

Passion and Panache!

# Cyrano de Bergerac

by Edmond Rostand  
translation by Brian Hooker

Howell Theatre - 8:00 pm  
December 1, 2 and 5, 6, 7, 8, 9  
and 12, 13, 14, 15, 16

Cyrano loves Roxanne to the depths of his poet's soul but believes he is too ugly to win her for himself. Knowing her attraction to Christian, his handsome but inarticulate friend, the gallant de Bergerac pens the incandescent love letters and spins the poetic phrases that gain Christian's entrance to her heart and chamber.

Rostand's romantic classic of the heroic soldier-poet with the outrageous nose has been a favorite of audiences and critics from its Paris opening in 1897 to "Roxanne," the film adaptation.

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Shaun Sartin/Daily Nebraskan

A typical grave site at Rolling Acres Pet Cemetery. Flowers and crosses adorn a lot of the graves. Mary Schaller, office manager of Rolling Acres, displays one of the many coffins that offer for burial of pets. The gift shop also sells urns and plaques.



Shaun Sartin/Daily Nebraskan

## Sorrow of a pet's death can be eased

By James P. Webb  
Staff Reporter

Rolling Acres Pet Cemetery, Crematory and Funeral Home, 400 S. 134 St., was granted Approved Pet Cemetery Status in October, according to owner/director Patricia Strnot.

Approved Status is granted to cemeteries fulfilling basic standards approved of by the International Association of Pet Cemeteries, said Strnot, board of directors member of IAPC since 1981.

According to Strnot, the standards include: the ownership of five or more acres of land, the land deeded to the cemetery and an endowment fund in place.

"What we're trying to do is get rid of the fly-by-night operators," Strnot said. "They abandoned the pets and use the land to build condos."

Rolling Acres, one of two pet cemeteries in Lincoln, is the only approved pet cemetery in Nebraska and one of 11 approved pet cemeteries in the United States, according to the IAPC. The other approved cemeteries are located in California and Ohio.

"It's good for our PR," Strnot said. "We get people from Omaha and we have people who have moved away from here who have not found a decent pet cemetery."

Strnot, who served as president of the IAPC for a one-year term in 1987, said she voluntarily sought approval early this year, but has operated under most of the guidelines of the IAPC since opening. The main concern of IAPC is for "perpetual" care of the pets.

Strnot received special permit for 34 acres in 1977 and since has built two storage buildings for equipment and a funeral home in accordance with building codes for the city of Lincoln. Plans are under way for a 480-square foot addition for a gift shop.

Other improvements include an expanded visiting room to avoid traffic from the gift shop, the addition of a counseling room and relocation of restroom facilities. Grief counseling and support are available through a group composed of Strnot and Wilma White, a volunteer, and other part-time employees.

"People don't realize how terrible losing a pet can be. They say, 'You're just being foolish. You can replace it with another pet,'" White said. "But if they've lost a son and if the son has taught the dog tricks, (the dog) becomes a constant

reminder to the parents. Then, when the dog dies, it's like burying the son all over for them."

Rolling Acres offers a flexible assortment of burial, crematory and ceremony arrangements according to Strnot. She said cremations range from \$45 to \$115 according to the weight of the animals and burials, depending upon location of the plot, range from \$12 to \$120.

There are five areas for customers to choose from including the Garden of Whispering Pines and the Garden of St. Francis, patron saint of animals.

"We even have the remains of owners buried with their pets," Strnot said.

Because officials say concrete vaults constructed on site cannot be proven watertight, human corpses cannot be buried at Rolling Acres. However, according to Strnot, cremated remains of humans may be disposed of in any manner and cremated remains of pets may accompany corpses in regular burials.

"We have seven owners buried here and (in some cases) have arrangements for the spouse to be buried here too," Strnot said. "We have mostly dogs and cats, also hamsters and gerbils, birds, a monkey, a parrot, (and a few riding horses)."

The explanation for a majority of dog burials, according to Strnot, is because they live outside and are exposed to the elements. The older dogs develop arthritis and some can't take the summer heat; dogs also frequently are hit by motor vehicles.

White said that dogs' plots are purposely located away from those belonging to cats because of canine tendency for aggression toward members of the feline family. However, cats may be buried with dogs in another area upon owner request.

Strnot said burials may take on many forms; from owners who bring in their pets for a simple burial alongside a windbreak, to elaborate arrangements including all family members.

"We arrange for the ceremony to last an hour," Strnot said. "We wait for all the family members to show up... sometimes they bring their own priest."

She said the staff encourages the family to write notes and/or leave pictures with pets.

"The whole thing is like therapy," Strnot said.

"People talk more here than at funerals held in town," White said. "People aren't as afraid to talk about the good times with their pet as they are to talk to (deceased) people."

Strnot said in addition to regular visitations, including some from Omaha, many people remember their pets on Memorial Day, adorning tombstones with crosses and flowers available for purchase at the funeral home and gifts from the family.

"I think we have more flowers out here than they do (at the cemeteries in town)," Strnot said. "We also have an open house the second Sunday in September especially for visiting pets."

In addition to flowers, regular and custom tombstones, caskets of variable size and cost, and an assortment of brass, aluminum and tin urns are available for purchase. Also, plaques, which are mounted inside a gazebo, and living memorials, such as a tree or shrub, may be purchased directly or given to owners of a deceased pet.

Strnot said other income comes from sales from a booth Rolling Acres rents during the Nebraska State Fair. At the booth, volunteers sell items from the gift shop including: cards and posters of children and animals by Swedish artist Lisi Martin, stuffed dolls of children and animals by Annalee, an East Coast enterprise, and other small animal sculptures and figurines.

"We sell just enough to cover expenses," Strnot said.

She said that it's not a business in which a great deal of money is waiting to be made and stressed that that kind of expectation is dangerous to the well-being of pets.

Strnot said except for donations and a great deal of volunteer work, her husband has been her sole support financially, providing initial capital for start-up costs.

"He has supported what was basically my idea," Strnot said. "It's not going to make us millionaires, we just want to make this one spot greener on this earth because we were here."

The cemetery grounds are open from 9 a.m. until sunset every day and the office is open from 9 a.m. until noon, Monday through Saturday.

Besides being a member of the IACP, Rolling Acres also belongs to the Nebraska Cemetery Association and the Central States Cemetery Association.

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