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# The New Englander

February / March 2008

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE  
**NEW ENGLAND CEMETERY ASSOCIATION**

**www.newenglandcemetery.org**

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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Winter is winding down, mud is prevalent, and spring clean up is just around the corner. Time will start to fly by through our busiest time of the year, but it's not too early to plan to attend the 106<sup>th</sup> NECA Annual Meeting to be held this year at the Sturbridge Host Hotel in Sturbridge, Massachusetts. Dates are June 24<sup>th</sup> through the 27<sup>th</sup>.

I believe the conference will be informative and a good time for members and their families. The Board is working hard to put together a fine program that all can enjoy, including the spouses' program. If you have ideas of topics you would like to learn more about, please email me with your suggestions. Look for information that will come out soon.

For all of the NECA members and friends who attended the Mid Winter Meeting get together, thank you. Donna and I had a great time and believe it or not, some good networking was done, and the food was great. I believe the Indians made out on this one. I hope that everyone called Charlie on his NY Giants pick. A hearty thank you to Dale Fiore for finding the Mystic Hilton and getting the ball rolling.

I will be completing my meeting schedule in April, with a trip to Vermont to attend their meeting. This will accomplish my goal of attending a meeting in each of our member states.

Sincerely,  
*Mark Hemmann*  
Your President

## STATE NEWS

### **C**onnecticut: by Dan Krueger

Come join us for the Connecticut Cemetery Association Annual Suppliers' Expo to be held Thursday, March 27th at the Aqua Turf Club in Southington between the hours of 9:30 am and 2:30 pm.

The Suppliers' Expo is a day devoted to our suppliers. They will exhibit their equipment, services and wares throughout the morning for our benefit. This is the perfect time of year to see what's new and how our suppliers can help make your day-to-day operations easier and more efficient. You will have an opportunity to discuss first hand how these products can benefit your cemetery. We expect over 20 exhibitors along with 75 members in attendance.

Following the buffet lunch we will have a special business meeting to consider changes and amendments to the association's By-Laws. Past President Ken Hedman has been working very diligently over the past several years to update the association's legal structure. These changes have allowed CCA to be recognized by the IRS as a non-profit organization. It has also permitted us to incorporate and apply to the state for non-profit status. Being incorporated also allows the association to procure officers and directors insurance. The ratification of these changes will finalize all of the hard work that Ken and his committee has put forth over the past three years.

Please join us at the Aqua Turf Club on the 27th. Their buffet is renowned, the facilities beautiful and the atmosphere is very conducive to learning through networking. Please contact Martha Smart (203-734-3577) or Matthew Knowlton (203-269-9840) for registration information and other details. We look forward to enjoying the day with you.

### *106th Annual Conference (continued from page 6)*

The Sturbridge Host Hotel and Conference Center, being adjacent to Old Sturbridge Village, is located at the junction of the Mass Pike and I-84. This locale offers convenience for travelers along with many wonderful leisure activities for families — OSV, antique shops and boutiques, Country Curtains, the Hyland Brewery, — to name a few. The conference center offers a lake for boating and swimming, miniature golf, a health club with racquetball and an indoor pool.

Please keep an eye out for your conference packet arriving soon in the mail. Mark has negotiated an excellent rate at the hotel making this conference a truly value-added event.

### **N**ew Hampshire: by Jeff Snow

It has been a busy legislative season in New Hampshire this year. Several bills which impact our industry have been filed.

- HB 1542, the "green burial" bill, would prohibit cemeteries from burying bodies based on lack of embalming or type of casket or container. Several people spoke against this bill. It has been deemed by committee as inexpedient to legislate, effectively dying in committee.
- HB 1221 would give cemetery trustees control over shrubs, trees and other greenery growing in and around the cemetery, requiring written permission to remove any and all plantings. This also has been deemed inexpedient to legislate in committee.
- SB 430 would change definitions of cemeteries and burial grounds in the NH law books. Religious and other private cemeteries are currently "burial grounds" and would be reclassified as cemeteries. The only real effect would be financial reporting. This bill passed the senate with an amendment leaving religious cemeteries as "burial grounds" and only changing the definition of other private cemeteries.
- SB 332 is relative to the resomation of human remains. Currently the process is allowed although there is no regulation. This bill would provide guidelines for the operation of such facilities. This bill has passed the senate with amendment.
- SB 512 would reestablish laws regarding public health emergency powers and the safe disposal of corpses, which was repealed in 2002. This is in response to possible pandemic or other emergency. This covers a lot of ground other than disposal of bodies and is still in committee.

