



Ferncliff

Celebrating 160 Years of Service to our Community

160

YEARS

1863 - 2023

Summer NEWSLETTER
June - September 2025

Director's Insights Connecting Through Community

*D*ear Friends of Ferncliff,

Since 1863, Ferncliff has stood as more than a cemetery. It is a place deeply rooted in the heart of our community. A space where memory, nature, and connection are woven together. The founding members of the Springfield Cemetery Association envisioned Ferncliff as a sanctuary not only for honoring those who have passed, but for enriching the lives of those still living. That legacy remains central to our mission today: To serve the community with supportive, affordable, and inclusive end of life services in a beautiful, historic environment in perpetuity.

Sacred Spaces, Shared Moments

Alongside the quiet beauty and solemn reflection you expect to find at Ferncliff, you'll also find moments of life—opportunities for neighbors to explore, engage, and find meaning in this shared space. From families participating in our summer scavenger hunt, to geology tours along the cliffs, volunteers placing flags in veterans' sections, and guests attending the reopening of Whispering Memories Pet Haven, each gathering reflects our spirit of connection.

Hosting events within our grounds is not meant to diminish the dignity of this special place. It is meant to highlight it. Ferncliff is a place of rest, reflection, beauty, and legacy. By welcoming the community in respectful and meaningful ways, we preserve not only the stories of those who came before, but the spirit of connection that sustains us all.

Our events support worthy causes, encourage learning and wellness, and offer new ways to experience the history and cultural significance of Ferncliff with reverence and appreciation. We take great care to ensure these events are planned with sensitivity and purpose. Ferncliff is never treated as simply a venue. It remains a sacred space, first and foremost.

Many of our events are made possible through meaningful partnerships with local organizations and businesses who share our commitment to enriching the lives of others. This year, for example, Park National Bank and Wallace & Turner Insurance are generously sponsoring our trolley tours, continuing a tradition of community support that has included many local businesses in years past. These collaborations not only strengthen our connection to the broader Springfield community but also help ensure our events reflect the care and respect that Ferncliff represents.

If you appreciate these experiences and wish to contribute to our ongoing efforts, a tax-deductible gift to the Ferncliff Foundation is a meaningful way to support Ferncliff's efforts to preserve, develop, and enhance the historic and educational features of Ferncliff Cemetery and Arboretum.

Ferncliff has always been a place where the past and future meet. As we walk these paths today, we do so with gratitude—for the vision of those who came before us, and for the trust you place in us to carry that vision forward. Thank you for being a part of this ever-growing story.

Warm regards,

Shelley J Baker
Executive Director

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 Summer Gate Hours: McCreight Avenue: 7:30AM - 7:00PM | Plum Street: 7:30AM - 7:00PM

Office Hours: Monday - Friday: 8:00AM - 4:30PM | ferncliffcemetery.org

Community Answers the Call for Help

We are deeply grateful to the many volunteers who answered the call and joined us early on a Saturday morning to honor those who served our country. With heartfelt dedication, they helped place American flags at the graves of each of the more than 3,100 veterans laid to rest across our four designated sections:

- GAR (Grand Army of the Republic), also known as the Civil War Mound
- World War I Section
- World War II Section
- The Annex (WWII Annex)

This meaningful tradition is a tribute to the courage and sacrifice of the men and women laid to rest here. If you have a friend or loved one who served and is buried elsewhere in the cemetery, please stop by the office—we would be honored to provide you with a flag to place at their grave any time.



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.

Early Springfield Begins to Build

Let us turn back several pages of our journey into Springfield's early history so that we can better understand its steady cultural growth. In past issues of "Springfield's Continuing Saga," we briefly sketched the stories of several main characters who made a difference, setting the future foundation of our budding village. All frontier settlements faced common unexpected difficulties. Communication outside of town was limited. Markets were few and inaccessible. Building materials and machinery for manufacturing were in scarce supply. The fear of Native American intervention kept villagers in a constant state of alarm, preventing potential new settlers from coming. Yet, clusters of log cabins began to grow.

If you have been following "Springfield's Saga" throughout the duration of Ferncliff's quarterly newsletters, you might remember that Springfield's founder, James Demint, and surveyor James Daughterty established the first city plat March 1801. Because the demand for lots was rapidly increasing, in 1804 they platted a second addition that extended west to Race Street. Also, Demint changed the name of South Street to Main Street.

