

Mount Bethel Reflections

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

2024 Edition

mtbethelcemetery.org

President's Message

Friends,

Hello to our 294th year as an active cemetery! Mount Bethel Cemetery is a significant historical treasure in the heart of the Columbia community. Our activities continue year-round. Many volunteers help with event planning, historical research, and much more. Thank you!

This spring, mowers and weed whackers will begin to manicure the grounds. Volunteers will continue the important work of cleaning, resetting, and restoring monuments. In 2023, eight additional veterans' graves were discovered with date of death prior to 1930.

A digital record keeping project is to begin with the Columbia Historical Preservation Society as we continue to discover more unknowns about our rich history and those buried at Mount Bethel. Maps, lot deeds, burial records and even stock records sold will be scanned and recorded digitally to preserve paper records.

Mount Bethel is open daily with no admission.

We welcome joggers, bicyclists, sightseers, students, photographers, picnickers, dog walkers and those who would want to rest and reflect. The cottage is available for small groups to meet. I'm sure a visit will spark your interest to continue to relish in our grounds and the glorious history they hold.

Thank you for the generosity of the community businesses, organizations, patrons and volunteers who donate to the preservation and maintenance of these historic and hallowed grounds. Your support is always welcome; volunteers are always needed. Visit our website at www.mtbethelcemetery.org or call 717-575-9760 to volunteer or for more information on history, events, genealogy and burials. Please consider making a donation in the enclosed envelope so that we might continue our work.

Sincerely,
Jane Moore
 President, Mount Bethel Board of Directors

Columbia, Home to Heroes

You may have seen many of the "Hometown Hero" banners hung throughout the community. The number of these banners is approaching 600. Young men and women who gave a part of their life time, and in many cases their life, to defend our country.

At Mt. Bethel Cemetery there are 690 veterans interred representing every war from the Revolutionary War up to the Viet Nam War. Of this number over 450 were Civil War veterans. We are still finding more veteran's graves as we go about cleaning grave stones.

Probably the most notable veteran buried at Mt.

Bethel is Brigadier General Thomas Welsh. His tomb can be found in Section A, lot 241. Welsh was born in Columbia on Third Street between Locust and Walnut Streets on May 5, 1824. He was the son of Charles and Nancy Daugherty Welsh and was educated in Columbia Borough Schools. When the Mexican War broke out in 1846, he enlisted as a private in the U.S. Army and later was promoted to 1st Sergeant at the Battle of Buena Vista. Welsh received a severe leg injury during the battle causing him to limp for the rest of his life.

Welsh returned to Columbia after his discharge

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2024 Friends of Mount Bethel Events

April 26 and April 28 – Art by Janette Toth-Musser

In conjunction with Columbia's Fourth Friday, Mount Bethel Cemetery will hold their annual art exhibit on Friday, April 26 in the cottage at 700 Locust Street from 5:00 – 8:00PM. Janette Toth-Musser, a well-known and talented local artist will share her photography and paintings. The exhibit is open to the public at no cost and will also be opened on Sunday, April 28 from 2:00 – 4:00PM. Light refreshments will be available. *See the article on page 3 for more details.*

June 15 – 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 13 – 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 featuring selections for listening or dancing is included in the \$20 per person fee payable by August 31. Admission is limited to the available seating, but guests to complete that number may be accepted after August 31 for \$25 per person. Please check before arriving to determine if day-of seating is available. Those who attend should bring their own picnic basket with food and beverage. Tables, chairs, and linens will be provided. In the event of rain, the Fête will be held in the social hall of St. John's Lutheran Church, our neighbor to the west.



Guests shown above enjoyed the Fête en Noir in 2021. The same enjoyment has continued throughout the years, as this

October 27 – Columbia Halloween House Tour

The grounds of Mount Bethel Cemetery, 700 Locust Street, Columbia, are an anchor location for Create Columbia's "Halloween House Tour" which begins at 2:00 and runs until 7:00 PM. Stop by the cemetery to purchase your tickets between 1:30 and 4:30 PM. Stay to enjoy a narrated guided mini-tour of the cemetery before embarking on your house tour.

December 14 – 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 left.

Thank You to Our 2024 Sponsors!

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Featured Artist for 2024 Exhibit at Mount Bethel ***Janette Toth-Musser***

The Caretaker's Cottage at Mount Bethel Cemetery will be the site of the annual exhibit featuring the works of a local artist. On Friday, April 26 from 5 to 8 PM, and on Sunday, April 28, from 2 to 4 PM, Janette Toth-Musser will share her photography and paintings.

Janette graduated from the Art Institute of Pittsburgh in 1981. Since then, she has worked in the field of advertising and art related employment in several capacities, including a fashion illustrator, freelance artist, and scenic painter. Exhibiting her work since 1992 in the Lancaster, Harrisburg, Pittsburgh, and Philadelphia areas.

Her large scale mural work includes nature-inspired scenery in the Antique Automobile Club of America Museum in Hershey, Pennsylvania, Bass Pro Shops in several USA locations. Locally, you'll find an historically-inspired mural at the rear of 301 Locust Street, Columbia and a vintage-inspired mural for Hinkle's Restaurant, also in Columbia.



