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# The New Englander

**MAY 2025**

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE

## **NEW ENGLAND CEMETERY ASSOCIATION**

**President**  
**Gregory Howard**  
Riverbend Cemetery  
Westerly, R.I.

*Honoring the Past*

*Serving the Present*

*Preparing for the Future*

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

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### ***President's Message Gregory Howard***

Dear NECA Cemeterians & Suppliers,

I am very excited to be hosting the 2025 Annual Meeting & Conference in my home state of Rhode Island, at the Marriott Providence Downtown. We have what promises to be an amazing event planned, and we hope to see as many of you as possible in attendance. Providence is a unique location that offers plenty of entertainment options in and around the city, including wonderful museums, restaurants, and several options for both public and private tours. The area is also home to several historical cemeteries, including Swan Point Cemetery in Providence, and St. Ann Cemetery in nearby Cranston, RI. We will be offering several networking opportunities, including trolley tours of both cemeteries, as well as the Annual Golf Tournament, which will be held at the Swansea Country Club in Swansea, MA, and the Shot Gun Shoot with Gene Kinnel, which will be held at the Addieville East Farm in Mapleville, RI. Our speakers will be Ashlynn Rickord Werner from PlotBox, Hayden Burrus from HB Actuarial, and our keynote, Jeff McManus, from The McManus Group and the University of Mississippi, will be sharing his vast expertise in team building and getting the most out of your employees. Please join us for a great learning experience, valuable networking, and a lot of fun as well! I hope everyone has a wonderful spring, and I will be looking forward to seeing you all in Providence in June!

Greg Howard, NECA President



- \*Informative Speakers
- \*Cemetery Tours
- \*Great Networking Opportunity

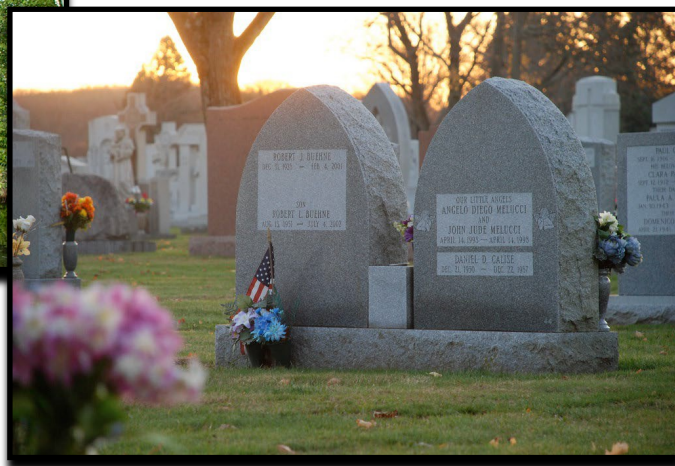


**New England Cemetery Association  
122nd Annual Meeting & Conference  
Providence Marriott Downtown  
One Orms Street, Providence, RI  
June 16-June 18,2025**



Swan Point Cemetery

St. Ann's Cemetery



# PROGRAM

## 122<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting of the New England Cemetery Association

### Monday, June 16, 2025

10:00 - 11:30 NECA Board Meeting – Lincoln Room

12:00 – 5:00 Networking Activities (registration required - see page 2 of registration form)

- Golf @ Swansea Country Club, Swansea, MA. Arrive 12:00pm for 12:30 Start
- Swan Point Cemetery Trolley Tour. Meet in Hotel Lobby at 11:45
- Shot Gun Shoot – Meet Gene Kinneel at Addieville East Farm, Mapleville, RI at 12 PM

4:00 Early Supplier Set-up Available – Canal/College Hotel Rooms

### Tuesday, June 17, 2025

8:00 – 9:00 Registration/Continental Breakfast/Supplier Set-up

9:00 – 9:30 Annual Meeting/State Legislative Updates

9:30 – 10:00 Opening Remarks, Welcome First Time Attendees & Supplier Introductions

10:00 - 11:00 Jeff McManus:

“Growing Weeders into Leaders” (Part 1)

11:00 – 11:30 Break & Time with Suppliers

11:30 – 12:30 Jeff McManus:

“Growing Weeders into Leaders” (Part 2)

12:30 – 1:30 Lunch

1:30 – 2:30 Hayden Burrus:

“How to ensure your Perpetual Care Fund will Stand the Test of Time”

2:30 – 2:45 Break (Snacks, Coffee, etc.)

