

Mount Bethel Reflections

A Publication of the Mount Bethel Cemetery Company - A Non-Profit Cemetery

Spring 2022

President's Message

Greetings! We are looking forward to another year as spring is upon us. Our dedicated volunteers and Board members are hard at work maintaining Mount Bethel Cemetery with various projects and fundraising events.

Managing a cemetery comes with profound responsibility. Our accountability is to the veterans, family, and friends of loved ones who are buried here. There is nothing more reaffirming than to hear "the cemetery has never looked better", a refrain that happily has become more frequent. We all know that to preserve and maintain the cemetery is directly linked to the availability of volunteers and generosity of our donors and sponsors.

Your support is always welcome. Volunteers are always needed. Call 717-575-9760 or visit our website at www.mtbethelcemetery.org to volunteer, to make a donation, or for more information on history, events, genealogy and burials.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dave Rupp. His dedication, hard work, and endless care to Mount Bethel Cemetery has been more than gracious. This cemetery, along with those interred and their families have benefited from his services.

Sincerely,

Jane Moore

President, Mount Bethel Board of Directors

Heartfelt Thanks Board Member Retires

The Mount Bethel Board of Directors voted on the resignation of David Rupp at their November 2021 meeting. It was accepted with great regret.

Dave joined the board in 2005 and served in many capacities during his tenure. Dave maintained the mailing list for Mount Bethel Cemetery, monitored the email account, and assisted with maintenance of the grounds. Dave regularly worked with Ron Mable on projects to improve the condition of gravesites and to reestablish the brick path in the brickyard section of Mount Bethel Cemetery.

In 2016 Dave dismantled the shed that stood on the grounds. Built in 1869, the structure had become surrounded by gravesites and tombstones over time, making it inaccessible to trucks in the present day. Dave painstakingly reassembled the shed, preserving and updating it.

Dave's contributions are greatly appreciated. The Board wishes Dave well as he enters a new phase of retirement.

Welcome Aboard New Board Member Appointed

The Board of Directors welcomed George Kernisky as a new member in December 2021. George was well-known to members of the Board through his service as a volunteer for Mount Bethel Cemetery projects.

George, a native of Monessan, PA, moved to the area after his graduation from Indiana University of PA in 1969. He and his wife Fran (Potter) have 3 sons, 6 grandchildren, and 10 great grandchildren. George and Fran have lovingly restored their 200 year-old home.

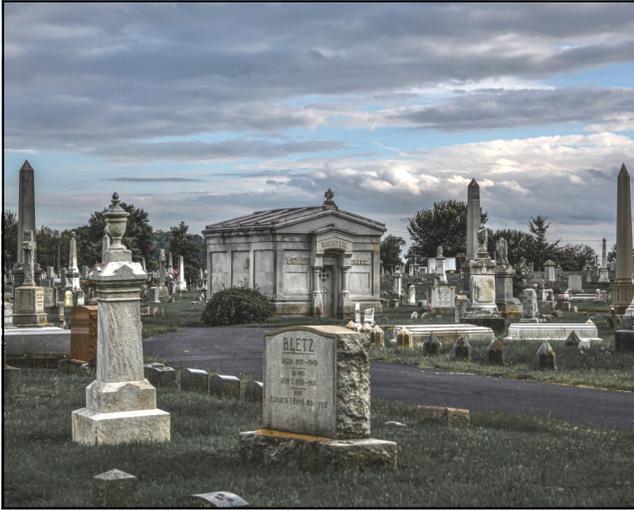
George's career as a Speech/Language Therapist was largely served in the Columbia Borough School District. During that time, he also served as a coach for multiple sports including football and basketball. George has also volunteered with the Off the Streets program in Columbia and as a volunteer to help with the listening skills of kindergarten students.

The Board welcomes George and looks forward to the input that he may offer in the coming years.

