

Perspective – Fall 2015

Newsletter of the Memorial Society of Kitchener-Waterloo and Area

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WE ARE NOT DEAD... (YET)... but... the future is up to YOU!

Have Your Say!

Please, attend the **Annual General Meeting**
with Speaker **Angel Paterson** from Dying with Dignity
on **Thursday, November 26, 2015 7:30pm**
At Grand River Unitarian, 299 Sydney St, Kitchener (side door from the parking lot)
519 603 2550
Refreshments will be available.

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What happened?

Our Memorial Society, fully run by volunteers, has been dormant for the last two years. The current acting board members Ken Oliver, Jim Sannes, John Wine and Ellen Papenburg had a meeting in October and agreed to revive the Society.

They feel strongly the Society can play a big role in the end-of-life arrangements. There are opportunities to inform and educate, to make connections to other organizations such as Dying with Dignity and new movements like Home Funerals, Death Cafes and Natural or Green Burials.

We can still direct our members to good local traditional funeral services with many price and service options.

To do this, we need **your** input, feedback and help. We should have at least six board members with meetings only four to six times a year. **Would this interest you?**

Our Speaker Angel Paterson is a warm, inspiring and enthusiastic person. As a former Funeral Director, Angel was not enchanted by the practices of most traditional funeral services. However she told us about current good and more reasonable funeral homes in our area. They are often very accommodating, even willing to explore green options. Angel is the Chapter Head of Dying with Dignity for the Grand River Region, one of ten Canadian regions. We are looking forward to her presentation.

Current Possible Cost of a Funeral

In principle the only cost of an end of life arrangement is the disposition of the body. Unfortunately much-of the funeral industry has led us to believe that we should be spending an average of between \$5,000 and \$10,000 per person. Here is a typical quote from a low-cost minimum service provider:

Coordination by a Licensed Funeral Director
24 Hour Support and Service
Transfer from Place of Death
Facilities for care of the deceased
Cardboard Cremation Container
Transfer to Cemetery or Crematorium
Temporary Container
Government Forms and 10 Proof-of-Death Certificates.

Total for all the above: \$1500

Unlimited Proof of Death Certificates
In Person Arrangements
Dedicated Online Obituary Page
Post Service Information Guide
Estate Document Consultation
Priority Cremation
Priority Delivery of Cremated Remains
Do-it-yourself Memorial Assistance
Add \$400

Disbursements
Cremation Fee
Coroner's Cremation Certificate
Death Registration Fee
Add \$450

Also, with the new legislation (2012) all the above except the disposition of the body can be done by the family, including transferring the body and obtaining the appropriate certificates at cost. One can have a memorial service later celebrating the life of the deceased at one's home, in a rented hall or in a church with minimum expense.

Federation of Ontario Memorial Societies (FOOMS) AGM met in September 2015

Some local memorial societies have folded, as have those in Hamilton and now also Thunder Bay, so FOOMS was pleased to see our KW Society return to their meetings. That Memorial Societies are no longer needed is a misconception. In fact we succumbed in part due to our own success in having legislation changed. Funeral Homes are now required to provide a detailed price list of all costs involved.

FOOMS will continue serving consumer interests of the local Societies while also being a source of information and support for the Province.

The Toronto Society, large and well-organized, has increasingly become an important resource for the other Societies. At the FOOMS AGM we had a Skype meeting with the Executive Director of the British Columbia Society. We talked about Society renewal and possible new Ontario legislation taking effect in January 2016. BC has been very successful and Ontario may learn from them.

What happened to the Funeral Co-op?

The Steering Committee met frequently in 2013 and 2014 explored a vision and the feasibility for starting a local Funeral Co-operative. After these public meetings with speakers, however, it was decided not to take the Steering Committee forward. Starting a Funeral Co-op is clearly a huge and expensive task, basically to do the same job as the other funeral homes around except for being a not-for-profit operation. We will keep our findings available for persons who may be interested in forging ahead.