The Calling

WHY FUNERALS Matter

Two New Videos For Your Families!
President’s Message
In Remembrance
NYS Tribute Foundation
Classifieds
Calendar of Events
PrePlan Honored by BBB
Executive Director’s Message
NYSFDA Text Alerts for Members
DOH/DMV Still Plans Pocket Cards with Photo IDs
Communicating the Value of Funerals
VIDEO: Why We’ve Had Funerals Since the Beginning of Time
Honoring, Remembering, Healing
PHOTO SLIDE SHOW
Are You LinkedIn?

Helping Children Grieve
Albany RCD Steps Up Marketing
Tribute Foundation Golf Outing
New Regulation Regarding Pet Cemeteries
The VA Automates Burial Payments for Vets’ Survivors
NYS Honors those KIA
Join Us at Convention!
Being Creative is Key
Directors Choice Credit Union
PrePlan
UPDATE: Shipping Cremains
On the Light Side
INTERACTIVE SURVEY: Do You See Your Business Model Changing?
Dear Colleagues:

Well here it is . . . my last submission to the newsletter as your President. As all the Presidents before me have said, it is amazing how F-A-S-T the year goes!

It has been a very busy but fulfilling year: EDRS, that was started a while ago came to be; three presentations with the Two Tom’s -- TOM LYNCH and TOM LONG; nine regional meetings about the food and beverage issue (we are half way there); The REAL Project; and don’t forget all the regular Board and committee meetings too.

Many thanks . . .

To BONNIE and RANDY and all the Association staff, you guys are the best! Our volunteer leadership needs talented people to get things done -- we are extremely lucky to have you!

To my Board of Directors, we did a lot of good this year and I appreciate your participation and support!

To the members like you, thank you for your service on committees, your support at regional meetings, answering those surveys, and giving your input when asked.

To BEA LEWANDUSKI, TIM DOYLE, BOB ENOS and DOUG BRUEGGEMANN, I couldn’t ask for a better group of officers to serve with. Not only are you great officers but you guys are great friends!
To ED MILLER, JOSH MILLER, MATT MILLER, JARROD KRIEGER, JODI SALATTI, DANNY ZYSMAN, PATTY HITE of MILLER FUNERAL AND CREMATION SERVICES, INC. THANK YOU, THANK YOU, thanks to you I am able to serve our Association.

I still have two more years on the Board, but the worst best year is over. Last but not least, thank you to my family for your support -- especially my lovely wife CINDY. I couldn’t have done it without you!

So please join me in installing our new President, and my friend, BOB ENOS at our Annual Convention. The Convention schedule is packed with plenty of opportunities for top-notch continuing education, seeing what our suppliers and sponsors have to offer, and more importantly an opportunity to be with your fellow funeral directors.

I can’t express enough how much it has meant to me to serve as your President! I leave you one more time with this quote from ELLA WHEELER WILCOX:

"With every deed you are sowing a seed, though the harvest you may not see."

Sincerely,

Francis “Joe” Martin, Jr.
In Remembrance
A listing of friends of NYSFDA who have recently passed.

CLICK to view

THANK YOU to everyone who has donated to the NYS Tribute Foundation during the past year!

CLICK to view our donors
CLICK to view 2014 scholarship winners
JOIN US at the Golf Outing

CLASSIFIED ADS
CLICK to view

CALENDAR OF EVENTS
CLICK to view
The BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU serving Upstate New York was proud to present PrePlan with the TORCH AWARD FOR MARKETPLACE EXCELLENCE in the small business category. The award is designed to promote not only the importance of ethical business practices, but the willingness and efforts made by outstanding businesses to ensure that our marketplace remains fair and honorable. BBB was joined by the NYSFDA and FDSS Board of Directors in honoring PrePlan at a special dinner in Saratoga Springs on June 11th.

PrePlan has been an A+ Accredited Business with BBB since 2011.

An independent judging committee reviewed each application received by BBB and scored each business to identify winners in each category. Businesses throughout Upstate New York have an opportunity to apply for the annual BBB Torch Award program whether they are BBB accredited or not. The businesses that apply must be in good standing with BBB.
Dear Members:

During the Annual Convention, the report of the REAL PROJECT TASK FORCE will be presented to NYSFDA members by DR. JACQUELYN TAYLOR. The Task Force, comprised of representatives from every area of funeral service within our state, has worked long and hard to develop this report. The title of this project, The REFERENDUM ON FUNERAL SERVICE EDUCATION AND LICENSING, would lead one to believe that its key focus and discussion would be actual educational and licensing requirements.

But that is not what has happened. The reality is that education and licensing is a means to an end. But, without deciding what that end should look like, how can you design how to get there? In old-fashioned terms, trying to figure out education without knowing for sure where you need to get to is like putting the cart before the horse.

