



## OAK HILL CEMETERY

*Historic Preservation  
Foundation Newsletter*

### OAK HILL CEMETERY

3001 R Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20007-2923  
Telephone: 202-337-2835  
Fax: 202-337-6481  
www.oakhillcemeterydc.org  
Email: info@oakhillcemeterydc.org

### Cemetery Hours

Office and grounds:  
9:00 am to 4:30 pm, M - F.  
Saturday 11:00 am - 4:00 pm.  
Sunday 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm,  
(weekends walk-in gate only and no drive-in  
accession holidays either) weather permitting.  
Please observe rules posted at gate.

### Oak Hill Cemetery Historic Preservation Foundation Board

Richard L Fischer  
George Hill  
Judi Cochran  
Clift Seferlis  
Darla Jackson  
David Jackson, Executive Director  
Elizabeth Mizell, Director of Development  
Communications and Individual Giving  
Lois Brown, Director of Development and  
Administration

### Oak Hill Cemetery Board of Managers

George G. Hill, President,  
John W. Gill, President Emeritus  
David C. deVicq, Vice President  
Loretta Castaldi, Treasurer  
Patricia Berl, Secretary  
David Jackson, Superintendent



## From the President

Dear Friends of Oak Hill,

Much has been accomplished this year, especially regarding smaller and more detailed projects of restoration and improvement. We have not recently undertaken any large projects in the cemetery, but we are preparing. Preliminary exploration and testing have begun on the Bigelow Cast Iron Fence along R Street, with some encouraging news. The cast iron is in poor condition, but the foundation stones are generally in good shape. They will need repair but not replacement, which will eliminate some costs. Perhaps you will have seen the green screen that has temporarily replaced the two fence sections under repair. And Dave and Darla Jackson are rearranging their household to make way for kitchen and bath renovations in the gatehouse, long overdue, to begin very soon.

We have experienced a wide range of weather conditions across the region this year, and the steeply sloping landscape of Oak Hill can be vulnerable. The powerful windstorm of early March toppled two dozen monuments of varying sizes. Over time, the upper parts of monuments can separate from bases. Soil can erode or soften, and it is understandable that problems follow. But we were surprised that a strong wind could push them over. We have worked all year to re-erect, straighten and secure as many as possible. New foundations have been provided as necessary with fresh bonding materials. Almost all this work has been done by our highly skilled workers. Several dozen monuments have been treated along the fence by Montrose Park, at Greeves Circle, on the northern slopes around there and the Corcoran Mausoleum, on the slopes below the Gatehouse, on the paths east of the Carriage House, and near the Columbarium.

We had beautiful Spring weather but have had periods of drought and heavy rains to follow. Washington has had a full year of rain so far this year, and we are writing in August. This has made landscape maintenance and repair more difficult, and we need to thank our crew. The work of installing hundreds of feet of new gutters with their drains has paid great dividends, as we have seen very little erosion. That work continues. Please come to visit and see all that we are doing. Oak Hill has been especially beautiful this year. And please support our ongoing maintenance and restoration projects.

Respectfully submitted,  
George G. Hill





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### *Executive Director Report* by Dave Jackson

Hello! Yes, I am writing you from the perspective of the Executive Director of the Oak Hill Cemetery Historic Preservation Foundation. This is one of the two hats I wear, the other being the Superintendent, Executive Vice-President of the Oak Hill Cemetery Company. This newsletter is a first. It is from the Preservation Foundation, a 501 ( c ) 3 organization, rather than the Oak Hill Cemetery. If this is confusing, let me explain.

As you know Oak Hill Cemetery (OHC) was founded in 1849 by William W. Corcoran and Chartered by an Act of Congress in that year. For 169 years we have operated as OHC with the Board of Managers and Superintendent as the governing and operating heads of the company. OHC operates as a 501 ( c ) 13 organization, something the IRS created for Not-for-Profit cemetery associations decades ago. Obviously, this arrangement works well or we would not have existed for so long.

