



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/

WINTER 2019

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK Jenifer Breyer

I had a wonderful experience yesterday. Totally unexpected and random, it bears sharing. I was visiting overnight with six folks at a bucolic home/property in Manchester Center, VT. They had bid on and won a week in the place and were making the most of every tourist opportunity throughout the region.

One guest, someone I had never met before, and I chatted as he was preparing breakfast at the center island in the kitchen. I learned he was a life-long teacher and academic administrator who had served in a number of locations in the south, having begun life in the midwest and now living in "retirement" in San Diego.

Not at all interested in slowing down, he studied to become a personal trainer for seniors, and he has opened a business on his property in San Diego. He spoke at some length about exercises especially helpful to the ageing, including how they can be managed with little or no fancy equipment and how folks who never thought they could "stay with it" find them helpful and, yes, fun! Of course, as trainer and trainee interact, the often-gentle movement encourages lots of conversation.

I get to my point: As this gentleman, newly embarking upon his seventies, spoke of his recently deceased mother who he lost at an advanced age, this was a perfect time to introduce him to Funeral Consumers Alliance of CNY and National, its mission and programs. He was immediately interested. Better still, he had something more to bring to the moment. He said his mother had left a book filled with all her

wishes, from asking to be cremated to plans for the memorial event, including information about the trust she had established to facilitate matters after her death.

He beamed, saying, "We didn't have to do a thing. It was all there for us. Our job was to do what she asked, and spend our time celebrating her and her life. There was no reason for disagreement between siblings and, all together, she had continued to take care of us even after her passing. What a gift that was!"

This excellent experience reminded me to stop preaching to others about such things and get about seeing after my own such affairs. I hope this gives you readers a bit of a prod, too, and encourages you to reach out to FCA of CNY if you have questions about how to move forward in a direction to assure a result similar to that shared by my new friend.

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.

LOOK FOR YOUR FCA OF
CNY AT THE 2019
PLOWSHARES.
NOTTINGHAM HIGH SCHOOL
DECEMBER 7 & 8

OBIT? WRITE IT YOURSELF?

You probably know that the newspaper no longer writes the obituary; you and your family must do it. **Funeral Consumers Alliance** can help you.

The **Community Foundation of Central New York** and members of **FCA** have teamed up and will give an interesting workshop for your group. Jan Lane, Development Director at the Foundation gives 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. Longtime volunteer for FCA. Joyce Homan 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. Length of workshop can vary – an hour or more with refreshments included. For information call: Joyce Homan 315-446-7211

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fcacny@gmail.com

Dead Bodies and Disease: The “Danger” That Doesn’t Exist

Funeral Consumers Alliance

Funeral industry members frequently claim that dead bodies are a source of contagion to the public, and that embalming is necessary to prevent the spread of disease. Some will also claim that unembalmed dead bodies must be buried in a casket and a vault to prevent “contamination” of groundwater. These assertions are not true. The myth of contagion from dead bodies is one of the most persistent of the American funeral industry, and it's important for journalists to know there is no evidence, peer-reviewed or otherwise, to justify it. In fact, there is overwhelming scientific evidence against it. This guide should help you separate funeral myth from fact.

It's important to remember that this is not a matter of opinion, but of facts. "He said, she said" stories are not appropriate. We often see articles that read like this:

"John Q. funeral director says embalming helps prevent the spread of disease, but consumer advocates say this isn't so."

This is not an accurate way to present the issue. It's not just that consumer advocates “say it isn't so”; the **Centers for Disease Control**, the **World Health Organization**, and the **Pan-American Health Organization** have all published data backing up our position. By contrast, there are no studies showing a public health threat from unembalmed bodies. There is no evidence of rampant disease in the countries around the world (almost all of them) where embalming is seldom, if ever, practiced. The next time a funeral industry member claims dead bodies are dangerous, ask for evidence and documentation.

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 a copy 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).

GREEN BURIAL NEARBY? IT'S FINALLY AVAILABLE!

Joyce Homan

When death occurs, it is natural that the first thought goes to planning a service. That done, it sometimes comes as a surprise that there is much more to do. Burial requires choosing a cemetery, plot, opening and closing of the grave, the choice of marker or monument and the many attendant requirements and regulations—not to mention the cost. Even for those who choose cremation, there is the question of what to do with the ashes. (often called cremains) Scatter? A marker? Placing cremains with an already buried loved one? (Yes, you can).

At last we have a gem of a cemetery nearby on Route #173 east of Jamesville near Gates Road. It is the Walnut Grove Cemetery dating back to the Revolutionary War and the early Jamesville residents. It has the peace of rural upstate New York and is beautifully maintained.

Unlike many cemeteries it has an up to date web site. Simply *Google*: Walnut Grove Cemetery Jamesville and you'll find full disclosure on its history, Board of Directors, prices, availability and most interesting of all, "Burial of a human body in a shroud is allowed without a casket." This information should be of interest to FCA of CNY members who often search for the simplest, uncomplicated way to deal with end of life issues.

Where to find information in CNY

Nancy Aureli

Throughout life I am constantly looking for new information, experiences, and acquaintances and I bet you are too. If so then you may want to check out a senior information fair near you. Community Living Advocates held two new senior fairs in partnership with LeMoyne College. At our LeMoyne Senior Information Fair we had singers, dancers, sound therapy and so much more. Attendees could also meet the wide variety of vendors we had including the Funeral Consumers Alliance of CNY, Loving Transition, local senior centers, travel companies, painting with a twist, the Landmark Theatre and many more.

If you are into experiencing life, stop out to our 2020 LeMoyne Senior Fair that will be held May 28, 2020 at LeMoyne College in the campus center. You can also find information on senior fairs throughout Onondaga County on the Community Living Advocates website:

www.communitylivingadvocates.com



President Jenifer Breyer and Treasurer Susan Rainey staff the FCA of CNY booth at a recent outreach event.

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, Richard Guyer, 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.

JOIN THE DEATH CAFÉ MOVEMENT

Have you ever wanted to spend some time speaking openly and candidly about death? I have and I also want to bring about death awareness. Therefore, I held my second Death Café on October 24th at Hope Café Coffee & Tea House in Liverpool, New York. At a Death Café people drink tea, eat cake and discuss death. A Death Café’s aim is to increase awareness of death in order to help people make the most of their (finite) lives. We had approximately 10 people in attendance and most people contributed and we all walked away with an experience like no other. If you’d like to talk about death in a welcoming and safe space look for the next Death Café that will be coming in April 2020.

Nancy Aureli

POWER OF ATTORNEY AND THE BANKS

We have recently heard that sometimes banks are not honoring people who have the Power of Attorney. While new Power of Attorney provisions require a laundry list of which transactions the Power of Attorney can exercise, banks are still required to honor old Power of Attorney forms. If the bank refuses to honor your Power of Attorney, ask to speak to that person’s supervisor so you are dealing with someone who has the power to accept your form. In addition, inform the supervisor that you are willing to have your attorney call the bank or write a letter to the bank to inform the bank of the validity of your form. If the bank is still not cooperative, ask the bank supervisor to inform you of the proper person your attorney should write or call. If all else fails, have your attorney call or write the bank. Finally, be patient and be somewhat relieved that the bank is making sure your person’s assets are being protected. **Robert Sarason**

The current Price Survey of central New York funeral homes has a new look: easier to read and print! Find it on the website: fcaeny.org

Consider making a contribution to our national organization, FCA. The address: Friends of FCA 33 Patchen Road South Burlington, VT 05403

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