



# Funeral Consumers Alliance of the Finger Lakes

## Spring 2017 Newsletter

www.fingerlakesfunerals.org • info@fingerlakesfunerals.org

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## Are You Ready For The Final Departure?

### Public Presentation and Annual Meeting of the *Funeral Consumers Alliance of the Finger Lakes*

#### Speaker:

**The Reverend Matthew P Binkewicz,**  
BA, MA, FT

**2 PM, Sunday, April 23, 2017**  
**Auditorium, Kendal at Ithaca**  
*Open to all*

DO YOU KNOW THE KINDS OF ADVANCE care directives you should have in place? At what age should you prepare them? What do you know about hospice? How might hospice help you as you near the end of your life? The Reverend Matthew P Binkewicz will review the



advance directives all of us should complete. He will discuss hospice as a plan of care, some misconceptions about hospice, a realistic look at the people who work in hospice care, and a few interesting stories from his hospice experience.

An Orthodox priest who serves St George Orthodox Church in Lansing for nearly 25 years, Binkewicz has

been involved in end-of-life care as a bereavement counselor, chaplain and educator. He is currently the Bereavement and Pastoral Care Coordinator at Hospice of the Finger Lakes in Auburn, NY. In addition, he is an adjunct instructor at the State University of New York at Canton where he teaches courses in Death, Dying, and Bereavement.

The Reverend Binkewicz is accredited by the Association of Death Education and Counseling (ADEC) as a Fellow in Thanatology (FT). He is also a published author in the field of End-of-Life Care with his book *Peaceful Journey: a Hospice Chaplain's Guide to End of Life*.

### Directions to Kendal at Ithaca Auditorium

- It is recommended that visitors to the Auditorium use the (old and original) South entrance to Kendal. The parking lot is close to the Auditorium.
- For the South entrance to Kendal, turn left at the stop sign for the circular road. Follow road around right curve. See visitor parking sign to right (park in visitor parking lot). Enter through the doorway under the portico. Find auditorium to the left.

### Annual Business Meeting

The business meeting will follow The Reverend Binkewicz's presentation. **Please stay for the meeting. The main item of business will be election of officers and directors. Your attendance will be important to achieve the quorum required to conduct business.**

**Election of officers and directors:**

A nominating committee will offer the following slate of candidates for three-year terms:

Vice-President: Barry Adams

Recording Secretary: Pat Pryor

Corresponding Secretary: Diana Nathanielsz

**Nominations (to three-year terms):**

Jack Booker

Pat Gaines

Dorothy Pasternack

**Nominations from the floor will be invited.****Continuing members of the Board:**

Deena Freed

Peggy Haine

Carol Hardy

Martin Hatch

Angela Mennitto

Bronwyn Molhke

Donna Scott

**Biographical notes on Nominees to the FCAFL board:**

**Jack Booker** came to Ithaca as a graduate student at Cornell, ultimately retiring there in 2002 as Professor Emeritus of Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering. Academic leaves were spent in both England and The Netherlands exposing him and his wife, Barbara, to approaches other than “The American Way of Death”. Early on, they joined the predecessor of the FCAFL and both signed up for the anatomical gift program of the SUNY Upstate Medical University. Unfortunately, Barbara developed early-onset Alzheimer's disease when she was in her early 50s; upon her death her wishes for her body's ultimate use were honored. Today, Jack continues to sing with the Ithaca Community Chorus and indulges his need for exercise and love of the natural world with the Ithaca Hikers. He and his partner, Nelly Farnum, have put their Brooktondale properties in conservation easements with the Finger Lakes Land Trust, which they also support as volunteers.

**Patricia (Pat) Gaines** holds degrees from Cornell and Western Connecticut Universities. She taught elementary school for 43 years. Just as busy in retirement, Pat tutors children in both the volunteer-run Golden Opportunity (GO) program (for kids who need extra help) and in the 4th grade at Belle Sherman

School. Pat is part of an Ithaca Unitarian Church group which sews quilts for homeless people. She also buys used baby equipment for the Unitarian ‘Babies First’ program which is then donated to needy expectant mothers. Pat serves on the Groton Town Zoning Board of Appeals and is Treasurer for the Friends of Groton Public Library Board. She enjoys providing part-time care for her 15-month-old great grandson. Pat and husband, John, also travel quite a bit, having just been in southern Africa on an animal watching safari. Next up, Scotland and Guatemala.

