
The New Englander

NOVEMBER 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

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President's Message *Gregory Howard*



Hello NECA membership,

First, I would like to say thank you to everyone that attended the Annual Meeting & Conference back in June. It really was a great event, complete with incredibly informative speakers, our most trusted suppliers, and, as always, just a lot of quality people, good food, and great conversation. I do hope to see everyone again this summer at the Mystic Hilton in Mystic, CT.

I am also very much looking forward to the upcoming 55th Annual Frederick R. Laffond Cemetery Management Seminar, which will be held on December 8-10 at the Publick House in Sturbridge, MA. We have put together a comprehensive program covering topics such as monument restoration, cemetery operations, hiring techniques, grief counseling, developing previously unusable land, and leveraging data and technology to meet the customers' needs. There will be an interactive 'What was your worst day on the job?' roundtable discussion as well, and, perhaps best of all, cemetery trivia hosted by Karin & Kristin Sprague. This is one you will not want to miss! The deadline to register and secure your rooms is only a couple of weeks away, so make sure you complete the registration form and call to reserve your room today. Please contact Dan Krueger (necal902@gmail.com) or myself (greg@riverbendcemetery.org) with any questions you may have.

In conclusion, I just want to thank all our membership, especially my fellow Officers and Directors of the Board, as well as our Suppliers, for all your continued support of this great organization. Thank you, and I hope to see everyone soon!

Sincerely,

Gregory Howard

President



**New England Cemetery Association
2025 Frederick R. Laffond
Cemetery Management Seminar
December 8 – December 10**



The Publick House

**277 Main Street, Sturbridge, MA 01566
508-347-3313**

Featured Speakers:

Regina Harrison—Mount Auburn Cemetery

Nick Tempe—webCemeteries

Karin & Kristin Sprague, Karin Sprague Stone Carvers

Patrick Healy, Green Mount Cemetery

David R. Nichols, Sr., Quality Transitions Inc.

Wilson Hood, Grief Counselor, HopeHealth

Jonathan Appell, Atlas Preservation

Call the hotel to reserve your room today.

We hope to see everyone there for an amazing event!

NEWENGLANDCEMETERY.ORG

For further Information



New England Cemetery Association
55th Annual Frederick R. Laffond Cemetery
Management Seminar
December 8th – 10th, 2025
The Publick House, Sturbridge, MA

Monday December 8

11:30 – 12:45 p.m. Registration

12:45 – 1:00 p.m. Welcome Remarks & Introduction of First Timers

1:00 p.m. Historic Cemeteries Facing the Future

Presented by Regina Harrison, Mount Auburn Cemetery

As cremation rates steadily rise throughout North America, cemeteries are being handed an opportunity to add exciting and appealing burial spaces using pieces of land that would previously have been seen as problematic or unusable. Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge and Watertown, Massachusetts has embraced this opportunity in a variety of cemetery development projects, ranging from simple and budget-friendly to complex and high end. Each project is designed to appeal to today's purchasers, and several solved maintenance issues while also improving the existing landscape and bringing in significant revenue. In this talk we will look at several types of projects and how they fit into Mount Auburn's landscape, sharing ideas that you can take back to your own cemetery. Not all these projects will work in all landscapes but with eyes open to cremation, you will find new potential in your own landscape.

2:00 p.m. Burial Trends and Consumer Expectations in 2025

Presented by Nick Timpe, webCemeteries

How are burials trending across the country and in New England in 2025? In this session, Nick Timpe, CEO of webCemeteries and Dean of ICCFA University College of Technology, will provide a quick evaluation of real burial trend data, and discuss consumer expectations that feed into these trends. We will explore how cemeteries can leverage technology to better reach families and meet their modern needs.

3:00 p.m. Break

3:15 p.m. Introduction of Suppliers

3:30 p.m. Cemetery Trivia

Presented by Karin & Kristin Sprague, Karin Sprague Stone Carvers

Attendees will be broken into groups and given the opportunity to show off their cemetery knowledge by competing in "Cemetery Trivia."

4:30 p.m. Free Time

6:00 p.m. Social Hour and Dinner

Tuesday, December 9

8:00 a.m. Registration

8:50 a.m. Welcome Remarks

9:00 a.m. This is My Cemetery Presented by Patrick Healy, Green Mount Cemetery

Patrick will share with you the unique characteristics and challenges that Green Mount Cemetery in Montpelier, VT presents and how, through his creativity, he has been able to meet the needs and desires of the families he serves. This includes incorporating green burials and a more natural landscape into his municipal cemetery.

