

# Annual suppliers' edition

## WCCFA

# The Insider

JUNE / JULY 2011

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# Come Together!

## WCCFA/WSFDA Annual Convention Truckin' into Cle Elum August 25-27

Put on your boogie shoes and truck on over to the Suncadia Lodge Resort in Cle Elum, Wash. on August 25. Our annual convention is combined with the WSFDA for one big, happy family. We'll have three days of peace, love and understanding, hearing some really great presentations from an amazing group of



speakers, take part in fun events, meet lots of new colleagues, elect directors and officers, and get to parade around in silly costumes. How can you turn down an opportunity like this?

### Answer: you can't!

For the third straight year we've been able to hold down the registration cost to just \$295, and that includes all convention sessions as well as your meals and social events. And for a mere \$129 more you can take part in the annual golf tournament, which includes greens fees, cart, lunch and driving range/balls.

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## Director's Line



By David Ittner  
Fairmount Memorial Association,  
Spokane

The recommended topic for this month's Director's Line is Memorial Day activities, i.e., what took place at our cemeteries over the three days.

Well, as usual, Fairmount Memorial Association enjoyed a very lively and eventful week-

end paying tribute to the military personnel and veterans who ensure and have ensured the freedoms we enjoy. Our tribute to Bob Hope and the U.S.O., complete with live musical performances, went off without a hitch.

In addition, we also opened our flag museum in the Kirkland Cutter-designed Rock Chapel building at Fairmount Memorial Park. The museum holds several 48-star flags, along with other historic flags, that have been flown at Fairmount as part of our Veterans' Memorial Flag Program. And, as you read in last month's *Insider*, we were again successful in displaying over 3,200 (5ft x 8ft) U.S. flags. (In case you didn't know, these flags have been

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For details on the schedule see the registration insert. For details on the program and speakers, keep on reading.

We will start the official convention program Friday, Aug. 26 at 8:30, with our keynote speaker ICCFA President Ken Varner to set the tone for our theme of "Come Together."



**Keynote Speaker is Ken Varner, President of the ICCFA**

A CPA by trade, Ken joined the death-care profession in 1989. Both ceme-  
terian and funeral director, he is currently Presi-  
dent of the Inter-  
national Cemetery, Cremation & Funeral  
Association, CFO and a director for the

Cemetery and Mortuary Association of California, and member of various other death-care professional associations as well as several civic organizations. Ken is President and CEO of Cypress Lawn Cemetery Association in Colma, California, a non-profit garden cemetery and funeral home in the San Francisco Bay area.

With over 22 years of experience in death care combined with his involve-  
ment in state, regional and national death  
-care associations, Ken will kick off our  
convention with a "Come Together" mes-  
sage. It will be Ken's first (but, one hopes,  
not his last) visit to a WCCFA convention  
so let's give him a big welcome.

Next up: **Get it Together with Google - How You Can Be Number One!** Keith Lee's company American Retail Supply domi-  
nates Google and other search engines  
which results in 250-300 new clients  
each month. Go to Google right now and  
search for "store supplies." Google will  
give you around 469,000,000 results and

American Retail Supply will be #1 or #2 in the natural searches. Business-  
es are paying huge amounts of money to be in the shaded part of the top of the page. Keith will show exactly what to do to get to the top of the natural searches where you don't have to pay-per-click.

Keith Lee is the owner of American Retail Supply. American Retail distributes fixtures and supplies for retail stores. In the last 30 years while Keith has been at the helm of American Retail most retail store distributors have gone out of business or been bought by more progress firms. While many of his competitors have gone out of business, American Retail Supply has thrived and added distribution



**Keith Lee, Owner American Retail Supply**

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## Mission Statement of the Washington Cemetery, Cremation & Funeral Association

*The mission of the Washington Cemetery, Cremation & Funeral Association is to provide guidance and direction to its membership to achieve and maintain a high level of professionalism, ethics and integrity in the deathcare profession.*

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## Technology brings digital memories to grave sites

*This is from a recent "All Things Considered" conversation with Dave Quiring through Seattle's NPR station, KPLU.*

The process of burying the dead hasn't changed much over the centuries, but now their gravestones can provide a digital link to their life stories.

A Seattle-based company is creating burial markers that include a scan-able, stamp-like image called a "quick read" - or QR code.

The codes can be placed on tombstones so visitors can learn more about the dearly departed, leave messages for their loved ones, and record stories for others who may visit. And all you need is a smartphone and a free app to make it work.

Death and the human desire for remembrance are the constants that have kept Quiring Monuments—run by Dave Quiring—going for three generations. Quiring is part grief counselor, part artisan, part editor.

"My job is to help people tell a story in stone, generally," he says.

Quiring inherited his role 43 years ago, when his father died. Since then, he's added bronze, glass, even stainless steel and color photographs to the materials the company uses to make modern headstones. And now he's going digital: by offering black-and-white QR codes for gravestones.

You may have seen QR codes in magazine ads. They're a little larger than a postage stamp and look a bit like a combination of a bar code and a Rorschach blot. You scan



A portrait of David Quiring Sr. This is the first image that appears when you scan the QR code at his grave. Follow this link to see Mr. Quiring's QR website: [http://www.monuments.com/livingheadstone/David%20Quiring%](http://www.monuments.com/livingheadstone/David%20Quiring%20)

them with a free smartphone app and they bring up a website. Quiring pulls one from his

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Wilbert Precast also is the supplier of the "Wilbert" brand burial vaults and cremation products in the Inland Empire, which covers the areas of E. Washington, Northern Idaho and Western Montana.

I would like to extend an invitation to all members of the association who are contemplating cemetery improvements to contact Dan Terhaar at 1-800-888-4573 and let me explain how Wilbert Precast can help you with any upcoming projects.

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DELIVERING Innovative SOLUTIONS

# Supply Line



By Jim Fischer,  
WCCFA Supplier Director  
Options by Batesville

## Looking back over the last 12 years

As I write this column I have now served in this industry for 12 years with several companies selling products & services to different segments in the industry. When I started with Matthews International selling bronze memorials I primarily focused on supplying cemeteries with their memorial needs. The cremation rate for Washington state was approximately 56% and many families were still choosing to memorialize in a cemetery. Fast forward 12 years and over 70% of people dying in the state of Washington are being cremated. As a Sales Consultant with Options by Batesville I specialize in helping funeral homes maximize their cremation revenue. A lot of change has occurred in the past 12 years.

With the cremation rate approaching 75% statewide this has profoundly affected our industry. Private and public cemeteries are struggling with getting enough revenue to fund ongoing operations. Funeral homes are adjusting to lower per case revenues from higher cremation rates and families choosing little or no services. They are selling coaches, laying off administrative staff, reducing the number of funeral directors and anecdotally I have heard of firms delaying paychecks and being turned down for loans because of reduced profitability.

So how to thrive and prosper in a 75% cremation world? A quick review of the

cremation statistics for the state of Washington from 2000-2009 show that there were 125,633 additional cremations during those 10 years in this state! If you assume that those families spent \$2,000 less per call on products and services than it means the Funeral industry in Washington state saw a loss of over \$250 million in revenue due to the rise of cremation!

That doesn't even count the lost revenue to cemeteries because the majority of those families that chose cremation over the past 10 years didn't choose to memorialize their love ones in a Cemetery.

Is our industry doomed like the vinyl record industry when CD's came out? Are we only going to provide the administrative and disposition function for our families where they choose services with other providers or no services at all? Will stand alone cemeteries close operations due to lack of burials? I know those aren't questions that we can answer but we can look at our business and analyze where we are and develop plans to stop the revenue decline, increase revenues and reduce cremations with no services by making sure we present all the options to our families.

Do you know your "numbers"? By numbers I mean the number of direct cremations, number of cremations with services, the number of cremation families choosing a container above your minimum (probably cardboard), the number of families choosing urns above your minimum (probably plastic), the number of families choosing keepsakes and jewelry, the average revenue for direct cremations and cremations with services.

Do you know your average by arranger (pre-need and at-need)? Having these numbers for the past six months gives you a baseline to assess your business. From there you can set goals for improving those numbers to grow your business. A simple spreadsheet can be used to track and analyze these facts, giving you the ability to increase your revenues.

**I have seen firms that do this type of analysis and goal setting achieve an addi-**

**tional \$500 per call in increased revenue on average!** Multiply the number of cremations by \$500 and what does that do for your firm?

