

PCA Historian's Report 2024

The PCA was very active in 2024, here are some of the highlights: Motivated at least in part by a letter from Patty, the city has promised to act upon much-needed repair and restoration projects at the Smurthwaite House in the current fiscal year. They haven't started yet and we don't have a schedule, but work should be getting underway soon. Ed published a new history of the PMMP cemeteries, the first to reevaluate James Barneys' 1941 newspaper article on which all subsequent histories of the park have been based. After several years in the making, the Jacob Waltz Memorial will be dedicated in January 2025 thanks to the untiring efforts of Vivia, Mark, Sterling, Margy and other dedicated committee members. Awards were presented to Cindy by the Museum Association of Arizona for her excellent record of gravestone preservation and to the PCA by the Arizona Historical Society for the association's years of preserving the history of Arizonans. Our social media presence grew tremendously this past year thanks to the efforts of Val, Lezlee, and Donna and we welcomed the addition of new volunteer Tom to Thursdays at Smurthwaite. On a sad note, we received the unfortunate news of volunteer Ryan Van Ark's passing in December. His enthusiasm for cemeteries will be missed.

PCA Projects and Affairs

- This is our first ZOOM meeting, no longer on Webex (Jan)
- Food trucks have been serving the past two Saturdays and blocking the entrance on Madison. (Feb)
- New history of PMMP by Ed Dobbins almost finished, 100 copies will be printed as 50-page booklet and sold at Smurthwaite and other facilities willing to carry it (Mar) Will print 100 copies at \$350 plus tax, book retail price \$12.95, sell to members \$10 each or \$6 each with a minimum purchase of 5, all proceeds to go to PCA general fund, approved (Apr) 100 copies sold by Sept, re-ordered another 50 copies. Ed scheduled to present at North Mtn Visitor Center, Association of Gravestone Studies plan to review, Judy asked for books for DAR (May)
- West Valley Genealogical group reached out to us for support. Would like us to donate two books for their Feb 17 raffle. They will take some rack cards and reciprocate the gifts at Jan 17 open house (Mar)

- Smurthwaite burglarized Feb 28, internet cables cut, currently no internet (Mar) In April, internet still not repaired from damage on 2/28, new security plan drawn up, will ask for help from state police and bring up matter to Joe Diaz at next meeting (Apr)
- Need to increase our fees for large tours (Mar) New schedule of fees presented, \$40 for copy of military pension file, \$10 guided tour, no Senior discount, under age 5 free, \$5 per person for school groups, board approved (Apr)
- AHS moving forward with Black Burial Documentation project, will reach out to PCA members and associates for assistance (Apr)
- On Memorial Day received donations from the AZ Masons Lodge #2 and the Scottsdale Civil War Roundtable
- Cactus Wren DAR placed a new bench along Ave of Flags. Dedication ceremony possibly to be held in fall (Sep)
- PCA bills more than income, proposal to raise member fees by \$5 approved by board (Sep)
- Verizon now our internet provider (Sep)
- Wooden Smurthwaite sign stolen and police report made (Jun)
- Cindy Lee received “Excellence Award” from the Museum Association of Arizona (May) Congrats!
- Obtained free dose of NARCAM from Phoenix Public Library, brief demonstration given (May)
- Tour Guide Jarrod Riddle would like to offer “cemeteries only” tour. He will work on plan to present (Sep)
- PCA received the coveted Al Merito Award from the Arizona Historical Society for outstanding preservation and dedication to preserving the history of the people in Arizona. The application was coordinated by Anne Ferrannini the wife of our conservator, Joe. Three members attended the to receive award (Nov)
- Ed prepared a report on the possible location of a Chinese burner in Loosley/City Cemetery. Sent to board members and included in newsletter. Looks promising but further work needs to be done. (Sep)
- Cindy presented Election Board Ballot for 2025-2027, 13 board positions and 6 auxiliary, all recommended individuals were approved (Dec)

- Ed submitted a revised single page PMMP timeline draft version to hand out to visitors (Dec)

