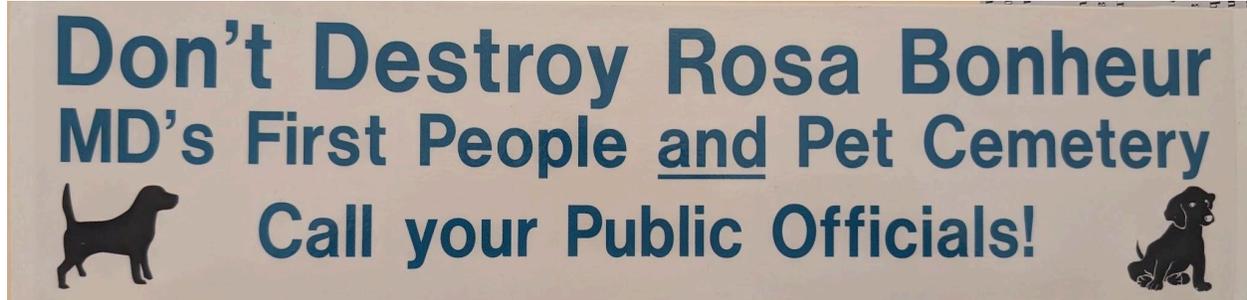


**Rosa Bonheur Collection of Articles at the Elkridge Heritage Society**

Here is a bumper sticker that was found in our file. We do not know what year it was created - possibly 2013.



B.S.c.

## Baltimore Life: People, Pets And Eternal Rest

Bonheur Memorial Park, billed as "America's largest and finest memorial park for pets," won special zoning approval in Howard County this April to bury people and pets together in the same cemetery.

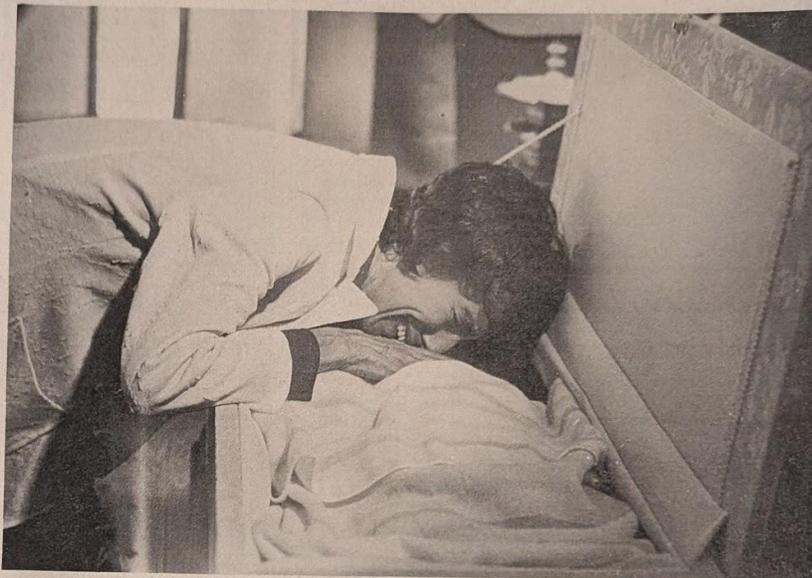
Curiously, placing the cremated remains of humans in pet cemeteries is not illegal, but Bonheur was forced to seek special zoning to allow human burials in caskets within its gates. There are already eight persons' ashes interred now with their pets at Bonheur, including the remains of one man which were placed inside his dog's casket. The most recent cremation/burial was of a one-time Prince Georges County commissioner who was laid to rest last summer next to his five dogs. "His wife will be interred there when she goes," says William A. Green, owner of Bonheur.

Aside from Paw Prints Garden in west Chicago, says a spokeswoman for the National Association of Pet Cemeteries, Bonheur is the only pet park in the country to offer such a humane service. Located just 12 miles from downtown Baltimore on Washington Boulevard in ElkrIDGE, Bonheur has been in operation since 1935, begun by a forgotten Baltimore City politician named Eddie Gross.

"We have everything from elephants to hamsters," owner Green says of the 8,000 pets interred on the cemetery's 11-acre grounds. Residents include two canine mascots for the former Baltimore Bullets and Mary Ann, an elephant from the Baltimore Zoo who had to have a concrete foundation dug around her to serve as a grave.

There are myna birds, monkeys and mice; raccoons, rabbits and ferrets. Plans are being made to bury six racehorses; a difficult feat because once horses die, Green notes, "it's impossible to fold their legs."

Now people will be added to the list of permanent residents at Bonheur, although there are some human ashes there now. Sixteen people have already



Mrs. Edward Floyd (above) of Baltimore says goodbye to Teddy Bear, a ten-year old half-poodle, half-Pekinese dog who was "just like a member of the family."



