

This is Erin Dunn of the Fortuna Chamber of Commerce with a Community Comment.

The Friends of the Fortuna Cemetery District is presenting this year's production of "**Grave Matters & Untimely Departures**" on Sunday, October 26. A different cemetery is being used for the event this year—the Odd Fellows and Masonic Cemetery on Rohnerville Road.

I've been a producer of this event, along with Ross Rowley, since it started in 2010. There are a lot of logistics that go on behind the scenes, the most sticky being transportation.

For the four years we did the event at Sunrise Cemetery we had patrons park at Newburg Park and then we took them up via the People Mover tram to the back gate of the Cemetery. We couldn't have had the event without the cooperation of the neighbors since we tromped through their yards to get to the gate. We were really lucky to have their support.

So here we are, going to a new cemetery with unique logistical challenges. Patrons will have to drive on a narrow lane to get to the field where they park. Then it's a hundred feet or so to the Cemetery. We nervously talked to the two neighbors that will feel the brunt of the extra traffic that day. And, how lucky are we—they both support the project enthusiastically.

What makes Grave Matters different from other cemetery tours? A couple of things. First, because it's a Halloween show, we select stories that feature Untimely Departures. Sometimes we slip in a purely interesting historical figure, but it's mostly about the Departure.

Second, we use some of the area's finest actors and storytellers. They stand by the grave of the person they are playing to tell their story. While the stories are true, it's more of a theatrical production.

This year's "**Grave Matters**" is directed by Brian Walker, a cast member in several of the past productions. The stories are researched by

Alex Service, the Depot Museum Curator—and one of our producers.

This year you will meet –

The host of the day, Lieutenant Bill Arbogast, a U.S. Marine who died while helping rescue efforts during the 1964 Flood.

Boots Orman, a well-liked Rohnerville native who was shot in an argument outside a card room on the streets of Wildwood (now Rio Dell) in 1927.

And Annie Schuler, who was married to the ferryman who ran the ferry between Rio Dell and Scotia. She died in 1902 from asphyxiation in a fire caused by an exploding oil lamp.

And Staff Sergeant Donald Albert “Al” Kaski. Al was a high-achieving scholar and athlete at Fortuna High School and served as Student Body President in his senior year. He was killed when his vehicle hit a land mine a few months after arriving in Vietnam, in 1968. There is a scholarship at Fortuna High for outstanding scholar-athletes in his memory.

There are 8 stories all together this year and they all hope to see you on October 26 in Fortuna for Grave Matters & Untimely Departures.

This has been Erin Dunn with a Community Comment.