

FAMS *The Funeral Advisory and Memorial Society* (Southern Ontario) Newsletter April 2019

Exciting Times

The New FAMS of 2018-2019

by Ellen Papenburg, chair.

These are exciting times for Memorial Societies as the landscape of End of Life services and consumers rights is changing. These consumer's rights are even addressed on TV and YouTube, by for instance CBC Marketplace among others. It turns out there is (still) a lot of work to be done for memorial societies like your FAMS (Funeral Advisory and Memorial Society).

A number of memorial societies thought their purpose of existence disappeared when the legislation in Ontario changed recognizing rights of the consumer. Some of the memorial societies felt we achieved our goal and our job was done.

However, the public is often not aware of these changes or their rights, especially in a vulnerable period of their life. There is a big role for memorial societies in education, information as well as advocacy. **FAMS** intends to fulfill that role for Southern Ontario and MSNO (Memorial Society of Northern Ontario) does the same for North Ontario.

The long-time Federation of Ontario Memorial Societies - Funeral Consumers Alliance (FOOMS-FCA) has no longer a purpose, as the remaining societies within the Federation merged with FAMS, with the exception of MSNO which covers North Ontario. We are very grateful to Pearl Davie, who was president of FOOMS-FCA for many years and a pioneer in consumer advocacy for end of life services. She and Margaret Adamson were and still are our beacons on the rights of consumers.

Below a photo with the most of the former FOOMS & now FAMS board members, left to right back row: Jim Sannes, Ellen Papenburg, Shannon Calvert, Reno DeHaan, Sheila Middleton, front row: Margaret Adamson, Pearl Davie, Miriam Kramer, Joyce Orchard and Judith Wouk.



Margaret Adamson gracefully fulfilled the function of chair for FAMS with a lot of experience and insight for years, a hard act to follow.

There is a lot of work to be done. The website is getting revamped to become more dynamic with interesting news. A new Facebook page will be launched with help from the London group and we will distribute the newsletter (per email) more frequently. The board is talking about new directions and perhaps a new structure.

Want to have a say in what is happening? Then join us for the first FAMS **Information Day** on Saturday May 4, at 1pm with speakers, information tables and the 62nd Annual General Meeting. Be seeing you there!

Green Burials and Alternate Dispositions

REPORT from Judith Wouk, Vice President, Green Burials

This committee continues to bring information to members on green/ natural eco-friendly choices that minimize one's environmental impact after death.

Resomation (also known as alkaline hydrolysis, flameless cremation, water cremation, or biocremation) is currently available in Ontario, only on a very limited basis. Other new technologies, such as cryomation (promession, freeze drying, cryonics), composting, mushroom suits, bio-urns and burial pods are not yet commercially viable options.

Green burial in a section of a cemetery set aside for that purpose, is increasingly available around the province. Green burial sites restore or preserve a green landscape populated by native trees, shrubs and wildflowers. The Green Burial Society of Canada now has a certification program which sets the standard for environmentally sustainable death-care practices in Canada.

What's Up with the BAO?

(Bereavement Authority of Ontario)

REPORT from Pearl Davie, Vice President, Government Relations

There was a great deal of interaction between the Registrar of the Bereavement Authority of Ontario (BAO), Carey Smith, and FAMS' Pearl Davie, with numerous meetings and telephone conversations. Reports on the matters of concern were made to the FAMS board.

The Registrar issued a Directive on May 2, 2018 that pre-need sales of Alkaline Hydrolysis is prohibited and he issued a Notice to the Profession regarding a study and assessment of the alkaline hydrolysis process; and that until further notice, pending the outcome of the study, licensees are prohibited from selling or offering to sell, in advance of need, alkaline hydrolysis services.

The alkaline hydrolysis method of body disposition - a breakdown of the process was provided which indicates it is not a harmless "water method" as is implied in the advertising. The Ministry of the Environment is involved in the study, as well, since the process involves the use of a great deal of water and the final effluent (dissolved human flesh) goes directly into the municipal sewer/waste system. Currently, only the Wartman Funeral Home in Kingston is offering the alkaline hydrolysis method and only for at need arrangements. The process may not be included in pre-need contracts.

In a TV program, a staff member of a funeral home (Arbor), appeared to be poorly informed on whether a person could use their own casket as opposed to purchasing from the funeral home, and on the matter of embalming. Carey Smith advised that he had instructed the corporation to upgrade its education process and they had complied.