So the work of the Task Force became aspirational . . . what is our vision of what funeral service needs to look like 10 years, 20 years from now? Briefly, it is the recognition that nearly all consumers need a service that will guide them during one of the most difficult periods of their lives. It is a valuable service, one that is multifaceted, demanding great skills, dedication and professionalism. It is a service that is part of a dramatically expanded scope of practice that is finally recognized by state law.
Executive Director’s Message

It is a business and profession that holds all practitioners to the highest ethical standards, by law. It demands robust, appropriate educational and residency requirements. It demands expansive yet targeted and relevant continuing education. It raises the bar very high, and seeks to discourage or eliminate subpar practitioners.

Now that the vision has been determined, filling in the details of how to get there will be an important and laborious process. Many Task Force members would like to continue serving in order to build a multi-year plan that will lead to fulfillment of the overall objective.

It is clear that standards will most likely be raised in the future. But change is integral to the successful future of funeral service.

I leave you with a quote from JEFF BEZOS, founder of AMAZON. “The death knell for any enterprise is to glorify the past—no matter how good it was.”

I hope to see many of you at Convention, and have a wonderful August.

Sincerely,

Bonnie L. McCullough, CAE
Did you get our latest TEXT ALERTS about the recent "POCKET CARD" delays?

If not, keep reading! In the event of breaking news or an emergency, it is vital that NYSFDA is able to contact you as quickly as possible with critical information that impacts funeral service. You can expect to receive important text alerts from NYSFDA on updates regarding pandemic or mass casualty events, obituary notices of fellow funeral professionals, and key issues - like the pocket card delay - impacting funeral service.

- The service is FREE for current members;
- Only your mobile number and name are required to sign-up;
- Your personal information will not be shared outside of NYSFDA;
- If you have an unlimited data plan, no fees should apply; and
- Participation is voluntary and you may cancel the service at anytime. To unsubscribe: Reply ‘STOP’ to any message you receive.

CLICK HERE to sign-up!
NYSFDA has been provided some additional news that concerns photo IDs on funeral director pocket cards.

In our recent and ongoing subsequent discussions with the NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH (DOH), NYSFDA Deputy Executive Director RANDY L. McCULLOUGH has been further advised of the following information:

The BUREAU OF FUNERAL DIRECTING has been working with the NYS DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES (DMV) to develop what is called a “Memorandum of Understanding” (MOU). This MOU, once finalized, will permit DMV to print funeral director pocket cards with photo identifications in the very near future. It is my understanding that, while the Bureau and DMV have been working collaboratively on this initiative, the required MOU was not in place to allow for the photo IDs for this registration period.

According to Randy, “I have been assured that the Bureau will continue to work toward that goal so that pocket cards with Photo IDs will be initiated for the 2016-2018 biennial registration period.”

With respect to this years’ delayed pocket cards, DOH mailed the 2014-2016 registration cards to all funeral directors on July 23, 2014.
The CENTER FOR LOSS AND LIFE TRANSITION announces a training scheduled for **February 2-5, 2015** in Scottsdale, AZ. Entitled, *Opening Your Community’s Eyes to WHY We need Funerals*, this three-day workshop will be facilitated by author, educator and grief counselor **DR. ALAN WOLFELT** who will review why humans have had funerals since the beginning of time and explains how each of the elements of the ceremony—from visitation to music to the gathering after—are essential components of the funeral. The purpose of the training is to educate and motivate funeral directors and other end-of-life caregivers so they can in turn educate families, which will help ensure the creation of complete, meaningful funeral experiences; it is also the inspiration for NYSFDA’s two new videos featured on the right. A companion workbook, posters and brochure, also written by Dr. Wolfelt, are included in the materials for this training seminar. Participants will be encouraged to rethink their roles and responsibilities, focus on educating families, overcome common objections that families have to funerals, and reinvigorate funerals in their communities. In addition, this seminar is designed to immerse participants in the content so thoroughly that they’ll be well-prepared to return to their funeral homes or other organizations and, using the workbook and their newly practiced skills, train the rest of their staff in this inspiring and practical model. An essential element of this training provides a model for integrating the WHY of meaningful funerals into the arrangement conference.

For more information or to reserve a seat in the seminar, call **970-226-6050** or visit **www.centerforloss.com**.
Why funerals matter

TWO NEW VIDEO TITLES PRODUCED BY NYSFDA:

WHY WE’VE HAD FUNERALS SINCE THE BEGINNING OF TIME

Every culture throughout history has used ceremony and ritual to recognize weddings, birthdays, and funerals. This video describes Dr. Alan Wolfelt’s *Hierarchy of the Purpose of Funerals*.

[CLICK to watch video]

HONORING, REMEMBERING, HEALING

Regardless of the kind of service, it helps for families to understand the parts of a meaningful funeral. Each element serves a unique purpose and plays an important role. A link to our newest video will be shared in the October 2014 issue of *The Calling*!
NYSFDA Leadership Academy in PHOTOS!