For cemeteries, what type of cremation products do you offer? Do you have many offerings from high end cremation memorials down to a memorial wall and ossuary for cremated remains from scattering? If you're a combo you could offer all your cremation families a tour of your cemetery showing them all of their memorialization opportunities and offer them a free scattering in your Cremation Garden (or Ossuary). If you're a standalone Cemetery you could work with your local Funeral Homes and offer their families a free scattering to get the opportunity to present them with your cremation offerings. Do you have a place where families can gather for a service?



I presented a lot of questions here for us to ponder but by asking ourselves questions it motivates us focus working on the business and not just working in the business where we can analyze, plan and set goals. As Spock said "Live long and prosper"

*Jim Fischer is a Cremation Sales Consultant for Options by Batesville assisting Funeral professionals in California, Oregon and Washington helping them with analyzing, planning and growing their cremation revenue. He focuses in the area of planning, assortment, merchandizing, packaging and training. He can be reached at 360-630-9830 or james.fischer@batesville.com.*

(Continued from page 4)

shirt pocket.

A few seconds later, my smartphone begins beeping, and soon it has pulled up a sepia picture of a man in a double-breasted suit looking out at us. "There's my dad," Quiring says. "Look at him—quite the dapper guy back in 1930."

The QR code affixed to David Quiring Sr.'s tombstone

Quiring beams at the sight of this picture and the slideshow that follows. There's the obituary that was in the newspaper after his dad died and a scan of part of a Robert Frost poem that his wife found in his wallet. It became David Quiring Sr.'s epitaph.

### More Than Just Monuments

We head to the veterans cemetery less than a mile up the road from the shop to visit the Quiring family's plot.

From the car, Quiring—who himself served during Vietnam—looks past some blooming cherry trees. Rows and rows of uniform white monuments cover the hillside.

His shop has a federal contract to make them. He'd love to see his QR code stickers added to each one.

"And then you could make a tour through there and it would be more than just a bunch of white monuments," he says. "It would be distinct lives of people who really deserve to have their story told."

It's an idea that's catching on—and not just with QR codes. A company in Phoenix has started selling tombstones with RFID tags for digital storytelling. That's a technology used for tracking things like library books and clothing in retail sales.

Also visiting this cemetery is 80-year-old Harry Coles. He's an army veteran, making stops at his brother's and mother's graves. He doesn't own a cell phone, much less a smart one. But he likes the demonstration of how the QR codes work at the Quiring family's graves.

"I'll be darned," he says. "Now that's something new!"

Coles says he's old-fashioned, so he wouldn't want anyone to buy one for him. But he thinks having one could mean a lot.

"For some people it brings back happy memories, and probably some bad memories, sorrowful memories," he says. "But, mostly, I would think, it's out of love. That's the basis for the whole thing."

And it's the vision for Quiring Monu-



Dave Quiring Jr. inherited Quiring Monuments from his father 43 years ago. He points to the QR codes he has attached to the gravestones of his father and mother at their family plot in Seattle's Evergreen Washelli Memorial Park.

ments: using technology to help future generations connect with their past.

You can see a YouTube video of the Living Headstone at this link:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yd2\\_FG06vnl](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yd2_FG06vnl)

(Continued from page 1)

named and numbered and fly in the same spot every year.)

Our classic car show, aptly named "Show and Shine," was full the entire weekend. There were several new and exciting models this year including a 1971 Pantera—something you don't see very often!

I saw something else this weekend and in the weeks leading up to our events, which never ceases to amaze me. The grounds crew and office staff at Fairmount Memorial Association (and I'm sure at your places as well) always seem to find an extra gear and additional positive energy to tackle the monumental prep-work. Every year the work load and project list appears impossi-

ble, yet the people here meet the deadlines and complete the jobs. Each day as I moved from cemetery to cemetery, I was continually astounded by the amount of work our crews finished in a 24-hour period. It seemed the closer we got to the weekend, the more they accomplished, and they did this while knowing that they still had to work the entire Memorial Day weekend with no rest in sight.

I continue to be extremely impressed with the excellent customer service and positive attitudes displayed by the grounds crew and office staff during the weekend events. Everyone is smiling and eager to help the next customer who walks in the office or up to an information tent. Maybe it is the spirit of what Memorial Day stands for,

or it is the pride and ownership everyone takes in what they have accomplished, but our staff is always at their best this time of year.

Every Memorial Day at Fairmount is filled with great events and activities dedicated to the service men and women who have given their all to protect our country. But the answer to the question of what we had at our cemeteries this year would not be complete without mentioning the people who made the weekend great. We have dedicated and hardworking crew and staff and to all of them, thank you.

David Ittner

# Observations: You can't regulate stupid

*"We have now sunk to a depth at which the restatement of the obvious is the first duty of intelligent man." - George Orwell*

A postal worker in the state of Washington decided delivering mail was a bother. He built up 34 tubs of undelivered mail. He put it under a blue tarp in his back yard and eventually burned it in a fire pit, also in his back yard. These were checks, bills, important notifications and life-changing correspondence. There is no explanation to his actions other than just plain laziness. He now faces federal charges.

How do you regulate stupid?

A windshield repairman was summoned to replace a windshield on a van in an industrial area of Mesa, AZ. As he was working on the van, he couldn't help but notice its contents or their odor. There were cardboard boxes stacked up inside the van.

The business was Allstate Crematory.

The repairman, a viewer of Channel 15 news, couldn't sleep very well and gave them a call: "They had stickers on the boxes that said what the person's name was and where they came from.

"They were just there in my mind, thinking about it. They are, just in my opinion, mistreated, sitting there in a van rotting away in the heat. Just thinking if it were a family member or a loved one of mine, that there is no way for any reason that I would want them treated that way after they passed," the "viewer" told Channel 15.

The viewer took cell phone video of a partially opened garage door that showed maggots on the floor and the unlocked van in front stacked with cremation containers.

ABC 15 staked out the van with five bodies in it from 7 one evening until 2 the next afternoon—nearly 20 hours. The heat reached 80 degrees. The crematory staff finally moved them inside.

Later reporters Joe Ducey and Maria Tomasch found out that All State Crematory owner Franklin Lambert had taken four other bodies home and parked them in his driveway overnight in another van.

Reporter Ducey confronted Lambert, an Arizona licensed funeral director and cremationist.

Lambert told ABC15 that he had been too busy and that his cooler was full. This was just a temporary measure.

Arizona law states that embalming is: "Not required by state law, if remains are refrigerated, cremated or buried within 24 hours and the person has not died due to certain communicable diseases. If you select any of the services, you do not have to pay

for embalming you did not approve. Note that funeral establishments are not required to provide refrigeration."

Therefore, after 24 hours, refrigeration was needed for ALL of his clients.

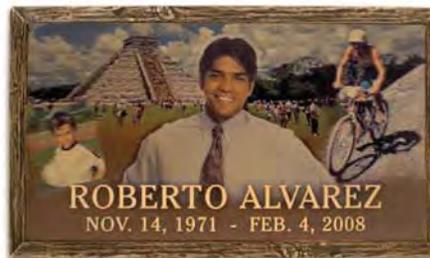
Channel 15 called some of the families they were able to discern from the labels.

*(Continued on page 17)*

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(Continued from page 2)

facilities in Denver and Honolulu to complement its base operation in Kent, Washington. The company's manufacturing facility in Bend, Oregon continues to set new sales records almost every month

Rounding out the morning will be a moving, and at the same time nuts-and-bolts, presentation: **Behind the Badge Foundation: Helping with a Line of Duty Death.** Speaker Gayle Frink-Schulz



**Gayle Frink-Schulz, Program Director, Behind the Badge Foundation**

became a police widow in 1993 when her husband, Trooper Steven L. Frink, a motor officer with the Washington State Patrol, was killed in the line of duty. Their daughter was 14 and son 3.

Gayle worked through her grief by supporting families suffering the loss of their officer to a law enforcement line of duty death, and supporting police agencies af-

ected by the loss of one of their own. She has been a member of the Behind the Badge Foundation's Line of Duty Death Response Team since 1998, has served on the national board of Concerns of Police Survivors (COPS), trained nationally for COPS as lead presenter on The Traumas of Law Enforcement and trained at the CJTC Basic Academy on Critical Incident Stress and the Family, and has served as president or board member for various other related groups. She is currently Program Director for the Behind the Badge Foundation.



**Cameron Smock, WSFDA President**

Gayle will be assisted with her presentation by Cameron Smock. Currently president of the WSFDA, and a past president of the then-WCFA, Cameron has been in funeral service since 1985 and with Bonney-Watson Funeral Homes since 1988. He has been called upon to handle arrangements for numerous police officers killed in the line of duty. As a result he developed a

written protocol "A Ceremony with Dignity and Pride—The Role of the Funeral Director" which has been used as a resource by the multi-agency planning group that coordinates a line of duty death ceremony. Bonney-Watson received the Behind the Badge annual Spirit Award in 2008 for their support of the law enforcement community.



