

Vermont Cemetery Association has some concerns in regards to H3 2-15-17

**The House of Representatives is voting on H3 next week. Please contact your Rep and ask them to vote no on H3**

Please read the following definition.

From Encyclopedia Britannica

**Burial**, the disposal of human remains by depositing in the earth, a grave, or a tomb, by consigning to the water, or by exposing to the elements or to carrion-consuming animals. Geography, [religion](#), and the social system all influence burial practices. Climate and [topography](#) determine whether the body is buried under the ground, placed in water, burned, or exposed to the air. Religious and social attitudes determine how elaborate the burial should be; rank, for example, may determine whether the body is placed in the shallow trench of a simple burial or in an underground chamber of impressive dimensions and construction.

Questions/comments that I am sharing with legislators

**1. What are the best practices for shallow burial in climate and soils of Vermont? Who is doing this? How do we assure that our soils are decomposition friendly?**

We, Vermont Cemeterians care deeply about what happens during the time that the corpse is in the ground as we take care of these remains for many generations and we want to make sure that we follow the best practices. But to date, I cannot find the Green Burial best practices for climates and soils similar to VT. Anyone that has made compost knows that a specific recipe of air, water, temperature and compost materials needs to be achieved or anaerobic decomposition sets in and smells occur. Is our society ok with smelling Dad and his decomposition? Other questions - How do we perform a winter green burial – will we need to insulate the grave with hay and perhaps backfill with warm soil? And what is the recipe of the back fill soil in order to assure water, air, microbes are properly introduced? Simply put, a green burial is creating a compost pile with the main ingredient being a human body. The bottom of the pile is to be no more than 3.5 ft deep. So naturally , us Cemeterians have logistical concerns.

**2. What about smells, rodents and other animals digging up the corpse?  
Why did our ancestors place the body at 5 ft in Vermont Soils?**

Our ancestors must have had issues thus the 5 ft depth was chosen. What were those issues? Was it smell and rodents?

**3. What about Grave Wax?** It is a problem in Germany. Sounds like it could be a problem in VT with our clay soils.

*For a body to decompose quickly and fully, it needs oxygen to be present, and a little moisture (but not too much). The problem in Germany is that when many communities created their newest cemeteries, they purchased cheap soil with high clay content from local farmers. This clay-heavy soil drains very poorly, keeps the bodies cool, and prevents oxygen from reaching them. And what happens then? Instead of rotting into good old-fashioned grave dirt, the bodies turn into a “**gray-white, paste-like, soft mass.**” Oh, man, yuckers! But that’s not all – given time, the pasty bodies eventually solidify into a hard, durable, wax-like substance that “when knocked with a spade... sound hollow.”*

[http://www.sciencebuzz.org/blog/grave\\_wax\\_and\\_soap\\_people\\_germanys\\_not\\_so\\_rotten\\_corpses](http://www.sciencebuzz.org/blog/grave_wax_and_soap_people_germanys_not_so_rotten_corpses)

**4. What is next in the legislative arena? Will we be mandated to perform green burials or perform winter burials?**

**Please tell your representative and Senators not to move this bill H3 any further until the proper research is done or perhaps found. There emails are found on <http://legislature.vermont.gov/>**

**Call the Sergeant at Arms at 802 - 828 – 2228 and you can leave a message for your legislator - “Vote No on H3” And always leave your name and contact info in case your legislator wants to contact you. Feel free to tell them to contact me as my cemetery is less than 1 mile from the State House!**

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