Other members of the Floyd family at the viewing in front of Teddy Bear's open casket.

At this time, Mr. and Mrs. Floyd (right) say they have no interest in being buried alongside Teddy Bear. But at suburban Bonheur Memorial Park, one of the two pet cemeteries in the country to offer such services, the option will always be open to them.



purchased space next to their pets, anticipating a reunion in the hereafter with their four-legged friends. One couple reportedly wants to share a "family plot" with their dog and ten cats.

Elaborate funeral rites for humans have long been considered a dandy practice, but when it comes to burying pets,

some scoff. When it comes to burying pets with people, they scoff even more. Anita Hertz, of northeast Baltimore, is far from the grave, yet she is looking forward to being reunited with her two cherished pups, Ginger and Peanut.

"The reason I prefer to be buried with my pets is that people lack all the attributes, all the tenderness and all the love that animals have," she says sincerely.

"If you would leave it up to my family, they would put me in a people's cemetery and then I'd end up haunting people forever. If I thought I'd have to lie for all eternity next to people, I wouldn't rest well."

Bernadette Leiben is another Baltimore woman who will probably join her pets at Bonheur some day. "I'm not senile, believe me. I think I should have the right to be buried with my pets," she says. "A lot of people think I'm a damned fool, but the more I see of people, the more I like animals."

She liked her six dogs and a cat enough to bury them at Bonheur and spend about \$2,000 total on their parting ceremonies. "I don't regret a penny of it," she says.

"There's certainly nothing unusual or peculiar about it," Green says. The people who wish to be interred with their pets often have no living relatives or friends. "They are just people who love their pets. They loved them in life and continue to love them in death," he concludes.

The 27-year-old Catonsville resident talks in a friendly, disarming voice, perfectly suited to his line of work. He buries an average of 300 pets a year, complete with a service by a priest or rabbi if you so choose, a eulogy if you like, a few close friends who understand. Perhaps, even a few paw-bearers.

For an extra fee, candles will be lit at your loved one's grave on the anniversary of his or her birth or death, and on Christmas and Easter. If your furry friend was Jewish, Chanukah and Passover are remembered as well.

Ground for a human grave

costs \$240 at Bonheur, comparable to traditional cemeteries; Tack on another \$220 charge to open and close the grave. As for the casket and mortician work, Green says, "The undertaker handles all of that."

For a small pet grave, including opening and closing charge, a pet owner can expect to pay \$225 at Bonheur. A larger grave, let's say for a Shetland pony, could cost up to \$400, while the caskets Green manufactures, available in wood or metal with crepe or satin linings, run from \$80 to \$285. Then there are markers. "We have markers that go up to \$600," Green says, estimating a person could spend "better than \$1,000 for everything" if he wanted to send his pet out in style.

Green is opening a new, 3,600-grave section of the cemetery this summer. He is also contemplating erecting a mausoleum for people and pets who don't like it below ground or for those who prefer cremation.

The Baltimore metropolitan area alone supports four traditional pet cemeteries. Colonial Pet Rest in Annapolis opened its gates last October. Dulaney Pet Haven in Cockeysville has been in operation since 1968 and has more than 500 animals under its "perpetual care." Oakleigh Pet Cemetery,

near Parkville, has a three-acre tract for pet burial; one woman reportedly has laid to rest 108 cats there.

Although those memorial parks have had inquiries and requests about dual burials, only Bonheur has answered the call.

The markers at Bonheur are fitting testimony to the feeling of bereaved pet owners, who still pine for their tail-wagging, panting partners . . .

"Tiny: You gave us the only true love a mother and daddy could ever receive and you will be in our hearts every day."

"Peanuts Prestianni: Loneliness was a stranger until now, Mommie."

"Peggy Cognac: Memories are a treasure that no one can steal, death is a heartache no one can heal."

"Sparky Walther: God's friend now."

— Bruce Friedland



Teddy Bear is lowered into his grave at Bonheur Memorial Park. Due to recent Howard County zoning changes, now humans can be laid to rest alongside their devoted pets.



Bonheur Memorial Park is opening a new, 3,600-grave section this summer, and is contemplating erecting a mausoleum for people who wish to be buried with their pets.

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FEATURED ARTICLES

NEWS

### Baltimore County Council approves pet cemetery legislation

By Alison Knezevich, The Baltimore Sun | October 1, 2012

Owners of pet cemeteries in Baltimore County will have to notify customers of plans to sell or lease their graveyards for development under legislation passed Monday by the County Council. The legislation sponsored by Councilman David Marks, a Perry Hall Republican, was spurred by complaints about the Oakleigh Pet Cemetery in Parkville, which has faced numerous code-enforcement fines. Some believe the cemetery could be sold for development. Under the legislation, pet cemetery owners will have to publish a notice in a general-circulation newspaper of plans to develop a cemetery for any other purpose, and give written notice to every plot owner.

