
The New Englander

OCTOBER 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

Editor: Raymond C. Scholl
Milford Cemetery Association
4 Winesap Dr. Oxford, CT. 06478
203-903-6270
Rcscholl627@gmail.com

Secretary
Dan Krueger
Beaverdale Memorial Park
New Haven, CT.

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

Treasurer
Joseph Swift
Highland Memorial Park
Johnston, RI



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

Hello NECA Cemeterians & Suppliers!

First, I would like to thank all of you that attended the 2025 Annual Meeting & Conference that was held at the Marriott in Providence, RI over June 16-18, as well as recognize the generous contributions of both time and resources from several specific individuals and organizations; Kelly Perry, Joe Cavallaro, and the entire staff of Swan Point Cemetery, Anthony Carpinello, St. Ann Cemetery, and the Diocese of Providence, River Bend Cemetery, Brian and Nick Ricciardi from Means Precast, Gene Kinnel from McCleskey Mausoleum, and Craig Neal from the Wilbert Group, all played a significant part in making this event a success. We had Jeff McManus from the University of Texas as our keynote speaker, who just hit it out of the park, as well as Hayden Burrus from HB Actuarial, and Ashlynn Rickord Werner from Plot Box that completed a very educational and engaging program. For those of you that missed it, I highly encourage you to attend next year if you can!

Chair Dave Raposa, Jr. will also be hosting the 55th Annual Frederick R. Laffond Cemetery Management Seminar at The Publik House Historic Inn in Sturbridge, MA on Monday, December 8 through Wednesday, December 10. The Education Committee is currently putting together a fantastic program that will be worthwhile for everyone, so save those dates and plan on joining us for a few days of education, experience, networking, and plenty of laughs.

In closing, I just want to state how excited I am to have the opportunity to serve NECA as President for another year, and look forward to working side by side with all the amazing people we are so lucky to have in this organization. I hope everyone has a great summer, and hopefully, I will see you all in Sturbridge in December.

Sincerely,

Greg Howard, NECA President

REMEMBERING BARBARA BROOKS

Hello, NECA Cemeterians & Suppliers!

Back in December of 2024, I was contacted by Dale Fiore from Evergreen Cemetery in New Haven, CT., who was calling on behalf of the late Barbara Brooks. Mr. Fiore is a Past-President of NECA, and he explained that Ms. Brooks was a longtime member of The Rhode Island and New England Cemetery Associations who served as treasurer of NECA from 2003 through 2009. Barbara was in attendance for all New England Cemetery events, including the midwinter gathering, the annual meeting & conference and the fall management seminar. Barbara received her New England Cemetery Association Professional Achievement Certification and Honorary Member status. As Treasurer of the association, Barbara kept a keen eye on the books and financials, and perhaps most importantly, was a longtime ambassador at the hospitality room, where she invented many games, including the infamous ‘Screw your Neighbor.’ She loved a good lottery scratch ticket and playing the slots at the casino. Barbara also toured much of The United States behind the wheel of an RV with friends, and it was rumored that she held a Pilot’s license and flew planes, too. In 2017 Barbara passed away and was laid to rest in her family lot at River bend Cemetery in Westerly, Rhode Island. Dale went on to express his disappointment that Barbara’s grave was unmarked, and wondered if there was anything the organization could do to see about getting her properly memorialized. I told him that I understood and appreciated his concern, and that I would see what I could do.

Barbara had been interred on an old family estate lot, so the first thing we needed to do was get permission from the family to install a marker on her grave. We were quickly able to get in contact with the current proprietor of the lot, and he was very much on board to get Barbara memorialized. He stated it had never sat right with him that she was not properly acknowledged, but stated that as only a cousin, he did not think it was his place to have it done. With his permission, we contacted Richard Brooks (no relation to Barbara) from Buzzi Memorials, a local monument company that we work with quite often, explained the situation, and asked if they would be willing to make the marker for us. Mr. Brooks was happy to get involved and offered a matching 2’ X 1” granite marker with engraving for the incredible price of only \$500!

The last step was to secure the \$500 in funding for the marker, as the foundation and installation was to be handled by River Bend Cemetery staff free of charge. The matter was discussed at the NECA Board Meeting prior to the Laffond Seminar in December, and it was decided that we would start a collection among the attendees at the Seminar to see if we could raise the money. I made one announcement on the first day, and within about 5-10 minutes, we raised the money that we needed. Kelly Perry, Karin Sprague, Mary Anne Hawthorne, Dave McKenna, Nick Ricciardi, Allan MacKinnon, Robbin Kelley, and the Elm Grove Cemetery in Rhode Island were among the very generous contributors. The marker was then made and installed in April of 2025 (see picture), so, a huge thank you to Dale Fiore, Richard Brooks from Buzzi Memorials, the NECA Board of Directors, and for all those that contributed to get one of our own memorialized in the way that she deserved. May she rest in peace.

Sincerely,

Greg Howard, NECA President



122nd Annual Meeting and Conference

Over 80 members and guests gathered at the Marriott Providence Downtown hotel for the 122nd Annual Meeting and Conference in mid-June. President Greg Howard and the Board of Directors presented an inspiring educational program in a warm and inviting atmosphere. The program certainly provided the attendees with an opportunity to gain knowledge and inspiration for improving and growing their operations.

First and foremost, we need to acknowledge and thank the following individuals and companies who made donations that contributed to the success of this event.

Brian Ricciardi – Means Precast for supporting the trolley tour of St. Ann Cemetery
River Bend Cemetery, Westerly, RI for supporting the cost of the audio visuals
Craig Neal – The Wilbert Group for organizing the Nick Pahoulis Memorial Golf Classic
Gene Kinnel – McCleskey Mausoleum for organizing and supporting the Shotgun Shoot
Swan Point Cemetery for providing the luncheon during the trolley tour

We also want to thank all of our Supplier members who participated via table-top displays. Industry vendors are very important to our industry and provide important services and products to our New England cemeteries. Without their support and participation, meeting our missions would be nearly impossible.

