

# OCA Journal

July 2020 | Volume 10 | Issue 3  
Publication of the Ohio Cemetery Association



## OCA Webinar – June 30, 2020

With COVID 19 eliminating many if not all of the conferences for 2020 the OCA board developed a virtual conference which was held on June 30, 2020.

This webinar was led by board members along with supplier partner Davey Tree Expert Co. who was the host and moderator. A first of its kind for OCA, the goal was to engage members who typically attend spring, summer and fall events. These events are obviously networking and revenue generating events for the association. We appreciate any feedback and ask for your continuing support of the association.

The event was framed in a Townhall setting with President Joseph Wilson providing the welcome and review of the topics to be covered. Tim Long, OCA legal counsel, addressed the current legal issues in Ohio.

The last segment was board panel experts, Marilyn Brandt (Lakeview Cemetery-Cleveland), Kirk Roberts (Roberts Funeral Home- Wooster), and Chris Sullivan (Spring Grove Cemetery-Cincinnati) The panel fielded questions from the 50 + members who attended. The panel provided insights on ways they are servicing, selling and operating during these difficult times.

Like all other business's Covid-19 has changed how we serve our customers dramatically. As we consider additional webinars, suppliers will have the opportunity to sponsor and provide a presentation to those attending. Please contact the OCA office if you are interested.

This is the first OCA Webinar sponsored By Davey Tree Expert Co.

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## Upcoming Events

<b>Annual Convention</b>
Tentative date
October 2020
Hotel
Embassy Suites
2700 Corporate Exchange Drive, Columbus
Golf Outing – TBA
Field Day
Union Cemetery, Columbus



# COVID-19 - The Columbus Dispatch

## ***Coronavirus Keeps Many From Paying Tribute At Funerals***

May 11, 2020

Families say the necessity of smaller gatherings and lack of public calling hours or visitations leave them feeling as if their loved one was shortchanged.

At first glance, Donna Althar's funeral might have seemed normal. On May 1, mourners gathered around a blue tent on the eastern edge of Dublin Cemetery. The Rev. Linda Meredith eulogized the Marysville resident with memories of her devotion to her cats, her church and her powder blue Volkswagen Beetle. The Lord's Prayer was recited.

But a closer look revealed some of what has made funerals different during the coronavirus pandemic: Rather than sitting in rows of chairs near the casket, the small group of family and friends — most wearing masks — practiced social distancing and stood scattered in a wide ring.

The ceremony was over in less than 20 minutes, shortened because nobody wanted to be standing for too long.

## ***Coronavirus prevents traditional funeral for retired Pickaway County sheriff; procession still planned***

May 9, 2020

"We didn't get to pay full tribute," Meredith said. "It felt less personal."

Bonnie Coleman, a resident of Russells Point in Logan County and one of Althar's nieces, understood that it had to be this way.

"It was very nice, under these circumstances," she said.

But Coleman said she was struck by the lack of hugging, both as people arrived and when they left.

It felt abrupt. While a few close family members lingered, other guests generally gave a wave or a salute from a distance and just drifted away.

Though funerals are exempt from Ohio's ban on mass gatherings, the Ohio Funeral Directors Association recommends that directors not hold public calling hours or visitations and that they work with families to limit funeral attendance. There were about 20 for the Althar service.

"Traditional funerals as we know them aren't happening right now. They just can't," said Scott Underwood of Underwood Funeral Homes in Marysville, which handled the arrangements for Althar.

Given that, funeral directors have been recommending that families plan a larger memorial service later, when the restrictions might be eased.

For now, directors and families have had to get creative.

**COVID-19 continued from page 2.**

Melissa Sullivan, executive director of the OFDA, said livestreaming funerals, offered by some funeral homes for years, has become widespread.

She heard of one funeral that resembled a drive-in movie, where the director put a big screen in the parking lot and mourners watched from their cars.

Some central Ohio funeral homes have allowed a procession of mourners in cars to “drive through” their parking lots and wave to grieving family members.

Jim Anderson, area manager of Newcomer Cremations, Funerals & Receptions, with chapels in Grove City and Westerville, said cemeteries have been allowing “false set-ups” in order to safely accommodate more people.

That involves cases where the gravesite is not accessible by car, so the service is held adjacent to a cemetery driveway. That way, people can hear the service while staying in their vehicles.

Not allowing calling hours or visitation, though, can lead to some “delicate conversations” with family members, Sullivan said.

Anderson said that early in the pandemic, some families didn’t understand the restrictions. Even if they do, though, he said he is frustrated by the situation.

