



Funeral Consumers Alliance of Rhode Island

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Web: www.funerals-ri.org

**Funerals during a pandemic.
See pages 5, 6, and 12**

NEWSLETTER – SPRING 2020

HOME FUNERALS

Home funerals are now legal in every state. They allow family, friends, and community to be invited into a healing after-death care experience in a safe and familiar place, with care performed by loving hands. The average dead body is not dangerous or contagious. Embalming is not required by law. Dry ice, Techni-ice, or AC can keep the body cool for up to three days. Families have full control of the loved ones and can choose whether or not to hire a funeral director (nine states do compel hiring a funeral director for filing, transportation or disposition witness). The casket or shroud can be made at home, purchased from a local craftsman, or ordered online. Clergy and Celebrants can come to the home for services, or family members may design a fitting goodbye. For more information visit: www.HomeFuneralAlliance.org

WASHINGTON STATE APPROVES RECOMPOSITION

Recomposition is an alternative to cremation and conventional burial. It is a process that converts human remains into soil. The process was developed by death care advocate Katrina Spade. She has founded a public benefit company called 'Recompose' which plans to open its first facility in Seattle in 2021. The 18,500 square foot facility will process as many as 75 remains at a time. The conversion-to-soil process takes about 30 days. For more on this subject see our two 2019 newsletters. The legislature approved the bill to legalize the process of natural organic reduction by a vote of 80 to 16 in the House and 38 to 11 in the Senate. It was signed by Governor Jay Inslee and will take effect on May 1st of this year.

FCA AT URI

Ann Porto, M.S., Psy.D.

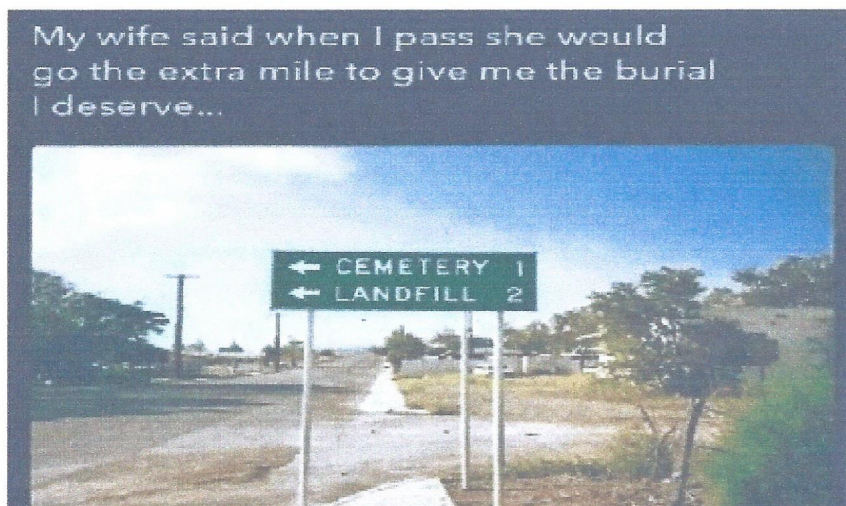
Three members of the FCA of Rhode Island presented their newly produced comprehensive Power Point to students at the URI School of Nursing in Kingston as part of a Thanatology course. The students were given many handouts and materials to augment the presentation. The students seemed receptive and interested and had numerous questions. Questions were such as, "where do green burial sites exist in Rhode Island?" and, "what is the difference in costs involved?" They were surprised to hear of the high carbon footprint involved with traditional preparation and burial. They questioned us about what is a home vigil (wake) and the role of a death midwife AKA death doula before, during and after death. Ann brought a biodegradable urn with neutralizing soil and composting materials to show students. Cases from the speakers were shared with students to

(Continued on the next page)

THE MISSION OF THE FUNERAL CONSUMERS ALLIANCE OF RHODE ISLAND IS TO PROTECT THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE MEANINGFUL END-OF-LIFE OPTIONS. WE EDUCATE CONSUMERS, PROVIDE STATE-WIDE PRICE INFORMATION, AND SUPPLY RESOURCES AND ENCOURAGEMENT FOR PRE-PLANNING.

