SAN DIEGO MEMORIAL SOCIETY

Simple, Inexpensive, Dignified Cremation and Burials

SPRING AND SUMMER 2011 NEWSLETTER

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2011 ANNUAL MEETING

The 2011 Annual meeting will be held on April 30 at the Scottish Rite Center in Mission Valley, 895 Camino del Rio South, San Diego, CA 92103 (across from the Mission Valley Mall). The meeting will begin at 1:00 pm and the agenda will include the normal reports, election of Board Members and a vote on an amendment to the SDMS Bylaws.

The Bylaw Amendment was approved by the SDMS Board in February and is being submitted to the members for ratification. The amendment will be in Article V. Subsection 6 to read: *The Board of Directors, by a majority vote, in recognition of exemplary service to the Society, may elect a SDMS member to the SDMS Board as an Emeritus Board Member. The position will be a non-voting lifetime office.*

At the time of this writing no candidates have come forth for election to the Board of Directors.

At the last several Annual Meetings members have requested more opportunity to get questions answered and a greater variety of speakers relating to end of life issues. To rectify this situation, The Board has authorized the establishment of a SDMS EXPO to be held in conjunction with the Annual Meeting. The Meeting has been shortened to allow for a greater involvement of members as well as guests to get information from experts in all fields of end of life activities.

FIRST EVER SDMS END OF LIFE EXPO
EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT DYING BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK

The End of Life EXPO will begin about 1:30 PM in the Scottish Rite Center using the same facilities as did the Annual Meeting. The subtitle: Everything you wanted to know about dying but were afraid to ask reflects the Society's understanding of what the general population feels about the nature of death and dying. Since the Society's primary goal is to provide information of an educational nature to the communities of San Diego County, it is appropriate that we bring together those who work closely with the issues relating to the end of life.

YOUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Russell Armstead-President
Paul Ward-Vice President
Elaine Durson-Secretary
Frances San Clemente-Treasurer

Michael Hoctor, Director
Timothy Jenkins-Director
Paul Marsh-Director
Lee Mason-Director
Victor Savino, Director
Barbara Thomson, Director
Sheila Williams, Director

A nonprofit, nonsectarian association established in 1958.

6/06

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A GREAT NEED

The San Diego Memorial Society remains one of the best kept secrets in the County. Almost daily our Office Coordinator hears from callers the joy of finding the Society but wondering why they hadn't heard of it before. Those of us who make presentations get the same response. "Why didn't I know about you sooner, I just made a bad funeral investment!" We are in the shadow because we haven't focused the light upon ourselves. We have one of the best messages to sell to the community. We offer information, dignified mortuary and cemetery experience, as well as a substantial savings for members.

With a few Board Members we were able to expand the number of membership to double the 2009 total. With more active Board Members we can expand even more. Consider how you can serve your fellow San Diegans. With an investment of just time and energy, you can provide the county with a better understanding of end of life factors. Our need is great. The Society can only do that which our man/woman power permits. The task is great but the workers are few. Dedicate a few hours a month to help your fellow citizens have access to the values of the San Diego Memorial Society.

The tasks are manifold. The Society investigates businesses before we accept them as participating mortuaries. We monitor their use by our members to insure they meet the standards of the contract they sign with us. The Society sends out representatives to organizations to share the three prime principles which are our purpose: 1. Decide whether to be buried or cremated; 2. Make a written plan and select a mortuary to be called at time of need; and 3. Advise heirs or spouses or friends of the mortuary, the plans, and any other wishes for your end of life needs. Members of the Memorial Society have a final planning booklet. Be sure it is filled out and communicated to those who need to know.

If you feel the urge to get involved, please call the office so we can get your name on the ballot that will be distributed at the Annual Meeting. We can be reached by phone at 858 391 1267 or by email at volunteer@sdmsonline.com.

AN ENGAGED MEMBERSHIP

If it is true that "An army travels on its stomach" as Napoleon has noted, then a non-profit like the San Diego Memorial Society travels on the strength of the volunteer's time, energy, and money. These last few years have seen a drastic drop in donations for non-profit organizations throughout the land. Many have given up public service, others have filed for bankruptcy, and most have cut back on the service to members. The SDMS has weathered this drought of donations by an increase in numbers of membership and more processing fees. While we are not able to do all we want to promote the goals of the Society, we have been able to maintain our function of sharing with the community and providing information through the good efforts of our office coordinator, Barbara Thomson.

There are several ways that you as members of this Society can help promote and grow it. If cash donations are difficult, then consider these three ways you can help.

