

OCA JOURNAL

NOVEMBER 2011

VOLUME 1

NUMBER 2

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HOW MUCH CHANGE?

— **WES RUSSELL**
EDITOR, OCA JOURNAL

This article is written based on the presentation “It’s Not Your Father’s Cemetery Anymore, But Maybe it Should Be,” given at the 2011 OCA Annual Convention by Pat Downey, President of The Downey Group, Inc.

Pat Downey grew up in the cemetery business. Much of the philosophy he lives by today was instilled by his father, William Downey (1924–1997), who founded and operated Wisconsin Memorial Park of Brookfield, Wisconsin from 1951 to 1997. During the many years he worked for his father, Pat developed a core set of beliefs that ring true today. In the current, contemporary, change-hounded cemetery industry, there are certain traditional values that never change. Here, as Pat says, are “lessons I learned in my father’s cemetery.”

“A cemetery is an island in the community, a city unto itself. We are made up of many departments and functions, operating together to the benefit of the families we are privileged to serve. People should have an opportunity to leave the world behind. Everything stops when they come through the gate. They should feel memory and security on the grounds. All departments work together to make this happen.” To further illustrate this point, William liked to quote William Gladstone (1809–1898), four-term Prime Minister of England:

Show me the manner in which a nation cares for its dead, and I will measure with mathematical exactness, the tender mercies of its people, their loyalty to high ideals, and their regard for the laws of the land.

“Nothing happens until somebody sells something. Every responsible person knows they need cemetery property,

PLEASE SEE CHANGE ON PAGE 7

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February 23–25, 2012
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Sales Spectacular

See insert
for more informa-

FEATURE CEMETERY: CITY OF DOVER CEMETERIES

— SCOTT HARMON
CITY OF DOVER CEMETERIES, DOVER

The City of Dover Cemeteries department currently operates and maintains three cemeteries.



The Fourth Street Cemetery was set aside as a burial site for some of Dover's earliest residents around 1810. At the time, most families

interred their relatives in a family cemetery located on their farm. As Dover grew, it became necessary to allocate a designated space for such a purpose.

Fourth Street is the final resting place for the founding families of Dover. Here you will find markers bearing the names Deis, Slingluff, Deardorf and many others. The last burial at Fourth Street Cemetery was in 1976.

Maple Grove Cemetery is a 40-acre site laid out by our Victorian ancestors in 1886.



Maple Grove invites a stroll through late 19th-century and early 20th-century tastes and fashions. Towering monuments, ornate private

mausoleums and dedicated military memorials invite a winding afternoon stroll. Many graves at Maple Grove date to the 1918 flu epidemic which swept the globe at the time of World War One.

Also interred at Maple Grove Cemetery are numerous children who sadly passed away while residents of the old orphans home on Tuscarawas Avenue. When the orphanage was demolished, bodies of children interred on the grounds were moved to Maple Grove, where today a simple, poignant stone marks their resting place.



Though interments are still conducted at Maple Grove, no plots are available for purchase.

Dover Burial Park, which saw its first interments in 1930, is more park than cemetery. The carefully-maintained grounds reflect its daily upkeep by a full-time staff of five caring people. Flowers, careful landscaping and hundreds of award-winning mature trees create a restful, peaceful environment.



Ample acreage (125 acres, 45 developed), along with a well-funded endowment ensures that Dover Burial Park

will meet the needs of area families for the next several hundred years. Private family mausoleums are frequently seen, as is the public mausoleum, which offers 192 crypts as well as 96 cremation niches. To meet the ongoing cremation trends, since 2007 the Dover Burial Park has placed three 48 niche columbarium and a cremation scattering garden.

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If you would like to your cemetery to be featured in a future issue of the OCA Journal, please contact Elaine Russell at walnutgrove@covad.net, or call 614.885.5933.

Scott Harmon is the Superintendent of the City of Dover Cemeteries, Dover, Ohio.

