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# FRIENDS OF THE PEACEABLE KINGDOM IN HARTSDALE

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Issue 14

2010 Edition

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## A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends:

The past year was a memorable one for the Hartsdale Pet Cemetery. The Cemetery continued to receive a great deal of attention after being listed as one of the top ten cemeteries in the world by Lonely Planet's "Best in Travel 2009." In fact, a wonderful video about the distinction aired on zootoo.com, a popular website for animal lovers. You can now view this on our own website, [www.petcem.com](http://www.petcem.com). Another notable media appearance aired on the Spanish-language television network, Telemundo.

The War Dog Memorial also continued to receive attention after being listed as a historic site with the Westchester County Office of Tourism in 2008. *Doggie Afficionado Magazine* (Fall 2009) and *The Elks Magazine* (May 2009) both recognized Hartsdale's famous sculpture in their publications, the former calling it "a moving memorial not to be missed." Also, photos of the War Dog Memorial are included in an exhibit at the Museum of Military History in Dresden, Germany.

The annual War Dog Memorial Celebration held in June was highlighted by our keynote speaker, Tracy Wolak, who served as a K-9 trainer in Operation Iraqi Freedom and who is also a volunteer at Yonkers Animal Shelter. The program also included a touching story by plot-holder, Leslie Caruso, of her beloved dog, Gretchen, a search and rescue dog who served valiantly following the attacks on September 11, 2001. Gretchen died in 2008 after losing her battle with respiratory complications that were likely related to her work at Ground Zero. She now rests at the Peaceable Kingdom in Hartsdale.

In May, Hartsdale proudly accepted the Citizen's Award for Public Service by the Greenburgh Police Department in recognition of our support of its K-9 Unit. And in June, approximately 150 students in grades 2, 3 and 6 from Sacred Heart School in Hartsdale were given a tour of the Cemetery by my son, Ed. The enthusiastic students heard all about the rich history of the pet cemetery that is right across the street from their school. The students were especially fascinated by the story of Goldfleck, the lion cub of a Hungarian princess who was buried at Hartsdale in 1912.

A personal highlight of 2009 was participating in a Pet Lover's walking tour at Woodlawn Cemetery, which included a visit to the mausoleum of Dr. Samuel Johnson, the founder of Hartsdale Pet Cemetery. The details of my visit are contained in a separate article in this newsletter.

We are grateful for the positive feedback we receive from you about the beauty of the Cemetery. Our staff works hard to ensure that our historic grounds continue to look beautiful. Although funds collected for general maintenance and flower care play a part in creating this beauty, it is the additional support we receive from you for our Beautification Fund that really helps make a difference. Your continued support is greatly appreciated.

On behalf of all of us at the Hartsdale Pet Cemetery and Crematory, I extend our best wishes to you in 2010.

Edward C. Martin, Jr.  
Director

## NOTABLE INTERMENTS

Some notable interments at Hartsdale this year included the burial of celebrity chef, Rocco DiSpirito's cat, Pumpkin. Also, a young man traveled all the way from his home in England to bury his Labrador Retriever, Sara. Two burials took place in plots that were both originally purchased prior to 1925. And, there were 5 interments of human cremated remains. One of these people arranged to have his cremated remains delivered from his home in Alabama for burial in his plot at Hartsdale.

Although not buried at Hartsdale, "Midnight," a Labrador Retriever who served 7 years with the New York City Bomb Squad, was brought to Hartsdale for cremation by his handler and trainer, Police Officer, Ron Richards. As with all canines that are in service with a police department, Midnight's cremation was done at no charge.

## IN MEMORIAM

### *Charles Sealy*

We sadly announce the passing of Charles Sealy, who died on August 23, 2009 at the age of 79. Mr. Sealy, who lived in Barbados, was a seasonal grounds-worker at Hartsdale for nearly 20 years. He continued to work until the time of his death. He was a hard worker who arrived early and always gave a full days work. Often, he needed coaxing to come in from the hot sun in the summer and rest. He cared deeply about Hartsdale and we all will miss him.

### *Vito Sorrentino*

Vito Sorrentino died on December 24, 2009. Vito was the successor to Ed Martin, Sr.'s monument business (father of Ed Martin, Jr., the current director of Hartsdale). Vito and his family provide much of Hartsdale's monument services through the companies they operate, Presby Leland Monument Company and Westchester Sandblast. Vito was a friendly guy who loved his family, baseball and golf.

## TAKE A WALK THROUGH HARTSDALE HISTORY WITH JOHNSON-ERA PHOTOS

The next time you visit the cemetery, please drop by the office to peruse our album of newly-restored historical photographs. Taken between Hartsdale's inception in 1896 and the mid-1930s, this remarkable collection of images shows in vivid detail how the Peaceable Kingdom emerged from a rough-and-tumble apple orchard to become the premiere resting place for pets in America.

Many historic cemeteries rely on old photographs to retrace stages of their development, but it is rare to see the formative years of any burial ground chronicled in a portfolio of this scope. What's even more remarkable is that they appear to have been taken with the intent of documenting history in the making. In their entirety, the collection shows a property in rapid transformation, from a semi-wild hillside to manicured vista dotted with blooming gardenias, fancy ironwork and animal-themed sculpture.