PRICE LISTS

As with any major purchase, it's wise to examine the funeral home's price list very carefully before signing any contract. That way, you can ensure that the funeral you want fits within your budget. The Federal Trade Commission's Funeral Rule, enacted in 1984, includes many important consumer protections that make researching and buying a funeral easier than in the past. It mandates that all items be priced separately, and that you have the right to select **ONLY** the goods and services you want. In addition, the law requires that the funeral home give you a copy of the General Price List (GPL) at the beginning of any discussion of arrangements.



FCA AT URI

(Continued from previous page)

help make the material presented come to life.

The volunteer Board members created the power point so that anyone who wants to volunteer with FCA-RI and who might want to be a public speaker to advocate and protect the rights of consumers purchasing interment, funeral goods and services has a tool if they wish to use it. We hope this will encourage people to come forward as volunteers as well as reach more people throughout the state of Rhode Island.

PRICE SURVEY

Our new 2020 Funeral Home Price Survey is now available on our website at www.funerals-ri.org !

EAST PROVIDENCE

The Funeral Consumers Alliance of Rhode Island conducted an end-of-life planning session on December 5th at the Fuller Creative Learning Center in East Providence. This was our second such presentation at this location.

WEBSITE

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.

THE FINAL 4

Our November 2nd presentation at the Rochambeau Library was very well attended. Members of the panel talked about four end-of-life options (traditional burial, cremation, body donation, and green burial). There was good participation from the audience resulting in a great discussion period where many of their questions were answered.



SAC

The annual Senior Agenda Coalition Conference was held on November 1st at the Crowne Placa in Warwick. As in past years, FCA-RI had an exhibitor table where attendees could pick up useful information on funeral related topics and have their questions answered by our staff volunteers.



"THE PRESENTATION"

William Oehlkers, FCA-RI

This is a true story. When Rob died, he willed his body to a medical institution where it would be used to train a generation of new doctors. A funeral director was called to carry his body away. As he was leaving, he said, "I would like to meet with you for a 'presentation'". What he was saying was that he would like to sell them services and products associated with final affairs.

The 'presentation' was held the following day and as the family gathered, he asked all of them for contact information. Then he asked the widow to talk about her deceased husband, his career, interests and hobbies. She did so at length.

The funeral director then began explaining the services he could offer. Because this was a body donation, there was no need to talk about a casket (costs ranged from \$220 for a cardboard container to \$16,000 for a more elaborate model), embalming, viewing, or a funeral service. However, other services were available: help with the death certificate, an obituary in the local paper, assisting with a memorial service and a luncheon. At this point, warm cookies were handed out.

But there was more: A basic memorial package, thank you cards, service bulletins, memorial candles, customized DVD with 75 photos, premium wood flag case (He was a veteran) and flower seed packets. All together they added up to hundreds of dollars. All these items were spelled out in the funeral homes's General Price List.

Note that when you deal with a funeral home, you expect that they are there to help you to deal with your loss, but they are a for profit business and will seek to sell you their services at a time in which you are under great mental strain. In this case, there was no need to hurry a decision as there would be no funeral. If a funeral is held, decisions will need to be made in a matter of days.

If you are an individual who is designated to carry out the wishes of the departed spouse or relative, be prepared. Hopefully you will know, because the deceased has made his or her wishes clear, what is needed or not needed.

When presented with choices by the funeral home, take the initiative and indicate what the family wants. What is the family's plan? How do they want to carry out the plan? Ask the funeral home how they can help with the plan.

Balance convenience and cost. For example, in the case of body donation, the funeral home may offer to help with the memorial service at a place of worship. You may say, "We know his spiritual leader and can take care of those arrangements ourselves."

Let's step back a bit. The first step is for all of us to:

1. Get our affairs in order. The booklet, "Before I Go, You Should Know" available from the Funeral Consumers Alliance of Rhode Island, is a good resource.
2. Make our wishes for final affairs known to the family, particularly the person that you designate to carry out your wishes.
3. Coach your designee to anticipate a sales talk from the funeral home. What is desired? What can be skipped?
4. Finally, recognize that the funeral home, while helping in a time of need, is a business and deserves to be compensated for their services. At the same time, your values should be honored even in the time of your death.

