

FCA-KC **Funeral Consumers Alliance of Kern County**
(Formerly Kern Memorial Society)
P. O. Box 1202 Bakersfield, CA 93302-1202
Email: fca-kc@live.com
Website: www.fca-kern-county.com

Affiliated with the national Funeral Consumers Alliance, Inc. and
member of Funeral Consumers Alliance of California

FCA-KC NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2014

2014 ANNUAL MEETING & LUNCHEON

Our Annual Luncheon and Membership meeting is coming up! It will be on Saturday, March 22, at 11:30 a.m., in the private dining room at Rusty's Pizza, 6675 Ming Avenue, just west of Ashe Road. Order something great from the menu. No reservations needed.

Our featured topic is "Organ Donation." According to donatelifenet there are 120,000 people in the U.S. in need of lifesaving organ transplants, 21,000 in California. A single donor can save up to **eight** lives.



Speaker: **Kathy Vochaska** will tell us about the challenges and rewards of being a kidney donor and how others can follow her example. Kathy is a local activist who has become a full-time advocate for the OneLegacy, a non-profit that coordinates organ donations.

See the Bakersfield Californian article on Kathy Vochaska at <http://www.bakersfieldcalifornian.com/opinion/hot-topics/x1891366873/KATHY-VOCHOSKA-Save-a-life-sign-up-as-an-organ-and-tissue-donor>

This presentation will be followed by our annual membership meeting during which we will present our nominee(s) for our board of directors. This is also a great time to bring your friends (young and old) so they can become familiar with our local Funeral Consumer Alliance organization and what this local, state and national organization can do for you to protect your consumer rights when purchasing funeral and mortuary services. Our motto is, "Preplan, but don't prepay." We will have free printed material to assist you. *Before I Go, You Should Know*© funeral planner published by our parent organization, the Funeral Consumers Alliance, will be available for purchase. This planning document has logs for •Your funeral plans• Where your important papers are• Who should take care of your pets and how• Whom to call when the time comes.

BALLOT FOR 2013-15 BOARD MEMBERS

At the annual meeting, members can vote for nominees to be members of the board of directors of FCA-KC. You may vote at the meeting or send this form in the enclosed envelope postmarked by March 22, 2014.

Nominee:



Roseanna McCleary, Ph D.- Associate Professor in the Department of Social work, CSUB. She specializes in gerontological social work and teaches courses in human behavior in the social environment, gerontology and medical social work practice.

For _____ Against _____

“What do I do with this enclosed envelope?”

1. If you are a member of FCA-KC and do not attend the annual meeting, you can send in the ballot voting for or against the nomination for the two-year term on the organization’s board of directors.
2. Donations are very welcome as they increase our ability to serve the community as well as our members. Memorial donations pay tribute to the deceased and are appreciated by the family.
3. It is difficult to keep our membership up-dated. You can help by writing a note telling us of any changes in your name, address, email or phone number. Mortuaries seldom let us know when one of our members has died so we must rely on their friends and relatives to give us that information.
4. Please write a note telling the board members what they are doing right and/or what more they should be doing to help you.
5. Finally, our group needs to constantly add new members. Write down the names of friends and relatives you know who would benefit from learning how to plan for their final rites so they can be on our mailing list. Also let us know of any organization that would welcome a Funeral Consumers Alliance speaker.



BYOB (Bring Your Own Box)

Did you know that you have the right to provide your own coffin to your funeral service? For a long time we automatically bought coffins and urns from whatever mortuary we had chosen to serve our loved ones at the time of their deaths. Several years ago a law was passed that stipulated all mortuaries must accept third party coffins or urns and must not charge a fee for that service.

Did you know that California has a Cemetery and Funeral Bureau, a part of the Department of Consumer Affairs? Underfunded and overworked, it publishes the “Consumer Guide to Cemetery and Funeral Purchases.” Page 13 of the guide describes your right to bring your own box. Available in English and Spanish at <http://www.cfb.ca.gov>, under the “What’s New” tab. While there you can also view the “PreNeed Q&A” and the “Peace of Mind Brochure.”

The FCA/KC Board conducted a survey by phone during November and December 2013. Twenty-five mortuaries were contacted; twenty-two of them had no objection to this procedure. Interestingly, the mortuaries that did set limits or had complaints are owned by Service Corporation International (SCI). Funerals in America are a \$16 billion per year business according to Bloomberg News. SCI is the largest single funeral provider in America with a market capitalization of over \$4 billion and over 20,000 employees. On Dec. 31, 2013 it acquired Stewart Enterprises, the second largest funeral provider. For a Bloomberg news story, see <http://www.bloomberg.com/video/death-inc-the-big-business-of-funeral-chains-JNicUFGCRMWqc7hHjJAeIA.html>

Funeral Consumers Alliance of Kern County Treasurer's Report	
Year Ended December 31, 2013	
Beginning Cash Balance January 1, 2013	\$2,472.25
Receipts:	
Gifts	\$558.00
Memberships	450.00
Disbursements:	
Annual Meeting (receipts)	\$(396.00)
Annual Meeting (expenses)	239.77
State & National Dues	220.00
Newsletter - Printing/Folding, etc.	663.13
Office Expenses	267.18
Excess Receipts (Disbursements)	13.92
Ending Cash Balance December 31, 2013	\$2,486.17

Now, about coffin and urn options here in Kern County: First, you can build your own, but you must go by cemetery guide lines and it probably would take a great deal of time. The other two “local” choices are Costco and 18th Street Carpentry.

