



From Your Executive Director

Learn more about
the Cemetery Oversight Act

AS WE APPROACH SPRING, I am reminded daily of the beauty of this season as I watch the grass start to turn green again and flowers start to shoot up from the ground. Every day on my way to work, I drive past Camp Butler National Cemetery near Springfield and am reminded of those who gave their lives so that today we all can enjoy the freedoms that we do. Driving past this beautiful cemetery each day also reminds me of the beautiful and historic Arlington National Cemetery just outside Washington D.C. that I have visited many times. More than 300,000 people are buried at Arlington National Cemetery and funerals average 28 a day.

Thinking about these beautiful cemeteries reminds me of the many beautiful township cemeteries, both large and small, that are scattered throughout townships all over Illinois. Within the last seven months, cemeteries have taken the spotlight in Springfield because of the unfortunate incident at Burr Oak Cemetery near Chicago. There were rumblings that something was going to happen and sure enough last fall, legislation was introduced and in January, House Bill 1188 passed that became The Cemetery Oversight Act.

I would like to thank all the township officials who took the time to call, write and email their legislators. Your actions did make a difference and many legislators acknowledged they had heard from many township officials. Since this issue not only affects town-

ships, we worked closely with the Illinois Municipal League and the Alliance of Illinois Cemeteries. LuAnn Johnson, President of the Alliance of Illinois Cemeteries, did a fantastic job in leading up the efforts of the "locals" along with our own Tim Bramlet and folks from the Municipal League. House Bill 1188 passed the General Assembly on January 13, 2010 and the Governor signed it into law on January 17, 2010.

While the new law does not totally exempt township cemeteries, it really only requires a few things and most of them are things you should already be doing. In its original form, the bill would have been devastating to all local governments that operate cemeteries but in the end, the result was not bad at all.

The Cemetery Oversight Act will affect most public cemeteries, including townships in Illinois. The feature story in this issue of the magazine highlights this new law and what it will mean to townships that own, operate and maintain cemeteries. Please take time to read it, but don't become alarmed. This new law is going to take a while to be fully implemented and TOI will make sure you are informed every step along the way. Through the magazine, the TOI website and future training programs, we will make sure our members get all the information they can on the Cemetery Oversight Act. Full implementation of the new law will not be until March 1, 2012.

As a small child, I remember going with my Grand-

On Our Cover ...

CAMP BUTLER NATIONAL CEMETERY, east of Springfield, occupies a portion of what was the second-largest military training camp in Illinois during the Civil War. Along with soldiers who fought for both the Union and Confederate sides during the Civil War, veterans who lost their lives in the Spanish-American War, the two World Wars, the Korea War and the Vietnam War are also buried at Camp Butler National Cemetery. The 53-acre site of Camp Butler was the final resting place of many remains returned from overseas following World War II. Camp Butler National Cemetery was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1997.

Correction

A statement on page 5 of the March *Township Perspective* regarding the approval of agenda items was incorrectly worded. Due to a change in 2009, Illinois law now requires all Annual Town Meeting agenda items submitted by electors to the township clerk must be done by March 1. We apologize for any confusion this error may have caused.

On the road with Bryan ...



THE TOI EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR spoke to DuPage County Township officials Feb. 25.

ma Smith as she made her “inspections” of the cemeteries in the township. She was a Township Cemetery Trustee back in the 1960s-1970s when cemetery trustees were still elected at the township election. I remember how seriously she took the job and how she wanted to make sure everything was done right so the cemeteries looked nice for families of those visiting the final resting place of their family and friends. That attitude hasn’t changed much in all the years since. There are hundreds of townships in Illinois that maintain thousands of township cemeteries. It’s a function many townships have undertaken and one for which many townships are well known.

With the new Cemetery Oversight Act, I want to encourage all township officials who operate and maintain township cemeteries to familiarize themselves with the new law and what it means. Stay tuned, as there will be more to come!

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