The next meeting of the NHCA will take place April 16 at Alan's Restaurant in Boscawen. HMIS will present a program on cemetery software and mapping. There will also be a session on problem solving in your cemetery.

***Resomation? See page 5***

## STATE NEWS

**Vermont:** by Joy Fagan

The Vermont Cemetery Association is looking forward to its Spring Meeting to be held at Barber & Lanier Funeral Home in Montpelier, VT on Thursday, April 17, 2008. We are especially looking forward to NECA President Mark Hemmann and NECA Secretary Ray Scholl attending the upcoming meeting. Mark will be presenting a program.

VCA is working to improve relationships with the Vermont funeral directors because we can better serve the public if all of us in the industry can work well together. Barber & Lanier funeral director Jim Johnston has a good working relationship with cemeteries and is pleased to host our Spring Meeting. The head of the Vermont Funeral Directors Association will be invited to the meeting.

Recently an out-of-state (and out-of-country) businessman has wanted to purchase a 167 acre farm in Hartland, Vermont. His stated purpose for the purchase is to build a family home on the property. He wishes to build the house exactly on the piece of land where there is a 40' X 20' cemetery, the Aldrich-Kendall Cemetery. He, therefore, wishes to move the cemetery to accommodate his house. Out of all of the 167 acres, he has chosen the exact location of this small cemetery on which to erect his house. Since the man is a serious businessman, many are also concerned that moving this little cemetery is also to accommodate development. Whatever the reason, there are important reasons not to permit the moving of this cemetery where the remains of loved ones have rested since 1850.

Among the known deceased in the cemetery are included the great-great-great-grandparents of a woman who is requesting party status to the case which is now in Probate Court. The probate judge has granted her party status, and even before the last hearing in Probate Court, the businessman has already appealed her party status to the Superior Court. Like several others interred there, the great-great-great-grandfather was a War of 1812 veteran. Along with other War of 1812 veterans, the cremated remains of the next-to-last owner of the farm are also in that cemetery.

People from cemeterians, including VCA and the Vermont Old Cemetery Association to veterans to lay people are protesting the requested move, however none has party status. There was standing room only at the last hearing and every one of the attendees protested

*Continued: see Vermont next column*

*Vermont (continued)*

the move. Yet upon leaving court, the petitioner smiled and laughed at the crowd, saying he was very pleased at the hearing outcome and felt assured he would prevail.

VCA, VOCA and others are deeply concerned that if the move is allowed, it will set a disastrous precedent. We all recognize the disgraceful lack of respect and dignity in the proposed move and the total disregard of the concept that a cemetery is forever.

The new VCA website is up and running thanks to VCA vice president Greg Trulson and his partner Willie Docto, both of whom run Moose Meadow Lodge in Waterbury. Willie of Docto Association Management, LLS, set up the website and manages it. The website now is bringing in numerous inquiries and new members. We invite all to take a look at

[www.vermontcemeteryassociation.org](http://www.vermontcemeteryassociation.org).

As I write this we are expecting another major snowstorm starting tomorrow. It seems great to see the white gold after too many warm winters. Anyone interested in further information about the VCA Spring Meeting may go to our website or contact Joy at 802-253-7776.

***“No mater how you feel,  
get up, dress up and show up.”***

*Regina Brett, columnist for The Plain Dealer,  
Cleveland, Ohio*

**D**id you pay your dues yet?

Secretary Ray Scholl mailed out renewal notices earlier this year. If you have not paid your dues please do so as soon as possible. Membership in this wonderful organization has many benefits including the education programs, the Membership Directory, this newsletter, not to mention the ability to network with fellow professionals concerning unique problems and issues.