Janet Toth-Musser, shown with one of her works.

There are two decorative painted pianos in Columbia sponsored by Create Columbia that Janette has painted. One painted in blue Delft folk patterns located in the Historic Columbia Market House, and another piano displaying the historic timeline of Hinkle's Egg Dye and restaurant as told by the historic plaque on the 4th Street side of the building. The piano will re-emerge this spring as it is indoors for the winter.

Presently, Janette works as a scenic artist for American Music Theatre in Lancaster. Her studio work is represented by Garth Gallery, Columbia, Pennsylvania. Several paintings are in the collection of Penn Medicine Lancaster General Hospital network, the Ann B. Barshinger Cancer Institute, Penn State Health Lancaster, and in numerous private collections. Janette's work has also been published in the Lancaster General Health's book of Healing Arts.

Janette offered these thoughts about her preparations for the upcoming exhibit.

"This exhibit features an assortment of my paintings combined with photographs I recently rediscovered that I'd taken at Mt. Bethel Cemetery. They are photos of actors that were gathering for a dress rehearsal in the 2006 production of Ghosts of Columbia: A Haunted Lantern Tour produced and directed by Janet Wood. My hope was to display some of these photos in the exhibit. However, while preparing my work, my husband, Jerry Musser suggested combining some of my paintings with the cemetery photos. The result is an interesting blend of color, texture, and mystery. The exhibit is a mix of these newly combined visuals along with my traditional paintings."

The public is invited to view Janette's works and to discuss them with her at this free event. Good will donations will be accepted to benefit Mount Bethel Cemetery.

Mount Bethel Leadership

Officers:

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

Board Members:

John Hinkle
Kathy Hohenadel
George Kernisky

Kathleen Lutz
Ron Mable
Dave Mountz

Columbia, Home to Heroes

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and prospered as a merchant, canal boat owner, justice of the peace, and lock superintendent. He became president of the Borough Council and founding member of the Board of Trade. With the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, he re-enlisted where he served at the battles of South Mountain and Antietam. His gallantry was rewarded by making him a brigadier general on March 13, 1863. He died from malaria on August 14, 1863.

Friends of Mt. Bethel recently ordered a “Hometown Hero” banner for the General and expect it to be placed near the cemetery by fall. We continue to honor all of our heroes by caring for their graves. On April 27th beginning at 10:00AM we will continue our project of cleaning the graves of veterans. The public is encouraged to assist.

Plans for Pet Cemetery Come to Fruition

The newest feature of Mount Bethel Cemetery—a section specifically for pets—is now in the implementation stage. The new pet cemetery is located on the Locust Street side of the Caretaker’s Cottage, nestled between the building and the fence.

Hardscaping for the pet cemetery has been completed, and the lots have been identified. Lots will accommodate the cremains of beloved pets. Each of the 96 individual lots contain a numbered marker. Once a lot is purchased, the marker will be modified to include the owners’ names. When the pet is deceased, its name and dates of birth and passing will be included.

Lots may be pre-purchased for anticipated needs. Pricing plans are in the development stage and will be shared in late spring or summer.

Thank you to these organizations who continue to assist in needs at the cemetery site: Catholic War Vets, Dayspring Christian Academy, Gamby Disposal (Jack & Robin Gamby), Manos House, MBC “Stoners”, Park Rangers, Susquehanna Glass Company, and many community members. **THANK YOU!**

You can show your appreciation for those veterans who do not have a banner by participating in the “Wreaths Across America” event scheduled for Saturday, December 14, 2024. If you would like to purchase a wreath to place on a forgotten veteran’s grave, you can do so by going to our website www.mtbethelcemetery.org click on Events, select Wreaths Across America, complete the form and then follow the directions. Or you can complete an order online by going to www.wreathscrossamerica.org Click on Sponsor a Wreath. Be sure to include our identification number – Local ID PAMBCC and or fundraising group Id – PA0358P. If you prefer, you may access this site easily by using the QR Code on page 2 of this newsletter. Thank you in advance for your support.

“Honoring Our Fallen” Project

Special Cemetery Maintenance Event Returns in 2024

Last year saw the initiation of a project designed to clean the headstones of veterans interred at Mount Bethel Cemetery. Volunteers scrub identified markers with special cleaning solutions and other supplies provided by the cemetery. Interested individuals are invited to participate.

The event is scheduled at the cemetery on Saturday, April 27, from 10:00AM to 5:00PM. Lunch will be provided by Andy’s Market. In the event of rain the event will take place on Saturday, May 4.

MBC Records Move into the 21st Century

Thanks to the interest and abilities of members of the Columbia Historic Preservation Society (CHiPS), all Mount Bethel records will be digitized. This service will be provided gratis and will allow for the preservation of some fragile records that date back almost to the cemetery’s inception. Mutual access to these records will prove beneficial to the interests of both organizations. The Board of Mount Bethel is very grateful to CHiPS for the time and energy that they have committed to this project.