



# Funeral Consumers

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ALLIANCE



## NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2008

**WE'RE IN THIS TOGETHER**  
**CONSUMER ADVOCACY FROM THE GRASSROOTS TO THE NATION**

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**Seattle University**  
**June 26 - 28, 2008**  
**901 12th Ave.**  
**Seattle, Washington**

If you've never been to Funeral Consumers Alliance's national conference before, **don't miss this one**. We've got the largest program of speakers in our history, and we're honored to be working with our oldest and largest supporting member, **Peoples Memorial Association**, to bring you this program. PMA made history last year by opening the largest nonprofit, member-owned funeral service cooperative in the country. Don't miss this chance to come together in the city where it all started, and meet the people who are bringing funeral consumer advocacy into the 21st century!

### FEATURED SPEAKERS AND PLENARY SESSIONS

#### **Mark Harris — Natural Burial: It's Not Just For Hippies Anymore**



Join author and former L.A. Times Environmental Reporter Mark Harris for a state of the nation update on natural burial. What's it all about, where's it going, and how can you bring truly traditional, economical, and environmentally friendly funerals to your community? Harris has been featured on National Public Radio's Fresh Air, and he's been a popular speaker at FCA affiliate meetings. His

recent book, *Grave Matters*, is the most readable, practical, and straightforward manual available on clearing the clutter and consumption out of funerals so we can tread lightly on the land — and our wallets — even in death.

#### **Valerie Bayham , Institute for Justice — Caskets, Cartels, and Consumer Choice**



Dismantling the funeral industry's monopoly on casket sales in Tennessee and Oklahoma is only the first step in the Institute for Justice's mission of returning economic liberty to the people. From funeral directors to florists, Bayham will explain how regulated groups gain control of their regulatory bodies and begin dictating new regulations that further their bottom line rather than the benefit consumers. Learn what you can and should do about it.

## **Kathryn Tucker — Compassion and Choices**



A graduate of Georgetown University Law School, Tucker is Director of Legal Affairs for **Compassion & Choices**, a national non-profit public interest organization dedicated to improving end-of-life care and expanding and protecting the rights of the terminally ill. She successfully defended Oregon's Right to

Die law before the U.S. Supreme Court.

## **Ruth Bennett — President of People's Memorial Association**

The Libertarian candidate for Washington Governor in 2004, Bennett will kick off the conference with the story of how PMA turned lemons into lemonade in a three-month sprint to open the nation's largest non-profit, member-owned funeral services co-op after PMA lost its contract with its long-time funeral home.

## **Anatomical Donation Panel** *with representatives from*

**-The Pacific Northwest Transplant Bank**

**-Northwest Tissue Services**

**-Willed Body Program of the University of Washington**

**-BioGift**

Confused about the various forms of donation? What's the difference between a non-profit willed body program and a for-profit tissue bank? Join our expert panel to learn about organ donation, life enhancing tissue donation, university willed body programs, and new organizations that procure whole bodies for scientific research. There are important ethical questions and body and tissue donation — who pays for it, and who gets paid? Bring your questions and concerns for a lively discussion.

## **Workshops and Breakout Sessions**

*(choose up to three on the registration form)*

### Advocacy 101: Waking Up to Your State Legislature

*Joshua Slocum, FCA Executive Director*

This is Advocacy 101 - The Basics. It's time to stop saying "we're not political" and start watching what your lawmakers are doing in your statehouse. FCA groups that don't pay attention are finding funeral consumer rights are being written out of their state laws by industry trade groups. But it doesn't have to be this way, and jumping in from the consumer advocacy side is fun and invigorating. In this workshop, you'll learn:

- How to find out what your existing state laws require and forbid (you'll know more than government clerks know who lean over the counter and give mistaken advice)
- How to monitor your state's pending legislation in the comfort of your bathrobe
- How to write clear, compelling testimony and letters of support and opposition your members can

use to make consumer voices heard

- How to get great publicity for your FCA (and excited new members) in the process

### Advocacy 102 —From Reaction to Action

*Elvira Hoffman, President of FCA of Long Island/ New York City; NY Legislative Liaison for FCA National*

No one has been more successful than Hoffman at standing up for funeral consumer rights in the statehouse. Join her to:

- Learn how to move from just reacting to other people's bills to writing your own.
- Get tips on how to write a bill (yes, you can!) that stands a good chance of becoming law.
- Learn how FCA of L.I. /NYC went from doing a simple survey of local cemeteries to getting a bill introduced that would require General Price Lists at cemeteries.

This step by step approach can help you do the

same in your state. If FCA L.I./NYC can do it, so can you!