**Nectar Ramirez, Director of Sales, Options by Batesville**

The first afternoon session will be **The Time to AC2T is Now!** with Nectar Ramirez, Director of Sales for Options by Batesville. This will be Nectar's second visit to our annual convention.

This educational seminar is designed for all funeral professionals who are involved in the cremation process with families. Our target audiences are funeral professionals who seek to engage these families in creating meaningful services and memorials as

(Continued on page 10)



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well as address the threat that cremation brings to the profitability of their business. Nectar will cover the most up-to-date consumer research (Fall 2010) regarding cremation preferences and the identification of the gaps between what consumers want and what the industry makes available to them. We will also cover **AC²T** (Acting on Cremation Challenges Together) - a comprehensive 5-step system that drives increased profitability from cremation families and greater family satisfaction.

**Nectar L. Ramirez** was born and raised in Puerto Rico. She earned a BS in Industrial Engineering from Purdue University, her MBA at the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University. Nectar worked for Corporate Executive Board as a consultant identifying and teaching best practices to Fortune 500 companies in Sales, Marketing and HR - her clients included Hewlett Packard, Ford, 3M and GE. Nectar has been at Batesville Casket the last 8 years as Director of Market Research, Sales Director for the Metro Region (New York, New Jersey, Connecticut) and most recently as Di-

rector of Sales for Options, Batesville's cremation business.

Our last speaker for Friday is Sherry Anderson with **Avoiding Staff Burnout: How to Keep Funerals From Being Such a Bummer, Man.** ☺

Sherry specifically asked to speak during the afternoon timeslot when you would normally be nodding off or ducking out to "make a call." Hang out for this one—you'll be glad you did.

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# Come together Aug. 25!

**WCCFA/WSFDA Annual Convention August 25-27, 2011 Suncadia Lodge Resort, Cle**

Reserve your hotel room soon!

It's mere WEEKS until the 2011 WCCFA/WSFDA convention.

Go to [suncadiaresort.com](http://suncadiaresort.com) to find out more about Suncadia Lodge accommodations, and call 866-904-6301 to reserve your room. You can only reserve by telephone.



Visit us at [www.wcfa.us](http://www.wcfa.us)

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- ◆ When did you last dread the idea of the next work day?
- ◆ When did you last activate a plan to improve your employee satisfaction?

Whether it's yourself or a staff member, avoiding burnout might be easier than you think.

**Why bother?**

It's estimated that job stress costs roughly \$300 billion a year. And certainly the death-care profession has unique stressors.

So join Sherry for an interactive opportunity to create your own plan, exchange ideas with colleagues, and return to your staff with a strategy to turn burnout into blazing new business!

Sherry's varied background includes facilitating group workshops and personal-



*Sherry Anderson, SightLife Liaison*

ized grief/bereavement services. She currently works with SightLife as a liaison to funeral homes, coroners, medical examiners, and hospitals in southwest Washington. *Bonus goodies for anyone who stops by the SightLife booth to talk with Mike or Sherry and mentions that they read this bio!*

**Saturday** will begin with a discussion on the future of the WCCFA and the WSFDA.

Second up on Saturday will be **Ralph Bruksos**. Prior to forming his own consulting firm in 1973, Ralph was president of the largest sales training company in America, with 23 branches in the U.S. and Canada. He has been consultant to or has done training for Aqua Quip Pool and Spa, AT&T, Boeing, Eschelon, Bonney-Watson, Carrier Corporation, and many other well-known national and regional companies. He serves as an advisor to people who realize they need someone with whom to discuss



*Ralph Bruksos, Sales Trainer Extraordinaire*

business problems and opportunities. His four objectives are to teach people how to manage more effectively, develop leadership skills and to help them learn how to increase profitable sales and to deal positively with change.

He has taught at the UW and has lectured in the Masters Program at UPS and many other campuses.

The final session of the convention will be **Building Teams That Count!**

Coming together to improve service, build better relationships, meet the needs of the future, and increase revenue – a dream or reality? Build a team that works within the organization (Funeral Home or Cemetery). Involve stakeholders – Determine who are the stakeholders. Put the plan to work – Build the plan between Funeral Home and Cemetery as well all major stakeholders (casket sales, vault sales, monument sales, florists, etc.)

Speaker Jack Norvell is Program Director of the Mortuary Science Department at PIMA

(Continued on page 12)



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(Continued from page 11)

Medical Institute in Seattle, having formerly been Program Director of the Funeral Service Education Department at Lake Washington Technical College, in addition to being a full-time instructor in the program. Complementing his educational experience, Jack also has been a licensed funeral director and embalmer for over 40 years, and has owned and managed funeral homes from small to large. He has been a consultant to Fortune 500 and 100 companies. He has a lot to share!



**Jack Norvell,**  
Program Director,  
Pima Medical  
Institute Mortuary  
Science Department

Now that you know all about the program, here are some reasons why we are meeting at the Suncadia Lodge Resort in Cle Elum.

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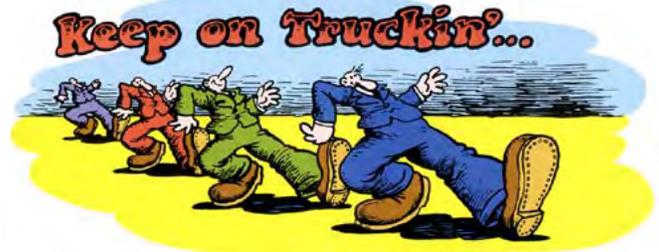
- ⊙ Golf tournament Thursday, August 25
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# Oregon Memorials introduces

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For more information, contact your Batesville representative.



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lution. Using our Glass Art™ process we can take the idea of bronze memorialization to a whole new level. Bronzstone™ moves us beyond the problems we inherited with traditional bronze... it costs up to 45% less than bronze, it will never fade or patina, and there is no theft value! It is a permanent application with amazing flexibility, the look of bronze with the same 50-year warrantee.



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Our motto simply states: "If you can imagine it, we can create it in stone." The question posed today? What can YOU imagine??



# Safety doesn't happen by accident— You have to have a plan

Safety training is an important and often overlooked part of managing any organization or company, but when it comes to managing a cemetery, it's a crucial part of the job. Safety policies and procedures must be reviewed and reiterated over and over again. It is easy to lose sight of a safety program, but doing so can result in injury, fatality, lawsuits, fines and a bevy of other repercussions you want to avoid.

This article will discuss the benefits of developing a consistent safety program, the consequences of not doing so and how to tailor your program to fit your employees. Finally, I will provide you with the tools you

can use to construct a successful safety program in your own organization.

## Better safe than sorry

There are many reasons to conduct regularly-scheduled safety meetings other than the most obvious, which is employee safety. Having a safety program on record can protect you against lawsuits, fines and OSHA violations. It shows insurance agencies that your company is worth protecting because you put in the effort to protect yourselves. And it shows your employees that you care about them and their safety.

Maybe your company has skated by without a safety program for years and you feel you don't need one because so far there haven't been any consequences. Think again.

That situation is a ticking time-bomb set to explode the minute an employee or visitor gets seriously injured within your facility or on your grounds. Given the potential dangers present in a cemetery—open graves, loud and hazardous machinery, harmful chemicals and dangerous weather conditions.—that moment can happen at any time.

*(Continued on page 16)*

# The human touch: Look for clues

Probably no word is used more in the funeral service profession than the word "service." Probably equally true, no word is more misused and abused—in many professions—than "service."

Throughout my career, I have rarely if ever encountered anyone connected with a service profession, including hotels, eating establishments or even grocery stores, who willingly admit that they give poor service, even if they do.

Yet we all know that poor service exists—it exists everywhere. We all encounter poor service on a daily basis. The question could well be asked: "Why?" Why does poor service exist?

Of course, there are organizations that excel at giving service. An exploration of the difference between poor and excellent service is always a good, old-fashioned use of time. For no matter how technologically sophisticated we become, in the end the people in our profession must turn off the computer and serve other human beings. Computers cannot conduct funerals, nor can they manicure a cemetery.