PCA Community Outreach

- DAR cleanup on March 2 (Jan) Looking for monitor assistance (Feb) Two DAR groups cleaned area in and around Porter cemetery, made a noticeable difference (Mar)
- March 23 open house
- Will begin planning soon for Memorial Day on May 27 (Jan) Open house only with no formal program, PCA will notify groups who previously participated that they are welcome to visit (Apr) Masons DeMolay to help with set up, volunteers to arrive at 8:00 AM (May) Low key Memorial Day went well with about 60 attendees, snacks and drinks served (Jun)
- Mar 29 tour for Maricopa Historical Society (Mar)
- April 13 cleanup in Travis Manion's memory, died 2007, buried at Arlington (Mar) About 20 participants will clean, tools provided by PCA (Apr) 29 volunteers assisted, installed new marker, cleaned area around (May)
- Ice Cream Social Sep 21 (Jun) Put on hold (Sep)
- Dia De Los Muertos Sep 28 (Jun) Moved to Tonto and 7th Ave (Sep)
- Open House October 26 (Sep)
- PhD student from rural Oregon interested in internship associated with PCA, Pamela Stewart will assist and advise if feasible (Sep)
- Open house Dec 28 (Dec)

PCA Committees and Team Reports

Grave Marker Preservation Committee

- January open house and Valentine card making on Sat Jan 27 (Jan) Thirty visitors attended, 5 membership renewals, \$345 raised (Feb) 101 Valentines were made for Veterans and delivered in Veteran Home in Prescott (Mar)
- February open house will include Spirits of the West (Jan) (Feb) Event had 33 visitors and earned a net profit of \$750 (Mar)

- May 4 Mother's Day Brooch making fundraiser (Mar) 17 guest showed for Brooch/Mother's Day event, light refreshments served, \$360.00 profit (Jun)
- April 27 open house, "April showers bring May flowers" theme (Apr)
- Cindy to apply for Tier 1 \$2000 grant available from AHS for Grave Marker Preservation and was awarded approximately \$1500 which will be used for preservation supplies (Nov)
- Dia De Los Muertos Sep 28 (Jun) Moved to Tonto and 7th Ave (Sep) Total funds raised for GMP \$785 generating 320 volunteer hours
- Resolved that future donations from the IOOF will automatically go to the Gravemarker Preservation Committee (Oct)
- 50 visitors at the November 16 "Make and Take" ornament exchange, \$215 collected. Ed gave several short presentations on the history of the cemetery during the event.
- Workers from US Dept agriculture here on same day as ornament exchange to clean headstones
- Received \$1000 donation from IOOF for gravestone preservation.

Jacob Waltz Committee

- Granite for Jacob Waltz site has arrived and will complete spreading next week. One minor word change on final draft which will be reviewed at committee meeting on Jan 11 (Jan)
- Estimate for proposed rack cards received from one vendor at \$50 for 100 cards and \$90 for 200. Discussion questioned ordering cards before monument arrived, whether new cards were necessary given current supply, using the card rack for fundraising purposes, and if DAR donation can be used to fund. Vote delayed until update on rack and cards is done and presented to all (Jan)
- Masons' donation received on Memorial Day for Jacob Waltz Monument. Donation added to general fund for maintenance as stated in fund raising letter since monies raised surpassed cost of monument. (Sep)
- Design finished and monument to be installed near end of March, we have insurance if car crashes through fence, small ceremony planned for Apr 20, rack cards to be ordered after monument installed (Mar)

- Rack card approved for printing (Sep)
- Dedication of new monument postponed until Fall because wife of engraver passed away (Apr)
- Monument installed, fundraising over except waiting for promised \$300 donation from Dons, will consider dedication ceremony for November (May)
- Jacob Waltz dedication scheduled for Jan 11, 2025, wants small “low key” event, discussion limited due to absent committee members. Committee to have one more meeting (Dec)

Memorial Marker Committee

- We have funding in excess of needs for memorial markers. All markers received but need to be placed. Need help with placement. DAR requested to be present when markers placed (Jan) Researching a different brick/marker design that would be easier to install. Goal is to have markers for everyone we have bios on or requests from families, groups, etc. (Feb)
- Markers placed where need to be installed, Polo contacted but did not respond (May)

Sotelo Heard Committee

- Collective now in charge to have annual meeting this Saturday 2/3 (Feb)

Communications and Social Media Teams Report

- Val discussed her *Behind the Epitaph* blog that includes cemetery bios and ways to promote traffic and interest in the cemetery. 8,000 people visited the blog in 2023 with popular topics reaching 100-200 hits. There is a link to the blog on our website (Jan) Plan to place additional bios and information on Facebook and the blog (Feb)
- Val posted *Behind the Epitaph* on average three times per week from June to August. The blog received 5,010 views during this time frame. Our largest

audiences are Hong Kong, The United States, Singapore, and the United Kingdom. (Sep)

