Greetings from the FCAWM Board of Trustees

Joan Pillsbury, Kate Mason, Cecile Richard, Sandy Ward, Jim Couchon, Lynn Lovell

Photo by Carol Coan, April 29, 2019

Kate Mason, a retired hospice nurse, was elected to the board last fall for a three-year term. She had been a member of FCA of Eastern MA before moving to Greenfield. Jim Couchon of Springfield was recruited and nominated by Cecile, and appointed by Sandy at our March meeting, to fill one of our open positions. Jim, recently retired, was seeking meaningful volunteer work. We welcome Kate and Jim!
Susan Maddern, Trustee 2012-2019

Missing from our board photo on page one is the cheerful face of long-term volunteer and Trustee Susie Maddern. She had missed our March 25 board meeting because she was on a family vacation in Arizona. After returning home, she fell ill and died April 1. We are heartbroken, but know that she lived a full active life, and her wish and long-term plan to donate her body to the UMass Medical Center Anatomical Gift Program was promptly fulfilled, according to her husband Phil Maddern.

Oh, how we miss Susie! She was a passionate advocate for FCAWM, inspired by her parents who had shared their newsletters with her for years. She spent many hours helping our organization, serving as Membership Chair, mailing membership packets, writing thank-you letters, and doing outreach at public events (as pictured here at the Northampton Health & Safety Fair in May 2016).

A celebration of Susie’s life will be held on **Friday July 26, 1-4pm**, in Gill, MA, where she and Phil had lived for many years. It will be at the Schuetzen Verein, a place Susie liked. For more information, read the notice published in the Recorder April 30, and viewable online:  
www.legacy.com/obituaries/recorder/obituary.aspx?pid=192741983

**Helpful Tip:** Review what you have written down about your final wishes. Be sure your loved ones know what you want and where to find the necessary information. The FCA 30-page spiral-bound workbook, shown right, is a helpful tool. If you filed it away years ago, please pull it out and update as needed. Want to order a fresh copy? Or extras for friends? See request form on top of page 7. (For Spanish version, see page 6.)
Education and Outreach

Volunteers representing FCAWM educate the public by giving presentations, staffing information tables, and responding to inquiries via mail, email, telephone, and in person.

At our Annual Meeting October 14, 2018, President Sandy Ward reported, “Since last October, we’ve responded to 70 inquiries that have come via our FCAWM voicemail or email; we have done outreach at several health fairs and spoken to audiences at the Amherst Club, Loomis Village, a Congregational church in Holyoke, the Amherst Senior Center, and Michael’s House in Northampton and Orchard View Apartments (Easthampton).”

During the MA Council on Aging conference October 24-25, we co-taught a workshop with colleagues from FCA of Eastern MA and spent two days in the exhibit hall, educating people about options.

On November 14 at the Jewish Family Service of Western Massachusetts, eleven people attended “Funeral Planning: For those who don’t plan to die,” led by Sandy Ward.

Twenty people came to our Funeral Planning talk at the Amherst Senior Center January 10, 2019.

Jim Couchon and Sandy staffed a table at the annual Northampton Health and Safety Fair May 9, and at the Springfield Housing Authority’s Riverview Community Fair on June 6.

In addition to these scheduled events, we do behind-the-scenes work. For instance, we reach out to town clerks and local boards of health, reminding them to be receptive to families caring for their own dead but needing assistance with the state’s Electronic Death Registration System (EDRS). We investigate problems that come to our attention, and we answer questions from individuals.

At least 40 phone and email inquiries have come to FCAWM since October. We help people sort out what is possible and advising them on next steps. Some ask for financial help, which we cannot supply, but we do listen empathetically and offer tips on how to keep costs low and minimize problems.

Comments from people we’ve served have been gratifying. Examples: “This is really helpful.”
   “I really appreciate this. I’ve never done this before. Never lost a loved one before.”
   “I appreciate your time and the fact that you care to do this work.”
   “I love your website!”
   “It’s so new to me and my family that we don’t know the exact process.”
   “Thank you so much for this information. It was very helpful.”
   “Never knew it was so complicated; I appreciate the education.”

Help us reach more audiences. Spread the word. Invite us to a group near you. Thanks!

News from FCAEM: New website launched
May 11, 2019

New logo, too! Visit www.fcaemass.org
Expanding Options Beyond Burial or Cremation: News from WA

On May 21, 2019, the governor of the state of Washington signed a bill authorizing new options in death care. CNN reported, “Washington has become the first state in the nation to pass a law allowing composting as an alternative to burial or cremation of human remains.” The bill describes the process as a “contained, accelerated conversion of human remains to soil.” Katrina Spade, a leader in developing this process, calls it natural organic reduction, or recomposition. She has founded a public benefit company that is preparing to offer the service in WA in late 2020. See www.recompose.life/ for information about the process and the people working on this initiative.

