



Funeral Consumers Alliance of Central New York, Inc.

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SPRING 2019

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

While Spring 2019 was painfully late in coming, it was surely worth the wait. That's one of the (sometimes hidden) blessings of being located in CNY, isn't it? Finally, we are on a roll!

In a further stroke of good luck, we have been able to finalize plans for our **Annual Meeting**. Our speaker will be Mr. Herbert Engman, President, Board of Trustees of Greensprings Natural Cemetery in Newfield, NY (near Ithaca). As interest in green burials has grown significantly in recent years, this subject is particularly timely. The meeting will be held on Saturday, May 18, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. at Park Central Presbyterian Church in Syracuse (504 East Genesee Street, 315-475-1677). We will meet in a particularly appealing space offering lots of room for a crowd, snacks and conversation. Mr. Engman's presentation/slide show will be followed by a Q&A. Designated parking is across the street from the church.

As FCA of CNY continues its outreach efforts, we will take part in an Elder Law Fair at Onondaga Community College on Thursday, May 23. The fair runs from 8:00 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. in Building 2. Board Members Dr. Joel Potash and Ms. Nancy Aureli will present an **hour-long workshop on Death Awareness**. Call 1-877-926-8300 to register.

Interested in joining small group conversations on a broad range of subjects relating to end-of-life? Death Cafes have been around for some time in other locations, and, thanks to our Nancy Aureli, a first "local" **Death Café**, was convened on Thursday, April 18, at Hope Café in Liverpool, NY (305 Vine Street).

For more information on Death Cafes, read the article by Dr. Lanny Freshman and Ms. Aureli, RN on page 3 of this newsletter. And keep your eyes open for our next one; it is our plan *not* to keep you waiting for long.

After we returned from the FCA Biennial Conference last year, our Joyce Homan conducted a obituary writing workshop, which met with considerable success. Read more about it on page 2 and stay in touch to hear when another one will be offered.

Two prize-winning **documentaries** have graced our path recently, and they have served to enlighten and comfort us. For more information go to *defining hope* (<https://hope.film/>) and *End of Life* (a film by John Bruce and Pawel Wojtasik).

We are busy. Please join us whenever you can, starting with the Annual Meeting,

Jenifer Breyer

The 2018-2019 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 List. 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.

AN OBITUARY WRITING WORKSHOP!

You probably know that the newspaper no longer writes the obituary; you and your family must do it. **FCA CAN HELP YOU.**

The Community Foundation of Central New York and members of FCA have teamed up and can give an interesting workshop for your group. Jan Lane, a Director of the Foundation, has a presentation that guides you in writing the facts of your life the way you want it expressed – not something written in haste by others. FCA helps with the practicalities of submission, cost and other end of life details. The last Obit Writing Workshop that was given was so successful the participants hardly stopped to eat the refreshments. We can arrange a workshop for your group. Go to our website for details about date and time: fcacny.org

FCA of CNY BOARD

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REASONS TO GET YOUR NEWSLETTER VIA EMAIL!

An electronic newsletter, rather than a hard copy? It’s a no-brainer! You can easily follow links to related articles; just click on them. Electronic versions of the newsletter are better for the environment. Email versions of this newsletter save 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

Is your End of Life Directive up-to-date? You can request a fresh new form from us. Call 315-446-0557 or email fcacny@gmail.com.

What If I Had Dementia? Planning for the Future.

BY JOEL POTASH, MD

Many of us worry about how to assure that our medical wishes are followed in case we have a level of dementia to question our capacity to make medical decisions.

A worksheet is available at this web address: www.dementia-directive.org It will lead you through choices in the case of mild, moderate or severe dementia. Wishes include length of life, treatments to prolong life (DNR/CPR), place of residence, and relief of suffering/comfort care in each of the three scenarios of dementia. I found these easy to follow, and your family care givers and health care providers will benefit from knowing what YOU want when decision making on your behalf might otherwise be difficult.

YOU CAN HELP US GROW

Share this newsletter with friends and family. It’s a good way for potential members to discover what we are all about. Tell people about our website (fcacny.org) where they can read previous newsletters, study the price survey and discover valuable resources they can read online or download.

We would be happy to send you copies of our brochure that explains the mission of FCA of CNY and contains a simple application form to fill out and send in.

