

Summer  
2023

### **Board of Trustees**

#### 2025 Term

Jo Burroughs  
Cynthia Luke  
Inga Solberg

#### 2024 Term

Linda Plaut  
Todd Solberg  
Phil Olson

#### 2023 Term

Ben Crawford  
Darrell Clowes  
Dianne Rencsok

#### Officers

President:

Dianne Rencsok

Vice president:

Phil Olson

Secretary:

Linda Plaut

Treasurer:

Inga Solberg

**P.O. Box 10082**

**Blacksburg, VA 24062**

PHONE:

540-953-5589

E-MAIL:

[fcavbr@gmail.com](mailto:fcavbr@gmail.com)

[www.fcavbr.org](http://www.fcavbr.org)

## **Funeral Consumers Alliance of the Virginia Blue Ridge**



### **FTC -Update**

The Spring 2023 newsletter mentioned our hope that Federal Trade Commission updates would require Funeral Homes with internet access to post the General Price List on line for consumer's benefits. Well, the government does not work fast, but the FTC is hosting a workshop via a webcast on **September 7** concerning proposed amendments to the Funeral Rule. The link to the webcast will be available, when it is posted, at <https://www.ftc.gov/news-events/events/2023/09/funeral-rule-workshop>. More information will be available in the Upcoming Events section on the Home page of our website, fcavbr.org.

### **Annual Meeting**

all are invited, bring your friends  
Tuesday, September 12, 2023 7:15 PM  
Christiansburg Library, 125 Sheltnan Street

Of what does the service of a Death Doula consist?  
Come to the Annual Meeting where there will be a presentation on this subject by Paula Markham.

Election of Board of Trustees will also take place at the annual meeting. Three persons have been nominated to fill the three terms ending in 2023. Nominations will also be taken from the floor. (Be sure you have agreement from your nominee).

Current nominees are

Ben Crawford - previous CEO for non-profit organization and Virginia Tech faculty, retired.

Dianne Rencsok - current President, previous involvement in presentation of end-of-life subject workshops.

Franklyn Moreno - Past and Initial Board member. Involved with Memorial Societies and Funeral Consumers Alliance since late 1970's.

### **Death Café**

Wednesday, August 23, 4 PM at "Tasty Pasta and Grill"  
1301 South Main Street, Blacksburg next to Our Daily Bread

Wednesday, October 18, 6PM to 8PM, Sponsored by Blue Ridge Green Burial, Location to be posted closer to the date.  
See website fcavbr.org or info@blueridgegreenburial

Palliative Care Project event

**October 4, 2023**

**“Advanced care Planning”**

Wednesday, October 4, 2023 4PM at Christiansburg Library

Although the Funeral Consumers organization’s initial concerns focused on Funeral Homes and the functions encountered when facing or planning a funeral, we have found that this intersects with other organizations. One such, recently formed, is (PCPNRV) the **PALLIATIVE CARE PARTNERSHIP OF THE NEW RIVER VALLEY** . This group is sponsoring the Advanced Care Planning event above. They are a community collaboration group to Promote, Educate, and Empower end of life care in the New River Valley. They seek new members interested in Palliative Care or End of Life Care to join the group. A monthly meeting via Internet takes place on the 3rd Friday of each month at 8AM. If interested, please contact Pollyanne South, MSW at [pcsouth@carilionclinic.org](mailto:pcsouth@carilionclinic.org) or Nicole Bailey Bedsaul, LCSW at [nabailey@carilionclinic.org](mailto:nabailey@carilionclinic.org)

**GREEN BURIAL is becoming more popular here and around the world.**

An article in the Bay Journal in 2023, praised the opening of the first certified natural cemetery in Maryland. Virginia’s first natural cemetery, Duck Run in Penn Laird, opened in 2012. The year, 2023, saw the opening of Virginia’s 6th natural burial cemetery. Ramsey Creek in South Carolina, in 1996, was the first green cemetery in the US.