Prior to 1806, no attention was given toward educating the children in the village. The rugged early pioneers found no reason for "book learnin'." Understanding the business of construction and hunting was deemed sufficient for the day. Drunkenness and lawlessness prevailed. Sermons were ignored. Springfield's early heritage was very similar to surrounding communities in the relatively unsettled West.

However, in 1806, several recognized the importance of establishing a school. That led visionary Nathaniel Pinkered, who some have considered to be the founder of the local education system, to build a school. A log house on the northeast corner of Main and Market Street (now Fountain), became Springfield's first school. Today, the old Lagonda Bank building stands on that location.

At the same time, townspeople took a keen interest in, an awakening of sorts, in religion. In a previous article we learned about Methodist minister Saul Henkle ministering the Gospel of Christ and Mrs. Smallwood leading children's Bible studies. Prior to Henkle's arrival in 1809, several Methodist preachers from the Miami Council arrived and established a church in Pinkered's school. Several ministers from other denominations held services in the old Foos Tavern (Sibcy-Cline's office now is located there) mentioned in a previous newsletter.

During the winter of 1811, an evangelistic group called the "New Lights" arrived bringing revival to Springfield. Eventually, they began to build a church. Local citizens, led by Griffith Foos, were called upon to meet the financial needs to fund church construction. Because of overwhelming support from the village, leaders recommended that the church be non-denominational.

The building site selected was west of the Mill Run that flowed through the center of town and south of Main Street. The church was built from hewn logs about twenty by thirty feet in size. In 1818, the church was also used as a schoolhouse and later converted to a shelter for hogs and pigs.

The "New Lights" held a camp meeting around this time which attracted many men of questionable character. Their evangelistic outreach was powerful. Lives changed.

We will continue "Springfield' Saga" in the next quarterly issue.

Pardon our Panels, Progress Ahead

If you've driven past Ferncliff recently, you may have noticed the speed tracker installed by the Springfield Police Department near the curve on McCreight Avenue. We're grateful for their support in helping to slow traffic in this busy area and increase safety for all who visit and pass by.

We also want to acknowledge the missing fence panels along that same stretch, which were damaged earlier this year. While it may look like we've forgotten about them—we haven't! We've held off on repairs because we're in the planning stages of some exciting improvements that we'll be announcing soon. We appreciate your patience and understanding as we work toward these upcoming enhancements.



A Special Evening of Light and Memory

On the evening of Friday, May 16, over 150 members of our community gathered along the quiet edges of Benston Lake for the 2025 Floating Lantern Remembrance Service, a night set aside to honor, remember, and hold close those we have lost.