FUNERAL SONGS

Hymns are no longer the most popular funeral songs. Since 2016, the top three songs were:

1. "My Way" by Frank Sinatra
2. "Time to Say Goodbye" by Andrea Bocelli and Sarah Brightman
3. "Over the Rainbow" by Eva Cassidy

Others in the top ten are: "Wind Beneath My Wings" by Bette Midler
"Angels" by Robbie Williams
"Unforgettable" by Nat King Cole



BEFORE I GO, YOU SHOULD KNOW

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

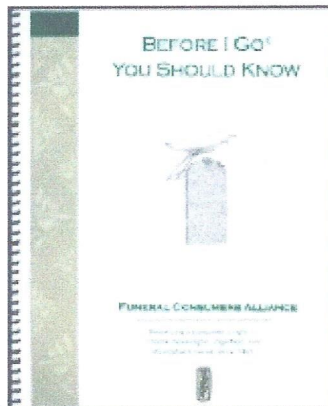
- Your funeral plans
- Where your important papers are
- Who should take care of your pets
- Who to call when the time comes

Our 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.

TO ORDER: Send your check for \$15.00 per copy to:

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

Please specify whether you want the English or Spanish version !



YOUR CURRENT FCA-RI BOARD

Sally Barney
Dana DelBonis
John Dineen
Janet Larson
Fred Graefe
Bill Oehlkers
Ann Porto

PLAN NOW

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 you may not have wanted !

 Your donation is greatly appreciated

The Funeral Consumers Alliance of Rhode Island is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. Donations are fully tax-deductible and any size donation is welcomed. Your donations are our primary source of funds which enables us to publish this newsletter, provide our Funeral Home Price Survey, maintain a telephone line for consumer inquiries, hold group presentations with guest speakers and conduct educational workshops.

BECOME A FCA VOLUNTEER

We meet once a month at the East Greenwich Library

Call
401-884-1131



To invite a FCA-RI speaker to conduct an end-of-life planning session at your location, call (401) 884-1131 or e-mail us at fca-ri@cox.net.

The free pamphlet "How to Pay for a Funeral" is now available in Spanish !

POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR HEALTH CARE

Have you prepared a Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care ?

A form you can use for this purpose may be found at:

www.health.ri.gov/forms/legal/DurablePowerOfAttorneyForHealthCare.pdf

Funerals during a pandemic.

CDC ADVICE

As the number of lives claimed by the novel coronavirus continues to rise, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is urging Americans and the world to livestream any funerals of their loved ones.

In a webinar with the National Funeral Directors Association, the CDC said there was no evidence to suggest that people could be infected from a deceased person if their cause of death was coronavirus-related.

But the agency said people should follow social distancing advice and limit how many people attend funerals in person during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr. David Berendes, an epidemiologist at the CDC, said funerals should be limited to close relatives and streamed online for other mourners.

"As you think about planning for the event, limit the number of people if possible, use live-streaming options and perhaps have only immediate family on hand", he said. "While you're at the event, promote social distancing etiquette, hand hygiene and try to limit other people coming in and out"

Even before the advice from the CDC, some funeral homes in the United States had already started offering livestream services.

(See UPDATES on page 11)

PLANNING A FUNERAL DURING A PANDEMIC

- Construct a list of less than ten people who will take part in the memorial in person. Check the restrictions in your area in regards to "social distancing". They are different depending on where you live. Follow the local guidelines.
- If the funeral is pre-planned go through the plans and make note of everything that may need to be adjusted. The rules in place during the pandemic may make it harder or impossible to follow through with some of the plans.
- Access an app such as zoom or use other streaming capabilities to connect with loved ones who cannot be there in person. This will allow those who would have attended to still be a part of the service and be able to grieve together.
- Create a program and send it to friends and family electronically.
- Create a group online via Facebook or some other medium that will allow people to write memories. They can post pictures with the loved one. Write a letter to tell them how much you love them. It is a great place to share their feelings on the death. This will allow people to grieve together even though they may not be able to be in each other's presence.