2:45 – 3:30 Ashlynn Rickord Werner:

“Graveside Stories: Unlocking the Hidden Histories in Your Cemetery”

3:30 – 5:00 Supplier Showcase

5:00 – 6:00 Time on Your Own

6:00 – 7:00 Cocktail Hour

7:00 – 8:30 President’s Banquet

8:30 – 11:00 Hospitality

### Wednesday, June 18, 2025

7:30 – 9:00 Breakfast Buffet

10:00 – 12:00 Bonus Program (registration required - see page 3 of registration form) • Cemetery Bus Tour – St.

## Hayden Burrus

### “How to Ensure Your Perpetual Care Fund Will Stand the Test of Time”

**Bio:** Over 20 years ago, Hayden Burrus began devoting his actuarial skills to analyzing the issue of cemetery perpetual care funding. He interviewed cemetery operators and regulators regarding perpetual care funding issues. After 18 months of research, in 2001, he authored a three-part research series in International Cemetery and Funeral Management magazine. Every cemetery needs to know whether its perpetual care fund will have adequate resources to pay for all maintenance costs in perpetuity. Our perpetual care fund studies answer all your questions. Questions such as “Where is the fund currently heading if no changes are made?” and “What are the chances that the fund will run out of money within the next 100 years?” Hayden is the most recognized expert in the field of perpetual care adequacy.

An independent analysis from **PerpetualCareAdequacy.com** will give management support that it is engaging in responsible long-term perpetual care management practices. For most cemeteries, the time to perform a perpetual care adequacy analysis is now.

**Description of Topic:** The best way to complete that assignment is to forecast perpetual care fund balances for many years in the future. A detailed perpetual care fund balance sheet forecast can tell you if you have enough, how likely you are to run out, and when (if ever) you are likely to run out of funds. A significant benefit of a very long-term perpetual care analysis is that you’ll know where you are heading now, so you can make some changes if you don’t like what you see 100 years down the road. We have performed analyses like these numerous times before and can help you complete that daunting task. Since 2000, Hayden Burrus has consulted with numerous cemetery managers and had the chance to learn of the plans and goals they have for their businesses. Most cemetery managers have the expectation that their perpetual care funds will cover their expenses for the foreseeable future (10 years). Some wrongly believe that if expenses are covered for ten years or so, then their perpetual care funds are adequate. The problem with this view is that solvency for the foreseeable future does not guarantee long term (100+ years) solvency. In addition, the actions required now to guarantee long-term solvency are usually quite minor. However, if we ignore long-term solvency, the required future changes to a perpetual care fund will become increasingly painful. This program outlines the tasks necessary to create a 100-year study, and all of the pitfalls you may encounter along the way.



## Ashlynn Rickord Werner

### “Graveside Stories: Unlocking the Hidden Histories in Your Cemetery”

**Bio:** Ashlynn Rickord Werner is a cemetery tourism and public engagement specialist with deep experience in cemetery operations, programming, and strategic planning. She served as the Director of Cemeteries for the City of Providence, RI, where she developed new public initiatives, launched a volunteer program, and elevated the visibility of historic municipal burial grounds. She currently serves as the Customer Success Lead at PlotBox, advising hundreds of cemeteries across the Americas on digital transformation, operations, and long-term planning. She also co-hosts a monthly deathcare book club for the Association for Gravestone Studies.

