



Funeral Consumers Alliance of the Finger Lakes

Spring 2023 Newsletter

www.fingerlakesfunerals.org • info@fingerlakesfunerals.org

P.O. Box 134, Ithaca, NY 14851-0134 • (607) 229-5286

You're invited to the Public Presentation and Annual Meeting of the Funeral Consumers Alliance of the Finger Lakes

2 PM, Sunday, April 16, 2023
Auditorium, Kendal at Ithaca, Open to all

Conservation Challenges and Successes at the Ithaca City Cemetery

Speakers: Christine O'Malley, Jeanne Grace, Julee Johnson

The Friends of the Ithaca City Cemetery work to conserve, protect, and celebrate the historic Ithaca City Cemetery by holding regular cleanups, tours, and special events. During this visual presentation, the speakers will discuss the challenges and successes of their work in the cemetery over the last decade.

Christine O'Malley is the Preservation Services Coordinator at Historic Ithaca, a local non-profit historic preservation organization. She assists the Friends of the Ithaca City Cemetery with their cleanups and conservation efforts to preserve the historic landscape of the Ithaca City Cemetery.

Jeanne Grace is a graduate of SUNY Environmental Science & Forestry and Cornell University School of Horticulture. She has been the City Forester for the City of Ithaca for 10 years. She sees cemeteries as great places to protect and conserve not only history, but also habitat and biodiversity.

Julee Johnson is a long-time volunteer with Historic Ithaca and Friends of the Ithaca City Cemetery and resides in Ithaca's Northside neighborhood. Julee also volunteers with the Tompkins County Public Library and Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Services.

Annual Business Meeting by Donna Scott, Acting President

A short business meeting will follow the presentation. Please stay for this meeting. Your attendance is important to achieve the quorum required to conduct business.

The main item of business will be the **election of officers**. We will vote on the following slate of candidates for 3-year terms:

President: Patricia Mason

Vice-President:

Corresponding Secretary: Donna Scott

Acting Recording Secretary: Angela Mennitto

Nominations from the floor will be invited.

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Enos Buckbee "Seek the Light" August 2012

Annual Business Meeting *(continued)*

Other continuing members of the Board are Joel Rabinowitz (treasurer), Carol Hardy, Deborah Harper, Maureen Kelly and Gary Reinbolt. Continuing advisor, Barry Adams, is a former long-term member of the FCAFL Board of Directors.

Candidate for FCAFL President Patricia Mason has worked in emergency management/emergency preparedness for 25 years. As part of that work, she often focused on mass fatalities, cold storage of bodies, and working with coroners and funeral homes. She also spent many years working with organizations to provide information and forms on Health Care Proxy, Living Wills, Organ Donations, pre-planning and the like. Patricia has a great interest in Death with Dignity. Patricia presently works for Tompkins County Public Health Department as the Preparedness Coordinator. Pat is interested in the important topics covered by FCAFL, subjects that she says many shy away from. She looks forward to learning more about burials, especially, green burial, funeral and memorial planning, body donation, and different customs and religions, as they relate to funeral and burial rituals. She has three grown children and 12 grandchildren. She and her husband live in Groton with their cat and five hens.

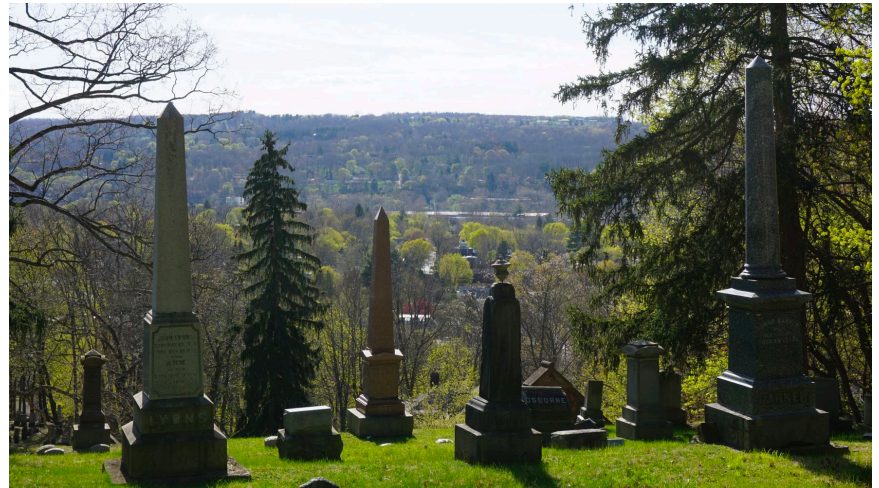
FCAFL needs people to serve as working board members!

