



Champion COMMUNITY Page

Despite growth, Evergreen Cemetery should hold out for another 40 years

By IRENE GENTLE

The Champion

When it comes to choosing a final resting place, traditional burials may be a dying trend.

And if they are, Milton's Evergreen Cemetery should have the capacity to operate for another 40 years, said Jim Strain, secretary treasurer for the Ontario Street cemetery.

That's despite a projected population boom expected to take Milton from 35,000 to 85,000 by 2016.

Traditional burials first took a beating in Britain, where it simply ran out of space, said Mr. Strain.

Space is plentiful in Canada, but the appeal of cremation has crossed the ocean anyway.

Since the early 1990s, cremation has been making slow but steady gains in Ontario, going from a low of 33 per cent in 1993 to a high of 38.5 per cent in 1997, said Mr. Strain.

But preliminary 1998 figures indicate the growth trend may have stalled.

"While it is climbing, it isn't growing by big leaps and bounds," said Mr. Strain.

Opened in 1881, Evergreen Cemetery is non-profit, stakeholder-owned and governed by an eight-person board of directors.

In this case, a stakeholder is anyone who holds interment rights on the land.

Burial trends different

But burial trends have changed drastically since the cemetery's inception.

In the old days, families were apt to buy eight burial lots, each one a full nine-by-four feet. Over time, four lots became the norm. Then just two.

Now, with cremation, one lot, sized about three-by-five feet, is the usual purchase.

But that depends on the type of memorial requested.

A flat grass marker doesn't take up much space, but it lags behind the upright monument in popularity.

One reason is visibility. In a cold climate, a snow-covered ground can make it tough for loved ones to navigate a flat grass marker.

"People choose the type of grave based on the type of memorialization they want," said Mr. Strain.

As the only active cemetery in a growing town, a skyrocketing population could be expected to do a number on the 13.5 acre Evergreen.

But it probably won't, said Mr. Strain.

Since young families will make up a large portion of new residents, he isn't predicting a surge in burials for a while.

"Will the cemetery see that growth? I don't think so," said Mr. Strain. "Look who's moving in."

And when death rates do rise, the newer residents may not choose to be laid to rest in Milton.

Instead, they may have family plots in other areas.

Either way, there's plenty of room in Evergreen if cremation continues its rise.



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Milton's Evergreen Cemetery has plenty of space left despite having been in operation since the early 1880s.

"If the numbers keep climbing, space in Evergreen is virtually limitless," said Mr. Strain.

Some of that is due to a local bylaw that allows three cremations to be layered above a single traditional burial.

So even when the cemetery's full, there's room for more.

"It would continue to operate doing cremated remains," said Mr. Strain. "You could keep going and going."

When space does get tight, unused roads or pathways could be transformed into cemetery lots.

And an even greater space saver is an on-site granite monument with the ability to hold about 120 cremated remains on a plot of land sized for two conventional burials.

But the cremation versus traditional burial debate is largely split

by Hwy. 401.

The further north of Hwy. 401 one travels, the less popular cremation becomes, said Mr. Strain.

Which just goes to show that even in death, it's all about location, location, location.

"It's tradition. It's what people have historically done," said Mr. Strain. "The thinking of the consumer is that traditional burial is the way to go."

But since all things must come to an end, Evergreen may one day be forced to close its doors to new burials of any type.

When that happens, the cemetery board would likely approach the Town to begin talks on a new site, said Mr. Strain.

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COGECO 14 Programming Schedule — April 18th, 2000 - April 24th, 2000

Tuesday, April 18th	Wednesday, April 19th	Thursday, April 20th	Sunday, April 23rd	Monday, April 24th
10am, 11am, Noon Plugged In! Encore	10am, 11am, Noon Plugged In! Encore	10am, 11am, Noon Plugged In! Encore	4pm, 5pm, 6pm Plugged In! Week In Review	10am, 11am, Noon Plugged In! Encore
5:30, 6:30, 7:30pm Plugged In! Seniors Showcase	5:30, 6:30, 7:30pm Plugged In! Cable in the Classroom	5:30, 6:30, 7:30pm Plugged In! The Local Scene	4:30pm The Local Scene	5:30, 6:30, 7:30pm Plugged In! Living on the Edge
6:00pm The Issue Is...	6:00pm Swap Talk - Live!	6:00pm The Local Scene	5:30pm Seniors Showcase	6:00pm Living on the Edge
7:00pm Halton Hills Council - April 17	7:00pm Milton Council - April 17th	7:00pm The Issue is...		7:00pm Money Week
8:00pm	8:00pm	8:00pm Halton Region Council - April 19th		8:00pm SportsZONE Live

Feature this week: "Living on the Edge" - Health, Fitness & Lifestyle with Edge Goba & Susan Halet! Monday, 6pm