



MAY – JUNE 2023

Orange County Cemetery District

TRUSTEES

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Join Us on Memorial Day as We Remember Our Veterans!

On Monday, May 29th please join as we honor and remember our Veterans who have sacrificed so much to protect and preserve our freedom.

El Toro Memorial Park

25751 Trabuco Road
Lake Forest

Program begins at 11:00 a.m.

Anaheim Cemetery

1400 E. Sycamore Street
Anaheim

Program begins at 11:00 a.m.

Santa Ana Cemetery

1919 E. Santa Clara Ave.
Santa Ana

Program begins at 10:00 a.m.

Each cemetery offers its own unique program, including color guards, wreath presentations, firing salutes, poetic readings, keynote speakers, and a variety of special music. Many Veterans attend and it is a wonderful opportunity to express our gratitude to all those serving in the Armed Forces. The events are free and will take place rain or shine. Seating is limited and bringing your own lawn chair is encouraged. Come early for the best parking. We hope to see you there! Our thanks to all the many volunteers who help to make these programs possible!



VFW Post 6024 Rifle Team at El Toro



Lake Forest Mayor and Marine Corps Veteran, Doug Cirbo, will be the keynote speaker for El Toro Memorial Park.

Gather at the Community Mausoleum for Anaheim Cemetery's Memorial Day program.



Santa Ana Cemetery's program takes place at the Soldiers' Monument at the Santa Clara Avenue Entrance.



Cooper's Battery provides Cannon Salutes at Santa Ana Cemetery's observance.

Trustees Hear Public Comments on Gravesite Decoration Rules

Since at least 2005, the written regulations for gravesite decorations has stated that, "Each grave space may have no more than two (2) approved flower containers. One container shall be a flower vase placed flush with the surface of the ground and installed by District employees. The second container may be an additional flower vase OR an approved flower container."

But over the years, as the cemeteries have filled with interments, the amount of gravesite decorations has also exploded – to the point where it has become difficult for staff to efficiently maintain the beauty of the grounds. While staff have made attempts to enforce the two-item policy by placing violation notices on gravesites and bagging items outside of the two-item limit, many gravesites continue to be overloaded.

During full park clean-ups, what used to take a couple of hours now stretches into most of the day. In addition, waste companies are now requiring us to sort out green waste, trash, and recyclables which consumes even more staff time. Trash disposal costs have also increased with the larger number of items that are now being discarded.

When gravesites are overloaded with multiple items including shepherd hooks, flags, pennants, fencing, potted plants, and personal items such as toys and stuffed animals, it is difficult for staff to get equipment to gravesites when opening and closing graves, as all these items must be cleared out of the way and then replaced when the

equipment is removed and the service concluded. When items extend away from the marker, as pictured to the right, mowing and trimming is not possible.

Over the last several months staff have been researching what is allowed at other cemeteries and discussing how to make the regulations more specific to reduce the number of items being placed on graves. Beginning on March 1st the new proposed regulations were posted on the website and made available in flyer boxes posted throughout the grounds.

Under the new regulations, during non-holiday periods, gravesites may **ONLY** be decorated with fresh cut flowers or artificial flowers placed in no more than two in-ground flower vases installed by cemetery staff or in temporary cone vases which are available at the cemetery office. Balloons are allowed if they are securely fastened to vase receptacles.

During observed holiday periods, two additional items may be placed including potted plants, planter dishes (non-glass), and wreaths. Items no longer allowed would include: solar or battery powered lights or candles; fencing of any kind; pinwheels, shepherd hooks; statues, toys, glass items, stuffed animals, and pennants and flags (small U.S. flags are allowed).

At the April Board Meeting, 15 members of the public came to address the Board and express objections to the new rules. They also presented a petition that was signed by approximately 217 people, requesting that they have



When gravesites have multiple items as shown above, mowing and trimming is not possible.

the chance to discuss these changes and reach a compromise that would be mutually acceptable to everyone.

Gravesite decorations are always a sensitive topic. We understand that families are hurting and need a way to express their love for those they have lost. Tending to a grave is one of the last ways a person has to show their devotion and care. By no means do we want to prevent anyone from grieving in this way, but at the same time the park must be maintained.

After hearing the comments from the public at the April 12th Board Meeting, the District will delay the implementation of these new rules, which were originally scheduled to go into effect on Wednesday, May 24th. The staff and Trustees will discuss how to provide the maximum flexibility to families while still preserving the safety and beauty of the park. We will keep you updated on any decisions that are made. Thank you to all who took the time to attend the Board Meeting and express your thoughts!

