

# The Evergreens Cemetery

## Quarterly Newsletter



*Historic Chapel (now administrative building) designed by noted architect A. J. Davis*

### ***Beacon Hill 8***



On Wednesday June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022 The Evergreens Cemetery hosted the Grand Opening for Beacon Hill 8. The opening was the culmination of a project that began four years ago and signifies a beautiful, unique and historic addition to the cemetery.

Spanning nearly one thousand feet in length, Beacon Hill 8 can accommodate more than six hundred new gravesites, including in-ground burials and a columbarium for cremated remains. Situated on a challenging slope, its lowest point nearly 30 feet above street level, Beacon Hill 8 is the steepest of the rolling hills that make up the Evergreens' terrain. Panoramic views to the south create a magnificent setting on a site that was left unused for more than one hundred fifty years.

The design of the new burial area, inspired by the length and curve of the slope, creates a series of terraced, intimate rooms allowing for individual or family burials, catching the southern sunlight and affording long views toward Jamaica Bay. Our construction methods preserved the line of grand trees at the top of slope and carefully protected existing historic graves and headstones in proximity to the new burial areas.

The materials, including handcrafted Moonlit Rose granite, architectural cast stone, and custom ornamental metal, were selected for their elegance, endurance, and compatibility with historic materials used for monuments elsewhere at the Evergreens. Bluestone paving, carefully fabricated, forms stairs and paved terrace areas. Planting supplements preserve existing native plants such as sumac shrubs on the slopes, with their spectacular fall color, and introduces pollinator species of grasses and wildflowers which stabilize the steep slopes at the base of the terraces. As the shrub plantings at the existing cemetery level mature, they will cascade over the top of the upper walls, softening the edges and adding seasonal color during the spring. Groupings of evergreen trees celebrate the history of the cemetery's namesake and are supplemented by native trees on the slopes and by



flowering trees near the ceremonial entrances.

Attached are some pictures of the construction and opening of the section. The Evergreens Cemetery is honored to have Beacon Hill 8 anchoring its position at the highest point.



### *Notable Resident*

**This article continues our series highlighting important people buried at The Evergreens Cemetery**

**Wilhelm (William) Steinitz (1836 - 1900)**

William Steinitz was the first official world chess champion, holding the title from 1866 to 1894. Remembered as a pivotal figure in chess history, he was also an editor, theoretician and influential writer for chess magazines. As a player he became controversial for the strategic-positional style of play he developed in the 1870s, which forms the basis for modern chess. He fiercely defended his ideas in his writing, engaging in debate so heated it became known as the “Ink War.”



The son of a tailor, Steinitz was born in Prague and raised in Vienna, where he played chess from age 12. He won the title of world champion in 1866 at a match in London, and reigned for 28 years. He moved to New York in 1883, where he lived for the rest of his life. In 1885 Steinitz founded the International Chess Magazine, which he edited for 10 years. He became an American citizen in 1888, and changed his first name from Wilhelm to William. He spent much time on international tours, where he played for little money and often barely held on to his title. In 1894 he was ultimately defeated by a much younger man, Emanuel Lasker. Steinitz lived in poverty his entire life. He suffered from multiple health problems, including mental disorders. Members of the Manhattan Chess Club provided assistance for Steinitz to stay in a private care center at the end of his life, but he was mostly dependent on public services. He died in the Manhattan State Hospital on Wards Island, survived by his second wife and two children. Due to his style of play and writings he is regarded by many as one of the founders of modern chess.

His unique headstone features a chess board depicting one of his favorite games. A sign indicating the grave was donated by his great-grand nephew Kurt Landsberger, author of a Steinitz biography. William Steinitz is buried in the section of Bethel Slope, grave #5893



## Beautification of Bushwick Avenue

### Student Volunteers from Hunter College High School paint Bushwick Avenue fence

The Evergreens Cemetery Preservation Foundation embarked on a beautification project for the main entrance of the 225-acre property this summer. The beautification project included planting flowers in the beds aligning Bushwick Avenue, removing the weeds growing in the sidewalks, and painting the exterior fence along Bushwick Avenue.

