



**FUNERAL CONSUMERS ALLIANCE OF PRINCETON**  
**Princeton Memorial Association**  
**NEWSLETTER**



Promoting informed advanced planning for funeral and memorial arrangements

49th Year

Fall 2005

No. 9

## A Custom to Adopt

By Dorothy Jacobson


*Central Coast Memorial Society, California*

When I received the announcement of the death of a friend in Holland, I was sad, and also impressed by the thoughtfulness of the communication. I knew my friend had cancer, yet thought she was doing well. I would have been calling her again soon.

The decorously printed announcement of my friend's death in Holland is in Dutch, a language unknown to me, yet I can see that it includes her names, profession, birth and death dates, a list of surviving family members, and the name and address of a family member to whom one could write. Cremation was mentioned. Enclosed was a map giving directions to the last rites.

I responded with a letter of condolence, and subsequently received another printed message, saying that the family had not realized before the widespread friendships and influence of their sister and gave thanks for letters of sympathy. A Dutch friend translated the message for me.

In our country, we send birth and wedding announcements. When someone dies, the news gets around via the grapevine or local obituary. Old friends in distant places may hear later, if at all. An undelivered and returned Christmas message may be the only indication that an old friend has died.

I would like to see Americans adopt the civilized custom of sending death announcements, to honor both the deceased and friendships spanning great distances of time and space. I shall be including a list of my distant friends and their addresses with my Letter of Instruction that is filed beside my will. 

## Seniors With Living Wills More Likely To Die At Home

*From The Annals of Internal Medicine*

Living wills allow people to explain in writing which medical treatments they do or do not want if they have a serious or terminal illness and are too ill to voice their wishes. Surveys show that many people in the United States favor having living wills. Many say that they would limit certain medical treatments if told that they were terminally ill. Also, many would prefer to die at home rather than in a hospital. However, only 20% of people in the United States have a living will. Evidence that these wills influence end-of-life care is mixed and sometimes scant. In particular, no studies address whether having a living will influences where people die.

The researchers used data from a large study of older people born before 1924 (over 70) who were living in their own home or in the home of a relative in 1993. Contacts for 539 of the seniors who had died by 1995 gave the researchers specific information about living wills and deaths. The researchers then compared this information between seniors who did and did not have living wills before their death.

40% of the seniors had living wills. Living wills usually included wishes to prevent pain and limit or withhold treatments in certain circumstances. Compared with those without living wills, seniors with living wills more often received treatment to keep them pain-free and comfortable and also more often had other treatments withheld. The main finding was that those with living wills were more likely to die at home or in a nursing home rather than in a hospital.

*Continued on page 2*

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The researchers excluded 188 patients who died unexpectedly or suddenly. Medical charts were not available, so researchers could not see whether consultation of living wills was documented. Rather than other people consulting the living will and making decisions on patients' behalf, some people who prefer to die outside of the hospital who had living wills may have made decisions themselves.

The conclusion: Having a living will is associated with dying in a setting other than a hospital.

### Here's To Your Funeral

*Huddersfield, England*

Pub goers in Huddersfield are urged to raise the topic of funerals, as well as a glass, when they go out to down a few pints.

The Co-operative Funeralcare company wants people to shed their fear of the morbid topic and talk to one another about their thoughts for their own final farewell and those of their loved ones. And, to spark conversation, the Co-op is distributing Last Orders beer mats in some town center pubs.

"Over the years, as a nation we have become much more open and willing to express ourselves," said Brian Taylor, Co-operative Funeralcare regional manager, "But there is one subject that is still very much avoided – and that is death. Our campaign aims to shed light on the choices that are available when arranging a funeral"

The campaign has been launched in response to a Co-op survey that found that half of mourners interviewed experienced secret disappointment at ceremonies that did not reflect the life of the dead person.

Co-operative Funeralcare is asking for suggestions from the public about how to celebrate the life of their loved ones in the most appropriate fashion. The most inspiring accounts could be featured in a book, be it clack horses trotting past the Tetley Brewery in Leeds or Harley-Davidson motorbikes lining The Headrow in the city.

### Viewing Cremation

*Aloha, Oregon*

Funeral home directors are getting an increasing number of requests from family members who cremate their loved ones: More and more they are asking to watch the container that holds the body disappear into the retort, or cremation chamber – and even to press the incinerator's start button.

