



Current News and Comments from the Pennsylvania Cemetery, Cremation and Funeral Association / May 2021

President's Message



Greetings,

It has certainly been an interesting time to serve as President of the PCCFA. Just over six months into my role as President, we were suddenly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and, since then, have shouldered isolation from our peers and heightened exposure to a novel virus. Meetings were cancelled, guidelines changed rapidly and we were called upon to serve families in a very uniquely painful time of loss. Yet, we quickly embraced virtual meeting platforms and connected frequently by email or phone to share ideas and inspiration when needed most. There is no doubt that we have faced great challenges over the course of my term; however, through the bonds of our profession and the benefits of our membership in the PCCFA, we have been able to carry out our mission to provide comfort to the families we serve in a dignified manner that honors those who have gone before us. I am extremely proud of the dedication and compassion each of you has displayed during this historical time and it has been my true honor to serve as President of our esteemed organization.

If you have not done so already, there is still time to register for our Spring Conference, which will take place June 6-8 at the beautiful Eden Resort in Lancaster. I extend my personal thanks to Harry Neel and Ernie Petersen for all their efforts in coordinating this year's conference. This wonderful event has been carefully planned and I'm very much looking forward to being able to gather again, in-person, as a community. Please plan to join us for the "passing of the gavel" to Dagny Neel Fitzpatrick, who will serve as President for the 2021-2023 term. As Vice President and Celebrant at Jefferson Memorial Cemetery, Funeral Home & Crematory in Pittsburgh, I am very confident that Dagny will use her wealth of experience to serve as an excellent leader and resource for our members.

I am grateful for your support and participation in our organization throughout my tenure as President and I wish each of you the best of health and wellness as we enter brighter days ahead.

Sincerely,

David J. Michener

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(F)610-253-5517 (Stephanie)
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ERNEST L. PETERSEN, III
Sandyvale Memorial Garden
314 Fayette St.
Johnstown, PA 15905
(C)814-243-3837 ((Barbara)
southsidedestray@mac.com

RUTH SEEBECK
Warren County Memorial Park
20050 Route 6
Warren, PA 16365
(O)814-723-1540 (C)814-688-7501
(F)814-406-7310 (Ed)
ruth@wcmpark.org

PAUL SIMMS
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Butler, PA 16001
(O)724-287-5559 (C)412-614-0736
(F)724-287-3238 (Mary)
paul.bcmap@yahoo.com

JOHN YEATMAN
Forest Lawn Cemetery
1530 Frankstown Road
Johnstown, PA 15901
(C)240-462-4195 (F)301-355-4268
(Angela)
johnyeatman@gmail.com

Real Estate Commissioner

EDWARD SEEBECK
Warren County Memorial Park
20050 Route 6
Warren, PA 16365
(O)814-723-1540 (C)814-688-7501
(F)814-406-7310 (Ruth)
ed@wcmpark.org

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Immediate Past President 2 Year Term

FRANK GRABOWSKI
Schuylkill Memorial Park
75 Memorial Drive
Schuylkill Haven, PA 17972
(O)570-385-2647 (C)570-573-3247
(F)570-385-1580 (Janet)
frank@schuylkillmemorialpark.com

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CRAIG S. SCHWALM
Letum Inc.
2650 N. 3rd Street
Harrisburg, PA 17110
(O)717-234-6940 (C)717-576-2829
(F)717-234-6943 (Deanna)
cschwalm@letuminc.com

GARY BUSS
Arlington Cemetery/Topptizer FH
2900 State Road
Drexel Hill, PA 19026
(O)610-259-5800
(F)610-259-9284
gary@arlingtoncemetery.us

GUY N. SAXTON
Previously listed

HARRY C. NEEL
Jefferson Memorial Cem/FH/Crem
401 Curry Hollow Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15236
(O)412-655-4500 (C)412-720-6100
(F)412-655-7758 (Marianne)
hcneel@verizon.net

SAMUEL SAXTON
Cedar Hill Memorial Park
1700 Airport Road
Allentown, PA 18103
(O)610-799-2597 (C)610-248-1232
(F)610-799-4547 (Missy)
ssaxton799@aol.com

JACK SOMMER
Prospect Hill Cemetery
700 N. George Street
York, PA 17404
(O)717-843-8006 (C)717-891-1279
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jack@prospecthill.org

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1426 Deer Run Road
Ottsville, PA 18942
(C)215-688-6216 (Carol)
greggstrom1426@gmail.com

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MIKE ASH
Matthews International
1315 W. Liberty Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15226
(O)/(C) 304-288-6558 (Kristy)
mash@matthewsintl.com

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Morgan Plant & Associates
322 S. West Street
Carlisle, PA 17013
(O)717-245-0902 (C)717-386-1012
morganplant@mac.com

