

# The Cemeterian

Spring 2008

Published By The Vermont Cemetery Association

Volume 10, Issue 2

## **Spring Meeting—THURSDAY APRIL 17 at Barber and Lanier Funeral Home in Montpelier, VT**

- 8:45 Registration w/coffee  
9:15 Introductions  
9:45 ***Preparing for Spring—Getting Rid of Stains on Monuments***  
Jerry Mascola, Granite City Tool Company  
10:15 Break  
10:30 ***Spring Maintenance Tips***— Patrick Healy, Green Mount Cemetery  
10:45 ***Communicating with Funeral Directors***— Chris Book, President VT Funeral Directors and Embalming Association  
11:15 ***Funeral Home Tour***—Jim Johnston, owner of Barber and Lanier  
12:00 ***Website and Legislation Update***— Greg Trulson and Patrick Healy

**LUNCH—catered by McGuillicuddys**

Our next meeting (April 17) being held at Barber and Lanier Funeral Home is one NOT to miss. Ever wonder what happens at a Funeral Home? Do you really understand what functions a Funeral Director performs? Do you have questions for a Funeral Director? This presentation will allow us all to better understand what our clients are going through. On April 17, we will not only be meeting at a funeral home owned by Jim Johnston, we will also have Chris Book, President of the Vermont Funeral Directors as one of the guest speakers.

Additionally, Jerry Mascola, of Granite City Tool will be speaking about “Getting Stains out of Monuments” and Patrick Healy will share his Spring Maintenance tips. And lastly, Lunch will be provided by McGuillicuddys Irish Pub.

## **April Newsletter - President's Message**

It is the end of February; we have just received another 8" of snow which the wind is swirling around as I write this and since Stowe Cemeteries is basically closed in the winter, I have some extra time to think about current issues in what I call cemetery science.

There is much talk about cremation and green burials nowadays. Much of it concerns comments from people whose knowledge about cremation and green burials comes from those whose only relationship with cemeteries involves the burials of friends and loved ones.

I often hear the pros for cremation and reasons for green burials from these people. The problem is they never hear the other side of the coin. And there are ramifications about which everyone should be aware before making decisions concerning disposition of cremated remains, green burials and home burials.

Recently I received a phone call from a woman about home burials. She told me that the home she and her husband share is the property they purchased when they married more than 25 years ago. They love their home and would like to be laid to rest there for eternity. She wanted to know if there were people or offices she should contact. In talking with her I told her I understood why she desired home burials in her case, but said I had a few issues I wanted to mention to her before she made a final decision. I talked about how a home burial can devalue a property for sale in the future, how the certainty of a home burial site existing for eternity is not guaranteed or even its upkeep. I explained that unless definite legal steps were taken, she and her husband would have no way of knowing what would happen to their graves or any memorials erected once they were no longer around or had sold the property. (Please see article on Aldrich-Kendall Cemetery elsewhere in this newsletter.) There is even the possibility that family members or descendants could be refused access to the area, depending in which state the burials occur.

The woman paused and then exclaimed those were issues she had never thought of or considered. I continued to explain the departments she would need to contact if she were to go further about home burial and told her I was not telling her which way to go, but to first discuss it in detail with her husband and family including the cons of home burial. She was extremely grateful for the information and was obviously going to take that into serious consideration. From our conversation I believe she will look more favorably at cemeteries. Along with everything else we do as cemeterians, it is our responsibility to educate the public.

I often hear people say they prefer cremation because it is more environmentally sound. A cemetery is for the expressed intention of the interment of full body deceased and the inurnment of cremated remains and their memorialization. Cremated remains are the remains of a person who had a life here on earth. They are the remains of beloved relatives and friends. Cremated remains deserve exactly the same dignity and respect accorded to full body deceased. They deserve to be buried in a cemetery where they will be cared for and honored for eternity. Cremated remains deserve to be memorialized with a marker or above ground memorial.

It seems that all this, if not recognized previously, should certainly be recognized after 9/11. Even today, going on eight years from the attacks, families are still begging to find the tiniest scrap of DNA from a loved one lost on that fateful day - just a piece of remains that they may bury and memorialize. Certainly, we want to and do that for the loved ones who die conveniently available to us. I am afraid it is like so much else - when things are easy to do, we take them for granted. But when it is difficult, such as in a case where locating remains is concerned, we suddenly recognize the extreme value of having the remains and a place to visit forever to pay our respects.

