

WINTER, 2017

Funeral Consumers Alliance of Central New York, Inc.

P.O. Box 67, Dewitt, NY 13214-0067
 (315) 446-0557
 email: fcacny@gmail.com
 website: fcacny.org

FROM THE PRESIDENTS' DESK

Michael Goins and Jenifer Breyer, Co-Presidents

By the time you receive this newsletter, it is our hope that you will have enjoyed a wonderful Thanksgiving with family and friends. That leads us to the most pressing thought on our minds: We are very thankful to you, the members of the Funeral Consumers Alliance of Central New York, for your support and participation.

It has been a busy and productive time beginning with the Senior Fair at the New York State Fairgrounds. Peter Moller, Susan Rainey and Nancy Aureli were our representatives and did a great job. It was a lively event. The candy flew off the table, and we gained a new member to boot! Next up was the Westcott Street Cultural Fair boasting beautiful weather and a great crowd. Many people stopped by to talk with us, enjoy a piece of candy or two, simply tell us their story and ask how we might help. It is also a nice way for our members to enjoy the event. In that regard, many thanks to Michael Goins, Diane Case, Peter Moller and Susan Rainey who "manned" the booth, and also to Joel Potash for use of his table. In addition, we owe a special debt of gratitude to former FCA board members Jae Evangelisti and Peggy Chestnut for their loan of a collapsible tent for the event. Without it we would certainly have melted in the sun.

We are in the home stretch of the survey, which is an "all hands on deck" project to obtain pricing information from funeral homes. We want to personally thank the board members for their phone calls and personal visits to make the Survey possible. Special recognition goes to Joyce Homan, Peter Moller and Jenifer Breyer for putting on final touches.

We also want to let you know that our board meetings have been well attended, with members actively engaged and more than willing to take on the task at hand, informing the public about end-of-life choices.

In closing, we feel a renewed sense of vitality and purpose in that effort and look forward to the New Year and all that it brings.

NEWSLETTER VIA EMAIL?

An electronic newsletter, rather than a hard copy, provides the opportunity to read at your convenience, provide links to related articles, and they are better for the environment. And it saves us some money. If you would like to take advantage of this opportunity, please send us an email with your email address: fcacny@gmail.com



This familiar little brown bottle should be one additional item in your end-of-life kit. It's not your latest prescription for some blood thinner or thyroid cleanser. Inside is a form that you can fill out with all your vital end-of-life information. There's also a refrigerator magnet that alerts first responders that your Life Vial is in the refrigerator. And there are two window stickers with the same alert. All of this is a free gift from KinneyDrugs and can be picked up at any of their stores.

Direct Cremation Becomes a Popular Option

Our latest price survey of local funeral homes includes the cost of “direct cremation.” There are still some funeral homes that do not offer this option. But the increasing popularity of cremation has prompted more funeral homes to provide this option. According to the National Funeral Directors Association’s 2017 Cremation and Burial Report, “50.2 percent of Americans chose cremation in 2016, up from 48.5 percent in 2015, while 43.5 percent of Americans opted for burial, down from 45.4 percent in 2015.”

If you’re wondering what “direct cremation” means, here’s a list of characteristics, courtesy of Everplans:

- The body is cremated immediately after death, which means that you may engage the services of a crematory directly rather than a funeral home. This can potentially save you a significant amount of money.
- The body is usually cremated in a simple container, rather than an expensive casket.
- There is no viewing, visitation, or wake before the cremation, which eliminates the need for embalming or other body preparations.
- A memorial service may be held at a later date, which eliminates the need for an expensive casket and funeral arrangements.

For more detailed information on the cremation option, you can go to these websites: Everplans.com or Nfda.org.

FCA of CNY BOARD

Co-President.....Jenifer Breyer, Michael Goins
 Membership.....Peter Moller
 Secretary.....Diane Case
 Treasurer.....Susan Rainey

Cheryl McLeod
 Josh Goldberg
 Joyce Homan

Mark Monmonier
 Joel Potash
 Robert Sarason

The 2017-18 Price Survey is Available

You can view the current price survey of local funeral homes at our website (fcacny.org) or request a printed copy. The survey lists the costs of basic funeral services based on each establishment’s General Price Survey. You can also see a more detailed breakout of costs by going to the funeral home’s website. Not all have those prices on their website, but many do. Our national FCA is working toward requiring that prices be displayed on each website.

NY APPEALS COURT REJECTS PHYSICIAN ASSISTED SUICIDE

In September 2017, in Myers v. Schneiderman (NY Slip Op 06412) the Appeals Court of New York rejected, on appeal, the request for physician assisted suicide put forward previously and denied, for 3 terminally ill patients, 2 of whom had subsequently died. There is existing legislation in NY making assisting in a suicide illegal. The court stated that not being able to get assistance with suicide for the terminally ill does not deny due process or equal protection under the law. The court mentioned the interest of New York State in protecting the lives of its citizens. The decision stated that it is unlikely any future case can be presented to the courts in NY that will result in a different legal opinion and that changes in the legal status of physician assisted suicide (also called Aid in Dying) would have to be decided by the legislature.