COVID19 AND THE DEAD: FACTS, NOT FEAR

This April 2nd article will answer your many questions about what the Covid19 pandemic means for death, funerals, and dead bodies. To access the article, go to www.funerals.org and click on "news/blog" at the top of the page.

The Covid-19 pandemic is affecting our lives and our deaths. Families are having to make choices about funerals they haven't faced before. Everyday more state and federal officials suggest (or mandate) that we refrain from gathering in groups of more than ten (though this advice has probably changed even as you read this).

This is going to be difficult, but it is not impossible, and it is important to keep a sense of perspective, especially when the emotions of death in the family take hold. Many American families have stopped arranging large-group funerals for years simply because they're too costly for a growing number of households.

This doesn't mean we can't grieve. It doesn't mean that we can't connect and commune with our families and friends. Yes, it does mean we aren't going to have the solace of that in-person hug, and the meal afterward, and that's the hardest part.

But here are some things we can do. Some of these are activities that have already become common or even traditional in some areas:

① Remember that the physical disposition of the body doesn't control how we grieve and mend our wounds. Choosing simple services without in-person gatherings and ceremonies, such as direct cremation and immediate burial will get the body where it needs to go.

② But what then ? We can't have the in-person memorial services many of us are used to. But there are many free online services that let us see and hear each other in real time over video. Zoom, Facetime, or whatever application you ordinarily use can put you in the same virtual room with the people who ordinarily show up to hug you at the funeral.

Sarah Jane Lambring of the Funeral Consumers Alliance of North Texas and the National Home Funeral Alliance, has some help for us.

Watch her video on how to conduct a virtual memorial service at (<https://youtu.be/D1GmhuAja90>).

③ Adapt a practice familiar to New England families, who often do "spring burial". The frozen ground is too hard to dig in winter; most of our cemeteries hold the caskets in hillside crypts until Spring. It's common for families to gather in Spring for a graveside service even though death occurred months earlier.

No, we're not suggesting you pay a funeral home or cemetery a huge fee to store the casket for later burial. But what about scheduling a memorial service for three months in the future ? Funeral homes would certainly be glad to have that business, or you can do so through your church, at your fraternal or social organization, or in a family home.

④ Now might be a good time to make some hands-on, family-created memories of the person who died. Children and adults can write an "obituary", or a reflection on what grandpa meant to them, Victorians used to make lacework pieces out of a lock of hair. Do you have photos that can go into a collage ? Do you knit or crochet, or work with wood ? Make something that honors grandma. It's therapy right in the here and now, and it will become a family heirloom with meaning that can't be bought. These family pieces can be gathered together for that later memorial service, too.

ADVANTAGES OF PLANNING AHEAD	You may choose the type of funeral service you desire. You will save your survivors from making choices during the stress of bereavement. You can do comparison shopping at available funeral homes. You can make knowledgeable and thoughtful decisions. You will be stimulating family discussion, sharing, and decision-making.
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A CBS news report has raised questions about some activities at America's cemeteries, including exhuming bodies so that plots can be resold. In one of the most egregious cases, workers at Burr Oak Cemetery near Chicago had been removing headstones and coffins and dumping bodies in mass graves so plots could be resold. Sheriff Tom Dart said "This was all about greed". The Federal Trade Commission issued guidelines to protect consumers dealing with funeral homes, but those rights stop at cemeteries. More monitoring of cemeteries is probably needed. At Eden Memorial Park Cemetery near Los Angeles, where plots average \$8,000, groundskeepers have said they were ordered to cram new graves so close to old ones that existing burial containers were broken and bones were thrown out in the cemetery dump. A spokesman for the cemetery industry does not agree that there is a lack of oversight. He says that while occasional scandals arise, they are very uncommon when you consider that there are over 6,500 burials and cremations a day in over 45,000 cemeteries.

