



Charlie Marchant needs You to help with his project involving Vermont cemeteries. Please contact him at 802.365.7937, or use his e-mail address found on page 11, tell him you'r gonna help him! He will let you know what's needed. More about this later in this newsletter and at the spring meeting.

The Spring Meeting is May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010. More details can be found in the Vault.

The News Letter is on the internet and in color! Go to our web site: **voca58.org**

Check "What's in the Vault" in this issue for the member's site password.

Check your membership renewal date, just above your name to the left is your member number, and above your name to the right is the date your membership ran out if you have yet to renew. A few are dated 1/1/2008. We would love to keep you all! We need you, please renew your membership so we can keep you on our member list. Thanking you in advance for your prompt response.



Now it's time to find a place in the warm sun, set yourself down in a good comfortable chair, have your favorite beverage near by..... and see what's happn'n.

Winter is withering away around this part of Vermont. Most of the big snow is gone. We probably will get some more, but its not going to stay around for any great length of time.

Ahead of us we have a story about the evolution of "Funeral Directors", a message from VOCA president Tom Giffin, more information about Charlie Marchant's project, some trivia, a look in the Vault, and an article from the September 1900 issue of the "Inter=State Journal" published in White River Junction, Vermont .



The following information was obtained from the Wyoming Funeral Directors Association, Kurt Rostad, Executive Director.

The history of funeral service is a history of mankind. Funeral customs are as old as civilization itself.

Every culture and civilization attends to the proper care of their dead. Every civilization ever studied has three things in common relating to death and the disposition of the dead. 1) Some type of funeral rites, rituals, and ceremonies. 2) A sacred place for the dead. 3) Memorialization of the dead.

Researchers have found burial grounds of Neanderthal man dating to 60,000 BC with animal antlers on the body and flower fragments next to the corpse indicating some type of ritual and gifts of remembrance. With no great psychological knowledge or custom to draw from, Neanderthal man instinctively buried their dead with ritual and ceremony. Primitive man lived in a world of fear. He reacted to most natural phenomena such as weather events based on that fear. He eventually attributed many life events to his instinctive knowledge of a higher being or power. In his primitive mind, life and death events were the acts of spirits. Since he was not able to see or sense these spirits, he lived in a world of terror. In an effort to enact some type of truce with these "gods" or "spirits", man devised charms, ceremonies, and rituals to placate these spirits.

Although we may find ancient burial customs to be strange or in some cases repugnant, they obviously arose for a reason.

The first burial customs then, were crude efforts to protect the living from the spirits which caused the death of the person. Fear of the dead caused the burning of bodies to destroy evil spirits. Many primitive tribes even today simply run away from their dead, leaving them to rot. Some allow their dead to simply be devoured by wild beasts. They thought fire should be used in disposing of the dead and that burial was a defilement and injury to mother earth.

Some cultures feel it's an honor to eat their own dead. To this day certain African tribes are known to grind the bones of their dead and mingle them with their food. The Zulus burn all the belongings of the deceased to prevent the evil spirits from hovering in the vicinity.

This fear of the dead carried over into what was developing into religious thought. Sacrifices of one kind or another were also offered in honor of the dead. This was done to appease the spirits. In Japan, it was the custom to insist that twenty or thirty slaves commit Hara Kiri at the death of a nobleman. Probably the strangest rite was practiced among Hindu in India prior to being outlawed by the British. The practice was known as *suttee*, or wife burning. The wife of the deceased was expected to dress herself in her finest clothing and lie down by the side of her deceased husband on the funeral pyre to be cremated alive. The eldest son then lit the pyre.