### Marketing Your Mission: New Ways to Put Funeral Planning Front and Center

*Ruth Bennett, PMA President  
John Eric Rolfstad, PMA Executive Director*

What are the most effective things you can do to drum up enthusiasm for your mission? How can you get people talking about funeral planning - and actually have fun doing it? Public speaking is one piece of that, but not the only one. Leaving paper pamphlets at the local church won't do the job the way it did 20 years ago. We'll look at new ways to grab attention for your mission including easy, cheap ads on Google, getting your name listed in community human service directories, and marketing your mission to community "gatekeepers" such as hospices, hospital discharge planners, nursing homes and social workers.

### Ask a Funeral Director

Panel discussion with the consumer-oriented funeral directors who work with PMA. Steve Barton, Len Burton-Hardin, Gary Klontz and John Moles, will talk about consumer-friendly funeral practices, green burial, and more.

### Diversity in Death

*Dr. James W. Green, University of Washington, Dept. of Anthropology*

Families of diverse cultural backgrounds often have less experience with and greater mistrust of institutions associated with end of life care including hospitals, the funeral industry, and consumer advocacy groups. This workshop will ask why, and suggest ways consumer advocates can address these issues.

### Natural Burial, the Ultimate Back-to-the-Land Movement

*Cynthia Beal, the Natural Burial Company*

The Portland-based Natural Burial Company strives to educate and inform consumers, institutions, municipalities, and the funeral industry about the options and opportunities available to us all when the public is permitted to choose a "green" burial. With a focus on products — the goods and services con-

sumed or created — the NBC works to foster sustainability and ethical practices in the funeral transaction while running a profitable business that serves customers well and provides a living for the staff. Beal will give a fast-paced and informative session that recaps this ultimate 'back to the land movement', and inspires others to develop business niches that work for the customer, the environment, and the employees.

### Effective Networking: Energize Your Chapter and Yourself

*Julie Lomoe, MA, Administrator of the Memorial Society of the Hudson-Mohawk Region*

Successful FCA chapters need positive communications. Our potential network of relationships includes our boards, our members, local funeral directors, human service organizations, government agencies, the national FCA, the media, and most importantly, the general public who could benefit from our services but may not know it yet. This workshop will explore the characteristics of our chapters' networks and how to expand and strengthen them. We'll touch on relevant research in communications theory and end-of-life issues, and employ exercises drawn from sociodrama and the creative arts therapies. Participants will come away with a list of resources and ideas for enlivening their board meetings back home.

### A Grave Plot: The Resurrection of the Rhode Island Affiliate

*Bruce Donovan & Susan Graefe, the Memorial Society of Rhode Island*

The Memorial Society of Rhode Island has arisen out of a near-defunct organization of about 200 members originally established in 1983. In 2007, a new Board began talking about a possible change of name, FCA national, affiliation and the tone and emphasis of the new group. Over the past year the Society has collected General Price Lists for a its first-ever survey of funeral prices across the state, in a process adapted from the national FCA manual. We've designed a new brochure, and we're working to re-launch our newsletter. Board development will also engage us. This process has been interesting and even exciting — join us to learn from our experience and share yours.

Changing With the Times: Revamp,  
Rethink and be Relevant!

*Wendy Lyons, Funeral Consumer Information Society of Detroit; Sarah Robinson, FCA of Hawaii*

**Rethink Your Direction** — It's time to turn off the cruise control! Funeral consumer issues have changed over the decades, and we need to change with them. Lyons will present some "hot" topics for 21<sup>st</sup>-century Americans of all ages, including family-directed funerals and how to overcome the legal hurdles that sometimes make them difficult. Lyons will show you how to raise public awareness, get media attention and make an impact in your state.

**Making Your Price Survey Relevant** —Consumers can often save \$1,000 or more on final arrangements by making two telephone calls. Unfortunately, instead of comparison shopping, many consumers make only one call, often to the funeral home with the splashiest yellow page ad. So, comparison-shop for them with a price survey. The crucial next step is making your survey relevant. Robinson will show you how she successfully markets the Hawaii Mortuary Price Survey. You'll leave with at least one idea or Sarah will eat a piece of her survey!

Old Traditions: New Ways – Bringing  
Funerals Back to Family and Friends

*Sandy Booth and Donna Belk, Crossings Care Circle*

Funerals in the past - what was traditional? Carrying for the dead in the home. With the move from rural to urban settings the country undertaker/coffin maker evolved into the modern mortician. With industrialization people looked to the professional specialist in many areas of life, from physicians attending mothers

in childbirth in the hospital to funeral directors attending the dead in the funeral parlor. There is now a growing trend for families once again to become involved in the process.

You'll learn how to carry out the practical aspects of caring for a loved one who has died. Basic skills will be covered related to how to care for the body to give you the confidence and courage to create a beautiful and meaningful experience when death occurs.

