

**Funeral Consumers Alliance of Idaho
Annual Newsletter
Spring 2015**

While *death notices* are printed in local papers for **free**, *obituaries* can be **expensive**.

At the time of this writing, obituary charges for the *Idaho Statesman* are \$2.50 per line and \$43 for a photo on Monday through Saturday, \$3 per line and \$50 for a photo on Sunday. For a \$42.50 fee, the obituary is kept online (at Legacy.com) for a year. Although you may not be keen on writing your own obit, you may be called upon to write one for another; so learn how. Our guest speaker at this year's annual meeting will be local author **Diane Ronayne**, with ideas for **Writing Your Own Obituary** or one for someone else.

Short-story writer Jean McGarry said: "There's probably more fiction in an obit than any other writing."

From the president...

Greetings members, another amazing year has passed and it is again time to give the annual report, update the General Price List and make an invitation to the upcoming Annual Meeting, scheduled for April 25 at The Library! at Cole & Ustick Branch, conference room. Save the date.

Death seems to be a popular subject these days, make sure to visit our website for links to many articles of interest. With this surge of interest, outreach opportunities have been abundant with increasing interest in funeral planning and conversations surrounding death. Tom, our super-hero webmaster has added a "Coming Events" section to the website to announce upcoming events to help get the word out. It is a great way to keep current with FCAI activities and opportunities to support our efforts.

2014-15 Community Outreach

- Spring and fall Community Education Classes
- Conversation Project - April
- Compassionate Boise - November
- Sun Valley Wellness Festival - May
- Noetic Sciences - September
- BSU Emeriti Guild - September
- College of Idaho Law School – February
- Death Cafes

We have been able to meet all requests for speakers and it has been great to add Monte Wilson as a presenter. He has made informative Powerpoint presentations to augment his talks and has been well received. Monte says he "frets and fusses" over each presentation, but I think he is a natural. Thanks, Monte.

A special thanks to Susan as a presenter, she rarely misses an opportunity to talk about death. Susan's interest in outreach and broadening the death narrative has enriched the conversation about end of life issues. She is a valuable resource that offers a perspective that spans many topics and interests. She engages others into learning more about death in our culture that challenges folks to consider their own exit strategy.

To reach an even greater audience, the board decided to spend some money on advertising in the locally distributed resource directory, *Senior Housing & Services*. The directory has a circulation of over 12,000 printed free copies and distributed in over 600 locations, and available as an internet downloads. We supplied the following article:

Funeral Consumers Alliance of Idaho (FCAI), founded in 1972, is a not-for-profit, volunteer, consumer group with more than 650 members throughout Idaho. We are one of 200 similar groups affiliated with the national Funeral Consumer Alliance to provide objective advice and information about legal rights. Membership in ***FCAI*** is a one-time fee of \$35 and is transferable to FCA affiliates.

FCAI is dedicated to protecting a consumer's right to choose a meaningful, dignified, affordable funeral and believes that better decisions are made when you are informed, and are not making difficult decisions while dealing with grief and loss. We are not opposed to lavish, expensive funerals, however many of our members prefer simple, dignified, and economical funeral arrangements and would rather our estates go towards loved ones, charities, and education.

The mission of our organization is to inform consumers of their rights and options as provided by the Federal Funeral Rule and Idaho Statutes. Our website contains dozens of downloadable, printable brochures on subjects ranging from recycling medical devices, green burial, funeral planning, survivors' checklist, and veteran's funeral and burial benefits. Advance Directives are also explained and available for download and printing, all at NO CHARGE.

Perhaps of most interest to consumers is an annual comparative General Price List of Funeral Homes that shows pricing for like-kind services and the range of costs between providers.

Current speaking engagements and events are also listed. ***FCAI*** does not charge for speaking events although a Community Education Program does charge a small administration fee for their program. (We offer a two-for-one registration to offset the charge.) We accept most invitations to speak to groups about the importance of end of life planning and the rights of consumers as dictated by the Federal Trade Commission's Funeral Rule.

Funeral Consumers Alliance of Idaho contracts with local, independent funeral homes to provide services to our members. We perpetually recruit board members and everyone is welcome.

Our upcoming Annual Members Meeting is scheduled for Saturday, April 25th at the ***Library! at Cole & Ustick***. If you are interested in attending, please check our website: fcai.fortboise.org for more details.

More good news: Early last spring FCAI was investigated by the Better Business Bureau and given an A+ rating!

Seeking Volunteers...looking for involvement? Satisfaction?

We need volunteers to get involved with the operation of this organization. What we do is important. It isn't a huge time commitment, and the work is rewarding. We need help and it would lighten the load with a few more hands pitching in. Even if you do not want to serve as a Board Member, we will eagerly use you as a volunteer.

Our bylaws call for five board members with three year, staggered terms. Two terms expire this year, I made a friendly pact with Susan if she stayed another term so would I, so we will have open nominations for one Board position at the April 25th meeting.

Rose Thomas has agreed to accept a nomination and will be presented at the annual meeting for confirmation. Rose's experience includes Hospice volunteer, Energy worker, ULC Minister, and Naturopathic Doctor in private practice for over 30 years. We welcome her interest in becoming a board member.

