



Funeral Planning

Perspective

Published by The Memorial Society of Kitchener-Waterloo and Area

2004

About Memorial Societies in Ontario

Ontario Memorial Societies are non-profit and non-sectarian. These organizations are consumer groups that encourage funeral pre-planning and easy access to dignified funeral services for those who want them at modest cost. We do not operate or own any funeral home, cemetery, crematorium, monument company or transfer service.

There are eleven Ontario societies that make up the Federation of Ontario Memorial Societies. At the provincial level, FOOMS works to protect the consumer by focusing on any legislative activity regarding the funeral service industry.

For more information call us at 519 579 3800 or write to MSKW 120 Ottawa Street North, Box 43133, Kitchener N2H 6S9. You might also consider inviting a speaker from the K-W Memorial Society to address your interested group.

President's Message

Well, I think our enthusiasm has found some significant renewal over the last year. We made a start at examining the By-Laws that were first created about 1971. We still want to consider revising our personal card, mentioned at the end of the article on Organ Donations.

Ross Allen and Keith Newport have been in contact with local funeral homes to create this year's pricing update. And they will be making personal visits over the next year to explore new ways of serving our mutual interests. This could result in revised, and helpful, structures for reporting the pricing of funeral services.

Work is underway for the creation of a website for our Society. Christine Jones is Editor of our Newsletter and we are grateful to her for this edition.

She has also assumed the duties as Treasurer. Beth Waring has taken a leadership role for Public Relations and Nina Furniss, our Secretary, continues to be our backbone. Her guidance is based on decades of experience with our organization.

As outlined, Peter Naus will share with us some of his wisdom as the speaker for our Annual General Meeting in May.

It's always risky to name names, as I am doing here, especially this year, because attendance at board meetings has been good and everyone makes his/her own much-appreciated contributions.

We could still use some help on the Board of Directors for the project mentioned here. If any of you would like to join us, you would be most welcome.

John Wine

Annual General Meeting
Wed. May 12, 2004.
7:00 p.m.

Rockway Centre
1045 King Street East, Kitchener

speaker Dr. Peter Naus

**'A Sense of Well-Being
in the Later Years'**

Dr. Naus is a board member of the Memorial Society and a retired Psychology professor from St. Jerome's University in Waterloo. While at the university he taught a range of courses, among them a course on aging. He was also a member of the Gerontology Program at the University of Waterloo for many years.

Dr. Naus's talk will clarify what a 'sense of well-being' involves in the later years and explore ways to achieve it. He will also describe some of the major aspects of aging in an attempt to help us appraise more realistically the gains and losses involved in growing old.

Board of Directors

President	John Wine
Secretary	Nina Furniss
Treasurer	Christine Jones
Directors	Ross Allen
	Maryka Darron
	Peter Naus
	Keith Newport
	Charles Parsons
	Beth Waring

Organ Transplantation: The Basics and Some Impressions

Perhaps it is to be expected that many members of memorial societies are also very aware of the need for organ donations. Both interests are consumer concerns with a service base and both require planning before death in order to reap the benefits.

This topic has been explored in depth and I don't want to repeat all of that here. But by making some phone calls and consulting information on the Internet, I am prepared to outline some basics. And then I want to add a couple of impressions gained while I explored the information resources – some of this may surprise you. It certainly surprised me.

THE BASICS

There is a very great need for donated organs. The demand far outstrips the supply and many people die while waiting in line. Canada has a relatively poor record for donations. Last year less than half of those waiting for donations received them. Donations in Spain more than double Canada's rate.

The need is so great that many of those in need may soon be receiving pig organs. (Cross-species matching looks promising but remote possibilities of transmitting a viral infection are first being addressed.)

To be a donor, you must do two things. First, write down general instructions and carry these with you at all times. These should include the names of relatives and friends who know more details. (They will be consulted and could have the last word.)

You probably cannot **both** donate your entire body for research **and** make a donation of organs. The medical and anatomical uses of bodies in the classrooms and laboratories generally require that they be fully intact.

SURPRISES

Two surprises arose during my explorations. First, I learned that even if you have the most generous of intentions and fully comply with all the requirements, the chances that you would then become a successful donor are extremely small. It appears that donors must die in hospital, where they must become "brain dead" before their organs cease to function.

It is important that the organs receive oxygen and nutrients up to the time of removal. This would mean that those who die immediately in automobile road accidents would be ineligible as donors. Only 2 to 3 percent of persons die in qualifying circumstances – which are most often stroke, severe head trauma or another oxygen-depriving brain injury. (This sequence may not apply for some tissue donations, such as skin – I found the references a bit obscure on this point.)

My second surprise began on the telephone, before I had learned that donated organs must receive nourishment in a physically functioning body up until the time of removal. In my ignorance I asked who would bear the expense of transporting remains (as from home or from the scene of an accident) to the place of organ-removal before being taken to a funeral home, crematorium or final resting place. In answer I was told that it was customary for the family of the deceased to bear these transfer expenses, through charges made by the officiating funeral home.

Well! This told me that organ donation would entail additional expense to the donor's family – something I hadn't heard

before. As I later put everything together it seemed more likely that I had been misinformed. How could there be transportation costs if organs are never harvested from "transported" remains? And how could a central agency for encouraging transplants be so misinformed itself?

I found other shortcomings on the internet. Information from a Premier's Advisory Board was almost four years old. There is at least one news release over a year old that gives names and phone numbers for "urgent information". On the Web I found the dates for *Organ & Tissue Donation Week in Canada* - for 2002, and for 2003, but not for 2004! (During both of the previous years it was the third week in April, so presumably it is the same this year!)

