

JOURNAL

July 18, 2025

Publication of the Ohio Cemetery Association

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dear Members,

Ohio Cemeteries: Reflecting on Memorial Day and Looking Ahead to Summer

As Memorial Day passes each year, Ohio's cemeteries stand as solemn and sacred spaces where communities gather to honor the lives and legacies of those who served. This year was no exception. Across the state, cemetery teams worked tirelessly to prepare grounds, coordinate ceremonies, and welcome families and veterans with the dignity and respect they deserve. From manicured lawns to carefully placed flags, every detail reflected the deep commitment of our profession to preserving memory and fostering community.

The Memorial Day rush is always a defining moment—both a challenge and a privilege. It demands long hours, careful planning, and heartfelt service. But it also reminds us why we do what we do. The gratitude expressed by visitors, the quiet moments of reflection, and the stories shared among generations reaffirm the vital role cemeteries play in our collective heritage.

Now, as we transition into the heart of summer, our focus shifts to ongoing maintenance, restoration projects, and community outreach. Many cemeteries are embracing new technologies, enhancing green spaces, and planning events that continue to connect people with the past in meaningful ways. The work doesn't slow down—it evolves.

Amid this busy season, the Ohio Cemetery Association is thrilled to announce our upcoming annual conference, to be held in historic Youngstown, Ohio. This year's gathering promises to be one of our most engaging yet, offering opportunities for professional development, collaboration, and celebration. Youngstown's rich history and revitalized spirit make it a fitting backdrop for our shared mission of honoring the past while shaping the future.

We look forward to welcoming members from across the state as we reflect, learn, and grow together. Here's to a summer of continued excellence and shared purpose.

Scott J. Harmon OCA President

CONTENTS

President's Message (pg 1)

Upcoming Events (pg 2-11) Annual Convention

Legal/State News (pg 12) Cemetery Grant

Grounds Maintenance (pg 13-17)

Supplier Spotlight (pg 18-19)

In the News (pg 20-28) Sedgewick articles OCA Website





It's not too late to register for the OCA Convention & Trade Show

August 4, 5, 6

Youngstown, Ohio Doubletree by Hilton Downtown Youngstown 44 East Federal Plaza

We would love to have you join us for some great education and networking with your peers!

Use the following forms or go to the website using the link below to register https://ohiocemeteryassociation.com/

2025 OCA Convention



ANNUAL CONVENTION/FIELD DAY & TRADE SHOW AUGUST 4, 5 ,6 2025 Doubletree by Hilton, Downtown Youngstown 44 East Federal Plaza | Youngstown, OH 44503

<u>AGENDA</u> <u>Monday – August 4, 2025</u>

8:00am	Golf Outing - Olde Dutch Mill Golf Course
	2745 Grandview Rd. Lake Milton, OH 44429
	Golf Chair – Jordan Weaver, Holland Supply
8:00 - 6:00	Supplier Set Up
3:00pm	OCA Board Meeting
6:00 - 9:00	Welcome and Social Time with Suppliers
_	Heavy Hors d'oeuvres Golf Awards

Tuesday- August 5th, 2025

8:00-9:00	Registration and Continental Breakfast or Breakfast On Your Own
8:30-9:00	Welcome, Announcements, & Introductions
9:00-9:45	Youngstown History - Tracey Manning, Mahoning Valley Historical Society
9:45-10:30	The Economics of Maintaining Cemetery Trees and Landscapes
	RJ Laverne and Marilyn Brandt, Davey Tree
10:30-11:00	Break/Visit Suppliers
11:00-11:45	Famous Endings - John Herzig, Toland-Herzig Funeral Homes & Crematory
12:00	Leave for Field Day at Tod Homestead Cemetery, Sponsored by BronzeStone
	Welcome & Lunch
	Visit Suppliers

Return to Doubletree for rest and relaxation

Wednesday-August 6th, 2025



7:00-9:00	Registration and Breakfast
8:30-9:00	Welcome & Announcements
9:00-9:45	Claims Review/Evaluation and Safety Training Opportunities-
Andy Sawan- Sedw	vick
9:45-10:30	Break/Visit Suppliers
10:30-11:15	Total Return Investment Strategies/Benefits
	Dan Bird- Clearpoint Federal Bank & Trust
11:30-12:00	Ohio Cemetery Dispute Resolution Commission Update
	Emma Wilson & Kelly Neer, Ohio Dept of Commerce
12:00-12:30	Legislative Update
	Tim Long, OCA Legal Counsel
12:30	Announcements and Lunch
1:30	Conclusion



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2025 OCA Convention SPEAKER BIOS



Traci Manning is the Curator of Education at the Mahoning Valley Historical Society, overseeing outreach and educational programming. Their background reflects a strong focus on educational initiatives and historical interpretation, cultivated through diverse experiences in museum and park settings.

