



Ferncliff

Celebrating 160 Years of Service to our Community

160

YEARS

1863 - 2023

Fall NEWSLETTER October - December 2025

Director's Insights

New Fence, New Berm, Same Old Question: Will It Work?

Dear Friends of Ferncliff,

For as long as I have been at Ferncliff, one thing has been as predictable as the leaves turning beautiful colors each fall. This predictable thing is an extremely challenging problem. Specifically, someone, at some point, crashes into the fence along the McCreight Avenue curve. Sadly, it has become somewhat of a Springfield tradition. Over the years, we have lost count of the number of bent posts and mangled panels caused by these accidents.

In an effort to help change or better manage the inevitable occurrence, we have added a new twist to the story. Our latest experiment is not a sturdier barrier, or another round of repairs, but something much simpler: a berm. That's right, we have built an earthen barrier along the fence line, hoping that nature itself will succeed. This idea was based on advice from several landscape architects and cemetery planners who evaluated the area when they were in Springfield doing other work for us. This approach was a consistent theme in the recommendations for a "best practices" solution. In addition, we have invested in a new black steel fence along West McCreight Avenue and have installed it ten feet back from the previous fence line.

Why not Bollards, Guardrails, Boulders, or Brick Walls?

For years, people have offered plenty of opinions on the fence problem: brick walls, steel guardrails, even rows of bollards. We have consulted with the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) and the City of Springfield for their input. The City Services Director, Chris Moore, has been exceptional in his help to find a solution. Their input is that these options might protect the cemetery fence, but they are likely to create a much greater risk for drivers' safety. For example, a brick wall is not very forgiving and could result in catastrophic damage and life-threatening injuries to the driver or passengers. Also, the cost to repair or replace the damaged wall would be an expensive and (perhaps) unattractive outcome. Guardrails and bollards are not much better as they can send cars bouncing back into traffic and creating a secondary or multi-car pileup. At Ferncliff, we feel a strong sense of responsibility to community and an important



Continued on page 2

Our Mission: Ferncliff serves its community with supportive, affordable, and inclusive end of life services in a beautiful, historic environment in perpetuity.

501 W. McCreight Ave. Springfield, OH 45504 | Phone: 937.322.3491
Daily Fall Gate Hours: McCreight Avenue: 7:30AM - 5:00PM | Plum Street: 7:30AM - 4:30PM
Office Hours: Monday - Friday: 8:00AM - 4:30PM | ferncliffcemetery.org

A Tradition of Remembrance: *Veterans Day at Ferncliff*

Each year on Veterans Day, our community gathers at Ferncliff to pause, reflect, and give thanks for the men and women who have served our country with honor and sacrifice. We invite you to join us for this year's Annual Veterans Day Service, to be held on Tuesday, November 11, at 11:00 a.m. at War Memorial Park, near our veterans' sections.

This meaningful tradition will include uplifting choral music, a brief inspirational message, and the presentation of full military honors by the Marine Corps League, Detachment 963. At the heart of the ceremony is the roll call, a moment of reverence as we read the names of veterans interred at Ferncliff during the past year, ensuring their service and sacrifice are remembered.

No reservations are necessary, and all are welcome. We encourage guests to bring a lawn chair for comfort. Light refreshments will be served following the program.

We hope you will join us as we stand together, united in gratitude, for the courage, service, and enduring legacy of our nation's veterans.



Cont. from page 1

Director's Insights

priority is safety. Even though we will make every effort to protect the cemetery property, we will first focus on protecting lives. That is why we have chosen the fence set-back and earthen berm solution. We have hopes that the advice we have received and the experiences from other organizations will improve our situation. This approach is intended to absorb some of the impact, slowing, redirecting, or stopping the vehicle with less likelihood of severe injury. It offers a balance between safeguarding our grounds and minimizing harm to drivers, passengers, and other motorists on the road. We also hope that the caution signs and flashing lights will be a helpful warning.

