



Funeral Consumers Alliance of the Finger Lakes

Spring 2018 Newsletter

www.fingerlakesfunerals.org • info@fingerlakesfunerals.org

P.O. Box 134, Ithaca, NY 14851-0134 • (607) 273-8316

Open to all
Public Presentation and Annual Meeting
Sponsored by
**Funeral Consumers Alliance
of the Finger Lakes**

**Cemeteries in American History:
An Alternative Landscape Tradition**
Speaker: Professor Aaron Sachs

2 PM, Sunday, May 6, 2018
Auditorium, Kendal at Ithaca
(See box this page for directions)

The best-known environmental tradition in America upholds wilderness—the National Parks, for instance—as the ultimate landscape. But a different tradition held sway for much of the 19th century, one that put less emphasis on sublime grandeur and more on an every-day engagement with nature. It started with the garden-style cemeteries that sprouted up in the 1830s, '40s, and '50s and that served as the nation's first urban parks. In 19th-century American culture, it turns out, some of the most powerful environmental ideas were entwined with ideas about death.



Please join us for a delightful armchair tour of some garden-cemeteries featuring many of Professor Sachs' photos!

Aaron Sachs is Professor of History and American Studies at Cornell University, where he has taught since 2004. In 2006, he published *The Humboldt*

Directions to Kendal at Ithaca Auditorium

- It is recommended that visitors to the Auditorium use the (old and original) South entrance to Kendal. The Visitor parking lot is close to the Auditorium.
- For the South entrance to Kendal, turn LEFT at the stop sign for the circular road after leaving North Triphammer Rd. Follow the curved road to the Visitor Parking and enter through the doorway under the portico. Find auditorium on your left.

Current: Nineteenth-Century Exploration and the Roots of American Environmentalism (Viking), which won Honorable Mention for the Frederick Jackson Turner Award, given to the best first book in the field of U.S. history by the Organization of American Historians. In 2013, he published *Arcadian America: The Death and Life of an Environmental Tradition* (Yale U. Press), which was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize in general nonfiction.

At Cornell, Sachs is the faculty sponsor of a “radical underground organization” called “Historians Are Writers”, which brings together graduate students who believe that academic writing can be moving on a deeply human level. He is also the founder and coordinator of the Cornell Roundtable on Environmental Studies Topics (CREST). Sachs is currently at work on book projects focusing on environmental modernity; environmental justice; and environmental humor.



Tree trunk growing around a gravestone

FOR THE VOTE ~ proposed Clause to be added to the FCAFL Bylaws at the Annual General Meeting on May 6, 2018.

“To facilitate day-to-day operations of the Funeral Consumers Alliance of the Finger Lakes, the FCAFL Board of Directors may vote by email on non-contentious management issues provided all Directors have at least three days to consider the decision proposed. If two or more Directors object to email voting on a given matter, that matter shall be addressed at the next meeting of the Board. Furthermore, no decision involving an expenditure greater than \$500 shall be made by email except in an emergency.”

The Board of Directors, 2017-2018

- | | |
|--|--------------------|
| Donna Scott, <i>president</i> | Jack Booker |
| Barry Adams, <i>vice president</i> | Deena Freed |
| Carol Hardy, <i>treasurer</i> | Pat Gaines |
| Pat Pryor, <i>secretary</i> | Peggy Haine |
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<i>corresponding secretary</i> | Angela L Mennitto |
| <i>Advisors:</i> | Bronwyn Molhke |
| David Bandler | Dorothy Pasternack |
| Carolyn Eberhard | |
| Joel Rabinowitz | |

Annual General Meeting will include voting to elect board members:

- **Susan Fast** to the Board;
- **Joel Rabinowitz** to the Board and Treasurer;

Sue Fast spent her growing-up years in Anderson, Indiana. She earned B.S. and M.S. degrees at the University of Cincinnati and the University of Michigan respectively. She taught English and Science in Ghana through Teachers for West Africa; was eight years with Cornell Plant Breeding; was map Illustrator at U.M. Geology and Tompkins County Assessment; taught Earth Science and Environmental Science at SUNY Cortland and at Ithaca High School.

Susan came around to the ministry, and is in the final year of an alternative educational path toward ordained ministry. Susan currently serves as Designated Assistant Minister at First Congregational Church, Ithaca.

She enjoys tent-camping in the Adirondacks, going to the GrassRoots Music Festival in Trumansburg, and hanging out with her daughters and grandkids. She lives in Ithaca’s Fall Creek neighborhood, where she shares her serene dwelling with 30 enthusiastically-growing houseplants.