We would like to think that in these modern times, our state of enlightenment would have totally dispensed with such thinking, but such is not the case. Even today, death is approached from a standpoint of fear. Many of our funeral customs have their historical basis in pagan rituals. Modern mourning clothing came from the custom of wearing special clothing as a disguise to hide identity from returning spirits. Pagans believed returning spirits would not recognize them. Covering the face of the deceased with a sheet stems from pagan tribes who believed that the spirit of the deceased escaped through the mouth. They would often hold the nose and

mouth of a sick person shut, hoping to retain the spirits and delay the death. Feasting and gatherings associated with the funeral began as an essential part of the primitive funeral where food offerings were made. Wakes held today come from ancient customs of keeping watch over the deceased hoping that life would return. The lighting of candles comes from earlier attempts to protect the living from the spirits. The practice of ringing bells comes from the medieval belief that ringing bells would keep spirits at bay. Firing of a rifle over the deceased mirrors a tribal practice of throwing spears into the air over the deceased to ward off spirits. Originally, holly water was sprinkled over the body to protect it from demons. Floral offerings were originally intended to gain favor with the spirit of the deceased. Funeral music had its origins in the ancient chants designed to placate the spirits..... more on this topic in another news letter.

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## A note from VOCA President, Tom Giffin

March has arrived once again in Vermont and although most of Vermont is still snow covered, it won't be long before the Pussy Willows along the mountain brooks, and the arrival of the red-winged blackbirds return to announce the arrival of another Vermont Spring. Hopefully, many cemetery projects are ready to go once the frost is out of the ground and our mud season is over.

VT House Bill 281 continues to move this year in the VT State House. Please call your local state representatives and senators to support this bill which will protect our old burial grounds. You can find your legislative contact information on the VT legislative web page, [www.leg.state.vt.us](http://www.leg.state.vt.us), H 281 is also available on this site for your review. VOCA has been testifying on this bill since the 2009 session and we anticipate it should make it to the floor of the State House for a vote this year. We do need all VOCA members to make the effort to help pass this bill into law.

If you are interested in the possibility of utilizing a Vermont Department of Correction, (DOC) work crew for your cemetery maintenance this year, now would be the time to contact DOC Rutland Field Office Director, Mike O'Malley about this very successful program at 802-786-5196 and make your arrangements for a work crew.

VOCA is always looking for new members. If every member signed up one person and/or organization this year, it would help tremendously in our mission of graveyard preservation. Please check your latest newsletter's expiration date and renew your membership if you have let it lapse. Your continual support is appreciated. VOCA has many dedicated volunteers which keeps the organization running smoothly. I wish once again, to thank everyone who continues to donate so much of their time and talents to VOCA. If any member would like to become more involved with the organization, please contact any VOCA officer for information. Many communities have recently been requesting VOCA presentations for this coming year and hopefully we can accommodate most of them.

I am looking forward to seeing many of you at our Saturday, May 1<sup>st</sup> meeting in Springfield. We usually have coffee hour at 9:30. If you have agenda items and/or other concerns regarding VOCA, please do not hesitate to contact me at [tgifvt@msn.com](mailto:tgifvt@msn.com) or 802.773.3253.

Tom Giffin  
President



**Trivia:** Myra Colby Bradwell, 1831 – 1894, lawyer, and editor, born in Manchester VT. After marrying attorney James Bradwell she studied law in order to assist her husband in his practice. She passed the bar exam, but was denied admission, (Because she was female?). Meanwhile she established the pioneer weekly "Chicago Legal News" in 1868. In 1882 she got Illinois to grant everyone access to professions irrespective of gender, and was finally admitted to the bar in 1892. She is considered to be the first woman to become an attorney.

She promoted woman's rights and was instrumental in securing the World's Fair for Chicago in 1893.

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## Charlie Marchant needs our help!

The VOCA board has begun the process of updating and republishing **Burial Grounds of Vermont**. We are looking for people to work on a committee to do this. Changes that will occur in the new edition are that all cemeteries that are on a road that can be traveled by a standard pleasure vehicle will be given a 911 address and the official 911 name of the road will be in the directions section of Burial Grounds of Vermont, (BGV).

Another change will deal with cemeteries that can't be reached by a standard pleasure vehicle. Those cemeteries will have a new set of directions and a *GPS* number. This means someone will have to go to those cemeteries and use a *GPS* instrument to determine their location.

