



Spring, 2017

Funeral Consumers Alliance of Central New York, Inc.

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FCA of CNY Annual Meeting Scheduled for May 21

Mark your calendars and prepare to make your way to the **May Memorial Unitarian Church at 3800 East Genesee Street in Syracuse**. The meeting will start at 2:00. There's plenty of parking close by this architectural landmark. Yes, there will be summer-time beverages, lots of cookies and cupcakes.

We will have a short business meeting to update you on what your FCA of CNY has been doing. We will offer a ballot of board members and officers that you can vote on.

Our guest speaker for the meeting is Elizabeth Strabo from Hospice of Central New York. Strabo is an experienced social worker who will provide valuable information for us about the mission of Hospice and how it can be helpful to you and your family. Hospice of Central New York is our community's expert resource at the end-of-life. It provides comprehensive comfort care to patients and families through unique interdisciplinary services, bereavement counseling, education and collaboration. Hospice is committed to quality end-of-life care that is accessible to

everyone and that facilitates effective collaboration with community partners.

Dr. Joel Potash who is a physician and educator will talk about the value of the MOLST form. The MOLST form is a medical order that tells others the patient's medical orders for life-sustaining treatment. All health care professionals must follow these medical orders as the patient moves from one location to another, unless a physician examines the patients, reviews the orders, and changes them. MOLST forms will be available for anyone who wants one.

As usual at our annual meetings, there will be time to ask questions or make suggestions about what you would like FCA of CNY to do for you. The meeting is open to the public, so please bring some friends and neighbors with you!

Are Your End-of-Life Choices Up to Date?

There's never a better time to review your end-of-life decisions than right now. Go over your Preference Form with your family/friends. If you need a new form, send us a stamped, self-addressed envelope and it will come right back to you.



Remembering Edith Schmitz

The death of Edith Schmitz in February at age 96 marks the loss of one of our organization's longest supporters. She always noted that her husband Henry was among the original founders of the The Syracuse Memorial Society in 1968. Although many such groups existed earlier, the blockbuster book by Jessica Mitford, *The American Way of Death*, spurred the start of dozens of Memorial Societies around the country.

Henry and Edith both left Austria in the wake of the Nazi takeover. Meeting again and marrying in London, Henry was able to leave for America and served in the US Army in WWII. Edith worked in London until they were reunited in the USA after the war. They came to Syracuse with their family where Henry was a chemist with Bristol Laboratories. Edith taught French at OCC. They were passionate supporters of many causes especially the arts and music in the Syracuse community. Edith was a delightful companion and to the end could be witty in three languages. We are grateful for her devotion to Funeral Consumers Alliance of Central New York for half a century. (Thanks to Joyce Homan and Pat Brookes)

NEWSLETTER VIA EMAIL?

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

TALKING WITH YOUR FAMILY ABOUT HEALTH MATTERS AND PREFERENCES AT THE END-OF-LIFE

Dr. Joel Potash

Several seniors approached our Funeral Society table at the Westcott Street Fair, saying how difficult it is to get their families to sit down and talk about end-of-life care and funeral planning.

Here's one approach. My friend Pat is a physician. Every Thanksgiving at the dinner table each person is asked whether they have or have updated a Health Care Proxy form and if there is any information or preferences about health care, end-of-life care or related matters that they want to share. Guess what? It doesn't spoil the celebration. Chose an important date such as Christmas or Easter or Rosh Hashanah or a holiday/event significant to your family. Another good time is when you complete your Health Care Proxy form--don't do it without getting the OK from your desired Proxy agent, and having a conversation with that person about what you want or don't want to happen. If your family is reluctant, tell them that you are relieving them of the burden of making life or death decision for you, since they will only be carrying out your wishes. Some people, however, want their family to make all the decisions. If your family doesn't know what you personally want, they will have to make decisions regarding your "best interest", which is often what a doctor recommends. So put some thought into setting some parameters. I personally have found the Personal Death Awareness Worksheet of Hospice of Central New York to be helpful and even fun to fill out. To find this and other helpful resources, visit Hospice of Central New York's website: <https://www.hospicecny.org/10-step-checklist-for-planning-ahead>

RECOMMENDED READS FROM THE HUMOROUS TO THE GRAVE

Smoke Gets in Your Eyes: and Other Lessons from the Crematory by Caitlin Doughty. Her eye-opening, candid, and often hilarious story is like going on a journey with your bravest friend to the cemetery at midnight. She demystifies death, leading us behind the black curtain of her unique profession. And she answers questions you didn't know you had: Can you catch a disease from a corpse? How many dead bodies can you fit in a Dodge van? What exactly does a flaming skull look like?