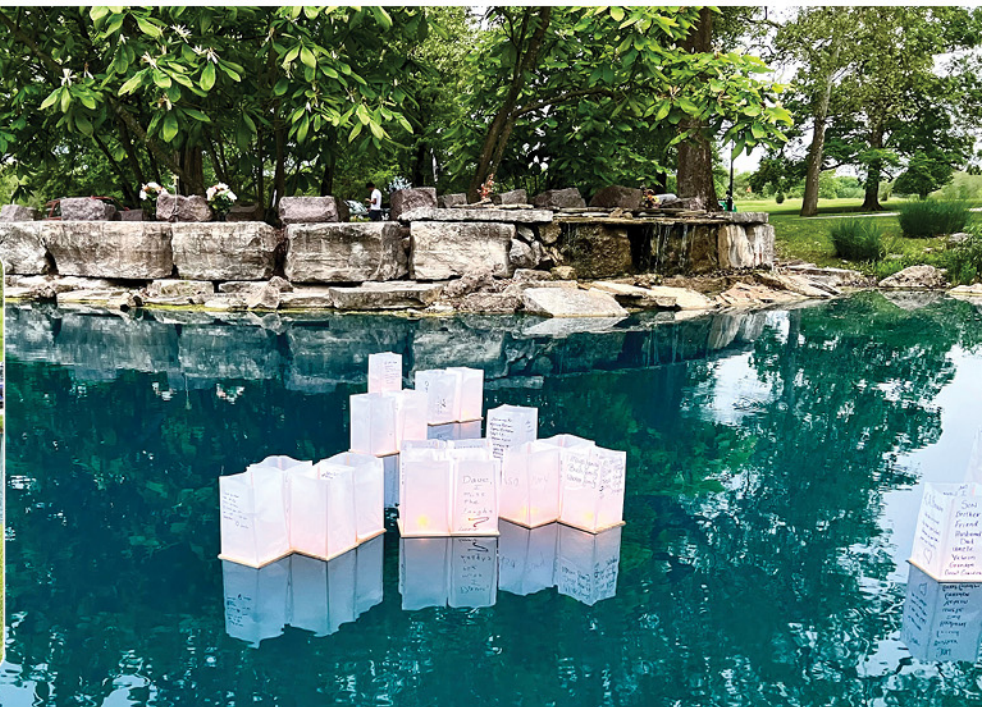
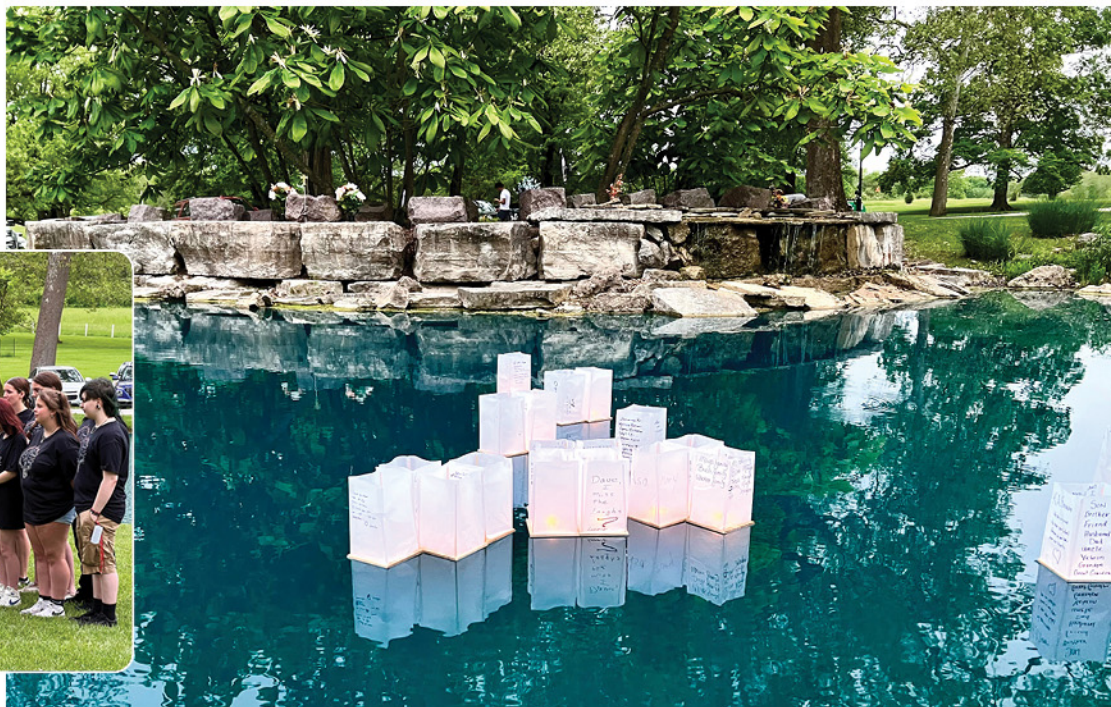
Despite forecasts of wind and storms, the skies held long enough for the glow of lanterns to gently drift across the water, each one a tribute, a name, a love carried forward. The air, though brisk and overcast, was filled with warmth, both from the gathering of kindred spirits and from the moving voices of the Greenon High School Choir, led by Sara Monath, whose music echoed the heart of the evening. A brief and powerful reflection was shared by Reverend Cynthia Atwater of High Street United Methodist Church, grounding the service in gratitude and grace.

Though we adjusted the timing to stay ahead of the weather, launching the lanterns just before twilight, the meaning of the moment was undiminished. Watching the lake fill with points of flickering light was, as always, a beautiful sight.


Each spring, Ferncliff extends written invitations to families who have experienced a recent loss. This year, we also welcomed families from the previous year, whose remembrance had been delayed by circumstances beyond our control. Space permitting, we open this gathering to others who wish to honor their loved ones in a setting that blends beauty, peace, and memory.

