

# SWEET AUBURN

*Newsletter of the Friends of Mount Auburn* | WINTER 2006



MOUNT AUBURN AS A NATURAL HABITAT AND WILDLIFE REFUGE

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*A publication of the  
Friends of Mount Auburn Cemetery*

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*Cover: Photo of Consecration Dell,  
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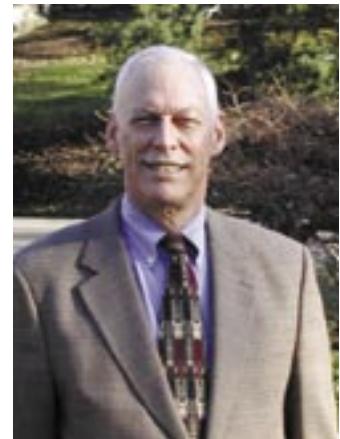
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The Friends of Mount Auburn Cemetery was established in 1986 to assist in the conservation of the Cemetery's natural beauty and to promote the appreciation of its cultural, historic and natural resources. Organized in 1990 as a 501(c)3 non-profit charitable trust, the Friends seeks financial support from its members, other individuals, foundations, corporations and public agencies. It receives gifts for educational and interpretive programs and materials for the public, specific cultural projects, and operating support for horticultural rejuvenation and the preservation of the historic monuments, structures, and archival artifacts and records. The Friends has over 1,200 active members.

# PRESIDENT'S CORNER

DURING THE WINTER, MOUNT AUBURN *may appear to be in a near-dormant period, but, quite the contrary, in our various offices and workshops the staff is hard at work. While our resident animals hibernate and our human visitors are fewer in number, the staff is involved in a strategic planning process with the Trustees, busy setting goals for the coming year and preparing budgets. Repairs to monuments, vehicles, signs and interior spaces are carried out by a work force much reduced in number by the absence of our seasonal workers (who return in April). And of course our work of burying and cremating the dead continues unabated.*

Although the fiscal year is not yet over, we are already celebrating a very successful fund raising year under the leadership of our Vice President of Development, Piper Morris. We have received a total of \$440,000 in gifts and grants, 51% ahead of last year's giving. The generosity of many of you--longstanding supporters who increased your contributions this year and new friends--will allow us to proceed on many fronts to preserve and enhance the Cemetery. We have received grants from the Richard Saltonstall Charitable Foundation for erosion control work in Consecration Dell; from the Walter Family Fund for the design of a protective cover for our significant marble monuments at risk of further environmental damage from acid snow and rain; and from the Harold Whitworth Pierce Charitable Trust and the Cabot Family Charitable Trust for Bigelow Chapel's restoration. Significant support from all of our Trustees matched challenge grants for the Bigelow Chapel project from the Sunfield Foundation (NJ) and an anonymous Boston foundation. A large gift from an anonymous individual will support the scanning of several volumes of our invaluable but fading business documents from the mid to late 19th century.



Bill Clendaniel

Probably the most significant project of 2006, strengthening the long-term financial health of the Cemetery and prolonging its life as an active cemetery, will be the design and construction of what we are tentatively calling Birch Gardens. This exciting new perimeter landscape of trees, shrubs, groundcovers and a fountain along Coolidge Avenue, with iron fencing and granite inscription panels weaving through the new garden, provides privacy and a buffer from the outside world for new cremation and casket burial sites. Designed by Halvorson Design Partnership, Inc., this project is the largest new Cemetery development of the last two decades offering shared memorials and individual private memorials. Finally, look in the mail and on our website, [www.mountauburn.org](http://www.mountauburn.org), for additional information on our many 175th anniversary events planned for 2006. We hope to welcome many of you to one or more of these happenings.

*Bill Clendaniel*

William C. Clendaniel, President



pg. 1



pg. 5



pg. 8



Young screech owl, Goldenrod Path, June 2004



# MOUNT AUBURN *as a Natural Habitat and Wildlife Refuge*

SCREECH OWL PHOTO BY JANET HEYWOOD, STAFF  
RED FOX PHOTO BY JOHN HARRISON, 2004

BY JILL GRABOSKI, former Visitor Services Coordinator, and  
DENNIS COLLINS, Curator of Plant Collections

**O**n any given day at Mount Auburn Cemetery a visitor may have the opportunity to spy a red-tailed hawk flying overhead, a coyote dashing across a sloping path or a squirrel hopping between tree branches. While these sightings are always a thrill, they are by no means uncommon. Mount Auburn Cemetery is an important wildlife refuge — ecologically rich, botanically diverse and increasingly vital as a large, undisturbed open space in a highly developed urban area. A wide variety of wildlife visits or lives within Mount Auburn's 175 acres and has been doing so since before the Cemetery was founded in 1831.

In the early 19th century, George W. Brimmer purchased a sizeable wooded property, located on the border of Cambridge and Watertown. His land was a popular destination for Harvard students as well as Bostonians seeking refuge in its rural qualities. It was affectionately called "Sweet Auburn" after Oliver Goldsmith's 1770 poem "The Deserted Village." In 1830 Brimmer agreed to sell his property to the Massachusetts Horticultural Society for the creation of America's first garden cemetery. Start-

ing with a site already rich in flora and fauna, the founders believed the grounds could provide comfort and inspiration to the living. And while modifications were made to the vegetation over time, the Cemetery's quiet green landscape continued to serve as oasis for many species of wildlife.

Mount Auburn can be seen today as a tremendous natural resource: providing a diversity of plant and animal habitats with adequate food, water, shelter and living space. The landscape includes open park-like areas with large swaths of grass, woodland settings with significant understory vegetation and wetland zones with opportunities for aquatic species. Many birds, like robins and catbirds, collect supplies in the woodland understory to build their nests in the protective branches of the trees. Eastern screech owls seek refuge inside sun-warmed holes in the trunks of aged trees. Mount Auburn's three major water bodies— Halcyon Lake, Auburn Lake and Willow Pond— attract a wide array of wildlife including birds and amphibians. Birds in particular benefit from the mix of open and sheltered areas provided by the vegetation along the banks. Today,

the nutrient and oxygen levels in the water are monitored to ensure healthy conditions.

