

Summer 2019

## Funeral Consumers Alliance of the Virginia Blue Ridge



### Board of Trustees

#### 2019 Term

Darrel Clowes  
Wava Osborne  
Dianne Rencsok

#### 2020 Term

Leanne Mitchell  
Helen Renqvist  
Sandy Schlaudecker

#### 2021 Term

Linda Plaut  
Harriett Cooper  
Phil Olson

#### Officers

President: Sandy  
Schlaudecker  
Vice president: Darrel  
Clowes  
Secretary: Harriett Cooper  
Treasurer: Dianne Rencsok

Isabel Berney,  
Administrator (volunteer)

### Find out more

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## Public program – October 6, 3:00 PM

### ***Be a medical cadaver***

Kim Garnett, Anatomy Lab Manager  
VCOM, VA Campus

Sunday, October 6, 3:00 PM

### **Christiansburg Rec Center, Senior Lounge**

Learn about donors, where they come from, how the medical students utilize them, and how to go about donating your body as an alternative to having large funeral expenses.

Directions to Christiansburg Rec Center on p. 4

Following the program, a short business meeting convenes to elect the Board of Trustees for the term ending in 2022. The nominating committee, consisting of Franklyn Moreno, Crosby Houston, Sandy Schlaudecker presents this slate: Ben Crawford, Wava Osborne, Dianne Rencsok. Nominations from the floor also are accepted.

### **Nature Conservancy has green cemetery**

A green burial site near Knoxville, Tennessee is part of the Nature Conservancy Taylor Hollow State Natural Area. Larkspur Conservation has created a green burial nature preserve on a former farm. Larkspur does not provide any funeral goods or services. It allows only biodegradable containers and only approved markers and plants. Each burial becomes a gift in conservation.

# “Medical aid in dying” is gaining momentum



MAID now available in 10 jurisdictions.

Words do matter. Medical aid in dying (MAID or MAiD) is the term now widely accepted in law and medicine to describe the practice of a physician prescribing medication to a terminally ill, mentally competent, adult patient who may choose to ingest it to end suffering they find unbearable, and achieve a peaceful death. It is accurate language which should be used. Other terminology such as physician aid in dying may also be used, but increasingly there is a preference for the term medical aid in dying.

Delegate Kaye Kory from Falls Church requested the *Joint Commission on Health Care* to study whether Virginians with

terminal illnesses should be able to get aid in dying from their doctors. These jurisdictions now allow such assistance in dying:

- California
- Colorado
- Hawaii
- Montana
- New Jersey
- Maine
- Oregon
- Vermont
- Washington
- Washington, DC.

For Delegate Kory, medical aid in dying is about choice. Kory is not sure if this is the right time to introduce such legislation, but there is definite interest.

## Funeral Consumers looks out for you



Price Lists are often deficient with required information.

The Virginia Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers posts the minutes of its meetings. It was disturbing to see the report of annual state inspections conducted and the amount of deficiencies.

Only 38.7% of main offices of funeral homes received no deficiencies in the report. This means that the vast majority had deficiencies. For the past two years, the most common

deficiency has been with incorrect price lists – missing required information or disclosures. We collect price lists for our funeral home survey and we contact funeral homes when we see a deficiency. We have also filed complaints with the State Board, some of which resulted in disciplinary action and/or fines. Funeral Consumers has your back!



# Human composting becomes a reality

Washington became the first state, and perhaps the world, to permit human remains to be disposed of and reduced to soil through composting. Katrina Spade, founder of **Recompose**, a human-composting company, led lobbying efforts to get authorization passed. It becomes law on May 1, 2020.

In this process, the unembalmed body is wrapped in a shroud and is placed in a vessel with wood chips, alfalfa, and straw, which work to decompose the body. Air is pumped in periodically; the temperature is kept at 130 degrees for 72 hours which kills pathogens. Heat is then generated by microbes at work decomposing.

Microbes need oxygen, nitrogen, and carbon to break down organic material to the molecular level. This process uses only one-eighth the energy of cremation.

As an architectural student at University of Massachusetts, Spade selected human composting space as her project, designing what it could look like. She discovered that the United States has only two alternatives for body disposal, and she asked why not more?

Washington also allows for alkaline hydrolysis. dissolving of bodies in a pressurized vessel with water and potassium hydroxide, or lye. Now 17 states allow the process. This is also known as green cremation or water cremation. Both alkaline hydrolysis and human composting require much less energy than cremation.



*The funeral industry is slowly responding.*



*Body covered with wood chips, alfalfa, straw.*

If you have a **Kroger Plus card**, consider signing up for Kroger Community Awards to give a percentage of your bill as a donation to FCAVBR

- Go online to <https://www.kroger.com>.
- If you already have a Kroger account, simply login. If not, you will be asked to create one.
- When asked to select the organization to receive your rewards, enter this number **TK761**.

**Amazon** also supports us. At your browser type [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com). If you have an Amazon account, sign in and you will see the choice to select a charity. If you type in Funeral Consumers Alliance, several affiliates come up and you can scroll down to select Funeral Consumers Alliance of the Virginia Blue Ridge.

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[www.funerals.org](http://www.funerals.org)

## **Directions to Christiansburg Rec Center**

**1600 N. Franklin St.**

### **From I-81**

Take I-81 to exit 118C-B-A to merge onto US-460 W toward Blacksburg. Take exit 3A-3B toward US 460 Bus E. Use right lane to stay on N. Franklin, turn right at first cross street onto Cambria NW, then immediate left into parking lot. Enter through main doors, turn left at hall, then left again, Senior lounge is on the left.

### **From Blacksburg**

Take US-460 E to N Franklin St, exit 3A-3B, toward US-460 BUS E/Downtown. Turn right at the 1st cross street onto Cambria St NW, then immediate left into parking lot. Enter through main doors, turn left at hall, then left again, Senior lounge is on the left.