

SAVE AUSTIN'S CEMETERIES

Fall 2015 Newsletter

Save Austin's Cemeteries Board Members

Dale Flatt, President
Sally Victor, Vice President
Jan Root, Secretary
Kay Boyd, Treasurer
Danny Camacho
Karen Eshliman

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2016 Photo Contest by Leslie Wolfenden

With 57 photo entries in the 6th Annual SAC Photo Contest featuring all five of Austin's historic city cemeteries, it was a tight contest among the top four photos with Katie Cowden's "Benediction" eking out first place. Katie's winning entry is showcased on the 2016 SAC calendar, now on sale while supplies last. Katie receives a free 2016 SAC calendar and a one-year SAC membership. The other photo contest winners include Angela Doetsch, Karen Eshliman, Richard Gaines, Cecille Marcato, Eva Mohrlök, Beth Pickett, Harrison Saunders, and Leslie Wolfenden, who will also receive one-year SAC memberships.



Benediction (Oakwood Cemetery), Katie Cowden 2015

SAVE AUSTIN'S CEMETERIES 2016

www.sachome.org

The SAC 2016 Calendars are available via our website at www.sachome.org or you can email us at info@sachome.org. It is \$10 plus sales tax and shipping. These make nice holiday gifts or treat yourself to scenic images of our historic cemeteries throughout the year. Available while supplies last.

Thank you very much to the talented photographers who sent in their entries and to all of you who voted for your favorites. This is a great way for us to show what wonderful places cemeteries are.

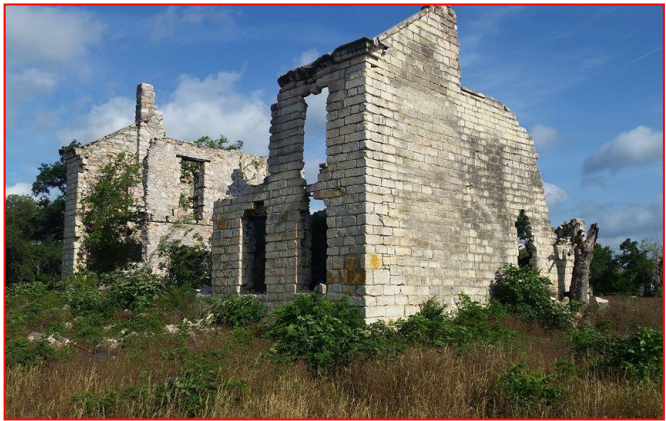
January 2016 Speaker Event: If These Walls Could Talk by Kay Boyd

Save Austin's Cemeteries' January guest speaker session will be at the Yarborough Library located at 2200 Hancock Drive. The presentation will begin at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, January 9, 2016. Join us and learn more about the preservation efforts going on at the Sneed Mansion.

Bobby Cervantes will talk about his work in preservation. His current project is the Austin Historic Landmark Sneed Mansion built in the 1850s by Sebron G. Sneed. He will talk about the history of the place and what brought it to ruins. Bobby's preservation work has brought together many Sneed family members. The old house is located at 6305 Bluff Springs Drive, east of South IH 35. Many family members are buried in Oakwood Cemetery, while some of them are buried in two family cemeteries.



Sneed Mansion – 1947



Sneed Mansion – today

Bobby Cervantes is a teacher and member of the Travis County Historical Commission. He grew up in South Austin and as a kid he played at the Sneed Mansion when the home was still standing. Bobby has been struggling with the current developer since it was purchased in 2011.

9th Annual Murder, Mayhem, and Misadventure Walking Tour by Megan Spencer and Kay Boyd

After watching the weather forecast all week with trepidation, we got a break in the wet weather and it turned out to be a perfect Halloween Day. Over 250 visitors came to Oakwood Cemetery and signed up for tours. This kept our fearless guides Karen Eshliman, Dale Flatt, Warren Friedrich, Glen Roen, and Bob Ward busy all day. Thank you so much for your hard work!

We also want to thank the volunteers who came out to help make our MMM day a success. Some came extra early to help raise the tents; some worked as greeters; some stayed until the last minute to help clean up. They are Dorothea Adams, Cathy Andrews, Susanna Federowicz, Warren Friedrich, Eva and Hal Mohrlök, Ramona Reeves, Angie Ward, and Stacey Woodall. We thank all of our friends.