With expertise in curriculum development, Traci has created programs for students, adults, and the general public. They coordinate special events, lectures, tours, and other public programs, representing MVHS at community events and within various community groups. Traci also supervises and trains museum educators and coordinates the MVHS volunteer corps. As a contributor to The Vindicator and WFMJ-TV, they demonstrate capabilities in community outreach.

During their tenure at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, Traci developed and presented curriculum programs to visiting students, covering topics from science and nature to history and culture. They also represented the Education Department on the Park-wide Civil War Sesquicentennial Committee, serving as an office Civil War liaison. Earlier in their career, Traci briefly contributed as a Park Guide at Vicksburg National Military Park, delivering daily scheduled programs to the public about Park history and artillery usage during the Siege of Vicksburg. They also introduced civilian interpretation and programming to the park.

Building on experience in museum settings, Traci served as a Graduate Assistant at the Fashion Archives & Museum of Shippensburg University. Traci holds a Curriculum and Instruction Certification from Wilson College, a Master of Arts from Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania, and a Bachelor of Arts from Gettysburg College.

Robert J. Laverne is the Manager of Education and Training for the Davey Tree Expert Company. He helps the employees of Davey Tree obtain the training they need to advance their careers and to better assist our clients. He also teaches courses in Arboriculture, Urban Forestry, and Landscape Vegetation at Michigan Technological University. R.J. received a bachelor's degree in biology from the University of Michigan, his forestry degree is from Michigan Technological University, and he earned a master's degree in remote sensing from the University of Michigan. He earned his Ph.D. in urban studies and public affairs at Cleveland State University. R.J. is an ISA Board Certified Master Arborist, is a Registered Consulting Arborist through ASCA, and is an instructor for the ISA Tree Risk Assessment Qualification course and for the ASCA Tree and Plant Appraiser Qualification course. When he's not working with trees he can be found in his woodworking shop making sawdust.

Marilyn Brandt is a long-time veteran with over 35 years in the cemetery industry. She started at Lake View Cemetery in Cleveland as a horticulturalist. Her dedication to cemetery care and management allowed her to move up the ranks to grounds manager and Chief Operations Officer, where she oversaw daily operations. In 2024, Marilyn joined Davey as a business developer specializing in cemetery landscape maintenance and management. In her role, she gives back to the industry she has been dedicated to for decades by working with cemetery clients to help meet their tree and landscaping goals. Marilyn has had leadership roles in the Ohio Cemetery Association, the OACS&O, the Greater Cleveland Cemetery Association, and is a part of the ICCFA and most recently the International Association of Pet Cemeteries and Crematories. She enjoys watching sports, even supporting the Cleveland teams, and spending time with her two rescue dogs, Gertie, a chihuahua puggle mix, and Maggie, a miniature goldendoodle.

2025 OCA Convention SPEAKER BIOS



Andy Sawan has been in the Safety, Health and Environmental field for over 29 years. During this time in his well-rounded career, he has worked in the consulting, manufacturing and healthcare industries. In those various professional roles, he has worked to improve the safety conditions and maintain environmental compliance in these industries. In his current role with Sedgwick, Andy specializes in customer safety training, development of written safety policies and procedures, conducting educational presentations and recordkeeping compliance. He currently resides with his family in Akron, Ohio.

Dan Bird

Emma Wilson began working for the State of Ohio in December 2024. She is the Registration and Resolution Chief at the Ohio Department of Commerce, Division of Real Estate and Professional Licensing, overseeing cemetery concerns and mediations. She worked for Nationwide Children's hospital for nearly ten years and attended Capital Law School's evening program to change careers from health care to law in 2017. She received her JD in 2021 and worked for the private sector before joining the Department of Commerce.

Kelly Joseph Neer has worked for the State of Ohio for over 29 years. He joined the Ohio Department of Commerce, Division of Real Estate and Professional Licensing in July 2012. His current role is as an External Auditor working with Ohio cemeteries. His responsibilities include auditing the Endowment Care and Merchandise Trusts that cemeteries covered by R.C. 1721 are required to maintain. He is also a resource for cemeteries to help them understand how to comply with Ohio's cemetery law. Prior to joining Commerce, he worked at the Ohio Secretary of State as the Assistant Campaign Finance Administrator. Mr. Neer received a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Taylor University.

Timothy C. Long, is originally from the westside of Columbus, graduated with a business degree from the University of Missouri in 1985 and received his JD from the Washington University School of Law in St. Louis in 1988. Despite many years spent in Missouri, he remains, first and foremost, a Buckeye.

Although he enjoys a broad general practice, Mr. Long has featured Ohio cemetery law as a principal area of emphasis since the early 1990s. He has been advising Ohio cemeteries and lobbying on industry issues for more than three decades and has served as legislative agent and counsel to the OCA since its inception.

The other areas of his general practice include, most notably, business transfers, succession and estate planning, real estate law and acting as "general counsel" to his business clients.