Note: there are several bills in the legislature in NY proposing legalizing physician assisted suicide, but they have not been brought to a vote. Joel Potash, MD.

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE TO FIND MORE VALUABLE INFORMATION:
FCACNY.ORG

WEBSITE RESOURCES FOR END-OF-LIFE PLANNING

In the PERSONAL BUSINESS section of the *New York Times* of October 7, 2017 page B5, an article called "Planning for the Unforeseen with Websites and Advisors" mentions the websites Everplans and Final Roadmap and discusses using advisors and setting up trusts. Everplans lists documents and discussions one should consider and has sections for storing keepsakes etc. Everplans costs \$75 a year and has a 10 minute "just in case" plan for members to complete. Final Roadmap has a one-time fee of \$249 and keeps legal and financial documents, messages for loved ones, and instructions regarding death. Joel Potash, MD.

RECOMMENDED READS

An article in *The New Yorker*, October 16, 2017 by Jill Lapore, called "Dead Weight: The Burden of the Corpse" reveals that embalming probably first started during the Civil War in the US, when families wanted the remains of their dead sons maintained in order to be shipped home for burial. Lapore discusses past discrimination with separate cemeteries for white and black, and even different burial practices for the different races. In 1874, the year the New York Cremation Society began, cremation became a vogue. Gilded Age citizens thought of cremation as a way for the wealthy to "purify" their remains as opposed to the burials afforded the masses. But the funeral industry promoted more elaborate and costly funerals/burials. The consumer movement after WW II worried about the increasing costs of funerals. In 1971 the "Last Whole Earth Catalog" printed instructions for do it yourself burials (cost: \$50). By 1980 the cremation rate was about 10%; it now exceeds 50%.

Caitlin Doughty, a mortician and writer founded the Order of the Good Death in 2011. In her new book, *From Here to Eternity: Traveling the World to Find the Good Death* (Norton), Doughty tours the ways of death in different locations and countries including funeral pyres, composting of dead bodies, and keeping mummified dead at home for months and years. She reports that the average burial in the US costs between \$8000-\$10,000.

Thomas Mira y Lopez, in *The Book of Resting Places* (Counterpoint), unhappy with his father's burial, looks into better ways to remember the dead. He describes visits to cemeteries, crematoriums, and cryonic companies around the world.

Thank You to Our Donors

The following list of donors is incomplete; it doesn't contain the names of many people who made donations but asked that their names not be published: Beverly and George Adams, Judith Antoine, Helen Ashley, Richard Askeland, Jane Begley, Carol Bickart, June R. Bomberger, Mark Briggs, June Capels, June Card, Nicolas Caruso, Diane Case, Geraldine Chapman Aird, Peggy Chestnut, Malcolm Clark, Robert Coye, John Dodge, Mary Lou Dopyera, Francis Durgin, Jean Eschner, Jane Feld, Joseph Fischer, Howard Ford, Bettina Frisse, Richard and Deanna Granville, Richard Guyer, Dorothy Harrold, Elizabeth Ingram, W. H. Irish, Mary Iverson, Richard Kinsey, George Kirkpatrick, Carleton Laidlaw, Frederick Lyman, Richard Manier, Jr., Mark Monmonier, Margaret Muller, Lisa Mundy, Jean Nash, Ramon Nitzberg, Ron Osborn, Vance and Evelyn Osborne, Mildred Owens, Caroline Palmer, Alan Pike, Ruth Pinckney, Joel Potash, Daniel Rabuzzi, Daniel Rakoske, Milton Sack, Robert Sarason, Vicky Schipper, Lorraine Schmidt, Edith Schmitz (in memory of Henry Schmitz), Harry Schwarzlander, Cynthia Shane, Sidney Shiffman, David Stam, Ward Stevens, Jr., David Tatham, Ann Tussing, Joyce Ucci, Susan Vanmaarseveen, George Ward, Jr., Richard Weiskopf/DeStefano, Joan Welch, John Wyman, Raymond Yahnke (in memory of Gavin Yahnke), Robert Zimmer

I would like to support the work and mission of the FCA of CNY. Please find my check enclosed in the amount of \$_____.

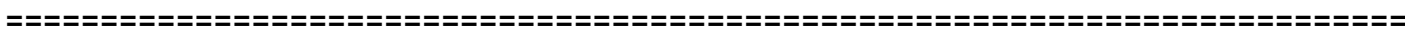
Your name: _____

Check here if you would like to receive your newsletter by email. Print your email address as clearly as possible: _____

May we honor your gift with your name in our next newsletter? _____

Please use the pre-addressed envelope enclosed in this newsletter to mail your preferences and contribution back to us.

Contributions to the FCA of CNY are not yet tax deductible.



Give the gift of a life time membership to FCA of CNY!
 You can make a membership to FCA of CNY a valuable and long-lasting gift to any member of your family or friend! Simply fill out this form and send back with your check for \$30.00. We will immediately send a membership packet.

New member's name and mailing address:

Indicate who made this gift possible:
