

# THE MOUNT AMWELL NEWS



## **Cemenar’s Workshop Recommends New Jersey Cemetery Board Provide Regulatory Authority Over Historic Cemeteries**

The Workshop held at the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Cemenar produced a major consensus that a significant improvement in the legal framework to protect and preserve historic cemeteries in New Jersey would be to expand the role of the New Jersey Cemetery Board to include regulatory authority to register historic cemeteries and enforce their preservation and protection.

The third annual cemetery seminar (“Cemenar”), emceed by Marcia Karrow, was held on 24 September 2016 at the Hunterdon County Library Main Branch and was attended by a wide variety of stakeholders

including representatives from the County Clerk’s Office, local municipalities, NJ State Senate, the NJ Cemetery Association, The Hunterdon County Historical Society, local historians, and members of the public with particular preservation concerns.

Organizer David Reading introduced the Workshop with a brief survey of other state’s law and a review of a workbook containing a law category framework that would guide the participants as they separated into breakout groups, discussed and selected options, and assigned priorities of the several categories of law. After the event, workbooks were collected and a summary report written. A PDF version is available for download at [www.mtamwell.org](http://www.mtamwell.org).

Other high priority recommendations from the workshop were:

- **Require** that all deeds reflect the presence of a cemetery or burial ground in the property description

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and ensure that the cemetery presence in maintained through all future transfers.

- **Allow** conditional access to private owned graveyards, cemeteries and burial grounds by family, descendants or their agents for restoration and maintenance.
- **Prohibit** destruction of privately owned cemeteries by landowners.
- **Restrict** the sale of property dedicated to cemetery purposes and used as a burial ground if the sale interferes with its use as a cemetery

The objective of this year's event was to educate the public on public policy issues relating to cemetery protection laws and collect stakeholder views on what needs to be improved in a workshop held in the afternoon session.

The event consisted of two parts: a seminar in morning and a workshop in the afternoon. The seminar was introduced by the keynote speaker, Lance Ashworth, president of the Fishkill Supply Depot Restoration project, followed by a presentation by Bob Leith of the Hunterdon County Historical Society of several case histories of cemeteries destroyed or impacted by statutory deficiencies or neglectful enforcement.



**Michael Camerino, Esq.**

Art Rittenhouse, representing the Hendricks (on) Family Association, presented a summary of the destruction and reconstruction of the Beau Ridge Townhouse Development off S. Laurel Ave. Holmdel, NJ. The morning session closed with a Q&A with attorney Michael V. Camerino, Esq. Mr. Camerino took questions from the attendees following case histories. Most of the questions were related to private property access and planning board decisions.



**Marfy Goodspeed & C. Miller Biddle**



**Dave Reading & Art Rittenhouse**



**Judy Welshon, Bob & Leslie Leith**

## Cemetery News

### Attorney retained for Howell Graveyard

We have retained the services of attorney Michael V. Camerino of Mauro, Savo, Camerino, Grant & Schalk to represent the Mount Amwell Project in our negotiations with the Borough of Stockton for the preservation of the Howell Graveyard. Mr. Michael Camerino is a distinguished attorney who concentrates his practice in banking, municipal, commercial and real estate. He has represented governmental entities for approximately 30 years now. Mr. Camerino is currently counsel to Raritan Valley Community College and Deputy Attorney for Bridgewater Township. He was a former Deputy Somerset County Counsel, Attorney for Bethlehem. Education: J.D., Seton Hall University, 1967; B.S., Seton Hall University, 1964.

Mr. Camerino has drafted a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Stockton Borough and the Mount Amwell Project for the preservation of the Howell Graveyard. The MOU states that Stockton will acquire ownership of the abandoned cemetery, but the MTAP will pay all costs. The Borough would then lease it to the MTAP for long term maintenance.

### Haypress

The Haypress clean-up has been suspended for this year. We will schedule a clean-up date for the 2017 in January. Please check on the website for schedules. We made a lot of progress this year and only three trees remain to be removed.



Haypress on 10/30/16

### Reading Burial Ground

The MTAP has contracted with the property maintenance firm Whole 89 Yards of Sergeantsville to cut the cemetery twice a year starting in 2017. They have already done a fall clean-up of this year. During a visit to the site in November it was discovered that a falling tree limb knocked a stone off its base and also damaged the base (see photo). It was also discovered that the dry set wall needs to be reset in two places. These repairs will be done in Spring of 2017. Chris Olewnik of Cocaptain Tree Service will remove several threatening trees in December.



Fallen gravestone of Lucy (Reading) Johnson

### Slacktown

Whole 89 Yards cut the cemetery 4 times in 2016 and they are under contract to cut again in 2017. It is also anticipated that one broken gravestone will be repaired next year.

Visit the new Drupal website at [www.mtmwell.org](http://www.mtmwell.org)

**Charles Miller Biddle Book**

*William and Sarah Biddle 1633-1711, Planting a Seed of Democracy in America* by C. Miller Biddle, M.D.

Dr. Biddle has produced after a 30 year effort a biography of his ancestor William Biddle and his wife Sarah who settled in Burlington in 1681. But it's much more than personal story of an early settler to America. William Biddle was a Quaker and a West New Jersey Proprietor who was a member of the Proprietor's Council and held the position of President and Vice President for several years. Over 300 plus pages, Dr. Biddle provides the reader with details of tumultuous early land distribution in New Jersey during the proprietary period and ends with William Biddle's death in 1711. It is clearly written and highly recommended as a New Jersey historical resource.

Published by C. Miller Biddle, M.D. Copyright 2012. Printed by McNaughton & Gunn, Inc., Saline Michigan. Copies available from Biddle Biography, P.O. Box 714, Moorestown, NJ 08057.

**Announcements**

The Swackhammer Churchyard Preservation Association (SCPA) will hold a general membership meeting and lunch on Saturday January 21st at The Warrenside Tavern starting at 12:00. The SPCA was formed as a non-profit association and chartered as a chapter of the Mount Amwell Project in January of 2015. Joan Chiu and Jeff Chiu served in lead positions within the organization, he as President and she as Secretary. The death of Joan requires that the members meet to decide on the future direction of the SPCA regarding its management and organization. All interested parties are encouraged to attend this luncheon meeting. If you wish to attend please contact:

Pat Barber pattytalk@att.net or  
Jeff Williamson (jjwilliamson73@aol.com)



**Joan L. Chiu 1961-2016**

Joan passed away at home on October 16th. She was a leader and primary supporter of the efforts to restore the Swackhammer churchyard cemetery in Lebanon Township. She will be missed.

**New Members**

We welcome new members Steven Firtko of Bethlehem, PA and Christina and Kiera Spring of Whitehouse Station, NJ.

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