



FCACO

Funeral Consumers Alliance
of Central Ohio

*A Memorial Society
"as defined by the FTC"*

P.O. Box 14835
Columbus, Ohio 43214

www.funeralsohio.org • 614.263.4632

News

FCACO Mission Statement

- To promote end-of-life planning and preparation
- To outline practical steps to be taken before death
- To inform and instruct the public concerning the funeral industry
- To offer reasonably priced options for dealing with remains at death
- To monitor the funeral industry on a local and statewide level
- To maintain public awareness and wariness through action, education and publications

Funeral Advice You Can Trust

Founded in 1953, FCACO is one of more than 75 similar alliances across the country working in conjunction with the national Funeral Consumers Alliance. We are run by volunteers and have no connection with the funeral industry, or any religious group. Membership is open to all in our service area that includes Columbus, Springfield, Yellow Springs, Dayton and outlying areas.

FCACO invites your inquiries. Call (614) 263-4632 or visit us at www.funeralsohio.org.

2015-2016 Board Members

Past President: Alice Faryna

President: Vivian Fiscus

Treasurer: Celia Elkins

Secretary: Su Ann Farnlacher

Membership Secretary: Cathy Elkins

Directors: Pat Hoffman,

Frank Timmons,

Mary Lou Mac Donald

FCACO—Serving the Central Ohio Community since 1953

Green Burial...What is it?

by Cathy Elkins

A green burial is an alternative to cremation or a traditional burial. Greenburials.org defines it as: "Interment of the body in a biodegradable casket, shroud, or a favorite blanket". The Green Burial Council offers certification to cemeteries and funeral homes which use plant-based biodegradable containers and non-toxic cleansing/preserving products. A complete list of certified providers, listed by state, can be found at www.greenburialcouncil.org.

Cremation is seen as more environmentally friendly and cheaper than traditional burial. However it does contribute to air pollution. Embalming, expensive sealed caskets, and burial vaults are not necessary or required by law. Vaults are required by most cemeteries. A green cemetery or nature preserve does not have these requirements.

Ohio currently has four Green Burial Council certified cemeteries

and 20 funeral homes. Central Ohio has one cemetery in Yellow Springs. Kokosing Nature Preserve in Gambier has applied for certification. Costs include fees for interment rights and burial site preparation. These fees can add up to over \$4000 depending on the day of the week and the particular cemetery.

Since trends in a body's final disposition are changing, funeral homes and cemeteries will be adapting. If you prefer a green burial, be sure to include this in your pre-planning documents so your family can inquire about these options at the appropriate time.

As a final note the buyer should beware. Josh Slocum, Director of the National Funeral Consumers Alliance in Vermont advises "marketers know if they can call something 'environmentally' they can charge more."

*FCACO attempts to verify all information in this newsletter,
but cannot guarantee all.*

Legal questions should be directed to your attorney.



Advance Directives

by Alice Faryna

What happens if you are critically ill or injured and unable to communicate your wishes regarding medical treatment? In the absence of properly executed written instructions, medical providers must initiate life saving and support procedures. Legal experts recommend that every adult, not just the elderly or infirm, should prepare advance directives. These include:

Living Will: You define which medical treatments you want or do not want. Two physicians must certify you have a condition specified in your state's law on living wills.

Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care: You designate a person to make medical decisions if you cannot and your physician confirms your inability to do so. If you regain decision-making capacity, the power reverts back to you.

Be aware that these are not legally binding. Providers may refuse to carry out certain orders. These documents are state-specific. You can download the forms and instructions from the following web site: www.caringinfo.org.

Emergency medical technicians cannot honor living wills or health care powers of attorney. Once emergency personnel have been called, they must do what is necessary to stabilize a person for transfer to a hospital.

Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) orders are a special form of advance directive. In Ohio the appropriate form can be obtained from the Department of Health: www.odh.ohio.gov/odhprograms/dspc/dnr/dnr1.aspx

This form must be signed by a physician, certified nurse practi-

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From the President What Goes Around Comes Around

by Vivian Fiscus

The old saying 'what goes around comes around' is certainly true. In this newsletter you will notice that we have focused on the 'newest' trend in funerals, the green funeral. This is truly a return to 'ashes to ashes, dust to dust' approach in caring for the dead.

I was discussing FCACO with my daughter who had once expressed an interest in cremation. She surprised me when she said, 'I don't want to be cremated. I want to be wrapped in a cloth and buried in the ground at the base of a tree'. Glad we spoke because if anything had happened I would have gone the cremation route. So, the younger generation is looking at the funeral industry with a jaundiced eye and opting for their ancestors' burial ways. Meanwhile, I need to get her a membership in FCACO so her wishes will be

written down for her survivors.

Funeral homes will be jumping on the band wagon to offer 'green burial' or 'environmentally friendly' funerals along with their other services. Please be aware the requirements for a green funeral are different. For instance, many green burial sites prohibit embalming fluids and concrete vaults. They also require that all burial materials be biodegradable. Carefully scan the funeral home's price list to make sure you purchase only the services you need as well as following the rules of the selected cemetery.

