

Cemetery

(continued from page 1)

Entire families are buried next to one another, one with as many as 13 graves. The hardships of health and sanitation problems are evident in the names and years etched in stone. The graves of many children under 10 years old still stand.

The oldest birthdate found is that of Joshua Fuller, Philetus's uncle, who was born in 1752. Joshua and his brother, Benajah, are the only two documented Revolutionary War veterans buried in the cemetery, although other men involved with war are said to be buried there.

"You don't think about cemeteries until people you care about are there," said Ray, who thinks the cemetery should be more a part of our lives. She remembers her mother talking of picnics in the cemetery, a way to share the memory of a loved one.

Although she has walked through the place numerous times, Ray discovers something new every time. She points out her husband's ancestors, George Steele and his wife, Elizabeth



Beatrice Ray, a member of the Huntsville Cemetery Association, stands next to the new sign placed at the cemetery's entrance.

Adkins. The Adkins were one of the original settlers of Lake Carey. They had four children and only one made it to adulthood.

"I like to read the inscriptions. The worst one I ever read at another cemetery was, 'Thank God she's gone.'"

In 1908, the adjoining land was purchased from the Rogers family to enlarge the cemetery and make up what is now the new section. Back then a five-grave lot was only \$15 and families took care of their own lots. Now the Huntsville Cemetery Association takes

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Walter Billings
Cemetery association president

care of upkeep and the cemetery is under perpetual care.

After her mother-in-law passed away, Ray took her place as a member of the Huntsville Cemetery Association in the 1970's. "At least we are taking care of this

cemetery," she said. "I see it as a mark of respect. If this is still here after 200 years, a lot of people have cared enough to keep it going."

The cemetery association was incorporated in 1887. Ray said she is a part of the cemetery association to preserve history and because "you take care of your own." Many members of Ray's family, including her husband, are buried in the Huntsville Cemetery. "This is something that is close to my heart. It is something that no one else cares about, except the group of us," she said.

Ray and her family plan to be buried next to her husband someday. Her son, Walter Billings, is president of the association. He

sees his membership as his civic duty to the community. "It's something to do to give back to the community. I believe all residents of a community should be involved in something. This is my little part," said Billings, a retired Bristol Township policeman.

He has served as president for three years. "Before I knew it I was on the Board of Directors and the people on the board felt I should be able to be available for the (president's position) since I'm retired," he explained.

As president, Billings stakes out grave locations, calls to have the dirt dug up and serves as a witness to interment.

For any information regarding the cemetery, call 696-3808.

Guest column



Robert Oberst

Dance builds confidence, promotes health in youth

more relaxed in public settings and have a great sense of mental motivation and energy. It is a proven fact that young children who understand rhythm and music also show greater abilities in problem solving and mathematics. It is my opinion that these are all traits that can make for more successful and outgoing adults.

Physically, dance will increase flexibility, improve circulation and help develop muscles. It encourages weight loss and overall fitness through calorie burn off. Muscle extension can also provide a mild and pleasant form of exercise. Like other forms of exercise, it not only promotes physical development, but also helps kids to channel their energy into coordinated movements. Children as young as three can benefit from balance, good posture, poise and improved motor skills.

There are many different opinions on what competitive dancing can do for children. A large number of people feel that dance should be for the art, not the award. I couldn't agree more.

People should dance for enjoyment. You can't excel at or benefit from something you do not appreciate. Nevertheless, competitive dance has many positive effects on children, more than most people might be aware of. Learning true sportsmanship at an early age is an extremely valuable asset in young people. Competing should not be looked at as just about winning or awards. It is about experience. It is about learning. Learning to win, and learning to lose. It teaches acceptance of criticism. I believe it makes students work harder and become better at something they

truly enjoy.

Dancers who compete do excel, sometimes by award, sometimes by merit, but always by that special feeling of accomplishment or personal form of achievement. That is not to say that every dancer should become a competitive one. Each child is different and should be looked at as such. But while some people in the dance community find the negatives of competition, parents need to be aware of the positives. Students who truly love and appreciate the art of dance can find both physical and intellectual challenge and stimulation in competition programs.

It is my firm opinion that dancing helps steer kids away from bad habits and activity. They are more in tune with their bodies as a whole and are less likely to become smokers. They pay better attention to eating habits. They find more enjoyment in hanging out at their studio rather than just "hanging out". They are more responsible individuals.

Children do benefit from dancing. It does provide structure. It does make a difference. As an art form, it transmits a unique form of culture and teaches skills. It assists in emotional development and enlarges their span of creativity.

It is more than attending classes and practicing routines. It is more than glittering costumes, shiny leotards and dance shoes. More than entertaining performances and recitals. Dance is more than all that. Now you know. Life is a dance. Take your highest leap.

Robert Oberst is owner and director of Back Mountain Dance Studio.

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