10:00 a.m. Essentials of Human Resources in the 21st Century Presented by David R. Nichols, Sr., Quality Transitions Inc.

Explore what is necessary in this changing world to navigate success for all aspects of Human Resources as we move through the 21st Century. We will also share the necessary steps in the hiring process in making the “right hire.”

11:00 a.m. Morning Break, Supplier Introductions and State Updates 11:30 a.m.

11:30 a.m. Vicarious Grief: What Deathcare Workers Need to Know

Presented by Wilson Hood, Grief Counselor, HopeHealth

While education about grief in general is often limited, education about the impact of vicarious grief-the grief we experience in response to another person’s direct loss-is even less common. Deathcare workers of all kinds, including cemetery workers, are exposed regularly to the grief process, both of those they serve directly and the general public, and are therefore at a higher risk of experiencing vicarious grief. Despite the silence around it due to both lack of education and social stigma, vicarious grief can have a profound impact on our wellbeing and on the wellbeing of our colleagues. In this session, we will learn more about vicarious grief, share our experiences, and discuss best practices for managing and integrating our vicarious grief into both our professional and personal lives.

12:30 p.m. Lunch

1:30 p.m. Monument Restoration: Finding Practical Solutions to Common Problems

Presented by Jonathan Appell, Atlas Preservation

Discussion will focus on using the best techniques to SAFELY raise, reset, and preserve monuments, which Jonathan Appell has taught to more people than anyone in the industry during his 48-state tour that has taken him to over 200 free events in just the last 5 years alone. Mr. Appell’s goals are to eliminate extraneous information and keep things as simple as possible in his quest to further professionalize the field.

3:00 p.m. Break and Time with Suppliers

3:30 p.m. Roundtable Discussion: “What was your worst day on the job?”

Attendees will discuss the most difficult situations they have been in throughout their careers, as well as how these issues were ultimately resolved.

4:30 p.m. Free Time

6:00 p.m. Social Hour and Dinner

Back by popular demand, we are pleased to have

A Completely Different Note

perform for us again.

A Completely Different Note (CDN) is UConn’s oldest lower voice a cappella group, founded in 1999. In the last 25 years, CDN has prided itself on its’ musical prowess and diversity, tackling songs from artists like James Taylor to Hozier. Delivering performances across Connecticut and the country, CDN always brings the character and charm that has defined them over the years. The group recently released its’ sixth studio album titled “Noteworthy.”

Wednesday, December 10

7:00 – 9:00 a.m. Breakfast and Farewell



55th NEW ENGLAND CEMETERY ASSOCIATION
FREDERICK R. LAFFOND CEMETERY MANAGEMENT SEMINAR
MONDAY, DECEMBER 8th — WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10th, 2025
RESERVATION & REGISTRATION

COMMITTEE

David Raposa, Jr., Chair ~ Greg Howard ~ Pam Brown ~ David Boyle ~ Ryan Milley

Name: _____		Badge Name/Nickname: _____	
Cemetery / Company: _____			
Mailing Address; Street: _____			
City: _____		State: _____	Zip: _____
Telephone: _____		Email Address: _____	
Is this your first time attending this event? _____ Yes _____ No			

(Please indicate your registration choice)

MEMBERS

NON-MEMBERS *

Full Seminar (12/8—12/10) - meals, snacks, etc.

_____ **\$395.00**

_____ **\$445.00**

DOES NOT INCLUDE HOTEL ROOM -

YOU MUST BOOK THE ROOM DIRECTLY WITH

THE PUBLIC HOUSE (\$110.00 PER NIGHT + TAXES)

LET THEM KNOW YOU ARE WITH NECA. TELEPHONE 508-347-3313

Monday, December 8 (includes dinner)

_____ **\$165.00**

_____ **\$215.00**

Tuesday, December 9 (includes lunch only)

_____ **\$180.00**

_____ **\$230.00**

Tuesday, December 9 (includes lunch & dinner)

_____ **\$260.00**

_____ **\$310.00**

***Non-Member fee includes 2026 membership to NECA (\$50.00)**

Choose one for Tuesday Dinner (Cocktail Attire Encouraged)

_____ **Prime Rib of Beef**

_____ **Salmon**

_____ **Chef's Choice Vegetarian**

PLEASE NOTIFY US IF YOU HAVE ANY FOOD ALLERGIES, RESTRICTIONS OR REQUESTS

DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION - November 15

Payment in FULL must accompany each registration

(The only exception will be a purchase order from a municipal cemetery)

Make checks payable to The New England Cemetery Association (Federal ID #22-257-5156)

Send completed form and payment to:

