

## Notice of 64<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting + Newsletter

### Sunday, May 16, 2021 1:00 pm Online (Zoom) Meeting

#### Volunteers ...

Yes you! New board members are needed to continue the work of FAMS. Please send an email to [info@fams](mailto:info@fams) and we will be in touch ♥

#### Member's Login / Voila! Members Tab

If you have not logged into FAMS (using your email + created a unique password), you are missing out on our member's documents and handbook- which is invisible until you login. (fams.ca icon in upper right-hand corner)

#### What has FAMS done in the last year?

We provide unbiased advice regarding funerals planning. Memorial society work is just as necessary today as it was decades ago. We have firsthand experience of our member's issues to attest to this need.

#### Pre-paid vs Pre-arranged

Statistically most funeral providers offer insurance versus accepting payment in advance. Advance payment requires the funeral home to maintain trusts which are registered by the BAO. If no monies are paid, there is no obligation to the funeral home or consumer as there is no contract.

#### FAMS Current Board

Chair:	Ellen Papenburg
Treasurer:	Miriam Kramer
Secretary:	Sheila Middleton
Gov't Relations:	Pearl Davie
Green Burials:	Judith Wouk
Trustee:	Jim Sannes
Trustee:	Katherine Burnie
Trustee:	Gordon McFarlane
Trustee:	Pamela Taylor
Trustee:	Margot Boyd

#### Retiring this AGM:

Gov't Relations:	Pearl Davie
Trustee:	Reno DeHaan
Trustee:	Joyce Orchard

## On the agenda

- Reports from the Board
- Speakers:
  - Gary Foster, Executive Director, Ontario Monument Builders Association
  - Heather Anderson, Ontario Historical Society
  - Carey Smith, CEO Registrar - Bereavement Authority of Ontario
- Speakers panel with Q & A

Grab a beverage and join us for the 64th Annual General Meeting. The central theme is cemeteries, and we are excited!

Please feel free to contact FAMS with any questions or concerns either at our email address - [info@fams.ca](mailto:info@fams.ca), or phone at 416-241-6274.

Thank you - we appreciate your support.

FAMS Board of Trustees



CTRL + CLICK → Join Zoom Meeting 2021 05 16 01:00 pm

<https://zoom.us/j/94038705465>

(Also available at [www.FAMS.ca](http://www.FAMS.ca))

# Newsletter

## Spring is here ...

Thank you for supporting our work. The Board is grateful for the opportunity to be of service. We look forward to having you as our guest at our online AGM meeting, May 16, 2021 1:00 pm – please put it on your calendar.

What can we say about 2021? It is not 2020!

Several years ago, Ontario Memorial Societies gathered from Ottawa, Kitchener, London, and Toronto. We discussed the success of the changes in Funeral & Cemetery legislation and asked ourselves, “What’s next? Is there a next?” At the end of the weekend, we voted to close the Federation of Ontario Memorial Societies – Funeral Consumer Alliance (FOOMS-FCA).

Our “Visioning” discussion raised the dream of having the luxury of dispensing with the membership lists, depositing cheques, and just providing information to the public. We asked ourselves, “Are memorial societies still needed?” Please read the Ontario Auditor General’s remarks in the attached documents.

Consumers are subject to the same conditions that existed before the legislated changes. We all need to pay attention and arm ourselves with current, relevant, information to plan our final event. That is the sole purpose of Memorial Societies – to provide consumers with options, choice, and current information without bias.

We are still here. We still have work to do. We stand by our members.

We liaised with other consumer advocates and responded to proposed changes to the Funeral, Burial and Cremation Services Act, 2002 as advocates for Ontario consumers and their rights. Much has been learned but each layer reveals even more issues.

The Ontario Auditor General has proposed the need for a resource to voice consumer needs on the Bereavement Authority of Ontario Board (BAO). We were recognized as a known, active consumer group.

In 2021, FAMS is looking to add Green Burials to our funeral homes and transfer list. The research has begun, and much work lies ahead as this is new ground. It has been noted that many members are interested in a simple burial with little fanfare, no embalming, back to basics. There are many shades of green and this is the work that we will begin this year.

We believe in the work of Memorial Societies and are reminded everyday that we can and do help our members. Thank you for inspiring us.

Good news, we have added four new board members but have a need for more. Specifically, web-based knowledge (or the interest in learning) and FAMS Facebook presence that is missing an administrator. We have achieved our goal and automated the membership process. We need a few good people to build a solid foundation that reaches more people.

One standout after the Ontario Auditor General’s report is that in all the press and generated news, FAMS and our work is relatively unknown outside of our membership. How can we change this? Our Board is looking for opportunities to talk to the public about what we do. We are hoping that some of our members will identify groups, events, and opportunities. For the near future this would likely be a virtual Zoom presentation.

When we started back in late 50’s, most people were buried. Today most choose cremation. Carey Smith, BAO Registrar, advises that embalming is chosen less frequently. Statistics for burial indicate approximately 20% still make this choice. We expect an increase in mausoleums and columbaria as the market shifts away from the traditional cemetery interment. What does this mean for the public? Cemeteries will need to accommodate the change in consumer choice. Our AGM speakers will address the fascinating history of cemeteries and the challenges ahead.

Sincerely

FAMS Volunteers



## Ontario Auditor General Reports (2020.12.07):

### 1. Overall news release:

There were 13 value-for-money audits in the 2020 Annual Report. The Bereavement Authority of Ontario (BAO) was one of the thirteen:

Bereavement Authority of Ontario (BAO): The audit concluded the BAO does not effectively protect people who are purchasing funeral services and products after a loved one has passed. The BAO does not require key purchasing information, such as price lists of funeral services and products, to be transparent and easily accessible by the public, who are often subject to high-pressure sales tactics. The audit also found there are no industry standards on packages, fees, deposits and cancellation policies, making price comparisons and informed decisions difficult.

### 2. News release on the BAO

More Consumer Protection Needed in Ontario's Bereavement Industry

[https://www.auditor.on.ca/en/content/news/20\\_newsreleases/20AR\\_news\\_09BAO.pdf](https://www.auditor.on.ca/en/content/news/20_newsreleases/20AR_news_09BAO.pdf)

### 3. Video - Ontario Auditor General's Report on BAO:

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/3LtsjgJ7MX8>

### 4. BAO value for money audit, 75 pages

[https://www.auditor.on.ca/en/content/annualreports/arreports/en20/20VFM\\_09BAO.pdf](https://www.auditor.on.ca/en/content/annualreports/arreports/en20/20VFM_09BAO.pdf)

(Note: there are no viruses in this link)

## Media Link:

BBC News / Business: "More and more people don't want a traditional burial"

<https://www.bbc.com/news/business-56926819>