1. Share with your family, your neighbors, your friends, and co-workers the value of membership in the Society. No one wants to burden their spouse or heirs with making decisions about the funeral at a time when mourning clouds thinking and indecision increases stress. Explain how, for a small fee of $40, they can have the security that their end of life will be orderly and without conflict. If every member would encourage just one other person to join, the Society would double in size!

2. Look at your involvement with groups. If you belong to a group: religious, civic, retired, educational, support groups, or any other gathering of citizens, seek to have the president or chairperson request a presentation from the Society. This will always be an educational presentation focusing on the need for everyone to make preparations for their end of life. An explanation of the purpose of the Society and the way it provides for its members is the only "commercial" in the presentation. As more people become aware of the Society, the demand for membership increases.

3. The governing Board of the Society meets quarterly to direct the Society actions. Members of the board serve a three year term and can be elected only once more so there is always a need for energetic, committed men and women to guide the Society. If you have the time, energy, and desire to help your fellow human beings, consider seeking election to the Board.

If you are interested in this year's election, please contact Barbara at the SDMS office 858 391 1267 for more information. We need you!

UPDATE ON THE 501(c)(3) ISSUE

At the 2010 Annual Meeting the membership voted to make the acquisition of the IRS's 501(c)(3) status a number one priority. The Board and officers began immediately to gather the material necessary and hired an attorney to help us through the hurdles. What should have been a simple exercise of getting financial material together, organizing it and sending it in to the government became more complicated.

The break-in, which occurred in October 2009, caused more than loss of equipment. Our records were put in disarray and some were lost. We worked to gather the needed materials from former Board Members, mixed up files, and stored records. As we got near the end of this search, we discovered we didn't have the income tax documents from 2007. We had switched accountants that year and somehow the data was lost. We requested duplicates from the IRS in September 2010 and did not receive them until February 2011. We are set to submit the IRS forms after the March Board Meeting. We are told by our attorney that it takes approximately 8 months for the approval and it will, more than likely, be made retroactive.

You will be kept up to date on this in future newsletters.

BIO'S FOR OUR END OF LIFE EXPO REPRESENTATIVES

FUNERAL DIRECTOR – Vic Savino
Vic has over 40 years experience as a "*funeral service professional*" in the state of California. There is hardly a license or certificate in the mortuary or cemetery fields that Vic does not possess. He has served over 21 years on the board of directors for the California Funeral Directors Association where he currently holds the position of Immediate Past President. He currently owns and operates his own funeral home in La Mesa, CA. Vic's expertise in his field includes having assisted the Dept. of Consumer Affairs, Cemetery & Funeral Bureau as a *"Subject Matter Expert"* writing the state examination for licensure of individuals in the funeral profession. Vic can most likely answer your questions about everything you wanted to know about funerals or cremations but were afraid to ask.

CEMETERY PROFESSIONAL – Lee Mason
Lee, owner & president of a consulting firm helping families for over 20 years in the insurance & burial industry, has several licenses to help provide proper guidance & accountability for the senior population. Lee has worked as Director, Manager & Bereavement Counselor for a privately owned cemetery and managed two well known San Diego County Cemeteries. Lee has helped families prepare for burial expenditures and mortuary counseling before or at time of need. With a vast knowledge of cemetery burials, ground, entombment and cremation variations, all you need to do is ask and you will receive your answer.

BUREAU OF FUNERALS & CEMETERIES – Steve Allen
Steve has spent the last eight years as a Field Representative with the Department of Consumer Affairs Cemetery and Funeral Bureau. He conducts compliance inspections at all Cemetery and Funeral Bureau licensed mortuaries, cemeteries & crematories on an annual basis in the counties of San Diego, Riverside and Imperial. He also conducts investigations against licensees brought on by consumers. Prior to this he spent 26 years in the funeral profession as a licensed embalmer, crematory manager and funeral director. I am here to answer any of your questions.

HOSPICE – Bryan McNutt
Bryan currently serves as the Director of Family and Support Services at a local hospice which provides care for terminally ill patients and their families throughout San Diego County. Bryan's area of responsibility in hospice care focuses on providing support and management of psychosocial needs of hospice patients and their families. His department focuses on a wide range of clinical responsibilities, including social work, spiritual care and bereavement counseling services. Bryan also assists in providing training and in-service education for the hospice associates where he works as well as various healthcare organizations throughout San Diego County. Bryan has a Masters Degree in Clinical Psychology and is also a certified grief counselor. He has previous clinical experience working in inpatient psychiatric care as well as in general acute hospital & rehabilitation care services. He is currently a sitting candidate for his PhD in Clinical Psychology.

MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE – Chaplain Joe Davis
Joe Davis has served as chaplain for the San Diego County Medical Examiner since 2000. He has also served as chaplain for the San Diego County Sheriff's Dept. at the courthouse in El Cajon since 2003. In this role Joe serves the entire Medical Examiner staff with the everyday stress of dealing with sudden, unexpected, traumatic death. He assists the investigators in the death investigation and often times does the death notification to the family. He is also the Executive Director of the Bereavement Center at the Medical Examiner's office, which is only one of four programs like it in the nation that provides free counseling, education, cremation assistance, pastoral care and referrals to families. Joe is also the family liaison for the San Diego Eye

Bank, the San Diego County Tissue Bank and the U.C. Irvine Brain Research Program. He is also the Executive Director of DUNAMAI Ministries, which facilitates the Bereavement Program and on the board of directors for the Sheriff's Dept. Chaplaincy Program. He is also a Certified Trauma Services Specialist with the Assn. of Traumatic Stress Specialists. He is a member of the SD County Critical Incident Stress Response team, the American Red Cross Community Crisis Chaplain's Response team, International Conference of Police Chaplains and an associate pastor for Calvary Chapel in Santee. There is no doubt that Joe can answer most any questions.

COUNTY PUBLIC ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE – Katherine M. Howard
Katherine's current position is Supervising Deputy Public Administration/Public Guardian responsible for decedent probate and legal accounting divisions. County employee for 20+ years. Worked in Adult Protective Services for 9 years. Katherine can answer any of your questions regarding the Public Administrators office and what they provide.

TRUST AND WILLS REPRESENTATIVE – Philip M. Vinci
Phil is sole general practitioner with emphasis in the area of estate planning, real estate and business since 1974. Phil has given several estate planning presentations in both the San Diego Teacher's Assn. and the San Diego Retired Teacher's Assn. as well as other groups representing the older generation and retirees. Phil has been a past member of San Diego Alzheimer's Society Board of Directors and Saint Madeline Sophies Center for the Developmentally Disabled Board of Directors. Phil is here to answer your questions regarding trusts and wills

TISSUE & ORGAN DONATION REPRESENTATIVE – William Elliott
Bill is Director of Tissue Development for Lifesharing, a Donate Life Organization. He has worked for 14 years in the eye/tissue banking industry. He is a Certified Eye Bank Specialist from Eye Bank Assn. of America and Certified Tissue Bank Specialist from American Assn. of Tissue Banks. He was previously employed as a Paramedic, Autopsy Asst., Burn Care Specialist and Emergency Room Technician. Bill can answer all of your questions regarding organ and tissue donations.

MILITARY SERVICES AND NATIONAL CEMETERY REPRESENTATIVE – Sharon Landon
Sharon took the position as Program Analyst at Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery on Feb. 1, 2010. She assists the Director with various tasks in everyday operation and the opening of the new Miramar National Cemetery. In March 2009, Sharon was assigned as the Asst. Director, Ohio Western Reserve National Cemetery, Rittman, OH where she worked with the director on everyday operation of the cemetery. In July 2006 she was selected as Director of Port Hudson and Baton Rouge National Cemetery, Baton Rouge, LA. In that position she oversaw the administration, maintenance and burial operations of the cemetery in accordance with NCA policies and procedures. With an extensive background in National Cemetery operations, Sharon will be happy to answer any questions our veterans may have regarding Military burials.

SAN DIEGO MEMORIAL SOCIETY REPRESENTATIVE – Russ Armstead
Russ is the current president of the Board of Directors of the San Diego Memorial Society. He has been a member of the Society since January, 2002 and served on the Board in various positions for the past 5 years. He is past president of the San Diego Teacher's Union and a retired San Diego City school teacher. Russ makes presentations about the Society in an attempt to educate people about end of life needs and is an excellent representative of the Society. He can answer any and all of your questions and would be delighted to schedule a presentation at any church, retirement home, hospice or anyplace else that would like to learn about end of life needs and the San Diego Memorial Society.

