

MAY 2013

The Annual General Meeting is being called to report to members, to review the Financial Statements of the previous year and conduct necessary business.

After the business meeting, a talk on recent developments in the use of low intensity lasers in therapy will be presented by Leslie Perrin, a cell biologist. Light has been used for healing since early times but in the areas of sports medicine, rehabilitation and pain management, low level laser therapy has gained popularity in recent years.

Mr. Perrin was introduced to low intensity laser therapy (LILT) as a patient suffering a herniated disc, sciatic pain and foot drop. After 15 treatments over a three week period, he became asymptomatic without surgery and convinced of the value of LILT. Mr. Perrin will explain Light Therapy, the biology underlying it and current uses of LILT. The subject might be of particular interest to those among us who are involved in the aging process and may be especially vulnerable to sciatic pain.

A question and answer session will follow Mr. Perrin's talk, followed by refreshments. We hope that members will introduce themselves to the volunteers and board members and share your ideas about FAMS and FOOMS.

Invitation and Notice

FAMS 56th Annual General Meeting

Sunday, June 2, 2013
2:00 p.m.

North York Central Library
Meeting Room Two, 2nd Floor

Guest Speaker: **Leslie Perrin**
Research and General Manager,
BiomedNova Laser Rehab Clinics

Directions to the AGM:

The North York Central Library is located at the North York Centre, 5120 Yonge Street (North Side of Mel Lastman Square).

By TTC, exit the Yonge Subway at the North York Centre station and walk through the Concourse to the western end of the North York Centre.

Paid parking is available underground and on the side streets.



FUNERALS, HISTORY AND THE DIGITAL REVOLUTION

Something is happening in the funeral industry. Its impact involves a transition that may signify a whole new stage in the history of how we grasp and arrange the complications of death.

Methods and ceremonies for disposing of the lifeless corpse in Canadian towns and cities began to take shape in the 1920s, and have remained basically the same ever since. Embalming was introduced in North America in the 1880s and preservation of the body led in the 1920s to the funeral home with its owner as the funeral director, to replace the rural custom of burial directly from the family home of the deceased. For at least three generations we have associated certain basic features – embalming, the funeral home and the funeral director – with what is now an established and necessary business in Canadian cities. Changes that have come through the place of the hearse and the automobile, the refinement of instruments and fluids for embalming, and the variety of caskets manufactured for burial, have done little to change the basic character of the industry. The number of cremations has increased but has only modified the difference between the funeral service and the memorial celebration.

Now, however, we live in a digital age and the challenge for the funeral business is how to adapt. On computer and smart phone we can communicate in ways that were not imagined fifty years ago. When FAMS was formed in 1957 the funeral home could make itself known only in print, and even then mostly in black and white. Today, publicity and advertising can be projected onto the screen in full colour, with movement and animation that make their appeal in a variety of ways, whether from the small, hand-held screen, the lap-top and the desk-top computer, or the full screen of the cinema. All of industry is affected, especially in marketing.

What might the consequences be for the funeral industry in general and for FAMS in particular? One outcome is to stimulate the tendency towards corporate concentration.

Large-scale owners of cemeteries with secure access to capital, see an opportunity to merge the management of the cemetery with the provision of funeral services, both through new visitation centres on cemetery property, and through the purchase and merger of existing funeral homes. On a continental scale in North America, Service Corporation International now owns over 1,400 funeral-service locations, together with 214 cemetery/funeral combinations, while in Canada, Arbor Memorial Services owns 92 funeral homes, some of which are combined with cemeteries.

A second outcome is the ease of access to the Internet and from there to the wide screen of the cinema, both of which are currently being used by a large and prominent cemetery company in the Greater Toronto Area. On a more limited scale, smaller and simpler funeral companies promote not just advertising but complete funeral arrangements through the Internet.

Marketing on this scale is expensive. The large number of independent funeral homes, which still constitute a majority, are limited to smaller expenditures and to static websites that do little more than show details on services and prices. The object is the same, however – to induce in the viewer thoughts about funeral pre-arrangement. And to encourage prepayment with this planning, banks and insurance companies on TV and the Internet, make visible for us how easy is insurance for a fixed, exorbitant figure of \$10,000.

FAMS, too, has had to adapt to this growing sophistication of internet technology, creating its own website, updating its database of members on a new computer, and communicating and accepting payment by email. The challenge is serious. There is a continuing need for memorial societies – to support the interests of consumers, to inform the public on the range of funeral services and prices, to bring a consumer voice to government of how we arrange for disposal of the dead, and to do so on a limited budget, with volunteers who willingly bring computer skills to a task that combines very little time with a very satisfying sense of giving.

FAMS' 56th Annual General Meeting will be a time to meet other members and hear about the new uses of laser technology. Members will be pleased to learn that our finances are in very healthy condition, thanks to good management by our Treasurer, to the many members who have continued to support the Society's work by sending in donations, and to a generous bequest left to FAMS by Mrs. Grace Hall.

Ontario memorial societies through FOOMS-FCA, have been successful in pushing for legislation to protect consumers. Society's values have changed, becoming closer to those advocated by memorial societies for years, but we must remain organized and alert to the changing scene in the death care sector, so that we can defend the interests of every Ontario consumer.