The Board of Managers realized fourteen years ago that an addition was necessary to maximize the cemetery's ability to advance philanthropic funding

for Oak Hill in today's world. Most organizations that receive donations are not-for-profits and exempt from income (and a few other) taxes and operate under the IRS Code Section 501 ( c ) 3. To go with the times, a separate entity, Oak Hill Cemetery Historic Preservation Foundation (PF), was created as a “( c ) 3.”

*PF Board of Directors  
and our Development  
Communications Director  
Liz and our Development  
Director Lois are all  
working to make our  
audience (that's you, dear  
reader!) more aware of our  
efforts to cultivate funds  
to maintain and preserve  
this wonderful cemetery.  
Social media, a new web-site  
(oakhillcemeterydc.org) and  
some new public events are  
all part of these efforts*

We accept donations to both entities for the work of the cemetery. OHC donations help with day-to-day expenses, including to “Friends of Oak Hill” for “beautification” (meaning plants). PF donations are used for preservation expenses or repairs and replacement of longer lived elements such as roads, buildings, and the large “Bigelow” Iron Fence along 30th Street.

I wanted to explain all this because this new newsletter and the PF Board of Directors and our Development Communications Director Liz and our Development

Director Lois are all working to make our audience (that's you, dear reader!) more aware of our efforts to cultivate funds to maintain and preserve this wonderful cemetery. Social media, a new web-site

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### Executive Director Report (continued from page 2)

(oakhillcemeterydc.org) and some new public events are all part of these efforts. Two up coming events in October are:



**Saturday, October 13, 8AM to 1PM - DOG DAY AT OAK HILL CEMETERY** – For the first time, dogs (and their owners) will be welcomed to Oak Hill for a day of fun and frolic. A day. One day. This will become an annual event with owners asked to donate to the PF for the privilege of bringing their “fido” through the gates. The other 364 days of the year, no way. But for DOG DAY, hooray and woof!



**Sunday, October 28, 1:30PM - SIN AND SALVATION - A DISCUSSION OF LINCOLN IN THE BARDO** – the best-selling and award winning novel by George Sanders will be the topic of a discussion by Adrian Vaugness of Georgetown University in the Renwick Chapel. Seats are limited so let us know you are coming by RSVP. All are welcome (no dogs.....)



There will be other community “building” events coming again. We will use the elements within the cemetery for a variety of things, an arbor experience, themed tours, and so forth. We know there is a good bit of interest in such things and we are working to find ways to do them.

A note. Please be assured that the events we do will be appropriate for Oak Hill Cemetery. I see events at other cemeteries that I am sure work for them but just would not be in keeping with Oak Hill. The Boards, both Cemetery and Foundation and I are very sensitive to this issue and will work hard to get it right.

## DOG DAY AT OAK HILL CEMETERY!!

The ONE DAY OF THE YEAR  
when dogs may walk in Oak Hill Cemetery!!

Saturday October 13, 2018  
8AM to 1PM



DONATIONS ACCEPTED  
RAIN OR SHINE  
Oak Hill Cemetery 3001 R Street NW  
202-337-2835

PRESENTED BY THE OAK HILL CEMETERY HISTORIC  
PRESERVATION FOUNDATION  
A 501 c ( 3 ) organization





## OAK HILL CEMETERY *Historic Preservation Foundation Newsletter*

### *Historic Bigelow Iron Fence Restoration Update*

As reported in the Oak Hill Cemetery newsletter the past two years, the historic Bigelow Iron Fence along R Street is in need of complete restoration. The fence was installed in 1866, over 150 years ago. After some research and a visit to Cambridge, MA, we determined that it was a near-copy to the fence at the Mount Auburn Cemetery where Dr. Jacob Bigelow, one of their founders, was credited with the fence design. We also credit Dr. Bigelow for our fence because it is so very similar.

This is a project of the Oak Hill Cemetery Historic Preservation Foundation. As reported in an earlier Cemetery newsletter, we wanted to approach the restoration in two phases. Phase One is to determine what best practices should be used. Two panels near the Renwick Chapel were removed in June. They were taken to Flaherty Iron Works, disassembled, and the parts sent to a “stripper” to remove the paint

and primer that was applied over the years. You will remember our earlier report that the original paint color was a very dark green (same as Mount Auburn) which we discovered through a very detailed microscopic paint analysis. Flaherty is going through each piece of the fence to restore or replace it with new cast iron. Some pieces will be repaired by braising them together (vs welding) and the majority of the fence will be reassembled on site.

