

Historic Gilberttown Cemetery Tour Celebrates Easton 175th



New information kiosk, dedicated to Gary Haines, at Gilberttown Cemetery. — Frank Pagliaro Photo

Residents are invited to the Gilberttown Cemetery on Saturday, Oct 24 for a walk back in time as Easton continues its 175th-anniversary celebrations.

The day will begin at 10:30 a.m. with the Cemetery Committee dedicating its new information kiosk to its recently retired chairman, Gary Haines. The kiosk was built by Boy Scout Troop 66, led by Lucas Farmer, and installed on Sept. 19.

At 11 a.m., immediately following the ceremony, local historian Frank Pagliaro will give

an historical tour of the cemetery and its gravestones. Established in 1768, the Gilberttown Cemetery is home to many notable locals, such as Revolutionary War hero Major Jabez Hill, and Samuel Staples, the benefactor of Staples Academy and the namesake of Samuel Staples Elementary school.

Pagliari will speak about the history of the area with regard to the cemetery and how locals in the past handled death and burial practices. Guests will be shown notable graves, the evolution of the headstones over the centuries and the symbolism inherent in them.

“We’ll walk among the graves and point out stones that are interesting for what they reveal about the past, especially mortality,” Pagliaro said.

There are also many stones with memorial inscriptions that will be visited and read aloud. The tour is expected to last around half an hour to 45 minutes.

The Gilberttown Cemetery is located at 373 Black Rock road, and the event will have a limit of 20 participants due to Covid-19 social distancing regulations. If you are interested in participating, RSVP to the Easton Cemetery Committee in advance at eastontcemetery@yahoo.com.

Masks are mandatory for all guests, and everyone should dress for the weather and wear shoes appropriate for the uneven terrain of the graveyard.

Memorial Day Wreath Laying and 21-Gun Salute Carry on Despite

Pandemic



Memorial Day remembrance ceremonies were subdued this year to prevent possible spread of COVID-19. Nevertheless, the participants produced a moving tribute to Easton's veterans.

Donald Rodgerson, commander of American Legion Charles L. Ruman Post 160, led the wreath laying ceremony at Town Hall. Other members who participated were Joe Puchalski, adjutant; Mike Ceruzzi, finance treasurer; Ron Berry, service officer; Sal Giardina, member; Dick Greiser, member; Ed Soderberg, senior vice commander; Hobert Summers, member; Mike Caldaroni, assistant adjutant; Tom Coyle, member and guest speaker. Mike Reputci, guest and Jackie Johnson, guest.

They visited Aspetuck and Union cemeteries, where Easton veterans are interred. At both, there were 21 gun salutes, and Taps was played as the American flag was lowered to half-mast. Police Chief Rich Doyle and First Selectman David Bindelglass also attended. Participants and guests wore masks and stood socially distanced from one another.

Summer events that showcase the spirit and bounty of Easton, including and the Citizens for Easton Annual Farm Tour have been cancelled. Easton's 175th anniversary celebrations are in the planing stages, including virtual activities.

Easton's farmers and residents have weathered natural and man-made disasters in the past, and no one doubts the community will thrive again.

Easton Observes Memorial Day



Easton is a resilient community and in observance of Memorial Day today, members of the community are tempering their sober recognition of past and current losses of life with a sense of hope and optimism.

Though this holiday technically honors those in the military who died in combat, many have expanded their expressions of condolence to include all veterans, as well as those who died as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mindful of the required precautions, which have kept Easton's COVID-19 numbers on the low side so far, the town's customary activities have been cancelled or scaled down. According to Police Chief Richard Doyle, remembrance observances will be modest, but no less meaningful.

Members of the American Legion will place a wreath in front of Town Hall at 10 a.m., followed by 21-gun salutes at the Union and Aspetuck Cemeteries. Doyle reminds those

wishing to attend to wear masks and practice social distancing.

Easton resident Vivian Hardison and her family plan to celebrate her two brothers and two sisters, who served in the Navy and Marine Corps. But this year, she's also recognizing her daughter, Lyn, who is continuing to work with COVID-19 patients in the Intensive Care Unit. "She is, in a sense, battling to keep them alive and to get them well enough to move out of the ICU on to another step-down unit," Hardison said.

Lisa and Larry Glynn and their children are thanking their family members who served and are serving in the military, though they will be doing so virtually. "My great uncle is 93 years old and a WWII veteran and my cousin, a Naval Academy graduate, who is serving with the Marines in Japan. They will be in our thoughts," Glynn said.

Ron and Sue Sharp aren't planning anything special, but the day is significant because Ron served in the 3rd Marine Division in the Far Pacific from 1957 to 1960. "Ron remembers his Special Service Team, some of whom didn't survive," said Sue.

Debbie and Howard Klein's flag is out in honor of Debbie's father, who was a veteran of the Korean War. The flag was given to her after it flew at West Haven's Bradley Point. "My father was West Haven Town Chair of the Republican Party. He served on the West Haven Town Charter Revision Committee. He was stationed in Alaska, which is how I happened to be born in Anchorage.

"Today is also our son Alex's 25th birthday. We will make it as fun as possible during this very weird, sad time," Klein added.

Adrienne Burke, who converted Greiser's Coffee and Market into a grocery store to meet local demand for provisions, is turning her thoughts to relatives. "If we could *really* do what we wanted this holiday weekend, we would be on our way to Pennsylvania to give big hugs to parents and uncles and aunts who have been isolated these past two months and we are missing terribly," she lamented.

Leslie Minasi is also thinking of family. “Many of us in Easton have parents who call Spring Meadow home. They have been in quarantine since the first week in March and are desperate for outside interaction.” She said.

She acknowledged the essence of the holiday as well. “We must remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice while in service to our country so that we are free to do as we wish every day.”

The Courier’s Executive Editor, Nancy Doniger, articulated what is on the minds of most residents today and reflects the sentiments of the Easton Courier staff. “I look forward to the day when Eastonites will once again line Center Road, cheering on the marchers and the Helen Keller Middle School Band, and listening to speeches honoring fallen service members — and heroic first responders — in front of Town Hall.

“This year, we also mourn the nearly 100,000 souls who have died from COVID-19, including several longtime Easton residents. I long for the day when the novel coronavirus no longer threatens our lives and cherished ways of connecting with one another.

“Happy Memorial Day to all, from our small sanctuary — our home — to yours.”