

Cemetery Trustees Annual Report

People die and their earthly remains are interred, hopefully with due ceremony and respect, in a place of their choosing. So it was this year with Richard Anderson, Superintendent of Cemeteries from 2005 until 2009. Dick was a unique and caring individual and it was my pleasure to learn from him this year. An accomplished mechanic and an ardent supporter of our cemeteries, despite suffering from health problems, he participated in the affairs of the cemeteries right up until the end of his life. It was an honor, though not a privilege, to participate in his funeral and to handle his interment in the Holbrook Cemetery, in a site that he had carefully selected and prepared. His demise was our loss, but his memory will remain. Rest in Peace, Richard.

Visit any of our cemeteries (and there are many of them) and you will see our history. Yes, do! Take a walk through them some nice spring day. Read the markers. Names carved on those markers, plain and ornate, dating back to the earliest days of our civilization. Check some of the dates. Some died very young, some did not. Familiar names, families that you know, many that you don't know but may have read about or seen on buildings in town. Your ancestors, perhaps. All, each and every one of them, contributed something to our heritage. We are in their debt and I'm sure that the care and maintenance of their final resting place is a matter of interest and concern for the vast majority of us that care about those that came before us and our town's history and heritage.

This year was a particularly challenging year. Richard wasn't able to physically participate in the actual maintenance activities and the responsibility for doing the work fell on Robert Pike and Ellsworth Williams. Their performance was exemplary and I have heard many compliments about how nice the cemeteries looked. The year began with a major ice storm and several of our older cemeteries have large old trees that are dead or dying and their limbs fall easily under the weight of the ice and snow, particularly when the wind howls. FEMA money helped with the spring cleanup, but even with that, labor expenditures, just for the normal work necessary to keep the cemeteries looking good, exceeded that appropriation line. Lower than budgeted expenditures in most other lines kept us from exceeding the bottom line, at the cost of deferred equipment maintenance and other projects needed but put off.

In 1994, the NH Legislature recodified the Cemetery Statutes, with the intent of eliminating optional elected Sextons and Superintendents and giving the sole authority for the care and maintenance to elected Cemetery Trustees. At the 2005 Town Meeting we voted to "delegate the duties and responsibilities of the cemetery trustees" to the selectmen. To legally serve as cemetery trustees, they are required to organize themselves as Cemetery Trustees. That was done in October. Because of his health problems, Richard Anderson resigned in December, effectively eliminating the position of Superintendent of Cemeteries. Any questions about the cemeteries now are handled by the Cemetery Trustees.

Richard H. Snow, Chair/Bookkeeper, Cemetery Trustees