



ALLIANCE OF
ILLINOIS CEMETERIANS

QUARTERLY

2901 Twelfth Street
Rock Island, IL 61201

Telephone: 309-788-6622
FAX: 309-788-6734

On the web at: aicemeterians.org

Email: aic_secretary@mediacombb.net

Spring 2012

President's Message

Deborah Schoonover, President

I hope everyone had a great Memorial Day. Here at Oak Knoll our office is open on Saturday, Sunday and Monday of Memorial Day weekend. It is always exhausting but well worth it. It is a time for the cemetery to shine - it is a great weekend to show off how great your site can look plus how much you and your employees care about the cemetery and the families they serve. I tell people it is our "Christmas Season" – they might laugh at me – but we all know that it is the truth. Even though we work hard to have the cemetery look nice all year long, it is May when we strive to have it look its best!

I have been working in the cemetery business since 1984 and things have changed so much. The last few years Oak Knoll has been striving to be more flexible with our families. Something that we would have said "no" to 30 years ago we are rethinking today. I remember going to an AIC workshop in Chicago a few years ago. One of the speakers was a funeral director. His message was telling cemeterians to change our way of thinking and start saying "yes" more often than saying "no." I walked away thinking he had no idea what he was talking about – we have rules and regulations to follow. Well, a few years later, I have found he was right. Here at Oak Knoll we have tried saying "yes" more than "no," and with great success.

"The tree that does not bend with the wind will be broken by the wind."

"Flow with the current and not struggle against it."

I am sure that you all have heard sayings like these before. It is so true for our business today. We need to rethink some of our business practices, especially with cremation on the rise. When our families come into our office and they have an unusual request, we listen more and try to figure a solution for them and for the cemetery.

Examples:

If a family wanted to bury four cremations on one grave -- sure, no problem, as long as there is only one marker with all four names on it. Thirty years ago we would have only allowed two cremations on one grave with only two names on a marker. The family would have had to buy two graves and two markers. So, if we allow the four cremations with one marker, I am saving the family money and the cemetery is getting cremation burials coming to the cemetery to be buried plus selling grave decorations for the grave.

If a family wants to bury a cremation on an existing grave -- sure, we will do it. We will place the urn under the marker, which of course will cost more to raise the marker. Since we allow only one marker per grave, we will drill and tap onto the existing marker to add the cremations deceased name. Again, saving money for the family, but at least Oak Knoll receives the burial and hopefully grave decoration sales.

These are just a few ideas that show we have become more flexible. It is better to get a little than nothing at all. But what has really been happening is that our families are telling other families that Oak Knoll is willing to work out solutions for every individual family. This is great "PR" for Oak Knoll. Believe me, we still have to say "no" sometimes but we try to find a solution for the family first before saying "no."

Remember we need to bend with the wind or we will be broken by the wind.

Cemetery Oversight Act Compliance

*Bryan Norton
Past President
Director of Education & Certification*

Cemetery Licensing Begins July 1st

The Department of Financial and Professional Regulation ("Department") recently adopted the rules needed to allow the Cemetery Oversight Act to take full effect. On July 1, 2012, forms will be available through the Department for:

- Application for Full Exempt Status
- Application for Partial Exempt Status

- Application for Licensure as a Cemetery Authority that is not exempt
- Application for Cemetery Managers
- Application for Customer Service Employees

All appropriate applications must be completed and submitted to the Department prior to January 1, 2013, along with the required documentation and fees.

Licenses will be issued by the Department if all conditions set forth by the Cemetery Oversight Act have been met. Licenses will need to be renewed every two years (beginning August of 2014) for Cemetery Authorities, Cemetery Managers and Customer Service Employees. Renewal is every four years for fully and partially exempt cemeteries (beginning in August of 2016).

Be sure to notify the Department within 14 days of any change in address. The Department must also be notified within 90 days if there is a change in a cemetery's exempt status. Notify the Department 30 days prior to any change in ownership.

Certification

Cemetery managers and customer service employees will have one year after submitting their application for licensure to complete a certification program. A certification program consists of training and testing in the areas of Cemetery Law, Cemetery Practices and Cemetery Ethics. Certification can only be gained by receiving a passing test score to show an acceptable working knowledge of these topics.

Certification programs must be conducted by a death care trade association that has been in existence for more than 5 years and each program must be approved by the Department. The officers and directors of the Alliance of Illinois Cemeterians (AIC) have been working very hard over the last six months to develop a certification program. We are currently in the process of having our certification program approved by the Department.

When approved, we will be offering our certification program to any cemetery manager or customer service employee in the State of Illinois – whether or not they are a member of the AIC. Our program will be given at a reasonable cost to cover expenses for materials and administration. We will offer our program at many locations across the State. Dates, times and locations of our program will be published in future AIC Quarterlies, on the AIC website, and on the Department's website.

Continuing Education

Continuing Education (CE) is another new requirement of the Cemetery Oversight Act. Cemetery managers are required to complete six hours of CE every two years. Customer service employees are required to complete three hours of CE every two years.

CE credit can be earned by verified attendance or participation in a relevant program offered by a death care trade association, school, college or university, State agency or any other person, firm or association that has been approved by the Department. CE credit can also be earned by personal preparation of educational presentations and articles pertaining to cemetery management or customer service.

The AIC will be offering many opportunities for cemetery managers and customer service employees to fulfill their CE requirements. Attending our workshops and annual conventions will be a convenient way to gain CE credit. Watch for more information in future Quarterlies or on the AIC website for a schedule of CE eligible programs and events.

The AIC Is Here To Help

In this increasingly regulated world, it is ever more important to be part of a State association that is on top of the requirements necessary to operate legally and with the highest ethical and practical standards. The AIC is committed to helping cemeterians understand and comply with the new requirements of the Cemetery Oversight Act. Membership in the AIC is still a bargain at only \$25 annually.

Come Gather 'Round Cemeterians

Gregory M. Vogeles
Executive Director

Come gather 'round cemeterians
Wherever you practice
And admit that the laws
Around you have grown
And accept it that soon
You can no longer do it all by phone.
If your time to you
Is worth savin'
Then you better start applyin'.
You can't be stuck like a stone
For the times they are a-changin'.
-apologies to Bob Dylan

Honestly, we cannot argue that the Cemetery Oversight Act has been implemented with such blinding speed that we have not been able to keep up with the change. The time has arrived, delay

will gain nothing, so let's get busy and do what we are required by law to do. Here is a link to needed application forms: <http://www.idfpr.com/PROFS/Info/Cemetery.asp> Click to follow this link, or you may copy and paste this link into your browser. If you do not have internet access, simply pick up the phone and call using the hotline number 1-888-756-8331. The time for complaints is over; it is time to do the work of compliance.

While completing the necessary forms and applications, let's be impressed by the importance of the work we do and measure up to the task at hand...for the times they are a-changin'.

Upcoming Events

Training and certification program: Watch for information on upcoming training and certification program to be offered for a nominal fee. **Continuing education opportunities** will also be available through the AIC.

January 24-25, 2013

AIC Annual Convention
Crowne Plaza
1250 Roosevelt Road
Glen Ellyn, Illinois
Phone: 630-629-6000