



# Funeral Consumers Alliance of Rhode Island

119 Kenyon Avenue  
East Greenwich, RI 02818

Phone: 401-884-1131  
Email: [fca-ri@cox.net](mailto:fca-ri@cox.net)  
Web: [www.funerals.org/affiliates/rhodeisland](http://www.funerals.org/affiliates/rhodeisland)



## NEWSLETTER – SPRING 2014



Our new expanded and improved web site is now ready. **TAKE A LOOK.** We think you will find it full of useful facts including our 2013 Funeral Home Price Survey, our newsletter, news, & history, as well as links to funeral related forms and publications and much more.

---> Visit: [www.funerals-ri.org](http://www.funerals-ri.org) <---

### THANK YOU

Our Board thanks Ruth Kirlaw for building the new website. If you like the result as much as we do, perhaps you can help Ruth find part-time employment. See page 4 for her qualifications.

### ANNUAL MEETING

Our Annual Meeting which is usually held in mid-May will not be scheduled until Fall 2014. The Board made this change because of our present shortage of resources (human and financial).



are urgently needed as a member of our Board. We currently have only six Board members which limits how much we can accomplish. Volunteers meet one evening a month for about two hours at the East Greenwich Public Library. If you can donate some of your time to help, please contact us at:  
[fca-ri@cox.net](mailto:fca-ri@cox.net)

**401-884-1131**

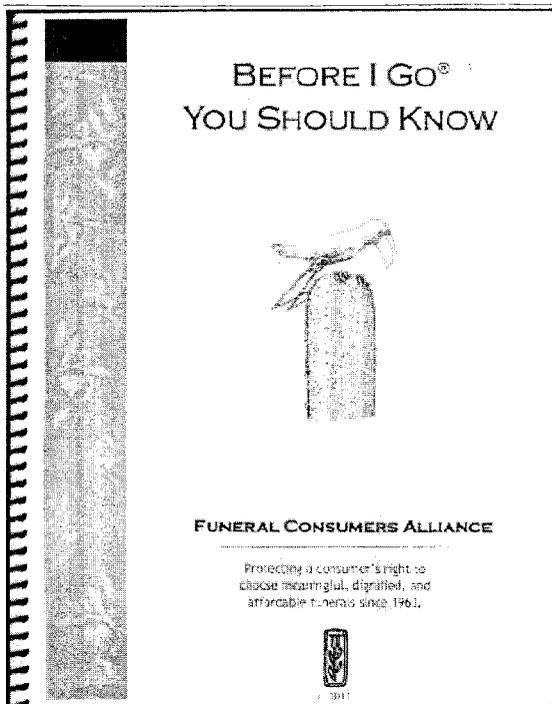
"What Shall We Do With the Ashes?" is the title of an informative pamphlet available to download from the National FCA website '[www.funerals.org](http://www.funerals.org)'. Look under the 'Documents and Publications' heading. 'Cremated remains' is now the term used more often than ashes. The volume of remains is usually about the size of a five pound package of sugar. The bone fragments are pulverized to about the texture of kitty litter and the color is somewhere between light grey and white. Various options for disposition are discussed such as: Let the funeral home take care of it, Let the Navy scatter them, Let the family do it, Keep the cremains in an urn or nice box, Bury the urn on your property, Bury the urn in a cemetery, Bury the urn with spouse, Inter cremains in a columbarium.

THE MISSION OF THE FUNERAL CONSUMERS ALLIANCE OF RHODE ISLAND IS TO PROTECT THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE MEANINGFUL AND AFFORDABLE FUNERALS. WE EDUCATE CONSUMERS ON AVAILABLE OPTIONS, PROVIDE STATE-WIDE PRICE INFORMATION AND GIVE CONSUMERS INFORMATION, TOOLS AND ENCOURAGEMENT FOR PREPLANNING.

