

Johnson Grass

Les Rohrbach – President

Johnson grass is an issue which has been a local problem for some time. We at BCAGP have encountered it in past years but this year has brought its virulence home to me most vividly. Since we are generally limited to group cleanups at any graveyard once a year, I never experienced the continual problems of dealing with it. I knew it got high, 6 to 8 feet, and was difficult to cut with a string trimmer. I had heard Dave Schlegel talk about his difficulties dealing with it at the Schneider graveyard.

This year when I participated in multiple cleanups at the Schneider graveyard, I realized what a problem it was. After cutting it, we were left with large piles of debris which the farmer did not want removed from the graveyard for the real concern of spreading seeds in his fields. When we returned in two months,



Schneider Graveyard infested with Johnson Grass. 2021

it had regrown just as high as previously. A small consolation was that the prior piles had decayed quickly and the mounds we had left were mostly gone.

This led me to research methods of dealing with it. What I found was not what I was looking for. Johnson grass seed can be viable for up to 10 years. Plus, it is a rhizome plant. Once roots are established, new shoots begin without seeds. So eliminating Johnson grass is

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"Grave Happenings," is a collection of member contributed articles written to keep everyone advised of recent and on-going preservation activities, BCAGP needs, and incidental graveyard related material.

We are always looking for items of interest and are open to suggestions on future content.

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Our newsletters are archived online on our website in full color

Contributors Staff/Photos this issue:

Meredith Goldey, Karla Hummel; Les Rohrbach; Keith Schaffer; Paul Schuman; Lara Thomas; Anne Wagner

Letter from Les

Les Rohrbach – President

I am taking this letter to recognize two individuals who have been great contributors to the BCAGP mission during my time with BCAGP. First is Dave Schlegel whom we first met when he appeared at a meeting in 2013. He came with a request that we do something with the Hoch graveyard in Richmond township. Burials included those of some of the founders of Fleetwood.

One Saturday morning in November 2013 I got my first look at this graveyard when Dave, Keith Schaffer, and I tackled the task of reclaiming it. Amazingly, in one morning we were able to clear everything growing inside, much of which was considerably taller than the three of us. An accompanying photo shows what we encountered when we first arrived. The second photo shows the same graveyard in the spring of 2021. Keith has rebuilt three of the walls. All other credit for the change in appearance goes to Dave, who also did fund raising among the Hoch family to support the rebuild of the walls.

His contributions to BCAGP have gone far beyond just this one graveyard. He vigorously participated in many cleanups. He also adopted numerous graveyards to maintain by himself and at his own expense. This spring Dave decided that it would be in his best interests to curtail his graveyard work. We will miss him and struggle to replace his contributions. We are grateful for the time and wisdom he brought to BCAGP and wish him the best as he continues his retirement.

The second person I want to mention appeared at maybe the third BCAGP meeting that I attended. Since then Anne Wagner has probably been the most important person in the revitalization of BCAGP. In 2008 BCAGP was trying to recover from many inactive years after the passing of one of our founders, Jackie Nein. That explains how two newcomers like Anne and myself found ourselves as officers soon after we arrived.

Anne threw herself into all aspects of BCAGP. She handled membership, researched deeds and history, nagged Keith to take her to many of the graveyards that our records said existed, took over publishing our newsletter, and put us on Facebook. And, she was the recipient of numerous requests concerning history and burials at our graveyards. Often she went well beyond what should have been expected and did extra, time consuming research.

This year Anne found herself with more demands on her time than she wanted and has sought relief from her BCAGP responsibilities. Fortunately we have had members willing to accept portions of her workload and we have been able to spread her many responsibilities. We are hoping that after some time away from persistent BCAGP stress that she again resumes a more active role in our association.



Hoch Graveyard November 2013



Hoch Graveyard November 2021

Veteran Focus

Daniel Jung (Young)

Lara Thomas - Secretary, BCAGP

I write articles for the BCAGP newsletter and I'm on the board, but I'm still visiting many of the cemeteries and burial grounds that BCAGP watches over for the first time. I added the Young Kissling to my list this fall when Les Rohrbach and I joined Dr. Laura Sherrod and students from Kutztown University there. Dr. Sherrod and her students did a ground penetration radar (GPR) survey of the Young Kissling, Les did some maintenance and I, well, I watched and took some pictures and looked up information on the interred individuals.