On Monday, June 16th, cemetery and supplier golfers took on the Swansea Country Club with the playing of the annual NECA Nick Pahoulis Memorial Golf Classic. At the conclusion of the event the prestigious Nick Pahoulis trophy was retired with the trophy being awarded to Craig Neal for all of his efforts in keeping this beloved tournament alive and healthy. Most certainly, well deserved!

Many non-golfers were treated by Gene Kinnel of McCleskey Mausoleums to an afternoon of sporting clays. Gene again organized and guided the group activity for members, this year at Addieville East Farm in Mapleville, RI. Many thanks to Gene.

Also, on Monday the non-golfers enjoyed a trolley tour of historic Swan Point Cemetery. Thanks to the generosity of Swan Point, the trolley travelers enjoyed a delicious lunch while learning about the history and continued development of the cemetery. While Swan Point has a long history, they are also very progressive in continuing to serve the citizens of greater Providence, embracing cremation, natural burials, etc. Many thanks to the staff and management of Swan Point.

Following the tournament and trolley tour, many of the attendees gathered at the famous Caserta Pizzeria on Federal Hill in Providence to enjoy a slice of signature pizzas, Wimpy Skippy or a Pig In A Blanket. This well known and very popular pizzeria is owned by our illustrious Past President, Joseph Cavellaro from Swan Point Cemetery. Normally closed on Mondays, Joe and his partner agreed to open up for our private event so that attendees could feast on a slice or two of Federal Hill's finest. Much appreciation to Joe, his partner and the skillful staff at Caserta Pizzeria.

Tuesday began with the 122nd Annual Meeting. During the meeting the following individuals were elected to serve as Officers and Directors for the upcoming year.

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: Robbin Kelley, Town of Harwich, Harwich, MA

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: Regina Harrison, Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge, MA

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

Please join me in congratulating these outstanding members and offering them assistance and encouragement.

Following the Annual Meeting the attendees were introduced to Jeff McManus, Founder and Lead Cultivation Officer of The Jeff McManus Group. As the Keynote Speaker, Mr. McManus shared with the group his experience in building a team of leaders, “turning weeders into leaders”. He shared what inspiring leaders do differently and why we love working for them. He highlighted 4 characteristics most admired in a leader – Honest, Competent, Inspiring and Forward Thinking. Being a leader is more than a skill; it is about building a relationship with your team.

Next Hayden Burrus presented a thought-provoking program on perpetual care funds. Your \$30,000.00 budget this year will cost you \$771,000.00 in 100 years based on the average inflation rate of 3.3%. He stressed that your PC plan should be based on a 100-year horizon. He suggested that you should re-evaluate your plan as needed, at least every 5 years. You will need to make changes as required including your contribution rate, your pricing, your maintenance budget as well as your investment policies. His presentation was certainly eye-opening.

The educational program was concluded by a presentation by Ashlynn Rickord Werner. According to Ashlynn, every headstone or marker tells a story if we know how to listen. She shared her experiences of opening up historical cemeteries to the public as learning places. She stressed that doing so will allow you to expand your community’s interest in your property and create an added revenue stream. Many of our member cemeteries have been successful in inviting the public to partake in their history and Ashlynn is a very good resource for guidance if these endeavors are in your future.

As an added bonus, the attendees were treated to a trolley tour of St. Ann Cemetery in Warwick on Wednesday morning. NECA member Anthony Carpinello guided us through the Providence Diocesan cemetery describing the many unique sections that were developed over time, utilizing the then current design features. The highlight was the Sts. Peter and Paul Mausoleum constructed by supplier member, McCleskey Mausoleums in 2021.

If you would like to partake in future NECA educational activities please keep in mind the upcoming Frederick Laffond Cemetery Management Seminar scheduled for December 8th through the 10th, 2025. As usual, this comprehensive program will be presented at the Publick House in Sturbridge, MA. Watch your email for continued updates.

Also, while you are checking your calendars, mark June 14th to June 16th, 2026 for the 123rd NECA Annual Meeting and Conference. This event will be held at the Hilton Mystic in picturesque Mystic, CT. The Hilton Mystic is right adjacent to the Mystic Aquarium and just over a mile from the historic Mystic Seaport. A perfect location for including the entire family.

If you would like to view additional photos of the 122nd Annual Meeting and Conference please visit our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/237636098861/>.



STATE NEWS

Rhode Island

An elegant cenotaph installed on Block Island.

A cenotaph is a monument memorializing a person or a group of people whose remains are located elsewhere.

This shared memorial was designed and installed by Karin Sprague Stone Carvers, in collaboration with Michael Shea, in the Island Cemetery. This monument commemorates those whose ashes are scattered on and around Block Island, RI, or those with a connection to Block Island who are entombed elsewhere. The triform, through-carved motif was conceived and realized by sculptor Rob Gil, emerging from his fascination with architectural tracery. On each side of the black slate is space for 12 names and dates. I've already had the honor of inscribing two names on the stone, those of Elva and Ralph Derby, my beloved caretakers as I was 19 living on the Island.

A video showing the process behind this beautiful monument can be viewed [here](#).

—
Kristin Sprague

Karin Sprague Stone Carvers, Inc

904 Tourtellot Hill Road
Scituate, RI 02857 USA

[Shop Newsletter Signup](#)

Shop Phone: (401) 934-3105

Cell: (401) 489-8197

karinsprague.com



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

Immediate Past President: David Boyle

DBoyle@townofchelmsford.us

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 Cemeterian 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.