DEATH CARE PROFESSIONALS: MEET DEATH

—DAN APPLIGATE
ARLINGTON MEMORIAL GARDENS, CINCINNATI

As death care professionals, we are exposed on a regular, indeed daily, basis to the ravaged and confused aftermath of death crashing with its awful force into survivors: the parents, spouse, sons or daughters, brothers and sisters, friends, lovers and loved-ones. As the providers of death care services, we're often uniquely positioned to catch nuanced hints, glimpses, or impressions of the survivor's despair and anguish. Sometimes it's much more evident than that and we witness their utter collapse. It is, according to the old Crowded House song, "The World Where We Live."

Through years of providing these unique services—of working with survivors, of managing details, of being exposed and privy to the particulars of death, of witnessing raw, paralyzing grief—we develop a certain emotional dexterity, a deft niftiness that enables us to sidestep and avoid those murky emotional quicksand pits that might otherwise, if we stepped into them, totally consume us. But, remaining above the fray is a tricky proposition, a high wire act of sorts: get too involved, and it can become emotionally dangerous; remain too passive and aloof, and somehow there's the loss of that unique human quality: compassion. And so there's this emotional tension—a push and a pull; yet, most of the time, we strike a balance and manage to make it work. That is, until it doesn't.

This past July, many of us experienced, first hand, the unnerving shock that accompanies death when we learned of the passing of two long-tenured, well-known cemeterians: Don Martin, Lake View Cemetery Association (Cleveland) and Terry Walker, Union Cemetery Association (Columbus). The circumstances of their deaths, suicide, and the timing—both within a few days of each other, were odd and eerie all at the same time. And, without exception, everyone—relatives, friends, colleagues and oh yes...cemeterians—were stunned.

Of course, this was a natural reaction. Unexpected death is stunning and shocking. Moreover, the cause of death for both Don and Terry compounded the shock. Even in today's society, there is a stigma attached to suicide as something foreign and unnatural. It happens suddenly, frequently without warning and is usually violent. It shakes our faith in orderliness; and we find it hard to explain. So, stunned and shocked was normal, even perhaps, for cemeterians who were, like most survivors, forced to meet death head-on.

Now, it's not as though cemeterians are immune to feelings; we're not, of course. But we are, at a minimum, experienced and indoctrinated, that is, our professional lives regularly require us to think about death and grieving (while, I might add, most people's lives are spent trying to avoid these subjects altogether). Therefore, this professional predisposition, as mentioned above, tends to modulate some of the red-hot bursts of emotion and shock that follow a death. So, when we're rattled, it's worth taking note.

And, so what does one make of this? Well, first of all, it serves as a stark reminder for death care professionals that death is a tragic force that wreaks havoc on the lives of those left behind. As mentioned previously, most people avoid talking or, for that matter, even thinking about death. And, because of this failure to even entertain the notion of what it means to be a survivor, most people are entirely unprepared for the messy aftermath—the shock, confusion and grief.

Second, even if there is the highly unlikely inclination to prepare for death and the inevitable emotional roller coaster that follows, there's a dearth of coalesced information available for one to lean on. While it's true that one may find various sources of good, reliable information, it's spread out all over the landscape which requires a great deal of time and effort to collect, not to mention process. It's hardly the type of project that a grief-stricken survivor will want to consider.

PLEASE SEE MEET ON PAGE 4

All of this, then, underscores one of our more important obligations to the public as death care professionals; and, if the respective deaths of Don and Terry, good, well-liked and well-intentioned men have reminded us of that obligation, well then, it's at least one reason to think that they did not die in vain. The obligation I'm referring to here is that of pre-need providers. As cemeterians I'm sure we all give our absolute best to the survivors of at-need deaths. Of course, under those circumstances, survivors are looking for any help and assistance that is available. But under at-need circumstances (in the which are absent of pre-planning), have we really provided our best services?

Our philosophy at Arlington is that we have an obligation to aggressively educate consumers in order to provide the protection and benefits of pre-planning. Not everyone reading this, of course, will agree with that point of view, but one of our core beliefs is that while pre-planning cannot and does not solve or resolve all, or even most, of the problems confronting survivors, it does eliminate many of the immediate responsibilities that typically befall them. In addition, pre-planning may in fact inspire some to actually confront or at least become aware of and begin considering the realities wrought by the aftermath of death. If we accomplish those goals, then we have, in our opinion, provided services of an incalculable value.

