

We are pleased to offer a presentation by Annie Ross
of Funeral Consumers Alliance of Vermont

CARING FOR YOUR LOVED ONES
at
THE TIME OF DEATH



Join us for a presentation and talk about the options available to all for this transformative time in the experience of being human. Learn about sustainable, noncommercial, home-based care, and the various requirements and benefits.

Funeral Consumers Alliance of Vermont
Annual Meeting ~ Saturday, April 25, 2015

Norwich Congregational Church

15 Church St, Norwich, VT 05055

Beverages & light refreshment at 12:30 pm

Annual Meeting starts at 1 PM

All are welcome ~ no charge



FUNERAL CONSUMERS ALLIANCE OF VERMONT

INFORMATION HOTLINE: 802.223-8140
EMAIL: FCA-VT@MYFAIRPOINT.NET
ON THE WEB AT WWW.VERMONTFCA.ORG

APRIL 2015

Every other year Funeral Consumers Alliance of Vermont conducts a survey of funeral homes to obtain current information about costs and services available here in Vermont. 2015 is the year for our biennial survey and this year we'll be adding information about establishments that provide direct cremation service — where family members can be directly involved in bringing their loved one on this final journey. We would be delighted to have your assistance gathering this information or putting the survey together. Once completed later this year, the survey will be available on our website (www.vermontfca.org) and, if requested, in hard copy by mail.

This past year we've made presentations at libraries, senior centers, and churches. We've talked about making sure that you don't take your final wishes to the grave with you; we've talked about families caring themselves for their loved ones after they have died, the challenges and the gifts of doing so. And we've had the pleasure of sharing information with staff at an area agency on the aging to assist them in working with elders and their family members and caregivers as they make choices in caring for their family members after death, in burial and cremation arrangements, and in funeral and memorial service arrangements. FCA-VT vice-president Mary Alice Bisbee testified on green burial legislation and continues to be a wonderful resource (and advocate) for folks in Central Vermont, assisting them in completing advanced directives to assure that what happens when they are ill and after their death follows *their* wishes.

As we mentioned last year, many senior centers around the state that would welcome similar assistance for those their participants. Is this something you'd like to help with? Would you want some training? Would you like a presentation for your church, or at a local organization? Contact us.

Please visit our website for the Funeral Consumers Alliance of Vermont at www.vermontfca.org — you'll find links to helpful resources, including Vermont's Advance Directive and where to register it, information on home burial requirements from the Vermont Department of Health (at its link to the *Digging Deep* publication), many pamphlets from the national Funeral Consumers Alliance, the Funeral Ethics Network, the Federal Trade Commission, and links to news media as well. Simply click on "here" at the bottom of the "Resources" page of our website, or use this link: www.vermontfca.org/resources/useful-pamphlets-and-publications.

We also continue to be interested in your thoughts about priorities for Vermont Funeral Consumers Alliance. We're hoping that a bill pending in the Vermont legislature authorizing natural burial grounds will be approved this year (see more inside) and that we're able to provide greater outreach to younger folks to assist in advance decision-making for themselves and family members. We look forward to hearing your thoughts by mail, by phone, by email, and at our annual meeting on April 25th.

Alexandra Thayer, President, FCA-VT

How to get to the Norwich Congregational Church: 15 Church St, Norwich, VT 05055.

The Norwich Congregational Church is just off the green in Norwich, Vermont. There is parking in front of the church on Church Street, along Main Street (US Rte 5). Handicapped parking and access are off Main Street, behind Tracy Hall and to the south side of the church.

Norwich is just about 6/10s of a mile from I-91. Take Exit 13 to US Rte 5 North (traveling from the south on I-91, Exit 13 takes you to VT Rte 10A (Main Street), turn left and VT Rte 10A becomes US Rte 5 North in .2 miles). Continue .6 miles to Main & Church Streets, then turn right onto Church Street.

On Green Burial and Natural Burial Grounds...

Last year at our annual meeting, we shared the film, *Dying Green*, the story of a natural reserve in South Carolina, where bodies are being buried without caskets or embalming. This film was about Dr. Billy Campbell's vision of using green burials to conserve his own land and his dream of conserving one million acres of land as green burial grounds, using our own deaths to fund land conservation and create wildlife preserves. <http://dyinggreenthefilm.com/> Another interesting film on natural burial grounds is *A Will for the Woods* about the preparation of musician and psychiatrist Clark Wang & his partner for Wang's own green burial. <http://www.awillforthewoods.com/>

At the beginning of the the 2015 legislative session, H. 25 was introduced in the Vermont House of Representatives to authorize "natural burial grounds." The House committees considering this bill held hearings and received a good deal of testimony — a big improvement over the past biennial session 2013-2014 where another bill authorizing natural burial grounds didn't get off the ground.