AROUND THE WORLD – WALES

"Hail Cremation" is a show recently held at the National Theatre of Wales. It is a "musical odyssey" about the life of William Price, often referred to as the "father" of cremation in Britain. He always argued that traditional burial was a "waste of good land, polluted the earth, water, and air, and presented a danger to living creatures." His actions paved the way for Britain's 1902 Cremation Act which legalized cremation.

JOIN FCA-RI TODAY --->

Members receive:

- the FCA-RI newsletter
- our funeral home price survey
- invitations to our annual meeting, educational workshops, and programs featuring speakers of interest
- various pamphlets and a directory of FCA affiliates across the United States
- the satisfaction of helping to support a national organization dedicated to educating consumers on end-of-life choices and protecting their rights to choose arrangements that are meaningful and affordable
- the opportunity to purchase our "Before I Go ... You Should Know" end-of-life planning kit

The 2020 conference will be in Austin Texas September 24-27

GREEN BURIAL IN RHODE ISLAND

There are currently two cemeteries in Rhode Island that offer green burial services. 1. Swan Point Cemetery in Providence has recently opened a new designated area for green burial called "The Ellipse". The area has space for 150 grave sites each of which can accommodate one full body or two sets of cremated remains. 2. The Stearns Memorial Section of the Arnold Mills Cemetery located in Cumberland also offers plots for green burial.

BECOME A MEMBER

We are run solely by volunteers and have no attachment to the funeral industry or any religious group. Membership is open to everyone !

Please complete and mail this form with your check to:

FCA of Rhode Island
119 Kenyon Avenue
East Greenwich, RI 02818

- () \$25 - Individual Membership
- () \$50 - Couple's Membership
- () \$__ - Additional contribution to support consumer education programs

