



ONE FOOT IN...

FUNERAL CONSUMERS ALLIANCE OF HUMBOLDT
AN ALLIANCE FOR END OF LIFE PLANNING

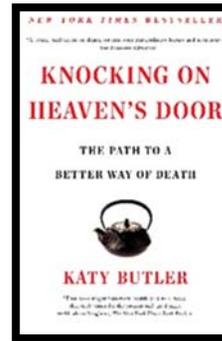
SPRING 2015

FCAH celebrates 50 years “Knocking on Heaven’s Door” in Humboldt County!

For this year’s Annual Meeting the Funeral Consumers Alliance of Humboldt will commemorate 50 years of community service in advocacy, education, resource and referral with an outstanding program! We are very pleased to welcome award-winning journalist **KATY BUTLER**, a National Magazine Award finalist and winner of the “Science in Society” prize from the National Association of Science Writers. Katy Butler has written about neuroscience, medicine, Buddhism and human behavior for the New Yorker, The New York Times, Vogue, Mother Jones, The L.A. Times, MORE, and The Washington Post. She was a staff reporter for twelve years for the San Francisco Chronicle where she covered health care, social issues, riots and the human face of the AIDS epidemic.



Her new book, “**Knocking on Heaven’s Door: the Path to a Better Way of Death**”, was named “One of the Ten Best Memoirs of 2013” and “A Big Book for Fall 2013” by Publishers Weekly, which gave it a starred review, as well as the “New York Times Notable Book of the Year”.



This soulful memoir speaks of shepherding her parents through their final declines. Its provocative thesis is that modern medicine, by single-mindedly pursuing maximum longevity, often creates more suffering than it prevents. (Scribner/Simon & Schuster, Sept. 10, 2013.)

“Knocking on Heaven’s Door” is a thoroughly researched and compelling mix of personal narrative and hard-nosed reporting that captures just how flawed care at the end of life has become. My hope is that this book might goad the public into pressuring their elected representatives to further transform health care from its present crisis-driven, reimbursement-driven model to one that truly cares for the patient and the family”

~~ Katy Butler, author

Board of Directors

President

Virginia (Gina) Subia Belton

Secretary

Nancy Ortiz

Treasurer,

Lois Crawford

Member Services

Jan Rowen

Denise George

Lionel Ortiz

Aisha Coriell

Board Candidate

Virginia (Gina) Subia Belton

Advisors To The Board

Charlotte August

Karen Roemke

Tracy Jordan French

Gretchen Ziegler

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE	2
MEMBER SERVICES	4
TREASURER'S REPORT	6
DO YOU REMEMBER	7
DEATH CAFÉ	8
LEGISLATION	9

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



"I'm the one that's got to die when it's time for me to die, so let me live my life the way I want to."

~~ Jimi Hendrix, "Axis Bold as Love"

Greetings members of the Funeral Consumers Alliance of Humboldt and Happy Anniversary!

I am honored to have been invited to lead the Board of Directors as your incoming President for the Funeral Consumers Alliance of Humboldt at the start of such an auspicious year—our 50th Anniversary.

Yes, the FCAH has been in service to our community for 50 years now! Since 1965, the FCAH has served Humboldt County as a consumer advocacy group, dedicated to protecting a consumer's right to choose a meaningful, dignified, affordable funeral. Additionally, we have been of support in providing resource and referral toward making these meaningful burial choices, as well as ensuring thoughtful community education. This year's Annual Meeting will have a definite celebratory mood and the FCAH will be hosting a very special guest to kick off a year of community events!

As a former professor of Community Public Health, now in private practice at Redwood Palliative Psychology providing psychological support, education and consulting, I have been engaged with our community along the continuum of care in end of life relationships for more than twenty years. My passion for end of life care planning as sacred work, with a purpose toward honorable closure, has allowed me to tend to the soul of our community in our dying time and I look forward to continuing in this way, with the graceful and committed Board of Directors at FCAH.

"The fear of death follows from the fear of life. A man who lives fully is prepared to die at any time."