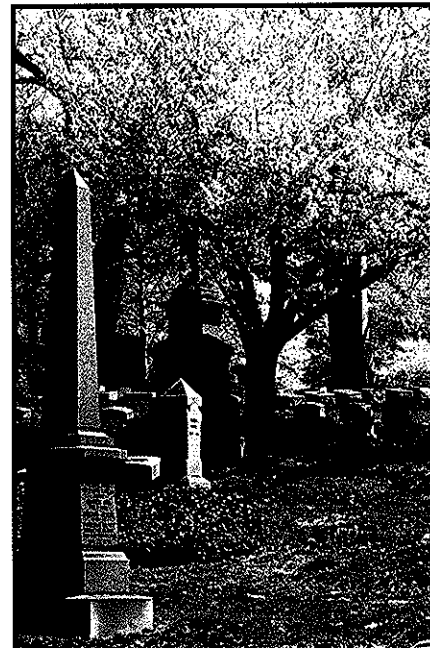
Yet, there is a fine line of disingenuousness here to consider and we constantly monitor ourselves to insure that we are not falling into that trap. Like most other businesses, we depend on sales to generate operating revenue. And, selling pre-planning is a critical component of our business model. Therefore, on an ongoing basis, we ask ourselves whether we are selling (pre-planning) in order to primarily help people; or, helping people in order to primarily sell. In some respects, these are two sides of the same coin but we like to think, and our intention is, that we are listening to our better angels and, in fact, selling in order to help.

Obviously, there are numerous "delivery" methods from which cemeteries can choose in order to provide effective pre-planning services; not all need to be aggressive nor is there necessarily a "best" method, a template or a one-size-fits-all. Some cemeteries face financial limitations (smaller cemeteries) or operational limitations (townships, governmental cemeteries) that prohibit elaborate pre-planning programs; others may be simply philosophically opposed (although that's hard to justify in this day and age). The point is that pre-planning is beneficial and "consumer-friendly" even if consumers sometimes fail to recognize the benefits until a death occurs. Likewise, death care professionals, comfortably sheltered in their professional cocoon, may have to meet a shocking death, or two, in order to remember just why pre-planning is so utterly important.

And that's not hype. It's reality.



Dan Applegate is President of Arlington Memorial Gardens, Cincinnati, Ohio.



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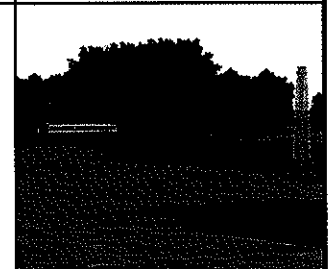
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WHEN NORMAL BLIND CHECKS FAIL

— **BOB MOSES**
CROWN HILL BURIAL PARK, VIENNA

This first year with our new Ohio Cemetery Association has been one of much cooperation and cohesiveness between two old associations. The elected officials have worked hard to blend together and make for a tremendous harmony that will fashion our Association for the benefit of all cemeteries, funeral homes, suppliers and deathcare providers in our state.

There have been several noticeable subjects arise which our new Association is attempting to address. We have some real challenges with Township and Municipal cemeteries which cannot hang on due to current economic conditions. Many have Endowment Care Trust funds, but due to state law they cannot access these funds. According to Bob Carr, the Ohio Bureau of Workmen's Compensation will be privatized in the not-too-distant future. There is no great movement on the legislative front, but nevertheless, we are keeping an eye on any developments. There remain several other subjects, but I wish to focus on one in particular.

During our past few conferences and association meetings we have had some experts share with us a subject no one wants to hear, namely, wrongful burials. What happens when normal blind checks fail? As mentioned, we have had the subject of wrongful burials on the agenda of several more recent Seminars. Some very credible speakers have advised us on how to avoid these costly, embarrassing and troublesome mistakes. These messages are focused on prevention as they well should be, and the traditional blind check should eliminate 90 to 95% of these rare errors.