ARTICLES BY DATE

NEWS

### Remains found in animal hoarding case to be buried at shelter

By Arthur Hirsch, The Baltimore Sun | July 29, 2013

The cremated remains of 240 dogs recovered in an animal hoarding case in Montgomery County four years ago will be buried in a brief ceremony Tuesday at the pet cemetery at the Baltimore Humane Society in Reisterstown. Shelley Janashek, a volunteer for a dog rescue group who was a witness in the case, asked the society for the burial. "I didn't want them to be trash," said Janashek. "I don't have the money to bury this volume of animals." Wendy Goldband, a spokeswoman for the society, said as far as anyone knows this is the first time the 86-year-old organization has conducted a burial for remains found under these circumstances.

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NEWS

### Balto. Co. pet cemetery poses challenge for neighbors, officials

By Alison Knezevich, The Baltimore Sun | August 13, 2012

At the Oakleigh Pet Cemetery in Parkville, Bobby the Wonder Monkey's tombstone is hidden in ivy. Weeds surround the grave of Monsetta, remembered as "Our only girl." And on Snookie's stone marker, the epitaph "Until the end our faithful pal" is barely visible behind the brush. The owner of the 2.5-acre cemetery near Loch Raven Boulevard says he is trying to clean up, but he has racked up nearly \$30,000 in unpaid county fines and fees for persistent problems such as overgrown vegetation, junk scattered on the grounds and broken windows.

NEWS

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give written notice to every plot owner.

**PUBLIC RECORDS  
SEARCH**

## NEWS

**Pet cemetery owners guilty of fraud**

By New York Times News Service | January 17, 1992

NEW YORK — In a case that provoked impassioned outcries from pet lovers, the owners of the Long Island Pet Cemetery were convicted of mail fraud yesterday for dumping thousands of dead dogs and cats in mass graves and bilking thousands of people who had paid for dignified burials for their pets. The cemetery owners, Samuel J. Strauss, 71, and his son, Alan J. Strauss, 36, were each found guilty of 45 counts of mail fraud and are expected under federal sentencing guidelines to be sentenced to at least 6 1/2 years in prison, said Andrew J. Maloney, the U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of New York.

## NEWS

**Pet cemetery owner ordered to pay clients who didn't get markers, ashes**

By Dana Hedgpeth and Dana Hedgpeth, SUN STAFF | February 1, 1997

A story in Saturday's editions failed to completely name the owner of an Elkridge pet cemetery ordered by a Howard County judge to pay \$20,000 to aggrieved pet owners. The cemetery owner's name is William Anthony Green. The owner of the troubled Rosa Bonheur Memorial Park in Elkridge has been ordered by a Howard County court to pay about \$20,000 to aggrieved pet owners for grave markers he never delivered and for giving pet owners ashes from the wrong animals brought in for cremation. As part of the order, Howard County circuit Judge James B. Dudley said Green's conduct at the pet cemetery involved "lying, misleading and deceiving" clients.

## NEWS

**Pet cemetery hearing may be repeated  
Judge questions notification of owner**

By Caitlin Francke and Caitlin Francke, SUN STAFF | January 17, 1997

The 16 bereaved pet owners who accuse the owner of Elkridge's Rosa Bonheur Memorial Park pet cemetery of fraud may have to testify again about their complaints. A judge has ruled that there are questions about whether the owner was properly notified about the lawsuit. Circuit Judge James B. Dudley this week nullified the Dec. 23 hearing against William Anthony Green. The ruling means the hearing may have to be repeated. Green, 45, did not attend the "show cause" hearing — essentially a trial — and told The Sun afterward he did not know about it. But the Howard County Office of Law has asked the judge to reconsider his decision, saying that Green had been properly notified about the suit, filed by the Howard Office of Consumer Affairs on behalf of the pet owners.

## NEWS

**Judge reverses pet cemetery case  
ruling Dec. hearing involving owner is called valid**

By Caitlin Francke and Caitlin Francke, SUN STAFF | January 24, 1997

The 16 bereaved pet owners who accuse the owner of Elkridge's Rosa Bonheur Memorial Park pet cemetery of deceiving them will not have to tell their stories of woe under oath again. Reversing an earlier decision, Circuit Judge James B. Dudley ruled that a Dec. 23 "show cause" hearing — essentially a trial — was valid. Dudley had nullified the hearing last week after questions arose over whether cemetery owner William A. Green was properly served with the lawsuit. The hearing concerned a suit filed by the Howard County Office of Consumer Affairs on behalf of the 16 pet owners, who alleged in their court testimony that Green never delivered costly grave markers and gave the pet owners ashes from the wrong animals brought in for cremation.