“Given the circumstances, we have not been able to provide the type of services families would like,” he said. “And it’s disheartening, because the grief process does not stop.”

Bob Ryan is president of Egan-Ryan Funeral Home, with locations Downtown and on the Northwest Side. Like Anderson, he sees the smaller funerals and lack of public visitation as the toughest adjustment for families.

“A big part of the funeral is knowing you’re not alone,” Ryan said. “Through that public outpouring, you realize how many people your relative has touched in life.

“I think that is really comforting and that is what is missing.”

Coleman felt that deeply.

In addition to not being able to greet people at visitation and not gathering for a traditional post-funeral meal at church, she lamented the fact that her aunt’s two surviving siblings — her father, Bud Doeber, 94, and aunt Marty Campbell, 89 — both

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**COVID-19 continued from page 3.**

decided not to attend because of their age and fear of contracting the virus.

“I’m terribly disappointed,” Coleman said. “But my Aunt Donna would understand.”

Hilliard resident Sara West understood why her mother’s funeral had to be different as well, but she didn’t like it.

Garnet West died at age 93 on April 8, and the April 14 funeral featured a false set-up at Glen Rest Memorial Estate in Reynoldsburg.

West said only about 10 people stood at the tent, while many of her mother’s numerous grandchildren had to try to hear while sitting in their cars nearby.

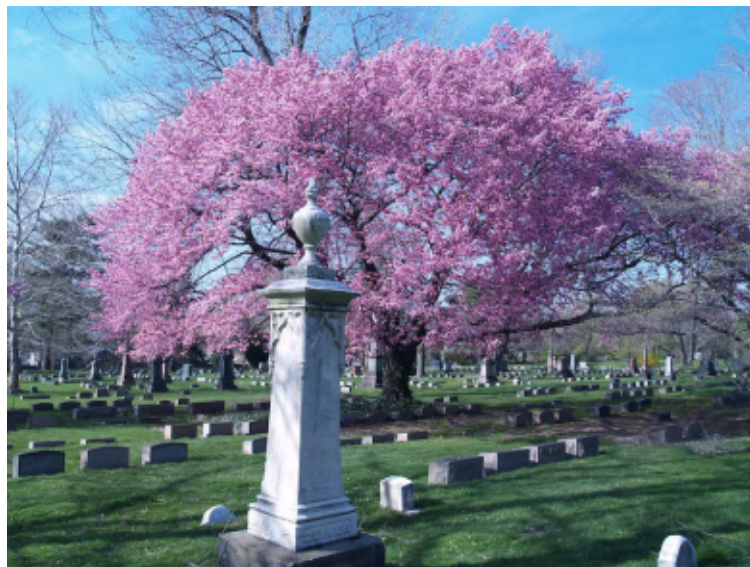
It was chilly that day, too, she said, and the ceremony was brief.

“It was a small group and it wasn’t very personal, it was just sad and weird,” West said. “We wanted her funeral to be a celebration of her life, with stories and music and positivity.

“Instead, it was quick and to the point. It was nothing near what she deserved.”zxx

## COVID-19 Guidance for Protection

The Ohio Department of Commerce [COVID-19 Guidance for Protection](#) is available to download as a PDF.







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# Compmanagement News

## ***Save Significantly On Your Workers' Compensation Costs***

Did you know that many alternative discounts are available to help reduce your annual ohio workers' compensation costs? Through the Ohio Cemetery Association's program, your organization can be evaluated for qualification in a variety of alternative rating programs to reduce your costs. Our program, administered by Compmanagement, offers you quality service and stability through the complex workers' compensation environment. The group rating enrollment period begins in June and ends November 23rd. Please submit any requests for a quote before November 1st.

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**Compmanagement News continued from page 7.**

Download CompManagement newsletters as a PDF:

[CompManagement CompNotes Spring 2020](#)

[CompManagement Risk Services Newsletter Summer 2020](#)

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## Ohio Township Information

### ***FY 2021 Cemetery Grant Application***

The Ohio Division of Real Estate and Professional Licensing is now accepting applications for the FY 2021 Cemetery Grant Program. This year's grant applications may only be submitted online. The online application can be found at [cemeterygrants.com.ohio.gov](https://cemeterygrants.com.ohio.gov).

The FY 2021 Cemetery Grant Instruction package can be found [here](#). Please carefully review the package in its entirety. The instructions contain a worksheet to allow you to gather all of the necessary information prior to submitting the grant application online.