In summary, there is an obvious and vital need for transplanted organs. Very few make the offer. And even among those who do, few of them will die in such a way as to be eligible. Tragically, many waiting for organs will die without receiving them.

Also sadly, the quality and age of available information leaves much to be desired. But I would conclude that there is NOT a personal or financial risk to making a donation.

Perhaps the best sites I found for solid information are:
Trillium Gift of Life Network:
www.giftoflife.on.ca or 416-214-7806
Multi-Organ Transplant Program:
(London, Ontario)
<http://www.lhsc.on.ca/transplant/>

As a final note, I would

"Perhaps the best sites for solid information are:
www.giftoflife.on.ca
www.lhsc.on.ca/transplant/"

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Membership News

The board recognizes Nicholas Gorka and Violet Peters for their service as directors in the recent past. We say good-bye and offer best wishes for their present endeavors.

Our membership is currently 855. We welcome any input from members. Should you wish to have an issue of interest or a personal experience included in Perspective 2005 please use the address or phone number listed below to contact the editor.

2003 Donors

Our appreciation goes to many members for their monetary gifts. The list includes the following:

J. Andrew	I. Leppek
W. Brandt	J. Lothead
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O. Kurschner	D. Wareham
J. Ledingham	H. Weber

Editor's Notes on...

How to get a Good Review

The task of writing my own obituary proved much more difficult than expected. The wealth of avoidance behaviours with which I distracted myself was proof, reinforcing the theory that undesirable tasks are much easier to do for another than for yourself. I may have *started* with the birds but by lunchtime there was nothing on paper and I was exhausted.

The only reason I find this memory quite amusing is because I did complete the task *and* to my satisfaction - my public farewell wishes neatly wrapped up in four paragraphs. Job well done!

If you have not experienced the intense sense of accomplishment and relief that comes with adding your own obituary to your 'upon death' file, I urge you to consider doing so. The emotional and mental struggle that may ensue forces you to clarify, in fair detail, many of your thoughts, values and last wishes.

Writing your own obituary is a gift to yourself and to your family. It is an act of love and a statement of no one else's truth but your own. And if that is not enough to interest you, you can look at self-authored obituaries as Elizabeth Taylor does - it *could* be your best review yet!

Resource Review

Member Dave Krout draws our attention to the Simply Essential Funeral Planning Kit published by the Self-Counsel Press, 2002.

Author Don S. Cochrane has had extensive experience as a funeral director and takes the reader through a three-step process of funeral planning detail by detail. The author spends considerable time examining alternative approaches available to the funeral planner. He refers to Memorial Societies as the 'best known alternative approach' and continues with a thorough exploration. The kit includes a CD-ROM and book. You will find more information on this kit at www.self-counsel.com.

Our member found this book to be extremely informative and helpful. Many thanks for this contribution, Dave!

Please change my mailing label. The correct information is printed below.

Please **discontinue** sending this newsletter to the name and address below.

Correct Name(s) _____

Correct Address _____

Correct Telephone _____ Email _____

Yes I wish to become a member of the Memorial Society of Kitchener-Waterloo. A cheque in the amount of \$_____ (15.00/person) is enclosed for ____ lifetime memberships. Please forward the appropriate information to the address above.

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stress the importance of carrying information on one's person with respect to wishes for final dispositions. This applies equally to the concerns of memorial societies and for organ and tissue donation. In both realms, what is "pre-planned" most often must be applied during the first few hours after death to reap the intended benefits.

Several organizations have created cards for specifying information and wishes regarding organ donations. And memorial societies (including K-W) distribute such cards to facilitate the realization of benefits.

While having information on one's person can certainly be useful, utilizing a prepared card is not itself necessary. You may record

this information in any way you wish.

Not everyone dies quietly, slowly, surrounded by persons who have firm knowledge of the information you would want shared at the time of death. And putting all your wishes in writing could be difficult. So, some of the most helpful information you could carry with you will be the names of those who know the details.

To combine the purposes of your overall pre-planning with the possible benefits of organ donation, you should probably carry at least **this** information with you:

Names of friends and/or relatives – more than one, and maybe more than two – friends who know where your records and will are kept, who your executor is and who also have a general knowledge

of your after-death wishes.

Instructions for disposition (should you die quickly and/or away from home) suggesting immediate contact with your friends/relatives, and mentioning a specific funeral home, if possible or desired and also mentioning instructions for cremation if desired.

Instructions for organ and tissue organ donation, if desired.

Instructions for whole body donation, if desired.

These are perhaps most of the primary and immediate concerns. As I set down these thoughts it became more apparent to me that as memorial society members we could probably work more closely with those promoting organ and tissue donations, for our mutual benefit.

John Wine

2003 Financial Statement



\$1,426.25 **income** from donations, membership fees and investment interest.

\$1,001.21 **expenses** for office supplies, postage, telephone service, and newsletter publication.

A man is not old until regrets take the place of dreams. John Barrymore

Memorial Society of Kitchener-Waterloo and Area (519 579 3800)
120 Ottawa Street North Box 43133
Kitchener N2H 6S9

Yes I support The Memorial Society of Kitchener-Waterloo and enclose a cheque for \$_____ as a donation.

You may publish my name if the amount is not shown.

You may **not** publish my name.

Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____

A cheque in the amount of \$_____ (15.00 per person) for __ lifetime memberships is enclosed . Please forward the appropriate information to the address above.