Date: _____

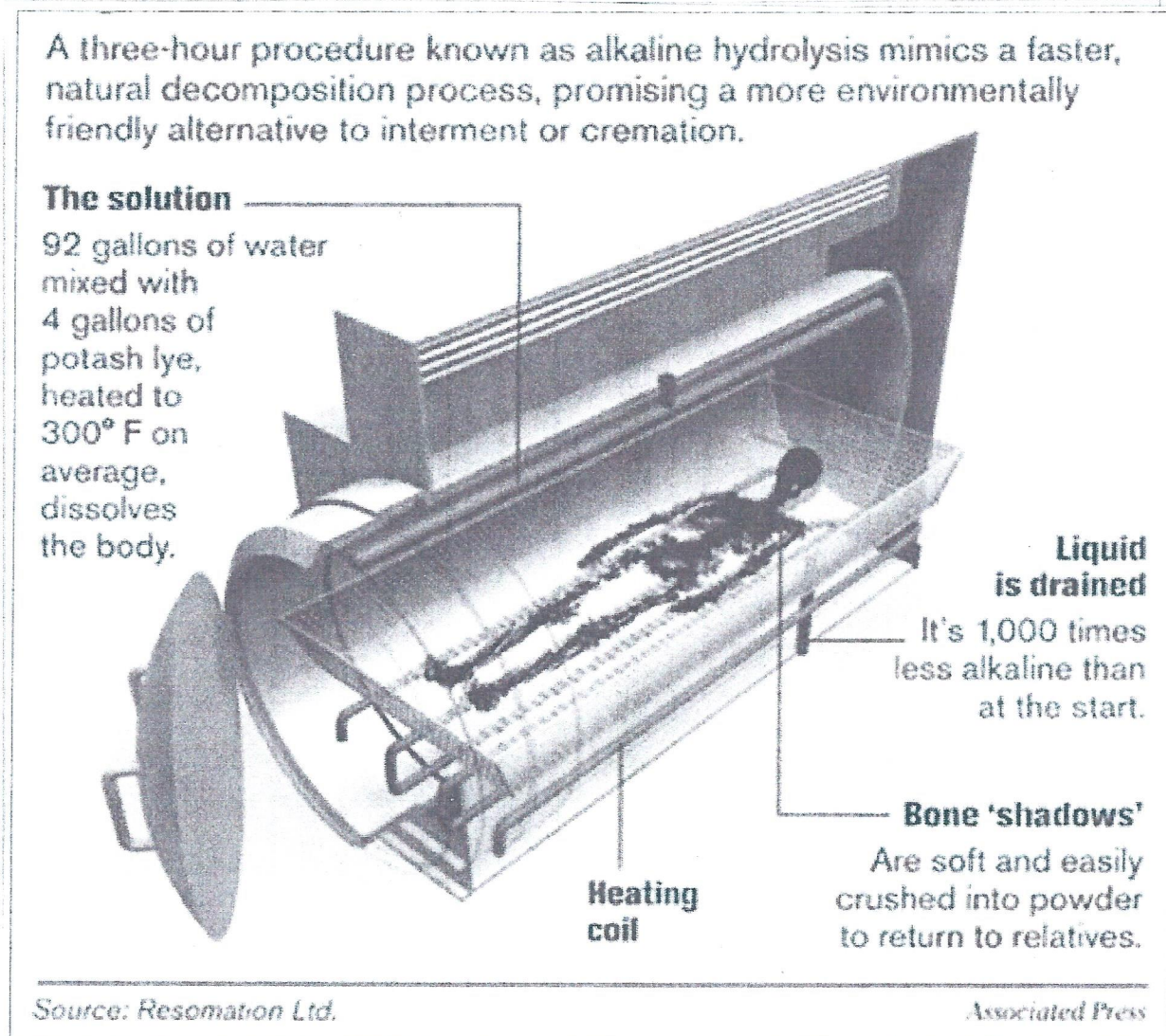
Name(s): _____

Address: _____

email: _____

WHAT IS ALKALINE HYDROLYSIS ?

It's a more environmentally friendly alternative to interment or cremation. The process uses water pressure, heat and a highly basic (pH14) additive to dissolve soft tissues leaving only bone fragments to be processed into ash.



The ash remaining at the end of the three hour process is similar to that after cremation, but larger in volume and more finely textured. It is a pure white powder unlike cremains which are a coarse grayish material. The effluent is disposed of through the municipal sewer system.

The process is now legal in at least eight states but there is strong opposition to the technology. Opponents express concern about public health safety and about the dignity of mortal remains. Compared to cremation, alkaline hydrolysis offers:

1. More than 75% reduction of carbon footprint
2. Uses 1/8 the amount of energy of flame-based cremation
3. Pacemakers and some other medical devices do not need to be removed prior to the process
4. Mercury from dental amalgam is contained and recycled, not vaporized
5. Preserves 20+% more bone fragments than cremation

As part of funeral planning, be sure to prepare the Rhode Island Funeral Planning Agent Designation Form which may be found online at:
www.health.ri.gov/forms/legal/FuneralPlanningDesignation.pdf

A summary of Maggie Jones article "The Movement to Bring Death Closer - Home-funeral guides believe that families can benefit from tending to-and spending time with - the bodies of their deceased. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/19/magazine/home-funeral.html>

Heidi Boucher describes herself as a home death-care guide. She assists families in taking care of the bodies of deceased loved ones shortly after death and often, alongside family members, she prepares the bodies for home vigils.

Maggie Jones, a contributing NY Times writer, shares the intimate and personal work of Heidi Boucher as she works with the family of Susan L'Heureux. The L'Heureux family contacted Boucher prior to Susan's death, to plan for a home vigil. Within hours after Susan's death Boucher arrived with flowers, baskets of supplies for washing the body (scented oils, candle, towels) and dry ice.

The family wanted the body prepared without embalming. Susan's daughter expressed that caring for her mother in death would be an extension of the care she provided during the last few years of her illness.

Few experiences are as intimate as witnessing the transition from a loved one's last breaths to the final, unforgiving stillness of death, It's a rite of passage that is no less monumental than birth.