**Description of Topic:** Every headstone tells a story—if we know how to listen. Cemeteries are open-air archives filled with local legends, forgotten heroes, and the quiet voices of history. In this session, we’ll explore how cemeterians can identify, research, and share the remarkable stories buried in plain sight. From the Civil War soldier to the town’s first teacher, these stories not only honor the dead but invite the living to connect more deeply with place, heritage, and each other. You’ll learn practical strategies for uncovering compelling narratives, designing walking tours and educational programs, and using storytelling to promote community engagement, preservation efforts, and tourism. Whether you’re just beginning to explore your grounds or already planning events, this session will equip you with the tools and inspiration to turn your cemetery into a living classroom—and a powerful place of memory.

## Jeff McManus

### “Growing Weeders into Leaders”

**Bio:** As the Director of Landscape Services at the University of Mississippi by day, a member of the National Speakers Association by night, Jeff has worked with hundreds of leaders and organizations to find the hidden leader within themselves and others. His easy-to-follow Leadership programs motivate participants to lead by example, problem solve and to engage in continuous learning and growing.

Jeff graduated from Auburn University in Horticulture, he is a Professional Certified Grounds Manager, and a Certified Arborist. Jeff knows that great leaders grow great leaders, and as a professional speaker and a member of the National Speaker Association, his message focuses on enriching, entertaining, and inspiring industry leaders looking to grow their team’s performance.

**Description of Topic:** Most organizations can’t pay for the talent they want, but with the right strategy most organizations can GROW the talent they have to get the leaders they need. Leadership is the art of motivating a group of people to act towards achieving a common goal. Leadership is a mindset. At the request of Greg Howard, in addition to Growing Weeders into Leaders, Jeff will also incorporate content about being an inspiring leader: To be an inspiring leader, prioritize leading by example, effective communication, and empowering your team. Encourage growth by providing opportunities, celebrating achievements, and fostering a culture of learning. Build strong relationships, show empathy, and set high standards to create a trusting environment that motivates and nurtures the growth of your team members.



# New England Cemetery Association

## 122nd Annual Meeting and Conference

### MARRIOTT PROVIDENCE DOWNTOWN

One Orms Street, Providence, RI 02904

**MONDAY, JUNE 16 – WEDNESDAY, JUNE 18, 2025**

**PLEASE CONTACT MARRIOTT PROVIDENCE DOWNTOWN TO MAKE ROOM RESERVATIONS AT 1-401-272-2400 and reference NECA for Special Rate.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Badge Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Companion/Guest: \_\_\_\_\_ Badge Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Number Attending: \_\_\_\_\_

Cemetery / Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Is this your first time attending this event? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

**\*\* Hotel Special Rates: \$179/per night plus tax, SUNDAY, June 15th thru TUESDAY, June 17th \*\***

**Program Registration & Meals** (includes Tuesday Continental Breakfast, Lunch Buffet, Social Hour, President's Dinner & Wednesday Continental Breakfast)

Member/Single Attendee: \$325.00

Member/Double Attendee: \$650.00

Non-Member/Single: \_\_\_\_\_ \$375.00

Non-Member/Double: \_\_\_\_\_ \$750.00

Day Tripper Rates: \_\_\_\_\_ →

Registration: (as per above): \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Golf: (See Page 2): \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Swan Point Tour: (See Page 2): \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Total: \$** \_\_\_\_\_

#### Day Tripper Rates for Per Person

##### Includes Registration

Tuesday...Continental Breakfast/Program/Lunch...\$175.00

Non Member... \$225.00

If staying for Social Hour & President's Dinner: Total \$325.00

Non Member Total \$375.00

**Special Dietary Needs and Allergies** (please list) \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE SEE PAGES 2 AND 3 FOR ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES!**

**GREAT NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES  
FOR MONDAY AFTERNOON!**

**NECA Nick Pahoulis Memorial Golf Classic**

Swansea Country Club 299 Market St., Swansea, MA

**Monday, June 16th 12:30 PM (First Tee-Times)**

Golf: \$112.00 9 holes

Scramble Tournament

Handicap \_\_\_\_\_ or avg. score for 18 holes \_\_\_\_\_

Golfers are to arrive by Noon  
to pick up their box lunches  
and get to their carts.