Start Spreading the News

*Steve Nicely, FCA of Greater Kansas City Newsletter Editor*

This veteran Kansas City Star journalist offers practical tips on rejuvenating your newsletter as a way to energize your affiliate and membership. Topics include assigning stories (finding a few talented writers in your membership and putting them to work); plagiarism (how to adapt interesting copy and photos from other sources without being sued); the internet as a newsletter tool; design basics and dealing with a print house.

They Aren't That Scary: Using Computers  
to Run Your Chapter

*Paul Deischer, Office Manager, People's Memorial Association*

Computers have come a long way in the last 50 years. They aren't as big as a room anymore and you don't have to be a math genius, a computer whiz, or a teenager to use one. We'll talk about the what, the how, and the why of using computers in a non-profit setting. Topics will include: databases (what they are and what they're good for), spreadsheets, email, accounting software, backing up, security, and cheap (sometimes free!) ways to get all the above.

**Special Events!**

**Cookout Reception**

Hungry after your flight? Grab a burger and a beer with us outdoors Thursday, June 26, at 6:00

**Tour PMA**

Peoples Memorial Association Funeral Cooperative will host an open-house Thursday from 7:30 to 9 p.m., and on Friday from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Details and transportation info when you arrive.

**Saturday Awards Banquet**

Join us in the Campion Ballroom Saturday Evening from 6 to 7 for appetizers (and cash bar) and socializing, followed by a catered dinner. We'll give out awards for excellence in consumer advocacy, then turn to Valerie Bayham from the Institute for Justice for a rousing talk to cap-off the conference.

## Important Information

### Rooms

Dormitory-style rooms are available in singles and doubles; residence hall assignments will be given out after you register. Linens are included; bathrooms are shared. You might want to bring a travel reading light if you curl up with a book at bedtime. **The price of your room includes breakfast and lunch the following day, except Sunday, which is breakfast-only.** If you choose to come early or stay a day late, meals are not included in those extra days.

### Internet Access

Wireless internet is available campus-wide **except** in the residence halls. For dorm access, bring an ethernet cable.

### Meals

Breakfast and lunch will take place in the Cherry Street Market food court in the student center. You'll get a meal card at registration. There's a cookout with beer and wine (cash) on Thursday for hungry travelers on campus for \$10 extra. Dinner is "on your own" in Seattle Friday evening (it's a great city for foodies). We hope you'll join us for the catered banquet Saturday night.

**Special** — You can choose to attend a special Saturday morning breakfast (see the registration sheet) with discussion topics at round tables in the Champion Ballroom. Topics include ANATOMICAL DONATION, HOME FUNERALS NATURAL ALLIES/NETWORKING, BUILDING A STRONGER AFFILIATE, ETHNIC DIVERSITY, NEWSLETTERS, PRICE SURVEYS.

### Registration

Conference Registration will take place at the Pigott Auditorium. You'll pick up your room key at the front desk of your dormitory.

### Commuters

Commuters staying off campus can pay for breakfast or lunch with cash or credit card. Parking will also be \$7 a day.

### Transportation from Sea-Tac Airport

Shuttle Express ([www.shuttleexpress.com](http://www.shuttleexpress.com) or call **425-981-7000**) is the most convenient and economical way to get to the campus. Rates go down significantly if you share a ride with others. Current fees **per van**, one way, are:

\$30.75 for 1 rider  
\$33.75 for 2 riders  
\$37.75 for 3 riders  
\$41.75 for 4 riders  
etc.

You **need to book your ride directly with Shuttle Express**. Funeral Consumers Alliance is **not arranging rides**.

But, we do have an online bulletin board at our site where you can hook up with other attendees arriving when you do to share the cost. Visit [www.funerals.org](http://www.funerals.org), then click "Discussion Forum" and leave a note in the "Conference Ride Share" forum. Remember not to leave any personal information you're uncomfortable sharing with the public.

### Canada

If you plan to cross the border **by land or sea**, remember to bring a birth certificate or citizenship papers and a drivers license. **Air travel** across the border requires a passport.

### Weather

It's Seattle, so packing an umbrella and a light rain jacket is always a good idea.

### Questions?

Call FCA at 800-765-0107

### Fun

Have it!

# Schedule of Events

plenary sessions are in **bold**

## Thursday, June 26

2 - 6 pm Registration – Student Center

12 - 5 pm Meeting of outgoing & incoming FCA board

6 - 8 pm Outdoor cookout (optional)

## Friday, June 27

7 - 8:30 am Breakfast – Cherry St. Mkt.