The original photos were showing signs of age. But thanks to 21st-century technology, they now have a new lease on life. Each one was scanned and downloaded into a special computer program where they could be scrutinized under virtual magnification and their damage corrected. Then, colors were applied before reprinting the images on age-resistant paper.

In their restored form, these photographs are yielding new details about the cemetery's infancy. For the first time, we see the figure of a groundskeeper in the shadow of the tree line. Another image shows cemetery founder Dr. Johnson making an appearance, his shirt sleeves rolled to the elbow and a watering can in hand on a summer afternoon. Even the first burial, which seems somewhat neglected in the black and white original, is in fact ringed with colorful wax flowers gently pressed into the soil, and telltale landmarks in the background are hinting at its long-lost location. Undoubtedly more revelations will be forthcoming as study of this amazing collection continues.

*The above article was written by Mary Thurston, our dear friend from Texas who is the Historian for Hartsdale Pet Cemetery. You may contact her at [info@animalimage.com](mailto:info@animalimage.com)*

# HARTSDALE AND WOODLAWN CEMETERIES: THE DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON CONNECTION

One of the more interesting discoveries I made this year was that Hartsdale's founding father, Dr. Samuel Johnson, is buried at Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx. So, when Woodlawn led its first-ever Pet Lover's Tour in October, my son and I eagerly made the journey to the historic cemetery.

Despite the rain and 39-degree wind chill, thirteen people huddled together to learn about Woodlawn's famous animal lovers and their pets – some of whom I recognized as plot-holders at Hartsdale. The tour was led by Susan Olsen, Woodlawn's Director of Historical Services.

We didn't have to wait long for our curiosity to be satisfied because the first stop was the grand mausoleum of Dr. Johnson, who died in 1937. Opening the large, ornate bronze doors revealed a beautiful stained glass window and eight marble crypts stacked on top of each other on both sides.

Several notable people have plots at both Hartsdale and Woodlawn. The tour included a visit to the plot of the legendary dancer Irene Castle, who doted on her many animals, including her pet monkey, Rastas. Also, included in the walking tour was a visit to the plot of Hungarian Princess Lwoff-Parlaghy, who is notable for burying her lion-cub Goldfleck at Hartsdale in 1912. And as a special treat, Hartsdale plot-holder Tony LaMura, who attended the tour, graciously opened his family mausoleum. It was fascinating to see how its design echoes that of the one he installed in Hartsdale in 2005 for his dog Sandy.

A personal highlight of the tour was visiting the grave of my great-grandfather, Robert Caterson, a well-known monument designer and builder who worked on many distinguished buildings, including Grand Central Terminal in New York City, and who is famous at Hartsdale for creating the War Dog Memorial.

This collage of pictures showcases the graves of people who have plots at both Woodlawn and Hartsdale.



Ed Martin Jr. and son stand in front of Dr. Johnson's grand mausoleum at Woodlawn (left). Dr. Johnson and his wife at Hartsdale Pet Cemetery at the turn of the century (right).



Dancing duo Irene and Vernon Castle's graves at Woodlawn (left) and Hartsdale (right). Irene was an ardent lover of animals who built the still-famous Orphans of the Storm Animal Shelter in Deerfield, near Chicago. Her dog Zowie and monkey Rastas are among the pets she buried at Hartsdale.



Hungarian Princess Lwoff-Parlaghy's graves at Woodlawn (left) and Hartsdale (right). She buried a lion-cub named "Goldfleck" at Hartsdale in 1912.



The mausoleum's of Tony LaMura at Woodlawn (left) and Hartsdale (right). The mausoleum for his dog, Sandy, was built in 2005 and is the second-ever mausoleum to be built at Hartsdale.



*Hartsdale's mascot, Nellie.*

## Calendar of Events in 2010

War Dog Memorial Celebration / Pet Adoption

*Sunday, June 13, 2010 at 1 PM*

Pet Memorial Day / Blessing of the Animals /  
Pet Adoption

*Sunday, September 12, 2010 at 1 PM*

Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony

*Sunday, December 19, 2010 at 1 PM*

*Please note that all dates are tentative and subject to change*

### **Please participate in the Hartsdale Pet Cemetery Beautification Program**

Established in 1896, Hartsdale is America's first pet cemetery. Rich in architecture, history, culture and natural wonders, Hartsdale is a national treasure. Your contribution will help us protect and preserve an irreplaceable part of our heritage. We invite you to make a difference.

**YES** – I would like to participate in the Hartsdale Pet Cemetery Beautification Program as indicated below

\$25     \$30     \$50     \$100     \$250     \$500     \$1,000

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Plot Number \_\_\_\_\_

Please make check payable and mail to:

Hartsdale Pet Cemetery  
75 North Central Park Avenue  
Hartsdale, NY 10530  
[www.petcem.com](http://www.petcem.com)  
(800) 375-5234 / (914) 949-2583

*Hartsdale Pet Cemetery is not a 501(c) charity. Therefore, contributions to the Beautification Fund are not tax deductible.*