Price includes greens fee,  
cart fee, balls, prizes &  
awards.

Number of players: \_\_\_\_\_

Names of players: \_\_\_\_\_

**Deadline for registration: June 1, 2025**

**NO LATE GOLF REGISTRATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED**

**Shot Gun Shoot**

Gene Kinnel from McCleskey Mausoleum  
Company has once again made arrangements  
for another Shot Gun Shoot!!

For any non-golfers who wish to participate,  
please contact Gene at

genekinnel@mccleskey.com to register for  
this exciting alternative.

The Shoot will be held Monday, June 16<sup>th</sup>.

Addieville East Farm  
200 Pheasant Dr.  
Mapleville, RI

12:30 - 5:00 PM

**A Trolley Tour of Swan Point Cemetery**

**Monday, June 16**

**Tour Limited to 34, First come, First Serve**

**\$25 per person**

**Pickup & Dropoff will be at the Hotel  
Must be in the Hotel Lobby no later than 11:45**

**for the 12:00 Tour**

**LUNCH IS INCLUDED**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*PLEASE EMAIL COMPLETED FORM TO: [NECA1902@GMAIL.COM](mailto:NECA1902@GMAIL.COM) \*\*\*  
**RETURN THIS REGISTRATION FORM AND YOUR CHECK PAYABLE TO:**

New England Cemetery Association

c/o Dan Krueger, Secretary, 158 Hoerle Blvd., Torrington, CT 06790

860-480-1337

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## WEDNESDAY BONUS

### Trolley Tour of St. Ann Cemetery

#### Tour Details:

Limited to 34 people (first come, first serve)

Wednesday, June 18 @ 10AM-12PM

Attendees will meet trolley at St. Ann Cemetery

73 Church St., Cranston, RI

Tour will cover the beautiful grounds and

The Mausoleum of Saints Peter & Paul

Expertly constructed by McCleskey Mausoleums in 2021

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Places of Interest in Providence

Historic Federal Hill

Providence Place

Museum of Natural History & Planetarium

Stephen Hopkins House

Roger Williams Park

Providence Athenaeum

Comedy Connection

Haunted History Walking Tour

Cathedral of Sts. Peter & Paul

Swan Point Cemetery

Rhode Island State House

RISD Museum of Art

Lippett House Museum

Providence Performing Arts Center

Roger Williams Zoo

Brown University

Providence Boat Tours

John Brown House Museum

The Great Escape Room

North Burial Ground

NECA is guided by a Board of Directors which are elected every year at the Annual Meeting and Conference.

Serving on the current Board are:

President – Gregory Howard, Riverbend Cemetery, Westerly, RI

Vice President – David Raposa, Jr., Fall River Catholic Cemeteries,  
Fall River, MA

Treasurer – Joseph Swift, Highland Memorial Park, Johnston, RI

Secretary – Dan Krueger, Beaverdale Memorial Park, New Haven, CT

Past President Director – Mary Anne Hawthorne, Cedar Hill Cemetery,  
Hartford, CT

Past President Director – Kelly Perry, Swan Point Cemetery,  
Providence, RI

Director – Stephen Dean, Newton Cemetery and Arboretum, Newton, MA

Director – Ryan Milley, Forest Hills Cemetery, Boston, MA

Director – Patrick Healy, Green Mount Cemetery, Montpelier, VT

Director – Pamela Brown, Hillside Cemetery, Wilton, CT

Director – Annalisa Heppner, North Burial Ground, Providence, RI

Director – Robbin Kelley, Town of Harwich, Harwich, MA

Continuing to serve will be Immediate Past President David Boyle,  
Chelmsford Cemeteries, Chelmsford, MA

