



Funeral Consumers Alliance of Rhode Island

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NEWSLETTER – AUTUMN 2015

You are cordially invited to attend a presentation about Home Funerals

"CARING FOR OUR OWN AFTER DEATH: RECLAIMING AN OLD AND LOVING TRADITION"

GUEST SPEAKER – PEG LORENZ

Peg is a home funeral guide and educator and the founder of 'Peaceful Passage at Home'. For six years she has assisted families with pre-planning and after death care. Peg is on the Board of Directors of the National Home Funeral Alliance and is Chair of its Legislative Committee. She has a certificate in end-of-life care from the University of Southern Maine and twenty years of experience with Hospice care. She is also a founding member of the Indian Hill Threshold Choir, a volunteer group that sings at bedsides of dying people.

THIS TIMELY PRESENTATION WILL INCLUDE A QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD

REFRESHMENTS WILL FOLLOW

Saturday September 26th 2015 2 - 3:30 pm lower level
William Hall Free Library 1825 Broad Street Cranston, RI 02905
Free Admission – Free Parking

Read about one couple's home funeral experience.
See 'Funeral Home or Home Funeral' on page 3.

June 22-26, 2016
FCA's National
Conference
Atlanta, GA

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.

END-OF-LIFE PLANNER

Our expanded End-Of-Life Planner features 30 pages to record everything from your preference for burial or cremation to how to close down your social media accounts and online life. It also provides a survivor's checklist of important but often overlooked tasks when death occurs. Along with the 8.5"x11" spiral bound book, you will 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.



Order Form for the "Before I Go, You Should Know" planner:

Quantity _____ @ \$15.00

Please make your check payable to FCA-RI and mail it with this form to Funeral Consumers Alliance of Rhode Island, 119 Kenyon Avenue East Greenwich, RI 02818

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone # _____

VETERANS

Did you know that all veterans are entitled to burial in a national cemetery, granite or marble headstone, and a flag? There will be no charges for opening or closing the grave, a vault or liner, or setting the marker in a national cemetery. Usually, a family is responsible for all other expenses including transportation to cemetery. Go to www.funerals.org and view the pamphlet "Veterans' Funeral and Burial Benefits" for more detailed information.

COMMON FUNERAL MYTHS

1. Embalming is required by law.

Embalming is NEVER required for the first 24 hours. In many states, it's not required at all under any circumstances. Refrigeration is almost always an alternative to embalming if there will be a delay before final disposition.

2. An embalmed body will last forever.

Mortuary-type embalming is meant to hold the body only for a week or so. Ultimately, the body will decompose, even if it has been embalmed. Temperature and climate are more influential factors affecting the rate of decomposition.

3. Vaults are required by law.

NO state has a law requiring burial vaults. Most cemeteries, however, do have such regulations because the vault keeps the grave from sinking in after decomposition of the body and casket, and thus reduces maintenance for the cemetery workers. Grave liners are usually less expensive than vaults. New York state forbids cemeteries from requiring vaults or liners, in deference to religious traditions that require burial directly in the earth. Vaults and metal caskets are not permitted in green burial grounds.

4. Cremation reduces the body to ashes.

When people think of "ashes" they envision what you'd find in the fireplace or what's left over after a campfire. However, what remains after a cremation process are bone fragments like broken seashells. These are pulverized to a small dimension, not unlike aquarium gravel.

For more 'Common Funeral Myths' visit the National FCA website at www.funerals.org

FUNERAL HOME OR HOME FUNERAL ?

The words are the same but changing the order around makes a huge difference. This is the story of one couple who chose a home funeral. Some acquaintances of the surviving wife were surprised and doubtful. "It will be hard" they said when they heard her plans for the deceased husband.

But she was insistent that this is what they both wanted. Other friends and family members supported her decision. One family member was well acquainted with the work of the Funeral Consumers Alliance and their emphasis on choice in considering last things. And yes, it is legal. A funeral home need not be involved.