For those cemeteries that are on a property that has a 911 address, but you can't drive to the cemetery, they will be given a 911 address connected to the existing property. This number will have to be approved by the 911 coordinator.

To prepare for this task, we have already contacted some of the regional commissioners, and the 911 coordinator has been informed that we want to do this. So far they are ready to help. It has also been suggested to use school groups to help with the *GPS* gathering, and one regional commissioner has suggested we may be able to get some help via college classes that need real life assignments to help them complete certain classes.

Besides committee volunteers, we are also going to ask the County Representatives to participate in this project in their county.

If as a County Representative you are unable or unwilling to help out on this, please let us know and we will seek someone from that county to help.

Any questions, comments, volunteers, etc. on this project please contact VOCA Secretary Charlie Marchant at Box 132, Townshend, VT, 05353, or by phone at 802.365.7937, or e-mail at [cemassoc@svcable.net](mailto:cemassoc@svcable.net)

In addition to the above I would like to make you aware of House Bill 281. VOCA has asked Representative Marek of Newfane to sponsor a bill to revise some of the statutes relating to cemeteries, particularly with regard to the removal of remains. This bill has widespread support from the House. We ask you to contact your Representative and ask them to support the bill. We also ask if they have any questions they should contact Charlie Marchant, or VOCA President Tom Giffin, contact information can be found on page 11. We ask you also speak to your senator. Some of the provisions will impact town Clerks and possibly cemetery commissioners. Ask them to look at the bill and to contact their representative also. If you don't know these people, it's a good time to have a conversation with them. Since it's not a money bill, we have found no one who was against it. If you find someone against it, ask them to call us and tell us why. We can explain what we are trying to do. Do the same with your local funeral director. If they have questions ask that they call Charlie or Tom, or if they prefer they can call Chris Book, or their industry lobbyist. We have 815 members, a large portion here in Vermont. We need you to be proactive in this matter. Cemetery preservation is our business!

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VOCA member Marilyn A Jaqueth, age 81, born in Andover VT on 3/8/1928, passed away on February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2010. She worked very hard for VOCA, and was a past president of VOCA. Thank you to Reita Lashway for your generous gift to VOCA in memory of your mother, Marilyn A Jaqueth.

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\*\*\*If you would like to advertise your business in the news letter & the internet version contact the editor. Contact info on page 11\*\*\*

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## What's in the Vault!

1) First be sure to make it to the spring meeting. Becky Tucker has made the arrangements for us, so you know it's gonna be good! It is held on May 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday. Coffee will be available at 9 am, and the meeting is at 10:00. Charlie Marchant will have much more detailed information about the Burial Grounds of Vermont revision and the legislation to help protect Vermont cemeteries. Lunch will be that good old New England stand by, chick'n & biscuits. The tickets for the meal are \$11.00 per person. You need to get your reservation in by April 25<sup>th</sup>. Send them to Rebecca Tucker, 72 Paddock Rd, Springfield, VT, 05156 or call the U U Church at 802.885.3327 to make a reservation. Make checks payable to the "U U Church". Directions are: from exit #7 off I-91, head west into Springfield. In the center of town go straight thru (if it's green) the traffic light. Continue to the next traffic light. You will see a shopping plaza to your left and a McDonalds toward your left. Make a left turn at this light, McDonalds will now be on your right. Next you will see a school to your right. Turn right onto Fairgrounds Rd (this is just past the entrance to the school). The U U Church is at 21 Fairgrounds Rd, just past the school. Keep an eye out for the VOCA signs!

2) Next we wish to welcome our new members: Chris & Thanice Petrak of Newfane VT, Ken & Elaine Coonradt of Shaftsbury VT, James & Audry Peck of Plastow NH, and Barbara Spear of Claremont NH. We welcome you all and hope to see you at the spring meeting! Lunch is going to be **really really good!** And when it comes to cemetery information our secretary, Charlie Marchant, is a walking museum.

3) The fall meeting is being organized by Anderson Thorp and will be held in Strafford VT on October 2<sup>nd</sup>. More details in the next newsletter.