Committees, Assignments

Conferences & Conventions

Spring 2021: Harry Neel
Mid Atlantic 2021 Ernie Petersen

Consumer Service Committee Harry Neel

Ethics & Inquiry Committee Harry Neel

Executive Committee

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Funeral Director Affairs Committee Scott Nulty

Keynews Editor: Dagny Neel Fitzpatrick
Co-Editor Ernie Petersen

Legal Defense Fund: Ernie Petersen

Legislative Committee: Guy Saxton

Membership: Craig Schwalm/Ernie Petersen

Nominating/Polling Committee Frank Grabowski with all Past Presidents

Political Action Committee Dagny Neel Fitzpatrick

PCCFA Website-www.PCCFA.com Craig Schwalm

Supplier Relations Committee Mike Ash

Benefits of Membership

By Craig Schwalm

- The eKeynews, a four times a year publication, delivered by e-mail.
- Two conferences a year with continuing education credits for funeral directors at PA locations. (Every other year, our fall conference is held in Atlantic City with four other states and there the education program provides credits and certifications.
- Access to the member only PCCFA Facebook page now with periodic updates about industry issues such as the pandemic
- Constant Contact available for for rapid communications. Suppliers take note!
- Access to our supplier members network
- The PCCFA complaint hotline helping us help cemeteries with consumer issues.
- An annual legislative reception, to make sure your representatives know they can come to us for assistance with pending legislation and constituent issues
- A lobbyist looking out for our best interests in Harrisburg
- Access to other cemeterians to network and brainstorm amid the changing and evolving death care industry. Green burials, spotted lantern fly, etc.



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Spring Conference 2021



SUNDAY JUNE 6th, 2021

- 12:00 pm **Past Presidents' Meeting**
- 12:30 pm **PCCFA Board of Directors' Meeting**
- 6:00 pm **Welcome Reception**
- 7:00 pm **Banquet and President Installation**

MONDAY JUNE 7th, 2021

8:45 – 9:00 am Welcome and Introductions

9 am-10:00 am



The Assassination and Funeral of Abraham Lincoln

Ernie Heffner, Funeral Director
1 Hr FD CEU)

This account has all the essentials of a murder mystery the difference is that this story is absolutely true. ***Even if history is not your favorite subject, you won't want to miss this program about our 16th President.*** The narrative begins 4 years before the assassination of President Lincoln in 1865 and ends in 1963 with the death of the last person to have looked upon the face of President Lincoln. The President's first funeral was in Washington, D.C. and was followed by 11 subsequent ceremonies over a period of 20 days. The 1654 mile funeral procession included a stop in York, Pennsylvania. 36 years later, President Lincoln was finally laid to rest for the last time after having been moved 17 times since first being entombed in Springfield, Illinois.

10:00 am-10:15 am Stretch or Coffee Break

10:15 am-11:45 am

Cremation is _____: Understanding Cremation Motivations

Pam Kleese, Homesteaders Life Company



A disconnect often exists between the motivations of cremation consumers and perceptions of funeral professionals. This research highlights how cremation consumers feel about their experiences and uncovers opportunities to serve them better. CANA statistics have tracked the growth in cremation and reported the reasons why cremation is the new tradition, but what happens after the decision to cremate? This session will present ground-breaking research on consumer behavior and attitudes toward cremation. Attend and gain strategies to better meet the needs of today's cremation families.

11:45 am-12:30 pm

Tick and Spotted Lanternfly Update

Liz Bosak, Penn State Extension Office



Learn more about preventing tick bites and how Lyme disease is transmitted. Recent updates in Spotted Lanternfly research and management will be discussed.

12:30 pm

Wrap up and go to lunch

Afternoon and evening activities on your own

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Spring Conference 2021 (con't)

TUESDAY JUNE 8th, 2021

8:45 – 9:00 am Welcome and Introductions

9:00 am – 9:40 am **"Who Speaks for the Dead: Pennsylvania's Right of Disposition Laws"**



Jason Benion, Esq., Saxton and Stump, LLC

How many times have your employees, your business, or you found yourself at odd's with a dysfunctional family arguments over the end of life decisions for Mom? Can one's preneed arrangements be invalidated by the family? As Pennsylvania has not provided clarity in the law on the right of disposition, this is a very important presentation for front-running potential conflicts.

9:40 am – 9:55am Stretch or Coffee Break

9:55 am-11:20 am **Customer Service and the Customer Experience – Knowing When to Know the Difference**



Kerri Mueller, SVP,
AmeriServ Financial Bank

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." Maya Angelou

The function of customer service and the customer experience (although they often work together) are two very different business strategies. In this session, we'll decode these often-confused terms so that your organizations can learn to prepare and strategize for both properly

11:25 am -12:10 pm **"Where is the body?" Learning from the Funeral and its Ceremony**
Rev. Dr. Nathan Corl
Minnich STS, CFSP,
Licensed Funeral Director
President of Minnich
Funeral Homes,
Elizabethville, Pa.