## NEWS

**Balto. Co. pet cemetery poses  
challenge for neighbors, officials**

By Alison Knezevich, The Baltimore Sun | August 13, 2012

At the Oakleigh Pet Cemetery in Parkville, Bobby the Wonder Monkey's tombstone is hidden in ivy. Weeds surround the grave of Monsetta, remembered as "Our only girl." And on Snookie's stone marker, the epitaph "Until the end our faithful pal" is barely visible behind the brush. The owner of the 2.5-acre cemetery near Loch Raven Boulevard says he is trying to clean up, but he has racked up nearly \$30,000 in unpaid county fines and fees for persistent problems such as overgrown vegetation, junk scattered on the grounds and broken windows.

## NEWS

**'Dog Logic': A little bit of Pet Heaven at CP**

By Mary Johnson, Special to The Baltimore Sun | June 26, 2010

Colonial Players closes its 2009-10 season with Tom Strellich's 1992 play "Dog Logic," about the caretaker of a seedy pet cemetery being pushed into selling the land by greedy developers. Hertel (played by Ben Carr) took over the cemetery when his father died. Now real estate developers envision a shopping mall in place of Pet Heaven — an attractive idea to Hertel's long-lost mother and his ex-wife, who want their share of the inherited property. Carr instantly connects with the audience as he delivers a series of monologues that reveal his quirky former hippie self, a man who respects and empathizes more with dogs than with people.

## NEWS

**In an effort that began in February,  
volunteers clean up and tend to  
Bonheur Memorial Park**

By LAURA CADIZ and LAURA CADIZ, SUN REPORTER | June 2, 2006

The Bonheur Memorial Park in Elkridge looks again, like a peaceful pet cemetery, with a neatly manicured lawn and fake flowers gracing some of the graves. Gone is the sea of 2-foot-tall grass. Sunken gravestones have been raised and detailed. Dead tree branches have been cleared away. The cosmetic changes at the pet cemetery — whose owner has said it is closed — are because of volunteers who have taken it on themselves to ensure that their pets and others have a serene resting place.

## NEWS

**Troubled cemetery for pets reopens  
Bonheur manager seeks old records**

By ERIKA D. PETERMAN and ERIKA D. PETERMAN, SUN STAFF | May 14, 1998

The embattled Rosa Bonheur Memorial Park pet cemetery has reopened for business, and its manager hopes patrons can help restore it to its past glory. Bookkeeper and manager Marilyn Phillips said the Elkridge cemetery reopened May 1 and is in the midst of a records reorganization. The facility had been foreclosed on and bought by a new owner after a series of incidents, including undelivered grave markers, doubts about the location of pet remains and pet ashes being delivered to the wrong owners.

## NEWS

**Troubled pet cemetery to have  
neighboring rival Competition surfaces  
near Rosa Bonheur**

NEWS

### Pet cemetery owner files for bankruptcy protection Civil, criminal charges were filed against him

By Caitlin Francke and Caitlin Francke, SUN STAFF | December 6, 1996

The owner of Elkridge's Rosa Bonheur Memorial pet cemetery has filed for bankruptcy -- possibly limiting chances that 16 disgruntled pet owners can collect thousands of dollars in claims against him. William Anthony Green filed for Chapter 13 bankruptcy protection in late October, about three weeks after civil and criminal charges were filed against him after an investigation by the Howard County Office of Consumer Affairs acting on behalf of the pet owners. The...

NEWS

### Group wants to rescue pet cemetery Animal league voices an interest

By Caitlin Francke and Caitlin Francke, SUN STAFF | February 12, 1997

A nonprofit animal advocacy group -- concerned about the fate of the 22,000 animals buried at Elkridge's embattled pet cemetery -- wants to take over the property temporarily to rescue it from legal limbo. Rosa Bonheur Memorial Park on U.S. 1 essentially has been abandoned since last week when its owner tried to give it back to the bank -- a move that the bank has resisted because of the cemetery's many troubles. Even as the Baltimore-based Animal Welfare League tries to resolve problems at the cemetery -- home to the deceased pets of former Maryland Gov. William Donald Schaefer and stripper Blaze Starr -- cemetery owner William A. Green is facing new legal scrutiny.

By Erika D. Peterman and Erika D. Peterman, SUN STAFF | March 15, 1998

Just when it seemed things couldn't get worse for the troubled Rosa Bonheur Memorial Park pet cemetery in Elkridge, a new problem has arrived right across the street. Competition Noah's Garden of Pets, on the property of the sprawling Meadowridge Memorial Park cemetery on Washington Boulevard, is planning to make a splash with its facility, currently being touted in newspaper ads illustrated with animals boarding an ark. Meadowridge plans a summer rededication ceremony and is running burial plot specials "to aid the pet community at this time."