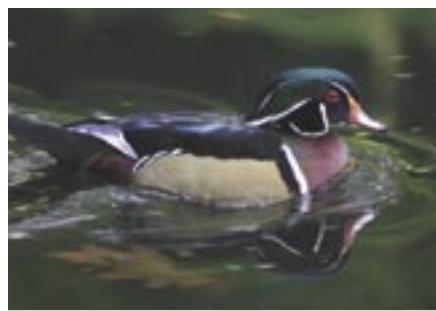
**The diverse plantings found throughout the grounds provide many food sources for wildlife.** Fruit-, nut- and seed-bearing trees attract birds and wildlife such as Eastern gray squirrels and raccoons. Shrubs like the native low-bush blueberry provide special treats for animals such as woodchucks (also known as ground-hogs), who otherwise feed on clovers and the occasional

flowerbed. The less common skunks and opossums feed on insects as well as plants. These smaller species may become prey for larger mammals like the coyotes and red foxes that live or hunt at the Cemetery. Some of the gardens and broad

grassy lawns that don't provide shelter for animals are important habitats for insects and other microorganisms. The rich soil and diverse plantings offer them food and shelter, and they, in turn, become an important wildlife food source at the opposite end of the natural food-chain.

Not content to simply maintain the status quo, **Mount Auburn's horticulture staff has taken an active role in expanding and enhancing wildlife habitat** during the past decade. Consecration Dell, the site of the Cemetery's 1831 consecration, has been the focus of an ambitious, multi-year effort to rejuvenate a woodland habitat by removing an invasive tree species and re-planting with thousands of native New England trees, shrubs and groundcovers (*see Sweet Auburn, Winter 2004-2005*). Pond dredging and vegetation restoration work have been implemented at all three of Mount Auburn's major water bodies. **The recently planted butterfly garden near Willow Pond has offered a new form of habitat.** In addition to these specific projects, some significant changes have occurred during recent years in the way the Cemetery's landscaping practices are conducted. These ecologically-driven changes will have a lasting impact on habitat quality throughout the grounds.

When visiting Mount Auburn, one cannot always count on catching a sighting of wildlife. Most species of wildlife are more active during the warmer seasons and some species are only here for a stopover during migration, but the Cemetery's diverse habitats can be appreciated by visitors throughout the year. If you come during winter, you can



Wood duck on Auburn Lake,  
October 2005

PHOTO BY JOHN HARRISON

search for evidence of our wildlife population by observing animal tracks in the snow, sighting great-horned owls nesting or spotting a fox sleuthing about the grounds. There are some birding guides and other resources available at the main gate (although these are limited during the winter months). Field guides and other nature books, available at local libraries or bookstores, can also help you identify Mount Auburn's diverse wildlife. The Cemetery is open every day of the year, and perhaps there is something new to see on each of them.



THROUGHOUT ITS HISTORY, professional and amateur naturalists have frequented Mount Auburn Cemetery to observe nature. Many visitors choose to be buried at Mount Auburn because of

the beauty and significance of the grounds. Some selected symbolic monuments that reflected their interest in nature.



**Butterflies** – cycle of life; caterpillar, chrysalis and butterfly represent life, death and resurrection.



**Dogs** – fidelity, loyalty, vigilance, watchfulness

**Doves** – purity, peace; a religious symbol representing Noah's search for land, the Trinity, the Baptism, the Annunciation of Mary and the saints.



**Eagles** – Resurrection, rebirth, generosity, power, American nationalism

**Lambs** – innocence, "Lamb of God;" usually marks the grave of a child, particularly infants.

**Shells** – journey, pilgrimage, baptism, women/goddesses

**Snakes (called Ouroboros)** – swallowing their tails – immortality, rejuvenation, eternity, new beginnings

## ECOLOGICALLY SENSITIVE HORTICULTURAL PRACTICES AT MOUNT AUBURN

The Cemetery is taking a leadership role in recognizing the ecological costs of air pollution, global warming, overuse of water, groundwater contamination, toxicity to humans and wildlife, and invasive plant introductions. As articulated in the Master Plan of 1993, the horticulture program is committed to finding landscaping practices that do not have a negative impact on the environment and is working to improve the overall quality of wildlife habitat throughout the grounds.

### Some recent changes:

**Leaf Mulching/Composting.** The traditional practice of large-scale leaf pick-up in the Fall has been largely abandoned. Since 1998, we have only removed enough leaves to produce the compost that is used in planting projects. We are now using mulching mowers to chop leaves in place and facilitate the recycling of organic matter and nutrients back into the soil. This has allowed significant reductions in fertilizer use for trees/shrubs/turf and has provided greater drought resistance by increasing the water-holding capacity of the soils.

**Irrigation Practices.** Watering is now based on minimal needs (1"/week is adequate). Special lawn-turf areas and new plantings are watered using more efficient systems for delivery. We are now recycling (harvesting) rainwater for irrigation use. More drought tolerant plants and turf spe-

cies are being planted. For turf, less frequent mowings and a higher mowing height are maintained.

**Dwarf Fescues Program.** Using grass species that grow to a reasonably low height without mowing, we are planting to enhance rural-naturalistic landscape character in some areas (solving two problems at the same time: aesthetics and labor). The remaining challenge is broadleaf weed control (now managed by monthly mowing).

**Mowing Practices.** Turf management equipment advances, such as "zero-radius turn mowers" have allowed us to dramatically reduce the number of mowers and staff needed to cut grass.

**Turf Removal.** Grass has been removed from difficult access areas such as slopes and also from beneath drought intolerant trees like European Beech, where we replace the grass with mulches or compatible groundcovers.

**Chemical Control of Turf Weeds.** This program was mostly abandoned 15 years ago (annual Dandelion and Nutsedge sprays).

**Disease Control.** We have selectively removed infected or highly susceptible plants for sanitation and prevention measures, and to avoid regular use of toxic pesticides. We now emphasize improving growing conditions to reduce plant stress and increase disease resistance.



## 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration! Breakfast Briefing

Over 75 cultural and civic leaders came to Mount Auburn's Story Chapel on September 22, 2005, for breakfast and to hear about our plans for celebrating our 175th anniversary (2006-2007). We were delighted

to welcome officials from the governments of Cambridge and Watertown and representatives of Harvard Square businesses and over 35 art, historical, and educational institutions in the Greater Boston area.



