



MAR. - APR. 2017

Orange County Cemetery District

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Severe Rain Impacts Operations at All District Cemeteries

As the saying goes, “When it rains, it pours!” Recently, residents of Southern California have experienced an “up close and personal” taste of this expression, as unusually heavy rains have drenched the state over the last two months. While we can be grateful for the precipitation that has been quenching our drought stricken reservoirs, there is also a price to be paid.

Staff at all three of the District cemeteries have been rushing to make repairs to damage caused by these storms.

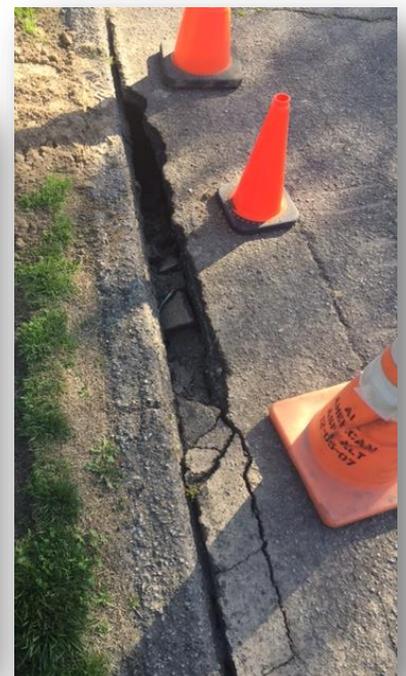
El Toro Memorial Park lost several beloved trees. Pools of standing water were left in the storms wakes at both Anaheim Cemetery and, most extensively, at Santa Ana Cemetery. Staff will be examining ways to improve drainage at Santa Ana Cemetery which will most likely result in a capital improvement project during the 2017-18 fiscal year.

Perhaps the biggest and most troubling impact of the storm for our families and visitors was the extensive erosion to gravesites and markers. When interments take place, every effort is made to compact the soil covering vaults. However, voids or empty spaces will invariably remain.

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A giant Pepper Tree at El Toro Memorial Park splits in two, unable to withstand the wind and rains. Pictured below, erosion damaged roads at Santa Ana Cemetery and numerous grave sites at all three cemeteries experienced collapse and sunken markers.

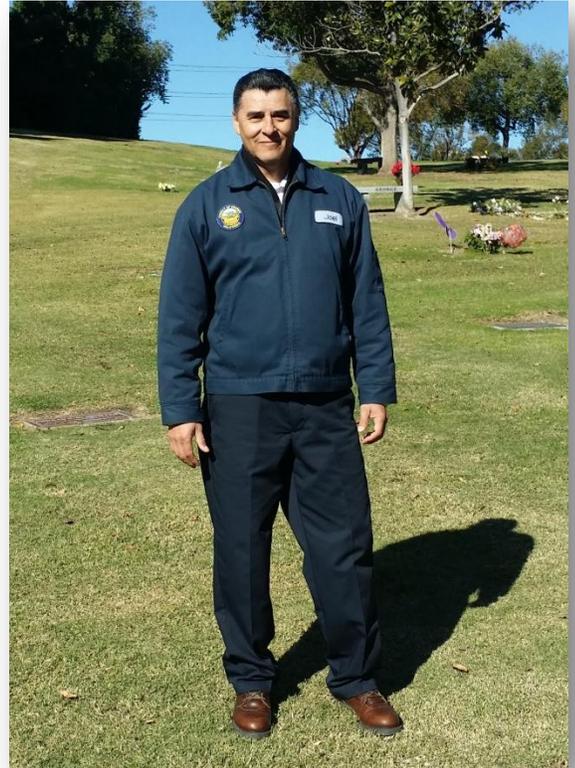


In Memorium: We Remember Leadworker Joel Torres

The Orange County Cemetery District has suffered a terrible loss. Leadworker, Joel Torres, who has been on staff for the last 16 years, passed away on December 22, 2016 after a prolonged and valiant battle against cancer.

Joel started with the District as a Groundskeeper at El Toro Memorial Park in April 2000 and was promoted to Leadworker in 2006. Having begun his career in this industry as a funeral director at Fairhaven Memorial Park, his knowledge, experience and compassion have been invaluable to the District and to the families he served. During his career at the District, Joel divided his time among all three District cemeteries, and staff at all three locations came to depend on him for instruction and leadership. It is the first time since the District's creation, that a staff member on active duty has passed away. His absence leaves a huge void both personally and professionally that feels impossible to fill. At his interment at Anaheim Cemetery, every available Groundskeeper and both remaining Leadworkers took part as a final salute to a very dear friend.

Joel leaves behind his beloved wife Guadalupe, and their two sons, Cristian and Giovanni. Our prayers and deepest condolences go out to his family. Joel, we will miss your smile, your laugh and your love.



Severe Rain Impacts District Cemeteries – Continued from page 1



Standing water at Anaheim Cemetery and an example of a sunken marker at Santa Ana Cemetery.

During periods of heavy rain, the earth settles and fills those voids causing collapsing and sinkage of the topsoil.

For families who are grieving the loss of a cherished loved one, to come to the cemetery and see a gravesite in this condition is very emotional and distressing. The damage also creates a major safety concern as these depressions can be a trip and fall hazard to guests visiting the grounds. To make matters worse, repairs are very difficult to make while the soil remains saturated. When lawns are soaked with rain, any use of heavy equipment on the grass rips up the turf and churns the lawn in to a muddy mess, which is even more disturbing to our families. As a result, regular maintenance like mowing and the installation of new gravestones also falls behind in an effort to reduce any further damage to the lawns.