Dan Krueger, Secretary

158 Hoerle Boulevard, Torrington, CT 06790

STATE NEWS

PRESS RELEASE

Release date: November 2025

Contact info:

Lisa K. Vaeth, Immediate Past President

Connecticut Cemetery Association, Inc.

lvaeth@jewishhartford.org

(860) 978-1435



EST. 1942

**CONNECTICUT
CEMETERY
ASSOCIATION**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

On October 29, 2025, the Connecticut Cemetery Association, Inc. announced their slate of Officers and Board of Directors at Casa Mia in Berlin, CT:

Board of Officers and Directors for 2025-2026

President	Bill Raffone, Catholic Cemetery Association, North Haven
Vice-President	Pamela Brown, Hillside Cemetery, Wilton
Treasurer	Anthony Puglisi, Evergreen Cemetery and Crematory, New Haven
Secretary	Jacob Jennings, Grove Street Cemetery, New Haven

Directors

Margaret Clarke, Oak Lawn Cemetery, Fairfield
J. H. Torrance Downes, Cypress Cemetery, Old Saybrook
Charlotte Maher, Mountain View Cemetery, New Fairfield
Andrew Summers, Hillside Cemetery Association, Torrington

Immediate Past President

Lisa K. Vaeth, Association of Jewish Cemeteries, Hartford

Supplier Liaisons

Chris Gehrke, Cooperative Funeral Fund, Inc.
Karen Pierson, SiteOne

For more information or to join our Association, please visit: <https://ctcemeteryassociation.org/>

SUPPLIER NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 23, 2025

Contact: Rolf Gutknecht

PH: (800) 991-0625 ext. 2

Email: rolfg@laadsmarketing.com

Respected Cemetery Veteran Tim Kolasa joins Merendino Cemetery Care as Director of Operations

Linden, NJ – Merendino Cemetery Care, one of the preeminent names in cemetery construction and development, is pleased to announce the addition of Mr. Tim Kolasa as the new Director of Operations.

Mr. Kolasa, a proud Marine Corp veteran, is a recognized name within Catholic cemeteries having served as Executive Director of Gethsemane Cemetery and St. Mary's Cemetery in Reading, Pennsylvania for the past 35 years. During that time, he transformed the cemeteries from small parish owned cemeteries to the largest Catholic cemeteries in Greater Reading and Berks County by continually evolving the cemeteries to meet the changing needs and requirements for families looking for new, innovative, and aesthetically pleasing burial, cremation and natural burial property options.

At Merendino Cemetery Care, Mr. Kolasa will oversee the day-to-day operations of the various landscaping and construction projects throughout the Northeast as well as other States where Merendino has current projects underway and future planned projects in the works. "We are thrilled to have Tim join our team," said Merendino Cemetery Care Vice President and Dean of ICCFA College of Land Management & Grounds Operation, Gino Merendino. "Tim brings such a wealth of talent, experience and creativity to us and our clients. His insights and success are undeniable. Tim's dedication to continuous learning at the ICCFA University as a professor and his belief that the work we do in this profession is a calling made bringing Tim on board an easy decision for both my brother Angelo and me."

"Providing insights and best practices on improving property development projects, inventory management and all aspects of cemetery operations, has been a passion of mine and I'm thrilled to be utilizing those skills to the benefit of our clients. There's no better place to put my commitment to the success of our clients to use than at Merendino Cemetery Care," said Mr. Kolasa.

For more information, or to schedule an interview with Tim Kolasa, please contact Rolf Gutknecht, LAads Marketing, at (800) 991-0625, ext. 2 or by email at rolfg@laadsmarketing.com

NECA is guided by a Board of Directors which is 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



NECA Membership Benefits

Professional Recognition—Shared Knowledge—Answers to Questions

Broader Access to Resources

Industry Links to Vendors & Cemeterians

Added Value to your Board of Trustees & Cemetery Associations

Opens Doors to National & International Cemetery Associations

Know a New England Cemeteryman who isn't a NECA member? Have them get in touch with Mary Anne Hawthorne NECA Membership Chair—send her an email at mhawthorne@cedarhillcemetery.org

PLEASE NOTE: Based on feedback from our members, the NECA Board of Directors made a change to member benefits. A member who is unable to attend either the Laffond Seminar or Summer Conference may send another individual from the cemetery in their place, without incurring the non-member fees.

CALLING ALL ACTIVE NECA MEMBERS!!!

Have you ever considered serving on the Board of Directors of
The New England Cemetery Association?

If so, now is your chance to let us know if you are interested in
getting involved in the future!

Please contact Nominations Chair

Past President: David Boyle

dboyle@chelmsfordma.gov