

LIFE

Garden Club to host dedications at Pioneer Park

By Sequim Gazette staff • April 16, 2025 3:30 am



Sequim Gazette file photo by Emily Matthiessen At 1 p.m. Saturday, April 19, the Sequim Prairie Garden Club will dedicate a refurbished Remembrance Garden and a new Sundial Garden at Pioneer Memorial Park.

The Sequim Prairie Garden Club will dedicate the refurbished Remembrance Garden and a newly created Sundial Garden at Pioneer Memorial Park at 1 p.m. Saturday, April 19.

The public is invited to attend and light refreshments will be served. The park is located at 387 E. Washington St.

Remembrance Garden

The wild west was more than young Jane Govan was dreaming of when she immigrated from Scotland. She and her husband John traveled by steamship to the U.S. with six children ranging from a newborn up to age 14 and started farming in the Sequim Dungeness Valley.

Govan’s oldest son was killed just as he was reaching manhood. One imagines she tried her best to keep up the gardens and livestock and be supportive to her husband who remained active in the community. But her depression contributed to an early death in 1890. Her loved ones placed a beautiful white marble stone in remembrance of both Jane and her son at the then Sequim Cemetery. In 1905, when the cemetery closed, their stone remained on the acreage.

The Remembrance Garden is located in the southwest corner of the park. Formerly called the Memorial Corner, it is the location of a collection of these headstones that were found over the years throughout the park.

This historically important site has been completely refurbished through a grant from The Benjamin N. Phillips Foundation to include a stylish black metal fence, new plantings inside and outside the fence, and an informational sign detailing the history of the old cemetery and the headstones. The headstones have been professionally restored by Mick Hersey with the help of volunteers from Sequim Garden Club members.

The Sequim Prairie Garden Club formed in 1947 and soon leased four acres for a park to honor the pioneers. In 1966 the Govan grandchildren placed a new marker embellished with “Let others tell of storms and showers, I’ll only tell your sunny hours.”

Sundial Garden

The park also had a unique sundial, but it was stolen during an act of vandalism. The garden club voted to replace the missing sundial and give it a place of honor in the center of a rose garden visible near the park exit. It will be referred to and dedicated as the Sundial Garden.

Della LaCour, a member of the Sequim Garden Club who worked with others on headstone restoration in the Remembrance Garden, realized that this might be a project for her husband Joe LaCour, who has a background in scientific instruments. Joe set about to research the original sundial from only a very small black and white photo that was found in one of the garden club’s scrapbooks. He concluded that it was a reverse type, commonly called a digital equatorial sundial.

Joe LaCour set about replicating the sundial, constructing it from stainless steel to withstand the elements. He improved the design by incorporating a rotatable analemma plate that the user rotates so it faces the sun. The analemma is a figure eight line that has the months on it and compensates for the elliptical orbit of the Earth.

Reading the time off of an analemma curve instead of a straight line gnomon allows for a very accurate time reading compared to a typical sundial with a straight gnomon. It will now be mounted on a pedestal located in the Sundial Garden, where it will be easily accessible for all who visit Pioneer Memorial Park.

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