1.  
2.  
3.  
4.  
5.  
6.  
7.  
8.  
9.  

CLICK the THUMBNAIIL to see a LARGER photo!
NYSFDA’S INAUGURAL LEADERSHIP ACADEMY SET TO GRADUATE!

Monday, August 11th • 12:30 p.m.

Join us at the **NYSFDA ANNUAL MEETING** (held during our Convention at Turning Stone in Verona, NY) as we honor the inaugural graduating class of the **NYSFDA ASSOCIATION LEADERSHIP ACADEMY**. Each “student” will also present their Capstone Project research findings on August 13th. **CLICK HERE** to learn more.

[READ their essays](#)
Ongoing changes with the Social Media site LinkedIn are giving small businesses - like funeral homes - another avenue to get their names out into the community and to develop their presence as knowledgeable, modern experts.

During a recent professional development training, a consultant from the PUBLIC RELATIONS SOCIETY OF AMERICA outlined several factors that can elevate a business’ presence in the digital world and translate that presence into a familiar name – all beneficial to those whose business depends on being found. STEPHEN DUPONT, VP of BRANDED CONTENT, a public relations firm representing brands like Thompson Reuters, GMAC, Mack Trucks, and others, offered tips business persons can act on, "starting today."

The goal is to build a stronger presence online and connect your LinkedIn presence with other social media like Google+, Facebook, and others. This is believed to contribute to building credibility and attracting the interest of potential clients as well as referrals from those with whom you are “LinkedIn.”

Aside from simply being listed – and including a thorough, well-thought out profile – LinkedIn is becoming a clearinghouse for discussion on specific topics . . . funeral service being one of them.
Currently, NYSFDA, through its Communications & Social Media Specialist, AKA “new guy” ED MUNGER, is a member of a LinkedIn discussion group called "Worldwide Funeral Workers."

Periodically, members of this group pose a question and members with expertise in the discussion get an opportunity to "show their stuff," so to speak. It’s an international discussion – which means funeral directors taking part or simply reading along can absorb a global understanding of the issues faced in the profession.

Some points Dupont suggests make LinkedIn an important element of a business' online presence:

- LinkedIn is considered the number one media platform dedicated not only to career development but also to business professionals.
- Worldwide, there are approximately 238 million users - many who could be potential clients - on LinkedIn.

Another facet of LinkedIn's offerings is that those you are connected
to are able to endorse you for skills - the more endorsements, the more professional and capable you appear. Endorsing and recommending those with whom you are connected typically prompts others to do the same for you - so long as you have skills and capabilities they feel comfortable endorsing you for.

**TIPS FROM DUPONT:**

- People do business with those they know, like and trust. LinkedIn affords businesses the opportunity to develop all of these.
- Half-hearted efforts are not successful - such as having a LinkedIn profile with only partial information. Fill out your LinkedIn profile thoroughly. Otherwise, people will think you don’t know what you’re doing or that you are unwilling to understand the technology.

---

**A NEW STAR IS BORN!**

Contact your authorized dealer: Specialty Vehicles • 1-800-349-6102 • scott@shasco.com • www.specialtyhearse.com
Business Tips

- LinkedIn should be seen as one of several elements to an approach to building and managing a network of contacts, which also includes meeting face to face with people, attending professional meetings and conferences, participating in professional associations and also taking part in community activities.
- Other elements of an online presence, as suggested by Dupont, are: Facebook, Google+, Twitter, a personal or professional blog, and a company website.
- Once your profile is developed, Dupont suggests you invite anybody you meet to join your LinkedIn network - a greater number of connections instills confidence in others.
- LinkedIn profiles give businesses and individuals more room to detail elements of their skills and expertise - in an easier and more-accessible format than a company Website.
- Some, like Dupont, will "advertise" writings or papers or other offerings on LinkedIn.
- Goal-setting, in terms of why you are on LinkedIn, is also important. Common goals of LinkedIn users include attracting new clients and connecting with other people who share your passions, causes or beliefs.

If you are already making use of LinkedIn, Dupont suggests editing your profile descriptor - it shows up on the Internet search engine Google search. He also recommends providing a thorough summary on your profile, and including contact information such as e-mail several times throughout the profile to make it easy for people to contact you. Also, fill in your LinkedIn profile completely - including listing where you've volunteered, what you've written, all the places you've been to school, let people know they can contact you and for what reason and be sure to list all honors and awards. Proofread all your material and ask somebody else to do it as well. Good editing requires more than one person reading written material.
A professional photograph on your profile is considered critical - keep it professional. "People are seven times more likely to look at your profile if you have a photo," says social media expert STEPHEN DUPONT.

As you grow your LinkedIn profile, be sure to ask friends and family members and neighbors - those you trust - to join your network. If each of the 250 people in your network knows 250 people, that gives you the potential to reach 62,500 contacts!

