

Cemetery cleanup volunteers to meet

Community responding to vandalism

By JOANNE HUIST SMITH
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DAYTON — Lisa O'Hearn knows the Drill.

She's organizing a restoration and cleanup of the Kerr-Drill pioneer cemeteries for the second time.

The two cemeteries encompass about an acre tucked behind apartment complexes between Frederick Pike and Northcutt Place just off Needmore Road. About 30 of the cemetery's 50 gravestones were vandalized several weeks ago. Those headstones now lay scattered and broken.

When news of the damage spread, folks around the Miami Valley responded with offers to help. O'Hearn has set a meeting for 1 p.m. Saturday at the Sheet Metal Workers Local Union Hall, 4949 Northcutt Place, for volunteers to meet and get organized.

"It's been wonderful. We'll had a lot of professional people call and offer to help," O'Hearn said.

The public is welcome to attend the meeting.

The cemetery cleanup had been an ongoing collaborative effort of ICU — Inspire, Create, Unite — a nonprofit organization founded by O'Hearn that brings together Dayton youths, city workers and neighbors.

O'Hearn plans to schedule three cleanups before Memorial Day. Youth volunteers from the East End Teen Center helped with the first cleanup. They'll be joined the second time around with others from the Alter High School's Key Club.

There also are restoration plans in the works modeled after an effort in a Tipp City cemetery.

The Old Lutheran Cemetery on Hyatt Street in Tipp City faced similar deterioration in 1976.

As the Zion Lutheran Church

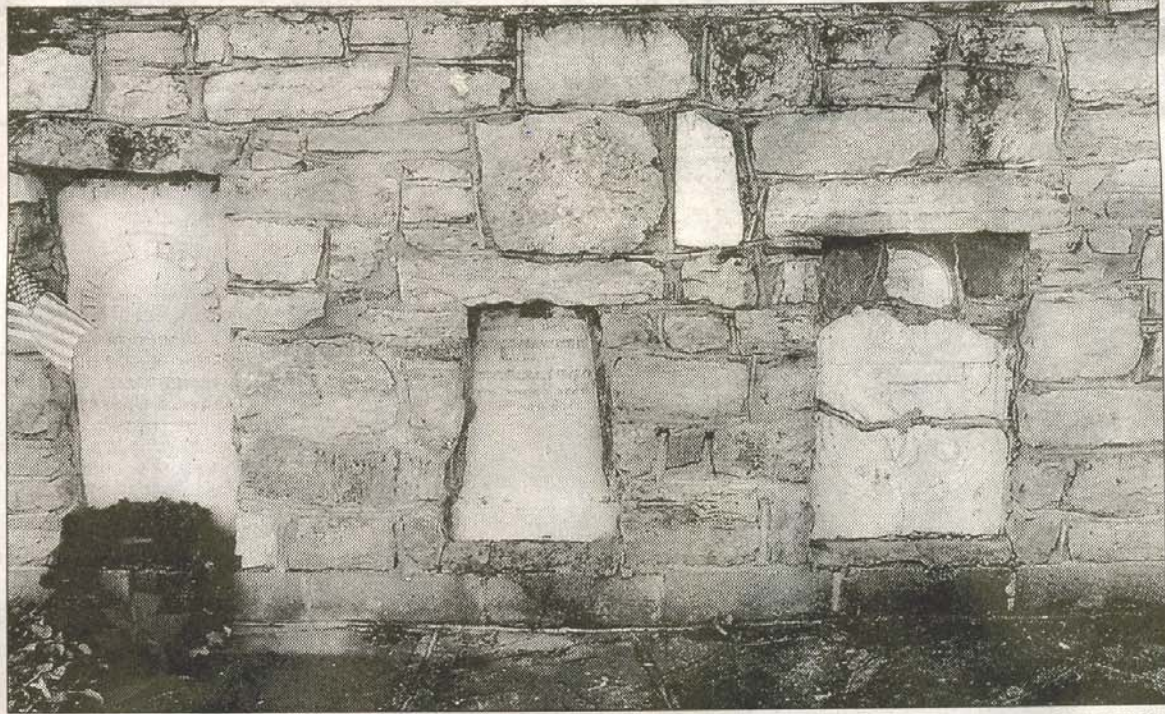


PHOTO BY DICK RICE

THIS CEMETERY IN Tipp City incorporated old tomb stones into a memorial wall in lieu of maintaining the individual gravesites that were in constant need of maintenance and repair. Lisa O'Hearn is planning the same type of wall for the Kerr-Drill cemetery in Dayton that was recently vandalized.

HOW TO HELP

- **What:** Volunteer meeting for Kerr-Drill Cemetery cleanup and restoration, open to anyone who wants to help
- **When:** At 1 p.m. Saturday
- **Where:** Sheet Metal Workers Local Union Hall, 4949 Northcutt Place, Dayton
- **For more information:** Call 546-6005 or email, icu@erinet.com
- **On the Web:** www.icudayton.com

We got to nosing around and found many broken tombstones," Posey said.

The volunteers built a cement wall and incorporated the broken pieces into it.

When Posey read about the vandalism at the Kerr-Drill cemeteries in the *Dayton Daily News*, he called O'Hearn.

"I had a sympathetic ear because of the problems we had

here," he said.

Posey plans to attend the upcoming meeting and share photos of the Tipp City cemetery wall.

"We'd like to do something similar," O'Hearn said.

Instead of a wall, ICU wants to make a series of pillars using the broken headstones and the wrought iron fencing that has been donated, O'Hearn said.

Contact Joanne Smith at 225-2362.

there prepared for its 150th anniversary celebration, William Posey, a former vice president of manufacturing at Aerovent Inc. in Piqua, and other volunteers were given the job of reclaiming the cemetery for the church.

"It was about one acre of land overgrown with weeds and brush.