Starring on our walking tours, volunteer tour actors write their own monologues based on the research material provided by our historian, Danny Camacho, and our genealogist, Kay Boyd. Some gave unique



Bob and Warren – a pair of debonair tour guides!
Cathy and Sue – smiling faces at the check-in table



perspectives on the character by choosing to be someone in the Oakwood resident's life. For example, we heard the story of a young man who met his untimely death told by the midwife who delivered him. One lady told her story as Oakwood resident Joe Blunn. The actors of the unsolved Engler family murder speculated on how the crime could have been solved with the use of modern technology. The actors were all wonderful and we are so grateful for them. Thank you all! Our actors included:

- Mrs. Olenich: Jessica Mayo & Esther Van Hout
- Joe Blunn: Patrice Sarath & Cortine Davidson
- Engler Family Murder: Elizabeth Garzone & Lana Davis
- Tom Gaines: Alvan Angelle & Stella Pullin
- John 'RIP' Ford: Scott Myers & Vanita Trippe
- John Paul Miller: Julia Deisler
- Maurice Moore: Billy Brookshire



Here are some shots of a few of our terrific actors. Going clockwise: Billy Brookshire as Texas Ranger Maurice Moore, Stella Pullin and Alvan Angelle telling Tom Gaines' story, Julia Diesler for John Paul Miller, Elizabeth Garzone for the Engler family murder mystery, Jessica Mayo as Mrs. Olenich, and Patrice Sarath and Cortine Davidson for Joe Blunn.

Our actors all seem to have a good time portraying their parts. Here some quotes from them:

- "It was great being a part of this event!" from Alvan Angelle
- "I always love doing this. Please keep asking me!" from Billy Brookshire
- "I had such a great time!" from Jessica Mayo
- "I had a wonderful time portraying Mrs. Blunn. I am already looking forward to next year! Thank you again for all the work you guys do to keep Austin history alive." from Cortine Davidson

As part of the tour event, our book, *Austin's Historic Oakwood Cemetery: Under the Shadow of the Texas Capitol* and the 2016 SAC calendars were available for purchase and proved to be very popular. We still have books available and a limited supply of 2016 calendars. The book and the calendar make wonderful holiday gifts!

All the proceeds from our tours, sales, and memberships go to benefit cemetery preservation projects.

See you next year at MMM on October 29!

SAC Board Elections by Beth Pickett

SAC elects officers for its board of directors every two years and this is one of those years. At the annual meeting held on October 10, SAC members elected this roster of officers:

- President, Dale Flatt
- Vice President, Sally Victor
- Secretary, Jan Root
- Treasurer, Kay Boyd

And there are a few more changes. Some board members who have served on the board for the past several years have decided to step down. They won't go far – all plan to remain active in SAC projects and activities – and their hope is that other SAC members who have expressed interest in serving on the board will now have that opportunity. In addition to the newly elected officers, Danny Camacho will continue to serve on the board, along with the additional new board members who will be appointed to fill the vacancies.

I offer my sincere gratitude to the board members who are resigning – Leslie Wolfenden, Barbara Surles, Bob Ward, and Megan Spencer—for their hard work, unique talents, and enthusiasm. No one knows all of their contributions, but we do know that SAC has benefitted enormously.

As one of the founding members of SAC, Leslie has had an especially long and productive tenure on the board in various roles, but she plans to stay close as the City begins to realize her dream of rehabilitating the Oakwood Cemetery Chapel. Barbara has been our Girl Friday, ever willing to step in wherever she's needed. She gets the credit for creating the flyers for our events, including this year's Murder, Mayhem & Misadventure flyer – which, by the way, features Bob Ward in costume as Ben Thompson, his favorite Texas ruffian. Bob brought his insights as an archaeologist to our table, as well a deep love for history and pretty much for anything interesting. He has helped especially with connecting SAC to other like-minded groups and individuals in town. Megan is at the ready to help, whatever it is. We most certainly appreciate her for serving as editor of the newsletter, always an enjoyable, engaging read. She's stepped up as a tour guide on many occasions and is Principal Water and Snack Bearer for our actors at MMM and other tour events. Thank you, thank you, thank you, and thank you to Leslie, Barbara, Bob, and Megan!

