

# ROCK PRAIRIE CEMETERY HALLTOWN, MISSOURI



126th Annual Association  
Board Meeting  
May 24, 2025  
2:00 P.M.

Chapel Hours  
Memorial Week:  
Mon 5/19 - Mon 5/26  
9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

## There's Some New Kids In Town

The 1976 Eagles hit, “New Kid In Town” pretty much describes how we all felt when Sherry Neeley and Jim Carson stepped down from the board last year. Even though some of us had already served eight, nine and ten years, we still felt like the new kid in town – anxious and awkward, but still hopeful and excited about the future. We knew we could handle things, but . . . just in case . . . we bestowed the title of “Honorary Lifetime Board Member” on both Sherry and Jim giving us the right to bug them whenever we wanted. Pretty smart, huh?

So, who are these smart people? Just look at the photo . . . have you ever seen a smarter-looking bunch of people? You're probably thinking, “Nope, looks like an old, washed-up, 60s rock band came to Halltown – the Grateful Dead? Fleetwood Mac? Ok. Forget the photo. Let me introduce you to your current Rock Prairie ‘Rock Star’ Board of Directors, in the order of their appearance in the photo.

Back Row, Left to Right:

### REECE DRAKE



The youngest member ever to be elected (and quite possibly the cutest), Reece Drake joined the board in 2023 at just 24 years old. He hit the ground running

proving that he is more than just a pretty face AND he is Sherry's grandnephew! You might see him flying around the cemetery on the Saturday before Memorial Day with flags in one

hand and Wet 'n Forget in the other making sure every veteran's grave has a flag and illegible headstones get sprayed. He is learning to mark plots and even volunteers to clean the bathrooms and sweep the chapel. Reece has the qualities that could see him break his grandaunt's record and serve longer than her 27 years. Go, Reece, Go! Reece's RPC family includes: Neeley, Floyd, Owens, and Porter.

### JERRY TUTTLE



Jerry Tuttle was hired to mow the cemetery in 2005 and in 2014 he was asked to join the board. He currently serves as President/Maintenance Supervisor.

He and his wife, Tami, own a farm in Halltown where they recently hosted their youngest daughter's wedding. In addition to farming, Jerry also mows several lawns in and around Halltown. Jerry has been our plot marking guru for many years doing so with diligence, precision and accuracy. He is training other board members in his meticulous ways to ensure future graves and stones will properly align. Jerry's RPC family includes: Sartin, Owens and Porter.

### JOSH NOGGLE



Josh Noggle, true to his nature, came to the board by being a nice guy. He filled in for his ailing aunt, Pam Sutherland, at the start of her second term in

2014. When her term ended in 2017, Josh was eagerly scarfed-up and elected to the board. He currently serves as Vice-President/Buildings Supervisor. Josh and his wife, Chris, own a farm in Everton. His skills and craftsmanship with chapel repairs and updates have been a godsend. Always happy, amenable, and dependable to a fault, Josh never hesitates when asked to help. He's the reason our chapel stays beautiful and functional. He keeps things light and easy when things get stressful with his quick wit and jovial disposition. Thank god for Josh! Josh's RPC family is large and includes: Noggle, Nicholson, Lee, Baker, Whinrey, and Stockton.

### MIKE PYEATT



Mike Pyeatt was asked to join the board in 2019. Mike and his wife, Denise, own a successful business a half mile from the cemetery and live a half mile in the opposite direction. Lucky for

us, that setup automatically provides free security detail for the cemetery as Mike passes by four times a day going to and from work and lunch. If the cemetery needs it and he has it at the shop, he'll make sure we get it. He provides the cedar sawdust for the bathrooms and hauls off our trash to the bin behind his shop. Mike's comments and suggestions in meetings reflect his keen business acumen and logic. Mike has been serving as Treasurer since 2023. Mike's great grandfather, John Fowler Pyeatt, was president on the board from 1927-1929.