Jones reports that often today death is viewed more as an emergency with the family in a passive role as others take over. The shift from family care to other care came during the Civil War when surgeons and undertakers began using ingredients such as arsenic, and zinc chloride to prevent decomposing during the long train ride home. Since that time the funeral industry has continued to grow and today several gallons of embalming fluid are pumped into the body. In 1963, Jessica Mitford exposed the funeral industry in her best-selling book "The American Way of Death". Following years of public concern and outcry by consumers, The Federal Trade Commission, in 1984, finally stepped in and enacted the Funeral Rule. The law holds funeral directors accountable and requires them to make costs transparent by providing an itemized price list of services.

Some religions and cultures have continued to traditionally care for bodies of their loved ones without embalming. Muslims and Jews wash and shroud dead bodies, perform rituals, recite prayers of forgiveness and maintain a close proximity. Susan L'Heureux's home ritual provided an opportunity for her husband, children and grandchildren to become aware of their own fears around death and experience a non-frightening, intimate and supportive time to be with each other.

Heidi Boucher became interested in this work through a neighbor who was a leader in the home funeral movement. The National Home Funeral Alliance started more than ten years ago and helps educate the public in home vigils. There are more than 2,000 members and 80 list themselves as home-funeral guides, death-care educators or death midwives or doulas. "Death-positive" is a term becoming more popular in this movement as it acknowledges that death is a part of life and planning ahead is a part of that process. Heidi's personal experience with the death of her father after a long illness confirmed for her the healing and closure that comes with home vigil.

(Continued on next page)

THE MOVEMENT TO BRING DEATH CLOSER

(Continued from previous page)

As my parents' bedroom grew still that night, I listened to the silence, to the painful absence of my father's breath. There would be no shortcut to mourning him in the coming months and years. But for now, and for the next 12 hours, time slowed for me. The presence of his body averted the cruelty of saying goodbye to all of him at once. As I lay under the blanket, with him just a few feet away, he was easing me toward a transition that I wasn't yet ready to bear.

Year's later, she was faced with preparing the bodies of her brother and niece who died tragically in Hawaii, when a rough wave pulled them into the sea. Although "gutted in shock" she wanted to create the most meaningful funeral she could for her widowed sister-in-law and surviving 12 year old niece. After preparing the bodies with the help of a family owned funeral home, Heidi and her niece arranged flowers around the bodies before her sister-in-law came in.

Boucher reports that people who choose home vigils usually choose cremations and green burials as well. There's no embalming and burial is in a biodegradable container such as a pine box, shroud, or wicker casket. The choice of cremation has increased from 10 to 53% since 1980 and the projection is that it will climb to 80% by 2035. Every state has its own laws governing the funeral industry and many of the requirements are outdated and do not reflect current trends. There have been a number of lawsuits challenging the autonomy of funeral directors and hospital policy with those who choose a simpler and more personal connection to prepare and bury their loved ones.

The experience of home vigil gives the family time to care for and spend time with their loved one. It's an intimate time for sharing with friends and family in a familiar setting before they separate themselves from the physical presence of the person.

MEETING WITH FCA AFFILIATES

Ann Porto, M.S., Psy.D.

In our March virtual Zoom meeting, a bunch of folks met to hear updates from the national FCA office with folks attending from all over the United States. We talked about how people are creating their state websites and how a Guidebook is available for running or starting a FCA unit in areas where it is needed. Just about everything we discussed in the virtual meeting which Josh Slocum hosted is on their new resources and additions area of the www.funerals.org website. There are now more resources there than ever. Please go and look at it.

Josh also offered to answer questions anytime we have them. A big recommendation as I recall was to track how each of us are receiving donations and also to look at our newsletter as a critical part of informing folks of what is happening as well as use it to encourage involvement. Also he spoke about how the FCA is really partnering with the Funeral Industry to encourage home funerals and green burial when people want this and to offer it where possible. The resources on the website are terrific and the archived newsletters and other information provide folks with a host of amazing resources. One valuable recommendation was that we should all be looking at each others FCA websites to see how they are posting and what they are posting.

BEFORE THE FUNERAL ...