In closing, I must add myself to the list of those stepping aside. Four years ago, when Leslie approached me about serving on the board, I had no idea what I was getting into. After two terms as president, I can say now that, truly, it's been a pleasure. I've very much enjoyed getting know the SAC family – board members, members, volunteers, and partners – and what a treat to learn so much about Austin's history and cemeteries close at hand from such expert sources. SAC is a fantastic group, and I'm happy to be a part of it. Best wishes to Dale and the new board as SAC's role in the Master Plan develops. Onward!

2016 Membership Drive by Leslie Wolfenden

It's that time of year again – time to renew your SAC membership! SAC offers individual annual (\$35), senior and student (\$25), family (\$50), and individual lifetime (\$500) membership levels. Membership term runs from January to December. Members receive the SAC quarterly e-newsletter, may vote in officer elections, and may hold office. **Best of all, members support SAC's programs and preservation efforts!** Read on to see what SAC accomplishes with SAC membership support.

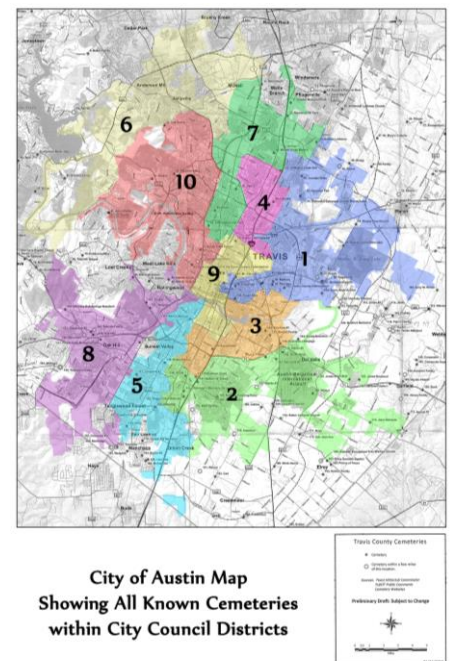
- SAC has worked hard for ten years with the City Staff, contractors, and master plan team to help craft the adopted Cemetery Master Plan and SAC will continue to monitor and assist with implementation and preservation projects. In many cases, we are representing common cemetery upkeep for families that have died off or families who no longer live in the area.
- We become a point of contact for families who are out of the area and who do not know who or how to contact the City of Austin Cemetery Division.
- The master plan will in the future require public bonds/CIP – Capital Improvement Projects – that have to be voted on and accepted by Austin taxpayers. With our free tours given several times a year and our public outreach programs like headstone cleaning, lot documenting, and guest speakers, we help reintroduce the city cemeteries to the public, tell your family stories, and impress upon the visitors that our public cemeteries are outdoor museums.
- The city has a research fee. We do not. In many cases, SAC volunteers help with photos and research. We also collect family stories and photographs, and we highlight these family stories through educational outreach programs that remind us that the City Cemeteries occupy an important place in Austin's heritage.

The SAC 2016 Membership form can be found at the end of this newsletter or on our website at www.sachome.org. Please join us or renew today!

Assisting the Austin City Council by Dale Flatt

Several times a year, the city is contacted about an old forgotten cemetery that has become overgrown or is now an illegal dumpsite. Many city departments and our new council members have no idea how to proceed with citizens' concerns.

One of the long-term projects we at SAC have been working on, in coordination with the Austin Genealogy Society, Travis County Historical Commission, and the Texas Historical Commission, is to document all of the cemeteries in Travis County. SAC Past President Leslie Wolfenden worked with the City of Austin Council District maps and combined them with ongoing mapping and inventory lists to identify all of the cemeteries within each council district. We created packets of printed maps with a list for each district, along with electronic copies on CD. These packets were delivered to each city council member. We also included cemetery resources and SAC contact information. SAC is always ready, willing, and able to help organize a cleanup or to assist with an historic designation project. We currently have a few projects in the discovery phase. If you have an older cemetery in your neighborhood and you want to make a difference, we can help set you on the right path. Reach out to us – that's why we're here!



Austin Museum Day by Barbara Surles

The Austin Museum Partnership (AMP) celebrated its 18th annual Austin Museum Day on Sunday, September 15th.

AMP promotes the day as a free, community-wide rediscovery of Austin Museums. For the 5th year in a row, Save Austin's Cemeteries joined the day of fun and enjoyed a small but nice turnout of curious visitors to Oakwood Cemetery. SAC held guided tours and answered questions and the Oakwood Chapel was also open for visitors to see. Several newcomers were excited to return for our MMM tour in October.