By going on-line to Costco Coffins, you can see choices of models and their prices. The price includes delivery cost and will be delivered within 48 hours, providing it is within a 75-mile radius of the Costco location nearest you. Otherwise there will be an additional \$125 charge. No deliveries are made on Sundays and holidays. Even if you do not order from Costco, its online pricing gives you a basis to compare prices elsewhere.

FCA-Kern County has found a local coffin maker, 18th Street Carpentry, located at 512 E 18th Street in East Bakersfield. Owned by Douglas and Andrea Rea, you can have high quality craftsmanship at reasonable prices. Hand crafted and one-of-a kind coffins can be yours. See <http://www.bakersfieldcaskets.com>.

See the KGET news feature, <http://www.kerngoldenempire.com/news/local/story/Local-couple-makes-custom-coffins/d/story/QWHsayUM0y9bsPX8pFIQw> and the *Bakersfield Californian* article, <http://www.bakersfieldcalifornian.com/business/x1612516957/Carpenter-finds-new-life-making-caskets> Who sez we aren’t technologically hip? Visit us at <http://www.fca-kern-county.com/> and we are developing our Facebook account, <https://www.facebook.com/fcakc.fcakc>! You may have thought ahead, gotten your body disposition plans in order and made a will, but what about your social media? If something happens to you, do you have a website, blog, Facebook or Twitter account? Have you made a “social media will”? The federal government’s consumer action handbook provides guidelines for managing your social media when you go to the great e-voyage on your final cloud computing. See <http://www.usa.gov/topics/consumer/consumer-action-handbook.pdf>, pg. 63



How Do I Join the Funeral Consumers Alliance of Kern County?

It is very simple. Each adult member pays a one-time fee of \$30. Members’ children are included without charge until they reach the age of 18. In addition, each member completes a form, “Survivor Instructions and Mortuary Information,” that he or she retains. Two copies of the completed form are mailed to FCA-KC. The FCA-KC will keep one copy for its files and send one to the mortuary. If you wish a wallet card, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Funeral Consumers Alliance of Kern County – Yes, I want to join!
Here’s my Membership Application.

A printable full page form is also available on our website at www.fca-kern-county.com or www.funerals.org/affilaites/kern

Name _____ Birth Date (Required) _____

1. _____

2. _____

Street Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Date _____

Email address (optional) _____

Minors under the age of 18, unmarried and living at home, are covered by the parent(s) membership. Please list.

Name _____ Birth Date _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

● Number of adult members _____ @ \$30 each = \$ _____

Detach and mail with your check made out to:

Funeral Consumers Alliance of Kern County
P. O. Box 1202
Bakersfield CA 93302-1202

From the statewide FCA Newsletter:

**Guest speaker Holly Blue Hawkins presents
"Death Café"**

A Death Café is an experiential and highly participatory model offering an informal setting for people to talk about death and dying. Usually there are refreshments offered. It is "café style," with casual conversation, and a facilitator introducing the concept, setting ground rules for the group and then floating between tables, available to answer questions and provide a sense of hospitality. The room is divided into smaller groups sitting at different tables. The small groups converse and table-hopping is an option if desired. There may be a note-taker and summarized sharing by each table at the end of the session if the larger group re-gathers at the close of the meeting

The Death Café movement started in Switzerland, and soon blossomed in England, where it was picked up and further developed by Jon Underwood. It is now a rapidly-growing international movement. Death Café is on Facebook and their website deathcafe.com has an instruction manual for facilitators. It is a way to bring strangers together to eat, drink and talk about death. The conversations are meant to be respectful and kept confidential. Now let's break up into groups and get started..."



2013-2014 Board of Directors

Lorraine Unger - *President*
Inge Kaplan - *Vice-President*
Sheila Ross - *Treasurer*
Kitty Pierce - *Secretary*

Directors
Melisse Herring
Mike Monji
Betty Newman

Volunteer
Merridith Warren,
Membership Administrator
Website & Email Administrator
Honorary Board Member

Donations to the Cause

Phil Neufeld	Ann Williams
Melisse Herring	Bugs Fontaine
Diane Garrett	Charles Courneyea



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here

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