

Mortician

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"I'm afraid with the money they've got, they'll be able to totally confuse the jury," Moore says.

When Moore has gone to install his gravestones at cemeteries, he has run into a little trouble. Fair Grove called out the state troopers. Springfield Memorial had him arrested. Rest Haven parked a bulldozer on top of one of his clients.

"I had the 76 year old wife of the deceased with me," Moore recalls. "And the driver just sat there, with the bulldozer on top of her husband." Rest Haven owner Chuck Whipple sent Moore a letter saying he would now "do anything" to stop Moore from making another installation. Some cemeteries simply refuse to show Moore where they buried his clients.

All of this hasn't done much for Moore's tombstone business. Customers have heard of Moore's problems, and not being anxious to have a bulldozer parked on their

relative, have avoided Moore's shop. Other clients have fought the cemeteries. They have either bought their grave stones from Moore or refused to buy a stone at all.

The cemeteries defend their action. "We don't believe Mack Moore is qualified to install gravestones," explains Gerry West owner of Lane Memorial Gardens. West tolerates Moore's presence on his grounds, but doesn't give him any help.

"We can't have strangers coming in here with a sack of cement over one shoulder. We have specifications that we have to follow."

Moore, who helped teach three of the five belligerent cemeteries how to install gravestones when they first opened doesn't buy this argument. These cemeteries, he says, make installment mistakes without outside help. They install gravestones upside down. Only last week Springfield Memorial installed a corpse in the wrong

grave.

"I've had my own clients — clients that I've performed services for — put in the wrong grave twice," says Moore. "They aren't keeping me out to keep their cemeteries beautiful, they're after the almighty dollar."

While the tombstone question has been dragging out in the courts, Moore has stumbled on what might be a partial solution to his troubles: his own cemetery.

In 1830 just west of Eugene, three cowboys were riding along through the meadow beneath Oak Hill when they were suddenly attacked by Indians. The Lane County Indians, the Caloopy, weren't known for their riotous behavior. They usually stood around looking scenic. But today they were in a bad mood. They shot one of the riders in the spine. With the help of his companions, this rider managed to make it up to the top of Oak Hill. Impressed with the drama of the situation, he turned to his companions and said: "Go on, leave me here." They did.

"When they returned they found

him dead. All in all, it seemed like a good occasion to start a graveyard. In the 150 or so years since the founder took residence, two and a half acres of people have been planted, adding to the Oak Hill graveyard's general historic fertility.

When Moore bought the cemetery 18 months ago it was in disarray. But he was impressed with its history and potential. He straightened the old tombstones and purchased an adjoining 51 acres, enough land to plant 100 corpses a year for the next 500 years. On these acres he offers low cost installation and burial plans new to Lane County, such as duplex graves.

Duplex graves offer couples and close friends the chance to be buried bunk bed style in the same place. The cost is cheaper, \$125 for two rather than \$110 for one.

Moore also offers the lower tombstone installation fees and publishes his prices for his mortuary, tombstones and cemetery in newspapers. In the death business open publication of prices is

taboo. Moore is a maverick mortician.

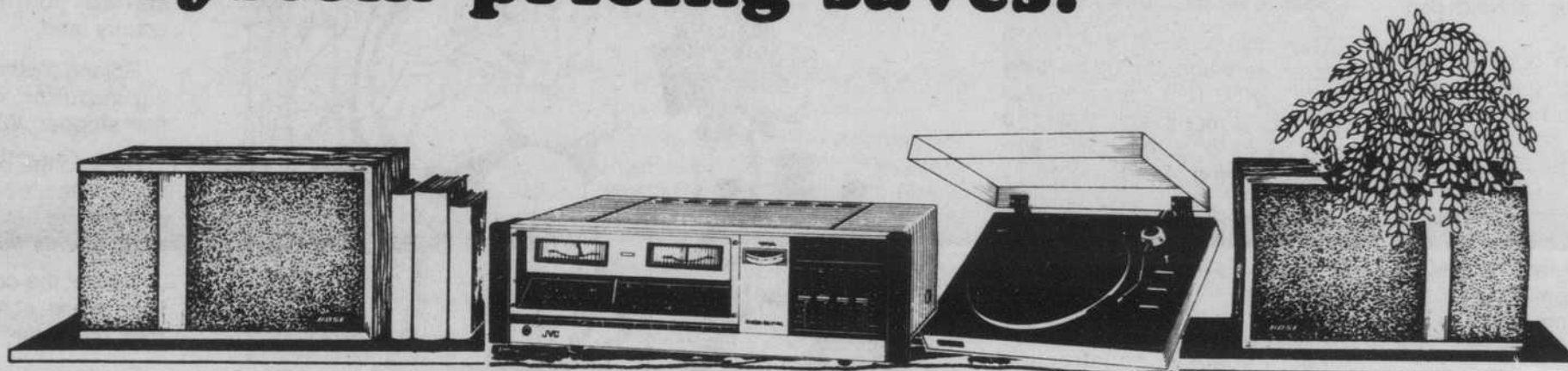
He encourages potential corpses to shop around before they buy.

Moore hopes his cemetery's competitive installation and duplex prices will draw customers away from the more exclusive Lane County cemeteries. If potential corpses compare prices before their condition gets too advanced, according to Moore, the free market will cure the cemetery problem. Otherwise, cemeteries will continue to throw the dirt over the consumers' eyes.

After 10 years and over \$10,000 in court costs, Moore has yet to achieve a decisive tombstone victory. He has five Lane County cemeteries, four cemetery associations, and most of the nations corpses conspiring against him. He isn't bothered.

"I know the law," he says. "It's not necessary to tie-in sales to make a profit. They do it for the almighty dollar. That's the only reason they're putting up this fight."

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