If you have ever wanted to serve the organization, here is an opportunity. In the past two years, we have had to fill vacancies that were not scheduled. This has made the term expirations dependent on the warm-hearted volunteers that have filled the positions. Merepeace graciously stepped up last annual meeting to fill such a vacancy.

Current board members and terms are:

Sherry Rudai, President (term expires 2015)

Merepeace, Vice-President (term expires 2015)

Monte Wilson, Secretary (term expires 2017)

Susan Randall, Membership Secretary (term expires 2017)

Patricia Kolb, Treasurer (term expires 2016)

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

We are perpetually grateful to **Tom von Alten** and **Monica Perry**, voices of experience and reason. Without the dedication of these wondrous volunteers we would not be successful. Tom is the reason we have online presence; he masters a great website, that is friendly to use and full of current interests surrounding end of life circumstances. Monica's collective memory continually helps inform our progress. She tirelessly reminds us were the organization has wrestled with reoccurring themes and is a cherished mentor.

Our wonderful Treasurer, Pat Kolb along with Monica performed our annual audit and found the books to be in great shape. There were a couple small accounting adjustments but all monies are accounted for and in good reporting order. Any member interested in helping with the audit is appreciated. Third party oversight from the membership is welcome, and necessary. Please chat with any of the board members to get involved.

Biannual Contract Review

Contract renegotiations with Accent Funeral Home in Meridian came due March 14, 2015. An agreement and renewal was signed through March 5, 2017 for FCAI members. No changes were made this renewal period. Randy and Danette Arnzen own and operate Accent. For decades, they have provided a remarkable, invaluable service for our members.

If you have not provided Accent with your Putting My House in Order paperwork, now is a good time. Or if the paperwork needs reviewed and updated, please do it. Randy and Danette are helpful, kind and dedicated to provide professional services as requested.

Be sure to share this information with friends and family members. FCAI routinely receives phone calls from family members under the false impression that membership to our organization is a “pre-paid” funeral plan.

Remember that there are additional charges from the General Price List for “After Hours 5:00pm – 8:00am” services and an “Overtime Charge” for Saturday and Sunday. Accent’s GPL is listed on their website and is linked through our GPL Comparison chart on this site.

NOW is a good time to review your funeral information to ensure your wishes are up-to-date. FCAI website makes it easy to do by providing forms on the [publications page](#) and links to download the blank forms.

Or better yet, **Update your life and support your local FCAI Fundraiser**

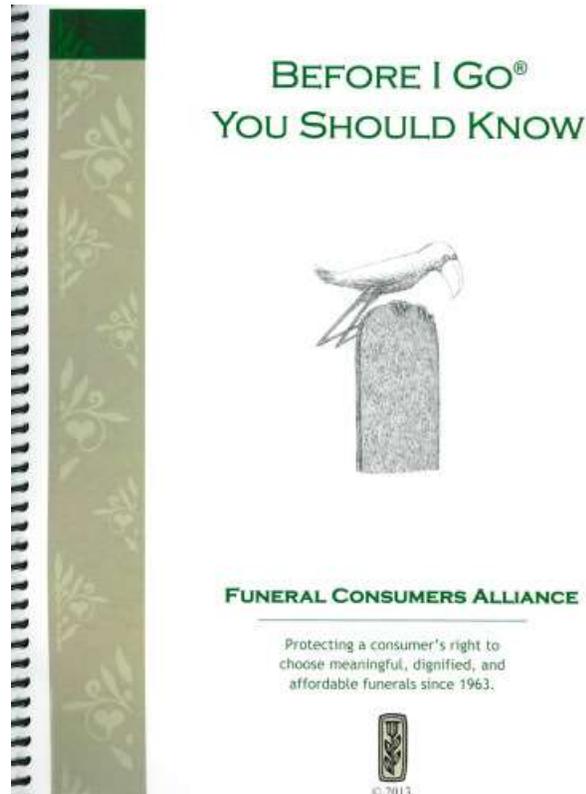
PLANNER NOW IN LARGE TYPE!

Purchase this updated BEFORE I GO YOU SHOULD KNOW planner for only \$20.00.

When was the last time your paperwork was updated? Did the Internet even exist then???

This 30 page, spiral-bound planner, “*Before I Go You Should Know*,” has space to list all your bank and retirement accounts, real property, instructions for pet care and your online accounts and passwords, plus the large type is easy to read.

IF you have made plans; have you **shared** them with your family or designated agent?



Membership by the Numbers

Fiscal Year	New	Transfers	Deaths
2012	20	6	11
2013	58	8	17
2014	43	9	16
2015	109	8	15

Over the past 12 months FCAI has signed **109 new members**, processed 15 deaths, transferred-in 8 affiliate members and transferred none out. This gives our organization a membership role of **682 living members**. Since 1972 the organization has had 1100 members sign up.

Over 90 calls have been logged on our volunteer message line, and dozens of email contacts made.

Your Funeral Consumer Rights in Idaho

[The Funeral Ethics Organization](#) has published a pamphlet that summarizes your rights in making funeral arrangements, choices for disposition of remains, veteran and social security benefits, and the pro and cons of prepaying for a funeral. [Your Funeral Consumer Rights in Idaho](#) is available as a downloadable PDF, at no charge. Visit [our publications page](#) for many other useful documents.

THANK YOU!

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

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