She didn't carry out her plans alone. She had contacted an organization that helps to advise survivors who want a home funeral. Yes, there are many details to be considered. The advisor helped her work through them. The husband had been under the care of hospice while at home and when he died, they washed his body which was placed in an air-conditioned bedroom, surrounded by ice packs, and dozens of candles.

He was an individual of some fame, but she wanted a private wake and funeral service attended only by the immediate family and close friends. They gathered in the couple's apartment for the wake, and the following evening, a clergyman, a friend of the deceased, led a brief service.

On the evening of the third day, the body was placed in a shroud by friends and family and the next morning carried downstairs to a plain pine box casket. Another friend emptied his van of the rear seats, and the casket was put in place. The van drove off to the cemetery where three dozen had gathered for the burial service. Then it was over. The grieving would continue, but the couple had fulfilled their plans. It was just the way they wanted it: simple, plain and unadorned.

A home funeral may not be for everyone, but it is an option. For those who are adverse to the sometimes over the top funeral with all its accoutrements, it is a choice that is perfectly legal and with help from an adviser, family and friends, can be done.

There are other choices as well. The goal of the Funeral Consumers Alliance is to help individuals plan so that the funeral and burial reflects their values and wishes. Funeral Home or Home Funeral ? Or something else ? What are your plans ? Do your family a great favor and plan now. Don't leave it to them.

– W. Oehlkers (FCA-RI)

[Our "Before I Go, You Should Know.." Planner can help. See page 2]

The Funeral Consumers Alliance of Rhode Island is run solely by volunteers and has no attachment to the funeral industry or any religious group. Membership is open to all.

Your donations are our primary source of funds. All donations are fully tax-deductible and any size donation will be greatly appreciated.
Thank You.

Become a FCA volunteer

Contact us at:

fca-ri@cox.net

for details.

To invite a FCA-RI speaker to make a presentation to your organization or religious group, call us at (401) 884-1131 or send an e-mail to fca-ri@cox.net.

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

Visit us anytime at:

www.funerals-ri.org

for announcements of upcoming events, copies of past newsletters, links to forms and publications, our funeral home price survey, and much more.

Greece has an economy that is sinking back into recession. The cash crisis has funeral homes struggling as banking restrictions have limited the amount customers may withdraw to 60 euros. A very basic funeral costs between 800 and 1000 euros. The country has a cash based economy and funerals are almost always paid for in cash. Also, Greeks are now choosing the most basic of services which is hurting the funeral business.

These days consumers are choosing simpler less expensive funerals, and cremations are becoming more common, all of which means less revenue for the funeral home. Some funeral homes and cemeteries now hold other events at their facilities in order to add income. For example, the Associated Press reports that Washington Park East Cemetery Association in Indianapolis runs an event center on cemetery property near a funeral home. It has 50 weddings scheduled there this year as well as a prom and other events.

CREMATIONS

The fastest growing part of the "death care industry" is cremation. About 2.5 million people die in the U.S. each year. Over 40% are now cremated (double the rate of just fifteen years ago). In the West, cremation rates are the highest with Washington and Nevada at over 70%. Mississippi is the lowest with a rate of about 16%. The main reason for the growth in cremations is cost but other factors also contribute. More family members now tend to live far from each other which makes cremation more practical. Also, family burial plots are not as commonplace as they once were.

INFORMATION

Previous issues of our newsletter are available on our website at www.funerals-ri.org. You'll also find our latest Funeral Home Price Survey and other valuable information there. Many pamphlets about funeral subjects may be found on the National FCA website at www.funerals.org under the 'Documents and Publications' heading. When you attend one of our presentations, most of these pamphlets are available at no cost. You can also pick up a copy of the Fact Sheet 'What to Do When Families' Home Funeral Rights Are Challenged'.

NOTES

WELCOME

Welcome to Ann Porto who has just joined the Board of FCA-RI.