During periods of stormy weather, the District respectfully asks for your patience as we make repairs as quickly as possible. We want our grounds to be a beautiful and tranquil place where you can remember your loved ones in peace. We sincerely apologize for any inconvenience you experienced or damage which has occurred.

A Great Way to Give Back to Your Community by Jim McComb

If you've ever considered volunteering in your community, Orange County's public cemeteries need you!

Recently the Orange County Cemetery District adopted very specific standards of excellence for operating and maintaining our three cemetery properties, and for the way in which we engage with the community. We call these standards of excellence "The District Standard." But how do we know if we are really achieving those standards? That's where you come in!

The volunteer opportunity is simply this: We're looking for a few Orange County residents willing to spend one or two hours at one of our cemeteries, evaluating our grounds and visiting with our staff, to determine whether the District's standards of excellence are being met or exceeded. You choose the cemetery (Anaheim, Santa Ana, or El Toro Memorial Park in Lake Forest) and the day

and time you visit. The results of your evaluation will be reported to our Board of Trustees, and will appear in this newsletter. We'll take action on anything that isn't up to "The District Standard."

You'll receive a copy of "The District Standard," an evaluation checklist, and we'll make sure you know exactly what to do before you set out on your "tour of the grounds." At the end of the year, we'll have a recognition event to properly thank all of our volunteers and you'll be invited!

If you have an hour or two to share with us, please call the District Office at 949-951-9102 and let us know you are interested so we can compile a list of willing volunteers. **We would like our volunteers to conduct their evaluations during the month of April, so please call now.** We're looking forward to hearing from you, and to being evaluated by you!

Trustees and Staff Celebrate Service Milestones

At the beginning of each calendar year, the District honors Trustees and staff who have reached service milestones. Congratulations to all of the following: (Pictured top left and going clockwise.)

Groundskeepers Adan Reyes (El Toro Memorial Park) and Martin Patino (Santa Ana Cemetery) have been with the District now for twenty years!

General Manager Tim Deutsch presents Dianna Torrence with a plaque honoring her for twenty-five years of service with the District. Dianna is the Assistant to the General Manager. Tim Deutsch was also honored for completing ten years as the District's General Manager.

Current Board Chair, William Nelson, presents Trustee Leslie Keane with a crystal vase for serving as a Board Member for 15 years.

Trustee Vivien Owen is also honored for serving as Board Chair for 2016. That marks the eighth year that Trustee Owen has led the Board as Chair. In all Trustee Owen has served on the Board for over 30 years.

Thank you all for your outstanding performance and dedication to the District and the families we help.



ORANGE COUNTY CEMETERY DISTRICT

March/April Board Meetings

The Board of Trustees for the Orange County Cemetery District holds regular meetings the first Tuesday of every month at 11:00 a.m. at the District Office located at 25751 Trabuco Road, Lake Forest, CA 92630. The public is welcome to attend.

Agendas are available at least 72 hours prior to each meeting and are also posted on our website at www.occemeterydistrict.com. In March and April, meetings will be held as follows:

- ❖ **Tuesday, March 7th at 11:00 a.m.**
- ❖ **Tuesday, April 4th at 11:00 a.m.**

If you have any questions or need additional information please contact the District Secretary, Mary Funk at (949) 951-9102 ext. 110.

2017 Holiday Decoration Schedule

For the following holidays, flowers and decorations can remain on gravesites between the dates listed below. Only fresh-cut flowers that are wilted will be removed on Wednesdays during these periods.



Persian New Year: 3/9/17 to 3/28/17

Easter: 4/6/17 to 4/25/17

Mother's Day: 5/4/17 to 5/23/17

Memorial Day: 5/25/17 to 6/6/17

Father's Day: 6/8/17 to 6/27/17

July 4th: 6/29/17 to 7/11/17

Halloween/Day of the Dead: 10/19/17 to 11/14/17

Thanksgiving-Christmas: 11/16/17 to 1/2/18

Flower Removal and Holiday Schedule

Every Wednesday, groundskeepers remove flowers throughout all three cemeteries. Living plants in approved containers or planter dishes and other non-perishable items placed on graves will be taken to the pick-up locations near the maintenance yards at each cemetery and held for a reasonable amount of time. Unless claimed, they will be disposed of.

Families are encouraged to remove their flowers or decorations on Tuesday night; you can then place the flowers back on the space on Wednesday afternoon.

The District does allow for flowers and decorations to be left on the spaces during holidays/events or for special occasions, such as anniversaries, birthdays and for new interments. Please come to the cemetery office and let us know that you have a special occasion and request that the flowers and decorations be left on the space. We do ask that you empty the vase and place fresh water in the container every four to five days to eliminate mosquito breeding sources, which can cause serious health issues. Your cooperation in this regard is greatly appreciated.

In honor of Persian New Year, flowers may be placed on graves beginning Thursday, March 9th until Tuesday, March 28th. In honor of Easter, flowers may be placed on graves beginning Thursday, April 6th until Tuesday, April 25th.



A complete listing of the District's extended holiday flower schedule for 2017 is listed to the left. You can also visit our website at www.occemeterydistrict.com and click on the tab for Flowers, Markers and Rules for more information.

Our Mission Statement and Core Values

The Orange County Cemetery District manages and maintains Orange County's public cemeteries in a manner that preserves their beauty, dignity, historical and cultural values, and offers affordable interment service for County residents.

The Trustees and staff of the Orange County Cemetery District are committed to the following values:

- Integrity ■ Respect ■ Accountability
- Responsiveness ■ Empathy ■ Transparency
- Appreciation for Diverse Needs