Mortuary Confidential; Undertakers Spill the Dirt by Todd Harra and Kenneth McKenzie. In this macabre and moving compilation, funeral directors across the country share their most embarrassing, jaw-dropping, irreverent, and deeply poignant stories about life at death's door. Discover what scares them and what moves them to tears. Learn about rookie mistakes and why death sometimes calls for duct tape.

ANATOMICAL GIFT PROGRAM AT UPSTATE IS ALIVE AND WELL

Many members of the FCA of CNY have made the decision to donate their bodies to the Anatomical Gift Program at Upstate University in Syracuse. Our intrepid roving reporter, Dr. Joel Potash, visited the Program recently and files this report:

You must be 18 years or older to make a donation. You may also donate your eyes and brain for other programs (such as with the New York State DMV) and still donate your body to UMU. However, if you donate other internal organs, e.g. for transplant, you are not a candidate for the Anatomical Gift Program. You also are not a candidate if you are excessively obese, are a carrier or actively infected with HIV, viral hepatitis or tuberculosis and if your body cannot be delivered within 48 hours of death. Your body is also not eligible if your body was autopsied. If you make a pledge, you can withdraw it at any time. Your pledge makes your donation legal and cannot be overridden by your family. The maximum time a

donation is kept is 2 years, but many donations are kept for a much shorter time.

An annual memorial service is held by medical students and physical therapy students out of respect for the donors and families in the late spring and the families of all donors in the previous calendar year are invited. The useful brochure, "Anatomical Gift Program" is available by calling 315-464-4348 or on the Internet: upstate.edu/cdb/donor

"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.

Our website is now available for you at any time. It contains past and current newsletters, the price survey of Central New York funeral homes and easy links to valuable information about end-of-life issues. Type fcacny.org in the address line of any browser.

Update on New York's Medical Aid-in-Dying Act

There has been no movement on the Medical Aid-in-Dying Act (S. 3151, A. 2383). The bill, still sponsored by Senator Diane Savino and Assembly member Amy Paulin, needed to be reintroduced to the newly elected New York State legislature when it reconvened in January. The bill allows terminally ill, mentally competent, adult patients the right to receive a prescription of medications which they can take (if they choose to do so) to achieve a peaceful death.

New York's Court of Appeals has ruled to hear the appeal of Myers v. Schneiderman, the lawsuit End of Life Choices New York initiated to make medical aid in dying available in New York. Additional briefs and replies will be filed in the coming months. They anticipate that a ruling will come through in the late spring. (Reprinted with permission from the FCA of Finger Lakes newsletter.)

FCA OF CNY IS LOOKING FOR A LAWYER

The FCA of CNY does not currently have "charity" status. We are not a 501(c3). We would like to apply for this IRS classification so your donations would be tax deductible. The legal requirements to apply for the 501(c3) status are considerable and legal expertise expensive. We're asking for someone with such legal expertise to volunteer time and services to complete the 501(c3) application process. If you are such a person or know someone who might be interested in this opportunity, please contact us by phone (446-0557) or email (fcacny@gmail.com).

FCA OF CNY ANNUAL MEETING!
MAY MEMORIAL UNITARIAN CHURCH
3800 East Genesee St., Syracuse
May 21, 2:00
Bring a friend. Everyone is welcome!

FCA of CNY BOARD

Membership.....Peter Moller
Secretary.....Jenifer Breyer
Treasurer.....Susan Rainey

Diane Case
Michael Goins
Josh Goldberg
Joyce Homan
Cheryl McLeod
Mark Monmonier
Joel Potash
Robert Sarason

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.