



**Funeral Consumers Alliance of Idaho
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Spring Newsletter 2021

Greetings from FCAI. We wish all of you good health. As with most other groups, we canceled our 2020 Annual Meeting. Our speaker for the meeting, Jillana, was gracious enough to write an article on green burials for this newsletter. See below.

Because we were unable to hold our annual meeting, the membership was unable to elect the officers for the term starting May 2020. Our year passed quickly with classes offered via the Community Education Program. President Chuck Bonney was instrumental in teaching our classes and conversing with many about the opportunities offered to members of the FCAI. The board is currently looking into resources for online meetings, and methods to vote.

As you know this is an all-volunteer organization. Chuck Bonney, our president, has been working double duty as the president and membership coordinator. For the past three years he has served and led the board in a variety of jobs. In May 2020, Chuck was scheduled to step off the board.

Since June of 2018, Nancy Gledhill has served as official phone communication officer, and later became vice-president. Nancy will continue to serve on our board. In addition, Nancy has recently taken over the secretary's job as well for our meetings.

At our last annual meeting, Steve Szlanic volunteered for the office of treasurer.

In the past, our board had five members. Now we need members to step up and volunteer! The board will meet monthly, and positions of officers will be determined by the board. These meetings will resume in person when safety permits. Until then, we intend to hold virtual meetings. The meetings are fun, educational, and guides FCAI to educate, communicate, and grow. This organization can't function without volunteers. Please consider volunteering to keep FCAI alive and growing in Idaho. Two people can not do the work of five. FCAI will have to go inactive unless we can recruit more board members for 2021-22. If FCAI ceases to exist in Idaho, our funds will be forwarded to Funeral Consumers Alliance located in Vermont.

**Do you have time to volunteer? Our board is diminished this year.
With five roles to fill, Our volunteers are almost nil.
One hour meeting a month is sufficient, Or our board will be deficient.
Please volunteer to keep FCAI alive, or it may not survive.**

Members interested in serving on the board, please send an email to fcai@fortboise.org.

Officers and roles:

The President plans meetings and uses a scheduling calendar to organize meetings. He/She also maintains annual meeting notes, vice-president's, treasurer's, secretary's, membership's, and phone reports. Additionally, the president negotiates our contract with our funeral homes who provide services for members.

Vice-president and Communication officer checks, keeps record of phone messages, and responds to phone calls and e-mails. They note the date and time of phone calls, and keep a brief account of questions and responses.

The treasurer keeps track of finances, and uses a template for a breakdown of income and expenses. At the end of the year, the treasurer provides an annual report and audit of income and expenses. Additionally, they pay quarterly dues to headquarters, Funeral Consumers Alliance in Vermont. The treasurer's reports are e-mailed monthly to the board.

The membership officer collects mail from the PO Box, deposits membership checks and donations in the bank, mails booklets and information to new members, adds names of new members to our database, and responds to funeral homes about membership questions.

The secretary takes notes at the monthly meetings, types and e-mails them to board members.

As you can see most jobs are accomplished at home in a brief amount of time, but they keep FCAI alive and well in Idaho. Without our volunteers FCAI will disappear.

Occasional Volunteer Opportunities

We especially want to thank Tom who voluntarily maintains our website and adds current information. We appreciate his continual support of FCAI.

We thank Jody Mahnken for her newsletter input and the poem on page one.

Each year, FCAI needs a member volunteer to help with the annual financial audit. This audit usually takes less than 3 hours and is done with the help of our treasurer and an awesome volunteer, no experience necessary, you will learn on the job.

Know Your Rights

Funeral service providers are required to provide price information at the beginning of any discussion about funeral arrangements. The pamphlet "How to Read a Mortuary's General Price List," is available on the Publications page of our website. It describes what you need to know about a general price list (GPL).

If you visit a funeral home in Idaho that is not listed in our Comparative Price Survey page on our website (there are about FIFTY more in Idaho), you can lend a helping hand to FCAI by sending us a copy, e-mail, or call and we will add that funeral home to the list. We update this list annually, another opportunity for a volunteer!

Article on Green Burial by Jillana

Jillana was scheduled to speak at our April 2020 Annual Meeting. Here are some highlights: Like growing organic food, green burial is not a new idea but a return to traditional practices. Green burial is an umbrella term to describe burial practices that are environmentally sustainable and avoid the use of embalming, non-biodegradable caskets, and concrete liners.

The Green Burial Council estimates that there are 279 green burial cemeteries in the US and Canada currently. In Idaho, there is a small, remote green burial cemetery in Leadore called Mountain View Green Cemetery. Dry Creek Cemetery in Boise has it in their future plans to open a section for green burial on their 130 acres. All of Idaho's neighbors Oregon, Washington, Nevada, Utah, Montana, and California have at least one green burial cemetery.

The Green Burial Council distinguishes three different categories of green burial options. A green burial addition to a conventional cemetery like Dry Creek Cemetery is called "hybrid green burial". "Natural burial" sites like Mountain View Green Cemetery only allow green burial, and a "conservation burial" site is established in partnership with a conservation organization with the explicit goal of preserving the land. These conservation burial sites can create or protect wildlife corridors or habitat areas, while still being open to the public.

To learn more visit the National Green Burial Council website <https://www.greenburialcouncil.org/>

If you are interested in joining conversations about creating a conservation burial site in Idaho, please email idahojillana@gmail.com. I am looking to talk to potential customers, stakeholders, and/or investors who are eager to see this conservation burial available in Idaho.

We are updating our mailing list.

In order to connect with members (or family of members) please make sure we have your email address. We look forward to inviting folks to presentations from FCA and FCAI meetings online.

“Reimagining Death” - Recommended Reading

A few hours after my mother died in June 2019, her body was taken away by the funeral home folks. That did not feel right to me. Since then, my interest in what happens after death has expanded. I have been longing to know about how to care for the one who has died and for the loved ones who need to grieve and find closure. The book, *Reimagining Death, Stories and Practical Wisdom for Home Funerals and Green Burials*, has given me the guidance I have been looking for and the book is at our local library!

Lucinda Herring is the author. Her hope and intention is that the reader will be inspired and empowered to reimagine the way our body, or that of a loved one, will be cared for after death – and to get those wishes and plans in place long before they are needed. Her stories help us to understand what is possible around death and they offer guidance for home funeral vigils, green burials, and making choices.

The book concludes with lists of many resources: books, websites, organizations and practical wisdom. I am imagining small groups of friends and family meeting to support each other in creating “Advance After-Death Care Directives” to assist and guide those left behind after our death. If you are interested call the FCAI number and let me know.

Nancy Gledhill, FCAI member

UPCOMING EVENT

Beyond the Obituary: Writing End-of-Life Stories

Laura Stavoe will present a workshop, “Beyond the Obituary: Writing End-of-Life Stories,” Saturday, March 6, 2021 10 am -1 pm, with an optional follow-up the evening of March 15.

The workshop will be held online—you don't need to be in McCall to attend! It's free (suggested donation for the support of the McCall Arts & Humanities Council, \$25), and offered with support from Idaho Humanities Council, as part of the Community Hub McCall's winter series, “Looking Ahead, Conversations on Aging and Dying.”

Laura Stavoe is an educator, writer, and personal memoirist who lives in Boise, and has taught writing for 30 years to writers of all ages in schools, colleges, and community arts organizations. Her blog, “Tending to Endings,” aims to build community and conversation around end-of-life matters.

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The Funeral Consumers Alliance of Idaho is a 501 (c)(4) nonprofit corporation, an affiliate of the national Funeral Consumers Alliance. We welcome donations to FCAI, they are not tax deductible.