*Photo captions l-r: Susan Flannery, Director, Cambridge Public Library; Cambridge City Councilor Denise Simmons; and Rich Rossi, Deputy City Manager, Cambridge, MA; David Barnett (l.), Mount Auburn's Vice President of Operations and Horticulture, and Michael J. Driscoll, Town Manager, Watertown, MA; President Bill Clendaniel outside Story Chapel with Trustee Ann Roosevelt (Cambridge); Barbara Cox, Senior Vice President, Cambridge Savings Charitable Foundation; Susan Wilson, representative for Boston History Collaborative and author; and Cicely Miller, Executive Director, Forest Hills Cemetery Educational Trust; Staff members Linda Fisher and Amanda Yost.*

PHOTOS BY MEG WINSLOW, STAFF

# MOUNT AUBURN NOTABLES: HEROES OF HABITAT

BY BREE DETAMORE HARVEY, *Director of Public Programs*

## CHARLES ELIOT (1859–1897)

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT, WRITER AND CREATOR OF THE TRUSTEES OF PUBLIC RESERVATIONS CONCEPT.

Born in Cambridge, Charles Eliot was the son of Harvard President Charles W. Eliot and Ellen Derby Peabody Eliot. As a child, Eliot developed an appreciation of landscapes that would last for the rest of his life. He graduated from Harvard in 1882 and continued his studies in landscape history and design at Harvard's Bussey Institute.

After a two-year apprenticeship under Frederick Law Olmsted (1883–1884) and a year of travel to study the great designed landscapes of Europe (1885), Eliot established his own landscape architecture practice in Boston in 1886. In 1893 he joined the Olmsted firm as a partner. A prolific writer, he devoted much of his time writing to increase public awareness about land conservation and environmentalism.

Eliot's greatest legacy is his work to protect open spaces for all people for generations to come. In 1891 he laid the groundwork for the creation of The Trustees of Public Reservations, the first private, tax-exempt, statewide conservancy in America that served as the model for the creation of Great Britain's National Trust. Eliot also worked to protect open space in Boston as chief landscape architect for the Boston Metropolitan Park Commission.

Eliot died of meningitis at the age of 37 and is buried with his wife and his brother's family on Amethyst Path at Mount Auburn. Following his death, Harvard established a course in landscape architecture and memorialized Eliot with the Charles Eliot Professorship and the Charles Eliot Traveling Fellowship.



"Five O'Clock Tea" from *Harper's Bazar*, February 1893.

*Photo courtesy of Smithsonian Institution Libraries, Washington, DC.*

## HARRIET LAWRENCE HEMENWAY (1857–1960)

FOUNDER OF THE MASSACHUSETTS AUDUBON SOCIETY.

Born in Boston to a life of privilege and high society, Harriet Lawrence Hemenway dedicated herself in the late 19th century to protecting native and migratory birds after reading a graphic account of the slaughter of millions of birds annually. More than 50 species of birds were being killed to supply the fashion industry with feathers, a popular accessory at the time on women's clothing and hats. Hemenway and her cousin Minna Hall organized a series of "teas" to convince Boston's fashionable women to trade their feathers for ribbons and other millinery ornaments.

Through their efforts, Hemenway and Hall convinced 900 women to join their cause.

In 1896 Hemenway invited men from Boston's scientific community to join her group to establish the Massachusetts Audubon Society, the first organization in the country devoted to bird conservation and public education. Within a year, similar organizations were chartered in ten additional states and in Washington, D.C.

Hemenway continued working to protect native and migratory birds for the rest of her life. She lobbied for national legislation to outlaw the trade of wild bird feathers and helped to secure land for the creation of bird sanctuaries around the state of Massachusetts.

Hemenway died in 1960 at 103 years of age. She was buried in the Hemenway family lot on Thistle Path at Mount Auburn.



## ANNUAL SERVICE OF COMMEMORATION TO BE HELD ON BIGELOW CHAPEL LAWN SATURDAY, MAY 27, 2006.

MOUNT AUBURN CORDIALLY INVITES YOU to remember the lives of friends and loved ones at our 15th annual Service of Commemoration to be held on Saturday, May 27, 1:30 PM. We set aside this time to celebrate the lives of many who have gone before us and to experience the uniqueness of Mount Auburn as a memorial of living beauty and peace. Religious and community representatives will lead the ceremony to be held outdoors on the lawn in front of Bigelow Chapel. Music will be provided by The Brass Consortium. After the service, refreshments will be served. All are invited. For more information, call 617-547-7105. (In case of rain, the Service will be held indoors.)

### *A Spring Growl*

*If there comes a little thaw,  
Still the air is chill and raw,  
Here and there a patch of snow,  
Dirtier than the ground below,  
Dribbles down a marshy flood;  
Ankle-deep you stick in mud  
In the meadows while you sing,  
“This is Spring.”*

—CHRISTOPHER PEARCE CRANCH



Christopher Pearse Cranch (1813–1892) lightened the transcendentalist movement by illustrating Emerson's essays with comic drawings and writing two amusing juvenile novels. He is buried in lot #5116 on Vesper Path.

*One of the earliest blooms is that of the WITCHHAZEL with its bright gold fuzzy blossoms. Look for the earliest color near Willow Pond and the Willow Court Garden Crypts.*



# Early Spring Bloom

*“There is a quiet spirit in these woods”*

BY JANET HEYWOOD, Vice President of Interpretive Programs

Longfellow wrote of “The Spirit of Poetry” in a poem by that name. He spoke of a “quiet spirit in these woods” that dwells where south winds blow. He likened poetry to the “heavenly forms we worship in our dreams” and the “soft hues that stain the wild bird’s wing.” He saw poetry as the eloquent voice “in all the sylvan pomp of woods, the golden sun, the flowers, the leaves, the river on its way.” Here we combine some verses of the beloved fireside poets of the 19th century as they muse on winter changing to spring with images of the opening blooms of the season. We encourage to you to read aloud and join in this celebration of these New England seasons – from mud to joy!

## Early Spring Blooms

THESE VERSES ARE FROM ONE OF THE EARLIEST POEMS OF HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW (1807-1882), WRITTEN WHEN HE WAS STILL A TEENAGER. HE INCLUDED IT AND A FEW OTHERS IN A SECTION CALLED "EARLIER POEMS" IN VOLUME ONE OF THE 1857 EDITION OF HIS POETICAL WORKS. WHILE IT LACKS HIS MATURE STYLE, IT REMINDS US OF CRISP WINTER DAYS AND SHOWS US A STAGE IN LONGFELLOW'S OWN FLOWERING AS ONE OF AMERICA'S MOST ADMIRE POETS. LONGFELLOW AND HIS FAMILY ARE BURIED IN LOT #580 ON INDIAN RIDGE PATH.



