



# THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CORTLAND RURAL CEMETERY

FALL 2024

## Knock on Wood... May This Year's Good Fortune Continue!

BY JOHN HOESCHELE, VP, BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**Supporters of the Cortland Rural Cemetery** know well that we've had an uphill climb over the last couple decades when it comes to keeping up with the grass and grounds maintenance, finding and keeping strong employees, and making ends meet financially. Not surprisingly, we've spotlighted some of those hurdles in this newsletter, on our website, and on Facebook in hopes that folks might provide financial support. (Thankfully, many of you do!) For this issue, we'd like to take the opposite tack, by recognizing that we've had a pretty darned good year — and praying this rare spell of good fortune continues!

### Saunders Mausoleum Project Completed

**The prospect of renovating a circa-1888 mausoleum was daunting**, but by plugging in the right professionals — and with the right guidance (**thank you to Board VP Brian Bosch and CRC Supervisor Danny Smith**) — the two-year renovation of the Charles W. Sanders family mausoleum was completed this summer. Funded by, and under the mandate of, the estate of Sudee Sanders (deceased, 2020), this effort was achieved thanks to the historic engineering expertise of Syracuse-based **Klepper, Hahn and Hyatt (thank you, Jim Palumbo!)** and the construction skills and expert execution of **R.E. Kelley Specialty Construction**.

*“...Supporters of the CRC know well that we've had an uphill climb over the last couple decades...”*

### Repaved Front Entrance

**Relatedly — and also enabled by the Sanders bequest, given its direct adjacency to the mausoleum** — we were also able to repave the road-way surfaces of our front entrance and circles near our office and chapel! Here, the work was done by a well-reputed and cost-competitive local paving supplier (**thanks, Daryl Anderson, and your crew at First Choice Asphalt**) and involved removing the deteriorating surface, rejuvenating it with tar, and reapplying it to the extent we could manage it. While we would have loved to pave the entire cemetery — doubtless a project that would require an investment of hundreds of thousand sof dollars — we are nevertheless very proud to have achieved this much! Oh, and **thank you to City of Cortland Mayor, Scott Steve**, for waiving our permit fee; every bit of savings helps.

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CORTLAND  
RURAL CEMETERY

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## Want to Continue Our Progress?

Please consider making  
a tax deductible gift to  
the Cortland Rural Cemetery  
and returning it using the  
enclosed envelope.  
Thank you for your support!



## Knock on Wood... CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

### Big Storms, Manageable Damage

While it's true that we had a couple major wind storms this summer, which resulted in several downed branches/and trees — it is also true that our own crew, augmented by the wonderful *Saluting Branches* team (more on this in a moment), were skilled and well-equipped enough to deal with most of the damage “in house” and at a tremendous cost savings. Well done, team!

### Speaking of Our Team...

In our Spring 2023 newsletter, we announced the hiring of our new Cemetery Supervisor, **Danny Smith**. In this current issue, we are ecstatic to report that Danny has worked out extraordinarily well and has proven to be an instrumental part of our recent and current success! Danny's leadership, work ethic, can-do attitude, and genuine care for our institution, our customers, and the deceased in our care have been nothing short of a Godsend. We also had an excellent grounds crew this year, several solid folks from **Cortland Works**, and another burst of help from much-appreciated **volunteer participants** in our 9th annual Cemetery Sweep Out Day on April 27.



**Wanted:  
Someone to remove  
tons of mixed fill  
from our  
Sands Street  
property, free for  
the taking!  
Call the CRC office  
for details.**





# Some of Our Good Luck Came From Great Donors!



Not surprisingly, a bit of our good fortune in 2024 took the form of financial support.

While expressing our genuine gratitude to ALL our donors — whatever the amount given — we'd just like to draw attention to two major contributors:

- **The Ralph R. Wilkins Foundation** — Talk about a foundation fully focused on our community's needs! The good folks at the Wilkins Foundation always seem to be there for us! This year, these good-hearted folks enabled us to purchase a commercial-grade blower and two professional string trimmers — in addition to helping us with extra-staffing hours and expenses related to emergency storm clean-ups.
- **A super, but silent, supporter** — We would be remiss if we didn't note that this year's success — and last year's, too, for that matter — was made possible in large measure by two consecutive, unrestricted five-figure donations from a very generous, anonymous donor. (You know who you are!) To that, we'll just add that this donor has had a long history of supporting the CRC and is a member of our *Angel Society*, whose names are noted on a plaque inside our chapel.

**Thank you one and all** for caring about our organization and mission! And, yes, we hope many of you will use the enclosed envelope to help us continue the momentum with whatever donation you can afford!



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**CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED**

## Be an Angel

*Learn how your donation or legacy gift can make a difference at the Cortland Rural Cemetery. Contact us to schedule a private consultation and learn about becoming a member of our Angel Society.*  
[www.cortland-rural-cemetery.com](http://www.cortland-rural-cemetery.com)



## Speaking of New Equipment, We Purchased Some Great New Gear!



As you'd expect, our professional-grade mowers endure a lot of wear and tear from climbing our steep hills, mowing around markers, and navigating rough terrain. At a cost of nearly \$20,000 each — and with a lifespan of 5-7 years on average — purchasing new mowers is a major expense indeed. Happily, we were able to purchase two new machines this year using a novel approach of 'borrowing' from our otherwise untouchable *Permanent Maintenance Fund* at no interest vs. financing in the commercial lending market at 5-8%! (Thanks to the NYS Division of Cemeteries for greenlighting this approach and to Board Member Mark Suben for helping with the necessary court filings.)

## Saluting Branches Graced Us Again for the 3rd Year!

On September 18, *Saluting Branches* returned to the CRC for the third consecutive year. This nationwide initiative, which celebrated its 10th anniversary this year, brings volunteer arborists and tree care companies together to provide tree care in military cemeteries and veteran-dedicated sites, including ours. Hats off and **heartfelt thanks, once again, to Jim Maloney**, an accomplished arborist from Niagara Mohawk, who once again coordinated this event honoring U.S. servicemen and women, enhancing our grounds, and saving us thousands of dollars in the process!

“...So you see, all in all, it's been a rare, good year at the CRC. Without pushing our luck, here's hoping there'll be others!...”