NEWS

### Troubled pet cemetery in Elkridge gets competition from its neighbor Rival promotes discounts for animal burial plots

By Erika D. Peterman and Erika D. Peterman, SUN STAFF | March 15, 1998

Just when it seemed things couldn't get worse for the troubled Rosa Bonheur Memorial Park pet cemetery in Elkridge, a new dilemma has arrived right across the street. Competition Noah's Garden of Pets, on the property of the sprawling Meadowridge Memorial Park cemetery on Washington Boulevard, is planning to make a splash with its facility, which is being touted in newspaper ads illustrated with animals boarding an ark. Meadowridge plans a summer rededication ceremony and is running burial plot specials "to aid the pet community at this time."

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NEWS

### Pet cemetery owner gets suspended term, probation For first time, Green makes formal apology

By Caitlin Francke and Caitlin Francke, SUN STAFF | August 22, 1997

Months after Maryland pet owners began pouring their crushed hearts out on witness stands in Howard County courtrooms, the pet cemetery owner who cheated them said he was sorry. William A. Green, the former owner of Rosa Bonheur Memorial Park in Elkridge, admitted to a Howard County District Court judge yesterday that he mismanaged the 22,000-plot cemetery -- mismanagement that attorneys say caused some customers who brought their animals for cremation to receive the wrong ashes. Green, who previously blamed an elaborate employee conspiracy for his problems, apologized for the first time yesterday at his sentencing hearing before Judge James N. Vaughan.

NEWS

### Graves for pets again in doubt Representative of owner died last month

By Dana Hedgpeth and Dana Hedgpeth, SUN STAFF | February 12, 1998

The man seen as the savior of an embattled Elkridge pet cemetery has died, alarming pet lovers who had hoped he would safeguard the remains of thousands of animals buried there. Vernon Leo Edwards, 56, of Elkridge, died Jan. 28 of a heart attack in West Virginia. The mortgage broker was a vice president of Elkridge National Bank. He used his banking experience to help the owner buy the well-known Rosa Bonheur Memorial Park off U.S. 1 in November. Edwards' death sparks concerns about the future of the remains of animals -- and humans -- buried at the 8-acre, 22,000-plot property.

NEWS

### Pet cemetery owner gets suspended term, probation 'I blame myself,' he says in court

By Caitlin Francke and Caitlin Francke, SUN STAFF | August 22, 1997

Months after Maryland pet owners began pouring out their crushed hearts on witness stands in Howard County courtrooms, the pet cemetery owner who cheated them said he was sorry. William A. Green, the former owner of Rosa Bonheur Memorial Park in Elkridge, admitted to a Howard County District Court judge yesterday that he mismanaged the 22,000-plot cemetery -- mismanagement that attorneys say caused some customers who brought their animals for cremation to receive the wrong ashes. Green, who previously blamed an elaborate employee conspiracy for his problems, apologized for the first time yesterday at his sentencing before Judge James N. Vaughan.

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Date: 9/28/2013 4:18:42 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time  
From: [Johnsieq@aol.com](mailto:Johnsieq@aol.com)  
To: [politicodiane@msn.com](mailto:politicodiane@msn.com)  
CC: [ejustice@verizon.net](mailto:ejustice@verizon.net)

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For Further Information

[rosabonheursociety@juno.com](mailto:rosabonheursociety@juno.com)

[ejustice@verizon.net](mailto:ejustice@verizon.net)

[johnsieq@aol.com](mailto:johnsieq@aol.com)

*Mary Ann, clipboard*

13

There will be a rally on the grounds of the Rosa Bonheur Cemetery (Elkridge, Howard County) on Sunday, October 27 at 2 p.m., rain or shine. The rally is being held for citizens to protest the re-zoning to commercial use of the historic cemetery where up to 200 people are buried, and for many of them, their pets are buried alongside them.

The cemetery, which dates to 1935, is unique in that people and their pets can be buried side by side. There are many famous war dogs, police dogs, guide dogs for the blind, and other animals noted for heroic deeds interred at the almost 8-acre cemetery.

Rosa Bonheur is often referred to as a "pet cemetery." That is only half the truth! It has been for some years, and IS now, a human and pet cemetery.

*wiki*

At present, there are no laws in the State of Maryland governing pet cemeteries. The neighboring State of Virginia has such a law.

Human burial sites are protected in Maryland by the State Law (Title 10 of the Criminal Code) and also the State Business Regulation Article 5-505 which involves Court action under the Maryland Rules. Violators of Title 10 (the disinterment of human remains outside the requirements of the law) are punishable by fines and imprisonment. There is nothing in the laws which weaken or withdraw the protections given to human burial sites if these graves lie alongside pet graves.

On July 25, 2013, during Comprehensive Re-Zoning, the Howard County Council, sitting as a Zoning Board, re-zoned the cemetery property TOD (Transit Oriented Development). There are up to 20 commercial uses to which property in this zone can be put.