**SNOWDROPS (*Galanthus*)**  
have very tough tips and push  
through the frozen ground,  
springing up like magic when the snow melts. Sometimes they are  
up by early January. Their bell-like flowers resemble white milk  
drops hanging from a stiff stem. Look for these on the hillside of  
Mount Auburn and near the intersection of Fir and Vesper avenues.

### Spring Has Come

*Intra Muros.*

The sunbeams, lost for half a year,  
Slant through my pane their morning rays;  
For dry northwester cold and clear,  
The east blows in its thin blue haze.

And first the snowdrop's bells are seen,  
Then close against the sheltering wall  
The tulip's horn of dusky green,  
The peony's dark unfolding ball.

The golden-chaliced crocus burns;  
The long narcissus-blades appear;  
The cone-beaked hyacinth returns  
To light her blue-flamed chandelier.

I hear the whispering voice of Spring,  
The thrush's trill, the robin's cry,  
Like some poor bird with prisoned wing  
That sits and sings, but longs to fly.  
Oh for one spot of living green —  
One little spot where leaves can grow; —  
To love unblamed, to walk unseen,  
To dream above, to sleep below!

—OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

### Woods in Winter

When winter winds are piercing chill,  
And through the hawthorn blows the gale,  
With solemn feet I tread the hill,  
That overbrows the lonely vale.

Alas! how changed from the fair scene,  
When birds sang out their mellow lay,  
And winds were soft, and woods were green,  
And the song ceased not with the day!

But still wild music is abroad,  
Pale, desert woods! within your crowd;  
And gathering winds, in hoarse accord,  
Amid the vocal reeds pipe loud.

Chill airs and wintry winds! my ear  
Has grown familiar with your song;  
I hear it in the opening year,  
I listen, and it cheers me long.

—HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW



**GLORY-OF-THE-SNOW (*Chionodoxa luciliae*)** is well-named, appearing to rise  
from the disappearing winter snows. Its six-  
petal lilac-blue flowers are turned upward  
and appear to reflect the heavens.

**SIBERIAN SQUILL (*Scilla siberica*)** appears in many places  
shortly after snowdrops bloom.  
It is planted under many of  
the mature European beeches  
at Mount Auburn. Its bell-like  
flowers droop downward.



THESE VERSES ARE FROM A 1858 WORK OF OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES (1809-1894), ONE OF THE HUNDREDS OF POEMS THIS PROLIFIC AUTHOR CREATED DURING HIS LONG CAREER AS PHYSICIAN, SCIENTIST, POET, NOVELIST, TEACHER, ESSAYIST AND HUMORIST. HOLMES IS BURIED IN HIS WIFE'S FAMILY LOT #2147 ON LIME AVENUE.

### Sonnet

These rugged wintry days I scarce could bear,  
Did I not know that in the early spring,  
When wild March winds upon their errands sing,  
Thou wouldest return, bursting on this still air,  
Like those same winds, when, startled from their lair,  
They hunt up violets and free swift brooks  
From icy cares, even as thy clear looks  
Bid my heart bloom and sing and break all care:  
When drops with welcome rain the April day,  
My flowers shall find their April in thine eyes;  
But there the rain in dreamy clouds doth stay,  
As loath to fall out of those happy skies;  
And sure, my love, thou art most like to May,  
That comes with steady sun when April dies.

—MARIA WHITE LOWELL



THE SONNET WRITTEN BY MARIA WHITE LOWELL (1821–1853) WAS FIRST PUBLISHED ANONYMOUSLY IN HER HUSBAND JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL POEMS IN 1844. WRITTEN BEFORE THEIR MARRIAGE, THE POEM IS ALIVE WITH THE PASSION OF THEIR COURTSHIP. IT WAS REPRINTED IN THE 1855 COLLECTED POEMS OF MARIA LOWELL, PRIVATELY PUBLISHED BY HER HUSBAND AFTER HER EARLY DEATH FROM TUBERCULOSIS. SHE

IS BURIED IN THE  
LOWELL FAMILY LOT  
#323 ON FOUNTAIN  
AVENUE.

STRIPED SQUILL (*Puschkinina scilloides*)  
naturalizes where it is planted and is one of the  
earliest bulbs to bloom. Look for it above Mag-  
nolia Avenue near the monument for Senator  
Edward Everett.

The bright yellow flowers of the WINTER AC-  
ONITE (*Eranthis hyemalis*) emerge through  
the leaves and melting snow. Look for these near  
the intersection of Central and Chapel avenues.  
The blue flowers of the groundcover VINCA or  
periwinkle provide a backdrop for the daisy-  
like blossoms of WINDFLOWER (*Anemone*  
*blanda*). Find these both at Bigelow Chapel  
Lawn.



### Spring

The Spring is here – the delicate-footed May,  
With its slight fingers full of leaves and flowers,

And with it comes a thirst to be away,  
In lovelier scenes to pass these sweeter hours,  
A feeling like the worm's awakening wings,  
Wild for companionship with swifter things.

—NATHANIEL PARKER WILLIS

THIS IS THE FIRST VERSE OF THE POEM SPRING BY NATHANIEL PARKER WILLIS (1806–1867). WILLIS, BORN IN PORTLAND, MAINE, AND EDUCATED AT YALE, BEGAN HIS WRITING CAREER IN BOSTON. LATER IN NEW YORK, HE MADE HIS MARK A MAN OF SOCIAL GRACE AND GAINED INTERNATIONAL PROMINENCE AS A JOURNALIST AND EDITOR. HE BUILT A CELEBRATED GOTHIC MANSION AND LANDSCAPE THAT HE NAMED “IDLEWILD,” NEAR NEWBURGH IN THE HUDSON RIVER VALLEY. HE IS BURIED WITH HIS FAMILY IN LOT #972 ON SPRUCE AVENUE.



*Janet Heywood, Vice President of Interpretive Programs (far right), retiring after 16 years of extraordinary dedication, intellectual contribution and loving service to Mount Auburn*

# THE *Indefatigable, Indispensable* JANET

BY STEPHEN H. ANABLE,  
*Freelance writer and communications generalist  
with a lifelong interest in historic preservation*

“H ave you spent much time in cemeteries?” she asks, a defining question for her, and, after you answer, she guides you through the corridor beneath the Story Chapel, pointing out the poured concrete ceiling as cutting-edge construction for the Victorians of that time. Vice President of Interpretive Programs Janet Heywood’s knowledge and enthusiasm about all things Mount Auburn strikes you the moment you meet her. Settling into her office—piled high with papers and books on history, with a Christmas cactus with hot-pink blossoms thriving in one window and a Mount Auburn screen saver on her laptop—Janet, in a brown tweed coat, Celtic-inspired pin, and green corduroy pants, can’t wait to talk business—which is also pure pleasure for her.