- Highest clicks for this month from friends was the YouTube channel, the membership event flyer, pioneer bios, and Behind the Epitaph blog. (Oct)
- We have roughly 450 on our friend email list and roughly 100 on our member email list. (Oct)
- The website has been updated regularly, particularly adding biographies of those interred monthly thanks to the assistance of Donna Carr. (Oct)
- Val Wilson has created a PCA YouTube channel. We currently have 9 videos posted and 8 subscribers. (Oct)
- Twelve Days of Christmas created by Donna and placed on social media platforms by Val and Lezlee, thanks to all (Dec)
- Lezlee will post Lost Dutchman Gravesite Dedication on PCA website
- Busy month posting in November, several bios and stories, over 1,000 confirmed views, contributions by Val, Patty, Debe, Donna, posted to our website, Instagram, LinkedIn, Reddit, Facebook, BTE blog (Dec)

Living History Team Report

- At year's end, there were 185 short bios in the Living History Committee's PMMP *and* Cementerio Lindo binders in the library. Anyone interested in researching and writing about our PMMP 'residents' is encouraged to do so. There's plenty of good material on burials in Cementerio Lindo as well. (Sep, Dec)
- Donna sends a selection of bios monthly to Val and Lezlee to be posted on our website and other platforms now being used to increase the visibility of the PCA

Membership, Volunteer and Treasurer Reports

- PCA closes out 2024 with 96 members. We end close to our 2023 total of 103 with a goal in 2025 to get closer to our 2022 total of 111.
- Total volunteer hours for 2016 through 2023 valued at \$1,405,498! Fundraisers raised \$53,000.

- Treasurer's report, Started January 1, 2023 with a balance of \$29,128.13 and ended year on December 31, 2024 with a balance of \$33,713.21. Nice!
- Val presented draft 2025 budget with explanations of committee types (Dec)

City of Phoenix Crew Projects and Other City Actions

- Fencing repaired but needs to be painted (Jan)
- Draft of PCA three-year plan sent out and will be presented to Joe Diaz at next quarterly meeting (Jan) Report is progressed further every year. No allocation to us from recent \$64 million bonds funds to Parks & Rec (Feb)
- Letter voicing PCA concerns re homeless issues, maintenance at Smurthwaite, and lack of follow through on various promises will be sent to Cynthia Aguilar, Director of Parks & Rec. follow up to be based on response to letter (Jan). Letter made big impact, at meeting with Joe Diaz on 1/24 he said that they now have received money for the cemetery to be used to repair Smurthwaite windows, siding porch, and fencing. Money to be allocated July 1, 2024. Diaz says 99% sure will happen, if not, Patty will alert public (Feb) No action on repairs to Smurthwaite reported through summer, will ask for another meeting with Joe Diaz and ask SHPO to review plans due to concerns over scope of work (Jun)
- Restoration update, city has agreed to save and restore the windows but will paint house stucco white and the trim sage green because these colors do not fade as quickly, Kim voiced opposition from board to color choices but happy that window repairs will be addressed ((Nov)
- Contractors visited to evaluate scope of restoration work on Smurthwaite, Mr. Shakleford advised of City Historic Preservation guidelines, Helena Ruter will continue to be advised on progress, paint samples being looked at, will meet with city before work starts (Apr) Restoration scheduled for this summer, no access to house during repairs, security responsibility of contractor (May)
- PCA had approved \$655 in funds toward irrigation system, but now city will pay. Suggest that city use money to buy weed killer to be stored on property for future use, city needs contract with city to spray regularly (Apr)

- PCA informed that survey work done for light rail week of Apr 25, no further info (May) Val Wilson was asked to serve on Art Committee to select installations for area rail stop (Jun) Status report on Light Rail received, not very informative, Valley Metro looking for historic information on neighborhood (Sep)
- At end of 2024, still no date for start of construction, Joe Diaz given our event schedule to work around
- Tim Breitenstein, Parks and Rec, was transferred to a west side park and his last day here was Nov 1. We bought him lunch and gave him a card. He will be missed. The new parks person is Angie Perches. Mark met her on Nov 5 and invited her to the Parks and Rec Meeting on Nov 14.

PCA Board Meetings

Ten per year, scheduled first Thursday of Jan to June and Sept to Dec.

Respectfully submitted,

Ed Dobbins, PCA Historian

January 5, 2025