EDITORIAL

Relations Between Cemeteries & Dealers

Many of us have plenty of free advice to give away, but we often experience the difficulties and frustrations of having people reject our free advice. This is true in the monument industry, and it is just as common in the cemetery field.

Monument dealers often have occasion to make suggestions to cemetery superintendents. Dealers have good reason to believe that they speak with some authority about memorialization and about public desires for traditional monuments. Yet, it is frustrating to make suggestions to cemetery people only to have them received without warmth or appreciation.

Communications between memorialists and cemetery personnel are not always known to be smooth. Monument dealers and cemetery superintendents are in an allied field of endeavor, but they are often working at cross purposes. The monument dealer looks at monuments as opportunities. The cemetery superintendent may take the opposite view and see monuments only as problems. Actually they do have a common interest—they are both serving the public, and this they should never, never forget.

Some memorialists are genuinely interested in memorialization but, a superintendent’s interests are usually taken up with the problems of maintenance, care funds, handling funerals, looking for reliable help to work for a modest wage, and the other details of operating a cemetery on an income that is often inadequate.

Many of the older cemeteries were laid out and developed during a period of time when human labor was inexpensive. Today the cost of labor is high, and the cemetery must continue to struggle with its outdated layout. Modern machinery and maintenance equipment is helpful, but some of this equipment has limited use in cemeteries that were not developed for such equipment.

If the cemetery looks upon monuments only as a maintenance problem the dealer doesn’t have much success in seeking more liberal monument regulations. This means that the cemetery superintendent and the dealer are working at cross purposes, and relations between the two deteriorate.

To build a better relationship with the cemetery the retail monument dealer must have something of value to offer the cemetery manager—something that will encourage him to look more favorably on the traditional monument idea. Some things can be done to modernize an old monument section, such as removing curbing and other obstructions to the use of appropriate modern equipment. If there is new space to be developed, this is where the monument dealer may have something that will be of genuine help to the cemetery superintendent. The dealer can recommend a modern monument section designed by a professional cemetery architect. This can give the cemetery superintendent a number of real benefits:

1. More income to the cemetery.
2. A reduction in maintenance costs.
3. A monument area that can be very attractive to the public.

If you don’t already have one, we suggest that you send to the BGA for our free “Guide to Planning the Modern Monument Cemetery.” Give a booklet to each member of the Board of Cemetery Trustees.

The Barre Granite Association is prepared to offer the assistance of a professional cemetery architect via the Cemetery Assistance Program which is jointly sponsored by the American Monument Association and the Monument Builders of North America. Your Barre friends are substantial contributors in support of this program. Its Director is Don Swaim. In addition, Barre has its own Cemetery Service Program under the direction of Barrett Adams, Past President of the American Cemetery Association. On a share-the-cost basis, it is possible for a cemetery to obtain a modern monument section design at a very modest cost.

The success of these cemetery programs has been very encouraging, particularly with the smaller cemeteries. The large municipal and diocesan cemeteries have not been as eager to receive assistance under this program. This is unfortunate because some of these larger cemeteries have outdated layouts and management that is in need of professional advice.

The condition of your local cemetery and its plans for expansion (if any) are as important to your business future as anything else we can think of. Put your best foot forward. Remember that your local cemetery will value your free advice only as it will benefit the public or simplify cemetery operation. A modern monument section can do this and more!
90 Ohio Dealers Attend Barre Conference

Recently 90 retail monument dealers within the State of Ohio concluded a successful one-day business conference sponsored by the Barre Granite Association. Here are some of their comments:

“We should like to take this opportunity to tell you that we five who attended your conference at Columbus gained much. It was extremely good. We do not know how you could improve on it.”

“The conference was well prepared and I think it would be a continuing good plan to have these.”

“The conference is presented as a must for all young men in this industry and a much needed refresher course for those of us who have been in this business these many years.”

Conference leaders were Milt Lyndes of the BGA, Pete Carr, successful retail monument dealer, and Arthur Olinto, business consultant. Dealers learned a practical method for figuring the retail prices of their monuments and many helpful hints on retail selling. They also were shown how to make more profit through a new method of cemetery lettering charges.