If you need additional information please contact Ray at 203.874.8998 or [NECemetery@gmail.com](mailto:NECemetery@gmail.com). And remember, you must be a member of a state cemetery association in order to belong to NECA.

## A LIFETIME ON CEDAR HILL'S GROUNDS

*William F. Griswold, Jr. is the Executive Superintendent of Cedar Hill Cemetery in Hartford, Connecticut. He is a Past President of the Connecticut Cemetery Association as well as NECA. This article, written by him, was first published in the Fall 2007 issue of "The Gateway", a newsletter published twice annually by Cedar Hill Cemetery. It is reprinted with permission.*

Employees have been living on Cedar Hill's historic grounds for decades. It was common-practice for larger New England cemeteries to provide housing for their employees. The superintendent, or sexton, would live at the entrance of the cemetery to open and close the gates, act as security and direct visitors to grave sites. Almost unheard of this day and age, Cedar Hill Cemetery still requires the superintendent to live in the Superintendent's Cottage at the entrance to the grounds.

I have lived on Cedar Hill's grounds my entire life. I was born during World War II in a cemetery-owned house on Ridge Road just over the city line in Wethersfield. I lived there with my parents until I was 19.

In 1964 I married my wife, Susan, and we moved into the two family house next to Saint George Greek Cathedral on Fairfield Avenue, which is owned by the Cemetery. In 1978 I accepted the position of Superintendent. It was then that Susan and I packed our things and walked them across the yard to the Superintendent's Cottage, the Victorian style house at the entrance to the grounds. It's hard to believe that we have been living here for the past 29 years.



*Cedar Hill Cemetery entrance.*

*Photo courtesy of Cedar Hill Cemetery.*

I followed my father's footsteps. For 37 years he worked as Cedar Hill's Operations Supervisor – he retired after having a heart attack in 1974. We worked together for 10 years, planting many of the trees and shrubs that now beautify the landscape. As I drive around the cemetery I remember when we planted "this tree" or "that shrub".

Even before I worked here I remember following Dad around the Cemetery as he worked. At a very young age I knew every rock, pond and tree on the grounds. I couldn't help but be attracted to outdoor life – hunting, fishing and trapping. I was lucky enough to be the only kid with a 270-acre backyard. However, living on the grounds is not all fun and games. I'm always on call for duties over and above the normal 9:00 to 5:00 job. On call 24 hours a day, seven days a week for security patrols, alarms, guard service patrols, police and fire department requests and general requests from the public – usually for directions.

In the 63 years that I have lived and worked here I have seen a lot of changes take place. The maintenance operations have become more mechanized; the standards of maintenance and services have increased; and the services the Cemetery offers have expanded, such as cremation and mausoleum entombment. The one thing that hasn't changed though, is our commitment to giving the community more and better choices for memorializing their loved ones. Cedar Hill was established under this premise and this continues to guide our decisions today.

Having always lived on the grounds and having worked here for so many years, I feel that I am at the helm of a large ship on a stormy sea. Up one wave and down another – day after day. I try to keep this ship on an even keel – guiding it through time with the ultimate goal of preserving its historical integrity.

It's been quite a life here at Cedar Hill Cemetery. I have enjoyed living on the grounds and I believe that Cemetery-owned housing has given many Cedar Hill employees a good start for them and their families. I hope this custom continues. It has given me the unique opportunity to meet and closely relate to the wonderful families who choose Cedar Hill as their final resting place and I would like to continue to see others benefit from this experience in the future.

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## Resomation

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Jeff Snow's report from New Hampshire mentioned two interesting legislative initiatives. They both are related to the increased awareness of the environment and interest in being more "organic".

The one involving "green burials" would prevent a cemetery from requiring burial vaults or even a casket. Fortunately, this bill died in committee.

Senate Bill 332 concerns "resomation". It is interesting that the a legislative bill would refer to a well known chemical process by a trademarked term. A Scottish company has developed a way, for lack of a better term, to dissolve a body through the very common natural process of alkaline hydrolysis. According to its website, Resomation, Ltd has trademarked the term "resomation" along with "biocremation" and "resomator". They also have a patent pending on their "resomator".