Daniel Jung, also known by the anglicized Young, was born on November 30, 1797. He was the son of Adam Jung and Catherine Hoch Jung and grandson of immigrant Adam Jung from either Prussia or the Rhineland-Palatinate of what is now Germany (sources differ). Adam Jung the immigrant was a veteran of the Revolutionary War. There were several boys in the family, and it appears they had farms near or adjoining each other. At least one sister who never married. Maria/Mary Jung (1793-1853) had her own home, next to Daniel's and she is buried at Young Kissling, too.

Unfortunately, it is common for records of this time to be incomplete or missing. We do know that shortly after the burning of Washington DC in 1814 by the British, Daniel joined the Pennsylvania Militia. He is recorded as serving under Brigadier General David Hottenstine of the 2nd Brigade, the 2nd Battalion of Lt Colonel John Looz, Captain Gabriel Old's company. While I wasn't able to find any veteran's pension records he is officially a veteran of the War of 1812.



Private Daniel Jung (Young)-Served in War of 1812



Dr. Sharrod's students taking measurements and notes:

After the war, he started his family. We can tell that he married a woman who was unable to sign her name but shows in records as Mary. We do not know her maiden name, when she exactly lived, or when they married. Daniel is in the census records of 1830 and 1840 and by 1850 the census records the names of his family all living with him. Wife Mary is approximately 10 years younger than he and 8 children are home with their parents. Lovina is 26 and single at home, son Albert is 17, Barbary Ann is 16, William is 13, Jacob is 12, George Washington is 10, Sarah is 6 and little Daniel is only 3. All the children but Lovina and Daniel the younger are

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SET IN STONE

Karla Hummel – Second Vice-President, BCAGP

Set in Stone articles are normally about tombstones since those are the area where I usually spend my time, but this season I had the opportunity to see how tombstones impact others. I received a message from an interested woman named Jody Miller back in May saying that she and her sisters, Mary VanBergen and Barbara Murray, were planning a long distance journey to trace their roots in Berks County. Having done some similar travels with my two sisters, I was happy to provide whatever service I could. The sisters planned to visit several cemeteries in addition to the Rickenbach family graveyard in Bern Township off Cross Keys Road (see page 18 of *Epitaphs*).



Descendants visit the Rickenbach in October.

The Rickenbach was adopted several years ago by a caretaker, Ed Glausman, so I knew it would be in presentable condition when the ladies arrived in October. It is well off the road, not visible from anywhere accessible, and I eagerly agreed to walk the ladies in from the small area where parking is available near the train crossing.

Lara Thomas decided to join us that morning since she hadn't yet had the opportunity to visit this particular site. I was glad she did, as Lara was able to assist with directions to the other cemeteries Jo intended to visit.

We hiked back along the edge of the soybeans, next to a row of trees that separate the farmer's field from the railroad tracks. We found plenty of deer bones, several golf balls and shot gun casings. We always find oddities even in the most remote locations.

The three sisters were delighted to see the graveyard, and had much speculation about more in depth issues of their family tree. I was personally rewarded by the interest they showed in the site and how grateful they were to have had the chance to visit. I work with BCAGP simply because I find burial grounds fascinating - I have no relations buried in Berks - so this occasion was a great reminder to me of how valuable our work is to the descendants of our early Berks County families.



Karla Hummel and Lara Thomas cleaning tombstones at the Rickenbach.

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Kutztown University Ground Penetrating Radar