If the berm works, we will have solved a problem that has stumped many of us for years. With nothing more than a setback, dirt, grass, and the gift of gravity we may see the

improvement we all desire. And if this does not work...we can always move on to the more expensive and complicated options later...assuming the work gains the regulatory approval from the state and city. Sometimes, the simplest solution, when recommended by qualified professionals, is worth trying first. Will it work? That is the suspense! We are not officially taking bets or offering any odds, but our staff and I will keep our fingers crossed... and our fence contractor on speed dial.

Warm regards,

Shelley J Baker
Executive Director
Ferncliff Cemetery and Arboretum

The Governing Body of Ferncliff Cemetery

Ferncliff Cemetery is governed by The Springfield Cemetery Association, a non-profit, volunteer organization established in 1863. The membership is comprised of Association Members and nine trustees (*indicates Trustees)

Currently, these members include:

- Pamela Bennett
- Bill Brougher*, Secretary
- Jim Campbell
- Darnell Carter
- John Detrick*
- Sharon Evans*
- Wendy Ford
- Harold Goodrich
- Daniel Harkins
- Dale Henry
- Deborah Hill*
- Darrell Kitchen*, Vice President
- Ed Leventhal
- Julie McGregor
- Dan McGregor
- Dale Miller
- Sheila Henry*
- Reed Robertson
- Eric Samuelson
- Dr. Paul Schanher*, President
- Steve Schumaker*
- Laurel Shouvin
- Jon Sterling
- Dr. Richard Umbaugh*, Treasurer
- Chester Walthall

Historical Series with Dr. Schanher

Dr. Paul W. "Ski" Schanher III has been a devoted member of the Springfield Cemetery Association and serves as the President of the Board of Trustees. "Ski" is a retired, local dentist and is an active and respected member of the historical community in Springfield and Clark County.

The article below is next in the series written by Dr. Schanher.

Peace at Last

The final major Native American uprising in the Ohio Territory, the 1794 Battle of Fallen Timbers, followed by the 1795 Treaty of Greenville, supposedly opened the territory for settlement. Because of the uncertain Native American presence in areas surrounding Springfield, settlers bound together to protect one another.

In the summer of 1807, a group of settlers sounded frequent alarms warning others to seek shelter in the designated two-story log house that stood on the southeast corner of High and Limestone Streets. That fall, the countryside surrounding Springfield was placed on high alert. Apparently, a marauding band of Native Americans killed a man named Myers a few miles west of Urbana. Soon thereafter, a family named Elliott, who lived along the Mad River, had been threatened by rifle fire that pierced the bonnet of Mrs. Elliott while she was gathering wood.

These outlandish attacks, along with the early beginnings of a Confederation led by Tecumseh, a Shawnee, and his brother The Prophet brought considerable concern to the settlers in Springfield and the surrounding area. Many families prepared to move back to Kentucky while others formed companies of militia to combat the threats. Griffith Foos's Tavern was converted into a garrison. The settlers demanded that the offending parties be turned over for judgment. Predictably, the native Americans denied the charges that the attacks were approved by Tecumseh's organized Confederation. The denial did not appease the settlers. Finally, both parties agreed to hold a council in Springfield to reconcile their differences.

A council convened in Sugar Grove, located on Main Street opposite the Foos Tavern. Today, that area is the northwest corner of Spring and Main Street, a parking lot today across from Sibcy Cline Realty. Friction between the two parties became more evident when neither side accepted responsibility but blamed the other. The settlers decided that no one could bring weapons to the council. Tecumseh and his party refused to attend unless they were permitted to bring their weapons. Tecumseh's tomahawk also served as a peace pipe, but the settlers were still concerned. One enterprising soul handed Tecumseh a clay pipe as a substitute, but Tecumseh threw it over his head into the bushes. The commissioners representing the settlers finally yielded and proceeded with the prescribed business.