The Registrar is very clear that his job is to administer the Funeral, Burial and Cremation Services Act and he will suspend or revoke licenses when licensees do not comply with the provisions of that Act. A number of licenses have been revoked over the past months; further information can be obtained by visiting the BAO website.

A new organization, Community Death Care, requested FAMS include their representatives in our meetings with the Registrar. Their main interest is home funerals and family rights to transfer a body, etc. As FAMS' interests are more far-reaching, across the industry, we advised them to arrange a meeting with the Registrar, which they have done and have been able to discuss their specific concerns with him on several occasions.

There were many other matters of interest discussed and we have always found the Registrar open-minded and informative. He regards FAMS as a very necessary consumer advocate organization in his job.

Carey Smith spoke at the final FOOMS-FCA 2018 annual meeting and was so well received he was invited to speak at the 2019 FAMS' AGM and accepted that invitation, as well.

(Editor's Note: As he would return per 737 and all 737 planes have been grounded, Carey won't be back in Canada in time, so he chose his inspector Michelle Crognale to speak in his stead)

and... Now for something completely different.....

(Excerpted from The New York Times, March 23-24, 2019)

Fighting Crime From the Grave

Essay by Fawn Fitter

Most of us hope to be remembered after death for our contributions to society during our lives. I want to keep contributing even after I'm gone. So, once I breathe my last, I'll be shipped to the University of Tennessee in Knoxville to the Forensic Anthropology Center, better known as "the Body Farm." There students and researchers will study my decomposing body to learn how to recover human remains, estimate time since death and piece together who I might have been

In other words, after I die, I'm going to solve crimes.

Fewer than a dozen sites around the world are devoted to the science of making sense of human remains. The Body Farm was the first. Established in 1981 with a plot of land just large enough for a single body, it's now a hectare, large enough for 150 to 200 people at any given time to decompose in a variety of scenarios. They're buried in shallow graves and floated in a pool, laid out in the back seat of a car and on the leaves beneath a tree. Every one is a valued collection of data points for future forensic scientists and detectives learning to analyze the details of death.

..... I looked up the centre and discovered its body donation program. "Some people are teachers who want to keep teaching after they're gone, some people want to be useful forever and ever, some people have known a crime victim," said Dawn Wolfe Steadman, the Body Farm's Director. "There are all sorts of reasons for donations, one for every person, and we're grateful for all of them."

More of the article at the [New York Times](#)

Please join us for our **62nd Annual General Meeting** and **First Information Day**

Saturday, May 4, 2019

Grand River Unitarian Congregation

299 Sydney Street South Kitchener, Ontario

Whitton Hall, side entrance from parking lot.

Free parking.

Programme

12:45 p.m. Doors open for Members & the Public

1:00 p.m. FAMS 62nd Annual General Meeting

2:15 p.m. Guest Speakers

- Michelle Crognale: Bereavement Authority of Ontario
- Mark Richardson: Board member of the Green Burial Society of Canada and Manager of Cemetery Services at City of Niagara Falls

3:15 p.m. Panel discussion

- Michelle Crognale, Mark Richardson, and Pearl Davie, Vice Chair Gov't Relations

Adjournment around 4 p.m.

Attendees will be welcome to visit the Information Tables on local Funerals, Green Funerals, Burials and Cemeteries, End of Life Doulas, Death Cafés, and more.

(Not necessarily endorsed by FAMS)

Cost of Death Notices - April 2019

Globe and Mail:	\$14.25 per line (1-day rate)
Hamilton Spectator:	\$170 (without photo)
Guelph Mercury-Tribune:	Starting from \$75
Kitchener Record:	Starting from \$75
Ottawa Citizen:	\$67 - 2 column Package, 1 day in print (8 lines)
Toronto Star:	\$ 9.50/line per day
Waterloo Chronicle & Waterloo Post:	Starting from \$39
Waterloo Regional Record:	Starting from \$75
London Free Press	From \$100 up, photo \$50 extra

Contact Us

The Funeral Advisory and Memorial Society
(Southern Ontario incl. Ottawa)

Mailing Address:

P. O. Box 65 Stn F
Toronto, ON M4Y 2L4
Tel. **416-241-6274**

Email: info@fams.ca Website: www.fams.ca

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