New Red Curbs Installed at El Toro to Ease Traffic Congestion

On average, El Toro Memorial Park conducts approximately 75 interment services every month. As the park fills, visitation on the grounds is growing rapidly. Between those visitors coming to attend a burial, and family members coming to visit gravesites for loved ones already interred, sometimes navigating the narrow cemetery streets can be problematic.

When cars are parked on both sides of a street, bottlenecks occur. Besides the frustration that this creates, it is also a real safety concern as it is important that emergency vehicles be able to access all areas of the park.

To help ease the congestion, staff have painted new red curbs along

the main street as you enter from Trabuco Road, around the entire Park Vista Loop, at the main cemetery intersection where the Public Restrooms are located, and at the curbs along the rear entrance/exit off of Old Trabuco Road. Parking along the red curbs is prohibited.

While we realize that this will reduce the amount of curbside parking, it is a necessary improvement to ensure that traffic flows smoothly and safely throughout the grounds. We are conducting similar surveys at Santa Ana Cemetery and anticipate that new red curbs will be installed there as well. Please be mindful of the red curbs and do not park where they are located. We appreciate your cooperation!



This new red curb has been installed around the entire Park Vista Loop and in other high traffic areas at El Toro Memorial Park. Please do not park along the red curbs. This will help traffic to flow smoothly. Thank you!

All In A Day's Work!



Groundskeeper, Jose Avila, pictured atop a 1,000 lb. boulder, that the interment crew had to dig out when opening a gravesite in Hillside 2 at El Toro Memorial Park. Staff is used to rocky ground, but this little stone was a record breaker! Great job gentlemen!

Trustees Attend CAPC Annual Conference

The California Association of Public Cemeteries is dedicated to promoting the development of Public Cemetery Districts and Public Cemetery governance through interactive communication, education, and legislative advocacy.

Each year the Association hosts an Annual Conference that includes an Exhibitor's Showroom, various educational seminars, and breakout sessions where Trustees, General Managers and staff can discuss common problems and concerns and share solutions.

This year's conference was held on March 23rd – 25th in Seaside, CA. Three Trustees were able to attend including: Board Chair

Kelly Rivers, Board Vice Chair Cynthia Ward, and Trustee Maribel Marroquin-Waldram.

The first day of the conference included a special presentation by Davis Cemetery District, a seminar by Attorney Robert Hunt on how to successfully manage the employer-employee relationship, a presentation by Attorney Mark Velasquez on prevailing wage and public works projects, and Attorney Karen O'Neil provided the required Harassment Prevention Training all Trustees are required to receive every two years.

Day two of the conference included the breakout sessions and a seminar on budget preparation training.

ORANGE COUNTY CEMETERY DISTRICT

May/June Board Meetings

The Board of Trustees for the Orange County Cemetery District holds regular meetings the first Tuesday of every month at 10:00 a.m. at the District Office located at 25751 Trabuco Road, Lake Forest, CA 92630. Meetings are now being held in person and are open to the public. Members of the public may also attend Board Meetings remotely. Instructions to join remotely are posted on the agendas.

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

- **Tuesday, May 2nd at 10:00 a.m.**
- **Tuesday, June 6th at 10:00 a.m.**

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

Flower Removal and Holiday Schedule

Every Wednesday, groundskeepers remove and discard flowers and decorations throughout all three cemeteries. Families are encouraged to remove their flowers and/or decorations on Tuesday night. You can then place the flowers back on the space on Thursday morning. Please remember that the District policy only allows for two items to be placed on gravesites. This includes the in-ground flower vase and one other item. If gravesites exceed the number of allowed items, staff may remove and discard the excess items. Please do not leave items of great monetary or sentimental value on gravesites as the District cannot prevent theft.

Throughout the year, various holidays are recognized with extended periods between full park clean-ups. During these times, 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 is greatly appreciated.

In honor of Mother’s Day, flowers may be placed on Thursday, May 4th and must be removed by Tuesday, May 23rd. In honor of Memorial Day, flowers may be placed on Thursday, May 25th and must be removed by Tuesday, June 6th. In honor of Father’s Day, flowers may be placed on Thursday, June 8th and must be removed by Tuesday, June 27th. During these periods, light clean-up will still occur each Wednesday and only flowers that are obviously wilted will be removed.

Please be advised, during full park clean-ups everything on gravesites are discarded. Please be sure to remove items you do not want discarded before the cemetery closes on Tuesdays.

The 2023 Cemetery Grounds Wednesday Clean-up Calendar is available on our website at www.occemeterydistrict.com. Click on the tab for Flowers, Markers and Rules for more information.

CEMETERY VISITATION HOURS

Anaheim Cemetery and Santa Ana Cemetery are open for visitation, seven days a week, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

El Toro Memorial Park is open for visitation, seven days a week, from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Cemetery Offices are open M-F 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. All offices are closed on the weekends and on holidays.

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