Also part of Phase One is to explore the construction of the stone bases and their foundations upon which the fence posts stand. Each post is on a granite base about 18” high but we didn’t know what was beneath the visible stone base. Frankly we expected that the stone base and its foundation would have to be replaced. Removing the existing bases and installing a new foundation was always the plan. The visible parts of a few of the bases suffered freeze-thaw damage and were repaired 2-3 decades ago. The bases, however, have not moved over their century and one-half lives. We had to know what was beneath the visible stone bases. We had a mystery!

In August, Lorton Stone Company dug two test pits, one at the site of Phase One and another in Chapel Valley where the ground slopes away from the fence. We are happy to report that the structural engineer company Silman inspected the two pits and reported “The existing fence post base consists of a single, solid stone measuring approximately 58” to 60” in height, and approximately 18”X18” in length and width, while the remaining portion below grade is



*the dig excavated at a fence post*

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*Jimmy Portillo and Rafael Chavez from Lorton Stone doing the excavation*

undressed rough-cut stone. Approximately 12"-16" of stone extends above grade. The base of the stone is supported by an approximately square foundation of loose stone set in mortar, measuring approximately 40" X 40" in length and width of unknown thickness. A second test pit...appears to include a stacked stone wall that retains the stone pier." They concluded that

"The below-grade existing fence pier is adequate for continued use, so the replacement of the foundation with a new concrete foundation pier is not necessary."

This means that the existing below grade foundation under each of the 81 piers will be re-used as the fence is reconstructed. Only the top 18" of each pier will be removed and replaced to accept the restored posts onto which the panels of pickets will be mounted. We hope that the resulting cost saving will be significant, although we do not yet know how much. Unfortunately, no mystery exists with the restoration of the iron. Phase One is showing the significant degradation will require extensive repairs before the fence can be described as "restored."

The drawing, provided by Silman, shows how the base and the posts will be reconstructed using modern-day stainless steel inside the restored 19th century and cast iron and stone. Although there may be some surprises in their installation, we expect Phase One's two panels and the base on which they sit to be completed this fall. So, as was expected, Phase One will give us much needed direction for Phase Two, which is restoration of the remaining 78 panels, once funding is available. Take a look when you visit the cemetery at the new,

*(continued on page 6)*

*Donors will be recognized  
in our annual report which  
will be published after  
December 2018*



