

SAN DIEGO MEMORIAL SOCIETY
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FALL/WINTER 2009 NEWSLETTER

YOUR MEMORIAL SOCIETY HAS MOVED

The SDMS Board of Directors voted to move our office from the Kearny Mesa area where we have been broken into twice, to a safer address in Poway. After careful consideration of cost for safe-guarding the present office it was determined to be more economical to relocate in a safer neighborhood.

Everything is up and running at our new location. We continue to function fully despite the tragedy of the burglary. Please note the new address and phone nos. at the top of this page. Mail and phone calls will be forwarded to our new location for the near future.

This is a mailing address only, not a physical address. Therefore, if you need to take care of any matters in person it is important to call and make an appointment to meet with the office manager, Barbara Thomson. The business hours will continue to be 9:00 AM to 12:00 Noon, Monday thru Thursday. However, Barbara may be available for emergency calls at other times. If she is not available, leave a message and she will return your call as soon as possible.

REMINDER: At time of death SDMS is not to be called. WE DO NOT PICK UP BODIES. You call the mortuary that you chose. If you joined prior to May, 2007 and filled out and filed your Service Instruction Booklet with Humphrey, that is who you would call. If you joined after that date, or did not file your SIB with Humphrey, you would call the mortuary you choose.

OFFICE BURGLARY

During the morning of Oct. 11, 2009, the SDMS office was broken into and thieves removed our computers, printer, fax machine, as well as other office equipment. This was a serious set-back for the Society. While the computers

contained our total data base, it did not contain Social Security Numbers. Therefore no personal information was compromised. Members have experienced no loss of ability to use their membership privileges and new members have been added as usual.

However, information was lost from the time period of mid August 2008 until Oct. 12th, 2009. Therefore, if you know of anyone who joined during that time frame it is of the utmost importance they contact the office in order to have their information restored. They can do this by phoning or emailing the office or mailing their membership no., date joined, name, address and phone no., birth date and last 4 digits of their Social Security no.

We were informed by the police officer who investigated the break-in there had been a series of burglaries in the Kearney Mesa area recently. The mode of breaking and entering was similar in our case to many others, including leaving a glove style finger print showing the specific type of glove worn. Several prints were found by the police to verify this.

Based on that information the Board made the decision to move out of the business park atmosphere into a more secure area. All equipment has been replaced and back-up is now being done both at the office and an outside location.

The San Diego Memorial Society continues to serve members with simple, dignified, inexpensive cremation and burial plans as we have for the past 52 years. Nearly 30,000 members have joined since it began in 1958 and our current role includes almost 10,000 active members. We are thankful that the membership of the Society continues to provide support so we can carry the message throughout the county. We all need to be prepared for the time of our death and by preparing for that eventuality, we save our loved ones significant heartbreak, decision making and expense.

NEW MORTUARY ADDED

Late this summer the Society received a recommendation to visit a new mortuary. We did and were pleasantly surprised at the reception we received. The mortuary is Legacy Funeral and Cremation Care and is located at 7043 University Ave., La Mesa. Phone no. (619)337-1400.

After careful investigation and a lengthy discussion with the owners, the SDMS Board voted to add it to our Participating Mortuary list. Despite

having begun business in 2009, the owners, Vic and Nadine Savino, come to San Diego County with over 45 years of experience in the mortuary and cemetery field. Vic is presently president of the California Funeral Directors Assn. His commitment to meeting the needs of consumers makes him a natural for our SDMS members. Nadine is a proven office professional who has managed local mortuary offices and worked for a major national funeral and cemetery corporation. Together they represent the entire staff of Legacy at this time. They pick up bodies together and share duties keeping prices down. The SDMS is pleased to have them as one of our Participating Mortuaries. They have already serviced several of our members and we have had wonderful feed back from their families.

CEMETERY ADDED TO PROVIDERS LIST

SDMS has reached an agreement with La Vista Memorial Park and Mausoleum, 3191 Orange St., National City, phone no. (619)475-7770, regarding cemetery services. This is a major break through for affiliates of the Funeral Consumers Alliance nationwide. After 52 years of offering mortuaries who provide fair practices and reasonable prices to our members, we have expanded to include options for disposition of the body.

Owners Mica Polanco and Lee Mason, the Director of Sales and Marketing, are a perfect fit for the SDMS. Their enthusiasm and desire to be of service to our members make them an obvious choice for us. La Vista sits on a hillside overlooking the South Bay. While it is presently a work-in-progress, it is clear the cemetery will be a place of peace, tranquility and beauty.

We are proud to say the total cost of an in-ground burial, mausoleum interment or niche for cremains, is considerably less expensive than any we were able to find in San Diego county. All costs shown on our mail-out info and on our website include opening and closing, vault (where needed), endowment care and processing fee. Specific prices can be acquired by calling the SDMS office (858)391-1267 or visiting our website: www.sdmsonline.com.