## Try putting yourself in the other person's place

I have found in my exploration of what constitutes excellent service that one portion of the formula involves our ability to carefully analyze the character of the individual human beings we are called

*(Continued on page 20)*



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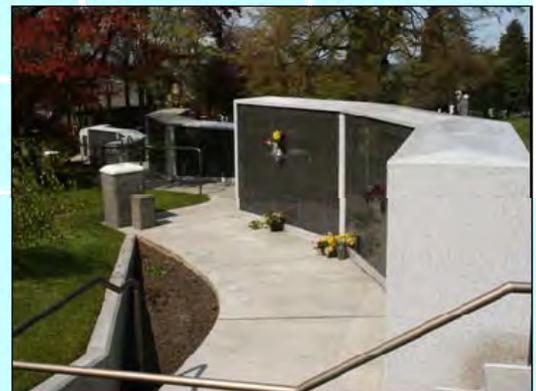
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# The Law has Changed!

By J.C. Barr, Governmental & Legal Affairs Committee Chairman

The Washington Cemetery, Cremation, and Funeral Association was busy in the 2011 legislative session.

As you may recall, in 2010 the association worked to oppose a change in RCW 68.50.160 that, in our opinion, would convolute the RCW. We were successful in preventing it from moving out of committee. However, we also foresaw that a continued drive to change the law would ensue for a few key issues. The Governmental Affairs Committee worked to create language that would protect the consumer and the funeral home/cemetery.

Foremost, the as it relates to prepaid funeral arrangements and

pre designation of disposition during lifetime remain unchanged.

The new inclusion in the law is that an individual can pre-designate an individual to direct disposition after death. For example, an elderly married couple could pre designate a child to handle all burial or cremation arrangements, so that the remaining spouse (perhaps fragile or ill themselves) would not have to be burdened with disposition arrangements. This would also be an option when there are no surviving next of kin local to the decedent and they could designate someone close to handle all arrangements.

Next change is the change to a

majority of children to authorize disposition instead of the current requirement that all surviving adult children sign (See 3b). This has long been a topic of discussion and a welcome change for most in the profession. The majority rule will also apply to siblings.

Last, when there are no surviving relatives in the categories listed, a guardian of the decedent can now authorize disposition. Many guardians have been reluctant to sign authorizing cremation after death if there are any living relatives, even those outside of the right to control disposition.

The new law takes place on **July 22, 2011**.

## RCW 68.50.160 as revised:

(1) A person has the right to control the disposition of his or her own remains without the predeath or postdeath consent of another person. A valid written document expressing the decedent's wishes regarding the place or method of disposition of his or her remains, signed by the decedent in the presence of a witness, is sufficient legal authorization for the procedures to be accomplished.

(2) Prearrangements that are prepaid, or filed with a licensed funeral establishment or cemetery authority, under RCW [18.39.280](#) through [18.39.345](#) and chapter [68.46](#) RCW are not subject to cancellation or substantial revision by survivors. Absent actual knowledge of contrary legal authorization under this section, a licensed funeral establishment or cemetery authority shall not be held criminally nor civilly liable for acting upon such prearrangements.

(3) If the decedent has not made a prearrangement as set forth in subsection (2) of this section or the costs of executing the decedent's wishes regarding the disposition of the decedent's remains exceeds a reasonable amount or directions have not been given by the decedent, the right to control the disposition of the remains of a deceased person vests in, and the duty of disposition and the liability for the reasonable cost of preparation, care, and disposition of such remains devolves upon the following in the order named:

(Continued on page 26)

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*Business News* | Turn Cremation Challenges into Growth Opportunities

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David Rees  
CFSP, Funeral Director and Director of Operations  
Spring Grove Cemetery and Gwen Mooney Funeral Home

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We implemented the AC<sup>2</sup>T System in October 2010. I compared the first 3 quarters of the year, before a cremation merchandising plan was in effect, to the last quarter after the change. **The results were incredible – we averaged over \$2,700 more per case under this new system.**

Anthony Guerra  
Vice President  
Guerra Gutierrez Mortuaries

Let's AC<sup>2</sup>T together! For more information about the AC<sup>2</sup>T System, contact your Batesville representative or call 1.800.444.5944.

**ACT<sup>2</sup>** Acting on Cremation Challenges Together

(Continued from page 14)

It is crucial that we protect ourselves, our co-workers, visitors and our organizations as best we can.

## Don't repair and repent—prepare and prevent

Safety is serious business, and it should be. But teaching safety should be fun, comfortable and entertaining. It's easy to stand in front of a group of employees and read off bullet points and drone on and on about the importance of wearing safety glasses and following procedures, but is it effective?

If your goal is to have an *effective* safety training program, remembering that if your presentation is somewhat entertaining, employees will pay a lot more attention. If you want a safety meeting to be successful, you need an audience that's awake and alert, not distracted and daydreaming.

There are many ways you can stimulate your audience's mind and keep their attention while delivering a valuable, informative message. The following guide to creating a successful safety program is based on what we do at Cypress Hills.

1. **Pick a topic.** You can look for ideas online based on the types of activities that take place within your organization. Some information that is not specific to the cemetery business, such as safe lawn-mowing or tree-trimming practices, can be found online or from vendors. Even if you get ideas from another cemetery, tailor the information to fit your needs.
2. **Choose your media and props.** Again, standing in front of a group of people reading a report is not the way to deliver a message anyone's going to stay awake for, much less remember. Visual aids are important. Develop hand-outs, take pictures and/or videos; create a PowerPoint presentation.
3. **Prepare carefully.** Don't just write something off the top of your head. Outline, draft and then finish your presentation. If you're using materials someone else has prepared, make sure to review them well.

You will be on the firing block up there when you're the one giving the presentation. Write out a list of questions people may ask and prepare answers so that you don't get caught flat-footed.

4. **Deliver your presentation.** The larger the group of people you're talking to, the less attention you'll get, so try to keep groups small enough that everyone feels the need to pay attention to you.

If you're prepared with an outline and plenty of visual aids to help you clarify your points, actually delivering the presentation will be easy. Start with some audience participation, which will get people's attention and give you an opportunity to hear their thoughts and experiences with the day's topic. (I usually start by asking if anyone has ever experienced a certain situation.)

Some subtle jokes, witty but respectful are fine, but remind everyone that while safety meetings can be fun, the information you're giving them needs to be treated seriously.

Don't drag these meetings out. There's always plenty of work to get to, so I tend to be very fast-paced and energetic. The ener-

gy seems to rub off on the audience and keep their attention.

Sometimes I end the meeting with a "pop quiz." Basically, I ask three questions about the safety material and whoever is able to answer correctly gets to go home a few minutes early. I found that incentive tends to make people pay attention, because everyone likes the idea of getting to leave early.

5. **Keep good records.** Whenever you have a safety meeting, be sure to have your employees sign in. Keep a record of all the meetings you conduct. If an incident occurs, you will be able to reference this material to show the topics you have covered and who attended.

## Tailoring meetings to your staff

In general, it's best to keep meetings simple and focused. The more complicated the material gets, the longer the session lasts, the less attention you will get, and the less effective the program will be.

In addition, you should consider any special needs dictated by your work force. For example, at Cypress Hills several ethnicities and native languages are represented, which poses some challenges when trying to convey information.

(Continued on page 21)

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(Continued from page 8)

One family had not received their loved one back in several weeks. Channel 15 played their crematory stakeout video to the family. They paid a visit and confronted All State Crematory owner Lambert. He told them he would be cremated that day. They received the cremated remains within 24 hours.

Franklin Lambert of All State Crematory appeared before the Arizona State Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers on May 17. The board voted to revoke the license of the crematory and Lambert's cremationist license.

Board member Jim Ahearne, a longtime funeral director and cremationist asked Lambert: "Did you ever sit back and say I have four bodies in my driveway at home, I have seven in a red van out front, I have 35 not in the cooler, I have an odor, do I have a problem? Did you meet the minimal standards doing the best you can?"

Lambert: "No."

Lambert did offer that "I do know that All State Crematory is a reputable crematory"

They are still nursing the chins that hit the floor.

Lambert admitted that 49 out of the 75 decedents in his care were kept unrefrigerated as long as three days because he was so busy.

Lambert has thirty days to accept or appeal his revocation of licenses.

The funeral home customers of All State Crematory have been summoned before the board. Their course of discussion is not known. However their liability is high with many lawyers circling the remnants of what should have been proud final care of the recently passed.

The funeral director that allows the pickup and drop off of those they do not cremate directly are fools; unless they regularly visit and can verify the clean, orderly premises and the same from its operators.

Doubt can never be erased from the

mind of the family of someone who has been cremated.

Learn from the errors of others.