~~ Mark Twain

Advanced Care Planning. As an educator and a clinician, I have spent a great deal of time facilitating family discussions around the importance of advanced care planning. For many in contemporary western American society, it is a taboo subject to discuss how one wishes to be tended to when we die—the gift of Advanced Care Planning can demystify this process for our families and loved ones. It helps to ask, "What Is Advance Care Planning?" According to the National Institute on Aging at the National Institutes of Health, planning ahead is not just about old age. At any age, one may experience a health condition that leaves you too ill to make your own healthcare decisions.

"Advance Care Planning involves learning about the types of decisions that might need to be made, considering those decisions ahead of time, and then letting others know about your preferences, often by putting them into an Advance Directive. An Advance Directive is a legal document that goes into effect only if you are incapacitated and unable to speak for yourself. This could be the result of disease or severe injury—no matter how old you are. It helps others know what type of medical care you want. It also allows you to express your values and desires related to end-of-life care. You might think of an Advance Directive as a living document—one that you can adjust as your situation changes because of new information or a change in your health." (March, 2015 from www.nia.nih.gov)

Getting Started. We are fortunate that we have many ways to enter into this conversation, the first being with our families and primary care provider. Other ways to explore this topic can be found

on the Humboldt DHHS Mental Health website for “Network of Care”, just go to the following link: <http://humboldt.networkofcare.org/> You will find an easy tool for “non-interactive” and “interactive” decision points for delving into your advanced care preferences and choices. This tool can assist you in finding out what your own understanding and feelings are regarding your end of life choices.

Another wonderful community resource in Advanced Care Planning is Hospice and we are fortunate to have two supportive agencies in our community: Hospice of Humboldt and Heart of the Redwoods Hospice. **Hospice of Humboldt** holds an “Advanced Directive” Workshop quarterly, the next one will be held on Saturday, May 2, from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Free and open to the public. For more info contact Jessica at 707-497-6260 x105.

“When you're dead, they really fix you up. I hope to hell when I do die somebody has sense enough to just dump me in the river or something. Anything except sticking me in a goddamn cemetery. People coming and putting a bunch of flowers on your stomach on Sunday, and all that crap. Who wants flowers when you're dead? Nobody.” ~ J.D. Salinger, Catcher in the Rye

Our dying time while universal, is a most intimate and individual experience. This final destiny rests unknown to us, a mysterious landscape and wild territory indescribable, until we encounter this place on our own. What is more, once we are delivered to this uncultivated terrain, what is being called forth from all those in relationship to this final destiny? It is my aspiration to be as open as possible to this wild territory that I may, as the poet E.B. White wrote, be open to wonderment!

“I carry death in my left pocket. Sometimes I take it out and talk to it: "Hello, baby, how you doing? When you coming for me? I'll be ready.” ~ Charles Bukowski

Virginia (Gina) Subia Belton MA PhD (c), President FCAH

Thinking about Green Burial?

by Jan Rowen

This past year there were two FCA members who had made it clear their wish to have a green burial at the Blue Lake Cemetery, the only local cemetery to offer green burials. Many people in Humboldt County have stated that given the option of a green burial vs. cremation they would choose a green burial. The problem with that is, we do not have a dedicated green, or natural, cemetery. At the Blue Lake Cemetery there is a designated area set aside for green burials; but, the space is limited and the lots cannot be pre-purchased. The lots are sold on an as needed basis. That said, I think we all need to put our collective heads together and brainstorm ideas for a green burial/natural cemetery space that would work.

We have available to us a video titled "A Will for the Woods" that recently aired on the PBS program America Reframed. It is one hour long. The film follows a man, diagnosed with incurable cancer, who wanted to make his very last act meaningful. It describes a new way of dying in America where environmentalism meets the funeral industry.

At the Annual Meeting on May 3rd, I will discuss a time to view it and toss our ideas around. I hope to attract a large number of opinions.

News from the Member Services Secretary

by Jan Rowen

The number of callers this past year has held steady at about 4 per month. One thing I often clear up is the confusion over membership and reduced rates for mortuary services. For over 40 years, FCA of Humboldt had an agreement with Pierce Mortuary and Paul's Chapel to provide our members with reduced prices for a bare bones cremation or burial. In more recent years, we have also had a similar agreement with Goble's Mortuary as well. This was a draw to many, and along with the reduced rates, came all the other benefits of belonging to the FCA, whether it be in Humboldt County or, if one moved, to another locale.