Retiring this spring after more than 25 years of involvement with the Cemetery, Janet became an employee on Halloween of 1989, working part-time on programs and membership. Mount Auburn Cemetery President Bill Clendaniel praises Janet’s extraordinary capacity for work and sharp intellect. “She is literally here seven days a week,” he says. “She seems indefatigable. There are rarely nights when I’ve stayed well beyond closing that she isn’t here when I leave. I’m sure no one on earth knows more about the history of Mount Auburn at this point, as well as knowing what’s happening here contemporaneously. Janet also thinks across all departments, across the whole organization. She really has the big picture in mind. She is a truly strategic thinker, and that’s rare.”

Bill cites Janet’s work on obtaining funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities for the soon-to-come Mount Auburn visitors interpretive center in Story Chapel, one of the legacy programs for Mount Auburn’s 175th Anniversary Campaign, as a key contribution. “She really deserves the credit for thinking up the intellectual content for both the planning and implementation grant. She worked with our grants writer to win this very competitive grant, the first of its kind for us.”

Vice President of Operations and Horticulture David Barnett credits Janet with an intuitive ability to balance inviting the public in to appreciate Mount Auburn’s history, art, and nature while always remaining respectful of the Cemetery’s character as a sacred space.

Janet created the Cemetery’s three audio tours and oversees the more than 70 members and public programs sponsored here each year. She helped create an annual Arbor Day weekend in late April that includes a tree planting. She developed the Women’s Walk each March to celebrate Women’s History Month and a Mothers’ Walk each May to view monuments adorned with symbols of maternity. “Janet pulls information together—things no one else could probably uncover—and puts them into her tours,” says Public Programs Director Bree Detamore Harvey. “She has a devoted following of people for her Angel Walk, every January. Two sisters who call themselves the Angel Ladies come every walk, no matter what the weather. The *Globe* did a wonderful story last year about the Angel Walk.” Bree has also appreciated Janet’s mentoring and encouraging her to investigate the history of the Cemetery’s



PHOTO BY JAMES HOLLAND, STAFF

design and plantings. Perhaps Historical Collections Curator Meg Winslow sums Janet's contribution most succinctly: "Janet gives meaning to the Cemetery."

Janet herself is especially proud of working with representatives from the National Park Service to help complete nomination papers to designate Mount Auburn as a National Historic Landmark. That goal, achieved in 2003, was especially sweet since, although there are many such landmarks throughout history-dense Massachusetts, most are built structures—not landscapes. In the Commonwealth, Mount Auburn joins the Boston Public Garden, Revere Beach, and Arnold Arboretum as landmark landscapes, and is one of just three cemeteries in the U.S. so honored.

Through her work, Janet has explored the lives of the residents of Mount Auburn, those famous and those known chiefly to their families. In literature she wrote for "Long Shadows: Headline News from the 19th Century," a walk for the Friends of Mount Auburn held in October 2005, she shared the stories, of, among others: Eben Horsford (1826–1913), a chemist and inventor of Rumford Baking Powder, who believed Leif Erickson discovered America and built a house near modern Fresh Pond Parkway; merchant John Brown, killed January 13, 1840 when the steamship Lexington exploded on Long Island Sound; and Sarah Goodridge (1788–1853), a miniaturist whose work won praise from Gilbert Stuart.

Because Janet actually lives in a cottage on Cemetery land, her commute involves no worries about traffic gridlock, "just watching out for squirrels. That's the nice thing about my work at Mount Auburn. There is a fairly seamless transition between what I enjoy personally and what I do to earn a living."

What initially attracted her to Mount Auburn? The birds. "I was fascinated by so many of the things that fascinate any visitor—the beauty of the site, the trees, the historic monuments, the fact that you can get lost when you're in the middle of a big city," she says. "Except when I first came here I had my bird guide and my binoculars around my neck. I was trying to learn birds." She loves Mount Auburn as a place of nature," a kind of "wonderful botanical garden" that is an avian hotspot.

Janet grew up in Anderson township, Ohio, near Cincinnati. Yearning for a metropolis, she left for college at the University of Chicago, majoring in chemistry before switching to earn her B.S. in psychology. "After I graduated, I got involved in the peace and civil rights movement. I spent three years at the university hospital, working as a laboratory technician for a very wonderful biochemist who convinced me to go to graduate school," she remembers.

So she moved to Cambridge and began studying molecular biology at Harvard, in a program of the super-ambitious: "Everyone was planning to win a Nobel Prize." Eventually, after a self-imposed sabbatical, she became a sales representative at a commercial printing firm. She did a fair amount of business in Cambridge and points west of Boston so she could dip into Mount Auburn to bird-watch before work or at lunchtime. She soon became known to Cemetery staff, and morphed from visitor to volunteer to employee.

She became indispensable on several fronts. With every week, her knowledge about the Cemetery grew, and, in addition to transforming the interpretive programs, she became a de facto technology resource, a "power user," in the terminology of the period. "It was unusual then, in the 80's, to have an older person who actually liked to play with computers. I knew how to do things the Cemetery needed done." She helped guide the office from relying on one or two freestanding computers to its current network with 45 users and was instrumental in refining today's relational database to handle multi-faceted membership and development information and records.

*"I know exactly where to find the first bulbs that will come up every spring, and the best spot to see the first redwing blackbird... I will miss this familiarity with the landscape."*

When she leaves, Janet will miss "the people I work with and the people who come here as visitors." And she will miss the flora and fauna that first tugged her in this direction. "For example, I know exactly where to find the first bulbs that will come up every spring, and the best spot to see the first redwing blackbird. In the fall, I know which of the hundreds of maple trees on the grounds will be the first to turn orange. I notice the rare birds and the familiar. I pay attention to what individual ones are eating—or not, especially in the winter. And I feel very protective of all of them. I will deeply miss this familiarity with the landscape."

When Janet herself migrates back to southern Ohio, she will live in the Cape style house bought by her parents, which has stayed in the family. She will be near her brother and his young children and be an enthused aunt on hand for plays, dances, and band concerts. A non-stop reader, interested in the Civil War and genealogy, she will now research her own family: "Part of the motivation for relocating back to Cincinnati is the opportunity to understand my family history a bit better."