If you are planning to use a cemetery and haven't made plans for this eventuality, please consider La Vista. The opportunity to complete your end-of-life arrangements at these extraordinary prices are worthy of your investigation.

SAN DIEGO'S BEST KEPT SECRET EXPOSED

Thanks to the many who have donated to make this Newsletter possible, we have been able to share the “good news” of the goals of the San Diego Memorial Society to many people. Our outreach for the last several months includes over 25 presentations to various groups, including civic, religious, health-oriented and medical organizations. Each opportunity opens the community’s awareness to the Society’s work in the county.

There are three things that you, our members, can do to keep the spirit of the Society alive. First, tell your friends, family & neighbors who are not members about the benefits you received when you joined. Secondly, if you are part of a group: civic, religious or business that holds regular meetings, seek to have a spokesperson from the Society make a presentation further exposing the Society’s name. Thirdly, make a donation to allow for the printing of brochures, membership packets and future newsletters to keep the Society viable in these economically challenging times.

If, as Napoleon said, “An army travels on its stomach” it is equally true that a non-profit organization travels by the will and support of its members. We have never been able to afford to advertise so we need to depend on our members to get the Society’s name and information out there. Thanks to all of you for your continuous support and please remember, no donation is too small and all are greatly appreciated.

THE SAN DIEGO MEMORIAL SOCIETY’S VISIONS

The dual purpose of SDMS is to provide educational information about end-of-life planning and to help members find fair and affordable cremations and burials. It is important the members become aware of the type of end-of-life choices they have and that their survivors are aware of these choices. Too often we hear from folks who have taken care of one of their parent’s end-of-life arrangements and later discover they were members of the Society and want to know what rights they have after the fact. This is a sad commentary. We urge all members to have the Final Planning Booklet readily available for the person who will be responsible for the mortuary being called to pick up the deceased.

Our yearly review of Participating Mortuaries will begin in December. If you have had a bad or good experience with any of the participating mortuaries we ask you to please let us know so that we can either correct the situation or make modifications in the number of mortuaries we currently

refer you to or commend those whose service was appreciated. The Society seeks to guarantee its members responsible relationships at affordable prices from all who serve our members.

DID YOU KNOW?

1. That the cost of a cemetery plot is higher when purchased at time of need than if you buy it in advance?
2. That the laws and regulations concerning mortuaries and cemeteries in California are among the strictest in the United States?
3. That the law requires any body that is buried in the ground has to be in a cemetery and that it is possible for an individual to create a cemetery on his own property as long as it meets state standards?
4. That on the East Coast and the Midwest, most funerals are with embalming, open-casket viewing and graveside services while on the West Coast cremation is the majority choice?
5. That if you wish you can observe the cremation process of a loved one, albeit for a pricey added cost?
6. That as a member of the SDMS you are affiliated with over a hundred like-minded groups throughout the United States and that you can use any of these if you are out of state when death occurs?
7. That the Funeral Consumers Alliance, our national organization, lobbies Congress for stronger consumer protection against the evils of some mortuary and funeral practices?
8. The FCA-California, our State organization, works with our State Assembly and Senate to strengthen our rights as consumers for fair and appropriate mortuary and cemetery services?

NEWSLETTER VIA E-MAIL

If you would be interested in receiving your next newsletter via email go to our website and click on membership at top of the page, then on identity and fill in the info and we will place you on our email list. This is something we have been wanting to do for some time to save money on printing, addressing and postage.

SDMS 52ND ANNUAL MEETING DATE

Sunday, April 11, 2010 2 to 4 PM
First Unitarian Church of San Diego
4190 Front St. in Hillcrest

Mark your calendar and look forward to seeing you there.

**San Diego Memorial Society
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HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM YOUR SOCIETY

SDMS SEEKS NEW BOARD MEMBERS

In April, the SDMS Board will lose three faithful members. Our bylaws limit board members to serve only six years and we will have to elect new board members to replace those who have served the maximum terms.

Gerry Newall has been the Board's secretary for several years and has served faithfully. His precise minutes and apt observation have paved the way for much of the Society's success. Anne-Louise (Kitty) Clinton has been a great watch-woman, keeping us abreast of things going on in San Diego and seeing to it that the Board members remain on task. Ken Barnett has brought a businessman's view to the board and his strong professionalism enhanced discussions and debates. These people will be difficult to replace, but the board must continue to do its duty to serve both our members and the greater communities of San Diego County.

If you are interested in joining the board, please call the office and let us know. We would recommend you attend a Board meeting to ascertain if this is a good match for you. We meet the second Saturday of each month from 10:00 AM to about Noon.

DONATIONS GREATLY NEEDED AND ALWAYS APPRECIATED