Why is it that people so often leave cremated remains, the remains of people we knew and loved, at the funeral homes, never to be picked up? How is such disrespect even imaginable? Yet so many people have done that, that it is now a problem. In some cases so many cremated remains have been left behind that it is a terrible burden to funeral directors who have run out space to hold them. Funeral homes are not intended to be the final resting place for human remains, full body or cremated remains. It is part of our responsibility to educate the public that cremated remains deserve the same dignity and respect that is given to full body deceased. They should be retrieved from the funeral homes, by arrangement with the funeral director, or from the crematory and laid to rest in a cemetery where they can be properly cared for and memorialized for eternity. That way not only are they cared for, for eternity, but also when, generation after generation, families wish to visit the remains and/or do a family genealogy, these people, who lived lives here just as we do today, will not be lost to history.

As cemeterians we wear many hats. Educating the public about the remains of our loved ones and the proper disposition and memorialization of such is part of the many roles we are obligated to accept and perform. To be entrusted with the remains of loved ones is an honor few receive. I hope we cemeterians recognize that trust and honor and accord both the dignity and respect they deserve.

Looking forward to seeing everyone at the Spring Meeting of the Vermont Cemetery Association to be held at Barbar & Lanier Funeral Home in Montpelier on Thursday, April 17, 2008. Happy Spring!

Joy

**Questions that will be answered at our Spring Meeting.**

- 1. How to clean a monument?**
- 2. What can one use to remove an oil stain?**
- 3. What about black walnut stains?**
- 4. What functions does a Funeral Director perform?**
- 5. Tips on establishing good relations with all Funeral Directors.**
- 6. What is in the legislation pipeline for Cemeterians?**
- 7. Is my Cemetery ready for Spring?**
- 8. Memorial Day affects my cemetery, How?**
- 9. Who are my fellow cemeterians in Vermont?**
- 10. Am I the only one that deals with..... (fill in the blank and ask for yourself)**

**Board of Directors VCA 2008**

President Joy Fagan	Stowe Cemeteries	802-253-7776	2008
Vice President Greg Trulson	Duxbury Cemeteries	802-244-5378	2008
Director Bert Lindholm	Jericho Center Cemetery	802-899-3879	2008
Director Karen Greenwood	North Branch Cemetery	802-224-9971	2009
Treasurer Peggy Mullen	Berlin Corner Cemetery	802-223-6639	2008
Secretary Patrick Healy	Green Mount Cemetery	802-223-5352	2008

### **Current Issues Gain Attention**

Our industry, as has been noted time and again in these pages, is changing at a record rapid pace. Cemeteries have been forewarned to keep current with the changes and new issues or pay the price. As cemeterians we need to learn about the issues, become conversant with them, and educate the public about them. More and more, cemeterians are finding clients asking questions about these issues and we need to be able to provide the answers intelligently.

Some of these issues have caught the attention of the public because they have made headlines on TV and in newspapers. One such issue is the moving of cemeteries and bodies because a man in Windsor County wishes to purchase a parcel of land of 167 acres on which there is a 40' X 20' cemetery. He says the cemetery is exactly where he wishes to build his house out of all the 167 acres. Buried in the cemetery are the great-great-great-grandparents of a woman who is contesting the move and also the remains of veterans of the War of 1812 as well as cremated remains more recently buried there. There may be other unknown burials. Research the Vermont State Statutes and you will see that the statutes relating to such moves are now out-of-date and put at risk cemeteries and burials throughout the state. This issue has caught the attention of Senator Illuzzi and he will be holding a hearing on this topic sometime after March 14. There will be an update on this and other items at the VCA Spring Meeting to be held on April 17 at Barber and Lanier Funeral Home in Montpelier.

The situation at a Bennington cemetery involves a family dispute where it is alleged that one family member arranged for the burial of a parent without telling other family members that the parent had even died to say nothing about being buried without their knowledge. As can happen in small communities where many often know each other, it is also alleged that there had been family disputes going on for some time. Were interment orders used? Did the cemetery think about this burial and wonder why no one showed up for the interment? While not required by state statute, these are issues that might enter a cemeterian's mind.

Other issues have also been brought to the attention of the Vermont Cemetery Association through phone calls, letters and the inquiry of VCA's new and greatly improved website. They include the issue of requiring a Burial Transit Permit to accompany cremated remains just as required for a full body, other improved record-keeping, such as the use and filing of cemetery forms such as interment orders, disinterment orders, work orders, affidavits of heirs and affidavits of burial rights. Other questions are being raised about family lots where there are more heirs than spaces, green burials, scattering of cremated remains, moving a body that has been interred in a cemetery and home burials.