About 8 years ago Pierce/Paul's was purchased by a large corporation, Service Corporation International (SCI), and we opted out of having an agreement with them. Pierce/Paul's had agreed to honor reduced rates for their services for those who were FCA members prior to ending of our agreement (08-03-2012). Our new membership numbers dropped dramatically when an FCA discount was no longer available to new members through Pierce/Paul's. Currently, Pierce/Paul's will be undergoing a change in ownership. Their general prices and FCA member prices may also change. Goble's Mortuary and Sanders Funeral Home will honor reduced prices for all our members. Other economical options are available through Humboldt Cremation and Ayers Family Cremation, both offer low rates to the general public.

I would like to stress to all the value of belonging to and supporting your local FCA. The phone rings 24/7 in my home and I am almost always available for any questions (I do occasionally get away for a period of time and then direct calls to the website or another board member). I have resources at my fingertips to answer questions concerning anything from green burial options, transporting a body to another locale for burial, directions for casket building (yes, it is legal to build your own casket), what to do now when there has been an unexpected death... We recently had a call and the person was wanting to drop their FCA membership as they thought there was no need to remain a member as there was no longer a discount...

I hope that everyone realizes the value provided by our local, state and national FCAs. We are the voice of the consumer here and at the state and national levels. This year when our coffers were nearly empty, we put out a call to our members for donations and are very thankful to those of you who responded. It allows us to keep the phones ringing and to send a board member to the state and national meetings, to name just a few things.

Please tell your family and friends about the FCA and encourage them to join..

NOTARY SERVICES offered for free. Contact Lois Crawford, Treasurer,
at 707-502-7696 or lois1854@hotmail.com



The Arnolds feign death until the Wagners, sensing awkwardness, are compelled to leave.

WE RELY ON YOUR SUPPORT

We appreciate any contribution you can offer.

_____ Enclosed is my tax-deductible donation of
\$10 _____ \$20 _____ \$50 _____ \$100 _____ Other _____.

_____ Enclosed is a tax-deductible donation of \$ _____ in
memory of: _____.

_____ Yes, I would be willing to consider serving on the Board.

_____ Yes, I can volunteer for a few hours. My interests are:
Public Speaking _____, Writing _____, Computers _____,
Financial _____, Legal Advice _____, Other _____.

_____ No, I can't volunteer right now, but I have some good
ideas. Please contact me to discuss them.

Please Print Your Information:

Name:

Address:

Phone:

Send your reply to:

Funeral Consumers Alliance of Humboldt

P.O. Box 856

Arcata, CA 95518

707-822-8599

info@fcahumboldt.org

HAS YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION CHANGED?

Help us to better serve you by keeping your contact information current. **Please print the following:**

Name:

Old Address:

New Address:

Old Phone Number:

New Phone Number:

Email Address:

I have moved from our service area. Please cancel my membership.

Transfer my membership to the FCA affiliate in my new locale.

Send your reply to:

Funeral Consumers Alliance of Humboldt

P.O. Box 856

Arcata, CA 95518

707-822-8599

info@fcahumboldt.org

Privacy: We never rent, sell or share your information with organizations outside of the Funeral Consumers Alliance.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Year 2014 Highlights

Active Members	892
Inactive Members*	485
Total Members	1377
New members	21

Income from Donations and New memberships**

New Memberships	\$525
Donations (thank you)	\$4359
Total	\$5064

**Members that have not provided change of address information.*

*** All donations and membership fees are now tax-deductible.*

You may view a financial *Profit & Loss Sheet for FY 2014* on our website at www.fcahumboldt.org. If you don't have access to a computer, you may call our Treasurer, Lois Crawford, at 707-502-7696 and she will mail a copy to you.

FUNERAL CONSUMERS ALLIANCE OF HUMBOLDT

AN ALLIANCE FOR END OF LIFE PLANNING

P.O. Box 856 • Arcata, CA 95518

707-822-8599 • fcahumboldt.org

info@fcahumboldt.org

A nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization.

All donations are tax-deductible.