Saturday, September 28, 2013 AOL: Johnsieq

Sponsors of the rally are Eternal Justice, an organization dedicated to the preservation and protection of human burial sites, founded in 1995; the Coalition to Protect MD Burial Sites, Inc., a Statewide non-profit founded in 1991, dedicated to the same purpose; and the Rosa Bonheur Society, a group of volunteers and lot-holders at the cemetery who provide the maintenance of the cemetery.

<sup>13</sup>  
The October 13 protest meeting hopes to bring to public attention the threat of imminent destruction of Rosa Bonheur due to the recent re-zoning action. Citizens are particularly alarmed because of the disturbing track record of Howard County in protecting its cemeteries. In 1992, in a case which drew State-wide attention and led to legislative action by the Coalition, St. Mary's Cemetery, an historic Catholic cemetery in Ellicott City, was desecrated and several graves dating to the 1800's were illegally disinterred by backhoes digging a water and sewer line to access two houses being built on top of the cemetery. Protestors of the commercial re-zoning of Rosa Bonheur hope to prevent history from repeating itself.

The rally sponsors are urging citizens to e-mail the Howard County Executive to express their outrage at the re-zoning. The email is [kulman@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:kulman@howardcountymd.gov) The message should be "Remove the illegal commercial re-zoning of the Rosa Bonheur Cemetery. Fence it and protect it, intact, according to the law."

x

x

x

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## Advocates for Elkridge cemetery oppose development zoning

Burial ground is home to pet, and some human, remains

July 24, 2013 | By Arthur Hirsch, The Baltimore Sun

Elizabeth E.W. Kirk has planned to be buried alongside her mother, Beatrice, and her family dogs at the Rosa Bonheur Memorial Park in Elkridge, believed to be one of the world's first pet cemeteries to allow people to be laid to rest with their animal companions.

Her name is already set into the grassy turf there, on a bronze plaque with a photograph of her as a young woman snuggled in bed with five dogs.

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But now the 69-year-old worries that her final resting place may have to be someplace else. A developer has asked Howard County to change the zoning on the 7.8 acres of grass and trees along U.S. 1 for a project that may include homes, stores and offices.

The developer has said he'd prefer to leave the cemetery as it is, if possible, but many with an interest in the 78-year-old burying ground are skeptical.

About two dozen people are buried at Rosa Bonheur and perhaps thousands of animals, including the Baltimore zoo's first elephant, a dog whose World War II service earned him the rank of corporal, mascot dogs for the former Washington Bullets basketball team and former Gov. William Donald Schaefer's canine companion, Willie.

Kirk, president of the Animal Welfare League of Greater Baltimore, wrote to the county Planning Board that she "vehemently opposes" the proposed zoning change — her letter is one of 23 emails and letters in the official record, all from opponents to the change.

Earlier this year, the Planning Board voted to recommend the change, with a condition that "if the property is redeveloped, the cemetery be accommodated in an appropriate way."

Opponents don't find that language reassuring and are looking for help from the Howard County Council, which is scheduled to make a decision Thursday as part of a countywide comprehensive zoning package.

"It's like saying to the fox, we want to allow some accommodation when we let you into the henhouse," said James Lanier, whose partner, Candy Warden, is president of the Rosa Bonheur Society Inc., a group of volunteers who have taken care of the cemetery for about six years.

Volunteers try to keep the grass at bay, but even with their efforts it's easy to miss the bronze plaques, which lie flat on the ground.

"Sometimes when things get too overgrown, we come through here with a metal detector" to find the markers, said David Simpson, a volunteer who buried his 14-year-old brown-and-white mixed-breed dog, Scruffy, at the cemetery in 1992.

"There are plaques all over," said Warden. She does not have a pet buried there but estimates the cemetery contains the remains of thousands of animals including dogs, cats, guinea pigs, a pigeon, parakeets, canaries, rabbits and horses.

### Related Articles

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August 13, 2012

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Because people and animals are buried next to each other, Warden said, she doesn't think any development could take place without disturbing graves.

State law establishes procedures for moving human remains, as does the Cemetery Preservation Act of Howard County. But no such legal standards exist for animal remains, said Marilyn Harris-Davis, executive director of the Maryland Office of Cemetery Oversight.

Harris-Davis said that despite the presence of human remains, Rosa Bonheur is classified as a pet cemetery.

Named for a 19th-century French artist who specialized in realistic animal images, Rosa Bonheur was opened as a burial ground for animals in 1935. In 1979, it made national news by becoming what was believed at the time to be the first pet cemetery in the world to also allow human burials.

Warden said at least 25 people have been buried there and at least three sets of human cremated remains have been scattered on the grounds. No burials have taken place since 2003.