The funeral is a liturgical expression of the church, visible and participatory in the public arena, and is therefore an excellent opportunity for catechesis. The observation of funeral from the perspectives of funeral director and clergy, this study (and complimentary resource material) will provide a framework for understanding the value of the body in this process and aid in beginning a dialog among the three most significant voices in funeral planning, the clergy, the funeral director, and the family.

12:10 pm – 12:25 pm **PCCFA Membership Meeting**

12:25 Wrap up conference and go to lunch.

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A Sense of Place

By Ernie Petersen



This edition of A Sense of Place is about a special event that occurred at Grandview Cemetery in Johnstown, PA. Grandview has been a member of the association over the years and currently has over 72,000 burials. The event is being recognized as yet another grassroots activity benefitting a Pennsylvania cemetery. We applaud the volunteer work-days at the Unknowns Plot at Grandview Cemetery. This work was coordinated and funds raised by



the Friends of the Johnstown Flood National Memorial.

To understand the Unknowns Plot we need to go back in time to May 31, 1889. On that day, the dam at the South Fork Hunting and Fishing Club burst and soon a catastrophic wall of water

that began at seventy feet high was racing fourteen miles downstream to Johnstown. More than twenty-two hundred people perished from the rushing waters or the subsequent fire created by overturned family cookstoves. As whole families were drowned or burned in the tragedy, it left many bodies that could not be identified. 816 nameless memorials stand at the Unknown Plot in honor of the bodies buried there in a mass grave at Grandview Cemetery.

At that time of the flood, Johnstown was arguably the largest steel manufacturing operation in the world and helped tame the West with barbed wire made in its operations. In today's dollars, \$484 million in property damage was done by the flood's devastation. The event was chronicled by many over the years.

Often cited for its accuracy, The Johnstown Flood, published in 1968, started the career of author, David McCullough. This disaster touched the nation and Clara Barton's relief effort was one of the first of the newly organized American Red Cross.



On April 17th and 24th, volunteers from the community showed up to set upon the task of cleaning and restoring the Unknowns Plot markers. Eighty-five volunteers showed up on the first day and fifty more gathered the next Saturday to clean-up the headstones for the first time in 131 years. The cemetery provided water and members of the maintenance team to assist. Two national park rangers were on hand to document the process. The volunteers used D2, wooden paint sticks, and natural bristle brushes to prevent damage to the headstones according to national park rangers interviewed on the scene.

(Continued on the next page)

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D2 is used on the White House, national buildings, monuments and national cemeteries. Moss is scraped off with the wooden paint sticks. Then the headstone is doused with water, and the D2 is applied with the brushes. A final rinse is applied and the headstone are noticeably brighter, but not as bright as they will be. They will continue to lighten for several months. While D2 is not harmful to the grass or shrubs in the cemetery, volunteers were encouraged to wear old clothes to do their work. "What a great thing to do honor those nameless individuals buried here." observed Mark Duray, Chief Executive Officer of Citizens Cemetery, the not-for-profit group that owns Grandview Cemetery. "Totally, 100% their initiative. My hats off to them, and they have both the community and our thanks."

**2021 MID-ATLANTIC STATES
CEMETERY & FUNERAL CONFERENCE**



Destination: Atlantic City

2020 had us shifting into high gear with accelerated change and challenges at every turn. Let's take the next exit to refuel and reconnect (in-person) with our deathcare family.

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RIG-04094-21

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

2021 Spring Conference

PENNSYLVANIA CEMETERY CREMATION & FUNERAL ASSOCIATION

June 6-8, 2021 - Eden Resort, Lancaster, PA

Company/Organization _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

Email _____

Names of Those Attending

First Name

Last Name

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Registration*:

Full Conference

One Day

Three Day Registration: includes Sunday dinner, Monday and Tuesday breakfast & lunch

One Day Registration: includes breakfast & lunch _____ @ \$475.00 _____ @ \$240.00

Spouse/Guest _____ @ \$299.00 _____ @ \$150.00

Youth (12-21 yrs.) _____ @ \$274.00 _____ @ \$137.00

Children (11 and under) _____ N/A _____ N/A

Local Attractions:

Local attractions include, but are not limited to, Sight and Sound Theater, Golf at Overlook Golf Course, Lancaster Barnstormers Baseball, Dutch Wonderland, Hershey Park, and Lancaster Central markets. These events will be featured in a separate e-mail. Local attractions will be selected and paid for by the attendee and will not be part of the registration fee.