If you have any questions or require additional assistance, please contact the Division at (614) 466-5384 or [CemeteryGrants@com.state.oh.us](mailto:CemeteryGrants@com.state.oh.us).

Sincerely,

Anne M. Petit

Superintendent, Division of Real Estate & Professional Licensing

## Brimfield Township, Portage County – Restland Cemetery Update

Brimfield Township trustees implemented a restoration program at the Restland Cemetery. The kick-off began in the original cemetery section at the Memorial Day Celebration May 2019. We honored Dr. Luke Lincoln, the first medical doctor to serve our township.

In my research, the Kelso House Museum provided a book published in 1930 that listed all the names of those buried in this section of Restland. The book was updated in 1991. Our Brimfield Township records covers up to the present. Many times this information can be easily lost.



During the Annual Brimfest in September 2019 (picture) a booth was set up to present the program to all residents. The pioneer section of Restland Cemetery was highlighted by showing new stones and giving the residents an opportunity to purchase a monument in honor of a family member. Many of our residents are descendents of these early settlers.



## Restland Cemetery Update continued from page 8.

The Portage Marble and Granite Company, Kent, OH has been instrumental in advising and helping with our project. We took our first delivery in February 2020 of 12 monuments. Dave Rufener, Road Supervisor, will oversee setting the stones at ground level. Pictured is Cody Kunkle of the road crew unloading the monuments for a Spring and Summer project.

I am looking forward to being part of giving honor to those who made Brimfield Township the "Gateway to Portage County".

Sue Fields, Trustee 2-28-2020



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Ohio Township News continued from page 9.

FEATURED article

# GRAVE RESPONSIBILITIES

## *The Rights and Obligations of Townships Toward **Indigent & Unclaimed** Decedents*

Benjamin S. Albrecht &amp; Helen Sudhoff

**W**hen a person dies, typically the friends and family of the deceased rally to provide a funeral and proper burial. However, sometimes the deceased's friends and family do not have the financial resources to fund a proper burial or the deceased is never claimed. In those circumstances, the obligations to care for the deceased and their burial fall on others.

Under Ohio law, townships are required to pay for the burial of indigent persons who have not been claimed by a loved one for private interment at their own expense. This means that when an indigent person dies or their body is discovered, the township is liable for the costs of

the burial or cremation of that person, unless a family member indicates that they will be responsible for the costs of the burial or other services.

Per R.C. §9.15, an indigent is defined as "a person whose income does not exceed one hundred fifty percent of the federal poverty line, as revised annually by the United States department of health and human services in accordance with section 673(2) of the "Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981," 95 Stat. 511, 42 U.S.C. 9902, as amended, for a family size equal to the size of the person's family."

In Ohio, nearly 2,700 of the 4,117 registered cemeteries are maintained by townships, and most townships have one or more cemeteries. Because the majority of cemeteries are located within townships, townships are frequently responsible for the care and maintenance of burials and cemeteries. As a result, trustees should be aware of the various rights and obligations townships have toward deceased indigent and unclaimed persons.

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### **Claiming a Loved One**

Townships have an obligation to cover the costs of the burial or cremation of an indigent person, unless the decedent is claimed by a loved one for private interment at the claimant's expense. However, a person who merely claims a dead person as their loved one has not claimed them for private interment at the claimant's expense. The claimant must express that they intend to cover the costs of the burial, cremation, funeral, or other funeral-related services for the township to be absolved of their duties. But generally, claimants may claim a loved one without undertaking the responsibility to arrange and pay for private internment.

### **Funerals, Burials, and Grave Maintenance**

When an indigent person dies within a township or an indigent resident of the township dies, the township is responsible for their burial or cremation. In addition to a burial or cremation, the township must also place a metal, stone or concrete marker at the site of the person's grave or remains that identifies the person's name, age, if known, and the date of their death. Aside from those requirements, townships are not obligated to provide an indigent person with other burial services, such as a religious funeral, embalment, or a casket. Additionally, while townships



## Ohio Township News continued from page 10.

are not required to bury an indigent person in accordance with the wishes of their loved ones, townships are permitted to consider the preferences and sensibilities of the claimant, to the extent reasonably possible. However, this does not mean that a claimant can make independent arrangements for the decedent and then bill the township. Rather, townships may work with the claimant to make arrangements for the decedent or determine whether a burial or cremation is preferred.

Furthermore, townships may want to speak with local funeral homes to discuss services they provide to indigent families and how the process and communication will flow between the funeral home and township officials when the body of an indigent is found and not claimed or claimed by an person that declares to be indigent. Townships might also consider negotiating a contract for services in these instances, such as cremation, an urn, a simple burial with no embalming and a plain pine box.

Once an indigent person has been buried by the township, the township is responsible for the maintenance of the grave. The township must at least comply with the minimum maintenance guidelines. Additionally, townships should maintain accurate burial records.

### Unclaimed Bodies

Generally, if a legal resident of the township dies and their body is unclaimed, the township is liable for the costs of the decedent's burial or cremation. In 2016, the Ohio General Assembly added to R.C. §9.15 that legal residence means "a permanent place of abode used or occupied as living quarters at the time of a person's death, including a nursing home, hospital, or other care facility." However, an inmate of a correctional, benevolent, or charitable institution of this state is not considered a legal resident and thus the township is not liable for the burial of that person - rather, the county would be responsible.

Townships may also be liable for the burial or cremation of residents that die outside of the township. This includes indigent individuals deemed incompetent who are sent to a convalescent home in another county and pass away in that facility. Although the individual died in another political subdivision, the township with which the individual resides is still liable for their burial costs.

Alternatively, in lieu of burying or cremating an unclaimed body, a township's board of trustees may authorize the delivery of unclaimed bodies to college or the Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors for science.

### Indigent Persons, Not Pets

The rights and obligations of townships to indigent persons only extends to the indigent decedent and not to other family members or pets. This means that an indigent person may not have their pet buried with them, although other individuals who privately fund their interment may be buried next to their pets.

### Indigent Burial Fund

While townships are obligated to cover the costs of indigent burials, they may be reimbursed for

these costs. In 2019, Ohio passed a biennial budget which set aside \$2 million to reimburse governments for the expenses of the indigent burial program, with \$1 million available each fiscal year. Under the program, each township is eligible for up to \$11,000 for indigent burial costs, recovering up to \$1,000 per deceased adult and \$750 for deceased children.

Despite the large pool of financial resources available, the fund has been significantly underutilized. As of April, only \$18,000 of the fiscal year's \$1 million fund had been appropriated for burial reimbursements. And as of July 1, the fund is reset to \$1 million for reimbursements. While townships are not obligated to advertise the fund, doing so can benefit indigent residents without requiring the township to expend additional resources.

### Cemetery Grant Program

Townships may also receive funding through the Cemetery Grant Program that was established in 2018. Under the program, not-for-profit cemeteries may receive funding to defray the costs of maintenance or to train cemetery personnel in the maintenance and operation of cemeteries. This program may assist townships by alleviating the costs associated with caring for cemeteries with indigent residents or unclaimed persons.

### Abandoned Cemeteries

Occasionally, townships may be liable for abandoned cemeteries. If a public or private cemetery has been abandoned, or if a cemetery that is open for public use has been deemed "detrimental to the public welfare or health," its use may be discontinued by the township. Under such circumstances, the board of township trustees may remove all the remains and all stones and monuments marking the graves, rebury the remains, and re-erect the stones and monuments in a suitable public cemetery nearby. Should the township choose this route, the costs incurred must be paid from the township treasury and prior notice must be given to the family, friends, or next of kin of the decedent. ■

about the authors

Benjamin S. Albrecht, balbrecht@fisheldowney.com, is a partner, and Helen Sudhoff, hsudhoff@fisheldowney.com, is a law clerk for Fishel Downey Albrecht and Riepenhoff, L.L.P. The firm regularly advises and represents townships throughout Ohio. For questions about these or other legal topics impacting townships, please feel free to contact Benjamin or the firm at 614-221-1216.

*Townships are encouraged to have a policy and work with legal counsel to assist in determining indigency when a body is claimed. The Ohio Township Association has model policies for determining indigency and for establishing rules for indigent burials. Please contact the State Association for a copy of these policies.*

Despite the large pool of financial resources available, the [Indigent Burial Fund] has been significantly underutilized. As of April, only \$18,000 of the fiscal year's \$1 million fund had been appropriated for burial reimbursements. And as of July 1, the fund is reset to \$1 million for reimbursements.





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# Positions Available/Wanted

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### Job Description

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Qualified applicants can apply here. References may be requested. Pre-employment background check and drug screening required. An equal opportunity employer.