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## Straight from the Board

### REMINDER:

**Effective June 1, 2025, full burial plots will sell for \$500 each**

**BUSINESS:** Your seven-member, volunteer board of directors each serve three-year terms that expire in yearly rotations of two/three seats. This year Roxie Sharpe (2016) and Mike Pycatt (2019) are up for re-election. Floor nominations must be submitted in writing at least two weeks prior to the meeting. Please join us to cast your vote. Thank you.

**BUSINESS:** We have gone from “desperate times” and “desperate measures” when we couldn’t pay someone to serve on the board to having a “waitlist” in the form of Alternates. At last year’s meeting we introduced our 1st Alternate, “Dawnnell Hughes.” The meeting then surprisingly produced a 2nd Alternate, “Clay Wilkerson.” Clay left before the group photo of the board was taken, but Dawnnell is there next to Roxie. Alternates have a unique opportunity to grow and learn about the cemetery and the board’s work so when the time comes they can hit the ground running! Thank you, Dawnnell and Clay, for your support and interest in the work of Rock Prairie!

**CHAPEL UPDATES: Floor:** The chapel floor is safe and strong sitting on beams and jacks placed by Mike and Kyle in 2023. Due to the age of the building, it is a slow and tedious process, but a few more cranks on the jacks will soon see the chapel all squared up again. Some of the windows (which are original) have cracked with each “crank” and some will have to be replaced.

**Usage:** Since 2019, chapel funerals have generated \$2,305! The simple, intimate nature of our historic chapel makes for a most beautiful and poignant funeral service and I believe its usage will continue to increase as more folks discover its magic and value. We just booked our first family reunion for this June!

**Display Cases:** The old, dark display cases on the wall at the back of the chapel were taken down, repaired, painted and updated with bright new fabric. Thanks to Josh, Stephanie and Roxie for their work on this project.



**UPDATE: Veterans Memorial Fund & Photo Wall:** Until a committee is established to more actively solicit donations and photos, our Veterans Memorial Fund and Photo Wall projects will sit idly by for now. Our goal is to get all 104 RPC veterans on the wall and raise \$5,200 in the process. With the “adopt-a-vet” method, anyone can participate. Please consider making a small, recurring donation, which would not only help steadily grow the Fund, but give it some life. Rock Prairie is proud of its veterans and honoring them is always the right thing to do. Help turn that belief into a real commitment. We could use your help . . . contact any board member, we’d love to talk to you. Thank you!

**NEW PROJECT: Old Part Restoration Project:** The board hopes to begin repairs to the Old Part this summer. The process will include taking before and after photos as well as notifying descendants. We welcome any descendant family support through work and/or donations. Thank you!

#### EXAMPLES OF THE BOARD’S HANDIWORK



**RECYCLED FLOWERS:** The fences are still in “full bloom” and everyone is welcome to “pick” from them! Use them however you like . . . here, there or anywhere! It is our tiny way of helping save the planet and raise funds for the cemetery – PLUS it just might help instill the joys of grave decorating in your children and grandchildren as they handpick flowers to put on grandma and grandpa’s graves. Thank you!



### 2024-2025 Rock Prairie Cemetery Board of Directors

Jerry Tuttle, President (2014)  
 Josh Noggle, Vice-President (2014)  
 Roxie Sharpe, Secretary / Sexton (2016)  
 Mike Pycatt, Treasurer (2019)

Reece Drake (2023)  
 Kyle Pycatt (2024)  
 Stephanie Colley (2024)

Reach us by email (just fill in the name): [firstname@RockPrairieCemetery.com](mailto:firstname@RockPrairieCemetery.com)

## FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

### JUNE 1, 2024 – MAY 1, 2025

DONATIONS / GIFTS	INTEREST	PLOTS SOLD	SUBTOTAL	(EXPENSES) /DISBURSEMENTS	BALANCE
\$14,839.36	\$6,503.52	\$1,200.00	\$21,342.88	-\$17,021.88	\$4,321.00

