



In Touch

Bay Area Funeral Consumers Association

www.ba-fca.org

463 College Avenue
P.O. Box 60448
Palo Alto, CA 94306
(650) 321-2109

SPRING 2015 Issue

Everything You Wanted to Know about Donating Your Body

The need for donated bodies for medical education and research will be the topic for the **2015 Annual Conference** of Bay Area Funeral Consumers Association, to be held Sunday, April 12 at the Los Altos Public Library Community Room, 13 South San Antonio Road, Los Altos. Doors will open at 12:45pm for members, guests, and the interested public.

Our speakers will be Chris Dolph, director of Stanford Medical School's Willied Body Program, and Karl McElroy, technician for the Willied Body Program at University of California at San Francisco. They will explain the guidelines for accepting bodies, what the families need to do, how the bodies are used, what costs are involved, and final disposition. Bring your questions and get them answered by the experts!



Chris Dolph

Chris Dolph succeeded his father John Dolph as the Director of the Willied Body Program in the Clinical Anatomy Division at Stanford Medical School. Dolph père was head of the Willied Body Program for 46 years and was a speaker at our annual meeting many years ago.

Chris has been with the department for 21 years and now carries the sole burden of coordinating the Willied Body Program. He manages the process of acquiring human cadavers, arranges their

transportation, embalms the bodies, and works with students in the anatomy lab. He takes calls 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, so that when a body-donor dies, he can provide the necessary swift retrieval.

In 2013 Chris was one of two recipients of the Stanford Spirit Award which honors staff whose work and dedication have helped make Stanford a great institution.

Karl McElroy started his funeral career in the Army as a Mortuary Affairs Specialist. He was attached to an Army Reserve Unit at Oakland Army Base while attending school at San Jose State University, where he became interested in the mortuary business. He left SJSU to attend the San Francisco College of Mortuary Science, where he graduated with an AA Degree in 1997 and then acquired his license as an Embalmer and Funeral Director.



Karl McElroy

He worked at several funeral homes in California from Willits to Mountain View, including time at Roller, Hapgood & Tinney in Palo Alto as their Managing Funeral Director. In 2010, he joined UCSF's Willied Body Program.

Over the past 5 years, he has been amazed to see the advances made in medicine through the use of the body donation program. "I am glad to be able to give the same care to our donors as I did while working in the funeral home," he said.

Inside this issue:

Donating Your Body	1
Board Members Needed	1
Aid in Dying Bill in Legislature	2
Speakers Bureau	2
Good Medical Info Online	2
Tributes	2
2015 Budget	3
BA-FCA is on Facebook	3
County Services Before and After Death	3
Ebola Death Care	4
Job Opening	4
News You Can Use	4

Can you make phone calls, visit mortuaries or scour websites to help us fill out and verify our mortuary price information? We'll provide training materials and guidance. Send an email to office@ba-fca.org or call us at 650-321-2109 if you would like to help out.

What Does It Take to Send a Newsletter?

Gather the news and interesting stuff, write it up, format it, proof-read, get it printed and folded, add inserts, generate a mailing list, remove duplicates, print and attach labels, set up bad-address returns, pay postage and mail. And maintain a website, email, and an office to answer questions. We volunteers do it for love, but much of it still costs money. That's where you come in. If you send us some, we can keep doing it. Thanks!

Carrying on BA-FCA—Board Members Needed

Several members of our Board of Directors are terming out this year and we are in urgent need of new volunteers to replace them. Board terms are three years and a person may serve two terms only. Board members are responsible for maintaining and promoting the organization, attending board meetings 2 hours per month and allocating about another 10 hours or so of committee work per month for non-officers.

We would especially like participation from the East Bay and North Bay, to help represent those areas that we are expanding into.

If you have an interest in helping to run an organization that educates the public about death care issues, and have some time to devote, we welcome your participation on our Board. Please email president@ba-fca.org for further information.

Did you hear about the 83-year-old woman who talked herself out of a speeding ticket by telling the young officer that she had to get there before she forgot where she was going?