If you are interested in helping out with this public education non-profit, please request our application form by email: info@fingerlakesfunerals.org

Among other important roles, we may need new officers in the future.



Sean, Ellen, Randy straightening headstone. August 2015



View from the Ithaca City Cemetery.

We have a new phone number!

607-229-5286

We invite you to call with any questions concerning funeral planning or end-of-life planning. Leave a voicemail message with your name and phone number, and a volunteer will return your call.

Due to problems with our phone service, our phone has been down for several months, but it is now available once again. We apologize for the inconvenience. You can always send questions to us via email at info@fingerlakesfunerals.org

A New Option for Body Disposition *by Angela Mennitto*

The current options for body disposition in New York include traditional and green burial, cremation and body donation. As of April 1, 2023, natural organic reduction (NOR)—or human composting—will also be an option.

At the end of December 2022, legislation (Bill A382) was signed to legalize NOR in New York. There are no NOR facilities in the state yet, however, cemeteries can begin accepting human compost as of April 1. New York is the sixth state in the nation to allow NOR, after Washington, Oregon, Colorado, California, and Vermont.

Other states have a variety of options of what can be done with the compost—including using it to plant trees, enrich conservation land, forests, or gardens. However, in New York the law states “remains shall be disposed of by scattering them in a designated scattering garden or area in a cemetery, or by prior authorization by the cemetery corporation, by placing them in a grave, crypt, or niche...” thereby limiting the possibilities significantly.

The process of natural organic reduction begins with the body being placed in a reusable container with organic plant material such as wood chips, alfalfa, and straw. The mix creates a good habitat for naturally occurring microbes to efficiently break down the body in about a month’s time. The details of the process vary widely at different facilities. Some use no heat, minimal exhaust and only one slow rotation, while others use a more involved process with rotation, aeration, water and heat.

Toward the end of the process, the compost is screened for non-organic items such as hip implants, the bones are pulverized, and the compost is allowed to dry and cure for a bit longer. The end result is a cubic yard of nutrient-dense soil amendment. While the law currently indicates that only cemetery corporations can set up a NOR facility, we have heard that may be expanded to include funeral homes. It isn’t clear yet. This method of body disposition uses significantly less energy than traditional burial or cremation, however, green burial is still the most earth-friendly option. We are fortunate to have green burial options in our area, but for urban areas where land is limited, this may be an attractive burial alternative. As we learn more in the coming months, we hope to update you on our website and in our next newsletter.

For more information about human composting, go to:

Return Home FAQ <https://returnhome.com/fag/>

Human Composting: An Eco-Friendly Alternative <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=25c0XyKaWwA>

New Yorkers Can Now Compost Themselves

<https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2023/01/new-yorkers-can-now-compost-themselves-after-they-die.html>

These links are live in the newsletter posted on our website: www.fingerlakesfunerals.org/

Donations gratefully received

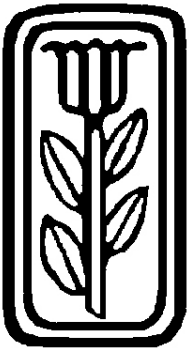
- Barry B. Adams *in memory of* Molly Adams
- Joel Rabinowitz *in memory of* Alice & Isaac Rabinowitz
- Susan P. Robinson *in honor of* Greensprings Natural Cemetery
- Rose G. Seely *in memory of* Kenneth L. Smith
- Ms. Barbara M. Shew *in honor of* Randy Shew

***Sincere thanks to all our donors.
We couldn't do it without you!***

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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. **Check out our website: fingerlakesfunerals.org AND “LIKE” us on Facebook**

The Board of Directors

Donna Scott, *acting president
& corresponding secretary*

Bronwyn Mohlke,
recording secretary

Joel Rabinowitz, *treasurer*

Carol Hardy

Deborah Harper, *newsletter shepherd*

Maureen Kelly

Patricia Mason
Angela Mennitto
Gary Reinbolt

Advisor:

Barry Adams

Ways FCAFL helps the public

Those with questions about funeral planning can talk to an FCAFL volunteer by phone (607-229-5286) or by email info@fingerlakesfunerals.org or go to: fingerlakesfunerals.org

FCAFL presentations

Volunteers can give Zoom presentations to groups of 10 or more people. Presentations include information on funeral planning and price comparisons.