

# Pet Cemetery prepares for summer

By BEN BRANCHAUD

**SOUTH KINGSTOWN** - The Rose Hill Pet Cemetery in South Kingstown, the only official pet cemetery in Rhode Island, has been fully and properly manicured for the spring and summer and is ready for a season of mourning, celebration of life and remembrance.

Patty Frisella Gagne and her husband Norman, 71 and 72, respectively, have been running the cemetery since the late 80s.

"All of my life I have wanted a pet cemetery," said Patty, who received three acres of property

from her father after her dog passed away and she had nowhere to bury him. "One of the first burials we had was a college professor who had a black lab. He buried his dog with a \$1 million check. He said his dog was worth a million dollars."

Ranging from raccoons to horses, the pet cemetery is the final resting place for more than 100 Rhode Island pets - and even some of the pet owners themselves.

"Nobody would ever guess that there is a lady in there," said Patty, whose brother is buried

there and plans to be buried there herself. "When she died, her husband came and buried her ashes with her dog. I think that is really beautiful and unique."

Three more people have included wishes in their will to be buried with their pets at Rose Hill.

Patty, who paints most of the stones and decorations in the cemetery, has stories from Rose Hill ranging from the sentimental to the bizarre.

"There is a golden retriever son and mother who both died of cancer in the same week," she said. "One man, an invalid, buried his dog in a big metal locker and wants to put himself of the middle of her and his other dog. What you see out there is his little plot that he has made. It's so cute. That's a shrine to that dog. There's a huge white fence around thirty-five cats. He buries all of his cats himself and puts the names on them himself. Everything is out there from parrots, guinea pigs, a lamb and horses."

Rose Hill Pet Cemetery, hidden in the woods off of Rose Hill Road, had to go through the town's zoning board to make it the first legal pet cemetery in the state.

Patty prides herself in the affordability of the plots and her willingness to work with those who are grieving the loss of a pet.

"When we were younger, nobody had enough money to bury an animal," she said. "So we keep the price so low that anybody can. We've got people that just sit there every day and just cry until they get past it. It's a very emotional thing. It's like they've lost part of their family, which they have."

Perhaps because mischievous kids just can't find the place or they have all seen the Stephen King movie by now, Patty claims that nothing has ever been stolen or disrupted at the cemetery.

"It's great to see what some people have put up," said Patty. "Anything that people can do to honor and remember their pet, I say do it."



PHOTO BY BENJAMIN BRANCHAUD

Upon crossing the bridge to the Rose Hill Pet Cemetery, the Frisella family plot will be the first thing that a visitor notices.



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The largest and most decorated plot in the cemetery belongs to a man who has already buried his dog Tara and has plans to bury his current dog and, eventually, himself in the same plot.