*"When it is obvious that the goals cannot be reached, don't adjust the goals, adjust the action steps." - Confucius*

Article by Steven Palmer from the July 2011 YB News reprinted in its entirety with permission.

Steven Palmer entered funeral service in 1971. He is an honors graduate of the New England Institute of Applied Arts & Sciences. He has been licensed on both coasts, he owns the Westcott Funeral Homes of Cottonwood and Camp Verde, AZ. Steve offers his observations on current funeral service issues. He may be reached by email at [steve@westcottfuneralhome.com](mailto:steve@westcottfuneralhome.com) or through his website at [www.westcottfuneralhome.com](http://www.westcottfuneralhome.com) or on Facebook.

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## Pima Medical Institute Seattle Campus launches new mortuary science associate degree

*The new Mortuary Science program is the first to be offered at any Pima Medical Institute campus.*

Pima Medical Institute, a leading private medical career college, today announced the offering of its latest program at the Seattle campus: the Mortuary Science program. This associate degree program is a first for Pima Medical Institute and offers a variety of course subjects designed to train students for positions as funeral directors and embalmers.

"Pima Medical Institute's Seattle campus is pleased to be the first to offer the Mortuary Science associate degree program," said Carey Hochman, campus director. "This new program will continue Pima Medical Institute's nearly 40-year tradition of offering quality health care education that prepares students for careers in their chosen field."

Students who are accepted into the

Mortuary Science program at Pima Medical Institute will gain the skills needed to become a compassionate, ethical funeral professional. Courses will cover topics such as microbiology, pathology, embalming, restorative art, funeral direction, management, law and the psychology of grief.

"Pima Medical Institute develops programs that address the needs of the community," said Hochman. "According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the demand for funeral professionals is high, with employment expected to increase by 12% through 2018. In fact, funeral directors who also embalm, which is the basis of our Mortuary Science program, will find the best job opportunities."

As with all programs offered at Pima Medical Institute, students will participate in externships, providing them with an opportunity to put what they learned in the classroom before they even graduate gives students the self-confidence they need and

experience required to set them apart from their peers when searching for jobs," said Hochman. "These externships also give our students a great opportunity to network and learn from respected professionals in the field."

*Pima Medical Institute (PMI) was established in Tucson in 1972 and is one of the premier medical career colleges in the western U.S. PMI is a private, family-owned accredited school dedicated to providing students with a well-rounded education that offers theoretical classroom studies coupled with real-world training on-site at medical facilities. PMI offers a wide range of certification and associate degree programs, such as medical assistant, radiography, veterinary assistant and pharmacy technician. The program is being headed up by returning WCCFA guest speaker Jack Norvell.*



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# Integrating GIS Mapping at Your Cemetery

*We are pleased to welcome LEES+Associates to the fold of WCCFA supplier members. Please note that we published an incorrect e-mail for LEES+Associates in our 2011 membership directory. Direct e-mail to [elees@elac.bc.ca](mailto:elees@elac.bc.ca).*

Article by Damian Bradley, GIS Mapping Coordinator for LEES+Associates, Cemetery Planners and Landscape Architects

## WHAT IS A GIS?

A Geographic Information System (GIS) is a tool that relates tangible elements in the real world (such as roads, trees, memorials and buildings) to information such as records, documents, photographs, stories and statistics.

Where a traditional map may show a line to represent a street, a GIS map displays the same line, linked to a database. This linked database may contain any information, such as the street name, surface type, condition, number of lanes, photo, and so on. GIS is the driving force behind products such as Google Maps, Earth and Street View, portable GPS units and cellular navigation technology. Each of these systems

literally puts the power of GIS at our fingertips. Although there is a lot of data and complexity working in the background, the end user interacts only with simple yet powerful maps.

The work that goes into creating a GIS infrastructure is significant: a good example is the Google fleet which mapped and photographed roads worldwide for the Street View project. In collecting this data and making it accessible and easy to use, Google changed the way the public interacts with street maps and uncovered new ways of capitalizing on mapping technology. The cemetery industry is in a position to do what Google did with roads: to fundamentally change the way we interact with cemetery information.



*GIS professionals can use your existing maps, CAD drawings, and aerial imagery or go on-site with a high-resolution GPS data logger to locate your plots, roads, buildings, iconography, signage, gardens, trails, trees, niches, crypts and memorials. (LEES+Associates)*

## HOW CAN MY CEMETERY USE A GIS?

Combining GIS data with a cemetery records management software provides cemeteries with a simple user-friendly interface to access information through a database or a map. Building a GIS system can greatly enhance aspects of your organization's management, administration, operations, marketing and visitor satisfaction. A GIS can:

### Management

- ◆ Provide cemetery planners with spatial and economic data to inform decision making.
- ◆ Help determine short and long term budgeting and planning.
- ◆ Show a full plotting plan of your cemetery.
- ◆ Determine who is buried at a given location, and link back to their records.

### Operations

- ◆ Show the location of trees which pose safety concerns and require regular monitoring.
- ◆ Locate infrastructure situated on the property, including associated data and condition.

### Marketing

- ◆ Publish public, online or Google-based cemetery maps and tours.
- ◆ Create online searchable databases to assist in the location of memorials.



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  - Cemetery GIS Mapping



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*(Continued on page 28)*

## Cold Spring Memorial Group Unveils New Cremation Garden Feature

Jon Laskie, Family Services Manager at Carriage Services, had sat down for dinner when the photos from his colleagues started showing up on his smart phone – shots from every angle. The subject of the images was a unique, custom-designed cremation garden feature on display at a national conference. Laskie liked what he saw, and with that, a Cold Spring Memorial Group team was en route to oversee the garden feature's transport and installation at Bunkers Memory Garden Chapel and Cemetery in Las Vegas.

"This feature is perfect," Laskie says, describing it as functional and aesthetically appealing. "It's diverse; from top to bottom, it has everything you need from an ossuary and urn spaces to estate corners for families."

This particular piece is just one example of the customized memorials that Cold Spring Memorial Group can develop to help effectively utilize space and meet the growing demand for cremation. Designed for any outdoor memorial garden setting, this columbarium and ossuary features limestone accents, a custom granite center piece, eight premier family corner spaces, 30 urn spaces and 540 ossuary spaces.

Nevada's cremation rate is nearly 70 percent – one of the highest in the nation. Laskie feels this option has become even more popular recently, due to its relative affordability during a difficult economy. "Knowing that, we're getting our business in line with



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the times, we need to embrace cremation more than ever."

As for the Las Vegas population specifically, Laskie says that many residents are not natives of the community, but instead moved there later in life. This often affects one's decision regarding whether or not to purchase a local cemetery burial plot.

Laskie explains, "One thing people may not understand about cremation is that placing the deceased's cremains does not have to be an all-or-nothing arrangement. Some of the cremains could be spread at a favorite location and the remainder can be

placed in an ossuary such as the garden feature. People still want to have a place to visit."

A cremation garden memorial is the perfect solution for families who wish to have a place where they can go to honor the memory of their loved one for years to come. For more information about this and other memorial options designed to meet individual needs, contact a Cold Spring Memorial Group sales representative at 800-328-5040.

*(Continued from page 14)*

upon to serve.

The idea sounds self-evident, and simple, and that may be why people often underestimate its importance. Many times this is exactly where difficulties in relating to others originate.

Being able to carefully judge other people's character is not easy, and doing it well requires a constant effort to improve. As we can all attest, some people get it, some people have it, some people get it and have it and then lose it an unfortunately some peo-

ple never get it, even though they work in a service position.

My grandfather was functionally illiterate but extremely intelligent. He always admonished me with the words, "You never know a man until you walk around in his shoes a little." Analyzing, or walking around in someone's shoes, is certainly important in a service profession.

The ability to do this, which takes a ton of old-fashioned work, results in a more complete understanding of the other person's likes and dislikes, desires and tastes. Particularly in these complicated times, this

can be of tremendous value to you in your important work, in your mission, in your success.

I once worked on a funeral with a chap who most of the staff at the funeral home described as "clueless." You know the type. This fellow was fully licensed, had certainly graduated from an accredited college of mortuary science and had passed the National Board examination, but nevertheless his co-workers described him as clueless—and so he was.

*(Continued on page 22)*

(Continued from page 16)

It isn't practical to get my presentations translated into four different languages, so I use universally understood symbols and visual aids to help employees whose English is limited understand the material.

Another challenge here, and no doubt at many cemeteries, can be veteran employees. I supervise some employees who have worked at the cemetery a lot longer than I have and may feel that their greater experience means they don't need to listen to me.