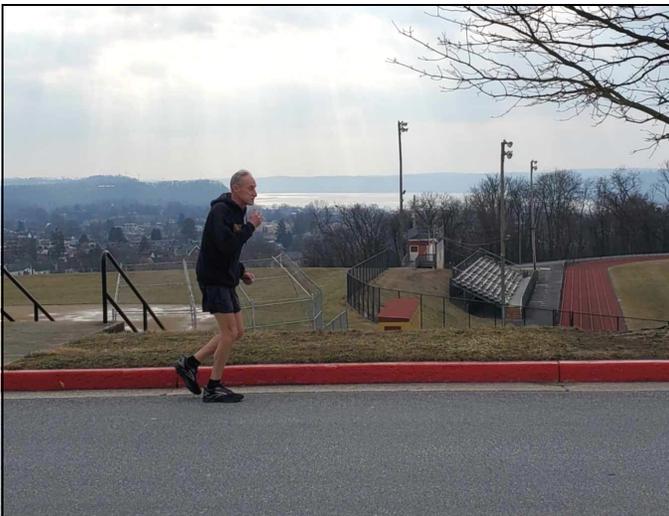
2022 Friends of Mount Bethel Events

April 22 and April 24 – Through the Lens

Photos taken by John Reitzel will be on display Friday, April 22 from 5:00 to 8:00 PM and again on Sunday, April 24, from 2:00 to 4:00 PM. Light refreshments will be available while we admire the work of this local award-winning photographer. The exhibit will be held at Mount Bethel Cottage, 700 Locust Street, Columbia. Samples of John's work may be seen below.



The Veterans Memorial Bridge (above) and Mount Bethel Cemetery (left) as seen through the lens of John Reitzel.



Set entirely on the campus of CHS, the Mount Bethel Cemetery Memorial 5k will have the Susquehanna River as a stunning backdrop.

New in 2022

May 28 – Mount Bethel Cemetery Memorial 5k

Runners and walkers alike will enjoy this unique course with a stunning view of the Susquehanna River. The run – entirely contained on the grounds of Columbia High School – offers mixed terrain. No spikes will be permitted on this course which includes macadam/cement, grass, and track surfaces. Easy parking will be available at Columbia High School. Pre-registration will be available for a \$20 entry fee, or participants may register on the event day for \$25. On the event day, registration activities and bib pick up will begin at 7:30 AM in the gym. The race will step off at 8:30 AM. Professional timing services will be used for this race. Additional details and the registration form may be found at mtbethelcemetery.org.

June 18 – Last Ride & Macabre Creations

The grounds of Mount Bethel will come to life when professional vehicles gather for a cemetery-related car show. Held in conjunction with the *Thunder on the River Car Show* coordinated by the Columbia Lions Club, this display of hearses, flower cars, and more will be complemented by vendors featuring macabre creations. Activities will be open to the public between 10:00 AM and 2:00 PM.

September 9 – Fête en Noir

An outdoor picnic held on the grounds of Mount Bethel Cemetery, the Fête will be a unique combination of elegance and casualness. Those in attendance are asked to dress in black, if possible, for this gathering which will be held from 6:00 to 9:00 PM with admission beginning at 5:30. Live music provided by a favorite local group, **The Kracker Beez, featuring selections for listening or dancing** is included in the \$20 per person fee payable by September 1. Admission is limited to the first 500 paid guests, but guests to complete that number may be accepted after September 1 or at the gate for \$25 per person. Please contact us at 717-681-6768 before arriving to determine the availability of seating. Those who attend should bring their own picnic basket with food and beverage. Tables, chairs, and linens will be provided.



Guests shown above enjoyed the Fête en Noir in 2021. Even more features added this year make the 2022 event a draw!



October 30 – Columbia Halloween House Tour Dia de Muertos (Day of the Dead) Celebration

The grounds of Mount Bethel Cemetery are an anchor location on this annual Halloween House Tour coordinated by Create Columbia. Stop by the cemetery as part of your tour ticket to remember those who have passed in a Dia de Muertos (Day of the Dead) celebration that is traditional to the Mexican culture. Visit our ofrenda (altar) to purchase luminaries to honor departed loved ones, decorate a mask, or enjoy a guided mini-tour with narration on the half-hour.

December 17 – Wreaths Across America

Mount Bethel Cemetery participates in this national program to honor veterans. Wreaths are sponsored by local individuals and organizations through Wreaths Across America. A ceremony, which begins at noon, is followed by placement of wreaths on identified veteran graves by community volunteers and wreath sponsors. To sponsor a wreath, visit www.WreathsAcrossAmerica.org. Be sure to use our location ID of PAMBCC and our fundraising group ID of PA0358P. For quicker access, use the QR Code shown to the right.