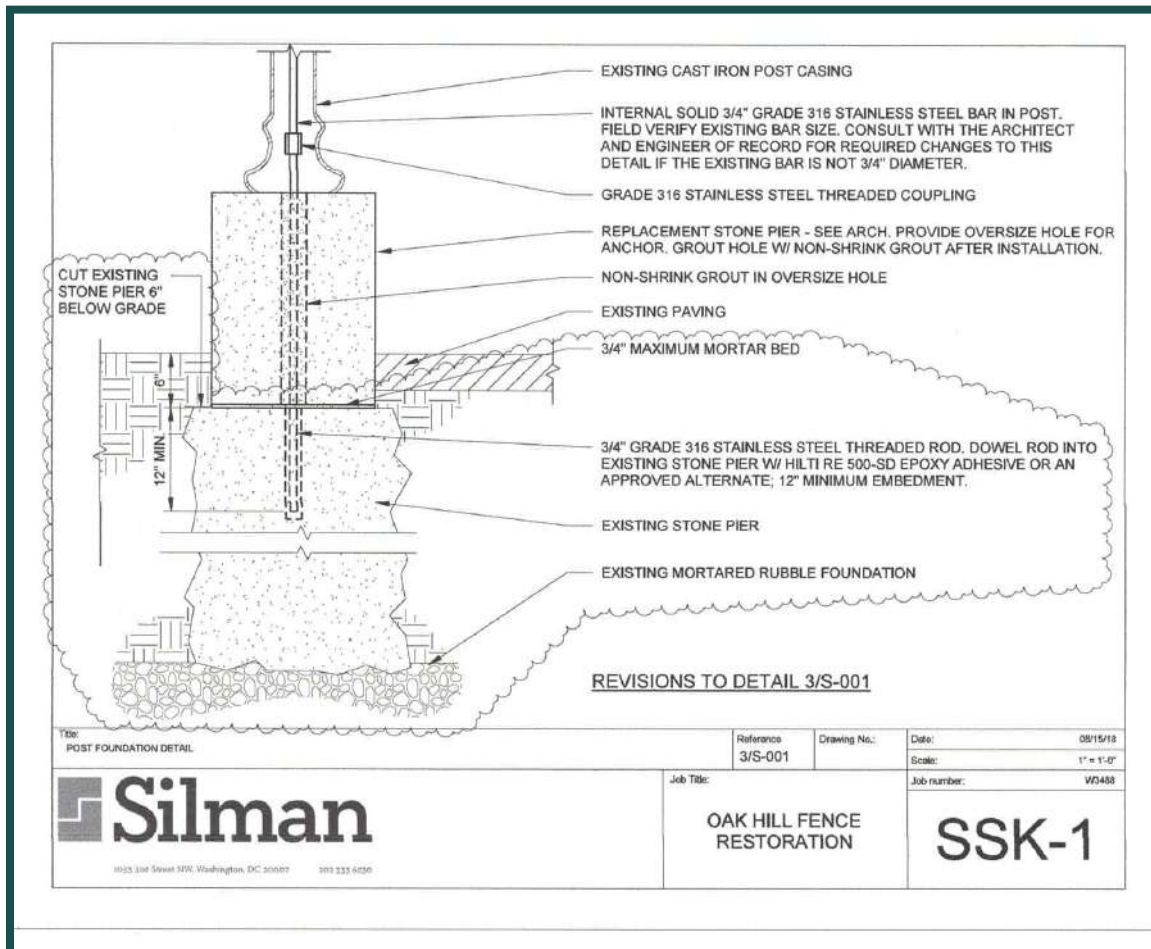
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very dark green panels near Renwick Chapel. The will be easy to spot!! Phase Two of the project, once the funds are gathered, will be to restore the remaining

780 feet of fence using the information gathered during Phase One.



*Silman's  
design for  
the fence  
posts and  
bases*

## Connecting with **YOU Online** by Liz Mizell

Our social media has **launched!** We are actively engaged on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. A few things you can find on our portals are; our hours of operations, current restoration projects, and upcoming events. Be sure to check us out, so that you know when our upcoming events (hosted by the Oak Hill Cemetery Historic Preservation Foundation) will be!

We want **you** to get involved. Please take a moment to join us online. We can be found at:



<https://www.facebook.com/OakHillCemeteryDC>



[https://twitter.com/OakHill\\_DC](https://twitter.com/OakHill_DC)