8 – 1:00 pm Registration – Pigott Atrium

8:45 - 9:00 Welcome remarks from PMA

9:00 - 9:15 **State of the FCA– Joyce Homan, outgoing President**

9:15 – 9:35 **Who We Are, Why We Are Josh Slocum, FCA Executive Director**

9:35 – 10:10 Q & A

10:10 – 10:30 Break

10:30 - Noon Breakout Sessions

12:00–1:00 Lunch - Cherry Street Market

1:00 – 2:30 **Anatomical Donation Panel**

2:30 – 2:50 Break

2:50 – 3:30 **PMA’s new business model Ruth Bennett, PMA President**

3:30 – 4:30 **Open Mic for Affiliates**

4:30 Dinner in Seattle (on your own)

## Saturday, June 28

7 – 8:30 *Optional* breakfast roundtable discussions - Champion Ballroom (hot buffet breakfast). Regular breakfast in Cherry Street Market.

7 – 10:00 Registration – Pigott Atrium

8:45 – 9:00 Announcements & housekeeping

9:00 - 10:10 **Mark Harris — Natural Burial**

10:10 - 10:30 Break & Book Signing by Mark Harris

10:30 -12:00 Breakout Sessions

12:00 - 1:00 Lunch - Cherry Street Market

1:00 - 2:00 **Kathryn Tucker, Compassion and Choices**

2:00 – 3:30 Breakout Sessions

3:30 – 4:00 Break

4:00 – 5:00 **Open Mic for Affiliates**

6:00 – 7:00 Cocktails and appetizers - Champion Ballroom

7:00 – 11:00 Awards Banquet - Champion Ballroom **Valerie Bayham, Speaker**

## Sunday, June 29

9-12 Checkout  
FCA Board meeting

# REGISTRATION FORM

The DEADLINE for registration is **MAY 20<sup>th</sup>**. There will be a \$30 late charge after that date.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

My FCA Affiliate (or if none, leave blank): \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact name and number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Breakout Sessions** (please choose up to **three** - times will be assigned at check-in)

- Advocacy 101 (will be repeated once)
- Advocacy 102
- A Grave Plot
- Using Computers
- Newsletters
- Marketing Your Mission
- Home Funerals
- Effective Networking
- Funeral Director Panel Discussion
- Green Burial w/ Cynthia Beal
- Ethnic Diversity
- Revamp, Rethink, be Relevant

**Banquet Entree Choice** (Optional — includes appetizers, salad and soft drinks; there will be a cash bar)

- Northwest Salmon Bake with wild rice and seasonal vegetables
- Grilled Flatiron Steak with garlic mashed potatoes and seasonal vegetables
- Grilled Polenta cakes with vegetable ragout and seasonal vegetables

### Scholarships

There is a limited fund to help those from FCA Affiliates who might not otherwise be able to attend. Scholarships are available only to board members and volunteers from FCA Affiliates who have not attended the last two Biennial Conferences, and whose Affiliates cannot afford to send a delegate.

- Please reduce my registration fee to \$75
- Please waive half my room and board expenses

|   |             |
|---|-------------|
| Registration fee - Whole Conference   | \$155 _____ |
| Commuter/ 1-day registration fee (please circle FRIDAY or SATURDAY)               | \$75 _____  |
| Cookout reception Thursday evening (optional)                                     | \$10 _____  |
| Banquet (optional)  | \$35 _____  |
| Saturday Breakfast Discussion ( optional, reg. breakfast is in Cherry St. Market) | \$10 _____  |

Subtotal = \_\_\_\_\_

**Important - If you have a special need or require accommodation to participate in the conference, call FCA by April 18, 2008 at 800-765-0107**

(Continue on Next Page)

**Room and board** (breakfast and lunch included Friday and Saturday, breakfast Sunday)

\_\_\_\_ I have difficulty walking or have a special need (describe)

\_\_\_\_\_

|               | <b>Wednesday</b><br>(no meals inc.) | <b>Thursday</b> | <b>Friday</b> | <b>Saturday</b> | <b>Sunday</b><br>(no meals inc.) |                           |
|---------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Single</b> |                                     |                 |               |                 |                                  | x \$65 per person = _____ |
| <b>Double</b> |                                     |                 |               |                 |                                  | x \$50 per person = _____ |

I'll be sharing a room with: \_\_\_\_\_

**or**

\_\_\_\_ Please find me a roommate if I select a double

**GRAND TOTAL = \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

|  |
|--|
| <b>Payment</b>   |
| ____ I've enclosed a check   |
| <b>-or</b>   |
| My Visa/Mastercard # is _____ - _____ - _____ - _____ Expiration Date: _____ |

**PLEASE RETURN THIS ENTIRE REGISTRATION FORM IN THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE, OR MAIL TO:**

**FCA CONFERENCE  
33 PATCHEN ROAD  
SOUTH BURLINGTON, VT  
05403**

**Thank You! You will receive a confirmation letter in the mail.  
Call us toll-free at 1-800-765-0107**