Sponsorships Available:

Sunday Dinner _____ @ \$750.00

Monday Breakfast _____ @ \$500.00

Monday Lunch _____ @ \$500.00

Tuesday Breakfast _____ @ \$500.00

Tuesday Lunch _____ @ \$500.00

Total Fees: \$ _____

Please return conference registration by **May 1, 2021** to:

Pennsylvania Cemetery Cremation & Funeral Association, : Attention Colleen Courtright
2200 Northampton Street, Easton, PA 18042 | Phone: (610) 253-5222 | Fax: (610) 253-3636

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Please make checks payable to Pennsylvania Cemetery Cremation Funeral Association

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Business Briefs

April 14, 2021 Stonewood Capital Management, Inc., a Pittsburgh-based private equity firm, has acquired CMS East, Inc., one of the largest privately-owned cemetery operations in the United States. Headquartered in Jeannette, PA, CMS East owns and operates 26 memorial parks across Ohio, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and the Carolinas, offering a range of cemetery-related products and services. "CMS East has developed a very attractive network of memorial parks which have served families for decades," said Peter J. Muth, Senior Vice President of Stonewood Capital. Stonewood Capital Management, Inc. is focused primarily on management led buyouts seeking to create value by directing capital to opportunities where our investment strategic insight and operational support can help companies become more competitive, more profitable and more sustainable enterprises.

Excerpts from article by Adam Burroughs, in the Smart Business Dealmaker, Pittsburgh and the Stonewood Capital website.

HOUSTON, April 21, 2021 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Carriage Services, Inc. (NYSE: CSV) today announced results for the first quarter ended March 31, 2021. Mel Payne, Chairman and CEO, stated, "We had a record first quarter performance in four of five operating and financial reporting segments to start 2021, as Total Revenue increased \$19.1 million or 24.7% to \$96.6 million, Field EBITDA increased \$15.7 million or 52.1% to \$45.8 million.

PAC and Legal Defense Funds

Who works with our state representatives to protect your business, consumer grievances and protects us from overly burdensome laws? **PCCFA does!** Support our efforts with your personal donation to the PCCFA PAC Fund.

For more information: Dagny Neel-Fitzpatrick (412) 655-4500 or e-mail dagny@jeffersonmemorial.biz

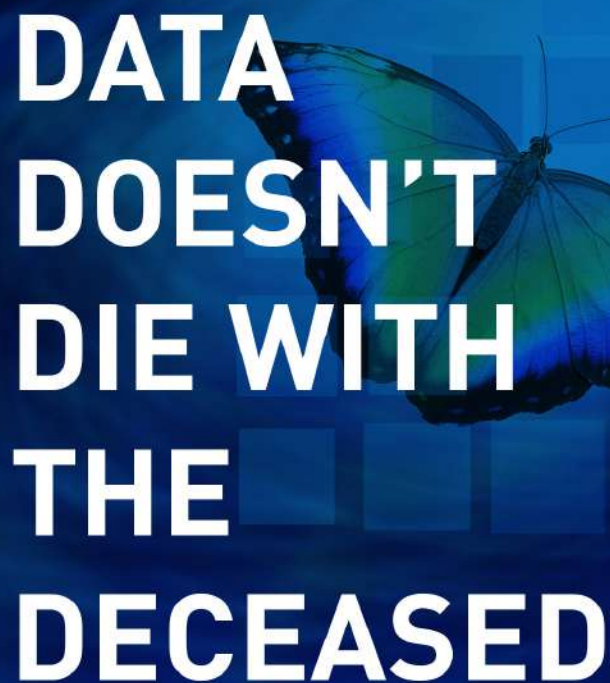
If you want to support PCCFA, with a business contribution, consider donating to the Legal Defense Fund.

For more information: Ernie Petersen at (814) 243-3837 or e-mail southsidestrays@mac.com

We have achieved a reduction in our Total Debt to EBITDA Leverage Ratio of 2.2 times in only 15 months (from 6.0 times at January 3, 2020 to 3.8 times at March 31, 2021), a truly remarkable achievement whose story was fully told and explained in my recent 50 page 2020 Shareholder Letter with the cover theme, "**A TALE OF HIGH PERFORMANCE TRANSFORMATION.**"

Carriage Services has read and adopted Jim Collins ideas from his book Good to Great. For example, think about your business and ask yourself if you have a big, hairy audacious goal (BHAG) for your enterprise? The litmus test of a true BHAG is how it answers questions like:

- Does it stimulate forward progress?
- Does it create momentum?
- Does it get people going?
- Does it get people's juices flowing?
- Do they find it stimulating, exciting, adventurous?
- Are they willing to throw their creative talents and human energies into it?



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