I handle this by turning the situation to my advantage. Through audience participation, I ask them to share their knowledge and discuss how it corresponds with what I've learned through my research.

Another way I've customized my safety presentations is by creating a safety mascot that appears in my training materials. I use my own dog, Scooter, and pose him in some of the photos I create to illustrate safety points.

Creating Scooter the Safety Dog may seem like a silly idea, and it is. That's the point. The guys make fun of the photos and

laugh, but they've proven to be a great way to get everyone's attention focused on the day's topic. Between meetings, everyone asks me, "When's Scooter the Safety Dog coming around again?"

Even if you follow my outline, you still have to come up with topics to cover, but with all the jobs that have to be done at a cemetery and all the equipment cemeteries have, this shouldn't be a problem. (See the list of sample topics.) Just don't forget: You shouldn't cover a topic once and cross it off your list forever.

It can be helpful to repeat some topics yearly. Time makes us comfortable and sometimes complacent, so safety reminders are important.

Conducting regular safety meetings is important to you, your organization, your employees and anyone who enters your gates. It will protect you against finds and lawsuits and it will increase the overall work



Scooter Desmond does a photo shoot for his role as Scooter the Safety Dog, helping create training materials for Cypress Hills Cemetery.

efficiency within your cemetery while improving employee morale.

As Scooter the Safety Dog always says, "A few moments of safety can save you a lifetime...woof, woof."

*Article by Anthony Desmond, foreman and family service counselor at Cypress Hills Cemetery, Brooklyn, NY, a historic 225-acre cemetery founded in 1848. It is reprinted in its entirety, with permission, from the July 2011 ICCFA Magazine.*

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(Continued from page 20)

Working a funeral with him was a major undertaking, because he was so self-absorbed with his own importance and so addicted to being the center of attention.

One day, we had a major funeral at the cathedral—someone of tremendous importance and high visibility had dropped dead. We all knew this would be a huge service, involving basically everyone on the staff, with each person assigned specific duties. Everybody knew what their job was. That is, everybody except Mr. Clueless.

The plan was to take the remains to the cathedral early in the morning. The family was going to have a private ceremony before Mass was celebrated. The archbishop himself was going to officiate, and that fact alone guaranteed that a television crew would be present. Also, many people in high political office and of high social standing would be walking into the sanctuary—passing right by our funeral coach with the name of the funeral home prominently displayed in the windows.

We brought the deceased into the church, positioned the casket and were preparing for people to start arriving when I turned around and saw that Mr. Clueless was sitting in the archbishop's chair, legs dangling down and swinging back and forth, with a great big stupid smile on his face.

I froze, and one of the veteran funeral directors went over to Mr. Clueless and scolded him with the very real threat that he had better not let our boss or anybody else see him sitting on the archbishop's throne.

Mr. Clueless disregarded this wise counsel. In fact, he asked one of the other staff members if he looked like the archbishop.

You guessed it. Mr. Clueless was still in his fantasy world, pretending he was the archbishop, when around the corner came our boss (who did not possess a great sense of humor), along with the bereaved family, walking arm-in-arm with the archbishop.

I very quietly walked to the back of the cathedral, quickly exited out the front doors and stood at attention next to the funeral coach outside. In short order, everything hit the fan, and Mr. Clueless was dismissed on the spot. I suspect Mr. Clueless might well be the only undertaker in the history of this great profession to be sacked in the sanctuary of a cathedral.

What I remember most about this debacle was that Mr. Clueless seemed utterly clueless as to why he was fired. His comment was this: "What's the big deal? It's just a chair."

It's been over 40 years since this happened, and as I write this account I think about all the

clues to which Mr. Clueless was oblivious. He was insensitive to authority and ignored gestures, advice and the tone of voice in which the advice was given. He was not nicknamed "Mr. Clueless" for nothing.

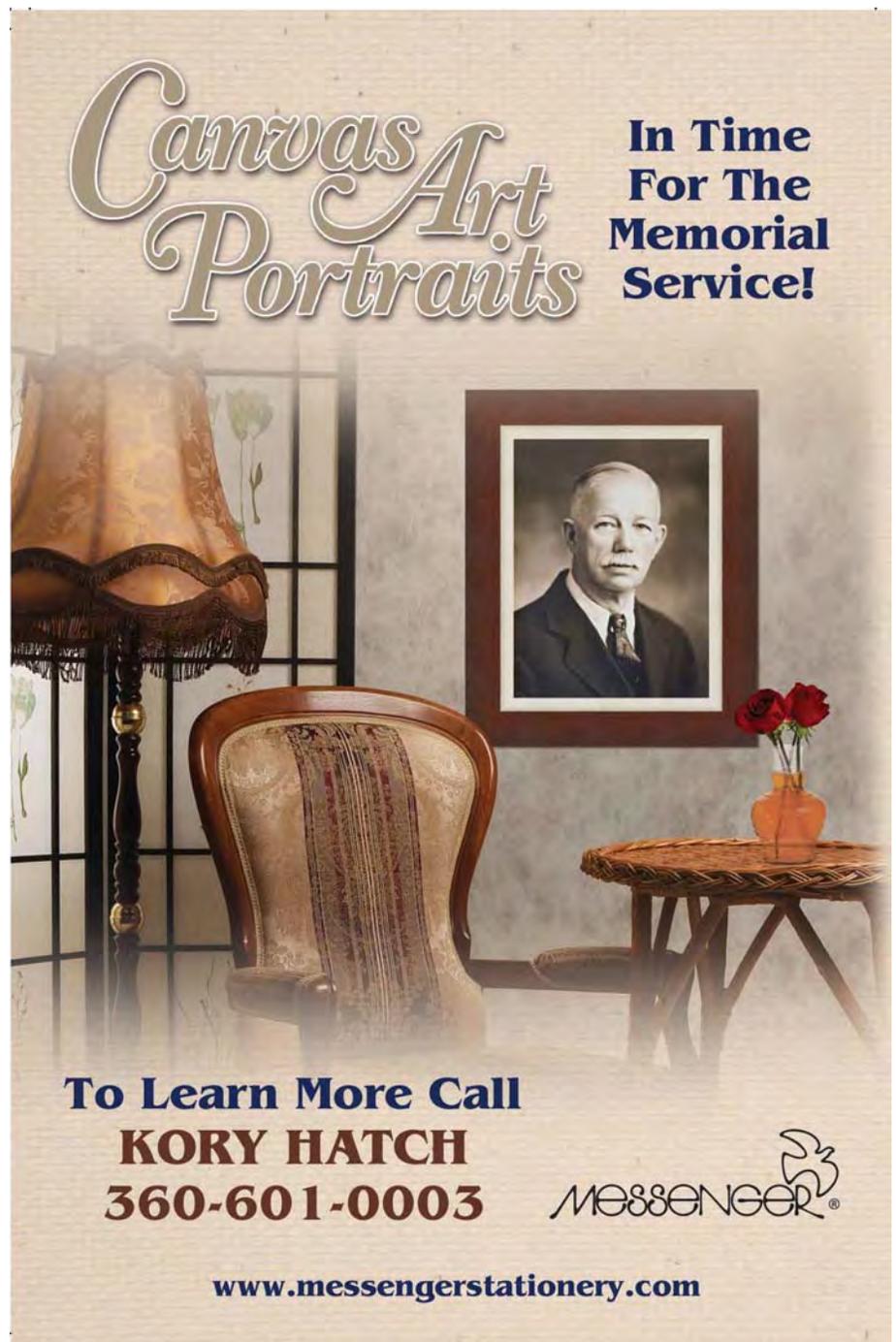
Nobody is perfect, and we all slip up once in awhile, but being able to catch clues about what is really going on around you is an important asset to have when your job involves serving others.

People often communicate most profoundly not by what they say but through

their tone of voice, their body language, the gestures they make and what they do.

I believe the skill in picking up on and analyzing these types of clues is more important today than it ever has been in our profession, simply because people are more disconnected, more socially complicated and more downright fussy today than ever before in the history of death care. It's true: People are just more demanding, less patient and crankier than ever before.

(Continued on page 23)



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**Look for clues that will help you better serve people**

I well remember a couple who went to a funeral director to take a tour of the cemeteries in the community in order to pick out a

cemetery in which to buy lots.

As they get into the funeral director's car, the wife<sup>3</sup> was innocently talking about how she loved her flowers, and how much she enjoyed working in her garden. The funeral director, who was paying close attention to the couple rather than, for example, thinking about what route he was going to take, in-

stantly picked up on this clue.

