

The View

*from historic Prospect Hill Cemetery
...a Baltimore County Treasure*



Located in the heart of Towson at York Road and Washington Avenue

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Realizing Our Vision

The Board of Directors is pleased to report that work is underway on several key projects in our Grounds Enhancement goal of the Strategic Plan.

This past spring, the board approved a master landscape plan that will upgrade six areas over the next three to five years. This work builds on the new lighting, 425 feet of new hedge on York Rd. and the planting of 11 major trees and 50 large shrubs that were completed in the last few years. A key goal is completing the green perimeter around the cemetery, to screen out modern development and recapture the tranquility of past decades.

This fall, we are completing two major lower cemetery projects that largely have been funded by three generous donations (see articles):

- Restoring Babyland, an area on the lower hill where more than 100 children are buried.
- Upgrading the plantings along The Promenade border to include large evergreen shrubs and deciduous trees that will provide seasonal color.

Board Member Funds Babyland Restoration

Board member Catherine Soares provided a generous donation of \$10,000 to fund the restoration of Babyland. She reminisces, "When I was a young girl, I spent many Sundays in the cemetery while my parents were next door at the Methodist church. I remember roses growing on an arbor near Babyland. It was lovely, but also sad to know that so many babies, some of whom were newborns, were buried by themselves. I was thrilled to learn that the board planned to restore this area. Having a tangible need connected to my childhood made it easy for me to donate to this project. My great-grandparents and my mother are buried at Prospect Hill; I often put flowers on their graves."



A Babyland Gravestone

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Towson Rotary and Anonymous Donor Fund Promenade

The 13 members of the Towson Rotary are long-standing supporters of Prospect Hill. This year, they provided a grant of \$5000 in addition to their annual \$1000 donation, in order to help fund the Promenade border plantings. Mike Burton, Rotary secretary, comments, "We started contributing to Prospect Hill after the vandalism in 2007. We donated \$2500 to help pay for new lighting. We usually hold a yearly meeting at Treasurer Vince Nesline's office, followed by a tour of the cemetery. Our club raises money for a number of worthy area causes, including the Assistance Center of Towson Churches, the Maryland School for the Blind, and an inner city tutoring program."



Members of Towson Rotary

A donation from an anonymous donor with a decades-long family connection to the cemetery matched the Rotary gift. This donor gave us funds for a significant planting several years ago, and we are delighted that he was willing again to help us.

A Temporary Setback

Hurricane Irene dumped heavy rains on the Mid-Atlantic in late August, followed by a second deluge from Tropical Storm Lee in early September. As a result of the wind and rain from Irene, three large trees in Prospect Hill fell, including the tree pictured here, and several headstones were knocked over. The large spruce at the entrance that toppled had a girth of over five feet and stood about 85 feet high.



Treasurer Vince Nesline examines a fallen maple tree

Thankfully, as of mid September, most of the damage from these storms was remedied. Taubman Properties, which owns the Dulaney Valley Shopping Center, is assisting with the cost of the tree removal at the back fence and our insurance is paying for a portion of the costs. We have already received several donations from our mailing list, which are helping to defray the cost of repairs and clean up, and we appreciate this vote of confidence very much.

A Community Treasure...

Did you know that Prospect Hill provides a tranquil respite for the living as well as a resting place for so many in the past? John Pjura, III, son-in-law of board member emeritus Betty Fannon and a Towson mail carrier for the past xx years, frequently drives into the cemetery to eat lunch and ensure that all is well. Mr. Pjura says, "quote here if available." Eventually, he will be laid to rest at Prospect Hill with the Fannons and Cassens.

Burial Lots Available

Historic Prospect Hill Cemetery is a registered Baltimore County landmark. It is also an active cemetery with burial lots still available. Reserve your place in history by contacting Prospect Hill Cemetery at: 410-252-8462

Photos From the Past

A rich resource for historic photos, and some residents of Prospect Hill, can be found online at the Baltimore County Public Library's website. Visitors also can retrieve and read historic newspapers at this site. To access the library's archives, visit www.bcpl.info. On the home page, go to the green column on the left, select your community, then select 'historic photographs.' Type in the name or location you wish to view. If you're lucky, you may find long-lost photos of your ancestors and their surroundings.



Line of Model T's parked on York Road in front of Prospect Hill Cemetery with Towson Methodist Episcopal Church at right. The Towson City Center building is now located at this site.

A Gift of Love



Remember your loved ones on holidays

The holidays are an excellent time to remember loved ones resting at Prospect Hill. Take time from the busy days to pay your respects. Leaving a memento, such as a holiday wreath or bouquet, is a wonderful way to leave behind a token of your love. Please, however, do not leave glass or battery-operated objects, which are a hazard.

Your Contributions Make a Difference

Funding from generous donors make it possible for Prospect Hill, a 501(c) 13 charitable organization, to continue to maintain and beautify the cemetery.

Send donations to:

Prospect Hill Cemetery,
PO Box 314
Riderwood, MD 21139

Volunteers are Always Welcome

Prospect Hill can always use your help. As a nonprofit corporation, we depend heavily on the commitment of our volunteers. You can contribute in many ways, from weeding, to planting bulbs, to conducting research, or even to serving on the board. Call 410-252-8462 to learn how to put your special talents to use.

Who Lies at Prospect Hill?

Historic Prospect Hill Cemetery contains a virtual "Who's Who" of early Towson history. Many of the individuals and families who rest in this beautiful place figured prominently in the growth and development of our community. With this in mind, we have decided to feature the story of one such family or individual in each of our upcoming newsletters.

We hope you enjoy this little journey back in time!

Richard W. Wickes, 1890 – 1965



*Rev. Richard Wickes, courtesy
Baltimore County Public Library*

If only the dead could speak! Prospect Hill Cemetery contains a wealth of influential Towson citizens who have shaped the town and surrounding county. One such notable was Richard W. Wickes, who passed away at age 75 while still serving as the director of probation for the Circuit Court of Baltimore County.

Grandson Ralph Wickes recalls, "My grandfather was very loquacious, dominating the conversation at our family's Sunday dinners. He was always quite assertive, knowledgeable and a stand-up guy. I looked up to him even though I didn't always agree with him."

Born and raised in Baltimore city, Richard Wickes received a bachelor of divinity degree from Lebanon Valley College in PA. He married Anna Kraus, who bore him four children – Richard, Hobart, Ruth and Rizpah (named for her mother).

After being ordained by the Crozier Theological Seminary in PA and serving as pastor in several churches in southern PA, Mr. Wickes became the pastor of the Calvary Baptist Church in Towson in 1923. The church's current pastor, Rev. Fred Weimert, comments, "People loved Wickes, who was charming and a good speaker. He presided over the church when it burned down in 1929 and oversaw the construction of the beautiful stone structure that still stands. While construction was underway, he led the congregation in worship at the nearby Recher movie theater."

Wickes also served as chaplain of the Maryland Penitentiary and Sheppard Pratt Hospital. Ralph Wickes recollects that one of his grandfather's more onerous duties was providing support to the condemned before they were hanged at the gallows. "He paced all night before an execution, but he befriended them and gave them spiritual support."

***Do you have a brief family history you'd like to share in our
newsletter? Send it to prospecthillcem@aol.com or call 410-252-8462.***