As a solo practicing attorney since 2002, Tim has both witnessed and been forced to embrace sweeping technological changes in the legal industry.

Tim reports that in the face of such rapid change, he has taken solace in the fact the some things never change: Michigan still sucks!

ANNUAL CONVENTION/FIELD DAY & TRADE SHOW

AUGUST 4, 5 ,6 2025 Doubletree by Hilton, Downtown Youngstown 44 East Federal Plaza | Youngstown, OH 44503



CEMETERY REGISTRATION

CEMETERY REGISTRATION (INCLUDES ALL SESSIONS/BREAKS/SOCIAL/MEALS/ENTERTAIN	IMENT)
for 1 REPRESENTATIVE	\$250.00
ADDITIONAL FULL REGISTRATION FOR REPRESENTATIVE OR GUEST/SPOUSE	
(INCLUDES ALL SESSIONS/BREAKS/SOCIAL/MEALS/ENTERTAINMENT)	\$210.00
SINGLE DAY REGISTRATION	
MONDAY (SOCIAL TIME/HOR D'OEUVRES/GOLF AWARDS	\$ 80.00
	+
TUESDAY (SESSIONS/FIELD DAY/SOCIAL /BUFFET DINNER/	\$115.00
ENTERTAINMENT	
TUESDAY EVENING - SOCIAL /BUFFET DINNER/ENTERTAINMENT	\$ 90.00
WEDNESDAY (ALL SESSIONS/BREAK/LUNCH)	\$ 80.00
GOLF OUTING (Monday, August 5, 2025 (Olde Dutch Mill Golf Course)	\$ 65.00
2745 Grandview Rd Lake Milton, OH 44429	

PLEASE MAKE YOUR CONVENTION REGISTRATIONS BY: FRIDAY-JULY 18, 2025

HOTEL INFORMATION:

Rooms have been set-aside at a special rate of \$119 plus taxes

Room Reservations must be secured no later than <u>FRIDAY-JULY 12, 2025</u> to guarantee this rate.

Follow the link below for reservations:

https://group.doubletree.com/z69is6

Please note, the entire URL must be copied and pasted for it to work properly.

Complete registration form on reverse

Doubletree, Downtown Youngstown 44 East Federal Plaza | Youngstown, OH 44503

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	Attending Field Day Yes No		
	ADDITIONAL FULL REGISTRATIONS @ \$210.00		\$
	Attending Field Day Yes No		
	SINGLE DAY REGISTRATIONS		
	AUGUST 4 - MONDAY GOLF OUTING (Olde Dutch Mill Golf Course)) @ \$65.00	\$
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		TOTAL	\$
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Phone	Email		
	n registration form with check payable to: Cemetery Association 11555 Wilson Mills Rd Chardon, OH 44	024	
Concert Colligion	y by credit card using the following link <u>https://square.link/u/</u> your Registration and Sponsorship forms to <u>oca.brandt@gmai</u>		

ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE CALL OR EMAIL Marilyn Brandt 440-290-9437 <u>oca.brandt@gmail.com</u>



2025 ANNUAL CONVENTION

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

COMPANY (Please print)_____

MONDAY, AUGUST 4, 2025

Event	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Golf Outing/Prizes	\$100.00	\$200.00	\$300.00	Other \$
Social Hour	\$200.00	\$400.00	\$500.00	Other \$

TUESDAY, AUGUST 5, 2025

Event		Option 1		Option 2	Opti	on 3	Option 4
AM Break		\$100.00		\$200.00		\$300.00	Other \$
Field Day		\$200.00		\$400.00		\$500.00	Other \$
Social Time		\$200.00		\$400.00		\$500.00	Other \$
Dinner/Murder Mystery	,	\$200.00		\$400.00		\$500.00	Other \$
			2	<u> </u>			
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 6, 2025							
WEDNESDAY, AUGU	ST 6,	2025					
WEDNESDAY, AUGU Event	<u>ST 6,</u>	<u>2025</u> Option 1		Option 2	Opti	on 3	Option 4
	<u>IST 6,</u>			Option 2 \$200.00	Optic	on 3 \$300.00	Option 4 Other \$
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Event AM Break	<u>ST 6,</u>	Option 1 \$100.00		\$200.00	Optic	\$300.00	Other \$

SPONSORSHIP TOTAL \$_____

Please add your Sponsorship amount to your Registration amount for total to be submitted



Past Times Arcade is a retro-themed arcade that offers a wide selection of pinball machines and more!

PINBALL & VIDEO

ARCADE

With over 400 pinball machines and more than 200 classic arcade games in its collection, the arcade boasts a diverse range of games that span nearly a century of production. From classic pinball machines of the 1930s to the latest releases of today, we have something for everyone. The machines are wellmaintained and in excellent working condition, providing players with an authentic gaming experience. Whether you're a seasoned pinball pro or a newcomer to the game, Past Times Arcade is the perfect place to test your skills and have a blast.

https://pasttimesarcade.com/



THINGS TO DO AROUND YOUNGSTOWN

Youngstown, Ohio offers a variety of attractions and activities. Popular choices include the Butler Institute of American Art, Mill Creek Park with Lanterman's Mill and Fellows Riverside Gardens, and the Youngstown Historical Center of Industry and Labor. For those interested in entertainment, the Covelli Centre, Stambaugh Auditorium, and DeYor Performing Arts Center offer diverse events and shows. Additionally, the city boasts local breweries, unique dining experiences like Youngstown pizza, and even bowling and music venues. https://exploremahoning.com/request-visitors-guides/

Attractions:

Arts and Culture

- The Butler Institute of American Art is a renowned art museum.
- Mckinley National Memorial
- Mckinley Presidential Library and Museum
- The Youngstown Historical Center of Industry & Labor explores the region's industrial past.
- The DeYor Performing Arts Center and Stambaugh Auditorium host various performances and events.

Outdoor Activities:

- Mill Creek Park offers 4,400 acres of green space with gardens, trails, and Lanterman's Mill.
- Fellows Riverside Gardens is a beautiful botanical garden within Mill Creek Park.
- The MetroParks Bikeway provides a paved trail for biking and walking.

Entertainment:

- The Covelli Centre hosts concerts, sporting events, and other large-scale shows.
- Westside Bowl offers bowling, live music, and food.
- Hollywood Gaming at Mahoning Valley Race Course provides gaming and racing.

Other:

- OH WOW! The Roger & Gloria Jones Children's Center for Science & Technology is a hands-on science museum.
- Lanterman's Mill is a historic grist mill located in Mill Creek Park.

Dining:

- Youngstown is known for its pizza, with popular spots including Wedgewood, Avalon, V2, Elmton, and others.
- Local breweries like Penguin City, Noble Creature, and Modern Methods offer craft beer.

Day Trip Options (within driving distance):

- Cleveland: Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, Cleveland Museum of Art, West Side Market.
- Pittsburgh: PNC Park, Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens, Carnegie Museum of Natural History.
- Canton: Pro Football Hall of Fame.



Fall Maintenance Seminar October 2 Preble Memory Gardens West Alexandria, Ohio

More information to be provided later







GRANT APPLICATION



<u>The FY2026 cemetery grant application period opens July 1, 2025</u>. Cemetery operators can sign up for our cemetery stakeholder email list <u>here</u>.

Once the application period opens on July 1st, the application can be found at <u>https://cemeterygrants.com.ohio.gov/</u>. If you have any questions or require additional assistance, please contact the Division at <u>CemeteryGrants@com.ohio.gov</u>.

The Division's cemetery grant program advances grants to properly registered cemeteries, except for-profit corporations, to defray the costs of exceptional maintenance or training of cemetery personnel in the maintenance and operation of the cemetery. A cemetery that has not had a burial in the last 25 years or is a family cemetery is exempt from registration and does not qualify for a grant.

Reasonable maintenance, pursuant to Ohio Revised Code section 4767.09, done in the day-to-day operations of a cemetery is not considered exceptional for purposes of awarding grants. Exceptional maintenance is construed broadly to cover non-routine, non-repetitive maintenance.

An operator may apply every other year for one grant of up to \$2,500. Operators of five or more cemeteries registered with the Division may apply each year. Grant funds cannot be used for activities or purchases prior to formal approval of the grant application by the Superintendent and the Division's receipt of a signed grant award agreement.

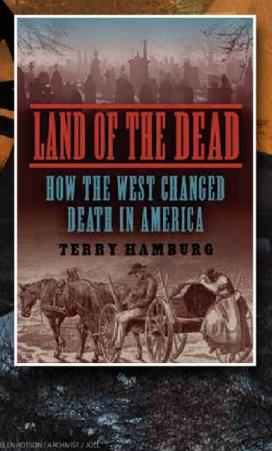


This article reprinted with permission from ICCFA Memento Mori October 2024

HOW THE VEST CHANGED DE ATH IN AMERICA

Leaving Morals, Humanity, and Souls Behind for the Sake of Survival

by Susan Cushing





ITH THE PROMISE OF LAND, wealth, and greater personal freedom, at the turn of the 19th century, the glorious West represented an unimaginable opportunity to fulfill

every dream. Drawn by this vision, young and old alike decided that the unknown trek across largely unexplored territory was worth the risk. As they packed their pushcarts, wagons, or knapsacks, these brave pioneers soon realized they would need to leave behind precious items to make room for only the bare necessities required to survive the long, arduous journey.

At the beginning of the odyssey, women might lament sacrificing treasured china or prized furniture, children might leave behind special toys, and men may have given up favorite tools, but soon they faced an even greater heartbreak: the need to leave behind loved ones who didn't survive the journey.

Little did they know, nor could anyone have foreseen, the even greater sacrifices that lay ahead. Despite their differences in social and economic status, nearly all these pioneers shared one common trait: they had always lived within some form of civilized society. Mores and traditions, handed down through generations, guided their lives and those of their neighbors. Life was organized and disciplined.

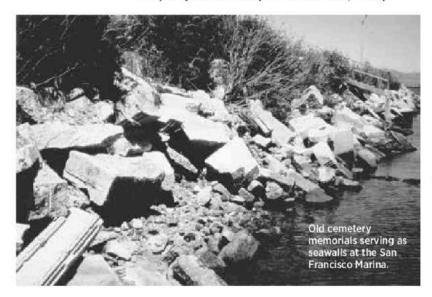
Terry Hamburg, the author of *Land of the Dead: How the West Changed Death in America,* who serves as director emeritus of the Cypress Lawn Heritage Foundation, a division of Cypress Lawn Cemetery, paints an elaborately detailed and fascinating portrait of just how this huge migration left a lasting impact on how we have come to view the burial and mourning process.



Workmen digging up graves at Odd Fellow's Cemetery, San Francisco, 1931.

"In terms of burial and mourning, it became very much like wartime but without the discipline that military battle entails," says Hamburg. "When you read the diaries of people traveling west, it's with such shock and dismay that they would come across literally hundreds of people not buried. Entire convoys, contracting disease or massacred, lie where they drew their last breath. And the further they traveled, the more death they encountered, their attitudes adjusting accordingly. This wasn't heartlessness but rather born of necessity."

The author speaks of pragmatism "with a capital P, because it is a way of approaching issues or problems," he explains. "The worth of an idea is how well it plays out in society. These pioneers were essentially forced into dealing with life and death as it was for them, with many adaptations as they continued their journey."



Tradition Replaced by Necessity

Gradually, as the weeks and months passed and hundreds, then thousands of miles traversed, "polite society" with its rules and morals began to slip away. One of the first of these notably "civilized" customs was in how the dead were dealt with. Back home, particularly during this period comprising the late 1800s and early to mid-1900s, preparation, burial, and extended periods of mourning were elaborate and solemn.

Prior to embarking on this exodus, these people, just like their ancestors, expended tremendous effort to honor those who passed away. Pre-burial viewing and respectful observance might last several days with mourning extending for days and weeks. Female family members and close friends traditionally observed an official mourning period of at least six months, often longer.

However, these customs were quickly abandoned not happily or easily, but out of necessity for survival. Wagon trains could not afford to delay progress for elaborate burials. Often, even the simplest graves could not be dug, depending on the weather, type of ground, number of bodies, or impending danger.

Early Pioneers

One of the more fascinating aspects of Hamburg's book is its highlighting of the two vastly different groups who journeyed to the "promised land." This tremendous and unprecedented migration consisted of early pioneers, including young men and young families, seeking the opportunity to own land, establish roots, and build a future, as well as older individuals seeking a fresh start.

In contrast, there were those who invaded the West in a sudden, unruly burst during a short span of time, earning the moniker The Forty-Niners. Charged with



The mass disinterment of bodies and destruction at Laurel Hill Cemetery, San Francisco, circa 1937.

In this all-male, rough, and crude populace, even those who may have once been righteous, humble, and honest, quickly abandoned these "unnecessary" traits in favor of simple survival.

an almost electric fervor and fueled by the promise of striking it rich, this virtually exclusively male convergence was as diverse as it was frenetic.

While the settlers of the first group sought to build a future for their families through hard work and sacrifice,



About 300 corpses from the Gold Rush era were unearthed from an old pauper's graveyard and re-interred at Skylawn Cemetery in San Mateo.

this gold-seeking faction was driven by the idea of quick riches and, for the most part, simple greed.

More importantly, Hamburg explains how dramatically different these two groups were in forming communities. The first group included wives, mothers, and sisters, while the Forty-Niners were as devoid of females as they were of rectitude.

In this all-male, rough, and crude populace, even those who may have once been righteous, humble, and honest, quickly abandoned these "unnecessary" traits in favor of simple survival. As common as death was for everyone venturing out West, those who converged upon the San Francisco area at this time experienced this tenfold.

And as desensitizing as it might be to experience death along the trail, confined within the "instant city" only served to strip away any remaining vestiges of civilization and humanity. As Hamburg explains, the absence of female influence fed into every negative and destructive aspect of life here.

As if there weren't enough death with murder, disease, and horrendous accidents, suicide became another type of pandemic. In chapter four, "Instant City, Instant State," the author shines a light on this depressing topic:

Some attribute the high suicide rate in early San Francisco—the second-leading cause of death—to



American exhumation

introduces a fresh

perspective on

traditional narratives.

uncovering the trends

and conflicts of a

burgeoning city from a

unique angle.

Grave robbing in the 1800s.

the dearth of women. The Annals waxes poetic on a male facing his maker in this God-forsaken corner of the world. Unlike the dying man back in his native land "cheered by the sweet, loving attentions of the woman—it may be wife, sister...

Another distinction between the two groups becomes apparent once they reach their destination. While the settlers did just as the name implies—finding a piece of land, planting crops, raising cattle, building homesteads that were typically miles apart—the

Forty-Niners fought for and shared the same small area. Cramped and miserable, tempers were short, hygiene ignored—and once the deaths began to accumulate, so did the bodies. Naturally, this gave rise to disease and, quite frankly, the dead were taking up valuable land, which eventually led to mass exhumation and grave robbing.

The Wild West

In this meticulously researched and compellingly narrated history, Hamburg delves into the genesis of an "instant city" and the pivotal decisions it entailed. As the *San Francisco Daily Evening Post* noted over a

century ago, "The story of the city's cemeteries is the history of the city itself." American exhumation introduces a fresh perspective on traditional narratives, uncovering the trends and conflicts of a burgeoning city from a unique angle.

Hamburg further illustrates that our relationship with the "living dead" is just as significant as their initial burial and subsequent relocation, both in San Francisco and beyond.

Hamburg has done a remarkable job of beautifully depicting this morbid slice of American history, weaving historical facts, excerpts from actual diaries, and stunning drawings that all serve to bring this period and the people to life. What could be a dry and stodgy recitation reads like a popular novel, yet with a sound foundation in facts and thoughtful examination.

While we are all familiar with the TV and Hollywood versions of the Wild West, Hamburg's book gets down to the nitty-gritty

and tells the story in such a way that we can almost place ourselves in the iconic time and imagine how we would have handled such dramatic changes.

Cypress Lawn Cemetery, where Hamburg serves as director emeritus of the Cypress Lawn Heritage Foundation, is a historic California garden necropolis that hosts nearly half a million "residents," including many prominent founders and builders of the American West and the nation. Hamburg holds a master's degree in history from King's College, Cambridge University in England. He has written numerous articles on California history and the fate of San

Francisco's dead, lectured widely, and conducts cemetery history and art tours. He is also the author of *Quotable San Francisco*.

Land of the Dead, published by Prometheus Books, premiered September 15, 2024, on Amazon.

Susan Cushing is a regular contributor to Memento Mori. Photos used with permission.

OCA Journal July 18, 2025

SUPPLIER SPOTLIGHT

Tara Edwards

Director of Cemetery Sales Aftercare.com

Tara Edwards is the Director of Cemetery Sales at Aftercare.com, where she partners with cemeteries across the U.S. and Canada to help them stay connected with the families they serve. With over eight years of dedicated experience in the funeral and cemetery profession, Tara is passionate about making aftercare simple,

meaningful, and supportive for both families and cemetery teams. She loves getting the opportunity to travel the country visiting clients and touring their beautiful cemeteries.

While Aftercare.com is based in North Carolina, Tara lives and works from her home in a small town in Southern Indiana. Tara is all about building real relationships and keeping things genuine, both in work and life. She has two grown sons and enjoys spending time with family and friends, being outdoors, and taking beach vacations whenever she gets the chance.

Contact Tara at:

Email: <u>tara@aftercare.com</u> Office: 910-518-6080 Cell: 812-608-0704

> cemetery information management system

Ocims

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OSHA EMPHASIS PROGRAMS

We all know that the goal of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is to ensure workplace safety across various industries in the United States. Some of these industries include, construction, agriculture, maritime, logging and general industry. OSHA uses a couple of programs to address specific hazards that they see in the workplace. The first one we discussed in a previous article is OSHA's Top Ten Violations. These are the most frequently occurring non-compliances OSHA uncovered during the prior fiscal year (October to September). What is beneficial about this Top Ten List is that it gives companies a guide to evaluate their safety programs and processes and compare them to what OSHA Compliance Officers are finding in the workplace.

The second program is a directive known as OSHA's Emphasis Programs which are temporary initiatives launched by OSHA to focus on particular safety and health hazards that have been identified throughout the country or a specific region. These directives are created based on inspection data, injury and illnesses, NIOSH (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health) reports, peer-reviewed literature as well as analysis of inspection findings. The goal of these emphasis programs is to target specific industries based on their operations (such as Trenching and Excavation) or by their North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS) (such as Food Manufacturers or Warehousing and Distribution). Additionally, these programs allow OSHA to direct resources to particular hazards and high-hazard industries and promote proactive measures (such as outreach programs) that employers can take to enhance workplace safety. In either case, it is important to determine if your organizations fall under a specific emphasis program.