**TREASURER'S STATEMENT:** After yearly budgets and forecasts are met, the board's main focus is on growing the Endowment Fund. Thanks to two very generous \$5,000 donations, four plot sales and funds from a matured Endowment CD, another MFA bond was purchased in December 2024 increasing the Endowment Fund by \$16,000.00! The operating account will keep just enough funds in checking to pay the bills with an appropriate "cushion" held in CDs for emergencies. Unless specifically designated to a particular fund, your donations will be carefully allocated to earn the highest rate of return. Our goal remains to not only steadily grow our accounts, but your trust in us as well. A complete year-to-date financial report for the 2024-2025 fiscal year will be given at the annual meeting on May 24th. You can reach me via email: [Mike@RockPrairieCemetery.com](mailto:Mike@RockPrairieCemetery.com)

Donations are allocated to these Funds: (1) Endowment (2) Maintenance (3) Mausoleum (4) Veterans Memorial  
If you have a Fund preference, please so indicate on your check. Thank you.

For your convenience, there are 4 easy ways to donate:

By mail at: **P.O. Box 45 Halltown, MO 65664**

By Credit Card using the 'PayPal Donate' button on our website: [RockPrairieCemetery.com](http://RockPrairieCemetery.com)

By dropping your check in the mail slot at the chapel

By choosing something from our Wish List below



#### WISHLIST:

This is a partial list of items or services the cemetery could use (Jerry Tuttle donated a guest book podium last year, so . . . one down . . .): (1) Easels for picture boards, (2) portable heaters, (3) security cameras, (4) permanent section signage, (5) topsoil (from your farm?), (6) trees to replace storm-damaged ones or to plant along the north border to lessen the noise from I-44, (7) your expertise in webpage design, (8) your time and energy for projects (just ask), (9) something you have and don't need, but think we could use, etc. Email or call a board member with your gift idea. Thank you!

#### “THINGS TO BE REMEMBERED” . . .

- The days and weeks leading up to Memorial Day see a lot of activity by decorators and visitors to the cemetery. Courtesy and caution are advised when using the cemetery roads. Be mindful of others needing to get around you and remember that some graves are closer to the road than they seem.
- Our cemetery has an ever-changing topography where holes, headstones and the potential for sunken graves exist. Upon entering, you agree to hold Rock Prairie Cemetery Association, its members, operators, and officers harmless from any and all claims, damages, or injuries arising from your presence on these grounds. Please exercise caution at all times. Thank you!
- Wind and storms often wreak havoc blowing our beautiful flowers all over the cemetery and, with no way of knowing where they belong, they end up on the wrong headstone or in the chapel. *Please attach a tag to your flowers or saddle indicating the name and dates on the headstone* and the section (if you know it) so we can put them back in the right place. Thank you!
- As always, flags for veterans are free and available to you daily on the front porch of the chapel the entire week before and including Memorial Day. We ran out last year because Reece singlehandedly made sure every veteran's grave had a flag. Thank you, Reece!
- For a small donation or an obituary solicitation, the chapel is available for funerals, memorial services, family gatherings, etc. Let us know your needs and we will try to accommodate. If you don't have one, or in addition to your favorite charity, you can simply add a statement like, "In lieu of flowers, please make donations to Rock Prairie Cemetery."
- When planning your estate please don't forget Rock Prairie – "A gift to Rock Prairie Cemetery will have a lasting legacy, benefiting others for generations."

If you move or change your phone number or email, please contact **Roxie Sharpe**. We don't want to lose touch!

**[Roxie@RockPrairieCemetery.com](mailto:Roxie@RockPrairieCemetery.com) or [RockPrairieCemetery@yahoo.com](mailto:RockPrairieCemetery@yahoo.com) or 417-234-4077.**

New Kids In Town . . . continued from Page 1

Mike's RPC family includes: Pyeatt, Carter, Gilliland, Neil, and Hall (founder of Halltown).