Once the full testimony was presented before the council, the prosecution concluded that the murder of Myers was the sole act of a single Native American. Tecumseh provided details of the action and disavowed all hostile intentions toward the settlers and denied that those under Tecumseh's leadership committed any crime against the white settlers.

At the conclusion of the council, the Native American tribes and settlers reconciled, and peace was gradually restored to the settlement. Tecumseh, along with other members of his tribes, remained in Springfield for three more days and participated in competitions that included running, jumping, and wrestling. Tecumseh, reportedly a 5'10", 175-pound, 38-year-old athlete, excelled. The settlers represented at the council were Jonah Baldwin, Walter Smallwood, Griffith Foos, John Humphreys, Simon Kenton, and John Daugherty.

At the conclusion of the games, Tecumseh and his men departed. Finally, the Native American threat was gone. Springfield, no longer paralyzed by fear, began to recover. With former settlers returning as well as the timely influx of immigrants, the community quickly began to live more peacefully.

Final Trolley Tour of the 2025 Season

On Thursday, October 16, Ferncliff will host the final trolley tour of the year with our *Fall Leaf Tour*. This special outing will be guided by both Dr. Paul "Ski" Schanher and OSU Horticulture professor and Ferncliff association member, Pam Bennett, who will share their knowledge of history, trees, and seasonal beauty throughout the cemetery grounds.

This year's trolley season featured a variety of themed tours, including new favorites such as *First Responders* and *Legends & Lore: Our Most Interesting Stories*. Each tour offered unique perspectives, stories, and experiences that brought Ferncliff's history and natural beauty to life.

We extend our sincere thanks to this season's sponsors, Park National Bank



and Wallace & Turner, for helping make the tours possible.



Looking ahead, our 2026 trolley season will begin in April. We're excited to announce that next year we plan to expand our tour times to include select evenings and Saturday options. This will allow even more members of our community the opportunity to experience Ferncliff during times outside the traditional workday.

We look forward to welcoming you back on-board next spring!

Springfield Cemetery Association Holds 161st Annual Meeting

The Springfield Cemetery Association held its 161st Annual Meeting on August 13, 2025, marking another year of stewardship and progress at Ferncliff Cemetery and Arboretum. The gathering reaffirmed the Association's dedication to sound governance, financial oversight, and innovation in the cemetery industry.

President Dr. Paul "Ski" Schanher opened the meeting with words of welcome. Reports followed, including financial and investment updates from Financial Services Manager Laura Williams and a presentation from Executive Director Shelley Baker, who highlighted key project updates and master plan initiatives such as the development of green burial options and expanded cremation placement options.

Governance matters were a central focus of this year's meeting. The Association formally adopted a new Code of Regulations, replacing the 1946 version of bylaws in alignment with recommendations from the long-term master plan. A committee comprised of Association Members Dan Harkins and Dale Henry, Trustees Bill Brougher and Darrell Kitchen, and Executive Director Shelley Baker guided this effort. The updated Code modernizes the Association's structure by expanding its membership from 25 total members to nine trustees plus 23 to 27 association members. It also establishes term limits and introduces an emeritus status to honor distinguished service.

An update was also provided on the activities of the Ferncliff Foundation by Vice-President Sharon Evans, underscoring the Foundation's role in supporting educational, preservation, and beautification efforts across the grounds.

The meeting concluded with a presentation by Dr. John Ritter, retired professor of geology at Wittenberg University. Dr. Ritter shared his expertise on local geology, discussing rock formations, soil properties, topography, floodplains, stream terraces, and bank stability along Buck Creek. He has also led guided tours along the Ferncliff cliffs as part of the Foundation's educational programming.