Joel Rabinowitz grew up in Ithaca and is a graduate of Cornell. He also holds a Masters degree from the University of Texas. Following a career as a research analyst and database manager in the development offices of Cornell and Ithaca College, Joel served as executive director of Greensprings Natural Cemetery Preserve for nearly eight years. In that role, he led a successful multi-year effort to acquire the neighboring 30-acre property and farmhouse. Prior to being hired as executive director, Joel served as a Greensprings trustee from 2005-07, during which time he helped the cemetery gain permission from the NY State Cemetery Board to begin operating in 2006. Upon retiring as Greensprings’ executive director in 2015, Joel rejoined the board, serving as secretary and treasurer.

In 2014-15, Joel was a volunteer and board member for Ithaca’s Lake View Cemetery, assisting with burials and fundraising. A member of the Finger Lakes Land Trust, he served on its board from 1998-2002, and chaired its development committee. Joel and his wife, Dorothy, live in Groton and enjoy traveling, hiking, cross-country skiing and birding.



by Amelia Sauter, copyright 2011

For more laughs from Amelia Sauter, check out drinkmywords.com/tag/death/

Donations gratefully received

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Daniel P Loucks	9/26/17-3/5/18
J Michael Lowe	<i>Sincere thanks to all our donors – we couldn't do it without you!</i>
Erna Manchester	
Patricia Martin	
Ann McAdams	
Joyce H McAllister	

- Alzheimer’s resources;
- hospice care;
- organ donation;
- funeral planning and how to control costs;
- green burial.

The feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Attendees appreciated having all those resources in one place, found the flow very useful, and the staff very knowledgeable.

We plan to participate in the event again this fall. We hear they hope to schedule it in early October to avoid conflicts with other community events and they are exploring adding a few new topics to the line-up.



Hand-decorated for the occasion – Day of the Dead Cookies

Talking About Death Won’t Kill You

From Angela Mennitto, FCAFL board member

Last October, the FCAFL participated in a community education event called “Talking About Death Won’t Kill You” designed to help people develop the practical know-how needed to plan well for the end of life.

We had people from a variety of agencies and organizations to help attendees explore:

- advance directives: health care proxies & living wills;
- accessing palliative care;

**Donations received In Memoriam
September 26, 2017 to March 5, 2018**

Joan de Boer in memory of Tob de Boer

Ruth Beachler in memory of Dot Winters

Elizabeth Earle in memory of Clifford Earle

Peggy Haine in memory of Judy Hart

Jean Jagendorf
in memory of André T Jagendorf

Lucille Wernsing in memory of Bill Wernsing

Nancy Wilson in memory of David B Wilson

Advance Care Planning in a Nutshell (a very large nutshell)

From Angela Mennitto, FCAFL board member

Advance care planning is the process of making decisions about the care you would want to receive if you became unable to speak for yourself. It includes naming an individual to speak on your behalf in that situation.

The best place to start thinking about end-of-life care is around the kitchen table. Explore the resources on The Conversation Project website: theconversationproject.org to help you think about who to choose as your healthcare proxy, how to think about your wishes for end-of-life care, and even how to talk to your doctor.

Complete your Advance Directives

- Educate yourself about the types of life-sustaining treatments that are available and decide what types of treatment you would or would not want if you were diagnosed with a life-limiting illness.
- Discuss your values, beliefs and what is important to you with your family, your healthcare proxy and your physician.
- Put it all in writing by completing your Health Care Proxy and Living Will.
 - NYS Health Care Proxy forms: www.health.ny.gov/publications/1430.pdf
 - A popular living will is the Five Wishes document: www.agingwithdignity.org/five-wishes
- These two documents do not require an attorney or a notary to be valid, only your signature and the signature of two witnesses.
- If you spend time in different states be sure to fill out paperwork in each of them.
- If you want a Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) order or need a medical order like a MOLST form, talk with your physician.

Give a copy of all Advance Directives to your healthcare proxy, your healthcare proxy alternate, your primary care provider, all specialist physicians involved in your care, the hospital where you

receive most of your care, and your spiritual advisor if applicable.

Accessibility

- Keep a copy of all Advance Directives in a secure place, but NOT in a safe deposit box or other locked security box that would prevent others from having access to them.
- Keep your MOLST form and HCP form clipped to the side of your refrigerator, as that is where emergency responders are trained to look for them.
- If you enter a nursing facility, have copies of all documents placed in your medical record.