This leaves us with yet another 5 to 10% that falls into the cracks. In most any other industry a 5 to 10% error rate would be well within the "acceptable" arena. Not so with us. So the question arises, how can we possibly eliminate even less possibilities of a blind check failing?

My cemetery is located in the Northeastern part of Ohio. Over the past several years, being situated within the snow belt region, we have experienced in and around 100 inches of snow each year. We are often bombarded with lake-effect snow that will dump 6, 8, 10 or 12 inches or more of snow in a very short time period. Our elite maintenance staff finds themselves spending a great deal of time trying to locate a grave site under all this snow. Even in the best of conditions, blind checks can be problematic. Try it

when the cemetery has had a complete snow cover for a couple months .

This situation is especially difficult when you have a cemetery that was started back in the 1920s, and the graves were not laid out in a formal pattern. Some graves lay north and south, some east and west and frequently in both directions within the same section of the cemetery. As cemerterians, we all know that grave spaces are laid out in a grid. Usually graves 1-4 or 1-8 are across the top from left to right and the bottom corresponds in 5-8 or 5-16 from left to right. All depending, of course, on which way you are facing as you look down upon the grave site. For some inexplicable reason, in my cemetery, we find the grave numbers running in the reverse. Instead of 1-8 across the top from left to right, they read from right to left. Sometimes we find both methods having been used within the same garden, creating a serious burden on both family-service and the maintenance staff. We must be cognizant of not only what we are looking at, but also where we are standing in relationship to the garden we are in. I have often said "Make sure you have your ass behind you."

So how do we deal with these unusual circumstances? Our General Manager, Carol Waren, and Marianne Loub, her Administrative Assistant, formulated a solution. They suggested that in addition to the regular blind-check procedure, we also make copies of the lot book and garden layout map to take to the grave site when trying to locate the area in which to dig the grave. This enables family-service and the maintenance staff to determine the particular layout of the grave sites, and also provides us with previous marker placement in order to identify the exact space for the grave to be dug. Isn't it wonderful when your entire staff comes together to solve a problem! Normally, the Administrative Staff would not be involved in a blind-check, but because they saw our other two teams struggling and making mistakes, they participated in uncovering (no pun intended) a solution to the problem.

Will this always prevent wrongful burials? I am not that naïve. However if we can reduce the chances by another few percentage points, it is well worth the effort. What I have proposed will find effectiveness in any cemetery and under most circumstances. Who knows, perhaps you will attain the 100% mark of exceptions, to wrongful burials. Please let us know if you do.

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Bob Moses is President and CEO of Crown Hill Burial Park, Vienna Ohio.

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 — BOB CARR
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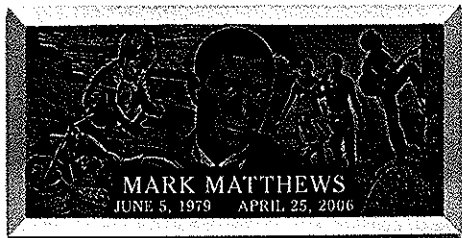
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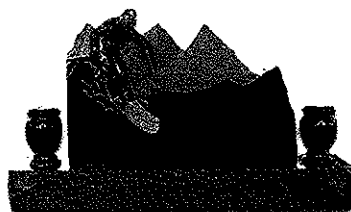
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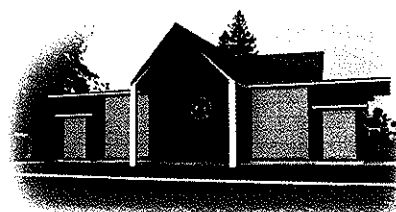
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*A very special thank you to the Board
and Staff of Woodland Cemetery for
supporting the OCA by hosting the
Fall Maintenance Seminar*

UNION CEMETERY ANNOUNCES POSITION OPENING

The Board of Trustees of Union Cemetery, Columbus, Ohio, has promoted Joseph Glandon to the position of General Manager, effective immediately. Joe has been an employee of the cemetery for the last several years and expects to retire within 3 years.