Giving back is just as important as receiving, in terms of social media networking. Offer advice if you have it, become a mentor within your network, and submit articles you believe may help those in your network. Join in a discussion and advance it. Joining groups on LinkedIn allows you to share ideas and information and meet new potential contacts.

Dupont also cautions that it is critical to consider what you post - don't complain about others and avoid posting content people may consider offensive. He advises people avoid using LinkedIn's InMail system - it's a mass e-mailing system that doesn't instill trust in people. Personalized e-mails are best.

As you work to grow your network, Dupont suggests you avoid accepting every single invitation you receive. Look at the profile of the person sending you an invite to connect and avoid those that look like stock photos, those with free giveaways and those who have minimal or no profile information and no education listed.

VIEW Stephen Dupont's LinkedIn profile.
The NYS TRIBUTE FOUNDATION Board of Directors voted to award a $5,000 grant to CAMP HEALING HEARTS, a program provided by HOSPICE OF CENTRAL NEW YORK’S GRIEF CENTER.

**Camp Healing Hearts is a day camp for children entering grades one through six who have experienced the death of a loved one.**

The Camp provides traditional camp activities such as swimming, arts and crafts and horseback riding, as well as circle time which allows the children to share their stories, get to know each other, and share healthy ways of coping. Camp Healing Hearts is free of charge to attend and will be held in Manlius the last week of August this year. *(Pictured L-R: Sarah Piskor, NYSFDA Past President Patty Knight Scholl, and Brenda Zook.)*
Established in 1847, the Diocese encompasses 14 New York counties, roughly 10,400 square miles, with a Catholic population of approximately 330,000 out of a total of 1.4 million people in the 14-county area. Their office manages 18 Catholic cemeteries in and around the state’s Capital Region.

“We’re certainly feeling the pressure of cremation,” said Rick Touchette, executive director at Albany Diocesan Cemeteries (ADC).

People are opting for cremation as a final disposition on an increasing basis - leading to fewer burials and, if people decide to bury their cremated remains, less revenue since they take up less space. For the past three years, Touchette said the ADC has offered free disposition of cremated remains in a common crypt, called the “All Souls Crypt.”

The committal service takes place during an annual service, Touchette said. The Diocese has been making changes in an effort to keep in step with the population - but not all of the new ways are finding complete acceptance by the faith community. Touchette said the free cremated remains burial (Catholics consider the word “cremains,” to be irreverent) signifies the faith community’s staunch belief that “cremated bodies should be buried or entombed.”

“We do this to acknowledge the sacredness of the body and the Catholic teaching on cremation,” Touchette said.
That means leaving the remains on a mantle or shelf in the closet isn’t really acceptable by Roman Catholic standards.

Touchette, who has been with the Diocese for 30 years, said cremation’s growing popularity is making cemeteries seem almost obsolete. Before the advent of cremation on the scale it is today, you had to dispose of a body somehow. Now, people can fire you up into space in a rocket ship, make a coral reef, scatter them on the golf course, bury them in the backyard and make them into jewelry,” Touchette said. “None of which are respectful treatment of remains that the Church requires.”

The mailing sent out in June highlights various options available from the Diocese’s cemeteries, including traditional in-ground interment. Mausoleum entombment, cremation spaces and niches and an environmentally-friendly “green natural burial site” are among offerings highlighted in the mailer.

And for a short period of time up until June 28, Albany Diocesan Cemeteries offered a five percent discount for anybody willing to pay cash and secure their space in advance. They continue to offer zero-percent financing for up to two years.

Despite the slowdown in activity due to cremation, Touchette said the cost
for cemetery space continues to rise. “The price continues to go up because we need to maintain these cemeteries,” he said.

ADC is emphasizing the benefits people can bestow on family members by arranging a final resting place ahead of time - similar to preplanning a funeral. “Mostly why people do pre-arrangements is to save family from going through that at the time of death. We hear that over and over again; ‘I don’t want to put my family through that,’” Touchette said.

ADC had a marketing company study the region and develop a mailing list to use for the flyers - Touchette said nearly 100 had returned within a couple of weeks and more were expected.

Cemetery arrangements are often made long before family members meet with funeral directors to arrange for final disposition, according to DAVID PARENTE from the McVEIGH FUNERAL HOME in Albany. Families infrequently come to funeral directors first to ask for advice about cemeteries, Parente said. And few funeral directors can “front” the money for families and pay for the cemetery or mausoleum spaces ahead of time. What is new, he said, is the fact that the ADC is offering a deal with its advertisement, which is uncommon. Parente said marketing activity for cemeteries has been growing since about 2010.

“I think it’s taken on a new life the last four or five years. They’re being impacted by grave sales, or the lack of grave sales and Saratoga National Cemetery,” Parente said.

The Saratoga National Cemetery allows for the burial of veterans at no cost to the family – that fact and the presence of numerous other fellow veterans makes it an attractive option for families.