It is with sadness we report that the Windsor Memorial Society has relinquished its charter. Stan McDowall was its stalwart leader since the early years of the Society until its conclusion. The Memorial Society of London has agreed to incorporate the Windsor membership into its numbers. The Funeral Advisory Society of Hamilton and District (FASHD) is currently in the process of closing down. We welcome the many former FASHD members who have transferred their memberships to FAMS; among them are Pearl Davie, President and Miriam Kramer, Secretary of FOOMS-FCA.

FAMS has a very large membership but the work of the Board is being carried by a small number of long-serving members. All but two of us are past 80, so we need new volunteers.

Volunteering for FAMS is enjoyable and it is satisfying to help provide information to members and the public. In particular, we need to bring FAMS into the new and changing world - especially of social media. Please complete the volunteer form and tell us about yourself at the AGM.

Margaret Adamson, Chair.

The Funeral Advisory and Memorial Society

Formerly The Toronto Memorial Society

Mailing address only

55 St. Phillips Road,

Toronto, ON M9P 2N8

416-241-6274 www.fams.ca

Board of Trustees

Chair: Margaret Adamson

Vice Chair: Shirley Zinman

Treasurer: Albert Tucker

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Volunteers

Telephone Coordinator: Marion Hutchings

Monday & Email: Margaret Adamson

Tuesday: Shirley Zinman

Wednesday: Lieselotte (Lisa) Gayk

Thursday: Marion Hutchings

Friday: Dorothy Winkler

Messages left on voicemail or at info@fams.ca, will be returned by the volunteer on duty, Monday-Friday, 9-5.

In an emergency, a volunteer can be reached 365 days of the year.

Newsletter Editors

Margaret Adamson

Albert Tucker

FAMS is an active member of The Federation of Ontario Memorial Societies-Funeral Consumers Alliance (FOOMS – FCA). The Legislation Committee of FOOMS-FCA maintains contact with the Ministry of Consumer Services and the Board of Funeral Services to promote the protection of consumers. Recently the Legislation Committee provided suggestions for the recently circulated Consumer Information Guide to Funerals, Burials and Cremation Services, available from the Ministry of Consumer Services at www.ontario.ca/consumerservices and the Board of Funeral Services at www.funeralboard.com.

FROM THE BOARD OF FUNERAL SERVICES

Ontario Funeral Sector – Quick Facts 2011

Deaths Registered: 90,518 Cremations: 53,099 (58.7%)

Average of actual costs:

When a funeral was purchased: Services - \$4,174, Casket - \$2,420

When a direct disposition was purchased: Services - \$1,455, Casket - \$270

It is interesting to note that the number of cremations were 53% in 2007, 57% in 2010 and 58.7% in 2011. In 2007 when a funeral was purchased, the average for services was \$3731 and for a casket/container \$2280, but for direct dispositions, for services - \$1, 252 and for a casket/container \$278.

Costs of Death Notices

Globe and Mail: \$11.09/line 1 day rate, special rates for 2 and 3 days

Hamilton Spectator: \$37.50 first 5 lines and \$5/additional lines

National Post: \$10.52/line per day

Peterborough Examiner: **\$18.75 5 line minimum, additional lines - \$2.50/line.**

Toronto Star: \$9.95/line per day

USEFUL INFORMATION ON THE NET

From the Ontario Government:

www.sse.gov.on.ca/mcs

Click on Cemeteries and Funerals on this Ministry of Consumer Services website and you will find a video, Know Your Rights; also, information on Planning Basics, Preplanning and Prepaying, Your Consumer Rights. Includes: When is it necessary to use a provider? Services offered by a funeral home, a transfer service, a cemetery, a crematorium. Is a casket necessary and what types are available? What is embalming and is it required? What can be done with cremated remains? A Consumer Information Guide to Funerals, Burials and Cremations can be ordered from MCS or the Board of Funeral Services at www.funeralboard.com.

From the Federal Government:

Canada Revenue Agency - www.cra.ca
Go to Individuals, then Life Events and you will find questions and answers on What to do when someone dies. Forms and information on cancelling benefits, lists of federal, provincial and territorial government contacts are found on the site. Also has links for information on International Benefits and on Death outside Canada.

FAMS VOLUNTEER & ORDER FORMS

We urge members to give serious consideration to volunteer with FAMS.

Please E-mail us at info@fams.ca, complete the form below, or call us at 416-241-6274.

To: **The Funeral Advisory and Memorial Society**, 55 St. Phillips Road, Toronto, ON M9P 2N8

Yes, I'd like to work with FAMS

By serving on the Board

Name _____

Doing promotional work

E-mail _____

Other

Telephone _____

Replacement member card (members only)

Free

Price List of Participating Funeral Homes (members only)

Free

Copy of FAMS brochure to give to prospective members

Free

What to do when death occurs

Free

Financial Statement

Free

Information on the Funeral, Burial and Cremation Services Act, (2002) and Regulations

Free

Up-to-date Member's Handbook

\$10.00

Replacement Funeral Prearrangement Form (1 Set per member)

\$10.00

Total of above: \$ _____

I enclose \$100 \$50 \$35 Other \$ _____ Plus Donation: \$ _____

as a donation to the society.

Total Enclosed: \$ _____

Regretfully, receipts are not tax deductible.

Please make your cheque payable to:

The Funeral Advisory and Memorial Society 55 St. Phillips Rd. Toronto, ON M9P 2N8

Name _____ Membership# _____ (See Address Label)

Address _____ Telephone _____

E-mail _____