She isn't planning to "walk away from cemeteries." of course, when she leaves New England. "No matter where you go, you're going to find burial grounds," she says. "Cincinnati, which is a relatively young city compared to Boston, still has a substantial history of its own. And I'm very interested in a cemetery called Spring Grove, which was founded in 1845, modeled after Mount Auburn. I actually have some ancestors buried there. So I'm planning to spend a fair amount of time in Cincinnati's cemeteries."

# FINE ART AT RISK!

BY MEG L. WINSLOW, *Curator of Historical Collections*

## WHEN IS A MONUMENT A WORK OF ART?

Walking among the many marble memorials set within Mount Auburn's landscape, what is it that catches your eye and draws you in? For me, it is the sculpted profile of the Greek goddess, *Hygeia*, marking Dr. Harriet Kezia Hunt's grave on Poplar Avenue. The scale of this figure and the grace of its form are striking, even from a distance. Despite its worn condition the figure's gesture of gentle dignity, the softly draping folds of her robe and the commanding presence of her pose show the genius of the artist. Although the sculpture's finer details have been eliminated by time, the statue is still captivating to behold.

Many marble monuments from the 19th century have been damaged by acid rain and snow and by the freeze/thaw cycles of our New England climate. Many lack documentation concerning the sculptors who carved them. But if they are anything like *Hygeia*, they are works of fine art that were designed to be placed outdoors, even with the inherent fragility of the marble. These works of art deserve the same timely and consistent care we give to Mount Auburn's horticultural treasures. Therefore, our preservation staff maintains

*Hygeia*, gently washing it periodically and removing organic growth such as moss and lichen from its surface. But this is not enough. To keep the statue recognizable, we need the help of professional conservators.

We cannot reverse a century of erosion, but we can slow the process of deterioration. One option under consideration is to design a protective cover to shield

this statue from the elements, which, if successful, could be used as a prototype to shelter other fragile, significant monuments. A priority for Mount Auburn is to raise the funds to commission such a design study and move forward with the preservation of *Hygeia*.



*Detail of Hygeia, showing graceful carvings despite environmental deterioration*



*Statue of Hygeia by Edmonia Lewis, commissioned in 1870 by Dr. Harriet Hunt for her lot at Mount Auburn.*

Beyond its beauty as a work of art and stunning outdoor sculpture, the statue is also significant because it is associated with two extraordinary 19th century women: the pioneering physician Dr. Harriet Kezia Hunt, who com-

missioned the monument for her grave, and the expatriate sculptor Edmonia Lewis (1844-c. 1901), who carved it. Lewis was the first person of color from America to receive international recognition as a sculptor, and very few examples of her work survive.

At the time of the Hunt commission, Lewis was the only professional American artist living and working in Rome. She was born to an African American father and a Chippewa (Ojibwa) mother. Both her parents died within a few years of her birth. After her education at Oberlin College in Ohio, she moved to Boston in 1863. She became a sculptor specializing in depiction of abolitionist and Civil War heroes. In fact, she financed her trip to Italy by selling copies of her bust of Robert Gould Shaw, commander of the famous 54th regiment of Civil War African American soldiers. Lewis was recognized for bringing a naturalistic approach to the neoclassical tradition of sculpture.

Harriet Hunt, who had a hand in the design of the sculpture, was one of the first female physicians in Boston, an early feminist reformer and an abolitionist. The daughter of a ship joiner, she was born in the city's North End. After her education and the illness of her younger sister, she studied homeopathic medicine. When she was refused admission to Harvard Medical School, the Female Medical College of Philadelphia gave her an honorary doctor of medicine in 1853.

*Hygeia* is a great work of art. It is also a testament to the talent and tenacity of 19th-century women.

[*Hygeia* is on Poplar Avenue. It is also on the Cemetery's public map and is highlighted on our African American Heritage Trail Guide to Mount Auburn.]

# BINOCULARS READY?

## Enjoying Birds in the Months Ahead

BY ROBERT STYMEIST; Bob, charter member of the Friends, Brookline Bird Club statistician and Bird Observer's bird sightings compiler, has been documenting the birds of Mount Auburn for decades.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN HARRISON, 2005



A cedar waxwing with red berries

EVEN IN WINTER, birds can be found in Mount Auburn. Not as many as in the spring, certainly, but the observant nature lover can sometimes find a roosting **great horned owl** in one of the many evergreens or a sunning **screech owl** perched outside its hole in an oak tree. In recent winters, a few **yellow-bellied sapsuckers** have been spending the time drilling horizontal rows of holes in Mount Auburn's four Nikko Firs as well as in some walnut trees. These sapsuckers generally winter far to our south; other "southern" species that have been extending their range into New England are the **red-bellied woodpecker** and the spunky **Carolina wren**. Many **robins**, some **cedar waxwings** and a few **Northern flickers** hang around and sometimes can be seen feeding on the fruit of the Amur Cork trees near Halcyon Lake. **Sparrows** and **juncos** ("snowbirds") join the resident **cardinals**, **chickadees** and **goldfinches** at the feeding station at Auburn Lake.

**Red-tailed hawks** start courting in March; on a nice winter day you can see some pretty nifty aerial maneuvers and you may be fortunate (or patient) enough to catch one of the adults carrying a branch to a nest site. At the end of March the first **blackbirds** return, the red-winged calling his "kong-ka-ree" song from a prominent treetop. The

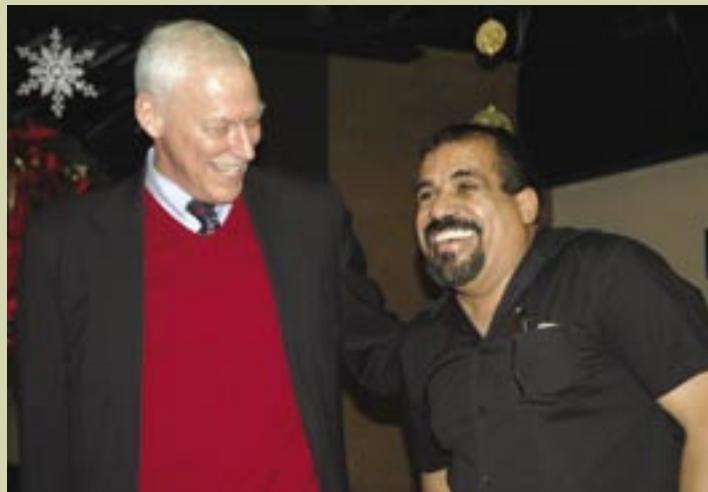
lucky observer may even flush a **woodcock** from under a shrub.