California Legislature Considers Aid-in-Dying Bill

A new bill before the California Legislature, Senate Bill 128 (SB 128), the End of Life Option Act, would enable terminally ill, mentally competent adults who meet certain criteria and follow specified procedures, to request medication from their physician to aid in ending their own lives, when they are deemed to have six months or less to live. This bill would make California the 6th state to allow physician-assisted suicide. The bill is carefully crafted to emulate Oregon's "death with dignity" law that puts in place strict guidelines to prevent abuse.

SB 128 specifies that participation by physicians is voluntary, but provides immunity from civil, criminal, or professional disciplinary action for physicians participating in good faith. The law prohibits any insurance or health-care agreement from being conditioned upon a patient making or not making the decision to die. It also mandates that the cause of death listed on the death certificate shall be the underlying terminal condition, and not suicide.

The bill creates a new law that would make it a felony to alter or forge a request for end-of-life medication, or knowingly to coerce or exert undue influence on an individual to request such medication. The safeguards

against coercion include witnessed oral and written requests for aid-in-dying with a waiting period of 15 days between requests, limitations on who may be a witness (*not* the attending physician, for example), and full freedom by the individual to take or not take the medication once prescribed.

In the 18 years since Oregon passed its law, only a little over 1000 people have requested aid-in-dying, and of those, about one third did not ultimately use the drugs to help them die. One unexpected consequence of Oregon's law was that physicians—fearing that they would be asked to help someone die—began to prescribe sufficient pain medication (usually highly-regulated opiates) so that their patients remained comfortable enough not to ask. Thus the anticipated deluge of death requests never materialized. There is an interesting irony in that it took a law *allowing* physician-assisted suicide to help create the circumstances under which most dying people no longer asked for it.

The full text of California's SB128 and the status of its progress through the legislature may be viewed at http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160SB128.

Speakers Bureau Has an Active Life

Several times a month, the Bay Area FCA Speakers Bureau makes a presentation or sets up a brochure table at a Senior or Wellness Fair. If you would like to join the committee, just let us know (email: office@ba-fca.org). We need more speakers, all around the Bay. Training will be provided.

Our usual engagement is talking about "Are You Good to Go?" with the help of a slide show, which takes about 40 minutes. We are glad to bring this to your church or organization at no cost. Check the calendar on our website to see the schedule; some are open to the public. www.ba-fca.org

How to Find Good Medical Info Online

When searching online for medical information, the most reliable sources are the US government, not-for-profit health or medical organizations, and university medical centers. Avoid sites supported by for-profit entities. Look at the bottom of the site for the HONcode seal, which means the site has credible information and is certified by the Health On the Net Foundation. Also be aware that good medical information changes all the time, so check the date that the information was published. Among the top sites are www.Medlineplus.gov, sponsored by the National Institutes of Health, which has info on more than 900 diseases and a directory of hospitals, clinics and care providers, as well as a senior-specific site (www.nihseniorhealth.gov). Another good site is www.MayoClinic.com, produced by 3000+ physicians, scientists and researchers. This one also offers a Symptom Checker tool and a First-Aid guide. The www.WebMD.com site also sports the HONcode seal and is a wealth of useful information.



Tributes

With thanks to these donors

Each year our organization receives gifts made to honor respected individuals or in memory of loved ones who are missed. Below are the financial tributes we have acknowledged since the last newsletter:

In Memory of:

A.E. Hillier, from Frances Hillier
Alice and Warren Miller, from Nancy Miller
Cecil E. Duncan, from Adrienne Duncan
Don Fuller, from Susan Fuller
Esther Pfeiffer, from Theresa McDonald
Florence H. Gottdiener, MD, from David Oaks
Frederic H. Hee, from Carolyn Hee
Harry Anisgard, from Robert Marder
Harry Anisgard, from Gerald Vurek
Jean McFadden, from Jean Garrett
Jeanne Starr, from Albert Starr
Kelly Tyhon, from Ted Chamberlin
Lela S. Groom, from Margaret Cole
R.C. Phillips, from Marilyn Phillips
Susanna Wallace, from Donald Wallace