The week before the start of the school year, three student volunteers from Hunter High School assisted with painting the fence on Bushwick Avenue. The fence had been needing some TLC and the students did a great job. The newly painted fence really makes the front entrance shine, creating a welcoming environment for all.

The Evergreens Cemetery Preservation Foundation hosts free programming throughout the year for the local community including stargazing with the Amateur Astronomers Association as well as Arbor Day in the spring and tree walks with renowned arborist, Bill Logan.



## Volunteer Spotlight

### Interview with Caitlin Furlong

Caitlin Furlong is the Academic Operations Manager at the Savannah College of Art and Design. She previously volunteered for the Evergreens managing the Instagram account.



#### Where do you work?

Right now I work at the Savannah College of Art and Design and I work in Academic Services, so it is a lot of faculty support and a little bit of student support, but mostly working on the back end, administrative side of faculty support.

#### What were you doing when you lived in New York?

I was a fundraiser working at art museums.

#### When did you volunteer at the Evergreens?

I believe I started in March of 2022. I was not able to do it for very long. I moved to Georgia in August; I think my last post was in July.

#### What were your goals with the Instagram account and do you feel you achieved them?

What I wanted to do was create more community engagements, and I have seen so many cemetery Instagrams that really promote the variety of work they do. People think cemeteries are a one-dimensional kind of sad space, but I wanted to change that and give the Evergreens a platform to talk about the historical figures buried there, and some of the interesting artwork and sculptures. Also, some of the natural life that you can find there. Reminding people that it is a space that anyone can walk in and enjoy, and hopefully bring more attention and community members to the cemetery.

#### Do you feel like you got a good response to your posts?

Yes, I got a lot of messages from people saying how much they enjoyed the posts, comments – those are kind of powerful. I was able to measure community engagement; I did see a considerable increase in engagement with our page and also the number of followers we were getting.

## What was the most rewarding part?

I think meeting people and having conversations with them, like the tour guide. Getting resources, and broadening my knowledge of the Evergreens' history and the people, because they were able to guide me in directions when there might not be a lot of literature about [some people buried there].

It was really fun to just open up conversations with people in the community that I wouldn't otherwise probably be able to have, or stumbling upon and kind of unlocking some Brooklyn history that isn't as widely discussed.

*The Evergreens is looking for a new IG volunteer! Please contact [info@theevergreenscemetery.org](mailto:info@theevergreenscemetery.org) if you are interested.*

## Constructing a Rustic Gazebo

Last April a new architectural structure was added to the landscape of The Evergreens. A rustic gazebo in Ascension provides a space for visitors to rest and reflect. Julie Bose, President of The Evergreens Cemetery, said “we’re delighted with this elegant addition to our landscape. The gazebo offers a place for repose and respite for our families.”

For this project the Evergreens reached out to historic expert restoration Curtis Barnhart. He is the owner of Barnhart Restoration Preservation & Design, and is a fourth-generation construction specialist that has been doing work in the greater New York City area since 1983. His specialty is 18th-century restoration, with a focus on early Dutch and English timber-frame and stone structures, as well as cast iron restoration. He has restored many landmark structures, including the Endale Arch in Prospect Park.

The rustic style of the gazebo is stylistically similar to the wooden Summer House next to the 19th century chapel which serves as the cemetery office. The Summer House, a shelter made of eastern red cedar, historically functioned as a gathering place for mourners. According to Barnhart, “The Evergreens Cemetery contacted me and wanted to make a gazebo in the spirit of what already exists there. It is thought that Calvert Vaux designed the gazebos that are next to the main building in the cemetery. So, I took inspiration from his designs. He was instrumental in both Central Park and Prospect Park and countless other projects on the East Coast; he was Olmstead’s partner. But this was before he was Olmstead’s partner, he was working with A.J. Downing, the famous architect when they were doing the cemetery. I have had a lot of experience doing these types of structures from that period of time.”