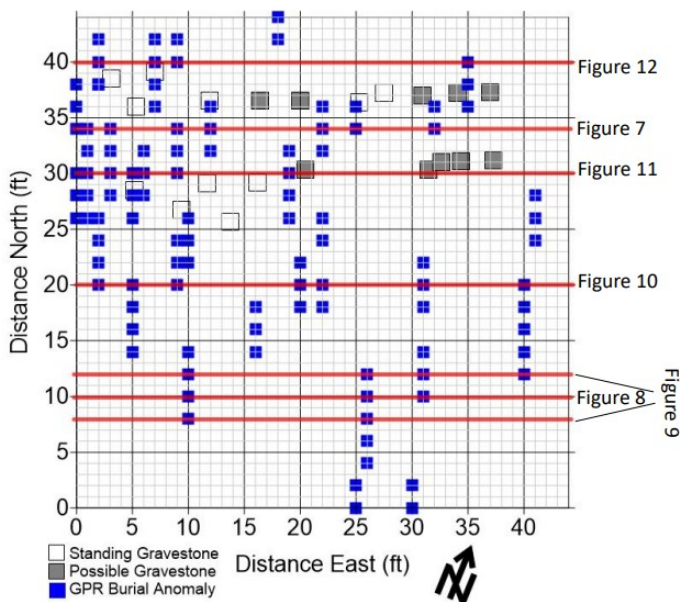
Dr Laura Sherrod from Kutztown University generously offered to once again bring her team of students to evaluate two different burial grounds using magnetometer and Ground Penetrating Radar. This is a valuable service as it can give clues to how many burials may be there unmarked, and if burials are outside the fence or wall. The students evaluated the data gathered with the equipment and formed a report with the guidance of Dr Sherrod.

Deturk/Rothermel: Muhlenberg Township

The first was conducted on the DeTurk/Rothermel in Muhlenberg Township on Friday, October 15th.

Since this burial ground has been damaged and had stones broken & moved, we hoped to be able to see the original layout.

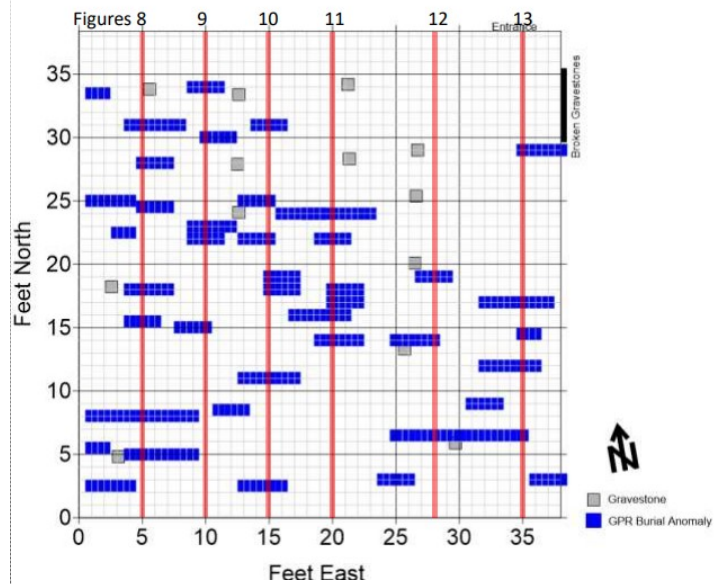
As you can see by the below extract from the report there are a number of places that could be burial activity.



Deturk/Rothermel GPR findings

Young Kissling: Exeter Township

The second was conducted on the Young Kissling Historic Cemetery in Exeter on Friday, October 22nd. As this graveyard site sits close to a highly traveled road on a sharp bend there has been significant damages through the years as traffic has accidentally left Ritter Rd and hit the gravestones. According to *Epitaphs*, markers have been damaged, destroyed, and shifted due to traffic. We're hoping the results can help us determine the original layout and number of graves as well as find buried stones. Some of the stones currently visible do not match our earlier records.



Young/Kissling GPR findings



Students with Dr Sherrod at the Deturk/Rothermel

Johnson grass (Continued from page 1)

not just a matter of killing individual plants, but also the rhizomes. Herbicides and tillage in combination are recommended.

For BCAGP tillage in a graveyard is not what we want to do. A herbicide treatment when the plant is less than 18 inches is the recommended starting point. Most growing plants should be killed and the rhizomes weakened. Additional treatments when new plants are growing will continue to weaken rhizomes. The literature does not give a promising picture of eliminating Johnson grass in the short term, just beating it back and managing it. Since seeds can survive for 10 years it is a long term problem.

The only recommended herbicide is a high powered version of Roundup and its key ingredient glyphosate. It comes with many protective warnings about proper apparel and application. Pursuing herbicidal treatments of Johnson grass will be on BCAGP's winter agenda.



Entrance to the Schneider with the gate open.



Gary Koenig and Carol Aulenbach at the Schneider with Johnson grass over their heads.