In April and May when there are warm south winds, the Cemetery becomes a temporary stopping point for waves of migrating birds. These **songbirds** are making their annual journey from Central and South America to their breeding grounds in the north. Most of these birds travel at night; at daybreak they seek a place to feed and rest before continuing their journey. Mount Auburn is an oasis of green for these weary migrants. Birdwatchers come from all over to see this annual spectacle of **warblers**, **vireos** and **flycatchers**. On most May days more than 200 birders are on the grounds by 7:30 AM covering nearly every inch of the Cemetery; hardly a bird escapes discovery. If a rare bird shows up, for example, Mount Auburn's first ever **white-winged dove** last year, word travels fast. A bird such as the dove or a **summer tanager** is verified by the mass of birders in no time, and word goes out bringing in many more observers.

In June Mount Auburn becomes very peaceful; almost all the birders have left, only a few continue to visit and enjoy the many nesting birds such as the **Baltimore** and **orchard orioles**. **Catbirds** and **chipping sparrows** are feeding their young; and an occasional **brown thrasher** or **great-crested flycatcher** can be found. It's a time to relax, enjoy the lush foliage and not have to worry about a rare **warbler** hiding in all that green.



A red-tailed hawk



**President's Award '05:** Bill Clendaniel presents the annual President's Award for "superior performance, ...loyalty and creativity" to custodian Jose Rivera at the staff holiday party, December 9, 2005.



**A school visit:** Librarian Karen Kosko and 6th grade students from the Haggerty School, Cambridge, film a project on US Senator and 19th century abolitionist Charles Sumner at the Cemetery, November 2005.

# CEMETERY DEVELOPMENT:

## *Innovation, Beauty and Conservation*

BY CANDACE CURRIE, Project Manager, Mapping and Planning

*...Mount Auburn's landscape itself is the best memorial to the deceased. Monuments are an essential element of the landscape and so, too, is their balance and relationship with the nature that surrounds them.<sup>1</sup>*

From 1831 until the 1870s, much of the northeastern part of the Mount Auburn Cemetery (from today's Halcyon Lake area to Asa Gray Garden at Lawn Avenue) was, essentially, a wetland. It was shaped and molded into the landscape that exists today, in part to remove mosquito breeding grounds and also to create new burial space.<sup>2</sup>

Today, Mount Auburn faces the challenge of finding appropriate burial solutions for caskets and urns while respecting the landscape, the cultural mores and the *genius loci*. Over the next few decades, cremation burials are expected to surpass casket burials, but even with burial spaces becoming smaller, the bigger question remains: how do we memorialize someone?

The Master Plan of 1993 noted:

*"The science of ecology and the environmental awareness of the late twentieth century have taught two important lessons that are relevant to the basic design principles and to Mount Auburn's development: the planet's resources are limited and need to be conserved; and the interdependence of all living things requires us to live as a community if the needs of all are to be met."*

So does this mean if we 'live as a community', then perhaps it's OK to be memorialized as a community? Yes. Mount Auburn sees these community alternatives as viable solutions and so do many of our customers. The granite curb-like structure along Vesper Path was very popular when it was designed in 1995. Other community-minded 'monu-

ments', like Azalea Wall and the obelisk at Begonia Garden sold quickly.

Recently in the oldest, northeastern portion of the grounds, Halcyon Garden and Nyssa Path have been composed using similar 'community' concepts for both casket and urn burials. By patronizing artists of our time as Mount Auburn's founders once did, Urban Instruments of Newton has designed elegant, respectful and timeless monuments for memorial tribute inscriptions in both of these new areas.

In our continuing effort to find new ways of memorialization, Birch Gardens mentioned in the President's Corner, will come to fruition this year and next. In the planning and design phase over the past two years, focus groups, customers and visitors have strength-

ened and softened the design ensuring that it says "Mount Auburn" and provides what today's customers are seeking – comfort and commemoration. Upcoming issues of Sweet Auburn will describe the garden, burial options and memorialization options in more detail.

With these new landscape embellishments, the staff at Mount Auburn strives to uphold the vision of our founders as well as respect our diminishing resource of available land, recognize the interdependence of all living things, be of service to our customers and nurture the spirit of Mount Auburn.

<sup>1</sup> Mount Auburn Cemetery Master Plan, 1993, p65.

<sup>2</sup> Today, Mount Auburn diligently abides to the state and federal wetland regulations and wouldn't even consider altering the landscape in such dramatic ways, but in the 1800s there were no laws governing the manipulation of "the kidneys of the earth."

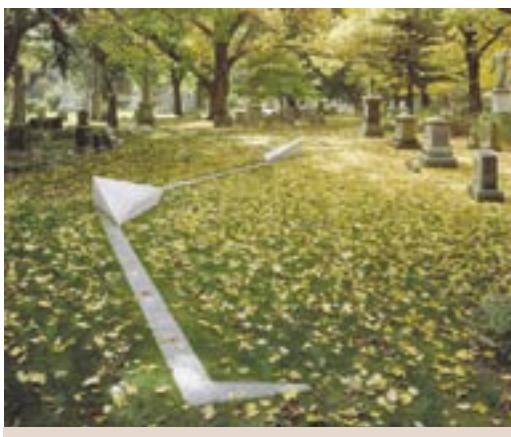


PHOTO BY CLEMENS/HOWCRAFT/BOSTON ©2005

*Nyssa Path memorial, designed and installed in 2003*



PHOTO BY SUSAN DOOLITTLE, STAFF

### 2005 VOLUNTEER BULB PLANTING

On October 20, 2005 seven hearty volunteers planted 2,000 Siberian squill near the intersection of Indian Ridge and Lilac Paths. Come see these early bulbs with blue star shaped flowers in March!

*Volunteers: (l. to r) Bob Greenland, Judy Jackson, Nancy Caraboolad, Irene Dygas and Miyako Fujiwara.*

# Updates

## BIGELOW CHAPEL PROGRESS REPORT

**Thanks to the generosity of several foundations and individuals, we have surpassed our fundraising goal of \$100,000 for Phase I with a total of \$136,450.**

We are also pleased to report that Phase I, with a total cost of \$375,000, is nearly complete: the slate roof and all flashings have been replaced; the chimneys have been sealed or capped; the two granite roof pinnacles on each side of the front entrance have been rebuilt and the façade repointed; and the front Rose window frame has been repainted. The interior renovations, including the installation of a new handicapped accessible bathroom and a small kitchenette, will be completed this winter (2006).