In Honor of:

David and Margot Botsford, from Peter Botsford
Marjorie Bridges, from Joanne Rovno
Byron Chan, from Carolyn Hee

2015 Budget

2014 Actual 2015 Budget

INCOME

Direct Public Support	\$13,432.63	\$14,210.00
Memberships and Transfers	\$8,588.10	\$10,800.00
Materials	\$664.26	\$750.00
Other	\$4,934.61	\$500.00
TOTAL	\$27,619.60	\$26,260.00

EXPENSE

Business registration fees, etc	\$35.00	\$35.00
Banking, credit card fees	\$26.27	\$162.00
State FCA dues	\$75.00	\$75.00
National FCA dues	\$1,576.75	\$2,400.00
Books and materials	\$384.90	\$500.00
Facilities, rent, utilities	\$3,147.05	\$3,710.00
Outreach	\$9,102.00	\$9,190.00
Supplies	\$193.67	\$200.00
Phone, internet service	\$1,382.72	\$1,125.00
Payroll expense	\$8,769.73	\$8,806.00
Travel, meetings, other	\$1,146.64	\$50.00
TOTAL	\$25,839.73	\$26,253.00

County Services Before and After Death

Each California county has three offices that help the elderly through bad times:

- Adult Protective Services (APS)—Handles reports of abuses of the elderly and disabled adults. The abuse may be financial, physical, exploitation, or neglect.
- Public Guardian-Conservator (PG)—Mental health and probate conservatorships for adults when it is found they can't manage their finances and/or health care or are gravely disabled by mental illness or substance abuse.
- Public Administrator (PA)—Manages decedent estates for individuals who die without a will or trust, and when there are no other relatives or heirs willing to administer the estate. The PA will
 - protect the decedent's property from waste, loss, or theft.
 - make burial or cremation arrangements
 - investigate to discover all assets
 - liquidate assets at public sale or distribute assets to heirs
 - pay the decedent's bills and taxes
 - locate persons entitled to inherit from the estate

The Public Administrator is reimbursed from the estate for expenses, starting at 4% of the first \$100,000. The general order of who is responsible for taking charge is:

1. Durable power of attorney
2. Spouse
3. Adult children
4. Parent
5. Adult siblings
6. Public Administrator

However, the counties also have Indigent Burial programs that are managed by the PA, working with the Sheriff and Coroner. This is for families where neither the deceased nor the next of kin can cover the cost of final disposition.

With the county in charge, there will be no viewing and no services. The remains will not be returned to the family, and the burial site will be marked only by a number. Veterans will be buried in a military cemetery plot and may be eligible for a military burial.

See the websites of your county government for additional information. The information above was culled from the Napa, Alameda and San Mateo County websites.

BA-FCA is on Facebook!



With a little help from our friends, we tech-challenged folk at BA-FCA have managed to get ourselves a **Facebook** page. Join us on **Facebook** so you can get up-to-date information about BA-FCA and the latest information about the funeral service industry, legislation, local

service providers, and more. Be our fan by "liking" us (just click on the Like button on our Facebook page.)

Feel free to share a story about a funeral or cemetery, or talk about how you are coming along on your bucket list. You can tell us what topic or topics you are interested in and what you want us to discuss online.

If you don't have a Facebook account, follow the steps below. Once signed up, search for Bay Area Funeral Consumers Association.

1. Go to www.facebook.com
2. Click Sign Up (if you don't already see the signup form) and fill out the information requested.
3. Click Sign Up

With our new social media presence, we hope to raise awareness about the importance of talking about the unmentionable topic of death and death care, and to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas, experiences, advice, guidelines, legislation, and whatever else our public considers important. Join the conversation!

Ebola Death Care

The question about whether cremation is a better disposition method for Ebola victims than burial was answered by the United Nations: Either is fine. The greatest danger is in handling the corpse, so autopsies are not done, as they are too dangerous. It is important to dispose of the body quickly. Once it is buried, the danger is largely over, unless someone digs it up too soon. The virus attacks living cells and does not go on reproducing indefinitely. It has never been shown to get into drinking water. In places such as Africa where burial is the norm, swift burial in a sealing body bag is perfectly adequate.