So many families at a Seattle funeral home request to view the procedure that it now charges for the service. A new funeral home in Aloha, Springer & Son, has a specially-designed viewing room overlooking the crematory. "It's the same as watching your loved ones being placed in the grave," said John Springer, owner and funeral director of Springer & Son. "What's the difference? It's about closure. Family members want to make sure they've taken Mom or Dad or brother or sister to that last step."

#### **Funeral Consumers Alliance of Princeton**

50 Cherry Hill Road, Princeton, NJ 08540

(609) 924-3320

email: [fcap@uuprinceton.org](mailto:fcap@uuprinceton.org)

web: [www.princetonol.com/groups/fcap](http://www.princetonol.com/groups/fcap)

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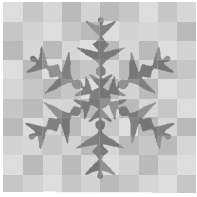
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#### *Humorous Obituary*

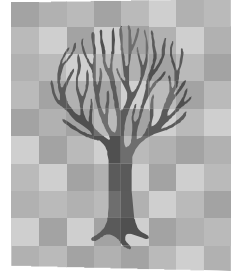
Robert "Bob" E. Welch, 56, of Enfield passed away Saturday (January 29, 2005) at the West Haven Veterans Hospital after a long battle with his family at his bedside.

*-the Hartford Courant*

Dear Member,



We need your financial support so that our educational presentations, publications and advocacy on behalf of consumers will continue and enable us to reach more members of the community who need information and help with end-of-life planning. The more consumers know and understand about the death services industry, the less likely it is that they will be disadvantaged when they are compelled to make funeral and memorial arrangements for a loved one. FCAP is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational and charitable organization. Your donation is tax deductible and supports our work counseling families at a time of need.



Thank you.

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## Free Pamphlets

- \_\_\_ *Ten Tips for Saving Funeral \$\$\$*
- \_\_\_ *Common Funeral Myths*
- \_\_\_ *Viewing and Visitation: The Difference*
- \_\_\_ *Prepaying Your Funeral: Benefits and Dangers*
- \_\_\_ *Veterans' Funeral and Burial Benefits*
- \_\_\_ *What You Should Know About Embalming*
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- \_\_\_ *Earth Burial: A Tradition in Simplicity*
- \_\_\_ *Organ and Body Donation*
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- \_\_\_ *Death in One State, Burial in Another*
- \_\_\_ *Death Away From Home*
- \_\_\_ *Eco-Friendly Death and Funeral Choices*
- \_\_\_ *How to Read a General Price List*
- \_\_\_ *Recycle Your Medical Devices*
- \_\_\_ *Expression of Personal Wishes*
- \_\_\_ *Living Will/Advance Directive*
- \_\_\_ *Nationwide Directory of Affiliates*
- \_\_\_ *Membership brochures to share with friends*
- \_\_\_ *Beat the High Cost of Funerals: Benefits of  
Membership in a Funeral Consumers Group*
- \_\_\_ *"Simple and Cheap" My Father Said*  
by J. B. Pesaresi, daughter of Supreme  
Court Justice Hugo Black

## Books for Sale

- \_\_\_ *Putting My House in Order*  
Prepared by FCAP, this is a helpful listing  
of all the things you want your loved ones  
to know before you go, presented in an easy  
workbook..... **\$1.50**
- \_\_\_ *I Died Laughing*  
by Lisa Carlson, softcover..... **\$8.75**
- \_\_\_ *Dealing Creatively with Death: A Manual  
of Death Education and Simple Burial*  
by Ernest Morgan, softcover  
(cover price \$12.95) ..... **\$6.00**
- \_\_\_ *The American Way of Death Revisited*  
by Jessica Mitford, hardcover  
(cover price: \$25.00)..... **\$20.00**
- \_\_\_ *Caring for the Dead: Your Final Act of Love*  
by Lisa Carlson, softcover  
(cover price \$29.95)..... **\$20.00**
- \_\_\_ *You Only Die Once: Preparing for the End  
of Life With Grace and Gusto*  
by Margie Jenkins, softcover  
(cover price \$12.99)..... **\$10.00**

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