Some significant amendments were made to the bill as originally introduced, but H. 25 as amended passed the House and was sent on to the Vermont Senate on March 20, 2015. There it was assigned to the Senate Health and Welfare Committee whose chair is Sen. Claire Ayers. Other members of this committee, in case you'd like to contact them about this bill, are Sen. Virginia "Ginny" Lyons, Sen. Anthony Pollina, Sen. Dick McCormack, and Sen. Brian Collamore. Go to <http://legislature.vermont.gov/people/all/2016/Senate> for contact information for Vermont senators. Go to <http://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2016/H.25> for up-to-date information on H. 25's progress in the Legislature.

Death Cafés in Vermont

As we mentioned last year, all across Vermont folks have been meeting in "Death Cafés" gather to eat cake, drink tea and discuss death. The objective is 'to increase awareness of death with a view to helping people make the most of their (finite) lives.'

And lots of people in Vermont are using these group-directed discussions of death with no agenda, objectives or themes to explore their own feelings about this often-difficult topic.

Death Cafes are offered alongside refreshing drinks and nourishing food:

- On a not for profit basis
- In an accessible, respectful and confidential space
- With no intention of leading people to any conclusion, product or course of action

The Montpelier Death Café meets the third Thursday of every month at the North Branch Café, at 41 State Street in Montpelier, 5:30-7 PM. Their next meeting is on April 16th. Check out their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/montpelierdeathcafe> & register at <http://deathcafe.com/deathcafe/958/#booking> On April 21, 2015 a Death Café will be held at the Johnson Town Hall on Main Street, 5:30-7 PM. To register, contact the organizer at <http://deathcafe.com/deathcafe/1615/#booking> .

Death Cafes have recently been held in Vermont at East Montpelier, Pawlet, Burlington, Norwich, West Rutland, Johnson, and Rutland. You can find more information on upcoming Death Cafés in Vermont at <http://deathcafe.com/search/?location=vermont&deathcafe=deathcafe&country>

Thanking you for your support

Funeral Consumers Alliance of Vermont appreciates your financial support. It allows us to be a resource to you and others both for planning ahead to assure that our desires and those of our loved ones are carried out at the end of life. Your contributions help us put together our biennial survey of Vermont funeral homes and to share that in print and online. Your contributions help us to provide outreach and educational presentations to Vermont groups and organizations, and to make information available through the website, by phone, and by paper copy.

You may also want to consider a donation in memory of a loved one. And contributions from churches and other organizations are always welcome.

Please be generous!

FCA-VT Treasurer's Report 1/1-12/31/14

Balance on hand Jan 1, 2014 \$1536.95

INCOME	
Contributions	\$1405.25
New Memberships	\$ 110.00
Books & publications	\$ 10.00
Total	\$1525.25 \$1525.25
EXPENDITURES	
National FCA	\$ 258.78
Postage, PO Box	\$ 67.80
Copying & printing	\$ 57.15
Newsletter printing & mailing	\$ 803.08
Annual meeting	\$ 156.93
Travel reimbursement	\$ 111.50
Website & design	\$ 18.00
Total	\$1473.24 -1473.24
Balance as of 12/31/14	\$1588.96

Please make checks payable to FCA-VT and send to P.O. Box 144, Plainfield, VT 05667-0144.

Your contributions are tax-deductible.

___ YES! I'm renewing my support for the Funeral Consumers Alliance of VT and its mission of promoting and protecting a consumer's right to choose meaningful, dignified, and affordable final arrangements: funeral or memorial services, care of the body and disposition of human remains (including burial, cremation or donation.) I'm enclosing my voluntary contribution of

— a cup of coffee a week at \$ ___ a cup for 52 weeks \$ ___ total
(at \$1 a cup, that equals \$52.00 total)

I'll stretch a wee-bit ___ \$1.10 a cup/\$57.20 ___ \$1.15 a cup/\$59.80 ___ \$1.20 a cup/\$62.40

OR

___ \$15 ___ \$25 ___ \$50 ___ \$100 or \$ ___

___ I'm NEW. Please enroll me and add me to your contact list. I'm enclosing \$ ___

___ I'm making a donation in memory/honor of ___ in the amount of \$ ___

___ I have time and interest in helping this organization. Please contact me about volunteer opportunities.

Name: _____ Telephone: _____
Address _____ E-mail: _____