Veterans Focus (Continued from page 3)

recorded as having attended school within the year.

Only three years later, Daniel Jung died, only 55 years old and apparently unexpectedly as he died with no will and 6 children still minor. Eldest son Albert must have felt unequal to the task as both he and his mother renounced the estate and requested that the court appoint "our friend George Stoner of Exeter" to act as administrator. Mr. Stoner must have been a good friend and faithful executor because not just the number, description and value of Daniel Jung's horses was provided, but they are listed by name!

Daniel Jung is buried just to the left of his parents. They have more traditional, Germanic stones. His is cut of the same marble and by the same mason(s) but with a slightly more modern, modest shape. Metal veteran markers with flags are near his stone. His epitaph is in Pennsylvania German dialect but can be read clearly to this day.



GPR being conducted by Kutztown University. (Photo Courtesy of Dr. Laura Sharrod)

Kemp Update

As many know, BCAGP has been closely following the events surrounding the possible acquisition of the land of and surrounding the historic Kemp Burial Ground in Maxatawny Township.

BCAGP's purpose is preservation of the irreplaceable pieces of our past in the form of the monuments, space and interments within and of graveyards and burial grounds. We applaud and thank the petitioners for remembering us. The below is copied from postings from them and includes terms as a result of the negotiations.

"GREAT NEWS! We have reached an agreement with Duke. As you can see below, the settlement is strongly in our favor. The historic Kemp Family Burial Ground will remain in place. The key elements of the settlement are listed below:

- Reconstruct the brick wall surrounding the Burial Ground
- Refurbish or replace the gate to the Burial Ground
- Provide a memorial plaque for the Kemp family and a plaque for Capt. George Kemp's slave, Hannah
- Restore, repair or replace existing gravestones
- Provide gravestones and/or markers for the unidentified remains found by ground penetrating radar
- Install flag poles with an American flag and a 13-star Colonial flag
- Install four parking spaces for visitors to the Burial Ground
- Install and maintain a buffer and landscaping around the Burial Ground
- Donate \$5,000 each to the Berks County Association for Graveyard Preservation and the Kutztown Area Historical Society

*Thank you for your support
The Kemp Family Descendants"*

This is all contingent on the sale to Duke of course. If the sale would not take place, efforts to preserve the Kemp will continue. There are other suits pending against the development of the property.

Clean ups and workdays

Schneider – Oley (July 28 and August 11)

As mentioned in the main article the Johnson grass has over run the Schneider graveyard. It took two separate days in extreme heat for the awesome volunteers to get it all down. Thank you all for braving the exhausting heat!

Did you know that the Schneider has one of the oldest tombstones in Berk County? Johannes Schneider 1687-1743

Rothermel – Maiden creek (October 10th)

This substantial historic burial ground luckily did NOT have Johnson grass. The seven volunteers cut poke, lambsquarters and other brushy weeds and Gary Koenig bravely pushed a mower.

Kirby – Maiden creek (October 10)

Many drive by the Kirby Burial Ground next to 222 just north of Kirbyville between Route 73 and Kutztown. On October 10th we cut back brush and weeds from the wall and began some repair work. A previously mended stone had failed at the break; we removed the old material and cleaned it for a new fix. The very Victorian mourning urn of Solomon Kirby (1800-1875) was in danger of falling off and got some help as well.



Lara Thomas repairing the Victorian mourning urn of Solomon Kirby.

Clean ups and workdays (continued)

Rothermel – Maidencreek (October 17)

BCAGP began our day at another Rothermel burial ground, also in the Maidencreek area. While Les Rohrbach and Ron Smith trimmed, Meredith Brunt Goldey cleaned stones. We evaluated tombstones for future work and Meredith and Lara Thomas reattached the marker for Leah Manmiller Rothermel (1825-1902) to its base.

Reichert/Dumm – Maidencreek (October 17)

What was once St Henry's Roman Catholic Cemetery which enlarged on the family burial ground of the Reichert and Dumm families has always been a challenge. It's one of the larger historic burial grounds and in the past invasive ailanthus (aka Tree of Heaven and favorite of lantern flies) has been a big problem. We've visited this one more frequently and it has paid off. Last year we treated the ailanthus stumps with Garlon and we were really pleased to see no new trees. Today we dealt with burdock, lambsquarters, nightshade and normal grassy weeds. It took the four of us a few hours but it looks pretty darn good.

allowing us to make the stone at least upright again. Also, the cleaning and D2 applied last fall worked. George Sr.'s stone is readable again!



