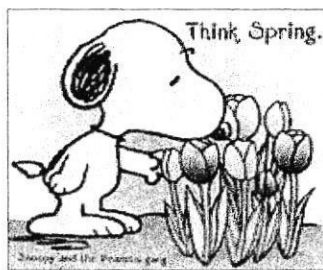


MEMORIAL SOCIETY OF RHODE ISLAND
119 Kenyon Avenue
East Greenwich, R. I. 02818

884-5933
884-5451



SPRING 1982

No. 3

BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Rev. Frederick Gillis, President 884-5451; Anne Wise, Vice President 295-5993; Carolin Goldman*, Corr. Secretary 884-7875; Winnifred Bennis, Rec. Secretary 539-2505; Muriel Flood, Treasurer 294-3789; Rev. Harry Hubbling* 884-2868; Dr. Nelson Marshall* 783-5312; Emily McAllister 783-4208; Rev. Bruce Kennedy 751-2025(* Terms end in June)

ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of the Memorial Society will be held at 7:30 P.M. on Thursday, June 3 in the fellowship hall of the Westminster Unitarian Church, 119 Kenyon Ave., East Greenwich, to hear reports from the President and Treasurer and to elect four Directors to serve on the Board (see Nominating Report).

GUEST SPEAKER

The Guest Speaker for the Annual Meeting will be Mr. Robert Canny, Executive Director of R.I. HOSPICE CARE, who will present the work of Hospice with terminally ill patients as they seek dignity and calm in the process of dying.

Dessert and Coffee will be served.
If you can contribute a dessert, please call Muriel Flood at 294-3789 by June 1.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

The Nominating Committee presents the following names for Directors to serve as indicated:

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------|
| 1. Carolin Goldman | for 3 years |
| 2. Polly Harrison | for 3 years |
| 3. To be announced | for 3 years |
| 4. Laurel Sakariason | for 1 year |

Further nominations may be made from the floor of the Annual Meeting.

Carolin Goldman
Chair

SPREADING THE WORD

President Fred Gillis has given talks on the work of the Memorial Society to staff and volunteers of Hospice Care of R.I. and to a Death and Dying study group at the Seekonk Congregational Church. Board members are available as speakers to any interested group. Contact the Society.

CREMATION AFFIDAVITS

There is still some confusion about the need for people who choose cremation to have a completed, notarized affidavit expressing those wishes. We eliminated the affidavit form because members seemed to be delaying returning their forms to us until they could get around to having that form notarized.

In Rhode Island, the next of kin has the power to decide whether or not a body will be cremated. No forms or affidavits can guarantee that your wishes will be respected if your next of kin decides otherwise. This is why it is so important to discuss your funeral plans with your close relatives. The person most likely to be making final arrangements should be in accord with your wishes. Having your wishes on file with the Memorial Society, in an accessible place in your home, with a next of kin, and with your chosen funeral director will increase the likelihood that your wishes are respected.

If you have no close relatives, however, and file a plan with a funeral director, it might be wise to file with it a notarized form indicating your wishes. This clearly protects him from any possible legal action.

MEMORIAL SOCIETY GROWING

As of this newsletter, the Memorial Society of Rhode Island has 112 memberships covering 180 people. Some of these are transfers from other societies, especially the New England Memorial Society, but we are also getting several new memberships. People hear of us by word of mouth and from talks given to various groups.

Tell your friends. The more members we have, the stronger we are as a consumer organization and the more resources we will have to serve those members.

FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS IN YOUR WILL

We have generally advised members that it is a waste of time to put your wishes for funeral arrangements in a will because the will is not ordinarily read until several days after a death. A lawyer tells us, however, that putting your wishes in your will, as well as having them on a form kept in an accessible place, will make a clear case for your wishes in case there is confusion or disagreement among those making final arrangements.

"90 day review" is still the answer when one asks about the status of the Federal Trade Commission's funeral rule. The rule must weather two such 90 day review periods before it can become law.

Since December 1981, when this status was set, nothing has changed. The rule must still undergo two 90 day review periods and neither of these periods have begun yet. The FTC expects the first period to begin soon when it submits the rule and supporting documents to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review.

This OMB submission is necessary because of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980; any rule that requires record keeping -- as the FTC rule does of funeral directors -- must be reviewed to assess the burden and cost effectiveness of that recordkeeping. The rule will require funeral directors to retain certain sale documents for one year. This requirement will help individual consumers in settling complaints, and the FTC in its monitoring and enforcement of the rule provisions.

OMB has up to 90 days to review the rule and give its recommendations to the FTC. Should the commissioners decide to accept OMB's recommendations, the FTC would then issue the rule. At that point the second 90 day review period to allow for Congressional veto would begin. Stay tuned.

NEW FUNERAL COSTS REPORTED

In 1980 the average funeral cost \$2,071, excluding cemetery costs. This average cost includes \$1,561 for funeral director services, casket and transportation; \$263 for interment receptacle; \$228 for cash advances; and \$19 for other miscellaneous charges.

Dr. Vanderlyne Pine, consultant and statistician for the National Funeral Directors Association states that funeral homes do their pricing in four different ways: single unit; bi-unit which lists the casket separately; tri-unit which breaks down into professional services, facilities, and casket, and, itemized which lists professional services, facilities, motor equipment, and casket. He arrived at his averages by averaging and also weighting the reported figures in accordance with the number of funeral homes using each type of pricing.

Dr. Pine said that the average casket price -- which can be separated out in all the pricing methods except for single unit pricing -- varies from \$474 to \$589. And these are averages. In the actual funeral purchase, the casket is the big item over which the consumer can exercise some choice and thereby control, to some extent, that final dollar figure.

Dr. Pine's figures of course assume a "conventional funeral" with embalming and visiting hours.

A new consumer education program on funeral planning is available from the Consumer Affairs Section of National Retired Teachers Association and the American Association of Retired Persons. The program package has two parts: 1) a comprehensive guidebook on the practical aspects of funeral planning, by Thomas C. Nelson, and 2) a program kit which contains a 13-minute slide presentation with accompanying tape cassette, an instructors manual, plus materials for distribution to audiences.

The program kit is of special interest to memorial societies because the instructions tell how to organize a resource panel for audience participation -- using community people such as memorial society members.

The book, IT'S YOUR CHOICE (24802) costs \$4.50 (\$3.50 for NRTA-AARP members) and can be ordered from: It's Your Choice, 400 South Edward St., Mount Prospect, IL 60056. The program kit (24800) costs \$17 and can be ordered from: It's Your Choice, 1900 East Lake Avenue, Room 1706, Glenview, IL 60025. Checks should be made out to Scott, Foresman.

Check with your local AARP chapter to see if they have or are planning to order the kit -- and if they need members from your society as resource people.

CLERGY PACKETS AVAILABLE

Information packets on preplanning and on the work of memorial societies designed especially for clergy are available from the Society office. They are without charge to clergy in the area.

MANUAL AVAILABLE

The most comprehensive PUBLICATION DEALING with all aspects of funeral preplanning is Ernest Morgan's A Manual of Death Education and Simple Burial. This is available from the Society for \$2.00 to members and \$3.00 to non-members postpaid.

ARE YOU A MEMBER?

Some of you receiving this newsletter have not yet become members of the Memorial Society. If you have been hesitating, you should know that we now have 8 funeral directors cooperating with us and that we provide our members with comparative prices for funeral services as well as help you plan for what you want. As a member you will be associating yourself with those who want simplicity, dignity and economy in funeral arrangements and will be helping us in our educational endeavors throughout the state. A lifetime membership is \$15 for an individual and \$20 for a family. Transfers from other memorial societies are \$8.