### EXPERIENCED SALES REPRESENTATIVE FOR HISTORIC CENTRAL OHIO CEMETERY ASSOCIATION

#### Job Description

Union Cemetery Association seeks a full-time sales representative to help families explore options and make decisions on final arrangements for loved ones or themselves. The challenging position requires a person who can:

- Assist families with decisions regarding at-need and pre-need interment by providing guidance and suggestions on a wide variety of choices that meet families' preferences and desires.
- Assist families with selections involving traditional burial and cremation options, including selling and designing memorial markers, monuments, urns and other selections.
- As part of a small collaborative office environment, participate in overall cemetery operations such as greeting guests, provide in-person, by-phone and online customer support, provide genealogical and location assistance, keep sales-related paperwork up to date and filed in a timely fashion, answer phones, respond to email inquiries, check social media, handle special assignments from the general manager and assistant manager, and handle other duties that may arise related to family requests and the course of daily business.

#### JOB SKILLS

Our successful candidate is comfortable with the English language, grammar, punctuation and spoken skills. Familiarity with other languages is a plus.

Our candidate also has the ability to use personal computer equipment and office software such as word processing, spreadsheets, electronic mail and certain social media applications, and also the ability to read burial maps and other historical documents central to cemetery operation.

Our candidate can also interact professionally and compassionately with families, guests, funeral industry professionals, visitors, board of directors and other office associates.

Our successful candidate has reliable personal transportation and a valid driver's license. Job Type: Full-time

**Please send resume to [jimmie.blevins@unioncemeterycolumbus.com](mailto:jimmie.blevins@unioncemeterycolumbus.com)**

# Articles For Sales Managers & Advisors Asking Questions

## WAYS TO HELP IMPROVE BUSINESS

It is by getting to the real reason things aren't working the way we intended. Ask a simple question, "Why?"

Also, ways our sales professionals can improve their sales by improving their relationships with their clients. Today more than ever – relationships matter.

### For the Leader -

Getting to the real reason when problems arise is the first step to ensuring they don't reoccur. We will learn the simple management principle of the 'five why's'.

Rather than just dealing with the issue, find out the cause and fix it.



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**Articles For Sales Managers & Advisors continued from page 15.**

## **For the Sales Team -**

Building relationships is an important element in the sales process. What are the elements that are required to build positive and trusting relationships with customers. When you have a relationship with someone you are more comfortable with them and are more trusting of their thoughts and suggestions.

## **Five Why's**

When problems arise it is important to try and determine the root cause of the problem. This cannot usually be done by simply asking, "Why?" Or "How did this happen?"

You must go deeper in questioning the issue. A simple yet effective management principle is called the five why principal. The concept is to keep asking 'Why' until you get to the real reason.

**Here is an example to help you learn and internalize this effective management tool.**

**Q - "Why did the flowers not get delivered on time?"**

**A - "Because the truck broke down."**

**Q - "Why did the truck break down?"**

**A - "It had not been serviced"**

**Q - "Why was the truck not serviced?"**

**A - "Our new driver had not been briefed on the maintenance schedule?"**

**Q - "Why had the driver not be briefed?"**

**A - "He was not told about the training meeting"**



*Articles For Sales Managers & Advisors continued from page 16.*

**Q – “Why wasn’t he told about the meeting?”**

**A – “His name never got to the training coordinator.”**

**So the real problem was not that the flowers didn’t get delivered. The real reason was that the administrative process is not working effectively.**

## **Relationships Matter**

As our entry to the market keeps being hindered by restrictions, changing markets, and technology, developing relationships with the families we are privileged to serve matters now more than ever.

Here are five elements that are critically important in building and maintaining positive and trusting relationships with your families.

**Focus on them** – The more your focus on being of service, the more you are concerned about their needs, the more they will listen to what you have to say.

**Listen** – Listen with your ears, eyes, mind, and heart. By listening with all your senses you are able to hear their real concerns and help them think through their issues. This will also give you a sense of how they feel about you, your company, your products, and services.

**Be their resource** – Become the professional that they can count on. Let them know you are the person they can rely on when it comes to your profession.

**Keep your word** – Tell your families what you can and will do, then do it. If you can’t do something – don’t say you will. Remember, people do more attention pay to what you do than what you say.

**Articles For Sales Managers & Advisors continued from page 17.**

**Be available** – Let your families know how to reach you, what your schedule is, and show them your willingness to meet with them when it is best for them.

**People buy from people they like. People refer people they trust.**

Article from:  **Info Gary O'Sullivan Company**  
(0302)

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# EF1 Tornado at Tuscarwaras Township Brookfield Cemetery

An EF1 tornado decided to make a visit to Brookfield Cemetery on April 8, 2020. The Davey Tree Expert Company answered the call and did an excellent job taking care in the clean up. The baby section of the cemetery was hit the hardest, and they were able to lift off the fallen 80' pines and not do any further damage to the headstones.



Article submitted by  
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