Do you belong to a social or professional or religious organization that might want members of our board to come talk and answer questions? We stand ready to do that at your request. Just contact any member of the board or leave a message on our voice mail (315-446-0557).

YOUR FCA of CNY GETS MORE SOCIAL

If you haven’t looked at the website lately (fcacny.org) you may be surprised. Features such as “Odds in the End” has a rich array of news articles--some humorous, most informative—that grows as members contribute to it. And our FACEBOOK presence makes it easy for us to share current news about the organization and, we hope, make a younger generation aware of the organization and its mission.

It Won't Kill You to Talk About Death

Over the past decade groups of diverse strangers have been coming together to enjoy coffee, tea, cocoa and cake while discussing death and issues relevant to death. These couple-of-hour get togethers called *Death Cafes* have no leaders, no agenda, no absolute closing time, and they simply go where they may.

Despite the title *Death Cafe*, it is not unusual for participants leaving with a sense of, "That was really a good time."

Why would you want to sit and talk about death? Many people find that talking about inevitable issues such as funerals, eulogies, obituaries, burial vs. cremation, hospice, parents summer cabins, do not resuscitate orders, and many many more topics is difficult, or even worse with family members, but possible with strangers facing similar circumstances. All these issues may be relevant to your close relatives—or they may concern your own mortality or voyage into diminishing physical and mental status.

There is no expectation of coming away with changed beliefs or positions but exploring any of these issues may well help you better sort out your own feelings.

Having attended a session in Ithaca, (the 11th time they have held a *Cafe*) I came away feeling these were two hours very well spent and, as always, an increased respect for the intelligence and decency of the people around me.

Lanny Freshman

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE TO FIND
MORE VALUABLE INFORMATION:
fcacny.org

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS

We rely on your donations to continue the work of the organization. We thank these members who made contributions since the last newsletter:

Catherine Bart-Patterson, William Billingham, Peter Garner-Richards, Nan Gartner, Michael Goins, Jane Guiles, Elizabeth Haswell, Joyce Homan, Ann Lewis, Margaret Muller, Mildred Owens, Caroline Palmer, Audrey Salzman, Vicky Schipper, Janet & Warren, Solomon, David Tatham, Ann Tussing, Richard Weiskopf and Linda DeStefano.

MAKING END-OF-LIFE CAKE

Our lives seem more complicated today than a decade ago. We have more "things" to keep track of. We now depend upon a digital world our parents couldn't imagine. Making sure we know where all this ends up in the end is increasingly worrisome. Your FCA of CNY provides you with a simple Preference Form to assure your last wishes are carried out. But a new free service called CAKE goes a step further with your last wishes: storing them securely online. CAKE's mission statement says, "Proactive end-of-life planning allows us to live more purposefully in the present—to appreciate relationships, celebrate accomplishments and realize goals for the future."

When you create an account in CAKE, you specify what you want done with your real and digital life in clearly laid out categories such as Health Care Proxy, Living Will, Power of Attorney, Digital Legacy Plan, How to Remember me, Bucket List, etc. Why leave all of this treasure in the care of an online service? Because it can't get lost you can share it easily with family, friends, lawyers. Your CAKE information is simple to update whenever you want. "Keep Important People" in the loop is CAKE's most innovative feature. Anybody who needs to know what you want before and after you go can be added to this list and informed when any changes are made. Making this cake is...sorry, but you knew it was coming...a piece of cake.

PETER MOLLER

FCA of CNY Annual Meeting

Saturday, May 18, 2:00

Park Central Presbyterian Meeting Room (handicapped accessible)

504 East Fayette Street., Syracuse

Parking is available across the street and behind the church.

Don't miss this summer's annual meeting! This year's program will feature Mr. Herbert John Engman, President, Board of Trustees of the Greensprings Natural Cemetery in Newfield, NY (just outside of Ithaca). There will be an opportunity to ask questions of Mr. Engman and the FCA of CNY board members, chat with other members and enjoy summer-time refreshments. This meeting is open to the public, so please bring friends or relatives who might be interested in the mission of your FCA of CNY.



One of the most frequent inquiries on our answering machine is about green or "natural burials." Greensprings is one of the oldest natural cemeteries in the country. Mr. Engman will talk not only about the history of the natural cemetery movement but also about the requirements for a green burial.

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I want 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 FCA of CNY are not yet tax deductible.

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