William Oehlkers, FCA-RI

The Funeral Consumers Alliance emphasizes the importance of planning ahead for one's funeral and burial, Equally important are the conversations that should take place before potentially fatal illness strikes. The coronavirus is speeding up this need The time for the conversation is before a sick patient is in an ICU, confined by tubes and machines and left voiceless. Of course, many of these wishes can be expressed in a power of attorney for health care. Other important wishes and desires require personal conversation. In a New York Times article, the Sunita Puri suggests these questions:

What is most important to me in my life ?

What makes life meaningful ?

What sort of quality of life would be unacceptable to me ?

Who is the best person to speak on my behalf ? (RI Funeral Planning Agent Designation Form is a legal document that accomplishes this purpose)

Who would I not want involved in decision making ?

Would I want to undergo CPR should my heart stop ?

What would bring me comfort if I were hospitalized ?

These questions can help inform the family and medical staff about the wishes of the ill person. Have this conversation while it is still possible.

More detailed information about this important conversation can be found online at "The Conversation Project" and "The Serious Illness Conversation Guide".

AROUND THE WORLD – GREAT BRITAIN

Do It Yourself Coffins - February 2020

Prices for funerals in England have gone up 62% in the last ten years. This has caused a high increase in people purchasing coffins on ebay or assembling them from kits. Some of these DIY coffins are badly made and not up to the task. Some have proven inappropriate for cremation use or have not been constructed to a high enough standard to carry a deceased person due to poor materials or glue. Some coffins have been dropped because the handles came off or have leaked bodily fluids onto pall bearers. The burial industry has been forced to introduce safety checks. Coffin accreditation schemes have been set up to test against agreed criteria. The schemes insist on seeing paperwork proving what materials went into making the coffin.

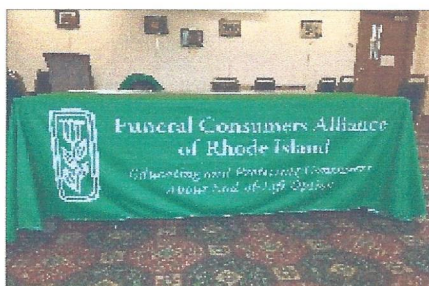
Funerals during a pandemic.

UPDATES:

It should be noted that not all 'live streaming' is 100% confidential. Read the fine print as some will use information to sell to advertisers. Please read all site information as there may sometimes be "opting out" options to choose which offer more confidentiality !
The CDC now recommends wearing a facial covering when out in public !

TABLE COVER

FCA-RI has just purchased a table cover to be used at future exhibits and presentations.



Funerals during a pandemic.

Janet Larson FCA-RI

On Saturday April 4th, Scott Simon from National Public Radio's Weekend Edition interviewed Norman J. Williams, the president and funeral director of Unity Funeral Parlors in Chicago. The piece is entitled "Let Us Stay In Touch With Those That We Love: A funeral director's Lessons For Life".

<https://www.npr.org/programs/weekend-edition-saturday/2020/04/04/827241461/weekend-edition-saturday-for-april-4-2020>

Scott Simon posed some of the following questions; the questions & answers have been summarized

Simon: How have you had to change what you do ?

Williams: We provide points of information and answer questions

- Can we even have a funeral ?
- Is cremation required ?
- Are there restrictions ? (Maintaining ritual and cultural customs)
- Not more than ten people can attend the service
- Help people resist the desire to hug and touch

Simon: Is it safe to hold a public funeral for someone who has died of the corona virus ?

Williams: We follow safety precautions so that the virus is not transmitted.

Simon: It must be difficult to watch people not be able to physically comfort each other.

Williams: What is really hard is the separation and not being able to follow your instincts to reach out to people, especially having been in this family business for 40 years. We have to help each other learn social distancing for a while.

Simon: What should we keep in our minds and hearts during this period ?

Williams: The things we learn from parents and grandparents are proving to be wise. Hygiene that we take for granted is very effective. "Wash your hands before you come to the table". Being concerned and not letting days pass before you reach out to people in your extended family through a call or text. Perhaps now is when you want to be known. Sometimes it's good for people to know where you're going and when you're expected back so they'll check in on you. "At the end of the day, no matter how individual we are, you do want to belong to somebody."

NOTES: