



25th Annual College of Cemetery, Cremation and Funeral Studies

“From The Inside Out: The Internal Customer” Speaker List

“Let’s Have a Chat”

The Importance of Communication

We'll discuss best practices in communicating with colleagues and customers both over the phone and in person. We'll focus on how to listen and clearly formulate thoughts into a concise message.



Ben Utterback, Batesville Casket Company

Ben Utterback has had the wonderful opportunity to serve on the WCCFA board as the vendor representative for nearly a year and a half. He has worked in various roles with Batesville including territory management throughout the Northwest. He loves anything outdoors including biking, snowshoeing, and climbing. He's excited to open today's learnings and festivities!

“Public Relations with the Internal Customer”

The Internal Customer: Who/What is an Internal Customer? How do we effect each other? How does this effect The External Customer / Our Families? Relationships with Vendors/Suppliers and their connection to Customer Service.

Craig Nelson, Becks Tribute Center & Restlawn



Craig was born on March 27, 1964, and raised in Salem, Oregon. Liberal studies degree from Oregon State University 1987. Funeral Studies/Mortician from Mt. Hood Community College 1989. Apprenticeship Funeral Director: Howell-Edwards-Doerksen Funeral Home: Salem, OR 1987-1989. Employed: Virgil T. Golden Funeral Service: Salem, OR. 1989-1991 Beck's Funeral Home: Edmonds, WA. November, 1991-Present. Funeral Director/Embalmer/Certified Celebrant. Served NW District of WFSFDA as Secretary Treasured for 2 terms. Assisted on various committees and Task Groups for WFSFDA and WCCFA. Married: 2 Children. Interests: Skiing, Hiking, R-Pod Trailer Adventures, Welsh Corgi (Roger).

I became interested in Funeral Service in the 9th Grade. Had to write a Sociology Paper about a Local Business Person and most people interview and wrote about a parent. I thought it would be “Funny” if I wrote about the local Funeral Director. Little did I know the joke was on me and I discovered my Life long career?

“Understanding Your Endowment Fund & the Importance of Your Investment Policy Statement”

The State Cemetery Board changed the way registered cemeteries may invest their endowment care funds, recently implementing the Total Return Concept. Think this only applies to managers or finance people? Think again! Every cemetery counselor should be able to effectively answer what an endowment care fund is and how your company cares for the endowment care fund. Funeral directors should understand the concept of endowment care as it relates to cemeteries. And maintenance folks should have an understanding of endowment care since it correlates **DIRECTLY** to funding for maintenance expenses.

Jim Letson, Becks Funeral Home



Jim began his funeral service career in Portland, Oregon with Uniservice Corporation. After mortuary school in San Francisco he returned to Portland, and in the 1970s was transferred to Texas and then to Seattle. He continued with Unservice as Chief Operating Officer until the company merged with SCI in 1995. After 9 years with SCI as Area Vice President he and his wife Nancy founded Northwest Preferred Funeral Services, Inc. Northwest Preferred owns Beck's Tribute Center, Restlawn Memorial Park, Northwest Preferred Crematory, and Common Sense Cremation of Woodinville and Everett.

Jim served on the Board of the Cremation Association of North America from 1990-1998, and as President in 1997. Past President of the Washington Interment Association and then WCFA from 1997 through 2000. Presently he is Chairman of the Washington Funeral and Cemetery Board.

Jim and Nancy have 5 children and 4 grandchildren.

AND

Karen Richards, Sandra Wheeler and Vickie Kozuck, Wells Fargo Advisors*

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*Wells Fargo Advisors is a trade name used by Wells Fargo Clearing Services, LLC. Member SIPC.

“Workplace Harassment / Appropriate Relationships

In this presentation, attendees will learn about the state and federal laws that are designed to protect employees from discrimination and harassment in the workplace; how discrimination and harassment of all forms can manifest in a workplace; what employers can do to prevent workplace discrimination and harassment and what steps employees should take to report concerns; and finally, how supervisors and managers should respond to complaints or concerns and steps the employer needs to take to address these workplace issues.

Angela Hayes, Associated Industries



Angela Hayes joined Associated Industries in 2009 where she currently serves as senior legal counsel. Prior to joining the company, Ms. Hayes was a principal and managing partner at Randall & Danskin, P.S., where her practice emphasized employment, business, and trust litigation and medical negligence defense. Ms. Hayes received her law degree, summa cum laude, from Gonzaga University in 1998, where she was a Thomas More Scholar and associate editor of the Gonzaga Law Review. Ms. Hayes graduated from the University of Washington in 1991 with degrees in English and Communication, and from Washington State University in 1994 with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. Ms. Hayes regularly provides training and guidance to Associated Industries’ members regarding a wide range of employment issues, including wage and hour, harassment and discrimination, leave, and disability issues.

“Modern Solutions for Increasing Efficiencies in Grounds Keeping”

An introduction to some of the latest equipment and irrigation technologies available to greatly enhance productivity, aesthetics of your property, efficiency of product applications, and reduce costly repairs.

Nick Newman, Business Development Representative, Horizon Distributors Inc.



Nick Newman has been working in the lawn care and irrigation industry “Green Industry” for 18 years and has worked in many positions including: warehouse support, driver, inventory specialist, customer service representative, store manager, and business development. He has a Bachelor’s degree in Business Management from University of Phoenix, has worked in Washington, Utah, and Idaho, and has been a member of the Inland Empire Golf Course Superintendents Association since 2009. In his role of Business Development Nick works with municipalities, cemeteries, schools, golf courses, and both construction and landscape maintenance contractors. Product categories that Nick sales and distributes include irrigation, landscape equipment, landscape supplies, and outdoor living products.

“Compassion Fatigue: Reclaim the Joy of Caring”

A skill building program dedicated to providing professionals the ability to identify the symptoms of compassion fatigue and strategies to overcome burnout. Participants will learn how to set boundaries and goals to break the compassion fatigue cycle.

Program Objectives:

- Gain a theoretical understanding of the history and causes of compassion fatigue and burnout in order to identify personal risk factors and symptoms, as well as their person and professional impact.
 - Be able to discern healthy vs. unhealthy caregiving.
- Identify the challenges of thwarting compassion fatigue and the strengths that enable the individual to minimize burnout.
- Identify methods to incorporate learnable skills, a self-care plan, prevention, and interventional strategies to enhance resilience and healthy change.

Cameron Axelson, Partner Relations Account Manager, LifeNet Health



Cameron Axelson is the partner relations account manager for LifeNet Health in Renton. He is responsible for building and maintaining relationships with local community partners, including medical examiners, coroners, funeral homes, EMS services and 911/state patrol programs to increase awareness and participation in tissue donation. Axelson joined LifeNet Health after working for many years in the funeral service industry, and as a tissue recovery team leader for seven years both in Montana and Washington. He maintains a Certified Tissue Banking Specialist certification with the American Association of Tissue Banks and is an active member of the Washington State Funeral Directors Association.