

• Youngtown

(from page 1)

The upkeep of an old cemetery is a complicated responsibility. First, there is the basic landscape maintenance. Sam Dyer has had the mowing job for the past several years. May and June are the peak growing months; often Sam enlists the help of his wife, Cindy, and their two children to keep ahead of the lush growth.

Memorial Day and Fourth of July are the two peak weekends for the cemetery, with Labor Day also important, when families are likely to be gathering for picnics and reunions, and making visits to the family plot. Graves are planted with pansies or geraniums, or with pots of flowers, artificial or real; more recent graves may be decorated with personal mementos, maybe a small jar of violets. Veterans' graves get a new flag each Memorial Day; Heald usually sets them out. The flags are purchased by the town's cemetery trustees, headed for many years by Robert Libby.

A big project was completed just last year — the mapping of all the plots by surveyor and trustee Paul Chapman. A large master map is used to sell individual lots; each lot owner is given a smaller version locating his lot. Since some of the graves never had a marker, or the stones are missing, the map may not be complete. However, given the age of the cemetery and its earlier condition, it is a big help in keeping track of the lots.

McIntosh — whose assumption of the association's presidency seemed natural, given that he lives in Grace Young's house and his wife is a great-niece of the cemetery's original rescuer — wants to see Youngtown continue as a community cemetery. Lots, which range from six feet by 10 feet for a two-grave plot to 18 feet by 18 feet for a family plot, now sell for somewhat more than a few years ago. McIntosh studied the average prices at cemeteries in the nearby larger towns, and recommended that the trustees bring the Youngtown prices more into line with those. That way a little country cemetery like Youngtown won't be

seen as a "good deal" by people with no connection to the community who are simply looking for a cheap grave site.

Neighborhood Effort

For the Youngtown Cemetery really is a neighborhood effort. All the trustees live within a mile of it, and most have long family connections to it. Many times their particular expertise is used, from the use of equipment and tools, to landscaping, to accounting. They pool their skills and tools to get jobs done. Some recent land acquisitions — a swap with an abutter, and a couple of bequests — have secured the future of the cemetery's need for space.

As Heald walks along the peaceful

paths, under the shade of those enormous trees, he wonders where you stop with a project like this. He says he could spend hundreds of dollars bringing in fill for the sunken spots, or repairing broken stones. Still, most would agree the Youngtown Cemetery right now embodies a spirit of tranquillity and beauty that can't be improved on.