On another note, we need several volunteers to serve on our board. The current board is filled with fun folks who would like to add a few new faces around the meeting table. Please feel free to call me (614-486-8525) or email me: vfiscus@gmail.com if you are interested in joining us.

Urns for Cremains

by Su Ann Farnlacher

Funerary, cinerary, or burial urns have been used for centuries all over the world. A quick tour of the internet shows zillions of sites wanting to sell brass, wood and pewter urns. Prices range from \$39.99 to \$599, even in discount stores. For those favoring "going green", there are biodegradable containers made of paper, salt, cellulose, even contain dirt and a seed for a tree. According to a Funeral Consumers Alliance newsletter, unscrupulous crematories will stamp words such as "Temporary Container—Not Suitable for Long Term Storage" on the initial plastic or cardboard container. Don't be fooled; Grandma's ashes can be placed in her favorite cookie jar if an attractive container is desired. If interment is planned, most cemeteries require urn vaults costing an additional \$59 to \$599.

Burial Vaults

by Vivian Fiscus

After you finish with the details of the funeral and the casket you will probably have one step left...the purchase of a burial vault or grave liner.

Before you purchase this item make sure your cemetery requires one. State law does not require burial vaults or grave liners but funeral providers may not tell you this. Cemeteries often require them as it prevents the ground from caving in as the casket deteriorates over time.

However, given that many of today's caskets are made of plastic or metal, casket deterioration will be minimal. Vaults/liners surround the casket with concrete or another material and come with a warranty of protective strength. There is no need to buy the most expensive vault/liner as they do not prevent the eventual decomposition of human remains. It is illegal for

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Understanding Alkaline Hydrolysis

by Pat Hoffman

One of the purposes of FCACO is to inform the public of changes in the funeral industry. On the horizon is pending legislation to permit alkaline hydrolysis, aka biocremation, as an alternative disposition method in Ohio. Alkaline hydrolysis is a chemical process using heat, lye and pressure to reduce the body to liquid and bone fragments. These bone fragments are similar to cremated ashes and can be returned to families. The alkaline hydrolysis process resembles the chemical decomposition that happens when a body is buried. Alkaline hydrolysis, originally patented in the U.S. Patent Office in 1888 by Amos Herbert Hobson of Middlesex, England, was intended as a process to treat animal carcasses yielding a product suitable for use as a fertilizer.

Proponents of alkaline hydrolysis cite its environmentally friendly features. There is no need for caskets or burial vaults; it neutralizes embalming chemicals, toxic drugs such as chemotherapy medicines and infectious organisms; it uses less heat than cremation, produces less carbon dioxide, and no mercury emissions from dental fillings. Opponents say that not enough is known about possible health and safety issues and this is not a respectful way to dispose of human remains.

Ohio House Bill 36 would add alkaline hydrolysis to sections of the Ohio Revised Code addressing body disposition. It was introduced by State Representative Wes Retherford and is currently in the Ohio House Government Committee on Accountability and Oversight. (www.legislature.ohio.gov). According to Matthews International, the makers of BioCremations, eight states have approved legislation allowing for alkaline hydrolysis. (www.fcaofmn.org)



We Thrive on Your Generosity!

FCACO has never required annual dues to maintain membership, although some affiliates do so. Our annual budget, like yours, faces increased costs for postage, rent and telephone. Printing costs are a major budget item. We have no paid staff. Last year, our ambitious project to expand the area covered by the survey of funeral costs in central Ohio required not only additional volunteers, but increased printing and postage costs. We want to keep you informed with twice yearly newsletters which are mailed. Email is not an option since we have few email addresses.

This year, an anonymous donor makes it possible to double your gift! The first \$500 in donations, will be matched. Your tax-deductible donations, at any level you can afford, are welcome. Please consider a gift to FCACO this season.



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- This is an interactive page.
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Contact Information on Important Resources

(Please keep this in a handy place)

Cook and Son–Pallay Funeral Home
(in Columbus) **(614) 444-7861**

Conroy Funeral Home
(in Springfield) **(937) 324-4973**

Body Donation at OSU
(614) 292-4832

for forms:

<http://go.osu.edu/bodydonation>

LOOP

(Lifeline of Ohio Organ Procurement)
(includes cornea donations)

(877) 223-6667

www.lifelineofohio.org

Franklin County Probate Court
advanced directives including
“Funeral Agent” form

www.franklincountyohio.gov/probate

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or <http://www.funeralsohio.org>
(planning forms, copies of old
newsletters, funeral home surveys
and other information)

Advance Directives

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tioner or certified specialist. There are currently two types of DNR orders: “DNR Comfort Care” and “DNR Comfort Care—Arrest.” Emergency personnel from the fire or police department must honor this directive if a copy is shown to them.

The original copies of these directives should be filed with your other legal documents. Copies should be given to your medical providers, persons named as surrogates in the documents and any family members who need to know. Review your documents periodically and make changes, especially if your designated surrogates can no longer serve in that capacity.

Burial Vaults

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funeral homes to claim they will keep water, dirt or other debris from penetrating the casket.

Before purchasing a vault/liner from the funeral home you should check with the cemetery to see if they or a third party dealer will offer you a better price. As usual, compare prices from several sources before you select a model.