



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I am happy to report that on February 17th, we conducted the annual meeting of the Lot Owners of The Woodlawn Cemetery. Richard Frye, Chief Financial Officer, Susan Olsen, Executive Director of the Friends of Woodlawn, and Robert Porco, Sales Manager, made presentations on the activities of their departments as a part of our annual "The State of Woodlawn" address. Robert R. Hall, Adele C. Keogh and John P. Toale, Jr. were elected to serve three-year terms as Trustees. In addition, the Lot Owners approved changing the date of the Annual Lot Owners Meeting from February to the third Thursday in March. This change should enable more Lot Owners to attend. We encourage Lot Owners to participate in our annual meeting or to provide a proxy in their absence. To request a proxy, please call Maureen Misch at (718) 920-1463, extension 227.



Grass Crew Foreman Anthony Rotella with Author Ben Sherwood

Although our primary mission is to serve our Lot Owners and to honor those in our care, occasionally situations arise where we have the opportunity to serve the community by assisting students, historians, writers and other talented New Yorkers who need the services of a cemetery. In the summer of 2002, we met Ben Sherwood, a novelist researching his book set in a burial ground. He came to us with a rather unusual request; he needed to experience what it was like to work in a cemetery in order to accurately describe it in his book. Initially we thought he was a bit eccentric, but we decided to help him by loaning him a uniform and putting him out with our crews. Our workers enthusiastically shared their experience with the writer and in early March we hosted a book signing at the Woolworth Chapel celebrating the release of *The Death & Life of Charlie St. Cloud*. It was exciting for us to be part of a creative project and we congratulate Ben on the success of his new novel.

In recent months we've provided guided tours for schools studying art and history, welcomed art classes from Sarah Lawrence College to draw by the lake, and hosted a photography competition for the Westchester Photography Club. Members of the Audubon Society came to Woodlawn to conduct their annual bird count; the Mushroom Club came out to gather specimens, and middle school students walked through to assemble a leaf collection. This spring, we are reaching out to graduate schools, colleges and high schools to encourage students to consider Woodlawn when choosing an intern project. We've learned that by opening our gates to those with an interest in our rich history and beautiful grounds we are actually doing more to document this very special place.

It is extremely gratifying for those of us who work here to know that The Woodlawn Cemetery is important to our community as well as our Lot Owners. We look forward to inviting Woodlawn's families and neighbors to the dedication of the Garden Conservatory, our upcoming Memorial Day Celebration, and our tribute to the Jazz Greats of Woodlawn and "The King of the Vibes," Lionel Hampton.

-- John P. Toale, Jr.