The public, and sometimes even cemeterians, are not fully informed on all of the ramifications concerning the above issues and, therefore, make decisions they would not have made, had they been better informed. As cemeterians we owe it to the people who come to us with questions and concerns to answer to the best of our ability and not to be afraid to say we don't know the answer when we don't. In such a case, we need to assure the client that we will find out the answer and get back to them. Please always feel free to contact the Vermont Cemetery Association when you have a cemetery question.

In the future the Vermont Cemetery Association will be addressing these issues and others at its Spring and Fall Meetings and in these pages. It behooves all of us to stay alert and to stay current.

**Vermont Cemetery Association Website**  
**<http://www.vermontcemeteryassociation.org/>**

If you haven't already seen the Vermont Cemetery Association website you are missing out. The website is complete and up to date with tons of valuable information from links to our suppliers, to legislation in Vermont, to how to find a deceased relative, to archived copies of the Cemeterian newsletters, to Unearthing the Mysteries of Burial and Cemetery Laws recently made available from the Secretary of States office. Members with paid up dues are provided with a password to give them special access to a members only section of the website.

Take a look through your Vermont Cemetery Association's website today and be informed. Feel free to provide us with any comments or feedback you may have as your input is what will continue to make this website a valuable resource of information to us all. Click the CONTACT US page on the website for any questions or feedback you may have.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Vermont Cemetery Association website. The header features the VCA logo on the left, the text "Vermont Cemetery Association" in the center, and the Vermont state seal on the right. Below the header is a yellow navigation bar with the text "The only PROFESSIONAL organization for active cemeteries in Vermont" and a "Member Log In" link. The main content area is divided into three columns. The left column is a yellow sidebar with a list of navigation links: Home, About Us, Membership, Suppliers, Legislation, Consumer Affairs, News, Upcoming Events, The Cemeterian, Related Links, Join The VCA, FAQ's, and Contact Us. The middle column has a section titled "Vermont Cemetery Association" with a paragraph of text explaining the association's purpose and a paragraph of text condemning the practice of selling cemetery property for speculative purposes. The right column has a yellow box for a "Spring Meeting" on April 17, 2008, at the Barber and Lanier Funeral Home, with an RSVP contact and fee. Below this is a photograph of a large granite monument with a staircase, captioned "The Granite Stairway" at Green Mount Cemetery.

**Vermont Cemetery Association**

The only PROFESSIONAL organization for active cemeteries in Vermont Member Log In

**Home**  
**About Us**  
**Membership**  
**Suppliers**  
**Legislation**  
**Consumer Affairs**  
**News**  
**Upcoming Events**  
**The Cemeterian**  
**Related Links**  
**Join The VCA**  
**FAQ's**  
**Contact Us**


**Vermont Cemetery Association**

The fundamental purpose for which this association exists is to inspire continued effort toward the improvement of Vermont cemeteries. To this end it seems essential that we declare the principles and ethics upon which rests the successful administration of our affairs.

We believe that it is necessary in such a declaration that we here condemn the practice of selling cemetery property for speculative or investment purposes, or upon the promise of re-sale at a profit. That such a practice is detrimental to public interest is self-evident. It defies the fundamental concept upon which the development of our industry has been predicated, and constitutes a threat to our advancement by abusing the privileges and prerogatives which we administer as a public trust.

**Spring Meeting:**  
April 17, 2008  
9:00 am - 2:00 pm  
**Barber and Lanier Funeral Home**  
139 Main Street  
Montpelier, Vermont 05602

RSVP  
Patrick Healy at 802-223-5352  
\$17.50 for VCA Members

  
"The Granite Stairway"  
[Green Mount Cemetery](#)

Vermont Cemetery Association  
468 Brook Rd  
Marshfield, VT 05658

## **Open Offices at Fall Elections**

During office elections at the 2008 Vermont Cemetery Association Fall Meeting there will be a number of open offices: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and Director. The Vermont Cemetery Association is YOUR organization and it is a volunteer association. It is hoped that more and more faithful members who have regularly attended VCA meetings will be interested in serving in some of these open offices.

If you are interested in one of the offices, please contact Joy Fagan for further information on the duties and time involved in such work. The time involved is actually quite minimal and one of the benefits to being on the board is that it is a terrific way of learning more about cemetery science which will increase your knowledge and your effectiveness in your cemetery as well as broaden your number of resource cemeterians. It is also a way to give back to the Association.

If you are interested in these opportunities, please contact Joy sooner rather than later so you will have time to learn about the position in which you are interested and can gain necessary training from now until the fall to better serve that office.

**WE NEED VOLUNTEERS**