This great funeral director later told me that he had originally planned to take the couple first to a very contemporary cemetery with modern art sculptures throughout the grounds. But after that talk of flowers and gardens, he drove instead to a cemetery known far and wide for its horticultural excellence.

This couple had never been in this particular cemetery. As they pulled up to the gates, the funeral director stopped the car and explained that he had selected this particular cemetery, one of several in the community, because it was an arboretum, and he thought they might be interested in it.

As he drove through the cemetery, he didn't really have to say much; the beauty of the cemetery sold itself. At one point, the woman asked him to stop the car so she could enjoy the natural beauty of the grounds and "soak in God's great creation."

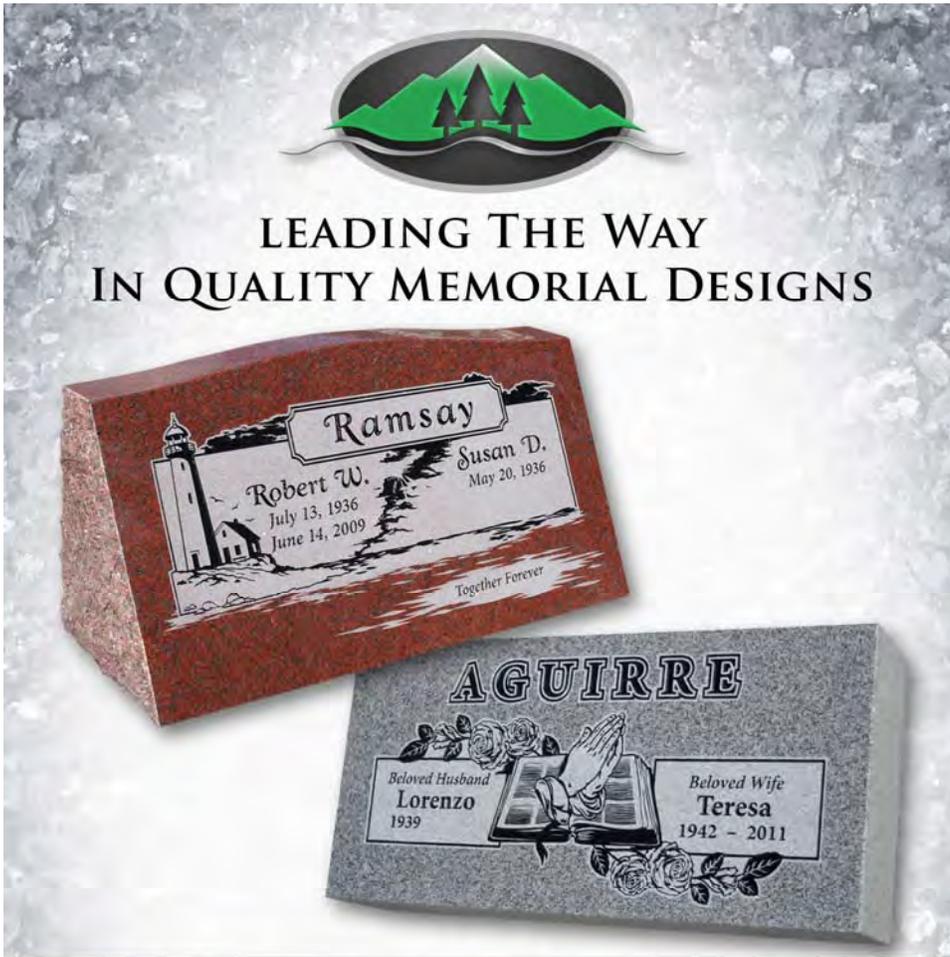
The couple was enchanted; they took out their checkbook and, right on the spot, purchased burial spaces. Because of one simple clue that this sensitive and alert funeral director picked up on, this couple received competent, time-saving service and the cemetery received a new client and additional cash flow.

Obviously, this particular funeral professional never would have considered sitting in the archbishop's throne in the cathedral. There is, to be sure, a difference between people in our profession. I call them not the "haves" and "have nots" but the "get its" and "get it nots."

One thing to keep in mind is that it's risky to think that surface indications about others are to be trusted. It's risky behavior to judge another person by some act or mannerism that may not click with us, that we don't approve of or are not comfortable with.

This is not always easy, but it is something to keep in mind at all times. When you mentally begin to turn a "thumbs down" to someone because of some surface observation, most of the time the person being judged senses it through some subtle tip-off on your part, and at that point you already may have seriously impaired the possibility of a friendly rela-

(Continued on page 24)



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(Continued from page 23)

tionship.

As funeral directors and cemeterians, we meet a lot of people and naturally start analyzing them at that first meeting—and they're doing the same to us. Clients are looking for clues to tell them whether we are reliable, kind, honest and good to work with.

It was not surprising that during the time the aforementioned "Mr. Clueless" worked at the funeral home, not one family specifically asked for him to personally serve them—not one.

Many years ago, I dismissed the idea of there being a "caste" system in funeral service. You know what I'm talking about: the offensive idea that some people are higher up on the food chain than others. Looking back, I saw that when I believed that nonsense, I behaved in an arrogant manner that made me look ridiculous. I believe that everybody who works in any job at any funeral home or cemetery is important, because if the job were not important why would it exist in the first place?

One of the key reasons for me coming to

this realization is my admiration for receptionists at funeral homes and cemeteries. I have learned to appreciate them in a big way, because they are usually our first-line people, the ones who make that all-important first impression.

When I lived in Cincinnati, I knew a funeral home receptionist who exemplified a charitable, tolerant attitude, and people in the community were very attracted to this marvelous human being, and hence also to the funeral home where she worked. I always wondered just how much people liked the funeral home's owner, but there was no doubt about how much they liked that receptionist.

One afternoon, I was delivering a deceased person to that funeral home, and I went to say hello to the receptionist. As we were visiting, a scowling elderly man approached her and rasped out the name of the deceased person he wanted to see.

In a flash, in that brief exchange, she caught a clue, one which I totally missed by the way. As she escorted him to the viewing room, she said soothingly, "This cool, damp Cincinnati weather makes my arthritis act up, and it can be a real pin."

The old man's gruffness suddenly left him.

He smiled and asked, in a much milder tone, "How did you know I have been suffering with arthritis? I haven't had a single night's sleep for days."

This skillful receptionist replied, "I noticed your eyes; they look like mine when the pain keeps me up at night, and combine that with this weather, well, you and I can sympathize with each other."

This old man smiled from ear to ear. He wasn't a grump, he was just suffering some aches and pains.

Here is probably the most important thing to keep in mind as you analyze the people you serve at your funeral home or cemetery: Everybody we come into contact with has good points. We just have to locate them, and when we do we will derive great satisfaction from thinking kindly of the other person and treating him or her considerately and with patience and tolerance.

One final piece of advice; Do not sit on the archbishop's throne. The juice is not worth the squeeze.

Article by Todd Van Beck for the July 2011 ICCFA Magazine, reprinted in its entirety with permission.



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## Welcome new Associate member: CycledLife

*Note: while CycledLife is an Associate member rather than a Supplier member, we always offer all new members a chance to introduce themselves to the WCCFA in our newsletter. As soon as CycledLife's alkali disposition method is approved by the Washington state legislature, they will become full Supplier members.*

People care deeply about their survivors. Both cremation and burial harm their families and friends. When offered a better alternative to cremation, people choose alkali disposition. Our first customer had 100% of its "cremation families" choose our ecological alternative over cremation.

Edwards Funeral Service, Columbus, Ohio purchased a system from Cycled Life Inc. for \$118,000 in September 2010.

Our process appears poised to replace cremation.

We offer alkali dispositions for human remains. Our competitors are firms offering cremation and burial services. We have evolved from licensing technology to having our own system. We have evolved from being a manufacturer to being a service provider. The success of our first customer proved the viability of our humane final disposition option.

Our process returns a sterile body to the land instead of polluting groundwater. The pure-white calcium phosphate from

bones and teeth will benefit the earth or be memorialized in an urn. The toxic mercury in the teeth will be safely reclaimed, not inhaled or ingested by the living. Soft tissue is converted into a nutrient-enriched water ("ANEW") that can be spread upon the soil. It saves 90% on fuel consumption and cuts greenhouse gases by 94%.