Sassaman – Maxatawny (November 7)

After working at the Kemp, several descendants including Kristine Ritter, Meredith Goldey and Linda Landis Heffernan joined us at the Sassaman, about 2 miles away. The wall apparently gave foxes a good spot to sit and watch for rodents! Scat removed and then grass, raspberry canes and brush were cut and removed.

Schmehl – Ruscombmanor (November 10)

Les Rohrbach, Gary Koenig, Ron Smith, Marvin Stamm, Joe Gross, new member and descendant Mike Schmehl, and a new face, Ty, had a relatively easy time at the Schmehl this morning. Beautiful day for it.



Kemp – Maxatawny (November 7)

BCAGP was joined by a group of descendants of the Kemp family who are related to George Kemp, Esq., captain in the American Revolution. Folks from as far as Maryland and near as over the hill came out. While the brush wasn't bad, stumps were removed, brush cut from the outside of the wall, and canes cut. Daniel Kemp, 1770-1854, son of George Sr., has been badly leaning. We were worried the weight of wet snow possible this winter could lead to the stone breaking. Several folks including Marvin Stamm, Ron Smith and Aidan Emerich dug soil and rock away

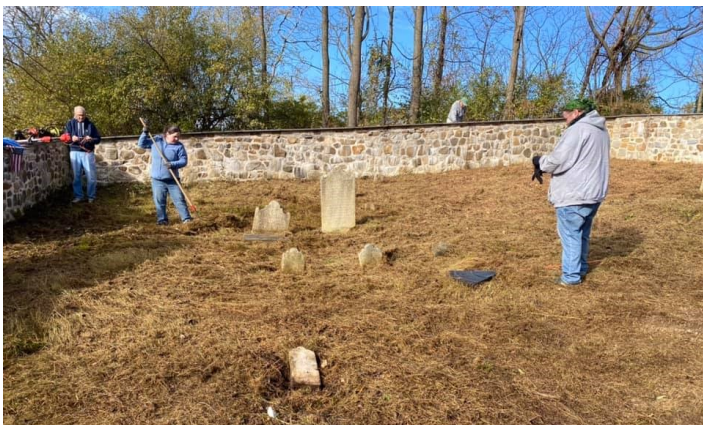
Clean ups and workdays (continued)

Kauffman – Maiden creek (November 10)

It's a good thing it was an easy start because the Kauffman of Maiden creek definitely needs a little care. Apparently the long grass did a good job of hiding the groundhog holes because we hear Ron Smith almost ended up doing a flamingo pose when his one leg disappeared up to the knee!

Ritter (November 14)

We were joined by two Ritter descendants for this effort! Thank you Kristine Ritter and Jessy Schaffer for helping! Past efforts to get rid of brush and ailanthus have really paid off at the Ritter. Ailanthus is also called tree of heaven and is a fast growing and spreading favorite food for the spotted lantern fly. So, it was nice to deal with normal but VERY long grass and some raspberry brambles at the Ritter. It's a bit of a walk to get back the field to the burial ground, but the original gate and rebuilt & restored wall make a lovely spot.



Hill (November 14)

We had lovely, kind supervision during work at the Hill this morning. The cows do an excellent job keeping the outside of the Hill clear, but the burrs and raspberry are always thick inside. Kristine Ritter joined us again this morning, thank you, Kristine!

Schaeffer (November 21)

The grass was super long but dry. Les, Ron, Gary, and Leon cut it and some brushy weeds, then Karla and Lara raked and pitchforked over the wall. The cows were surprised but also decided magically appearing hay is a good thing! We went back over *Epitaphs* and previous records. The three original

marble stones with details are known, as well as a more modern memorial to Georg Schaffer the original settler and owner of the farm. Today, groundhog holes were marked with orange flags so that no one fell in them and field stones that were marking other graves were marked with blue flags. It appears the burial is actually full or very close to it. Fieldstones are used to mark a burial when either a carved purchased monument is not affordable, not available or not convenient. Occasionally names, initials and/or dates are on them but none here appeared to have them. They may be for an adult, youth, or infant.