Shown to the left, Jason Price lays the wreath on behalf of Marines during the 2021 ceremony. The ceremony precedes decorating veterans' graves at Mount Bethel Cemetery.



www.WreathsAcrossAmerica.org/PA0358P

1. Open the Camera app on your phone.
2. Point camera at code.
3. Click on the link that shows up.

Mount Bethel Officers and Board Members

President – Jane Moore
Secretary – Claire Storm
Treasurer – Kevin Kraft

John Hinkle
Kathy Hohenadel

George Kernisky
Kathleen Lutz

Ron Mable
Dave Mountz

Columbia Remembers Its Veterans

Lieutenant Richard E. Cochran, Columbia native, who perished in the Mexican-American War at Resaca de la Palma, TX on May 9, 1846, was memorialized with a monument at Mt. Bethel Cemetery. The monument was erected and paid for by fellow Columbians.

Lt. Cochran was born in Delaware on November 16, 1817, the son of Dr. Richard E. and Eliza F. Evans Cochran. He received a collegiate education and was above the standard of ability in this remarkable family. His grandfather, Dr. Evans, is buried in the "Old Brick" part of Mt. Bethel Cemetery. Dr. Evans was a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania in 1810, took part in the War of 1812 and practiced medicine in Columbia.

In 1838 young Richard was appointed second lieutenant in the regular army 4th Infantry Division. His military career gave promise to a brilliant career. He went into active duty in Florida, under General Taylor, along the western border of Arkansas. When the war with Mexico commenced in 1846 he joined his regiment and was in the Battle of Palo Alto, on May 8, 1846.

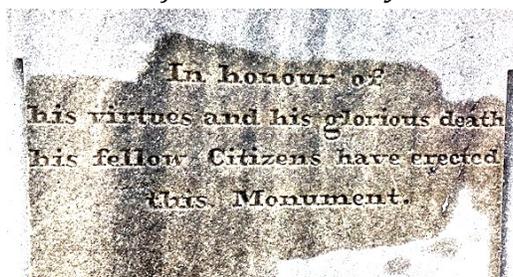
The next day, in the Battle of Resaca de la Palma, entering the captured entrenchments, sword in hand, he was killed.

Some months later his body was returned to Columbia and interred with the honors of war. The citizens erected a marble monument over his grave. The spire atop of the monument dedicated to Lt. Cochran has fallen to the ground. Plans to hoist it back atop the base were scuttled when a huge crack in it was found. It will now rest in peace near the lower half of the tombstone.

Cochran had three brothers: Thomas E., John Jefferson, Theodore, and a sister, Mary Frances. Theodore also received a commission as lieutenant in the regular line, and marched to Mexico. He was in the battle of Molino de Rey and Chapultepec. He returned to Columbia after the war and entered the editorial field, having served an apprenticeship at the Columbia Spy. Both Thomas and Theodore were involved in the production of the newspaper.

Sources:

- History of Lancaster County by Ellis & Evans*
- Biographical Annals of Lancaster County*



Superintendent's Corner

There are 685 veterans of the military in Mount Bethel Cemetery. They represent the Revolutionary War through the Viet Nam War. Unfortunately, not all veterans have a monument marking their burial site. Each known veteran is marked by a PVC pipe that is the holder of a flag to designate their service to their country. The flags are now maintained year round by volunteers. Originally the flags were removed after Labor Day and disposed of by the Marine Corp organization on the Ironville Pike.

Persons interested in volunteering are welcome to contact Mount Bethel Cemetery using mountbethelcemetery@gmail.com.

Our web address has changed. Visit our new website by using mtbethelcemetery.org.

Did You Know...

Beginning in the late 1800s, cemeteries were prime picnic spots. Following the bloody Civil War, and in an age of cholera and yellow fever, cities created large new cemeteries to accommodate the dead. These new-age cemeteries looked and functioned more like public parks than stark, spooky graveyards.

Some families simply wanted to continue their traditions of enjoying a meal with the family despite some of those attendees being deceased. As more public parks were established and the death rate began to decline in the early 20th century, cemetery picnics lost their appeal.

Interestingly, however, Americans have begun to revive the cemetery picnic tradition. Mount Bethel's "Fête en Noir" on Friday, September 9, is resurrecting the tradition.