10 TIPS REGARDING ELDER ABUSE

By Paul Greenwood, Deputy District Attorney, San Diego County

1. **Choose a caregiver with caution**: Do not assume that hiring a caregiver through a bonded agency guarantees their background has been checked. There is no current law requiring background checks for in-home caregivers in California.
2. **Keep an inventory of all jewelry**: Jewelry is often stolen from homes occupied by elders. Photograph rare, valuable or sentimental items so they can be identified if pawned.
3. **Every home should have a shredder**: Shred every piece of mail containing your name, address, and any other identifying information, even envelopes with your name and address.
4. **Protect your incoming and outgoing mail**: Never allow mail to sit on an unsecured mailbox making it easy for thieves to rob the mail. Get a locked mailbox or rent a postal box. Never leave mail with money or checks on the mailbox, mail them in secured boxes.
5. **Obtain a credit search at least two or three times a year**: Identity theft is rampant. Obtain a credit search two or three times a year from a reliable credit bureau – Experian, Equifax, or Tans Union.
6. **Every telephone should have caller I.D.**: Telephones equipped with Caller I.D. allow for the identification that permits the receiver to determine whether to take the call or not.
7. **You will never win the Canadian Lottery**: A telephone call that tells you are the proud winner of the Canadian Lottery is a lie. Likewise any emails from foreigners that request you send money in order to get a bigger chunk of cash are always fraudulent.
8. **Consider allowing your bank to send a duplicate copy of your monthly statement to a trusted family member or professional advisor**: Sadly, most financial elder abuse cases are reported or discovered six to nine months after the initial loses have occurred. Elders whose sight is failing are at greater risk because they may rely upon the very person who is stealing from them.
9. **Don't assume that the friendly handyman is in fact licensed**: Always obtain at least three estimates in writing and check on the name of the contractor with both the Better Business bureau and the Sate License Contractor's Board. Additionally, never pay more than 10% of the contract price up front.
10. **Always have a second line of defense at your front door**: Have either a locked screen door or a security chain guard at your front door. This will allow you to communicate with the stranger on the doorstep without exposing yourself to the possibility of a forced entry. Never allow a stranger into your home, even if it seems an emergency. If you are concerned about the emergency, tell the stranger you are calling 911 for help.

FUTURE NEWSLETTER'S AND CORRESPONDENCE VIA E-MAIL

To those who haven't, as yet, sent your request in, please send an E-Mail to barbara@sdmsonline.com. Include your full name, address, contact phone number and especially your E-Mail address. Please remember if you choose this, you will NO LONGER receive any correspondence from us via U.S. Mail. This is something we have been wanting to do for some time to save money on printing, addressing and postage. Also send any future changes in your E-mail address to us.

NOTE: If you no longer wish to receive the newsletter, please notify the office...

ANOTHER FIRST FOR CALIFORNIA

Once again, our state is the vanguard. Senate Bill 658 is the first bill in the country to require funeral homes to post their price lists online (if the funeral home maintains a website). Given that online price comparison is the norm these days, it's time the funeral business stopped living in the Cretaceous and joined the rest of the online world. Having prices on funeral homes websites will be an enormous help to consumers and to groups like ours when we need to conduct our price surveys.

Ed Howard, Senior Counsel for the Center for Public Interest Law at the University of San Diego convinced a lawmaker to introduce this bill. Ed was shocked to discover he couldn't find funeral home prices online when he had a recent death in the family, and he couldn't believe the number of phone calls he had to make at a stressful time to figure out how much it might cost (not to mention the mysteriously morphing prices every time he called back).

Please email **and call** the members of the Senate Committee on Business, Professions and Economic Development and urge them to support SB 658. Ask your own state representative, too! To make it easier for you here are the email addresses for the committee members: You can cut and paste:

senator.price@senate.ca.gov, senator.emmerson@sen.ca.gov, senator.corbett@sen.ca.gov, senator.correa@sen.ca.gov, senator.hernandez@sen.ca.gov, senator.McLeod@sen.ca.gov, senator.vargas@sen.ca.gov, senator.walters@sen.ca.gov, senator.wyland@sen.ca.gov

As consumers, you have a tremendous amount of power to influence the issue locally. If your intended provider has a great website, tell them so. If he or she doesn't, ask them why? I don't believe funeral directors receive much feedback from local consumers, aside from the usual comments about the funeral. Your constructive criticism of their website, or lack thereof, could be very helpful. As a potential customer it will carry a lot of weight.

CURRENT UPDATED PARTICIPATING MORTUARY AND CEMETERY LIST AND NEW PRICING

You will find an insert that is the updated list of participating mortuaries and their 2011 pricing on one side and the updated Cemetery pricing on the other side. We have dropped two mortuaries, Oceanside Mortuary and Accu-Care. We are currently looking for at least one mortuary in North County to replace these two. You can always view the latest list of Participating Mortuaries on our website: www.sdmsonline.com by clicking on Participating Mortuaries on the left hand side of the home page. The website is always the first item updated when any changes are made. It is really important that you members who have computers check our website occasionally.

REMINDER: For those of you signed up with Humphrey's, they are still doing a wonderful job with our longtime members.

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HOMELESS MAN'S FUNERAL

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 am not familiar with the backwoods, I got lost, and being a typical man, I didn't stop to ask directions. 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 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 worker's say, "I have seen nothin' like this before and I've been puttin' in septic tanks for 20 years." Apparently I am still lost……..

DONATIONS ALWAYS NEEDED AND GREATLY APPRECIATED!