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(Continued from page 15)

- (a) The surviving spouse or state registered domestic partner.
- (b) The surviving adult children of the decedent.
- (c) The surviving parents of the decedent.
- (d) The surviving siblings of the decedent.
- (e) A person acting as a representative of the decedent under the signed authorization of the decedent.
- (4) If any person to whom the right of control has vested pursuant to subsection (3) of this section has been arrested or charged with first or second degree murder or first degree manslaughter in connection with the decedent's death, the right of control is relinquished and passed on in accordance with subsection (3) of this section.
- (5) If a cemetery authority as defined in RCW [68.04.190](#) or a funeral establishment licensed under chapter [18.39](#) RCW has made a good faith effort to locate the person cited in subsection (3)(a) through (e) of this section or the legal representative of the decedent's estate, the cemetery authority or funeral establishment shall have the right to rely on an authority to bury or cremate the human remains, executed by the most responsible party available, and the cemetery authority or funeral establishment may not be held criminally or civilly liable for burying or cremating the human remains. In the event any government agency provides the funds for the disposition of any human remains and the government agency elects to provide funds for cremation only, the cemetery authority or funeral establishment may not be held criminally or civilly liable for cremating the human remains.
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\*Based on comparative selection room product price range.

# A proactive approach to advance funeral planning

## How to beat the summer sales blues

Each year, as summer sets in, I begin to hear the same comments from Funeral Preplanning Professionals. "Nobody wants to meet with me in this heat," "It's summertime and people have better things to do with their time than make funeral prearrangements," and "Everyone's on vacation; I can't get any appointments." I've heard some really

creative comments in my time. Each one is nothing more than a poor excuse for why they are not making sales.

The facts are: Yes, it is hot and steamy outside. Yes, many people do take their vacations in the summer months. Yes, the heat does make it uncomfortable. So what?

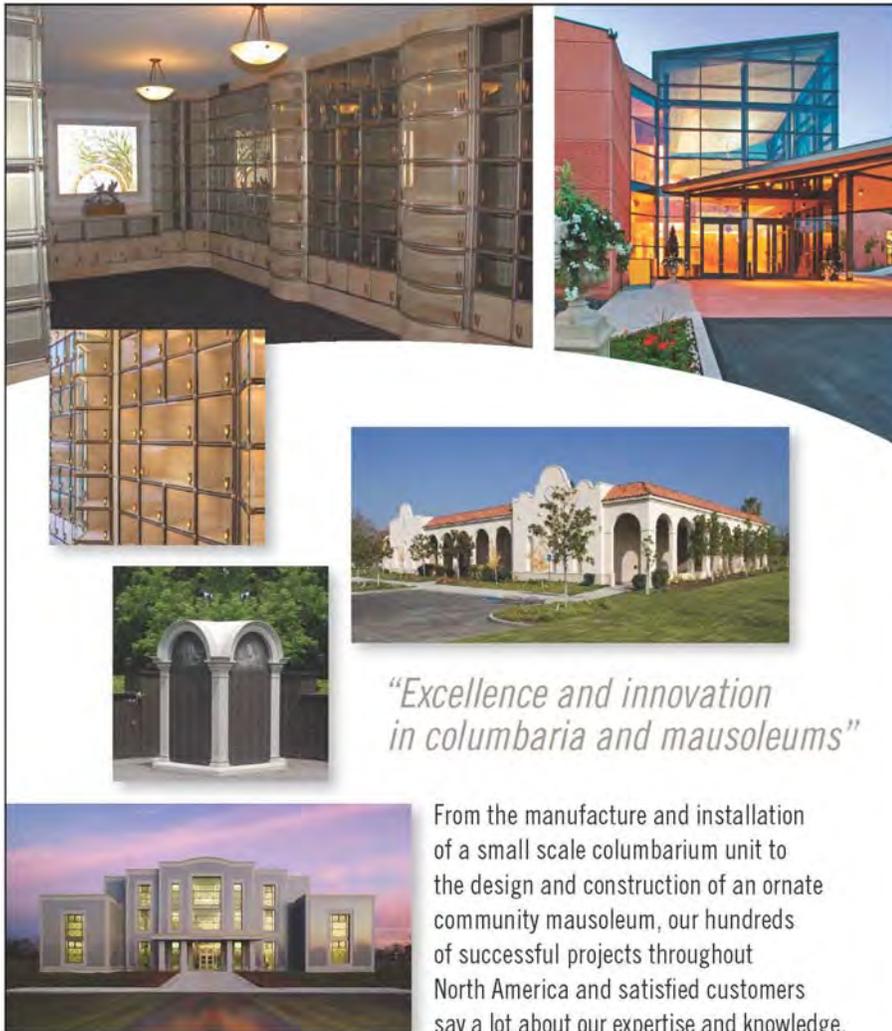
Funeral prearrangements can be and still are written in the summer months.

Funeral preplanning, and the people that take advantage of its features and benefits, do so just as much in the summertime as any other time. You can set just as many sales appointments and close just as many sales in the summer, fall, winter or spring. Just as death is no respecter of person; funeral preplanning is no respecter of season.

The summer months do take a slight change in your attitude and work habits to make them profitable. Here are some suggested adjustments to make over the summertime.

- \* Call people earlier in the day to set an appointment. The 65+ clientele predominantly start their day earlier during the summer months. They are up with the sun and can be contacted earlier than 9:00 a.m. Try 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. this has proved highly successful for many of Outlook Group Funeral Preplanning Professionals.
- \* During the summer months, people do their chores early and get back home and into the air conditioning before the heat of the day sets in. Therefore your morning appointments will usually not be as full as your afternoon and evening appointments. You can schedule many more appointments after lunch, when people are inside staying cool.
- \* Weekends are also a great time to schedule sales appointments. Saturday mornings from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and Sunday afternoon from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
- \* Get and keep a positive upbeat attitude when the thermometer readings are high. Don't let the summer heat sap your enthusiasm for what you are doing. People need what you have to offer year round. They need to feel your excitement for what you are doing. People will buy your feelings long before they buy your facts.
- \* Write a press release about the value of planning ahead. Send it to all local media outlets and post it on the internet. Share statistics about how many people your local firm has assisted over the years. Press release writers can get fabulous results from well-written releases that are optimized for the search engines. A consumer who is searching online for information and types into the search engine box the same keywords used in your release will most likely find the release. When you insert your email and website into the press release, they can click through and become a new sales lead.
- \* Summertime is the best time of the year to do go-bys. Do morning go-by visits with prospective

*(Continued on page 28)*



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(Continued from page 19)

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**BUILDING A GIS SYSTEM AT YOUR CEMETERY**

The key to realizing the benefits of building a GIS is to start with the basics.

(Continued from page 27)

clients. You can start arriving at their door anytime after 8:00 a.m. weekdays and 9:00 a.m. weekends. Get out and do these before the heat of the day sets in. early morning visitors are always welcome by 65+ adults.

Summertime is good and your pre-need living can be easy and worry-free if you follow these suggestions. Remember to keep calling,

keep mailing, keep sending emails, keep sending letters, keep reaching out to people in every and any way you can to spread the good news about funeral preplanning., Article by Christopher Kuhnen for the July 2011 YB News, reprinted in its entirety with permission. Christopher Kuhnen is Vice President of Marketing and Corporate Communications for The Outlook Group, Inc., Franklin, Ohio. He was 25 years' experience in the field of funeral directing, prearrangement planning and training. He also has considerable experience in public relations, market-

ing, consumer and business to business sales and is a trusted adviser to those in the death care industry. As an insider into excellence Chris provides comprehensive consultation, education and positive support to funeral directors nationwide to help them coordinate and develop their business strategies. He is a licensed funeral director, life insurance agent, certified preplanning consultant, In-sight Institute certified celebrant and certified marketing specialist. Reach him at ckuhnen@theoutlookgroup.com.

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ues: respect for the client, rigour, and a desire for a job well done. Our close cooperation begins with a thorough analysis of your needs, constraints and environment.

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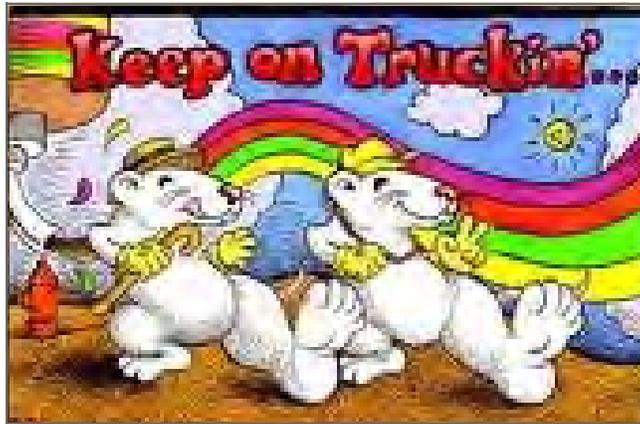
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