**Dorothy Pasternack**, long time Ithacan, arrived as a freshman at Cornell in 1955. After graduating in 1959, she worked in the Graduate School of Business Library. She worked at the University of Illinois, then returned to Ithaca in 1963, to work at Ithaca College. She has traveled widely enjoyed the privilege of living in Rome, Paris and London. During the mid-1970s, she began her career trajectory as a worker with words, beginning in 1974 as an editor in the Office of Publications Services and retiring in 2000 as director of that office. Married to Donald Farley, Professor Emeritus of Electrical Engineering, she now lives at Kendal at Ithaca.



For more laughs from Amelia Sauter, check out  
<[drinkmywords.com/tag/death/](http://drinkmywords.com/tag/death/)>

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**Writing condolence notes**

Getting started is usually the hardest part. It is like an artist facing a large, blank canvas. Once that first brush stroke of paint has been applied, the picture begins to take shape. The following may be helpful to you in getting started:

- “I’m so sorry to hear that John has died” may be all you need to start your message;

- “You are in my thoughts and prayers” will work if it's true;
- “We will all miss Sally; she touched so many of our lives” is good, if that's how you feel;
- “What I am feeling right now is hard to put into words.” Since this is probably quite accurate, it won't hurt saying so;
- “He was such a creative person, and I am so sorry he died.” Addressing the qualities of the person who died will enable you to reveal indirectly how highly you valued that person.

*Borrowed from <legacy.com> obituaries website where much information may be found on death and dying.*



## BOOK REVIEWS

*From Carolyn Eberhard, FCAFL Advisor*

### 2017 Publication

*Modern Death: How Medicine Changed the End of Life* by Haider Warraich, MD. (New York, St. Martin's Press 2017)

Born and educated in Pakistan, Dr Haider Warraich came to the US in 2010 for a residency at Harvard's Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston. He is currently a fellow in cardiovascular medicine at Duke University Medical Center.

It is astounding that he was motivated to write this book DURING his Residency in Boston. He writes from the perspective of a very young doctor – he is 29 years old. His intention is to provide people with information about this nest phase of life – dying – which is a dramatic extension of life and is unfamiliar territory for most people. He discusses life and death at the cellular level, the importance of advanced planning, cardio-pulmonary resuscitation, heroic measures, the role of religion for both patients and doctors, defining death, negotiating death, and sharing death. Since the book is preceded by his many serious articles and op-eds, he has a lot to say on these important issues. One example was headlined, “Force Feeding is Cruel at Gitmo, but OK for Our Parents.”

As you might expect, the discussions are filled with real life cases that sometimes border on shocking. The information is also surprising and well documented in the “Notes” section. Dementia patients, for example, do not do better on a gastric feeding tube. And, only two percent of elderly patients with multiple chronic diseases go home within 6 months after CPR. In

addition, even if the heart restarts it is hard to predict how much the brain is damaged. Physicians themselves generally do not opt for CPR.

The final chapter, “When Death is Shared,” describes a patient-driven change as people begin to document their experiences on the internet. As families and physicians “talk about death in a way that has never been talked about before,” Dr Warraich is cautiously optimistic that the inevitable will become less terrifying, less lonely and more – well, human.

An excellent *Fresh Air* interview with Dr Warraich can be found on the National Public Radio website, and is also a podcast, with a summary and link to the full transcript. Go to: [www.npr.org/programs/fresh-air](http://www.npr.org/programs/fresh-air) and search for Dr Warraich.

### Books by Local Authors

*Leaning Into Love: A Spiritual Journey Through Grief* by Elaine Mansfield. Larson Publications 2014. Elaine Mansfield and husband Vic were living on 71 acres near Hector, NY, when he was diagnosed with cancer. This beautiful memoir recounts their experiences during treatment, their decision that Elaine would remain on their dearly-loved property after his death, and how they prepared to make that possible. She describes the support of her spiritual community, a community which included the Dalai Lama. Vic died in 2008.

A Gold Medal 2015 IPPY Award Winner for Aging, Death and Dying.

*Second Wind: Navigating the Passage to a Slower, Deeper, More Connected Life* by Bill Thomas, MD. Simon and Shuster 2014.