Within the directive are two programs: the National Emphasis Program (known as NEP), which targets industries throughout the United States (including Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, Guam and Washington DC) and Regional/Local Emphasis Programs (known as REPs or LEPs) that target industries within a given region. Currently, there are 10 regions, and Ohio is part of region 5, which also includes Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin. Both directives cover a wide range of concerns such as fall hazards, specific chemical usage, heat hazards in indoor and outdoor environments, machine guarding and forklift operations.

The National Emphasis Programs include:

- Combustible Dust
- Fall Prevention/Protection
- Hazardous Machinery
- Heat
- Hexavalent Chromium
- Lead
- Primary Metal Industries
- Process Safety Management (PSM)
- Shipbreaking
- Silica, Crystalline
- Trenching and Excavation
- Warehousing and Distribution

The link to OSHA's National Emphasis Programs can be found at <u>https://www.osha.gov/enforcement/</u><u>directives/nep</u>.

The Regional and Local Emphasis Programs include:

- Building Renovation/Rehabilitation and Demolition
- High Rise Building Construction Inspection in Chicago, Illinois
- Wood Pallet Manufacturing
- Exposure to Noise Hazards in the Workplace
- Food Manufacturing Industry
- Grain Handling Facilities
- Powered Industrial Vehicles
- Transportation Tank Cleaning Operations

The links to each of these emphasis programs can be found at <u>https://www.osha.gov/enforcement/directives/</u><u>lep</u>.

OSHA's Emphasis Programs serve as vital tools in the ongoing effort to improve workplace safety across industries and promote a safer future. For workers, this means a safer working environment and peace of mind. For employers, engaging with emphasis programs can enhance the wellbeing of their employees while also potentially reducing long-term costs related to workplace injuries or illnesses. It is important you review the emphasis programs to determine if your organization has an operation or an NAICS number that may be on OSHA's target list for an inspection.

If you have further questions regarding OSHA's Emphasis Programs or would like more information, please contact Andy Sawan at <u>andrew.sawan@sedgwick.com</u> or 330.819.4728.



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THE POWER OF YOUR TPA CLAIMS EXAMINER RELATIONSHIP

As a Sedgwick TPA customer, our goal is to always provide you with comprehensive and immediate service for all of your workers' compensation claim needs. Part of that service includes a dedicated claims examiner assigned to your account who can offer a detailed plan of action to assist you in navigating the Ohio workers' compensation system.

When your company experiences a workers' compensation claim, your assigned claims examiner will typically receive notice of the claim within a few days of the filing. Their immediate goal is to complete a claim review of all documentation available so that they can notify you of any concerns with the information on file. Some of the caution signs they monitor include:

- Prior medical history to the same body part
- A delay in seeking treatment
- Vague or inconclusive injury descriptions
- Medical treatment discrepancies
- The injury is reported soon after a known employer discipline
- Hobbies or extracurricular activities that could cause the reported injury
- Medical conditions that co-exist alongside the primary diagnosis (comorbidities)

Once the validity of a claim is verified your claims examiner will develop a detailed plan of action to monitor and help move the claim to final resolution either through full and final settlement of the claim or a full duty return to work.

Early communication with your claims examiner can provide clarity in the investigation process, reduce administration delays and ensure forward motion of the claim, which is a benefit to both you and your injured worker.

While it is an unfortunate fact that workers do get injured on the job and the majority of those claims are credible, a strong relationship with your assigned claims examiner who can review what options are available to you as the employer to mitigate time and expense in the claim is one of the best tools you have in your toolbox. Their expert knowledge of the Ohio Workers' Compensation system can help you make informed decisions that will lead to successful claim outcomes.

If you have any questions, contact our Sedgwick program manager, Rejeana Woolum-Napier, at (614)359-2403 or <u>rejeana.woolum-napier@sedgwick.com</u>.





COMPLACENCY AND THE WORKPLACE

In today's fast-paced work environment, many employees find themselves settling into routines that can often lead to complacency. Complacency can be defined as, doing the same task for so long without incident that you assume nothing will ever happen. While familiarity with tasks can create a sense of comfort, it can also pose significant risks, especially concerning workplace safety. It's crucial to understand how complacency can lead to accidents and what can be done to mitigate these risks. Complacency can affect anyone at any age, regardless of their experience, so it is important to train all employees on how to spot complacency among themselves and other employees.

Let's take an example of a person who performs a daily safety inspection before production starts. The purpose of the inspection is to identify any potential safety hazards. This daily routine occurs for months even years without incident. But, because "an incident has never occurred", the employee decides to skip an inspection one day and no injuries resulted. So, the employee skips another one, then another, and soon inspections are rarely being conducted. Until something happens. Skipping important safety steps due to complacency could result in serious injury to the employee or fellow workers.

Usually, the best person to spot complacency is the employee themselves, but complacency can mean they don't see the dangers right in front of them. To overcome this, teach employees to spot signs of complacency in their co-workers first. The more they learn how to recognize these signs in others, the easier it will be to recognize it in themselves.

