

Perspective – Fall 2016

Newsletter of the Memorial Society of Kitchener-Waterloo and Area

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Have Your Say!

Please, attend the **Annual General Meeting**
with our Speaker from the **Henry Walsler Funeral Home**
on **Monday, October 24th, 2016 at 7:00pm**

At Grand River Unitarian, 299 Sydney St South, Kitchener (side door from the parking lot)
519 603-2550

Refreshments will be available.

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Members of The Federation of Ontario Memorial Societies (FOOMS)

KW Memorial Society at FOOMS

During Sept 16-18 2016 we met in Toronto with other Memorial Societies from across Ontario to discuss our past, present and future. The governing bodies of the Funeral Homes and the Cemeteries were combined and moved from under the Health and Welfare department to

Consumer Protection and the Bereavement Authority of Ontario (BAO). Several regulations were changed such as the funeral homes now must offer their lowest cost funeral in a price list along with all the extra options, including a low cost container for cremation. The Registrar, Carey Smith, addressed our meeting on Saturday and indicated that the greatest threats to your

pocketbook are not the Funeral Homes, but the people who are selling funeral insurance. He indicated that this year alone over 200 sales people have been licensed, not in Ontario, but in Alberta using an online course and then applying to have their credentials transferred to Ontario. Some of these sales representatives are from outside Canada.

He also mentioned that it is in your interest to become familiar with what is offered and make your wishes known to your loved ones at any age. Making arrangements at the time of need and loss is possibly the worst time to go shopping for a major expense without clear guidelines as to what is acceptable and desired. The average cost in Ontario for a funeral is about \$8000. Using Memorial Society Guidelines this cost can be as low as \$2000. Memorial Societies do not recommend cheap funerals, but we do want to ensure modestly priced options are available.

Henry Walser Speaker at AGM



The Owner of the only independently Family Owned Funeral Home here in Kitchener will be our guest speaker for the evening. He will give a short talk and answer any questions you may have about funerals and arrangements. He will mention green burials where available and other options including home funerals. Transfer services are becoming more popular as an aid to DIY funerals and Henry will explain the differences between those and his funeral home choices.

Another option, not yet available in this area, is called Resomation. This process offers a dignified approach for those not wishing burial. It uses significantly less energy and emits fewer greenhouse gasses than flame cremation. This is an option the public wants and the environment clearly needs.

Fresh from the President



We live in exciting times with a consumer friendly new legislation for the funeral industry and with a growing number of alternate options, like green burials (coming to our area soon), resomation and even the very family friendly home funerals. Death cafes are very popular as they help break with the taboo of talking about death, as are workshops on planning your memorial service.

People are more aware to make pre- and after death arrangements with the different powers of attorney for property and for personal care while alive. Not to forget arranging the will, possible organ donation plus discussing this with family.

A year has passed since we decided to revive the Memorial Society of Kitchener-Waterloo and we organized two meetings last year, one with Angel Paterson from Dying with Dignity and the other being the Annual General Meeting with enthused interaction about the society's goals in the past, present and future. It was clear we still have an important function to educate and inform the public on the choices and rights they have when their loved one has passed on.

During the meeting some suggested we should have monthly or bi-monthly meetings. We do need more people as members and on the board to make this a more vibrant and lively society. Your current board members Ruth Gilbert, Ken Oliver, Ellen Papenburg, Jim Sannes and John Wine are in the middle of phoning members getting their email addresses. So far we have about 50 email addresses from over 360 members. Sending the newsletter per email would be better for the environment and reduce expenses. Of course please notify us if you change your email address!! Not a member yet? You can become one for the one-time fee of \$30.

I am very eager to see you at the upcoming informative meeting on Monday October 24th. There is no admission and ALL are welcome! Spread the word and bring family and friends!

Ellen Papenburg