Dr Thomas's first job after his internship was directing a nursing home in upstate New York. He turned the place upside down by bringing in a caged bird for every resident. He and his wife, Jude, have successfully implemented their new ideas about aging, elderhood and better elder care: *The Eden Alternative* was cofounded in 1991 and *The Greenhouse Project* in 2003. The family is now based in Ithaca and has a cabin on Cayuga Lake. Since 2016, Dr Thomas has been on his *Age of Disruption Tour* (See: <https://drbillthomas.org>).



### “It Always Seems Too Early, Until It's Too Late.”

The aim of National Healthcare Decisions Day (NHDD) – April 16, 2017 – is to help people across the U.S. understand the value of advance care planning. We

encourage you to explore their website: [www.nhdd.org](http://www.nhdd.org). They provide a variety of resources to help you make, discuss and document future healthcare wishes and decisions. There are tools and materials both for individuals and organizations.

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*Tomb at Pere Lachaise cemetery, Paris, France  
(photo by permission: Angela Mennitto)*

**NEWS**

(provided by FCAFL board member Angela Mennitto)

**Update on New York’s Medical Aid-in-Dying Act**

There has been no movement on the Medical Aid in Dying Act (S. 3151, A. 2383). The bill, still sponsored by Senator Diane Savino and Assembly member Amy Paulin, needed to be reintroduced to the newly elected New York State legislature when it reconvened in January. The bill allows terminally ill, mentally competent, adult patients the right to receive a prescription of medications which they can take (if they choose to do so) to achieve a peaceful death.

New York’s Court of Appeals has ruled to hear the appeal of Myers v. Schneiderman, the lawsuit End of Life Choices New York initiated to make medical aid in dying available in New York. Additional briefs and replies will be filed in the coming months. They anticipate that a ruling will come through in the late spring.

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**It Takes All Sorts . . .** (uncovered by a former FCAFL board member)

Reported February 10 (UPI) – A Texas family had the last laugh against a less-than-beloved relative when they published a brutally honest obituary that "proves that evil does in fact die."

The family of late Galveston man, Leslie Ray Charping, published an obituary on the website of Carnes Funeral Home that declined to pull any punches after the man died at the age of 75 – “which was 29 years longer than expected and much longer than he deserved.”

The obituary says Charping “leaves behind two relieved children” as well as “six grandchildren and countless other victims including an ex-wife, relatives, friends, neighbors, doctors, nurses and random strangers.”

“At a young age, Leslie quickly became a model example of bad parenting combined with mental illness and a complete commitment to drinking, drugs, womanizing and being generally offensive,” the obituary reads.

The family says Charping was “surprisingly intelligent,” but failed to find professional success due to a lack of ambition and motivation.

“Leslie’s hobbies included being abusive to his family, expediting trips to heaven for the beloved family pets, and fishing, which he was less skilled with than the previously mentioned. Leslie’s life served no other obvious purpose, he did not contribute to society or serve his community and he possessed no redeeming qualities besides quick [witted] sarcasm, which was amusing during his sober days.

With Leslie’s passing he will be missed only for what he never did; being a loving husband, father and good friend. No services will be held, there will be no prayers for eternal peace and no apologies to the family he tortured. Leslie’s remains will be cremated and kept in the barn until ‘Ray’, the family donkey’s wood shavings run out. Leslie’s passing proves that evil does in fact die and hopefully marks a time of healing and safety for all.”

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**Join Helen for a Martini?**

Helen "Rusty" Webb passed away peacefully on December 16, 2016. True to her spirited nature, she wrote her own obituary two years prior to her death, which was printed in the Ft. Myers News Press. It was her wish to have the following excerpt reprinted:

"Recently, I woke up at 3 am worrying about mortality and the big 'D' word that the obituaries seem to avoid. Indeed, the obituary part is what caused the worry. My poor daughters; before they even plan my 'party' they have to write an obituary. Does anyone really care who preceded me in death, my birth place, the names of all my family members? Those who know me, know.

After all of the tossing and turning, I came to a conclusion. If I wrote my own obituary, it would only be to say this: How lucky I was to have received the gift of this long life journey. How lucky to have had my amazing and wonderful family and friends. How lucky to be able to see and hear new life, puppies, kittens, babies, sunsets, flowers, trees in bloom and all other glorious wonders of nature. Thank you, thank you. I feel that it is OK to turn off the news at the end of the day, go outside and soak up the beauty of this world with a cold martini in hand."