Do You Remember When....A Brief Glimpse Back Over 50 Years

Humboldt Funeral Society (now known as Funeral Consumers Alliance of Humboldt) was organized and incorporated as a non-profit in May 1965. The organizing committee was led by Rev. Andrew Montgomery of the Presbyterian Church in Arcata, and members of the Unitarian Fellowship, including Rev. Lewis McGee and Mrs. Anne Weiss, who acted as the Society's first president. The original membership roll listed 31 members.

Local mortuaries were not receptive to discussing "choices" in funeral planning to achieve our purposes of simplicity, dignity, and above all, economy. One local mortuary manager stated to our volunteer that he wanted "absolutely nothing to do with members of the Funeral Society". Today, we have a membership of 715. We have a written agreement with a cooperating mortuary to serve our members. We work closely with Hospice and we offer information and assistance to anyone who contacts us. We help members make "choices", including home funeral support and information. We have become a voice for the consumer in our County!

Prepared by Wilma Johnston
 Charter Member of HFS
 April 30, 2002

- 1965 Humboldt Funeral Society was incorporated. Memberships numbered 31.
 Membership prices were \$5.00 for a single adult, \$10.00 for a family.
- 1973 Newsletter stated: The Humboldt Funeral Society has grown to 123 memberships, most of them are families. Our members live from Garberville to Brookings and inland to Salyer.
- 1978 Our member's price agreement for mortuary services with Chapel of the Redwoods (now Paul's Chapel) were:
 Direct Cremation - \$301.50 + crematory fees
 Immediate Burial - \$333.50 + cemetery fees (Prices included sales tax of 6%)
- 1985 Celebrated our 20th Anniversary!
 Newsletter included our results from a UC Davis Memorial Society Membership Survey:
 Members responding to survey (by mail) 62% (very good return rate)
 Average length of membership 8.3 years
 Membership transfers from another society 20%
 Occupations represented were the most varied of any Society surveyed.
 Some college experience over 67%
 College graduates about 50%
 Prepared written instructions for survivors 70%
- 2003 Name changed to Funeral Consumers Alliance of Humboldt. Started to address the topic of green burials.
- 2013 We gained 501(c)(3) status as a public benefit, nonprofit corporation from the Internal Revenue Service.
- 2015 And now we are 50 years old!

The Humboldt Funeral Society/Funeral Consumers Alliance of Humboldt has been well-served by hard working, all-volunteer Boards of Directors and seventeen Presidents over our 50 year history. We owe all of you a large debt of gratitude for your forwarding thinking stewardship of our organization. Where we are today is a reflection of that leadership. Thank you for all of your efforts!

Death Café, Humboldt



By Gina Belton, Primary Facilitator at Death Café, Humboldt

“At Death Cafes people drink tea, eat cake and discuss death. Our aim is to increase awareness of death to help people make the most of their (finite) lives.” This is the invitation noted on the home page for Death Café, an international movement of communities hosting each other in intimate conversations around issues of our mortality. The Death Cafe model was developed by Jon Underwood and Sue Barsky Reid, based on the ideas of Bernard Crettaz.

What is very unique about attending a Death Café is that while it may feel supportive, it is not a support group and yes, it may indeed feel therapeutic, though it is not therapy. So what is a Death Café? Death Cafes are always offered:

On a not for profit basis (No Charge!)

In an accessible, respectful and confidential space

With *NO intention of leading people to any conclusion, product or course of action.*

Alongside refreshing drinks and nourishing food – and cake!

At **Death Café, Humboldt**, the topics have ranged from the sorrowful to the practical as well as from the hilarious to the deeply soulful. Death Café, Humboldt was established and is facilitated by Gina Belton MA PhD (c) of Redwood Palliative Psychology. Death Café, Humboldt has been ongoing since early 2014 in various settings which include private homes, the classroom on the HSU campus and in the community.

Regular monthly community gatherings will begin again in May 2015. Death Café, Humboldt will meet at the Humboldt Area Foundation on the second Tuesday of the month unless otherwise noted, from 6:00pm to 8:00pm. Our gathering in May will be Tuesday 5/12/15. Check the Death Café, Humboldt page on the Death Café website or email Gina Belton at redwoodpalliativepsychology@gmail.com for information.

See more at: deathcafe.com and check out our page on the website by typing in “**Death Café, Humboldt CA**” in the search field. Here you will find information for when, where and what time the next Death Café will be held, as well as photos and write ups from various Death Cafes.