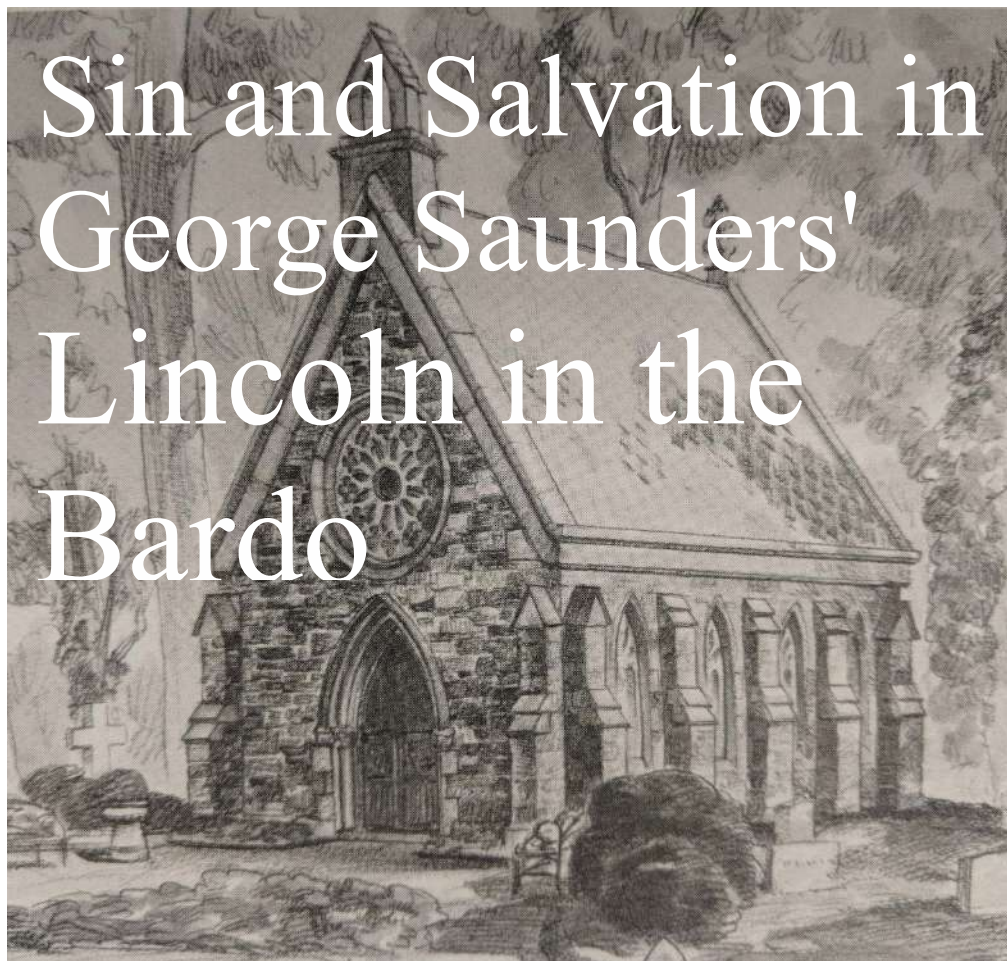


[https://www.instagram.com/oak\\_hill\\_cemetery](https://www.instagram.com/oak_hill_cemetery)



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# Sin and Salvation in George Saunders' Lincoln in the Bardo

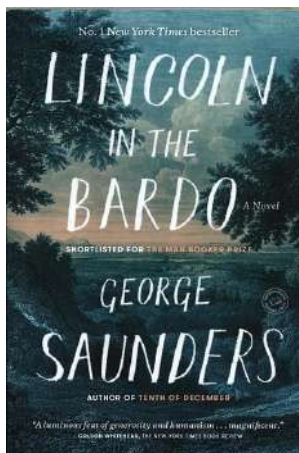
## A Lecture

Sunday, October 28, 2018  
1:30 PM

Historic Renwick Chapel  
Oak Hill Cemetery

RSVP TO  
[LOISBROWN@OAKHILLCEMETERYDC.ORG](mailto:LOISBROWN@OAKHILLCEMETERYDC.ORG)  
202-337-2835

THIS IS A FREE EVENT PRESENTED BY  
THE OAK HILL CEMETERY HISTORIC  
PRESERVATION FOUNDATION  
SEATING IS LIMITED SO RSVP EARLY!!



Adrian Vaagenes, M.Div, MILS  
Digital & Archival Services  
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## ***OHC Historic Preservation Foundation Strategic Planning Update***

**We Want Your Input!**

The Board of Directors of the Oak Hill Cemetery Historic Preservation Foundation welcomes your feedback on the Foundation's recently drafted five-year Strategic Plan. This is the Foundation's first Strategic Plan and key goals for the calendar years 2018-2022 include:

1. Advance historic preservation and restoration of Oak Hill Cemetery.
2. Advance Oak Hill Cemetery grounds beautification.
3. Increase outreach to and engagement with the community to raise general awareness of Oak Hill Cemetery.
4. Maintain strong financial stewardship to provide support for Oak Hill Cemetery now and in the future.

We hope you will take a minute to review the Strategic Plan and let us know your thoughts. To review it, go to: [www.oakhillcemeterydc.org](http://www.oakhillcemeterydc.org) - there is a link right on the homepage. Copies are also available to review at the Oak Hill Cemetery office during normal operating hours.