Barnhart built the octagonal gazebo from eastern red cedar from around Hudson, New York. He first restored the pre-existing foundation using concrete and stone, and widened it by about two feet. He then constructed a new gazebo with cedar logs, and designed and constructed four cedar benches. Finally, he constructed a cedar shingle roof.

“We submitted a design of both the stone work for the base and the structure and the design was approved and then we set about finding the materials and we ended up getting logs from around Hudson, New York. Some hillsides were being cleared of the timber we needed, it was eastern red cedar and we cut down maybe 200 trees that were slated for the grinder anyway. Then we sorted them and sized them in our shop in Sunset Park.

“From the time we started the actual cutting of the logs until the gazebo was ready to ship out, it took us about 23 days to do all the mortise and tenon joinery and it’s coped. Coping means that one log goes into another log – usually a larger log is wrapped around by a smaller log, so it looks like it is glued together when you are done. It looks very finished, it is a particular style of log work and it is probably the most difficult joinery to do in that type of work. But it looks nice when it is done, the finished product anytime there is coping. Then inside the coping is mortise and tenon which is the joint that holds the wood together.”

Due to the pandemic Barnhart faced some difficulties in acquiring materials: “it was Covid when we started the project and there were a lot of mills shut down”. “I usually harvest my own logs because I’m looking for specific shapes and sizes and they need to be symmetrical and match. So it’s kind of a tedious process in some respects.”

Another material that proved challenging to find during the pandemic was cedar for the gazebo roof. “There were no cedar shingles for sale. And I found one little lumber yard in Quogue that just happened to have the quantity we needed and we were able to purchase them, but it was kind of crazy.”

Barnhart’s favorite parts of the project were getting a design everyone liked,



and working with his team both in his shop and on site. “I have several employees and I picked out four and we just did it together and we worked long and hard and it was fun to do. We made the entire thing except for the roof assembly in the shop, and then took it apart and put it back together on site, and did the roof on site.”

The final result is a decorative and functional architectural element on the grounds of the Evergreens that will be enjoyed by visitors for years to come.



## Urban Wildlife Network Project

The Evergreens is part of the NYC region’s first wildlife monitoring transect! As the city continues to invest in greening, sightings of local wildlife, such as deer, foxes and even coyote, are increasing in number. These increases in urban wildlife are a sign of a healthy ecosystem and can restore a sense of nature to our urban lives, but there are challenges that come with our new four-legged neighbors as well. To prepare New Yorkers to coexist with wildlife responsibly, it is important to understand which species are present and where. Enter the Urban Wildlife Network Project.



In this photograph, Myles Osborn Davis, a Master’s Candidate from the Columbia University Ecology and Evolution program, shows off his wildlife monitoring camera, a collaboration with *Urban Wildlife Network Project* (UWIN), NYC parks, Hofstra University, and the Gotham Coyote Project. The Evergreens is also collaborating with Ph.D. candidate Marie Victoria Lilly and the OWIN One Health team and NYC Health to conduct a study of zoonotic risks such as ticks and mosquitos.

## Remembering Police Officer Robert Venable

Remembering Police Officer Robert Venable on the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death in the line of duty. The NYPD Honor Guard and members of the Transit Bureau along with board members of the NYC PBA are living up to their promise to never forget the fallen heroes with a wreath laying ceremony.





# Making Arrangements

The Evergreens Cemetery provides a beautiful final resting place for loved ones, and we are pleased to discuss the variety of options available.  
Contact:

Shevonne Tucker  
Family Service Counselor  
718-455-5300  
[st@theevergreenscemetery.org](mailto:st@theevergreenscemetery.org)

# Cemetery Hours

**Grounds/Gates open 7 days a week:**  
8:00 AM to 4:30 PM

*Please visit our website or contact the office for holiday closures.*

**Office:**  
Monday through Friday:  
8:00 AM to 4:30 PM

Saturday:  
9:00 AM to 1:00 PM

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