4) Spring of 2011 meeting is being organized by Louise Lessard and will be held in beautiful Danville VT. And !!!! guess who's coming to dinner??



It's that man your mother told you to stay away from, the rebel from the south, the dowser, Keith Schaffer. Mr. Schaffer will be giving a talk about ancient Indian burial practices. Keith has been very busy in his home state of Pennsylvania with a restoration project involving a historic cemetery. He told me he covers it like a big greenhouse so that he can continue his work in the winter. Keith will be in Lyndonville VT this summer. The date June 13<sup>th</sup>, time is 1:30 pm, place Lyndon State College.

5) Please don't let this be your last newsletter, check your renewal date. Also you will notice the new dues cards remind you of the dates of the spring and fall meetings.

6) The password for the members area in the internet version of the newsletter is: ( **wully&whitey** ). Help us save some money, let me know if you are going to get your newsletter from the internet. It's located at ( **voca58.org** ). The future newsletters on the internet will most likely include more articles. We are limited on the printed version due to costs. But it appears there will always be a printed copy.



THE LATE JUSTIN S. MORRILL.

The following is from an article written by Elizabeth Chandler of Strafford, Vermont for the September 1900 issue of the "Inter-State Journal", published in White River Junction, Vermont. (Thanks to VOCA member Andersen Thorp).

If, long ages hence, when all who walk the earth today with children to countless generations, have slept for centuries with the unnumbered dead, some restless soul, wearied with it's researches in other spheres returns to Earth, it will find still standing on one of

Vermont's rock-ribbed hills, the subject of our article, the Morrill Mausoleum. Rugged, staunch, unostentatious, emblematic of the character of the man whom it commemorates, in the cemetery on the crest of the hill north of Stafford village and less than two hundred yards from the house from the house in which he was born, stands this memorial of our "Grand Old Man" our "American Gladstone," Justin Smith Morrill.

Its location is ideal. Plainly visible from each of the three roads leading into the village it serves as a constant reminder of him whose name will ever stand illuminated in the annals of these United States. The idea of its erection undoubtedly arose from his devotion to that sweet and lovely character, his life-long companion and confidante, Ruth Barrell Swan Morrell. Her death occurred in May, 1898, and the work of the construction of the Mausoleum was begun the following summer. The contractors were John Crawford & Son of Buffalo, NY, and the work was entirely in the charge of William J Crawford. True to the love of his birthplace Senator Morrill stipulated that all stone used in this construction should be from Vermont quarries. All plans and contracts were made by Justin Morrill and until November 1898, when he returned to his Washington home, the work when on under his constant observation. But the completed structure was never seen by him as his death occurred in December of that year and the work was finished under the supervision of his son James Swan Morrill. As far as art of man has advanced in this fin-de-siecle age this structure has been planned to withstand the ravages of all time. Its base measures twelve feet by eighteen feet and its height is twenty feet. First an excavation of eight feet in depth and larger than the base of the monument was made in the ground and the whole cubic space was filled with stones, in the interstices between which thirty barrels of cement were used. The stone used on the exterior is Barre granite cut in the largest available pieces, thus making the minimum number of joints. All stones were dressed at the quarries and came by rail to Sharon, VT., and from there they were drawn to Strafford by horses with the exception of the capstone.....*This story will continue in the next newsletter.*