Located between Route 100 to the north and 175 to the south, the cemetery is a good location, said developer Donald R. Reuwer Jr. He said he wants to leave the cemetery as is, but there are no plans drawn yet and it's too soon to say how a project design might take shape. Much will depend on how many pieces of land the developer can put together for the project and how much land can be set aside as open space, he said.

"We want to treat everything sensitively," said Reuwer, president of Land Design & Development in Ellicott City. "There is no intention to go in and dig up animals" or to move remains to a mass grave.

He said he envisions working with the Rosa Bonheur Society to identify graves to try to preserve as many as possible. For the graves of people, he said, "The intention is to identify where humans are and plan around them."

In the 1980s, more than 100 pet graves were moved to Rosa Bonheur by then-owner William Anthony Green to resolve a legal dispute at another pet cemetery he owned. Green's troubles mounted in the 1990s when he filed for bankruptcy after civil and criminal charges were brought against him by the county on behalf of pet owners who said they paid for services that were not delivered.

In 1997, a Circuit Court judge ordered Green to pay about \$20,000 to pet owners for grave markers they never received and for giving owners cremated remains from the wrong animals. In 1997, the cemetery was sold at auction for \$219,500 to the Bonheur Land Co., owned by Gunter Tertel. He died in 2011. Reuwer said the land is now owned by Tertel's estate, and his company has a contract to buy it regardless of the outcome of the rezoning effort.

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# Cemetery advocate's crusade goes on

Eternal Justice founder takes up pet cemetery cause in Howard

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Longtime Maryland cemetery advocate Carolyn Jacobi has joined forces with residents in Howard County protesting plans to develop the Rosa Bonheur Memorial Park, a combination pet and human cemetery in Elkridge. (Daniel Kucan Jr. Special to The Baltimore Sun / October 13, 2013)

By Arthur Hirsch, The Baltimore Sun  
5:00 a.m. EDT, October 23, 2013

Carolyn Jacobi's broad-brimmed hat and cape stood out bright red against a gray afternoon recently at Rosa Bonheur Memorial Park in Elkridge, a combined pet and human cemetery, the latest stop in her 18-year national crusade for the buried dead and their loved ones.

In a voice ringing with a preacher's passion, she told some three dozen people protesting possible development that she would fight to protect cemeteries "as long as God puts breath in my body, as long as I have a brain."

At 74 years old, she told them, this is her life: visiting cemeteries, taking on another battle.

"I have no social life, I have no personal life," said Jacobi, founder of Eternal Justice Inc., a one-woman national consumer advocacy campaign she runs from her Prince George's County home. "This is my social life. Going into

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cemeteries. ... My life revolves around cemeteries."

A self-described "tough old broad" with a presence exceeding her 5-foot-1 frame, Jacobi travels the country responding to reports of neglected burial grounds and improper business practices. She has probed grave sites with a metal pole to make sure coffins are where they should be. At legislative hearings in Annapolis years ago, she presented the crushed remnants of a metal casket and human bones found lying around at a Maryland cemetery and helped to change state law.

Jacobi came to Rosa Bonheur at the request of cemetery advocates who fear the nearly 8-acre grounds are threatened by development. The developer says there's nothing to worry about, that he plans to leave the graves alone while encompassing the cemetery in a project of more than 21 acres that includes stores and homes.

His reassurances have not put to rest the anxieties of people whose loved ones — both animal and human — are buried there.

That includes Jacobi, whose two Lhasa apsos are among thousands of animals buried at the cemetery. The list of notable interments includes the canine mascots of the old Washington Bullets basketball team, the late Gov. William Donald Schaefer's dog and the first elephant at the Maryland Zoo in Baltimore.

The remains of at least 28 people are buried at the park, which was founded as a pet cemetery in 1935 and closed to all burials in 2003, according to the Rosa Bonheur Society. In 1979, the place made national news when the owner decided to allow humans to be buried alongside their pets.

Jacobi has been in the news herself since 1995, when she launched Eternal Justice as a watchdog at the cemetery gate. She runs it out of the portion of a single-family home that she rents in Fort Washington, where she keeps files of newspaper clippings from around the country, commendation letters and plaques from public officials recognizing her efforts.

On the wall behind her office chair hang framed proclamations from the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors and the state of Wisconsin for the work she did there to help expose improper cemetery practices, including bodies buried in the wrong graves.

She's got a key to the city of Birmingham, Ala. — for work improving an overgrown cemetery littered with broken headstones and human bones — and a framed proclamation from the Maryland State Senate declaring Nov. 2, 2003, as Eternal Justice and Carolyn Jacobi Day.

A photograph of Jacobi with then-Gov. Parris N. Glendening marks the day in 1997 he signed into law a bill she championed establishing the Maryland Office of Cemetery Oversight.