Bay Area Funeral Consumers Association

463 College Avenue
P.O. Box 60448
Palo Alto, CA 94306
Phone: 650-321-2109

NONPROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PALO ALTO, CA
PERMIT NO. 12

Visit us on the web! www.ba-fca.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Save the Date
Sunday, April 12, 1pm
Annual Conference
Los Altos Public Library
13 So. San Antonio Rd.
Los Altos

JOB OPENING

We will be losing Deborah Cox, our competent and reliable office manager, to family concerns, so we are in urgent need of an office manager in our Palo Alto office. We need someone who can work permanent part-time, has computer skills including file management, email, web research, MS Word and Excel, and who is friendly, knowledgeable, self-motivated, and reliable. This is a perfect job for a retiree who wants to remain active. See the full job description on Craigslist at <http://sfbay.craigslist.org/pen/npo/4930323212.html>. Email president@ba-fca.org if you are interested, or know of someone who is interested and has these skills. Thanks!

Before I Go, You Should Know—This \$15 booklet contains useful forms (powers of attorney, advance directives, etc) and lots more! Order by emailing office@ba-fca.org or calling 650-321-2109.

News You Can Use

3-D Printed Cremation Urns Replicate Your Grandma's Head.

There are, of course, many ways to spend money dealing with cremated remains (the "ashes"). You can scatter them at sea, from airplanes, from mountain-tops. You can make them into reef balls and jewelry. Or, for no money at all, you can use them to amend your garden soil. But now, you can store them in urns made by 3-D printers in the likeness of the deceased. Cremation Solutions (<http://www.cremationsolutions.com/c107/Personal-Cremation-Urns-for-Ashes-c109.html>) will only require a few photographs to whip up the likeness.

Communicating from Beyond the Grave?

It's not mediums and séances but high tech: emails sent to friends and loved ones after you die (see <http://www.wired.com/2014/11/talking-to-the-dead/>). Although Google has Inactive Account Manager, the Deathswitch app (www.deathswitch.com) takes it a step farther and eerier, allowing not only the sharing of passwords and the like so your heirs can close the books, but emailing birthday greetings, words of wisdom, or where the money is buried, years into the future.

Proposed New Cemetery in San Jose (contributed by Zoe Alameda)

With three aging and nearly-full cemeteries in San Jose, and a growing population, there is a proposal to site a new cemetery, Heritage Oaks Memorial Cemetery, on 275 acres of rolling hills near Cinnabar Hills Gold Course. The hurdles to overcome include ways to accommodate or mitigate for the protected species in the area, including the California tiger salamander and the Bay Checkerspot butterfly. More details at http://www.mercurynews.com/san-jose-neighborhoods/ci_26509166/area-near-cinnabar-hills-golf-course-is-likely.

Helping After Neonatal Death

(HAND) is an organization that offers empathetic peer support to families that have suffered the loss of a baby before, during, or after birth, or in the first year of life. The organization offers information and comfort to parents, friends and family, and they provide resources for health care professionals to help them recognize and understand the emotional toll that such a loss can take on the affected families. See more information about HAND of the Peninsula at www.HANDsupport.org.

Brain Donations Support Neurological Research

Confirming a diagnosis of a neurological disorder is one reason why families choose to donate the brains of a deceased loved one. A 2011 study of 800 donated brains of people diagnosed with Alzheimers, for example, showed that only about half actually had that disease. Historically, diagnoses of the various types of dementia such as Alzheimers disease, Lewy body dementia, vascular dementia, progressive supranuclear palsy, etc., have been wildly inaccurate, with correct diagnoses well below 50%. The Brain Donation Network (www.brainsupportnetwork.org) helps families to find the best nearby brain banks for their donations, and then helps to coordinate the process through a local funeral home. There is some cost associated to the process, though neither the Brain Support Network nor the brain banks involved charge for their services.

*Words of wisdom from my old granny:
Men should marry at 30. Women should never marry.*