Phase II, which will include additional exterior work and the conservation of the north chancel stained glass window, will begin this spring and will be completed by the fall. *We continue to seek funding for the stained glass conservation project.*

## Volunteer Profile EFFIE AND JOYCE: FLORA AND FRIENDSHIP

BY STEPHEN H. ANABLE

IT'S A FRIENDSHIP THAT began at Mount Auburn and blossomed, literally, along with the flora of the Cemetery. And it has yielded years of patient, exacting work that will help staff care for our landscape for decades to come. Two volunteers—Effie Shumaker and Joyce Friedman, both of Cambridge—helped to inventory Mount Auburn's 5,400 trees (of some 650 varieties). Consulting a tree guide, with input from Vice President of Horticulture and Operations David Barnett, Curator of Plant Collections Dennis Collins, and Plant Records Manager Karla Erickson, they finished this task, then, instead of resting on their laurels or any other greenery, began assisting with inventory of the Cemetery's smaller plantings, its shrubs and groundcovers.

A surprising result of the tree inventory was the revelation that Mount Auburn has so many trees, far more than the previous estimate of 4,000. At least 32 trees, mostly oaks, pre-date the Cemetery.

The shrub inventory was an even tougher assignment than the trees, because, according to Effie, "they're not as easy to identify." Their activity was pretty much a three-season affair, since snow made access an issue during winter, which is actually Effie's favorite time at Mount Auburn because branches are bare and "you can really see the structure of the trees." The two friends worked closely with Dennis Collins, who created maps of the grounds using BG-Map botanical garden-mapping software.

Effie and Joyce were involved in the tree inventory from 1996 through 2001. Both women brought cultivated and perhaps innate organizational skills to the job, having backgrounds in systems and numbers. Effie holds a B.A. in French and a master's degree in library science from the University of Illinois, plus an MBA from Boston University. She had worked as a computer programmer at Polaroid and as a librarian at the Boston Public Library and at Harvard. Joyce earned her undergraduate degree at Wellesley, then a doctorate in applied mathematics at Harvard, becoming a professor of mathematics and computer science at Stanford, the University of Michigan, and Boston University.

Both women are retired, robust, and outdoorsy. And they just like being at Mount Auburn. Joyce treasures the Cemetery because "it's, simply, a beautiful place to be." Effie came to see Mount Auburn "as my private garden." She adds, "Whenever I go in there, I leave feeling better."



Horticulture volunteers Joyce Friedman (l.) and Effie Shumaker (r.)

PHOTO BY SUSAN DOOLITTLE, STAFF

## ANNUAL FUND 2006 UPDATE

THE FRIENDS OF MOUNT AUBURN WOULD like to thank all who have contributed to this year's Annual Fund. As of January 31, 2006, we had already received an impressive \$109,854 from 523 individual donors plus \$15,825 from 28 Corporate Sponsors. These gifts provide critical support to our programs not covered by the Cemetery's endowment including horticultural rejuvenation, monument and archival preservation projects and educational programming for our many visitors.

We continue to welcome Annual Fund gifts. *All gifts received before March 31, 2006 will be counted in this fiscal year.* Please mail all Annual Fund contributions to: Annual Fund, Friends of Mount Auburn, 580 Mount Auburn Street, Cambridge, MA 02138. Thank you!



# Celebrating 175 years!

## Highlights:

- ★ **Ceremony at the State House** in June 2006 honoring the signing of legislation creating Mount Auburn in 1831.
- ★ **Celebration Ceremony at the Cemetery** on September 24, 2006, commemorating the actual 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Consecration of Mount Auburn
- ★ **Gala Dinner**, under a tent at Mount Auburn, closing the anniversary year, June 2007.
- ★ **Public Lecture series at the Boston Public Library:**  
**October 2006-May 2007:**
  - *October 18, 2006, STORYTELLING AND REMEMBRANCE: HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR., W.E.B. DuBois Professor of Humanities at Harvard*
  - *November 14, 2006, HORTICULTURE: DAN HINCKLEY, celebrated West coast horticulturist, plant explorer and author, on the influence of Asian horticulture.*
  - *January 24, 2007, MUSIC: STEVEN LEDBETTER, musicologist and former Program Annotator for the Boston Symphony Orchestra, on Boston's 19th century music life with recorded performances [Co-sponsored by the New England Conservatory of Music]*
  - *February 7, 2007, IMPORTANCE OF NON-PROFITS TO OUR SOCIETY: PETER DOBKIN HALL, Hauser Lecturer at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government*

Mount Auburn Cemetery will celebrate the 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of its 1831 consecration with a year-long celebration beginning in June 2006 and featuring public programs that highlight Mount Auburn's extraordinary cultural, historic and natural resources.

- *March 1, 2007, ART AND ARCHITECTURE: DAVID DEARINGER, Hilles Curator of Paintings and Sculpture at the Boston Athenaeum, on the significance of Bostonians as patrons of the arts in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.*
- *April 24, 2007, THE PLEASURE, ART AND SCIENCE OF BIRDING: A PANEL MODERATED BY WAYNE R. PETERSON, noted ornithologist and author and Director of Massachusetts Important Birds Areas for the Massachusetts Audubon Society. [Co-sponsored by the Harvard Museum of Natural History.]*
- *May 15, 2007, CULTURAL LANDSCAPES IN AMERICA: DR. CHARLES BEVERIDGE, Editor of The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted, and ARLEYN LEVEE, national expert on cultural landscapes and their preservation [Co-sponsored by the National Association of Olmsted Parks and the Olmsted National Historic Site.]*

**All of the 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary lectures will be held at 6:00 PM in the Rabb Auditorium at the Boston Public Library, with a reception following. The Lecture Series is sponsored by the Anthony and Mildred Ruggiero Memorial Trust.**

- ★ **Art and Music Programs**, highlighting artists and composers buried at Mount Auburn or work featuring Mount Auburn.

- ★ **Exhibition at The Addison Gallery, Phillips Academy Andover (MA): "The Daguerreotypes by Southworth and Hawes", including rare early images of Mount Auburn Cemetery, January 28-April 9, 2006**

**Friends of Mount Auburn Cemetery**  
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