In addition to skilled expert management and knowledge of trends, Albany Diocesan Cemeteries carries another advantage: the ability to sell monuments and engrave headstones.

Touchette said it’s possible ADC may send out another round of flyers in the fall. They maintain a total of 18 cemeteries in Albany, Schenectady and Rensselaer counties.
Did someone say golf? The NEW YORK STATE TRIBUTE FOUNDATION’s 4th ANNUAL GOLF OUTING will once again be held at the spectacular SHENENDOAH GOLF CLUB at TURNING STONE RESORT & CASINO, host of the 2006 PGA National Club Professional Championship. The proceeds from the Outing will help the Foundation fulfill its mission to act as a resource to further awareness of issues related to death and dying using the cornerstones of education, philanthropy, research, and consumer outreach. The Outing will begin at 11:30 a.m. with a buffet lunch, followed by a 12:30 p.m. shotgun start.

We hope you’ll be joining us on the links or consider becoming a tee sponsor!

Reserve your foursome today. Give Kelly or Frank a call at 800-291-2629; we’d be happy to answer any questions about this spectacular event. Thanks in advance for your support.

CLICK for sponsorship information  CLICK to register
A new regulation now allows for pet owners to be buried with their deceased animals.

Starting **AUGUST 2, 2014**, pet cemeteries in New York State will be allowed to accept the remains of humans as long as they don't advertise that option. This new regulation follows a three-year battle by the family of a former NYPD officer who, like many New Yorkers, wanted to be buried in a cemetery with his loved ones. It just so happened that his loved ones were his three Maltese pups!

This new regulation states that pet cemeteries can only bury human ashes as long as they don't charge a fee for it and don't advertise these human burial services. In addition, the pet cemetery must provide a printed notice, as follows:

(1) when a customer inquires about disposing of cremains in the pet cemetery, but before the customer commits to purchasing a lot with the right to dispose of cremains; and

(2) when a person with custody or control over cremains makes arrangements for the disposition of the cremains at the pet cemetery, but before such arrangements are finalized.
The printed notice must be in fourteen point bold font and must be contained in a document separate from all other forms and documents provided to the customer or the person making arrangements. The notice must list all of the following statements:

- This property is not a cemetery for human cremains.
- Cremains disposed of on this property WILL NOT be covered by the protections and legal rights granted by New York State Law to cremains disposed of in a cemetery.
- The family and descendants of the deceased WILL NOT be covered by the protections and legal rights granted by New York State Law to the family and descendants of deceased persons whose cremains are disposed of in a cemetery such as mandatory records of burials, rights of memorialization and restrictions on removals.
- There is NO ASSURANCE under New York State Law that this property will be maintained in its current condition and for its current purpose.
- There is NO ASSURANCE under New York State Law that this property will not be sold or transferred to another owner, or that access to this property will remain open to you, the family or the descendants of the deceased.
- There is NO ASSURANCE under New York State Law that any burial plots or memorials for cremains on this property will be maintained or preserved for any period of time.
- There is NO ASSURANCE under New York State Law that any cremains disposed of on this property will remain for any period of time in the location they were disposed, or on this property at all.

If you have any questions relating to this new regulation, call Randy or Marianne at 800-291-2629 or email marianne@nysfda.org.
New burial regulations effective in July will now allow the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to automatically pay the maximum amount allowable under law to most eligible surviving spouses more quickly and efficiently, without the need for a written application.

Under former regulations, survivors were required to submit receipts for relatively small one-time payments that VA generally paid at the maximum amount permitted by law. Surviving spouses will be paid upon notice of the Veteran’s death using information already in VA systems. The burial allowance for a non-service-connected death is $300, and $2,000 for a death connected to military service.
This revised regulation will further expedite the delivery of these benefits to surviving spouses, reduce the volume of claims requiring manual processing, and potentially make available resources for other activities that benefit Veterans and their survivors.

The new burial regulations will permit VA to pay, at a flat rate, burial and plot or interment allowances thereby enabling VA to automate payment of burial benefits to most eligible surviving spouses and more efficiently process other burial benefit claims.

**BENEFIT SERVICE-RELATED DEATH** - VA will pay up to $2,000 toward burial expenses for deaths on or after September 11, 2001, or up to $1,500 for deaths prior to September 11, 2001. If the Veteran is buried in a VA national cemetery, some or all of the cost of transporting the deceased may be reimbursed.

**NON-SERVICE-RELATED DEATH** - VA will pay up to $700 toward burial and funeral expenses for deaths on or after October 1, 2011 (if hospitalized by VA at time of death), or $300 toward burial and funeral expenses (if not hospitalized by VA at time of death), and a $700 plot-interment allowance (if not buried in a national cemetery). For deaths on or after December 1, 2001, but before October 1, 2011, VA will pay up to $300 toward burial and funeral expenses and a $300 plot-interment allowance. For deaths on or after April 1, 1988 but before October 1, 2011, VA will pay $300 toward burial and funeral expenses (for Veterans hospitalized by VA at the time of death). An annual increase in burial and plot allowances for deaths occurring after October 1, 2011 begins in fiscal year 2013 based on the Consumer Price Index for the preceding 12-month period.

