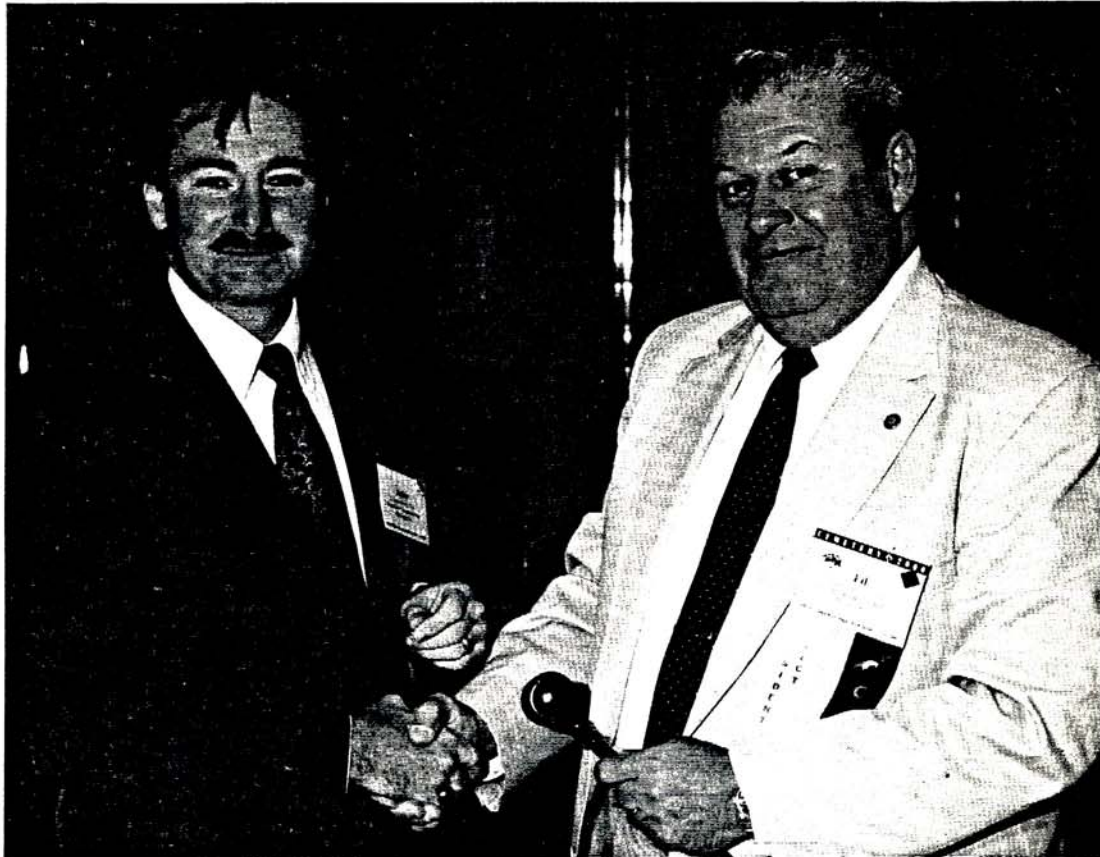


# AMERICAN CEMETERY

The Magazine of Cemetery Management

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## 1992 ACA Convention



J. Asher Neel passes the ACA president's gavel to Edward C. Laux

*Complete Coverage Starts on Page 18*

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*Also:*

**Ft. Sam Houston National Cemetery**

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**Millard Fillmore's Funeral**

# Maintenance Tops CCSC Query List

The Cemetery Consumer Service Council received 163 complaints and inquiries in 1991, of which 152 were resolved, according to CCSC complaint surveys completed by 28 of the 40 state CCSC committees.

The greatest number of complaints, 60, were over alleged improper cemetery maintenance, including charges that grass had not been cut or was not growing at all. Twelve complaints dealt with charges of questionable sales practices; and five dealt with "truth in lending" and other contractual matters.

CCSC was created in 1979 by industry associations to respond to complaints and questions regarding cemetery services and policies at no charge.

Most complaints are answered and resolved within a day during phone conversations between complainer and a CCSC volunteer, according to CCSC assistant secretary Robert M. Fells.

"Many of the complaints are based on misunderstandings and miscommunications," said Mr. Fells, who is also American Cemetery Association general counsel. "We clear them up with one on one contact."

Often smaller cemeteries are the subjects of complaints and questions.

"Many have part-time sextons, and there's often nobody there for people to talk to," Mr. Fells said.

Not everyone complains to CCSC. Some are simply curious about rules and regulations. Others have basic questions about cemeteries, like the purpose of burial vaults.

According to the surveys, there were 42 inquiries made about cemetery rules and regulations and 38 on other issues.

A rule many people seem unaware of is one concerning flowers. Most cemeteries allow only fresh-cut flowers at gravesites during growing season, Mr. Fells said.

"Some people will put silk flowers at a gravesite when it's humid; and they

can be a breeding ground for mosquitos and other pests," Mr. Fells said. "Many people don't realize this or it's not explained to them."

Sometimes people return to a gravesite, find their flowers gone, and want to know what happened.

A problem like this could be avoided if plot owners were provided with a list of cemetery rules when the plots are purchased, said CCSC president Larry Anspach, also president of American Cemetery/Mortuary Consultants of Chicago.

Not all complaints about mainte-

nance can be explained away so easily, Mr. Anspach said.