The Floating Lantern Remembrance Service is a tender tradition, one that speaks to the soul of Ferncliff itself: a place where love endures, memory is honored, and light finds its way across even the darkest nights.

Special thanks this year to the Greenon HS choir, Reverend Cynthia Atwater, and to Sunbelt Rentals of Dayton for donating the light towers.



Summer Programs and Events



June 18	Geology Walking Tour Reservation needed – call to check availability	3:30 pm
June 19	Trailblazers Juneteenth Trolley Tour Reservation needed – call to check availability	2:00 and 3:30 pm
June 28	Whispering Memories Pet Haven Grand Re-opening All are welcome to join us	12:00 pm
July 3	Buck Creek Boom Catch the fireworks from various locations around the community starting at dark. Save the date: July 8 is the backup date. Note that the fireworks are launched from Ferncliff, but the cemetery will be closed to the public.	10:00 pm
July 10	Industrialists Trolley Tour Reservation needed – call to check availability	2:00 and 3:30 pm
August 9	Naomi's Heart 5K Run through Ferncliff Watch for details and information on event registration	8:30 am
August 14	First Responders Trolley Tour Reservation needed – call to check availability	2:00 and 3:30 pm
August 16	Springfield Farmers Market Host Open each Saturday from June through Sept. at the Heritage Center	9:30 am – 12:30 pm
Sept. 11	WWII Veterans Trolley Tour Reservation needed – call to check availability	2:00 and 3:30 pm

School's Out – Summer's Here!

Summer is the perfect time to slow down, reconnect, and share meaningful moments – and there's no better place to do that than right here at Ferncliff. With our peaceful paths, shady trees, and stories tucked into every corner, Ferncliff isn't just a cemetery. It's a place to explore, reflect, and create memories together.

This summer, we invite you and your family to take part in a fun and thoughtful activity: an old-fashioned Scavenger Hunt. We've created three unique scavenger hunt lists,

designed to guide you through the beauty and history of our grounds. Whether you're discovering hidden details or simply enjoying a quiet walk together, it's a wonderful way to engage with nature and each other.

Stop by the office to pick up your list, or if you can't make it during business hours, just give us a call and we'll happily email them to you. Come explore Ferncliff with us this summer and rediscover the joy of connection in a place full of life, memory, and meaning.

Ferncliff Cemetery and Arboretum Receives Prestigious Scenic Ohio Award



Ferncliff Cemetery and Arboretum was honored as one of seven recipients of the 2025 Scenic Ohio Award, celebrating its exceptional beauty and historical importance. Chosen from over one hundred nominated cemeteries, Ferncliff's dedication to preserving its historic landscape has earned this esteemed accolade.

Scenic Ohio, an affiliate of Scenic America established in 1933, is the sole nonprofit in the state dedicated to protecting and enhancing the visual quality and scenic character of Ohio's towns and countryside. The Board of Scenic Ohio selected "Beautiful, Scenic, Historic Cemeteries" as its theme for 2025. The award highlights Ferncliff's rich history, natural beauty, and ongoing commitment to excellence.

"We are so very proud to be recognized among Ohio's most beautiful and historic cemeteries," said Shelley Baker, Executive Director at Ferncliff Cemetery and Arboretum. "This recognition reflects the thoughtful planning, care, and dedication that have shaped Ferncliff into a truly special place. We are honored to be selected for the work we continue to do in preserving Ferncliff's legacy while looking toward the future."

Scenic Ohio Chair Gary Meisner stated, "Our historic cemeteries are treasures to be honored as true gardens for the living. Ferncliff Cemetery and Arboretum is exemplary and an important example of what many historic cemeteries need. The work of thoughtful planning, restoration, preservation, and maintenance of historic cemeteries is work of the highest order and to be encouraged throughout Ohio."

Alongside Ferncliff Cemetery and Arboretum, the other 2025 award recipients include:

1. Lake View Cemetery, Cleveland
2. Greenlawn Cemetery, Columbus
3. Spring Grove Cemetery, Cincinnati
4. Mt. Tabor Cemetery, Mingo
5. Old Burying Ground, Highland County
6. Stratford Cemetery, Delaware County



PRIORITY REGISTRATION



**Now Open
for our 2025
Monthly
Trolley Tour Season**

To ensure everyone has a fair opportunity to experience our monthly trolley tours, we are launching our *Priority Registration for individuals who have never attended a tour before.