(Continued)
ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

• You paid for a Veteran’s burial or funeral, AND
• You have not been reimbursed by another government agency or some other source, such as the deceased Veteran’s employer, AND
• The Veteran was discharged under conditions other than dishonorable, AND
• The Veteran died because of a service-related disability, OR
• The Veteran was receiving VA pension or compensation at the time of death, OR
• The Veteran was entitled to receive VA pension or compensation, but decided not to reduce his/her military retirement or disability pay, OR
• The Veteran died while hospitalized by VA, or while receiving care under VA contract at a non-VA facility, OR

BURIAL AT SEA
SCATTERING OF ASHES

• Cremated remains transported to NYC Region waters
• Documentation of interment provided
• Open times 7 days per week
• Specific instructions will be followed
• Service is dependent on weather
• The cost is $100, cremains delivered to me
• Pick-up services available
• Pets too: dogs, cats, birds, etc.

CONTACT:
Capt. Mark Sertoff
PO Box 1281
E. Northport, NY 11731
Phone: (631) 368-4361
E-Mail: markenprod@aol.com

• The Veteran died while traveling under proper authorization and at VA expense to or from a specified place for the purpose of examination, treatment, or care, OR
• The Veteran had an original or reopened claim pending at the time of death and has been found entitled to compensation or pension from a date prior to the date of death, OR
• The Veteran died on or after October 9, 1996, while a patient at a VA-approved state nursing home.
The VA does not pay burial benefits if the deceased:

- Died during active military service, OR
- Was a member of Congress who died while holding office, OR
- Was a Federal prisoner

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS:

- Acceptable proof of death as specified in 38 CFR 3.211, AND
- Receipted bills that show that you made payment in whole or part, OR
- A statement of account, preferably on the printed billhead of the funeral director or cemetery owner. The statement of account must show:
  - The name of the deceased Veteran for whom the services and merchandise were furnished, AND
  - The nature and cost of the services and merchandise, AND
  - All credits, AND
  - The amount of the unpaid balance, if any.

For more information on how to apply and for tips on making sure your claim is ready to be processed by VA, visit their HOW TO APPLY page: www.benefits.va.gov/COMPENSATION/apply.asp.
Governor ANDREW M. CUOMO signed legislation on July 3rd to rename portions of the state highway system and bridges in honor of veterans groups and service members who were KILLED IN ACTION while protecting their country. Portions of state roads in Allegany, Erie, Nassau, Niagara, and Ulster Counties have now received new names. In addition, bridges in Putnam and Suffolk Counties have been renamed.

TWIN CITIES VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL HIGHWAY: A portion of State Route 425 in Erie and Niagara Counties will be renamed “Twin Cities Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway.” This stretch of highway was originally designated as the “Twin Cities Memorial Highway” to honor those killed in the Vietnam War. This bill would change the name to fulfill the original intent.

YOUNGSTOWN VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS MEMORIAL HIGHWAY: A section of State Route 93 in the Village of Youngstown, in the Town of Porter, Niagara County will be called “Youngstown Veterans of Foreign Wars Memorial Highway.”
WYOMING COUNTY VETERANS MEMORIAL HIGHWAY: The current Wyoming County Veterans Memorial Highway on U.S. Route 20A will be extended to include a larger stretch of that road.

SERGEANT OMAR G. BLOWERS MEMORIAL HIGHWAY: The section of State Route 70 lying within Allegany County will be called “Sergeant Omar G. Blowers Memorial Highway.” Sgt. Blowers, from Swain NY, served in the U.S. Army during the Korean War and was taken prisoner while fighting Chinese military forces. He died after 107 days in captivity at the age of 19.

SERGEANT SHAWN MICHAEL FARRELL II MEMORIAL HIGHWAY: A section of State Route 44/55 in Ulster County will be renamed “Sergeant Shawn Michael Farrell II Memorial Highway.” Sgt. Farrell, from the Hudson Valley, was killed when his unit came under fire while on a mission in the Kapisa province of Afghanistan on April 28, 2014.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS MEMORIAL BRIDGE: In Putnam County, the bridge on Bryant Pond Road that crosses the Taconic State Parkway will be known as “Disabled American Veterans Memorial Bridge.”

SERGEANT MAJOR DANIEL JOSEPH DALY MEMORIAL HIGHWAY: A portion of State Route 107 in the City of Glen Cove in Nassau County will be called “Sergeant Major Daniel Joseph Daly Memorial Highway.” Sgt. Maj. Daly, a native of Glen Cove, served in the U.S. Marine Corps and was awarded the Medal of Honor on two occasions. First in 1900 for single-handedly defending a position during the Boxer Rebellion and secondly, in 1915 for exceptional bravery during a peacekeeping mission in Haiti.