Looking ahead, the Springfield Cemetery Association remains committed to honoring its 162-year history while continuing to innovate. Priorities for the coming year include expanding green burial options, focusing on sustainability, enhancing the Ferncliff Arboretum, and preserving the cemetery's historic landscape. These initiatives reflect Ferncliff's mission to serve families with dignity while safeguarding the beauty and legacy of one of Springfield's most treasured places



As the season changes, so do our hours. Don't forget to set your clocks back one hour when Daylight Savings Time ends. Beginning **Sunday, Nov. 2**, Ferncliff Cemetery and Arboretum will observe winter hours:

McCright Avenue Gate: Open daily from **7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**
Plum Street Gates: Open daily from **7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**

We appreciate your cooperation as we move to our winter schedule and thank you for helping us keep Ferncliff safe and welcoming for all visitors.



Fall Back: Gate Hours Changing

Mausoleum Night Walking Tour Returns for 8th Year

As dusk settles over Ferncliff and shadows stretch across the grounds, the mausoleums begin to take on an air of quiet mystery. For the eighth year, guests are invited to step inside these stately stone structures during our **Mausoleum Crawl Walking Tour**, guided once again by local historian Kevin Rose of the Turner Foundation.



This unique evening event opens the doors of Ferncliff's large family mausoleums, giving participants rare access to their shadowed interiors. By lantern light and twilight glow, Kevin will share the captivating stories of the individuals and families entombed inside. Tales of prominence, loss, and legacy, along with insights into the striking architecture that makes each building a monument in its own right will be presented.

The tour balances history with atmosphere, blending the beauty of Ferncliff's grounds at twilight with the intrigue of venturing into spaces often locked to the public. It is an experience both educational and memorable.

Join us **Thursday, October 23** or **Monday, October 27**. Registration begins at 5:00 pm, with the tour starting promptly at 6:00 pm. Space is limited; please call our office at **937-322-3491** to reserve your spot. A suggested Ferncliff Foundation donation of \$10 per person supports our mission of preservation and education.

Naomi's Heart 5K Run Held at Ferncliff

On Saturday, August 9, Ferncliff was proud to host the 3rd Annual Naomi's Heart Mission 5K Run/Walk, welcoming runners and walkers of all ages to our scenic grounds. With clear skies and mild summer weather, participants enjoyed a picturesque course winding through the southern end of the cemetery, past tranquil waterways, beneath the canopy of mature trees, and along peaceful roadways.

The event was more than just a morning of fitness and fellowship. Organized by the non-profit Naomi's Heart Mission, the run directly supported the Naomi's Heart Mission Christian Academy in the Philippines. This year's fundraising goal was set at \$12,000, enough to sponsor the education of 25 children at the school.

Ferncliff is honored to provide a beautiful and meaningful setting for community events like this one, where the energy of participants and the generosity of supporters come together to make a lasting impact both locally and globally.



If you'd like more information on this organization, please visit <https://www.naomisheartmission.org/> or contact NaomisHeartMissionPhp@gmail.com



Holiday Closures

The Ferncliff Cemetery office will be closed on the following dates to allow our employees to spend the holidays with their families.

Thursday and Friday, November 27th and 28th 2025

Wednesday and Thursday, December 24th and 25th 2025

Wednesday, December 31st 2025 and Thursday, January 1st, 2026

Our gates will be open during regular winter schedule hours.

Caring for Our Grounds, Together

If you've visited Ferncliff recently, you may have noticed a few thoughtful upgrades designed to enhance both the beauty and usability of our grounds.

New section signs and updated trash receptacles have been placed throughout the cemetery, replacing the older wooden frames that had served their time. These additions not only improve the appearance of our landscape but also make it easier for visitors to find their way and help us keep the grounds clean.

In addition, six new pet waste stations have been installed. While we are happy to welcome leashed dogs at Ferncliff, we kindly ask that pet owners use these stations to help us maintain the dignity and serenity of the cemetery.

These simple yet meaningful enhancements reflect our ongoing commitment to creating a respectful, welcoming, and well-cared-for environment for all who come to visit loved ones and enjoy the arboretum.



FALL CLEAN-UP Scheduled for November 3rd

Our annual Fall Decorations Cleanup will take place on **Monday, November 3**. To help us prepare, we kindly ask that all decorations be removed from gravesites by **Sunday, November 2**.