Priority Registration is available for any ONE of our May - October tours.

This season's tours are **tentatively scheduled for the second Thursday of each month with two tour times offered: 2:00pm and 3:30pm.

- May 8.....Celebrating the Women of Ferncliff**
- June 19....Trailblazers/Juneteenth Tour: Celebrating prominent African Americans**
- July 10.....Industrialists - The Builders of Springfield**
- Aug. 14.....First Responders: a new tour this year**
- Sept. 11.....WWII Veterans - Remembering those who served**
- Oct. 9.....Fall Leaf Tour**

Call the office at 937-322-3491 to make your Priority Registration Reservation today.

*The remaining spaces will be offered as we've done in past years with registration opening upon announcement in the Springfield News-Sun and on our Facebook page, approximately two weeks prior to each tour date.

**The dates shown above are tentative and may be changed based on weather, illness, or any other circumstance which may arise. Registered attendees will be notified by phone of any change in date for their reserved tour.



The Power of Place

In recent years, more and more families have chosen cremation as part of their end-of-life planning. It's a decision often made with thoughtfulness and love, sometimes because it feels simple, sometimes because it allows a loved one to stay physically close during those first tender seasons of grief. An urn on the mantel, or ashes kept quietly at home, can feel like a way to hold on.

But as time passes, so do generations. And often, the next question arises: Where will this story live?

There is profound power in having a place. A place to visit, to reflect, to teach the younger ones where they came from. A place where love and memory is rooted. We have seen the sorrow in the eyes of grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, who want to "go visit grandpa," only to find there is no place to go. His ashes were scattered in a beautiful spot, yes, but time has moved on, and that place cannot be revisited. There is no marker. No place to lay a hand or a flower. And that absence is felt deeply.

At Ferncliff, we believe in the lasting value of permanent placement—not as a matter of tradition alone, but as a gift to the future. When cremated remains are placed in a niche, in a memorial bench, along a woodland path, or beneath a granite marker, it becomes part of something enduring. It becomes a place where generations can come to remember, reflect, and reconnect.

We offer numerous options for permanent cremation placement, each one thoughtfully designed to provide peace, beauty, and a sense of belonging. From our traditional columbariums to our upcoming wooded cremation walkway, every offering is rooted in the belief that every life deserves to be honored with a place that endures.

As we walk the paths of Ferncliff, among trees that have stood for over a century and stones that tell stories of lives well-lived, we are reminded again and again: place matters. For the grieving heart. For the generations yet to come. For the story that deserves to be told.

If you or your family are considering how best to honor a loved through cremation permanent placement, we invite you to call our office. We are here to help you explore meaningful options that reflect both a unique life story and the lasting imprint it leaves.

Join Us In Celebrating the

GRAND REOPENING

of our Pet Cemetery



Whispering Memories

Pet Haven

SAT., JUNE 28, 2025
12:00 PM

- Pet Vendors
- Kona Ice Truck
- Raffle and more!

PETS WELCOME
(ON LEASH)

No Reservations Required



The Wait is Over - Tails are Wagging!

Whispering Memories Pet Haven is ready to shine with its grand reopening on Saturday, June 28th at 12PM. Stroll along the new stone pathway, rest a while on our custom-made granite benches at the reflection circle, and enjoy a day filled with a special memorial service, as well as some tail-wagging fun.....think pet vendors, raffle prizes, and a visit from the Kona Ice Truck. Well behaved pets are welcome on a leash.

Whispering Memories has always been a special place in our hearts, and we're honored to give it the love and care our pet families deserve. Come celebrate the memories and the furry friends who made them unforgettable. It's going to be paw-sitively wonderful! Comforting families when they need it most.

The Governing Body of Ferncliff Cemetery

The Governing Body of Ferncliff Cemetery is a non-profit, volunteer organization. The Springfield Cemetery Association is comprised of 25 members from our community. Of these, nine members are selected to serve as trustees [*marked below]

Currently, these members include:

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



Ferncliff

501 W. McCreight Ave.
Springfield, OH 45504

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

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

*Summer's calm reminds us:
every life leaves a ripple,
every memory a reflection*