Oakwood Cemetery Chapel Update by Leslie Wolfenden and Kevin Johnson

The Oakwood Cemetery Chapel was constructed in 1914 by prominent Austin architect, Charles H. Page. It sits within the Oakwood Cemetery, a City of Austin Historic Landmark, a registered Historic Texas Cemetery, and a National Register of Historic Places site. In the subsequent 100 years since its construction, the building has suffered from uneven foundation settlement and deferred maintenance. Under the 2012 Go Bond funding for Cemeteries, PARD will complete a full rehabilitation of this historically and architecturally significant structure.

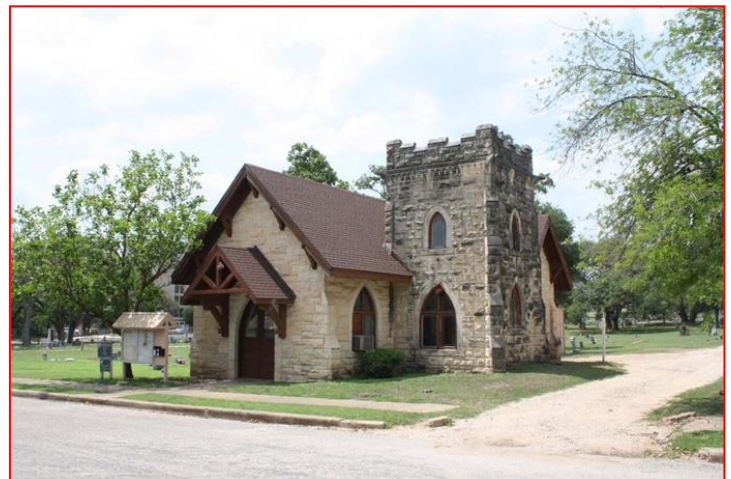
Rehabilitation of the Chapel will include:

- Structural stabilization of foundation
- Surface drainage improvements
- ADA site access improvements, including creation of one parking space behind the chapel and new sidewalk
- Rehabilitation of single unisex restroom
- Mechanical, electrical, lighting overhaul
- Restoration of interior and exterior finishes, including doors, windows, masonry, roof, plaster, etc.

Hatch + Ulland, Owen Architects completed the final construction bidding documents in September. The project was released for competitive bid by the COA Capital Contracting Office in October, and bidding will remain open until December 7th.

The evaluation panel will conduct its evaluation prior to the end of the year. If necessary, interviews will take place early in 2016 prior to making a final contractor selection. Pending negotiations and council approval, construction could begin in Spring 2016 and should last approximately nine months.

Once restored, the building will be programmed in conjunction by PARD's Cemetery Operations and History, Arts and Nature Divisions as recommended by the COA Historic Cemeteries Master Plan.



Austin American Statesman Library Archive by Kay Boyd

Until recently the Austin American Statesman newspaper archives have not been available to researchers. The newspaper has been added to the ProQuest collection that is available through the Austin Public Library. Anyone with a library card to APL can log in and do name and subject searches and narrow the search down to the year and month they are seeking. At this point, you enter you library card account number.

For instance, a search for Oakwood brings up 13,330 entries. Narrowing the date down by using the side bar to 1930-1939 narrows the items down to 2,085. Then the year can be chosen with the decade and also the month. In September of 1936, there are now 29 results to choose from. A preview is available or you can bring up a full-text PDF of the article. The article can then be downloaded and printed. There are also other options to view the page.

This newspaper feature provides genealogists, researchers, and scholars with online, easily-searchable first-hand coverage of the society and events of the time.

Go here to find databases of Magazine, Newspapers and Journals and follow the directions on the side bar to access the Austin American Statesman:

<http://library.austintexas.gov/databases/Magazines%2C%20Newspapers%2C%20and%20Journals>

The Portal to Texas History is still available to find information from newspapers across the state, as well as the oldest Austin newspapers, a few going back to 1829. Recent documents from the Travis County Archives of court records have been added to this database. <http://texashistory.unt.edu/>.