**STEPHANIE COLLEY**



One of our two newest members, Stephanie Colley joined the board in 2024. She lives and works in Mt. Vernon. Her passion for the cemetery was first noticed

when she brought her grandchildren to the cemetery and had them pick flowers from the fences in the chapel to put on grandma's grave. With tears in her heart and eyes, she said, "it's become our special little "family tradition." If that sounds familiar, it should because I stole her idea and used it for the newsletter. She was clearly a perfect fit for the board. With a full-time job and seven grandchildren to keep her busy, her energy level and eagerness to help at the cemetery is impressive. She has been itching to learn and wants to get started yesterday. Welcome Stephanie and thank you for your unwavering support! Stephanie's RPC family is large and includes: Emerson, Wood, Johnson, Bullard, Wallis and McCray.

**ROXIE SHARPE**



Sherry Neeley recruited a total stranger in 2016 when she overheard her rattling off genealogical info to her mother at the cemetery. Knowing that "desperate

times call for desperate measures" Sherry, ever so coyly, said to this stranger, "If you like genealogy, I think you'd enjoy being on the board. We don't do much . . ." HA! But Roxie fell for it and a few days later found herself sitting in the chapel wondering what happened. She was told she would serve as secretary and very soon learned that it was the secretary's job to sweep out the chapel! Sherry spouts off a lot of stuff, but she was right about one thing . . . Roxie truly enjoys all things Rock Prairie. She has analyzed and digitized all of the records from 1899 forward and now has over 6,600 names compiled from her Rock Prairie genealogical research – she

can tell you who, how and if you are related to anyone in Rock Prairie. She and her husband, Don, live in Republic. Both can be seen crawling the grounds looking for corner markers and he couldn't be more supportive of her cemetery work. Roxie's RPC family includes: Sumner, Hendrickson, Breidenstein, Hendrix, and Cantrell.

**KYLE PYEATT**

Kyle Pyeatt, our other newest member, joined the board in 2024. He, like Reece, is 26 years old. Kyle expressed a desire to serve on the board after attending a couple of meetings and helping his dad, our own Mike Pyeatt, at the cemetery. Kyle crawled under the chapel in the winter of 2023 to help assess and begin repairs to the fallen chapel floor. Repeated "crawls" have been and are still necessary before the nearly 150-year-old structure can finally be squared up again. Kyle is very interested in restoring old headstones and is excited about the "Old Part Restoration" project. A chip off the old block, Kyle's heart and talents are exactly what we need on the board. Welcome, Kyle!

**2024 APPRECIATION PARTY**



Rock Prairie's first official "Changing of the Guard" celebration created to honor Sherry and Jim took place last year immediately following the annual meeting in

the chapel. A cake was decorated to look



like the cemetery and posters with "We'll Never Forget The Difference You've Made" decorated the walls. Roxie Sharpe gave a 30-minute speech entitled, "The Changing of the Old Guard Dogs," a lighthearted yet thorough detailing of

Sherry's & Jim's work and achievements. Throughout the speech, Sherry and Jim sat humbly quiet, though visibly anxious to be done with all the hoopla. In their minds, they simply did what needed to be done and saw no need to make such a fuss! Ah, but much to their chagrin, a fuss was indeed made.



CHANGING OF THE GUARD CEREMONY IN PROGRESS

In an unrehearsed yet touching and respectful ceremony, two board members at a time played their parts: Mike & Reece presented them with a gift, shook their hand, thanked them for their service and stood at attention removing the trash after the gifts were opened. Jerry and Josh then stepped up to request the honor of assisting them in slipping on their jackets. They, too, gave the official handshake of gratitude and stood at attention. Then everyone stood as Roxie led a toast proclaiming Sherry and Jim as Rock



Prairie's first Honorary Lifetime board members stating, ". . . words cannot express the difference you've made. May the warmth of these jackets remind you of the warmth and appreciation we're feeling toward you today every time you put them on." Then "What A Difference You've Made In My Life," by Ronnie Milsap came on and suddenly everyone was singing, and dancing in the aisles grinning ear to ear. There were even a few tears – I know because I welled up, too.

If you didn't attend, you really messed up. The party was a huge success and everyone kept saying how glad they were that they came. Maybe you'll listen to me next time.

Have a great year and see you at the Rock!