Alkaline hydrolysis is a simple, natural process by which molecules are broken down to their basic building blocks. The process happens in nature when animal tissue is buried in soil with a neutral to alkaline pH. This natural decay is slow and assisted by the digestive processes of soil organisms. The "Resomator" utilizes high temperatures to dramatically shorten the time required to completely dissolve a human body.

As explained in Resomation Ltd's website, the body is placed in a silk casket. The casket is weighed and placed inside the resomator. Water and alkali are added based upon the weight of the person. The chamber is then heated to 170 degrees Celsius, about 340 degrees Fahrenheit. The resomation process takes anywhere from 2 to 3 hours.

Upon completion the body has been broken down to 2 components. The first is the liquid which contains the amino acids, small peptides, sugars and salts from the body. This liquid has no DNA and has no detectable link to the body dissolved. The other component is the skeletal remains which have soften significantly. These are referred to by Resomation Ltd. as "bone shadows" and are easily crushed into powder or "Bio-ash" which can be returned to the family in an urn. The liquid is perfectly safe to flush down the drain.

Resomation Ltd. promotes this process as a much more environmentally sound alternative to cremation. They explain that when a body is cremated it is heated to up to over 2000 degrees Fahrenheit and lets off a number of harmful gases including mercury.

*Continued next column.*

### *Resomation continued*

The company offers its units at a cost of 300,000.00 British Pounds (\$600,000.00) installed with a projected fee per case of 300.00 British pounds (\$600.00). They claim to have installed two units in hospitals here in the states. The hospitals use them to dispose of their medical wastes as well as their research cadavers.

Besides New Hampshire, New York is currently considering legislation relative to permitting Alkaline Hydrolysis as an alternative to cremation. If you are interested in more information just Google resomation or alkaline hydrolysis. You will get 6,210 and 1,910,000 hits respectively.

We can certainly expect to continue to see new and innovative alternatives being promoted for the final disposition of human bodies. But it will always remain our responsibility to provide a place of remembrance for these lives and their families.

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## SPRING/SUMMER CALENDAR

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### **March 27, 2008: CCA**

Annual Suppliers Expo  
Aqua Turf Country Club, Southington, CT

### **April 16, 2008: RICA**

Business Meeting  
Roma Gourmet, Providence, RI

### **April 16, 2008: NHCA**

Spring Meeting  
Alan's Restaurant, Boscawen, NH

### **April 17, 2008: VCA**

Barber & Lanier Funeral Home  
Montpelier, VT

### **June 24—27, 2008: NECA**

106th Annual Meeting & Conference  
Sturbridge Host Hotel and Conference Center  
Sturbridge, MA

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## 106TH ANNUAL MEETING AND CONFERENCE

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After four long months of dreary, wet, cold weather June seems to be just a dream. But before we know it the crocuses will be in bloom and we will all be scurrying about repairing winter damage, seeding graves and preparing for Memorial Day. Soon after the New England Cemetery Association will be holding its' 106th Annual Meeting and Conference.

All of us should plan on joining President Mark Hemmann and the Board of Directors in historic Sturbridge, MA from Tuesday, June 24th through Friday, June 27th. Mark and his team have worked diligently arranging for a spectacular program.

The highlight of this year's conference will be a focus on pandemics and mass mortality. Wednesday morning Bill Austin, the Fire Chief of West Hartford, CT will explain the ramifications of a flu epidemic or any mass mortality event. Chief Austin has extensive experience in emergency management and homeland security. Joseph P. Dispenza will continue the discussion with a focus on preparing your cemetery for the Herculean task that will present itself in the event of such proportions. Joe is the President of Forest Lawn Group in Buffalo, NY. Forest Lawn Group operates three cemeteries: Forest Lawn, Lakeside, and Williamsville Center cemeteries. He has had direct experience working with FEMA following a natural disaster.

This three day event offers many opportunities to learn and grow through both the scheduled programming as well as the opportunity to interact with other cemetery professionals. As usual, there will be the suppliers show where you can see many of the products that are available to make your job easier and help your cemetery grow. You will be able to talk one-on-one with the supplier representatives concerning your specific needs.

*Continued page 2, column 1*