Join us!

“Death twitches my ear; ‘Live,’ he says... ‘I’m coming.’” — Virgil



Q: What do you call serious rocks?

A: Grave stones.

Q: What is the definition of a will?

A: A dead giveaway.



California State Legislation Affecting End of Life

by Peggy Dickinson

The 2014 Legislative session passed no bills affecting major changes in funeral or cemetery laws. Bills were passed amending existing laws or codes.

AB 1629 amends the Crime Victim Compensation Law increasing the amount awarded for burial and funeral expenses "...as a direct result of crime..." to \$7500.

AB 2139 amends the Health and Safety Code to require a health care provider to notify a terminally ill patient, and their DPA, of their right to comprehensive information and counseling regarding end-of-life care options: treatment, costs, availability of insurance coverage, and referrals.

AB 2214 amends the Business and Professional Code to require a course in geriatric care as a "...continuing education requirement..." for Emergency Room Doctors.

AB 2279 amends the Insurance Code to allow death sales people to sell up to \$20,000 (an increased amount) worth of insurance or annuities, and allows them to avoid taking the "...full life agent examination..." in order to obtain a license.

AB 1577 requires a person completing a death certificate to record the decedent's sex to reflect their gender identity as reported on other personal legal documents - birth certificates, driver's license, etc.

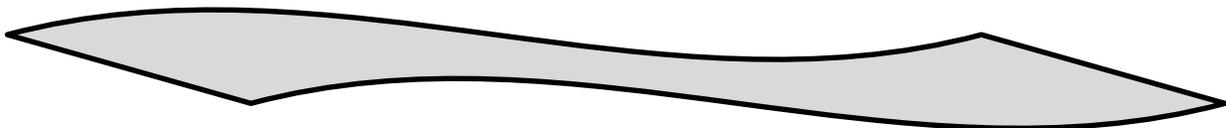
Anyone interested in reading detailed reports on relevant legislation should look at the website www.fca-calif.org where Marjorie Bridges has done thorough summaries.

The Funeral and Cemeteries Bureau has been actively enforcing relevant laws: in 2014 they revoked the licenses of two large cemeteries in Southern California for "persistent violations" - Beloved Care Funeral Service and the Delano Funeral Establishment.

In 2015 a very important bill has been introduced: SB 128 The End-of-Life Option Act. Introduced by State Senators Wolk and Monning with many coauthors. A similar bill was introduced in the Assembly by Assemblyman Eggman, and initially has 3 coauthors. This bill would authorize "...an adult who meets certain qualifications, and who has been determined by his or her attending physician to be suffering from a terminal illness, as defined, to make a request for medication prescribed pursuant to these provisions for the purpose of ending his or her life." This bill would establish the procedures for making these requests. The bill is very detailed and establishes many procedures, limits and requirements. It has been sent to the Health and Safety Committee and the Fiduciary Committee.

The bill (and any bill) can be read by using Google: type in CaliforniaLegislation2015, click on Search Bills, then type in the Bill number, in this case SB 128.

SB 128 will be heard by the Senate Health Committee on March 25th."



FUNERAL CONSUMERS ALLIANCE OF HUMBOLDT

P.O. Box 856 Arcata, CA 95518

(707)822-8599 fcahumboldt.org

**Consumer
advocacy for
dignified and
economic
end of life
care.**



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Nonprofit Organization

U.S. Postage

P A I D

Arcata, CA

Permit No. 32

Funeral Consumers Alliance of Humboldt Annual Meeting

Sunday May 3, 2015

1:00pm - 4:30pm

The Wharfinger Building

1 Marina Way, Eureka

Celebrating our 50th Year

with a special event!

~

Please join us for the Annual Meeting, socializing,
information gathering and refreshments.

~

Free to Members • \$25 for Nonmembers

(or join FCA for the same price)

~

For more information:

fcahumboldt.org • info@fcahumboldt.org • 822-8599

Katy Butler

~

Our Keynote Speaker,
award-winning journalist and author of

***Knocking on Heaven's Door:
The Path to a Better Way of Death***

She will discuss the growing revolution
in end-of-life medicine,
and how to plan and shape your final passage.

You have more choices than you think.

~

*The Keynote presentation will be followed by a
discussion and book signing.*