Keep an eye out for the following situations that may indicate complacency is setting in:

- Dissatisfaction with work and/or lack of motivation
- Taking shortcuts in work processes, safety procedures or inspections
- · Increased frequency of near-misses or incidents
- Changes in attitude
- Noticeable increase or decrease in communication
- Tardiness for meetings or shifts

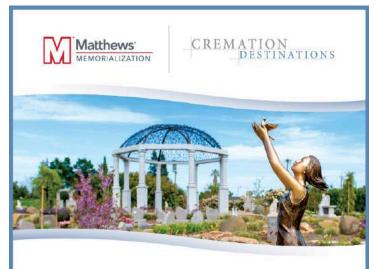
Increased employee engagement is a great way to help workers get out of the rut of complacency. Actions workers can take include:

- Consciously focusing on the task at hand.
- Identifying distractions when they come up and dismissing them.
- When conducting repetitive tasks, be on the lookout for procedural improvements that can help break up the monotony.
- Understanding the greater purpose of their job, such as the finished product or report, and interacting with team members regularly.

Identifying and addressing complacency is a team effort. Not only is it key for employees, but the employer can assist by implementing best practices such as:



- Share the Mission— Remind employees of the company's purpose and goals so they maintain a connection to the larger missions and emphasize that their behaviors have an impact.
- Minimize Routines—Since repetition is related to complacency, consider job rotation or change up some of the work tasks to add variety to an employee's job. Providing differing work tasks can help maintain focus and keep employees from falling into "cruise control" mode.
- Encourage observation of others Have employees briefly stop work and observe the actions of others as they work. Observing others raises one's own awareness, as well as the awareness of their coworkers.
- Correct poor performance Mentoring programs and coaching can help employees identify and correct poor work practices and potential problems before an injury occurs.
- Conduct safety discussions and toolbox talks Make safety talks part of a daily routine and get employees involved and engaged with team members.
- Share Knowledge Have employees identify and share the steps they perform to complete a job. Having another set of eyes or someone else's ideas may help improve the process.



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If you would like to know more about Sedgwick's safety services or would like to schedule a confidential consultation, please contact Andy Sawan at andrew.sawan@sedgwick.com or 330.819.4728.





TRUE-UP PROCESS

The Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) provides workers' compensation coverage based on *estimated* payroll. Therefore, at the end of the policy year, BWC asks employers to report their actual payroll for the prior policy year and pay any shortage (or receive a refund for any overage) in premium. This process is called a true-up. If the true-up is not completed timely, the following may occur:

- Employer will not be eligible for prior year rebates and incentives
- Employer will be removed from current year programs
- Employer will become ineligible for programs the following year and will continue to remain ineligible for all future years until all past true-ups are completed.

How to report payroll and complete the true-up

Although employers may contact BWC at (800) OHIO-BWC (800.644.6292) and complete their true-up report over the phone, BWC anticipates high call volumes and long wait times. They strongly encourage employers to complete their true-up report online through their BWC e-account at www.bwc.ohio.gov. If you do not have an e-account, simply select the Create E-Account Link to begin. You will need your BWC policy number and/or Federal Tax Identification Number.

Deadlines

Private employers - True-up report must be completed and payment received no later than **August 31, 2025**.

Public employers - True-up report must be completed and payment received no later than February 28, 2026.

Please note: There is no longer a grace period. True-up and payment (if owed) must be POSTED by the deadline date.

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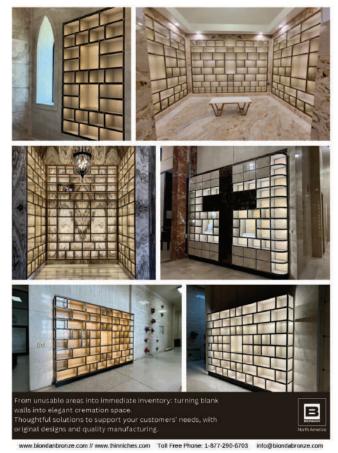
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The new OCA website has launched!

Check it out https://ohiocemeteryassociation.com/

We still have some work and improvements to make but this website is only as good as how much you, as members, participate by providing:

Asking questions and sharing ideas

What's going on at your cemetery: events, photos, retirements, new development

Job postings

Comment and review articles in the Journal

A link to your cemetery newsletter

Contribute articles

You can submit these by clicking News & Events under the Membership tab. Our team will review any submissions before publishing them on our News page.

You should have received an email to create your member log-in. If you need help or need a log-in for additional staff, contact Marilyn Brandt.





If you have any questions or would like to contribute to the OCA Journal contact:

Marilyn Brandt - OCA Secretary/Treasurer oca.brandt@gmail.com 440-290-9437 Office: 11555 Wilson Mills Rd Chardon, OH 44024



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