SGT. MICHAEL J. ESPOSITO JR. MEMORIAL BRIDGE: The bridge on Washington Avenue that crosses I-495 in Suffolk County will be designated as the “Sgt. Michael J. Esposito Jr. Memorial Bridge.” Sgt. Esposito, a native of Brentwood, was mortally wounded while clearing an anti-coalition force compound in the village of Miam Do in Afghanistan on March 18, 2004.
NYSFDA’s **2014 ANNUAL CONVENTION** will be host to many great speakers and will provide you with chances to obtain up to a total of **12 hours of continuing education credit**. Pre-Registration is FREE once-again for NYSFDA members!
Download the 2014 Convention App!

Download our **CONVENTION APP** with your Smartphone and view the program schedule; post messages on our news feed; share your photos; follow conversations on **TWITTER** (@nysfda or #nysfda2014); locate exhibitors on the trade show map; or view program materials.

Just click the link below with your Smartphone, it will redirect you to download the free **YappBox** app for NYSFDA (my.yapp.us/NYSFDA2014).

If you already have YappBox, the new Yapp will automatically install. If you don’t have YappBox, you will be directed to the YappBox installation page in the App Store or Google Play store where you will be prompted to install the YappBox app.

Once installed, open it and the NYSFDA Convention App will download itself. IMPORTANT - in order to receive automatic updated information notifications you MUST enable your ‘Push Notifications’ on your mobile phone. This can be found under your phone “Settings” > “Notifications” > “YappBox” > set “Notification Center” to “ON” and the “Alert Style” to “Alerts”.

[CLICK HERE for App](#)
In today’s text-driven world creative writing is important as it has ever been to making your funeral home successful. Your web page, printed brochures, or letters should take into consideration both content and visual creative. The layout, yes, even in a letter, can have a profound effect on the message, and even your bottom line.
To be successful, copy writing has to do several things. It must deliver significance. It needs to be worthy of attention to those who may never have considered needing your funeral home’s services. And if done right, it will help spread the word. Some people call this the **UNIQUE SELLING PROPOSITION**, or USP.

Technology has continued to evolve as has consumer behavior. And merely stating your USP isn’t enough anymore. Instead, deliver appeal to just the right niche audience, not every single potential reader on the internet. Provide value in the form of a return on time invested. Also be mindful that too many syllables and fancy phrases will just get in the way of your message.

**Marketing copy is the first product a customer buys. It’s their first investment in your funeral home.**

Brochures have the potential to be incredibly persuasive salespeople when you’re not there. A brochure can communicate important information about your funeral home, and if they are done well, motivate consumers to call on you during their time of need. Perhaps printed brochures may seem passe to today’s **iPad** generation, and the printed word should be turned into a video or a **Twitter** post instead. But it still starts with the writing. Someone still would have had to write all the stuff down. Whether it’s copy for a page, a video, social media post, or something else, marketing copy is definitely creative.

**Keep that in mind — copyrighting requires that you balance creativity with a real focus on call to action.**

This makes it one of the most difficult writing disciplines. That balance can mean a lot more customers. Learning to write marketing copy will help you become a more comfortable, able writer, and it will grow your funeral home business at the same time. Not creative? No problem! There are many advertising companies out there who are happy to help.
All your hard work to become financially stable can unravel if you become a victim of identity theft. Many people don’t know they’ve been victimized until a collection agency comes knocking on their door.

Here are steps you can take to prevent it:

- Never give out personal information over the phone, on the Internet or through the mail unless you initiate the transaction.

- When someone requests your Social Security number, ask if you can provide alternate information. At medical offices, use an identifier that is not your Social Security number.

- Ensure the passwords to your credit card, bank, and all other online accounts aren’t easily available and can’t easily be guessed. Avoid using obvious information such as your birth date or your mother’s maiden name.

- Keep items with personal information in a safe place. Tear up or shred all unnecessary papers containing Social Security numbers, account numbers and birth dates before discarding them so “dumpster divers” can’t retrieve them.

- Protect your mail. Keep your eyes open for bills and statements. Thieves sometimes submit change of address forms to divert mail to their address. Safer yet, consider enrolling in DIRECTORS CHOICE’S electronic statements!

- Check your bank and credit card account activity promptly upon receipt of a written statement. If you see any problems, immediately report them.
Looking for a loan? We’ve got GREAT RATES!

NEW personal vehicle rates as low as 2.25% APR for 48 months! *

The Convention Special runs through October 1, 2014. * Your APR (annual percentage yield) may vary from the above rate and will be determined by your credit history.

Paying your loan just got . . . Easier!

DIRECTORS CHOICE can now collect your monthly loan payment!

