

The New Englander

2023 SPECIAL EDITION

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE

NEW ENGLAND CEMETERY ASSOCIATION

President
David Boyle
Town of Chelmsford
Chelmsford, Ma.

Honoring the Past

Serving the Present

Preparing for the Future

www.newenglandcemetery.org

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Highland Memorial Park
Johnston, RI

Second Vice-President
Maureen Crick-Owen
Newtown Village Cemetery
Newtown, CT.

PRESIDENT'S INTERVIEW



1. What year did you begin working at a cemetery and where was it?

I started in November of 2003 with the Town of Chelmsford, MA Cemeteries

2. Have you been employed at any other cemeteries? No

3. What positions have you held during your time at the cemetery?

Superintendent of Cemeteries

4. How long have been employed in this type of business?

I have been in the deathcare industry since 1984, starting in the funeral business and becoming licensed in 1989 in both MA and NH, in 2003 I was hired as the Superintendent in Chelmsford

5. How long have you been involved with NECA?

I have been attending NECA events since 2004. I was the recipient of a scholarship from MCA to attend the Fredrick R. Laffond Cemetery Management Seminar in 2004.

6. What year did you join the NECA Board of Directors 2013

7. Are there any changes / improvements you would like to administer now that you have become president?

We must continue to work on maintaining our current members along with working to increase both our Cemetery and Supplier memberships and encouraging members to join our Board of Directors

NECA holds two large events each year, both always successful. In 2018 we moved the date and location of the Laffond Seminar to Sturbridge, that has worked well for attendance, especially giving attendees/municipalities the ability to be a day tripper.

In regard to the Annual Meeting and Conference, each year the President choses their location which works well, while talking with Suppliers during our visit to Concord I spoke to them in regards of the length of our summer conference. From those conversations, I brought it forward to the Board to try to shorten the duration of the conference. In 2024, it will begin on Monday June 17th with some great networking events, Tuesday we will hold the Annual Business Meeting/Educational program along with the ability to interact with our Suppliers throughout the day, ending with the Presidents dinner. As plans come together, we will be updating everyone with a confirmed schedule of events via the email and the NECA website.

As a cemeterian on each workday we expect to do our usual job, Mowing, trimming, vehicle maintenance, handling an interment, office responsibilities and depending on the season : Leaf removal, snow plowing—shoveling, spring cleanup; the list goes on.

In New England a storm or two, possibly a hurricane that will add to the burden of our daily routine.

Although a hurricane can cause a lot of damage but a tornado?, that is a storm I for one do not want to experience.

Unfortunately our Treasurer, Joe Swift at Highland Memorial Park had just an experience when one swept through his cemetery on August 18, 2023.

HIGHLAND MEMORIAL PARK CEMETERY

TORNADO – August 18, 2023

On August 18 at approximately 8:30 am while the cemetery operations crew were on the grounds and a staff member was present as the 115mph twister hit the cemetery. The twister churned the cemetery grounds, mixing earth and mighty trees and bending grave markers perpendicular to the souls interred beneath. Fortunately all employees made it to safety. The cemetery has 150 acres with 80 developed. Of the 80 developed the tornado struck about 20 of those acres. Approximately 125 trees were completely destroyed (most were 50 to 200 years old, most ripped from their roots and countless garden areas torn apart. Baskets, decorations and garden area plants were scattered throughout the cemetery. The main cemetery buildings were unscathed however the 200+ year old historical farm house was completely destroyed. Clean-up costs are estimated in excess of \$325,000.00. Those areas destroyed will never look the same.

HIGHLAND MEMORIAL PARK

Johnston, R.I.



If anyone has something you would like to share, please email me at Rcscholl627@gmail.com

It could be an event, project, a new piece of equipment, Vandalism, storm damage an unusual memorial, Etc.



Now that Halloween is getting closer, do you have any ghost stories or any type of unexplained experiences?