"A lot of people who complain about maintenance, they aren't homeowners, they don't know what it takes to cut the grass or maintain a lawn," Mr. Anspach said.

"They'll say, 'Gee, you haven't cut the grass for two days.' Well, maybe that's because it's been raining for two days. People who are homeowners understand maintenance problems better."

Unlike many golfers, Mr. Anspach said.

"People who play golf do not understand, because they're used to such well-maintained golf courses," Mr. Anspach continued. "They say, 'Gee, my golf course doesn't look like this.' Well, golf courses aren't making 500 burials a year."

Mr. Anspach has two priorities for 1993: for CCSC to stop referring complaints from California and Louisiana to state boards in those states; and to try and establish committees in the ten states currently without them.

Although state and federal agencies (including the Federal Trade Commission and state attorneys general) are the major sources for CCSC referrals, there is no reason local committees should not handle complaints and inquiries, Mr. Anspach said.

"In California and Louisiana, the state boards themselves are resolving complaints," Mr. Anspach said. "The whole purpose of CCSC is not to have government involved. We're trying to show people in this industry we can regulate ourselves if we have complaints. This is a volunteer organization. We want the association members to be responsible, not the state board.

"In Louisiana, the association is not a real strong association," Mr. Anspach continued. "The association may feel

continued on page 42

## 1993 CCSC Officers



Larry Anspach  
CCSC President

Cemetery Consumer Service Council officers for 1993 are: Larry Anspach, of American Cemetery/Mortuary Consultants, Chicago, president; Mary Tripp, of Los Gatos Memorial Park, San Jose, Calif., vice president; Joe Czapski, of Michigan Memorial Park, Flat Rock, treasurer; David Brownworth, of Cedar Memorial Park, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, secretary; Robert M. Fells, general counsel for the American Cemetery Association, assistant secretary.

Pope Pius IX, despite his misgivings about how the meeting would be received in the United States and the fear that he would be expected to genuflect and kiss the pope's ring, according to custom. (The pope kindly spared his reluctant guest such displays.)

#### Lincoln Visits

In February 1861 Fillmore hosted Abraham Lincoln at his home in Buffalo; the President-Elect was en route to his inauguration in Washington. Although Fillmore supported the Union cause during the Civil War, he came under attack for his signing of the Compromise of 1850, his later support of the Fugitive Slave Act, and other pre-war attempts to appease the South and avert the conflict. Following Lincoln's assassination on April 14, 1865, a mob vandalized the exterior of Fillmore's home. His perceived "pro South" Presidency was cited as the cause of the vandalism.

In his retirement, Millard Fillmore enjoyed excellent health until just a few days before his death. On the morning of February 13, 1874, just after he had finished shaving, his left hand suddenly dropped powerless to his side. He was quickly put in bed and his personal physician, Dr. James P. White, was summoned. The paralysis soon spread to the left side of his face and swallowing became difficult. Fillmore lay helpless for several days, but then there was a temporary improvement as he was able to swallow liquids and seemed to be recovering. Another physician, Dr. Gray, was summoned from Utica, New York, as an added precaution. Fillmore responded to treatment and recovered partial use of his affected muscles. Then a second massive stroke struck him on February 26 and paralyzed the entire left side of his body, destroying whatever chance he had for recovery. He couldn't swallow food or liquids.

#### Fillmore's Final Hours

In this helpless condition Fillmore lingered. He became dehydrated and his kidneys began to fail. On Saturday evening, March 7, 1874, he managed to ingest some food. He looked up and uttered his last words, "The nourishment is palatable." Suddenly Fillmore went into massive spasms, which indicated that he had aspirated some of the food particles into his lungs.

By 8:00 p.m. his condition had become critical, and since he could not expel the food particles from his lungs, Fillmore developed aspirative pneumonia. Dr. White was called to the home at 9:00 p.m. The pneumonia quickly reduced Fillmore's strength, and this, combined with advanced dehydration, created a physical condition that was incompatible with life. With the ex-President at his death were his son, his wife, and his brother, Cyrus. Amos Sarsnett and William Crawley, sent over by Buffalo Police Commissioner Charles E. Newton to help the Fillmores, also witnessed the ex-President's death.

Late Saturday evening Millard Fillmore lapsed into unconsciousness. He died on Sunday, March 8, 1874, at 11:10 p.m., in the upstairs bedroom of his mansion. He had lived 74 years and 60 days. The cause of death was listed as apoplexy paralysis.

TO BE  
CONTINUED

Watch for Our Series  
On the American Cemetery

CCSC

continued from page 23

the state would be able to handle complaints better. In California, they have a very active state cemetery board, and they wanted more control."

For his other priority, Mr. Anspach hopes to find individuals in the ten states without committees willing to establish committees.

"There are strong cemeteries in those states, and we will be contacting them to see if they will be willing to volunteer their time," Mr. Anspach said. "There's already forty states with committees. And people have always been very helpful in this industry, not only sharing ideas but helping in situations like this."

#### Pocahontas Buried In English Churchyard

Pocahontas, the Indian maiden who saved the life of Captain John Smith at Jamestown, lies in the churchyard of St. Georges Church in Gravesend, England. She died in 1617 at the age of 22, on the eve of her departure for Virginia.

After John Smith had returned to England, Pocahontas was told that he had died, and in 1614 she married John Rolfe, a widower, who brought her to England in the following year. There, known as the Lady Rebecca, she was feted by society and received at the Court of James I.

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