

Cemetery rests in peace

WYUKA from Page 5

the dedication of the Eternal Flame on Nov. 11, Veteran's Day. The Eternal Flame was extinguished on December 27, 1972, because of the energy crisis.

In 1894, local medical students robbed a grave to obtain a corpse for dissection at school. Fortunately, the corpse was returned before they rolled up their sleeves and got down to their grisly business.

It's rumored that high school delinquents sometimes try to sneak in after closing, especially around Halloween, to commit unspeakable acts of profanity and stupidity. But they are warned by their peers that it's dangerous. Some say there are malevolent Doberman pinschers that prowl the graveyards at night, to guard the clientele, and perhaps to add to the customer demand.

However, most people are too

frightened by the eerie atmosphere of the blackened graveyard, and the possibility of arrest, to attempt entry.

Although Wyuka is still considered a state cemetery, it is now self-supporting. Business is fairly steady, averaging more than one burial a day, 400-600 annually.

It may be presumed that most people become morticians for several ordinary reasons; family tradition, steady work, but above all, job security.

Since Wyuka is a state cemetery, employee turnover is slow. People are often appointed for life, so one can expect stiff competition in this particular job market.

Wyuka, "place of rest," is a variation of the Sioux Indian word "wynoka," meaning "to lie down." Indeed, Wyuka waits patiently, as the mausoleum of thousands of lost souls, who hopefully find peace at last in the sweet embrace of ocher.

A stark-raving-mad man talks

STARKRAVING from Page 11

say he stopped breathing around midnight, instead of listing a more specific time? If Charles Starkweather is dead, Hogswid asks, who's been paying my medical bills for the past three years?

These are questions worth pondering. But few are allowed to ponder Hogswid's questions, because Hogswid was incarcerated in Sunny Aspens home in Lawndale, Nebraska last year, some think unfairly.

Niles Foster, a close friend of Hogswid, has fought to have Hogswid released for months now, claiming that if the grave was opened, his friend would be proven sane and prudent.

"Dave Hogswid is as sane as you

an' me," Foster claims. "Maybe more sane even."

As Foster and Hogswid pad down the hall in their slippers, one wonders where the truth lies. Does it lie in the mess of bureaucratic forms stuffed into file cabinets by careless hands?

When Hogswid and Foster return from their meal, they seem renewed. Hogswid, animated, tells about the first time he met he met Charles Starkweather.

"He wasn't the sort of a guy that just dies," Hogswid said. "He kicks around a little an' he makes some noise. He was that way when he was a boy and he sure as heaven was that way in July of '59."

The way Hogswid tells it, Starkweather wasn't the sort of person who would die easily. He had con-

nections and could easily have rigged it so that not very many volts were shot through him in the chair.

"And there's always the other guy," Hogswid said.

It is Hogswid's belief that somebody died that night, someone who may have claimed to be Starkweather.

"Probably thought it would impress someone," Hogswid shrugged.

There is a question that remains, and I put it to Hogswid bluntly.

"You were put in this home because you believed Charles Starkweather is still alive. If it's necessary to prove that you're not insane, do you think grave 996 should be exhumed?"

Hogswid's face was livid. "Oh, no, don't let him out . . ."

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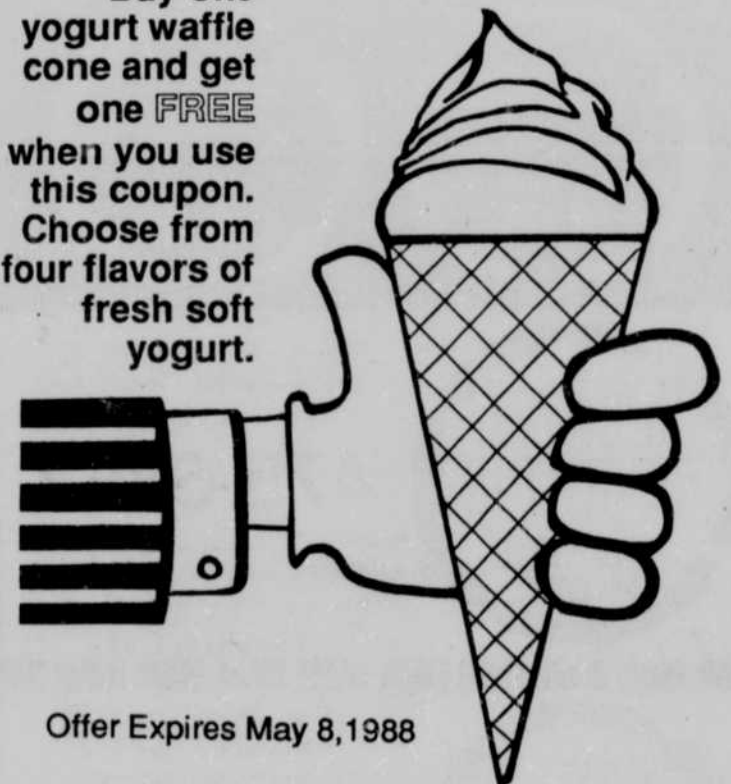


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