Please note that the following items may remain in place:

- Monument saddles
- Monument vases
- In-ground vases of flowers
- Flags in a VA flag holder

All other decorations will be removed and discarded during the cleanup.

This seasonal effort allows our grounds crew to clear leaves and prepare the cemetery for the winter months. Your cooperation helps us maintain the beauty and dignity of Ferncliff while also making room for upcoming holiday decorations.

*Thank you for partnering with us
to keep Ferncliff looking its very best.*

Did You Know? An Elephant Once Came to Ferncliff A Remarkable Circus Legacy

Born William Shackelford Andres in Portsmouth, Ohio, the world knew him as Doc Waddell, the "Bishop of the Big Top," the dean of circus press agents, and the only official chaplain of the circus. To Springfield resident Diane Plant, however, he was simply "Uncle Doc," and she grew up hearing marvelous stories about his extraordinary life.

Doc Waddell's connection to Ferncliff is through family: he was married to Effie Heighmiller Andres, the aunt of Diane's grandfather. Both now rest together in Section W. The circus was always in William's blood. His grandfather, David Hahn, was the first American trainer of Bengal tigers. His mother was a trick rider, and his father an elephant trainer. By age nine, William was selling concessions as a "candy butcher," or seller of candy, popcorn and other concessions and later, he earned a reputation as a clever card sharp on boats and trains.

In 1905, everything changed. At his father's funeral, William heard what he called the best sermon of his life and felt a quiet calling toward evangelism. He returned to the circus, this time not only as a press agent but also as a chaplain to the performers.

During off-seasons, Doc preached in prisons, saloons, night-clubs, and rescue missions. Over the years, he worked with some of the most famous shows in the world, Barnum &

Bailey, Hagenbeck & Wallace, Ringling Brothers, and Sells-Floto. In 1940, he became chaplain to the Mills Brothers Three Ring Circus, which wintered in Columbus, Ohio.

Though not a performer herself, Doc's second wife, Effie, was known for her flair, often wearing a leopard-skin stole and bright rouge on her cheeks. When Doc passed away in 1952 in Columbus, Effie turned to Springfield undertaker H. A. Littleton (today Littleton & Rue Funeral Home) to handle the arrangements.

What followed was one of the most unique burials in Ferncliff's history. The entire circus came to Springfield to honor their beloved chaplain. An elephant solemnly laid a wreath on his grave, while the circus band played Rock of Ages, repeating its first line, the only hymn they knew.

Diane, born a year later in 1953, grew up hearing the stories of this remarkable funeral. She recalls her mother's embarrassment at the spectacle, hiding behind a bush, and her father's relief that the local press had not reported on it, lest his seminary professors hear of the "circus funeral" for one of their own.

Thanks to Diane for sharing her family's memories of Doc Waddell, the "Bishop of the Big Top." His funeral remains the only known time an elephant visited Ferncliff Cemetery, a reminder that history can be just as colorful as it is meaningful.

Getting to Know our Board Members: Darrell Kitchen

In each issue, we spotlight a member of our Board of Trustees. We are extremely proud of each member of our Board and the contributions they make to strengthen our mission to serve our community. This time, please meet **Darrell Kitchen**, our dedicated Board Member and Vice President, sharing his story in his own words and trademark good-natured humor.

I was born in Springfield and was raised in the city's west end. I attended public schools at Snyder Park Elementary, Clark Junior High School, and Springfield North High School. Since the "educational flame" of the latter two institutions has been extinguished, it occurs to me that I could be next...but not now! The west end was a wonderful neighborhood with a closeness among the many families in our midst. Most of the stories and memories remain vivid in my memory, but some have been selectively forgotten. Rest assured, my memories and stories are priceless.

After returning home from active duty, I attended Clark State and Wittenberg where I majored in accounting and business. With a new job and many dreams, I married Michelle Moody. Michelle has been my best friend and life partner. We have now been married for over 53 years. I also think this means I am old.