**2009-2010 Headstones**

Thomas Giffin, President, 61 East Washington St, Rutland Vt, 05701 [tgiftv@msn.com](mailto:tgiftv@msn.com) .....802-773-3253  
 Betty R Bell, 1<sup>st</sup> VP, 89 North St, New Haven Vermont, 05472 ..... 802-453-3947  
 Vacant!!!!!!!!!!!!, Grants Administrator Assistant, .....This could be you!!!!!!!!!!!!.....Vacant!!!!!!!!!!!!  
 Arthur Hyde, 2<sup>nd</sup> VP&Grants Admin, 1991 Upper Plain, Bradford, Vt 05033 ..... 802-222-4088  
 Harry Fisher, Treas & Newsletter Ed, P O Box 266, Weston Vt. 05161.. [merci@vermontel.net](mailto:merci@vermontel.net)...800-675-8815  
 Merci Fisher, Assistant Newsletter Ed., PO Box 266, Weston, Vt 05161..[merci@vermontel.net](mailto:merci@vermontel.net)...800-675-8815  
 Justin Giffin, Asst Treas, 61 E Washington St, Rutland, Vt [justingiff@hotmail.com](mailto:justingiff@hotmail.com)..... 802-779-1671  
 Charles E Marchant, Sec, P O Box 132, Townshend Vt, 05353 .....[cemassoc@svcable.net](mailto:cemassoc@svcable.net).....802-365-7937  
 Edmund Wilcox, Exe Board, 4996 Georgia Shore Rd., St Albans Vt, 05478 .....802-524-3318

**WEB MASTER**

Darryl Harris ..... [webmaster@voca58.org](mailto:webmaster@voca58.org)  
 VOCA Website ..... [www.voca58.org](http://www.voca58.org)

**FOOTSTONES**

2012 Wesly Mowry, P O Box 297, Hartland, VT, 05048 .....802-436-3383  
 2011 Richard Howrigan, P O Box 16, Fairfield Vt, 05455 .....802-827-6513  
 2010 Robert Hooper, 44 Charity St, Burlington Vt, 05401 [hooper9999@aol.com](mailto:hooper9999@aol.com) .....802-862-0708  
 2010 Laura Griggs, P O Box 252, Reading Vt, 05162 .....802-484-5738  
 2010 Ruth Barton, P O Box 309, Putney, Vt, 05301 .....802-254-1128  
 2011 Chris Book, 44 N Main, Rutland, VT, 05701 .....802-773-6252

Vermont Old Cemetery Association is a non-profit organization founded in 1958 to “encourage the restoration and preservation of neglected and abandoned cemeteries in the State of Vermont”. Meetings are held twice yearly on the 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday in May and October. The VOCA newsletter is published by the editor four times a year to coincide with the seasons. The IRS granted VOCA tax exempt status 3/21/1969 (Ref BUR EO59-26)

**VOCA Books For Sale**

**The 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of “Burial Grounds of Vermont”, lay-flat binding \$35. Addendum to 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> editions \$4.00, “Stones&Bones”, a teacher’s resource packet \$24.00. These prices include shipping costs; we are not required to collect Vt sales tax. Send check made out to “VOCA” and a return address label, if possible, to “ Charles E Marchant, VOCA Secretary, P O Box 132, Townshend, Vermont, 05353”**

**VOCA County Representatives**

\*\*\*\*\* These are people who will come help you with your VOCA grant application \*\*\*\*\*

Addison- Betty R Bell 802-453-3947                      Grand Isle- vacant  
 Bennington – Jean Kosche – 802-447-2241      Lamoille- Deanna French 802-888-4537  
                                          Orange- Arthur Hyde 802-222-4088  
 Caledonia – Louise Lessard – 802-684-3404      Orleans- Wanda Webster 802-525-3550  
 Chittenden- Robert Hooper- 802-862-0708      Rutland- Cliff Giffin 802-773-3743  
 Essex- Richard Colburn- 802-723-4833              Washington- vacant  
 Franklin- Edmund Wilcox- 802-524-3318          Windham- Charles Marchant 802-365-7937  
                                          Windsor- Laura Griggs 802-484-5738

**Graveyard Preservation Is Our Business**

Circle One

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Address \_\_\_\_\_

Town/City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone # \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Dues are for calendar year: 1 year \$10.00, 5 years \$40.00, and lifetime is \$140.00

**\*\* A new member joining in Oct or Nov or Dec will have dues applied to the following year \*\***

**Make check payable to VOCA, mail to: Harry Fisher, VOCA Treasurer, P O Box 266  
Weston, Vermont 05161**

Vermont Old Cemetery Association  
Harry Fisher, Treasurer/Editor  
P O Box 266  
Weston, Vermont 05161