- We can pull the payment from either a checking or savings account
- Select a date that works for you
- Can split payments bi-monthly

With an ACH Transfer, you can also make regular deposits into Money Market or Club Accounts, to help meet your savings goals. Call us at 800-593-5920 to get started today!
Is your funeral home being overtaken by boxes and file cabinets full of old papers? Are you renting storage space to keep paperwork you are no longer required by law to keep? Are documents with sensitive consumer information being retained long after those documents are needed?

NYS GENERAL BUSINESS LAW 453 requires funeral homes to retain records related to preneed trust accounts for four years following the provision of the funeral services and merchandise or four years following a full refund if it was a revocable account. It is important to keep these documents for the period required by law - but just as important to destroy them after that time. Most preneed documents contain sensitive information such as Social Security numbers. These documents should be routinely destroyed after the retention period to prevent identity theft. Devise a system that works for your funeral home, such as simply color coding files by the year they are closed and following through with destruction of all one color files after the appropriate retention period. Remember digital images and scans of preneed paperwork should also be deleted from your computer four years after the funeral services have been provided or the full refund processed.
For information on retention requirements for other paperwork stored in your funeral home, log on to irs.gov. and download IRS PUBLICATION 583 under FORMS AND PUBLICATIONS.

"These are especially sensitive. Have them pureed."
All New —
Get the Abigail App for your iPad!
Download our catalog today!
Go to the App Store, search for Abigail, download for Free.

Call 800-442-3060
with any questions
PrePlan
a service you can trust

#1 Choice for Your PreNeed Trust Services

$667,000,000
Current Trust Fund Total

$125,000,000
Deposits in 2013

105,000
Tax Statements Prepared and Mailed in January 2014

89,000
Active Accounts

17,125
New Accounts Opened in 2013

13,821
Accounts Closed in 2013

610
Funeral Firms Using PrePlan

26
Years in Operation – Backed by NYSFDA

8
PrePlan Staff Members Committed to Serving Our Member Funeral Homes

The Numbers Speak for Themselves!
Effective **JULY 7, 2014**, all cremated remains must be sent via Priority Express International Service. This replaces the option of sending cremated remains via International Registered Mail Service. Earlier this year the USPS changed the policy of domestic shipment of cremated remains to this similar policy and it is now universal whether sending cremated remains domestically or internationally.

**THE USPS POLICY: 139 CREMATED REMAINS**

**139.1 Eligibility**

Cremated remains (human and animal ashes) are permitted to be mailed internationally under the following conditions:

a. The cremated remains are not otherwise prohibited by the destination country (see the Individual Country Listing).

b. The package is sent only by Priority Mail Express International service. (See the Individual Country Listings for availability.)
139.2 Packaging

The mailer must package cremated remains (human or animal ashes) in a sealed and siftproof funeral urn. The mailer must place the urn into a strong and durable outer container, and must pack the outer container with sufficient cushioning material to prevent shifting during transit. The outer container must be siftproof to prevent powders from escaping and thereby soiling, damaging, or destroying another mailpiece or any postal equipment, or from causing discomfort to a person. Also see Publication 52, Packaging Instruction 9F.

139.3 Markings

The mailer must indicate the identity of the contents on the required applicable customs declaration form (see 123.61).

NSFDA Awards Scholarship

The NASSAU-SUFFOLK FUNERAL DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION (NSFDA) awarded its annual scholarship recently to KRISTI SHARKEY of NASSAU COMMUNITY COLLEGE Mortuary Science School. The award was given recently at the annual meeting of NSFDA. Pictured L-R: NSFDA past president and scholarship committee chair BILL BUTLER; TODD MANNIX of CFF; scholarship winner KRISTI SHARKEY; and NSFDA president LOU BRUNO. Congratulations Kristi!
As a bagpiper, I play many gigs. Recently I was asked by a funeral director to play at a graveside service for a homeless man. He had no family or friends, so the service was to be at a pauper’s cemetery in the Kentucky back-country. As I was not familiar with the backwoods, I got lost. I finally arrived an hour late and saw the funeral guy had evidently gone and the hearse was nowhere in sight.

There were only the diggers and crew left and they were eating lunch. I felt badly and apologized to the men for being late. I went to the side of the grave and looked down and the vault lid was already in place. I didn’t know what else to do, so I started to play.

The workers put down their lunches and began to gather around. I played out my heart and soul for this man with no family and friends. I played like I’ve never played before for this homeless man.

And as I played ‘Amazing Grace,’ the workers began to weep. They wept, I wept, we all wept together. When I finished I packed up my bagpipes and started for my car. Though my head hung low, my heart was full.

As I opened the door to my car, I heard one of the workers say, “I never seen nothin’ like that before and I’ve been putting in septic tanks for twenty years.”

Source: International Order of the Golden Rule
What Do You Think?

Take a moment to fill out our interactive survey. Once you submit your opinion, you can view what your peers think too!

Due to the modifying trends in funeral service, do you see your business model changing significantly within the next three to five years?