

## **Cemetery Trustees Annual Report**

Last year we invited you to visit our cemeteries, to see our town's history and heritage. To read the markers, see the names carved on those markers, plain and ornate, dating back to the earliest days of our civilization. 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. It was my pleasure to see and hear of and from the different groups, organizations and individuals that took advantage of the offer. I was pleased to host several visits by the Historical Society, one to the East Candia Cemetery. The Heritage Commission visited the Village Cemetery. Sadly, we had some vandalism to the Hill Cemetery and Mother Nature again visited us early in the year. On the bright side, we managed to clean up after Mother Nature, restore some of the damage done, keep the cemeteries looking good and start a long-term process of cemetery improvement.

Jerry Becker joined us this year as Superintendent of Cemeteries. He and Robert Pike and Ellsworth Williams continued their exemplary activities maintaining the physical infrastructure. As always, I've heard many compliments about how nice the cemeteries looked. We managed to trim or remove a number of the old trees that were dead or dying in the Hill Cemetery, with the efforts of Bill Cooper and the donation of the use of an aerial bucket machine that could maneuver in tight quarters by Rick Girard of RBG, Inc. of Raymond. Again this year, labor expenditures, just for the normal work necessary to keep the cemeteries looking good and minimal restoration of the vandalism, exceeded that appropriation line. Lower than budgeted expenditures in most other lines were the result of prudent use of available funds. Jerry Becker was instrumental in a significant improvement in equipment maintenance projects that were needed but put off in the past. With the support of the board of selectmen, we were able to finally purchase a piece of commercial equipment to start replacing the number of old and tired home-style lawn mowers we've been using for years. We expect that expense will be offset by the increased efficiency in the operations and a subsequent reduction in the time spent on mowing grass, allowing us to play catch up on some long overdue improvement work.

The cemetery trustees spent the better part of last year working on a project to formally document the status of our cemeteries, public and private. The goal is to clearly define what physical real estate has been and is being used for burial grounds. Only Holbrook Cemetery had an actual surveyed plot plan, clearly defining its boundaries, derived from deed research. With the help of Jim Franklin, we were able to get deed research done and a boundary survey of three additional properties, Bean Island, East Candia and the Hill Cemetery, for the bargain price of \$600. We've encumbered the remaining \$200 from Jim's contract with the trustees into 2011 to complete the deed research for the Village Cemetery. We also hope to complete that survey and start surveys of the internal boundaries of Holbrook in 2011. Additionally, with the research assistance of Jim Lindsey, a dedicated and industrious volunteer, we completed an initial review of all of the currently available deeds from the sale of cemetery plots. This information is essential to being able to clearly define what parts of the cemeteries have been sold, to whom they've been sold, what portion of each lot has been used for gravesites, which lots do (and don't) have paid perpetual care and who currently has the right to inter in each lot. It's abundantly clear that our records are woefully inadequate. If you have a deed for a cemetery lot in Candia, we'd love to hear from you to update our records. Our door is always open and volunteer help is always appreciated.

Richard H. Snow, Cemetery Trustee