The Board of Trustees is looking to hire a person to fill the position of Assistant Manager with experience in the following areas: Cemetery office and grounds operations; management of employees; knowledge of office and business computer systems/software; enjoys interacting with people.

Applicants should apply to:

Board of Trustees
Union Cemetery Association
3349 Olentangy River Rd.
Columbus, Ohio 43202-1520

CHANGE FROM PAGE 1

But people don't want to buy something they don't want to use. If you expect to have a successful cemetery, you have to sell. When it is presented properly, people will never regret their decision to buy."

Pat worked in the sales department at Wisconsin Memorial Park, and sometimes had a less-than-successful sales day or week. He quickly learned not to whine to his dad, who told him, "To my knowledge the law of averages has not been repealed. Get back on the phone."

"Take care of your people, and they will take care of you. But you must set the example if you expect them to follow it."

"People will respect what you inspect."

"We have to stay ahead of the curve when it comes to technology, change and consumer trends, and offer our families the very best."

"Get in involved in your state and national organizations. There you will meet the best in the business and you will learn everything you need to know about the business."

"In order to succeed, we have to get people into our facility. Once they see all of the things that we have here, the beauty, the exhibits, the unique features and programs, they will choose our cemetery and they will tell others about us. Our first concern is for the living. We can serve the community best by being a place for the living, so we provide activities, art exhibits, programs, etc. that draw people into the cemetery for something other than a funeral."

"This cemetery is hallowed ground to the families with loved ones here. When you work here you have inherited a sacred trust that must never be violated."

Although change is the watchword in today's cemetery, some things never change. Pat and his father's life work certainly attest to that.

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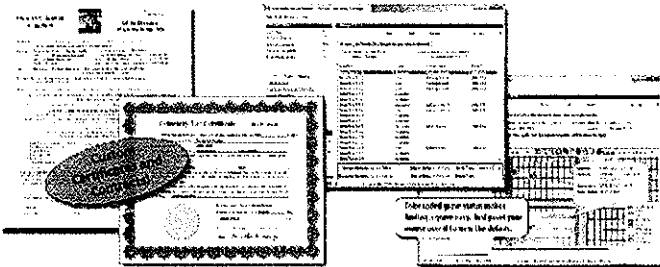
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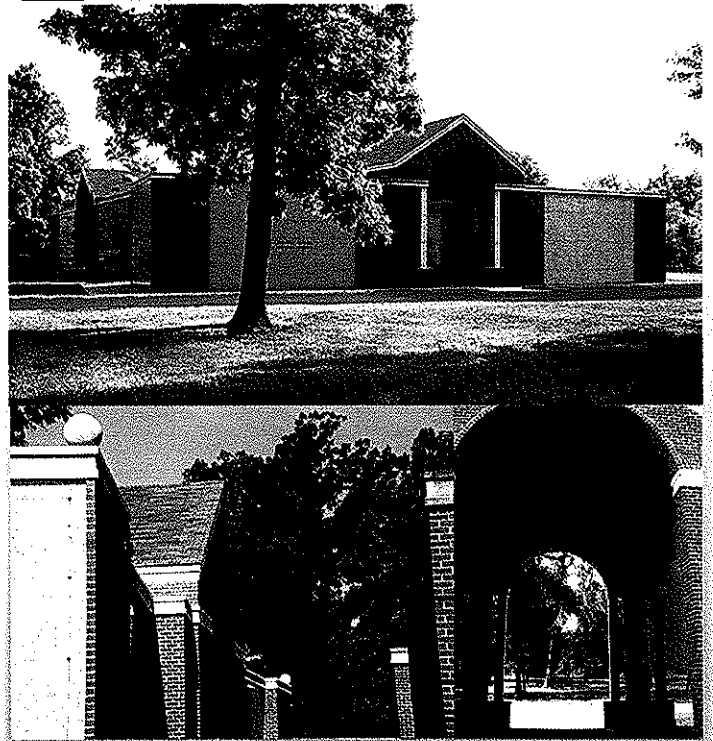


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