The bill, which will go into effect May 2020, also allows another choice for body disposal: aquamation (variously known as alkaline hydrolysis, bio-cremation, water cremation, or resomation). Aquamation has already been available in some states (e.g., Maine, Florida, and Oregon), but not in Massachusetts or, until recently, in Washington. In Seattle, the Co-op Funeral Home of People's Memorial offers the service now by working with a company in Portland, Oregon. To quote from the Co-op’s website, “Aquamation is a gentle process that uses water, temperature, pressure, and alkalinity to reduce the body to bones which are then processed into ‘ashes’ and returned to the family in an urn. Cremation does the same reduction using flame. Unlike cremation, there are no emissions with aquamation. It uses about 1/8th the energy.” See funerals.coop/pricing/aquamation.html for more information.

REPORT OF THE 2018 ANNUAL MEETING & PROGRAM

On Sunday, October 14, 2018, we gathered at Rockridge Retirement Community, Northampton, for the annual FCAWM membership meeting and enjoyed refreshments provided by Eileen and Dave Pratt. President Sandy Ward introduced the meeting. Treasurer Joan Pillsbury reported a healthy balance of $6250.87 in the FCAWM bank account as our fiscal year closed (August 31, 2018), thanks to generous donations to this nonprofit organization. Expenses had totaled $2969.84 that year.

ELECTION OF TRUSTEES:
We elected Kate Mason to a 3-yr term and re-elected these Trustees: Cecile Richard (3-yr), Susie Maddern (3-yr), Sandy Ward (2-yr) and Lynn Lovell (1-yr). Trustee Joan Pillsbury’s term continues.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS for this year:
• President: Sandy Ward
• Vice-President: Cecile Richard
• Treasurer: Joan Pillsbury
• Secretary: Kate Mason

PROGRAM: Funeral Consumers Want to Know…
* How to save money on final arrangements?
  2018 Funeral Home Price Comparison – Joan Pillsbury and Sandy Ward
* Which cemeteries allow green burial? Green Burial MA’s Cemetery Research Project
  Demo of online database by Katherine Dannehl (photo above) - See next page for update.
* How to acquire caskets at lower cost?
These and other questions were discussed, with many answers provided.
In April 2019 Green Burial Massachusetts launched a re-designed website. Take a look! You’ll find lovely photographs and substantial information about green burial, including a Searchable Database that displays the results to date from GBM’s Cemetery Research Project, which was initiated last year to answer the question, “Which cemeteries in MA allow green burial?”

Here is a screen-shot of a portion of the database, which has 107 entries now:

<table>
<thead>
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<th>#</th>
<th>City/Town</th>
<th>Cemetery Name</th>
<th>Allows Green Burial</th>
<th>Cemetery Type</th>
<th>Green Burial</th>
<th>Allows Non-Residents</th>
<th>Fees</th>
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<td>Private</td>
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</table>

More VOLUNTEERS are still needed. See instructions on the website for doing research on cemeteries of your choice and submitting answers to GBM. Questions? Write to info@greenburialma.org

**Pledge for Conservation Burial:** Green Burial Massachusetts, Inc., is on the verge of creating the first Conservation Burial Ground in Massachusetts! You are invited to express your opinions and make a pledge as a founding member of this burial ground. Please go to www.greenburialma.org and take a survey (before the end of June) about your interest in conservation burial. “Your body could help protect open space and nourish the earth as the earth has nourished you.”
COFFIN BUILDING WORKSHOP

Sunday, June 30, 2019, 1-4 pm
Greenfield, MA

Pre-registration ($210 fee) required

Carpenter Chuck Lakin will provide materials, tools, and expert guidance in the assembly process. Expect to spend 2-3 hours on this project, and be sure to bring a roof rack or a truck to transport your coffin home.

This workshop, organized by Joan Pillsbury, is co-sponsored by Green Burial Massachusetts and the Funeral Consumers Alliance of Western Massachusetts, and can accommodate the assembly of up to eight (8) pine coffins. Chuck will pre-cut the pine that he brings from Maine. For more information about Chuck and his coffins, see his website: www.Lastthings.net

As of press time, five (5) of these coffins have been prepaid. Three more are available. If interested, or if you have questions, please contact Joan at either info@greenburialma.org or 617-393-5011.

To register, write a check for $210 payable to Chuck Lakin and mail it to Green Burial Massachusetts, P.O. Box 323, Greenfield, Massachusetts 01302. Thank you!