I was asked about my first recollection of Ferncliff. It all began by exploring and playing in the cliffs along Buck Creek and attempting to snatch a goldfish or two from Kelly's Lake. A neighbor and childhood friend, Tom Nuss, and I would walk over the old railroad trestle to enter the cemetery from our old neighborhood. As you might expect, we did not have permission from our parents or the Ferncliff staff and there was an occasional "price to pay" for our explorations. Of course, at that time, I did not realize that my father and two brothers would be interred at Ferncliff...or that Michelle and I would have property for a family plot for our own use...but not now!

My parents are Springfield natives and generationally linked to Clark County's early formation in the (very) early 1800's. My mother is 101 years young, and, because I need it, I remain on her prayer list.

It was always so easy to recognize the natural beauty of Ferncliff. Despite taking away our football field across from our friend Jim Mosie's house, we now know that the many changes and improvements over the years have distinguished Ferncliff as one of the most highly recognized and respected cemeteries in Ohio...and beyond. To now have a connection with the organization is both fulfilling and an honor.

Though I have many personal hobbies, I enjoy nothing more than the time spent with our family. Michelle and I have two special children, Darren and Sarah (Lemon), who both live, work, and serve in the Springfield community. They have enriched and blessed our lives immeasurably. Our grandchildren are also front and center in our lives today. They also have a firm foundation with Springfield. In order of age, we have Olivia (attending Wright State University), Will (attending Miami University), and our twins, Sophie and Charlie (who both attend Clark Shawnee High School). All of them have been heavily involved in their schools, communities, and areas of interest. Observing

their character, hard work, and success has been rewarding and a special pleasure...in unexplainable ways.

My life in Springfield has included some community service opportunities that have been more rewarding to me than to any of the people that I may have served. In our congregation at High Street United Methodist Church, we regularly hear about social responsibility and service to other people. It is a powerful reminder that many of us need to hear. I was asked to list some of the community organizations that I have served. The list includes the several Mental Health Board(s), the Combined Health District Board, serving as a Trustee of (now) Clark State College, United Senior Services, National Trail Parks and Recreation, the United Way, the Springfield Foundation, the Community Health Foundation, and the Springfield Burying Ground. These opportunities have enriched my life. Quite often, I reflect on these experiences and the many people who have worked so hard to help make Springfield a better place. I think of these people and their sacrifices as I endeavor to serve the Ferncliff community.

I must say, the Trustees and staff at Ferncliff are amazing people who are deeply committed and vested in the important work of service to our families, our funeral home partners, the perpetual care of the 218 acres of beautiful peaceful space, over 8 miles of roads, an arboretum, over 80,000 interments, a pet cemetery, finances to secure the future, and the responsibilities we have to each other. Most important - is the responsibility for service to our families and our community. Together, we work hard to ensure that our commitments are executed and delivered with integrity while maintaining the financial strength that will sustain our Beautiful Ferncliff - forever.

My professional work over the years has been centered in the Springfield business and higher education community. Of my 50 years of employment, I worked over 33 years in higher education, and 25 of those years were at Wittenberg University. I served as Vice President of Business and Finance and the various professional organizations serving our colleges and universities. Though I have been gone for 13 years, it is the people and relationships from this work that have been priceless. There were so many great faculty, staff, students, directors, coaches, and business partners that I will remember and cherish forever. As always...it is about the people.



Our work at Ferncliff is extremely important, and we have a mission and vision before us in a time of great change. It is a privilege to serve.





Ferncliff

501 W. McCreight Ave.
Springfield, OH 45504

PRSRT
STANDARD
US POSTAGE
PAID
DAYTON OHIO
PERMIT NO. 966

**Are you thinking
about purchasing
space at Ferncliff?**

Perhaps near a loved one?
Call about availability
of property throughout
our grounds.

*We can't heal the world today.
But we can begin with a voice
of compassion, a heart of
love, and an act of kindness.
- Mary Davis*