## NEW EXPANDED END-OF-LIFE PLANNER IS NOW AVAILABLE !

Don't take your last wishes to the grave. Before you go, they should know . . .

- Your funeral plans
- Where your important papers are
- Who should take care of your pets and how
- Who to call when the time comes



This comprehensive end-of-life planner features illustrations by Edward Gorey. It is BIG, with 30 pages to record everything from your preference for burial or cremation to how to close down your social media accounts and online life. Along with this 8.5"x11" spiral-bound book, you also receive two FREE chapters from the book "Final Rights". You'll get your state's funeral and burial laws written

in plain English along with a guide for families who want to take on some or all of the funeral process themselves. Also included is a survivor's checklist of important but often overlooked tasks when death occurs.

**TO ORDER:** Send your check for \$15.00 per copy to:  
**Funeral Consumers Alliance of RI**  
 119 Kenyon Avenue, East Greenwich RI 02818

## PRICE SURVEY

Our new 2013 Funeral Home Price Survey is now available on our web site.

## FINANCIAL REPORT 2013

Balance Jan 1st	\$ 1,191.77
Receipts	1,895.00
Expenses	2,192.92
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Balance Dec 31st	\$ 893.85

## DYING IS REAL

What kind of funeral will there be for you ? You may have more choices than you think. Talk it over, and make plans now. Or someone else will make decisions that you may not have wanted.

For more information, contact us at:  
[fca-ri@cox.net](mailto:fca-ri@cox.net)

## NEW YORK PET CEMETERIES

New regulations now again allow New York animal lovers to spend eternity with their pets. After a two-year halt to the practice, and after a Hartsdale Pet Cemetery challenge, New York state approved the burial of human cremated remains & pets together. It is allowed as long as the pet cemetery doesn't charge a fee for it and doesn't advertise human burial services. The Hartsdale Pet Cemetery owner said he gets about 5 or 6 requests a year from humans who want to have their ashes buried with their pets. One pet owner who was interviewed said "I'd rather be buried with my dog than with my family".

## DONATION REQUEST

Please consider making a donation to the FCA of Rhode Island. Donations are our primary source of funds and will enable us to continue to:

- publish a semi-annual newsletter
- maintain a telephone line for consumer inquiries
- publish our Funeral Home Price Survey
- conduct educational presentations
- provide an informative web site

## ALTERNATIVES TO THE TRADITIONAL – THE LIST KEEPS GROWING

### 1. Natural or "green" burial.

A return to old ways, where interred bodies decompose without embalming and without the concrete vaults found in most modern cemeteries. Bodies are wrapped in a shroud or put in a biodegradable casket to decompose naturally, benefiting the environment.

### 2. Cremation.

The body is reduced to ashes and bone fragments through the use of intense heat. The process usually takes two to four hours. Depending on the size of the body, the resulting cremated remains will weigh three to nine pounds. Remains can be kept in an urn, buried, or scattered.

### 3. Resomation or "bio-cremation".

While regular cremation is less energy intensive than burial, the process still uses fossil fuels and releases pollution. With the "greener" bio-cremation process, the body is completely broken down using heated water and potassium hydroxide, leaving only bones behind. The bones are then pulverized, as in regular cremation, and returned to the family.

### 4. Promession or "freeze-drying".

This is one of the newest environmentally friendly methods of processing a body. The corpse is immersed in super-cold liquid nitrogen, which makes it very brittle. Vibrations then shatter the body apart and the water is evaporated away, dehydrating it into a fine dust. When buried, oxygen and water mix with the powdered remains, turning them into compost.

### 5. Alkaline hydrolysis.

A more ecologically favorable method than cremation. The body is put in a silk bag within a metal cage and loaded into a steel chamber. It is then subjected to a mixture of water and lye and heated to about 320 degrees. In three hours, the body is broken down into its chemical components resulting in a green-brown liquid and soft white bone remains. The bone is crushed to a white powder which is returned to the next of kin and the liquid is disposed of. This method is used by the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota to dispose of donated bodies.

