FCAVBR Newsletter
Summer 2025

We hope you will join us for our

Annual Meeting

Monday, September 22
6:30pm

Our Savior Lutheran Church
1845 Cambria Street, Christiansburg

Our Speaker will be **Tiffany Carpenetti**
"Willed Body Donor Programs: Giving the Gift of Education"

DID YOU KNOW?

Presentation's such as Dr Carpenetti's help to protect a truly beneficial action through Virginia's official administration. There have been unscrupulous actors who take advantage of good people. Legislation has been introduced in the US Congress, House Bill 2589 and Senate Bill 1270 to bring federal oversight to the currently unregulated industry of whole-body donation.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Death Café

October 7, 1-2pm
Warm Hearth Village Center, Board Room

A Death Cafe is a group-directed discussion of death with no agenda, objectives or themes. A Death Café offers the opportunity to talk about topics related to death, dying, and living. There is mutual respect for all participants.

Please Note:*Death Café is not counselling, bereavement, or grief support*

Senior Care Fair

September 24, 9am-1pm
Christiansburg Recreation Center

The FCAVBR will have a table in this free event, which is open to all. You don't have to be a senior to find useful information at this event. Be sure to visit us and see what's new!

National FCA Conference on FUNERAL POVERTY

The national board of the Funeral Consumers Alliance biennial conference focused on many aspects of Funeral Poverty. There are people whose families cannot afford the costs of a funeral. There are people in special circumstances such as those under a guardianship or incarcerated for whom no provisions have been made. Additionally, there are people without family or support, such as many of the homeless in our communities. It was heartening to hear of organizations working to identify and correct causative conditions. But disheartening to realize that much more needs to be done.

The conference opened, as have several that we have lately attended, with the recognition of the native Americans on whose land we stand. Attendees received a beautiful book, donated by the author, with pictures of cemeteries. Accompanying text consisted of histories, poems and meditations.

Here are some snippets from the conference.

- Delaying having the body picked up by a funeral home can serve as a substitute visitation.
- The first female Mortician used Funeral processions to serve the Underground Railroad's efforts to help slaves move to free states.
- Until there is someone in it, a casket is just a box.
- The FCA is pro-consumer, not anti-funeral homes.
- After hearing the many ways poverty affects caring for our dead a marketing specialist challenged us to find ways to "sell" our mission by studying successful ad campaigns such as those used in campaigns against tobacco.

LEGAL UPDATES

NATIONAL

Three Republican Senators in DC introduced a bill (H.R. 2436) "To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to treat distributions from health savings accounts [HSAs] for funeral expenses of the account beneficiary as qualified distributions."

This bill could help some people to prepare for funeral expenses by accumulating HSA contributions that can help pay for funeral goods and services. Think of it as a step toward addressing funeral poverty.

IN VIRGINIA

The Virginia legislature passed rules to protect consumers who **prepay** for Funeral costs. This "pre-need" legislation became effective on July 1, 2025. It is possible that this came about because of observations from the Virginia Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers. This board inspects and approves licensing of funeral professionals in Virginia. This past year the board's minutes refer to an investigation and case action brought against a funeral business because of unfair pre-need practices.

AROUND THE COUNTRY

Georgia and Minnesota have now legalized **Natural Organic Reduction** (NOR, a.k.a, human composting). **NOR** is now legal in 14 US States (Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada, Arizona, Colorado, Minnesota, Georgia, Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey, New York, Vermont, and Maine).

Alkaline Hydrolysis (AH, a.k.a. water cremation) is now legal in nearly half of all US States (Washington, Oregon, Idaho, California, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, Minnesota, Missouri, Illinois, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, North Carolina, Maine, Wyoming, Kansas, Oklahoma, Tennessee, West Virginia, Maryland, Connecticut, Vermont), and in five Canadian Provinces (Northwest Territories, Saskatchewan, Ontario, Quebec, and Newfoundland), as well as in the United Kingdom, some Australian States, and South Africa).

Let me Count

"Let me count the ways" from Elizabeth Barret Browning's sonnet "How do I love thee" is about more than romantic love. This can be a spring board for many facets of life's end. Who are we counting on to take care of our wishes and concerns when we are gone? Who is counting on us to provide support in so many functions?

This has come to my mind lately from both perspectives. We have a notebook ready for our survivors. The information inside includes data that will be needed for a death certificate, burial instructions, financial records, and the list of people to whom we send Christmas cards. Occasionally, we try to describe this to our daughters, who just say that they know where the book is! We are counting on them to recognize what is important to us. They are counting on us to have provided what they will need. However, a critical motivator for FCAVBR members is that we know that despite our planning there will be somethings that are not included in our plans and then increases sorrow for our survivors.

FCAVBR membership director, Ben Crawford, recently reminded us that we should also include a thumb-drive, like the one he has next to his computer, which has all the critical member information.

The new FCAVBR website (fcavbr.org) makes available the information we have been sharing. The pamphlets are there, such as "Common Funeral Myths" and "Cremation Explained." You can find previous newsletters showing the changes in practice and technology that we have presented over the years.

Who is counting on you to assure some activity continues? Do you manage a prospect, a business, some important resource for which others expect to continue? What have you done to assure this will continue when you are no longer here to accomplish it? Consider how important functions can continue. Not every occurrence can be anticipated, but something as simple as Ben's thumb-drive or a visit to our website can make life easier for those who the continue the work.

READY TO DONATE

Please consider donating to the VCAVBR so that we can continue to keep you and the rest of our service area informed about **funeral pricing**, changes within the **funeral industry**, and relevant **legislative moves**.

You can make a donation via the **TOP MENU of our website** or by mailing a check to:
FCAVBR
PO Box 10082
Blacksburg, VA 24062

HAVE IDEAS FOR OUR NEWSLETTER?

LET US KNOW by sending an email to **fcavbr@gmail.com**

Have Questions for our Board Members?

- **Please reach out to us at fcavbr@gmail.com**

Funeral Consumers Alliance of the Virginia Blue Ridge

PO Box 10082

Blacksburg, VA 24062

(540) 953-5589

fcavbr@gmail.com

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