If you look carefully, you can see the difference between the front wall, rebuilt by our mason, Keith Schaffer, and the other walls



Marvin Stamm, Les Rohrbach and Lara Thomas repairing and righting a portion of a damaged stone at the Deturk/Rothermel burial ground.

Our Mission

We strive to preserve and maintain the historic Berks County graveyards in Eastern Pennsylvania. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Historic Burial Places Preservation Act (1994) provides for the preservation of historic burial places, tombs, monuments and gravestones and imposes penalties for violations. Research supports the existence of over 300 historic graveyards in Berks County of which approximately 120 remain with some sort of visible surface evidence. The BCAGP is working aggressively to preserve these historic grave sites for future generations.



2022 Annual Membership Meeting

This will be our annual membership meeting. 2021 will be reviewed and the budget for 2022 will be adopted.

Sunday, February 20, 2022, at 2 PM

Oley American Legion

12 Deturk Rd

Oley, PA

Over the summer months our mason, Keith Schaffer, worked on completing the needed repairs to the front wall of the Hoch Burial ground in Richmond Township!

He also completed a wall repair to Bieber/Lesher in Oley where a branch came down and damaged it.

Other locations that are planned for upcoming mason repairs are:

- Levan, Oley - Mortar between caps broken
- Guldin, Oley - estimate for cap repairs
- Schneider, Oley - repair 2 sections fallen in, cap, & other work



Glen Oley neighbors assist with the Hechler/ Esterly

The volunteers of Glen Oley were busy at the Hechler Esterly this summer and fall! This burial ground has two Revolutionary War veterans and several graves marked with field stones. It also has the infamous Johnson grass both inside and around the outside of the stone wall. These folks did a clean up here on July 18 and took the grass down to the ground and it was regrown by the end of the summer! Tracy Lanshe Richards shared these photos with us, and says they are planning another. A SUPER example of a community coming together to take care of the folks who may be gone but who helped build and preserve who we are today. Thank you!



JOIN OR DONATE TODAY!

If you're not a current member, please join us in preserving and maintaining our historic graveyards. If you do not wish to be a member at this time but you are interested in contributing support for a specific graveyard, please indicate that graveyard on the form below. We also appreciate contributions to the general fund.

MEMBERSHIP FORM - 2022

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Save a tree! Please e-mail me the newsletter.

\$ _____ Individual Annual Membership, \$15

\$ _____ Family Annual Membership (residing in same household), \$25

\$ _____ Municipality or Business Annual Membership, \$35

Additional Donation Earmarked for:

\$ _____ General Fund

\$ _____ Gravesite

\$ _____ Municipality

\$ _____ Total Amount Enclosed

Date: _____

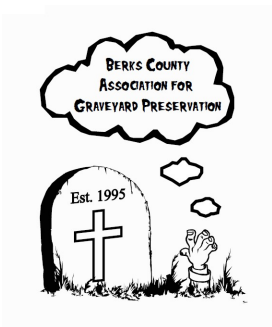
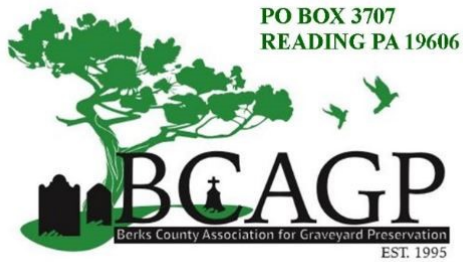
Mail Checks to:

BCAGP

PO Box 3707

Reading, PA 19606

- **Membership runs a calendar year (January to December).**
- Membership dues paid after October 1st will be applied to the next membership year.
- This form is also available on our website in the internet edition of the newsletters which can be printed.
- The official registration and financial information of Berks County Association of Graveyard Preservation may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999.
- Registration does not imply endorsement.
- Berks County Association for Graveyard Preservation is a registered 501 (c) (3). Please check with your tax advisor as to the deductibility of your contribution.



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Check our web site for meeting dates and for internet edition newsletter archives in full color!

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Don't forget to check our Facebook and Instagram for updates and more photos.