Review and Update

Review and update your forms after major life events, such as divorce, death of a spouse, etc. since you may wish to choose a new Health Care Proxy. If your health changes, your wishes may change, so be sure to re-evaluate your living will, and update it if necessary.

Avoid Problems

Problems may arise if you fail to share your wishes with your agent, your loved ones, or your medical providers or if you change your goals for care or treatment, but fail to reflect these changes in your Advance Directives forms.

- If you do change your wishes after documents are completed, an entirely new set of documents reflecting your new wishes must be written, signed, and witnessed.
- Be sure to give a copy of your new set of directives to all involved persons (proxy, alternate, primary care provider, etc.)
- Keep in mind that you can revoke your Health-care Proxy, Living Will, and MOLST form at any time.
- Be aware that your NY documents will not be effective in the event of a medical emergency. Ambulance personnel are required to administer CPR unless given a separate "Non-Hospital DNR Order," that is, a non-hospital order Not to Resuscitate (DNR Order).

Local Healthcare Decisions Day

Monday, April 2, at McGraw House, an independent apartment building in downtown Ithaca for adults age 62 and over, is joining the nationwide effort to provide information and tools to community members to talk about their wishes with family, friends, and healthcare providers, and execute written advance directives in accordance with New York state laws.

On Monday, April 2, from 2:00 to 4:00, the public is invited to attend presentations about advance care planning, including information on important documents, the process of dying, and funeral planning,

Speakers are Marcie Finlay, an Elder Law Attorney with Coughlin & Gerhart, LLP, whose talk — “Advanced Directives and Estate Planning” — will focus on powers of attorney, health care proxies, and other estate planning documents. Death Midwife Angela Mennitto’s talk — “The Art of Dying Well” — will be an exploration of the potential to grow as individuals and as members of families through the process of dying. What is important to you in life and what will be important at the end of your life? What will a good death look like for you? Donna Scott, President of the Funeral Consumers Alliance of the Finger Lakes’ talk — “It’s Your Funeral: Will It Be What You Want?” — will offer details on how the organization can help you and your loved ones plan ahead for the inevitable — your own death and the deaths of your loved ones?

Healthcare Decisions Day offers members of the community the opportunity to have thoughtful conversations about their healthcare decisions and complete reliable advance directives to make their wishes known. Doing so means that fewer families and healthcare providers will have to struggle with making difficult healthcare decisions in the absence of guidance from the patient, and healthcare providers and facilities will be better equipped to address advance healthcare planning issues before a crisis and be better able to honor patient wishes when the time comes to do so.

The event is free and open to individuals age 18 and older. McGraw House is located at 221 South Geneva Street in downtown Ithaca. Parking is on the street only. For more information contact Jane Baker Segelken at 607-272-7054.



Suggested Reading and Viewing

From Carolyn Eberhard, FCAFL advisor

“The Last Station.” 2009, DVD. Helen Mirren as Sofya, Christopher Plummer as Tolstoy, Paul Giamatti, James McAvoy and Anne-Marie Duff. The story of the last year of Leo Tolstoy’s life follows events at his estate, Yasnaya Polyana, and the nearby communal living experiment of Tolstoyans, and the struggle to put his philosophical ideas into practice. He viewed literature as a tool for social reform and promoted a life of Christian anarchism, vegetarianism, non-violence (inspiring Gandhi), turning the other cheek, celibacy, renouncing private property and avoiding participation in government.

“When Breath Becomes Air” by Paul Kalanithi 2016. Thorndike Press. Growing up in rural Arizona the author read voraciously, majored in English Literature and Neuroscience, earning advanced degrees in English Literature and Philosophy before plunging into Medicine. Eventually he entered the world of neurosurgical residency. He loved and excelled in the work, and was close to graduation when he received a diagnosis of stage IV lung cancer. He resumed reading, returned to surgery when able, and decided with his wife Lucy (an MD) to have a child. He worked on this book during the exhausting treatments. He died 8 months after graduation and the birth of his daughter, Cody. This memoir draws on extensive studies in literature and philosophy to face his own mortality.



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Ways FCAFL helps the public

Those with questions about funeral planning can talk to an FCAFL volunteer by phone (607-273-8316) or by email info@fingerlakesfunerals.org.

FCAFL presentations

Volunteers from FCAFL give presentations at Lifelong in Ithaca and at other venues in Tompkins County. Presentations include information on funeral planning facts with backup fliers on the numerous areas involved for planning ahead.

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.

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