MMM hits the Streets by Dale Flatt

The Murder, Mayhem, & Misadventure Tour has gone high tech! SAC partnered with the Susannah Dickinson/O. Henry Museums at 5th and Neches as they launched their current display, *In Loving Memory: The Art of Victorian Mourning*. We created a self-guided QR Code-based walking tour that uses a smart phone or tablet to open a YouTube video where the video host tells the story of what happened at that site. You will never look at downtown Austin quite the same after taking this great tour! You can download just what you need here:

http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Parks/OHenry/ohenry_walkingtour.pdf

Holiday Gifts from SAC by Kay Boyd

A limited number of our 2016 calendars are available. The pages contain the winning photographs from our photography contest earlier this year. We have a limited number available, so buy yours before they're gone! These make great gifts to enjoy throughout the year.

Calendar pricing:

Pick up: \$10.83 (includes sales tax),

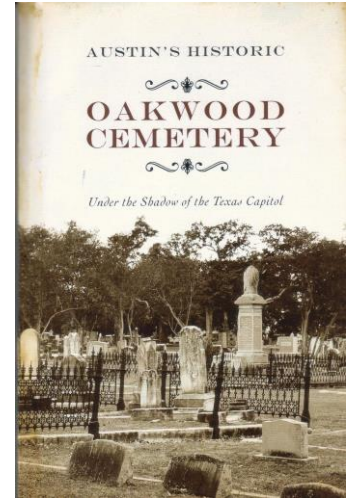
Shipped to you: \$14.00 (includes sales tax and shipping).



SAVE AUSTIN'S CEMETERIES 2016

www.sachome.org

Our book, *Austin’s Historic Oakwood Cemetery: Under the Shadow of the Texas Capitol*, is still available and will make a great addition to your or a friend’s library. It tells the history of Austin by connecting Austin’s past to the present with stories from the quiet shade of Oakwood Cemetery. This little book is a treasure chest of stories of early life in Austin – of the pioneers, immigrants, businessmen, and extraordinary women who helped make Austin the exciting city it is today.



Book pricing:
 Pick up: \$16.25 (includes sales tax),
 Shipped to you: \$22.20 (includes sales tax and shipping).

Contact us at info@sachome.org to place your order.

Submit an Article to the SAC E-newsletter

If you would like to submit an article to the SAC e-newsletter, please send your article or idea to info@sachome.org.

SAC Board Meetings

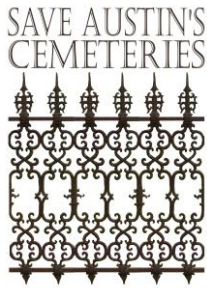
SAC Board Meetings are the second Saturday of each month, typically at Oakwood Cemetery at 10:00 a.m. If you are interested the city’s cemeteries, please join us. Contact info@sachome.org to confirm the time and place.

Calendar

Please join us for these upcoming events!

Dec. 5	Photo documentation at Oakwood Cemetery at 1:00
Dec. 12	Board Meeting
Jan. 2	Photo documentation at Oakwood Cemetery at 1:00
Jan. 9	Speaker Event: If These Walls Could Talk at Yarbrough Library at 10:30
Feb. 6	Photo documentation at Oakwood Cemetery at 1:00

If you would like to stop receiving SAC emails, or if you have updated contact information, please send an email to info@sachome.org.



SAVE AUSTIN'S CEMETERIES

2016 Membership (January to December)

Save Austin's Cemeteries is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization.

Enclosed is my tax-deductible membership contribution to Save Austin's Cemeteries.

- \$ 35 Individual
- \$ 25 Student (with copy of current ID)
- \$ 25 Senior (60+ years of age)
- \$ 50 Family
- \$500 Lifetime Membership
- \$ ____ Other (_____)

- My check is enclosed (please make check payable to Save Austin's Cemeteries and mail to PO Box 16411, Austin, Texas 78761)
- I prefer to charge my membership (go to <http://www.sachome.org/join/member.html> to use your credit card or PayPal)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Email: _____

Phone (optional; check preferred number)

Cell: _____

Home: _____

Yes No Do you have ancestors buried at any of the city cemeteries?
If yes, which ones?

AMP Annex Evergreen Oakwood Plummers

Yes No I am interested in more information about volunteering for SAC projects and events. I would like to learn more/assist with:

- headstone preservation/restoration
- multi-media
- video production
- newsletter stories
- photography
- tours
- website development
- historical research