Arthur Olinto’s long experience in financial matters gave him an opportunity to present some common sense advice on business management and record-keeping. Pete Carr’s success as a monument salesman attests to the value of the suggestions he gave dealers on many aspects of selling. He described the advantages of price tags on monuments and he imparted many useful hints to be used in various selling situations.

The dealers also saw a motion picture showing the beautiful memorials of Hope Cemetery in Barre, Vermont.

The conference was arranged by the Ohio Monument Builders, one of the largest and most progressive of the state monument dealer organizations.

THE KEOGH ACT a tax break for Monument Dealers

As a self-employed person, you can now set aside money for retirement through a tax sheltered retirement plan. Beginning this year, the law now permits you to enjoy a 100% income tax deduction for a personal retirement fund.

This important development is commonly referred to as “The Keogh Act.” If you are a self-employed individual and you adopted the Keogh Plan, you are permitted to contribute 10% of your annual income (up to a maximum of $2500) to a retirement plan. This entire amount may be deducted from your taxable income.

You may want to talk to your insurance man or accountant about the details of this new change in the tax law.

Northeastern Pennsylvania Dealers Attend Barre Dealer Conference

More than 40 retail monument dealers from the Northeastern Pennsylvania area spent a day at the Holiday Inn East, at Scranton, attending a dealer conference sponsored by the Barre Granite Association. Jack and Maureen Pesavento of Pesavento & Son in Scranton did a wonderful job in helping to make preparations for the conference.

The conference itself was a service to dealers of the Memorial Craftsmen of Northeastern Pennsylvania. That organization had requested the Barre Granite Association to conduct the conference and provide material of practical help to retail dealers.

Everyone in attendance agreed that the conference provided many practical suggestions for conducting a retail monument business including pricing, merchandising, displays, office management and many tips about dealing with customers.

The Barre Granite Association was responsible for the cost of the one-day meeting including preparation of all material, payment of expenses for conference leaders and their transportation. The Memorial Craftsmen of Northeastern Pennsylvania are one of the more active area groups.

“PAY-UP WEEK” JUNE 24-30

The American Monument Association reports a considerable number of past due accounts among retail monument dealers. Do you owe money to your monument manufacturer that is past due?

June 24 to 30 has been designated as “Pay-Up Week” by the American Monument Association. A special effort will be made by all manufacturers as well as AMA to collect all money that should have been paid by dealers but for some reason has not been forthcoming.

Manufacturers in all producing areas as well as Barre are taking a more practical look at their credit policies.

We hope that your firm does not have any past due accounts. If you do, make June 24-30 “Pay-Up Week” as the deadline when all of your past due accounts will be paid in full.
TIME AND TEMP PROMOTIONS

You Will Want This Attractive New Barre Guild Clock and Thermometer.

Your Barre friends have produced a new and attractive illuminated electric clock that will be a beautiful addition to your office and sales room. This new clock will have your name on it—free! Even better news is that the BGA shares the cost of the clock with you. The cost to you is only $21.95.

You can use this clock as a night light in your office or showroom. The quality appearance of this clock will enhance any location where it is placed. You may even want to buy an extra one to put in your local barbershop, beauty parlor, or any other location where people will see your advertising and name.

Remember, the price is only $21.95 and this includes two free lines of imprinting. Our supply is limited, so send for yours today!

No matter where you live, one of the easiest subjects for conversation seems to be the temperature. With this in mind, your Barre friends have produced a large advertising thermometer one foot square in attractive colors with your own name personalized on the face of the thermometer.

On a share-the-cost basis you only pay $5.95 for the thermometer, including two lines of free imprinting. Promotional thermometers of this type are very difficult to obtain. Here is your chance to buy several to put up in various parts of your community. The modest price will bring you big dividends in publicity over a period of time. Try it. Barre Guild merchandising aids will be your silent salesman 24 hours every day, year in, year out.