Rusty will be lovingly remembered and greatly missed by all her family and friends. In lieu of flowers, you may make a donation to Hope Hospice or to a

children's charity of your choice in memory of Rusty.

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 Although Rusty lived in or near Ft. Myers, FL, the obituary was published in the Burlington (Vermont) Free Press on 19 December, 2016.

**Donations gratefully received  
 November 1, 2016 - February 28, 2017**

- |   |                        |
|---|------------------------|
| Barazangi, Muawia & Nimat               | Bizzell, Virginia      |
| Bloom, Art & Donna                      | Contiguglia, Micheline |
| DaGrossa, Marion Craig                  | Donovan, Ronald        |
| Dieckmann, Jane &<br>Rosenbaum, Richard | Earle, Elizabeth       |
| Eberhard, Anatol & Carolyn              | Farnum, Cornelia       |
| Gaines, John & Pat                      | Finley, Kristina       |
| McConnell- Ginet, Carl & Sally          | Freed, Deena           |
| Hathaway, Eleanor & Isaac               | Gebhart, Francoise     |
| Jagendorf, Jean & Andre                 | Habel, Wilma J         |
| Koch, Judith                            | Heller, Laurence       |
| Linton, Rhoda                           | Lambert, Kit           |
| Lowes, J Michael                        | Loucks, Daniel         |
| Miller, Charlene                        | Magre, Ludovic         |
| Mount, Elizabeth & Tim                  | Moschak, Margaret J    |
| Pryor, Patricia                         | Peterson, Julie        |
| Savage, Edith Jo                        | Rabinowitz, Joel       |
| Shew, Barbara                           | Sheridan, Phillip      |
| Uphoff, Marguerite & Norman             | Wilson, Nancy          |

**Donations received In Memoriam**

Barry Adams *in memory of* Molly Adams

Ellen Biesdorf *in memory of* Heinz B Biesdorf

Jack Booker *in memory of* Cindy Wang

Joan de Boer *in memory of* Tob de Boer

JoEllen & Dalva Hedlund *in memory of*  
 Joseph (Joey) Mendelis, II

Donna Scott  
*in memory of* Lynn Carol Scott

Helen E Swank *in memory of* Robert D Swank

H Chris Wien *in memory of* Betty Wien



**YouTube – "Ask a Mortician"**

**Caitlin Doughty**, a young funeral professional from California, has created funny "Ask a Mortician" videos on YouTube.

Her website [www.orderofthegooddeath.com/category/videos](http://www.orderofthegooddeath.com/category/videos) has at least 23 humorous skits with titles such as, "Ask a Mortician – Exploding Caskets" and "Ask a Mortician – Are Viking Funerals Legal?" Even her more serious topics, such as "Ask a Mortician – Traditional vs. Natural Burial" tweak the funny bone.

**Funeral Consumers Alliance  
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**The Funeral Consumers Alliance of the Finger Lakes, Inc.,** founded in 1958 as the Ithaca Memorial Society, is a non-profit, tax-exempt, public-service organization that promotes advance planning of funeral arrangements and consumer education and protection with respect to funeral-related issues. Membership is free and open to all. Volunteers provide all services and programs. A Board of Directors is elected by the members. The FCAFL is supported entirely by donations and is a member of the national Funeral Consumers Alliance, Inc., which has more than 80 affiliates. This Newsletter is published twice a year and is freely available.

**The Board of Directors, 2016-2017**

Donna Scott, <i>president</i>	Deena Freed	<i>Advisors:</i>
Barry Adams, <i>vice president</i>	Peggy Haine	David Bandler
Carol Hardy, <i>treasurer</i>	Martin Hatch	Carolyn Eberhard
Pat Pryor, <i>secretary</i>	Angela L Mennitto	Joel Rabinowitz
Diana Nathanielsz, <i>corresponding secretary</i>	Bronwyn Molhke	

**Websites of Interest**

**End of Life Choices New York:**

*endoflifechoicesny.org*

**Home Funerals in New York:**

*www.nyfunerals.org/homefunerals.  
htm*

**Check out our website**

*www.fingerlakesfunerals.org*

**And**

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