### 5. Eternal reefs.

Artificial reefs are cast from a mixture of concrete and human cremated remains. They are placed underwater in areas where reefs need restoration to attract sea life. An underwater plaque and GPS coordinates are included.

### 6. Whole Body Donation.

Medical schools have an ongoing need for bodies for teaching and research. Body donation may be an economical as well as thoughtful and generous choice. After medical study, the body is usually cremated. Some medical schools pay for transportation & cremation.

### 7. Cryonics.

Some people with large pocketbooks choose cryonics. This is the process of freezing a person's body with the hope that later medical science will make it possible to revive them with their personality and memory intact. Currently, there are several hundred people in cryonics storage in the United States. Cost can be \$200,000+

### 8. Space Burial

A chance to have your cremated remains orbit the earth and eventually burn up in the atmosphere can cost more than \$3,000. Remains launched into deep space runs \$13,000+.

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#### NATIONAL CONFERENCE

This year's FCA National Conference will be in Minneapolis June 5th through 7th. For details, check the funerals.org website.

#### FUNNIEST FUNERAL DIRECTOR

An informative yet hysterical video series by funeral director Caitlin Doughty can now be found on Youtube. It's called "Ask a Mortician"

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The article "Online, Forever After" by Carrie Arnold in the current issue of the AARP magazine provides useful information about how you can be sure your digital assets are managed properly after your death. Financial account information would be particularly important.

## FTC APPROVES MERGER

The Federal Trade Commission recently approved the merger of the two largest funeral home and cemetery chains, Service Corporation International (SCI) and Stewart Enterprises. The consolidation is not good news for consumers according to the executive director of the Funeral Consumers Alliance who says SCI generates more complaints from consumers than any other company, and is currently facing a class action case in Los Angeles.

## RIDE TO HEAVEN

An Ohio man's dying wish was to be buried riding his Harley-Davidson motorcycle encased in a see-through casket. In January, his family honored this wish. His two sons built the casket. The project required 4 burial plots to accommodate the Plexiglas casket and 5 embalmers to prepare his body with a metal back brace and straps to hold him in his seat.

### BECOME A MEMBER

Please complete and mail this form with your check to:

Funeral Consumers Alliance of Rhode Island  
119 Kenyon Avenue  
East Greenwich, RI 02818

Checks should be made payable to:  
"Funeral Consumers Alliance of Rhode Island"

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

- \$25 - Individual Membership Donation  
 \$50 - Couple's Membership Donation

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

### AT THE MALL

According to a recent Associated Press article, in California you can now shop for caskets and urns in the same place that you shop for clothes and food. A company named Forest Lawn has been installing movable kiosks in suburban malls. Another company named Til We Meet Again has funeral outlets in Texas, Arizona, Kansas, Louisiana and Indiana. The thinking is that if shoppers happen to see a place selling coffins or urns while they're pricing T-shirts, it might be less intimidating than visiting a funeral home. Most people don't want to enter a funeral home even one day before they have to !

Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

### POSITION WANTED

Does your organization or business lack a techie ? Someone who can explain technical subjects without talking down to you. I am just the person you need. I am an experienced technical support person seeking a part-time position from 5 to 20 hours per week. The skills I can offer are:

- software installation and updates
- virus checking and removal
- basic backup strategies
- basic web analytics
- spreadsheet setup
- data migration and cleansing (small scale)
- small group or individual software instruction
- web site updating and editing (HTML and CSS)
- hardware and software troubleshooting
- communication with hardware and software vendors
- basic network troubleshooting
- desktop database setup and maintenance

Software expertise: Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access, Outlook), WordPress, Windows (XP, Vista, 7), Apple iOS, and a variety of open source software including LibreOffice, Thunderbird, and others.

Contact: Ruth Kirlaw 90 Oakdale Street #44, Attleboro MA 508-222-3962 kirlawr@gmail.com

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