"Carolyn has played and continues to play an invaluable role in advocating on behalf of consumers in their interactions with the death care industry in our state and across the country," said fellow advocate Brian Ditzler, vice president of the Funeral Consumers Alliance of Maryland and Environs, a local chapter of a national group.

To understand why this former preschool teacher and cemetery sales executive says she turned consumer advocate you have to look at a side wall in her office. A small black-and-white photograph shows a slim, handsome man in a fedora, dark suit and dark shirt looking into the camera.

It's James Williams, Jacobi's father. He died in 1970, when, Jacobi said, he was shot in a street robbery in West Baltimore's Sandtown.

After he left the family when she was little, she was estranged from him for decades, until he got back in touch a few years before he was killed. He told her he knew he hadn't been a proper father, but he loved her.

"He said, 'You will always be somebody because you've always had a mouth,'" recalled Jacobi, making the point with the emphatic diction of an elocution instructor, a vestige of youthful training to overcome a stutter.

She went to her father's funeral but not the burial at Mount Auburn Cemetery in Baltimore. Nearly 25 years later in early 1995, she visited the grave with a cousin. What she found set the course for the rest of her life.

The headstone lay scattered in pieces and the soil in the grave had been "turned over," she said. Angered, she dug into the soil with her hands, finding a fragment of a human skull. Presumably it was a part of her father's remains, the only portion ever found.

She called a television station to cover the story and demanded the cemetery improve conditions. Months later she established Eternal Justice.

Since then, she has pursued complaints about cemetery maintenance, excessive fees, double-selling plots, bodies buried in the wrong place and desecrated graves. She has played many roles: mediator and rabble rouser, graveyard investigator and family funeral consultant.

Hari P. Close, a Baltimore funeral director and member of the Maryland Board of Morticians and Funeral Directors, a state regulatory body, said Jacobi's fiery personality tends to stir strong reactions.

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His dealings with Jacobi did not begin well years ago when he was head of a national trade association and the two "hit heads" over her complaints about funeral directors who did not remain at gravesides to see the bodies buried.

He said he's since come to understand her perspective.

"People like Carolyn have brought more integrity back to this industry," he said. "It's not always an easy pill to swallow."

Robert Silkworth, owner of Standiford Memorials in **Brooklyn Park**, also got off to a rocky start with Jacobi. When she was a saleswoman with the Maryland National Memorial Park, a private cemetery in **Laurel**, she told him he could not install monuments there, because customers had to buy them from the cemetery.

Once she became a consumer advocate, though, he said, they found "we were on the same page about a lot of things," especially customer choice in buying memorials.

The consumer choice ethic is emphasized by the Monument Builders of North America, a trade association that in 1997 hired Carolyn Jacobi as consumer advocate, a \$43,000-a-year position she still holds. She typically intervenes on behalf of consumers and dealers who are being charged fees for placing or maintaining monuments.

Jacobi said her work for the association and Eternal Justice do not conflict.

Close agreed, adding that if he saw an ethical issue he would speak up.

"She holds us all to a higher standard, no matter what," he said.

Jacobi said she usually gets along well with people in the business, which helps resolve disputes. Sometimes, the consumer is right, and "sometimes the cemetery is right," she said. "It doesn't happen often."

Roger Volland, executive director of Fort Lincoln Cemetery and Funeral Home in Brentwood, said he's always found Jacobi cooperative in resolving complaints.

"I have a lot of respect for her," said Volland, whose cemetery is owned by **Stewart Enterprises Inc.**, the nation's second-largest cemetery operator. "She really believes in what she's doing."

Stewart Enterprises thought enough of her to give her a "very fair price" on a granite sarcophagus for her at Fort Lincoln that would normally cost nearly \$40,000, Volland said, calling it a tribute to her work. Sitting on one of the highest points in Prince George's County, the monument bears a four-paragraph inscription, a hybrid resume/epitaph mentioning her work as a consumer advocate, five states where she influenced legislation, the Office of Cemetery Oversight, even her appearance on "The Phil Donahue Show."

Neither Jacobi nor Volland would say what she paid for the monument, which weighs about five tons, but Jacobi was adamant on one point: "I cannot be bought, do you understand that? I'm emphatic about that."

As she is about many things, including the failure of some of her efforts. She said she was "sleeping" when state law was amended to allow cemeteries to bill for "perpetual memorial care," the continuing care of a monument. In her view, consumers should not be charged for damage to monuments or material flaws, because the cemetery, monument dealer or installer should be held responsible.

She kicks herself for doing nothing about Maryland's lack of regulation on pet cemeteries, such as the Rosa Bonheur Memorial Park, but she's on that case now. If she can shepherd new legislation through the Maryland General Assembly, her sarcophagus monument inscription might have to be updated.

"If I do one more big thing before I go, it's that," she said. "I think the time is right."

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