Spanish translations of FCA resources

The national Funeral Consumers Alliance (funerals.org) now offers the 30-page funeral planner Before I Go, You Should Know in Spanish: Antes de Despedirme Debes Saber. It comes in either a spiral-bound workbook ($15), or a digital Adobe PDF version ($10).

Six of the popular FCA pamphlets are also now in Spanish, thanks to the generosity of two special volunteers, translator Adelaida Santana Pellicer and editor Miriam Rodriguez. Titles: Sus Derechos Funerarios; Diez Sugerencias Para Ahorrar en un Funeral; Como leer la Lista General de Precios de una Funeraria; Planificación Funeraria de Cuatro Pasos; Cómo Elegir una Funeraria... de Manera Inteligent; y Cómo Cubrir los Costos de un Funeral u Otros Servicios Funerarios.

Where to find the Spanish pamphlets? Go to funerals.org---->Resources---->FAQ Folletos – Español

FCA thanks past president Marcy Klein (FCA of Greater Rochester) for overseeing the translation and production process, and Sandy Ward (FCAWM) for a financial gift. MORE translations are underway. Donations to support this project may be made online funerals.org/donate or mailed to the Funeral Consumers Alliance, 33 Patchen Road, South Burlington, VT 05403.
Please make checks payable to FCAWM and send to P. O. Box 994, Greenfield, MA 01302.
Your contributions are tax-deductible. We are a 501c3 organization.

___ YES! I want to renew support for the Funeral Consumers Alliance of Western Massachusetts and its mission of promoting and protecting a consumer’s right to choose meaningful, dignified, and affordable final arrangements: funeral or memorial services, care of the body and disposition of human remains (including burial, cremation or donation). I’m enclosing my voluntary contribution of ___$15 ___$25 ___$50 ___$100 or $________

___ I’m NEW. Please enroll me and send the "Before I Go, You Should Know" planner and membership package. (Suggested new member donation is $30.) I am enclosing $________

___ Please send me ___ copies of the "Before I Go, You Should Know" planner. I enclose a donation of $_____ to reimburse FCAWM for the expenses of acquiring and mailing the 30-page, spiral-bound planner. (Suggested minimum $15 per copy.)

___ I have time and interest in helping FCAWM. Please contact me about volunteer opportunities.

Name: ________________________________________ Telephone: _________________________

Address (if different from that on reverse side): __________________________________________

E-mail: ___________________________ Prefer to receive newsletters via email? Yes No

Thank you!

Recruiting New Board Members
We encourage recruitment of interested persons who have not served before, to “annually reinvigorate” this organization, as called for in our Bylaws.

Perhaps YOU haven’t served before, and would like to be asked? Please let us know! Or perhaps you can recommend people you know? Nominations welcome.

This summer President Sandy Ward will appoint a Nominating Committee composed of one Trustee and two members at large. The task is to develop, by mid-September, slates of candidates to be voted on at our Annual Meeting.

Please contact us if you can help: 413-376-4747 or fcawmass@gmail.com Thank you!

Updating Funeral Rule to the 21st C.
Since 1984, the Federal Trade Commission’s “Funeral Rule” has required funeral homes to give customers printed price lists when they visit a funeral home to make arrangements. It’s high time to ADD a requirement that such price lists be posted online. In 2019 the FTC will open a formal review process to consider amendments to this Rule. A public comment period is likely to be announced this summer. Will you be ready to help? Both FCA and the Consumer Federation of America have been urging the FTC –for years– to amend the Rule to require funeral homes to post their price lists on their websites.

2019 is the year for ACTION. If you can help in this campaign, please contact us or contact the national FCA office at fca@funerals.org or 802-865-8300. Thanks!
Upcoming events:

**Coffin Building Workshop, Sunday June 30, 1-4 pm, in Greenfield**
Registration fee of $210 includes coffin. *See page 6 for details.*

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**Sunday, October 20, 2019, 2:00-4:00 pm**

**Caskets and Coffins and Shrouds, Oh My!**
with Carol’s “Five-Fold Path to Funeral Contentment” to ease your fears.

FCAWM Annual Meeting and Program
Palmer Historic and Cultural Center, 2072 Main St., Three Rivers, MA

Come to this “show and tell” event. We’ve invited Lenny Weake to bring examples of various casket types and do his educational and entertaining “Caskets 101” presentation. We’ve also invited Ruth Faas to show cardboard caskets that can be decorated creatively by loved ones, and Dina Stander to display her “Last Dance Shrouds.” We hope also to include willow coffins woven by Mary Lauren Fraser. More information about this event will be announced in the fall, on our website and in our newsletter. *Save the date!*