Funeral Consumers Alliance of the Virginia Blue Ridge

2024-2025 Annual Report

Mission

This year, the Funeral Consumers Alliance of the Virginia Blue Ridge has sought ways to increase our presence in the community. Our subscription to the Mailchimp program has made possible the email transmission of our newsletter. This method provides information in a more-timely manner, as with the annual meeting announcement.

Engaging a professional internet web designer, Katy Morikawa, has allowed major improvements to our website. Information is more accessible and better presented. Previously finding one of our pamphlets, for example “Common Funeral Myths,” required knowing where to start the search, then downloading the pamphlet in order to read it. Now, multiple pathways take you to a subject and the information needed is already visible in text and forms. Visit the website here https://fcavbr.org/.

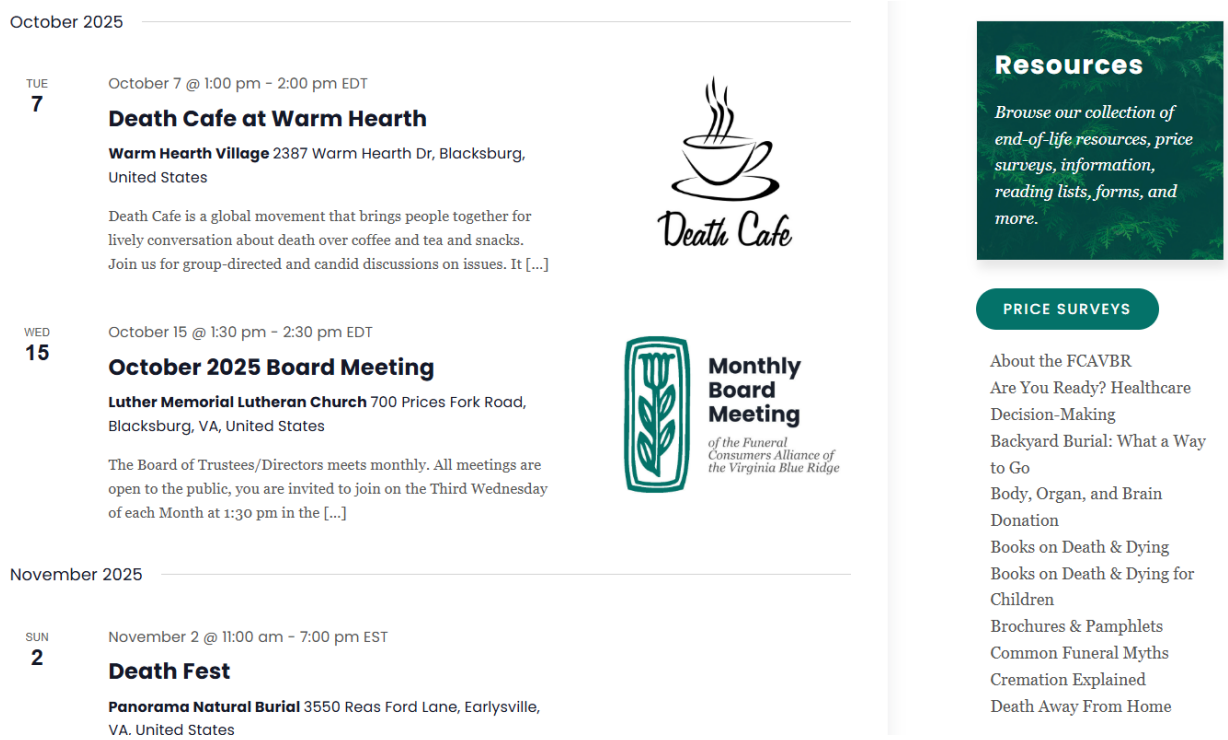
In order to make the FCAVBR more visible and increase our ability to make end-of-life information available to a wider audience, we have joined the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce. Attendance at Chamber functions has brought us into contact with many different professionals. At one of these functions, describing our mission to people we meet, has brought some unexpected benefits. Conversation with a director of another non-profit elicited the advice that keeping open, for a few months, telephone and email accounts is valuable in finding and acting on the many tasks required to put a decedent’s affairs in order.

Outreach

The FCAVBR continues to exhibit at events such as the Veterans Resource Fair and the Caregivers Conference. These events and the Senior Triad Fair are back on an annual schedule. In addition, our “Getting Your Ducks in a Row” has been presented in several

venues. Our Vice-President, Phil Olson, went out of our area to talk about funerals at the Sedalia Arts and Culture Center, Terrapin Mountain. We have increased our participation in other organizations such as Floyd Green Burial and the New River Palliative Care Project. Members attended, and the FCAVBR website advertised, the Date with Death series presented by the United Universalist Congregation. Although we only sponsored one Death Café this year, two are already planned for the coming months. (Next one October 7, 1:00 pm, at Warm Hearth).

[Event page of improved website.]



Increased interaction with other FCAs and the national FCA board have provided education opportunities and ideas for improvement. This included the list of webinars and links to the Colorado FCA in the Spring newsletter. Our President, Dianne Rencsok, attended the national biennial conference, Funeral Poverty. Some of that garnered information was included in the Summer newsletter, and more will be in future issues.

We continue to maintain phone line and email to allow those needing information, in a more specific or personal manner, to use our knowledge, and often benefit from our

sympathy. Although we are experiencing fewer contacts, they have been from a wider range of locations. These have included New York, Oregon, and Florida as well as the New River Valley area.

At present, we have 383 members. Increased interaction with other FCAs has shown that there is a wide range of FCA membership, from over a thousand members to a new alliance of only twenty-nine!

Legal Advocacy

FCAVBR board members monitor the Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers and the Virginia legislature. The increased activity of the national FCA board has also improved tracking of Federal actions and those in other states. Virginia Code changes reported this year pertain to preneed requirements and development of a formal document indicating acceptance of a designated person for funeral arrangements. Expect to hear more from us as we follow the Federal bill, HR 2436. This is being offered as a way to help cover funeral costs.

Respectfully Submitted, Dianne Rencsok, President, FCAVBR, September 22, 2025