

# The South Marysburgh Mirror

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## Thoughts on the South Bay Pioneer Cemetery

*By Sam Lanfranco*

Over the past several months discussions have begun with regard to improvements to the South Bay Cemetery. Subjects have ranged from better signage, brush clearance, head stone repairs, and improving the site to better preserve its dignity as a pioneer cemetery as part of the cultural heritage of the County.



The County's Cemetery Committee and the Municipality are looking at bringing the site in line with the Committee's Pioneer Cemetery Standards.

The Milford Village Fair Board, as part of its support for local cultural assets and activities, has discussed contributions to signage. The Partnership Committee of the Mariners Park Museum has offered to help with clearing unwanted brush at the site and is keen to link the mariners' history of the cemetery more closely to the Museum.

Success in this undertaking calls for a blend of community involvement, volunteer labour, and coordination and consultation with both the Municipality and the Cemetery Committee. Cemeteries are unique cultural assets: They are resting places for the ancestors and loved ones of local families - especially here for families in South Marysburgh - and they capture local history.

Work to preserve the cemetery's dignity, and enhance it as a cultural heritage site need not be expensive. But the task does involve making some important decisions. In my years in the County, and on the



Milford Fair Board, I have been impressed by both the local commitment and depth of passion when it comes to handling such issues in South Marysburgh. We need a dialogue in order to do this right.

There are some issues where the work would benefit from hearing the views of the residents of the County, and in particular from the residents of South Marysburgh. Issues range from minor to major. At the minor end are items like the design of appropriate signage, both to identify the cemetery and possibly to



highlight features within the cemetery. For example, thanks to the initiative and efforts of residents, there is signage

identifying the graves of Minerva McCrimmon and Moses Dulmage, key figures in the County maritime history musical "Minerva".

Given the links between the cemetery and the marine heritage of the region there is scope for more cultural signage while respecting the site as a cemetery. Brush clearing and tree trimming are relatively straight forward, but there are issues with regard to pedestrian access, the road frontage, and grass maintenance. As well, the County owns the plot of land across the stream from the cemetery over to the launch ramp. Any site work should also involve thought as to how best to use that land.

One challenge has to do with the approximately 140 headstones and grave markers that, around Centennial 1967, were re-arranged to lie side by side east-to-west in a central part of the cemetery.

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