According to the National Funeral Directors Association, over 60% of funeral consumers would be interested in exploring “green” funeral options, mostly for environmental reasons or for cost savings. Green burial involves the burial of unembalmed bodies (or cremated remains) in simple, biodegradable caskets, shrouds, or urns, and most often in a “green burial ground” or “natural burial ground.” Because no toxic embalming fluids are used, and because expensive hardwood or metal caskets are not used, consumers who choose green burial save money and minimize the environmental impact of disposition.

Sites can be certified by the Green Burial Council according to their defined standards ( [www.greenburialcouncil.org](http://www.greenburialcouncil.org) ). Green burial practices encourage the natural decomposition of the body. The town of Blacksburg is considering designating a section of Westview Cemetery for green burials. This will be discussed at the **Aug 8** Town Council meeting (**6:30pm** in the Roger E

Hedgepeth Chambers of the **Blacksburg Municipal Building**,  
300 S Main Street). Public comments are invited.

Funeral consumers are increasingly asking cemeteries about green options, and many cemeteries have begun to respond to consumer demand. While green burial is growing in popularity, it has been standard practice for Jewish and Muslim burials. Traditional Jewish burial involves the quick burial of an unembalmed body in a simple pine coffin that contains no nails. Traditional Muslim burial involves the quick burial of an unembalmed body wrapped in a burial shroud.

**Virginia’s six green burial grounds**

Duck Run Natural Cemetery (Penn Laird) ( [www.duckruncemetery.com](http://www.duckruncemetery.com) )

Forest Rest Natural Cemetery (Boones Mill) “hybrid”  
( [www.forestrestnaturalcemetery.com](http://www.forestrestnaturalcemetery.com) )

Cool Spring Natural Cemetery(Berryville)( [www.virginiatrappists.org/cemetery](http://www.virginiatrappists.org/cemetery) )

The Meadow Natural Burial Ground(Lexington)  
( [www.themeadowlexingtonva.com](http://www.themeadowlexingtonva.com) )

EcoEternity Forest (Middleburg): *burial of cremated remains only*  
( [www.agreenerfuneral.org](http://www.agreenerfuneral.org) )

Panorama Natural Burial (Earlsville) Panorama Farms  
( [www.panoramaburial.com](http://www.panoramaburial.com) )

In addition, Blue Ridge Green Burial (Floyd), a nonprofit organization, is seeking land on which to establish a green burial site in Floyd County.  
( <https://www.blueridgegreenburial.org/> )

---

COMPASSION AND CHOICES

This organization is also involved with the Virginia Legislature. Their lobbying efforts led to the introduction of a bill to authorize medical aid in dying. This has already been authorized in 10 other states and the District of Columbia. SB 930 was introduced for the 2023 legislative session. On January 20, the Subcommittee on Health Professions met, discussed the bill but voted to “pass”. An effort will be made to reintroduce this in future sessions. If you are interested in learning more, see website:

[compassionandchoices.org/Virginia](http://compassionandchoices.org/Virginia).



## Tidbits from the 2023 Virginia Legislative Session

The Funeral Consumers Alliance of the Virginia Blue Ridge monitors state legislation to identify any action that may affect end-of-life care. Often this review of proposed laws, or edits to existing laws, sheds light on information and issues that we may not have considered or even known to consider.

For instance, **HB 1817** relates to covering costs for an unclaimed body. This bill permits seizure of a decedent's nonprobative assets to cover the costs of disposition. Up to now, seizure was limited to estate assets for this purpose. **This bill only added another 9 words to Section 32.1-309.2** of the Virginia Code. In the law, Virginia has tried to address various scenarios around the question "What happens when someone dies but has no family?" For example, the law states that a "good faith effort" must be made to identify family. If no family is found or if a "claimant is financially unable to pay reasonable expenses of disposition, the expenses shall be borne by the county or city where the claimant resides". If the decedent was a prisoner, the Department of Corrections is responsible for disposition when no family member claims the body.

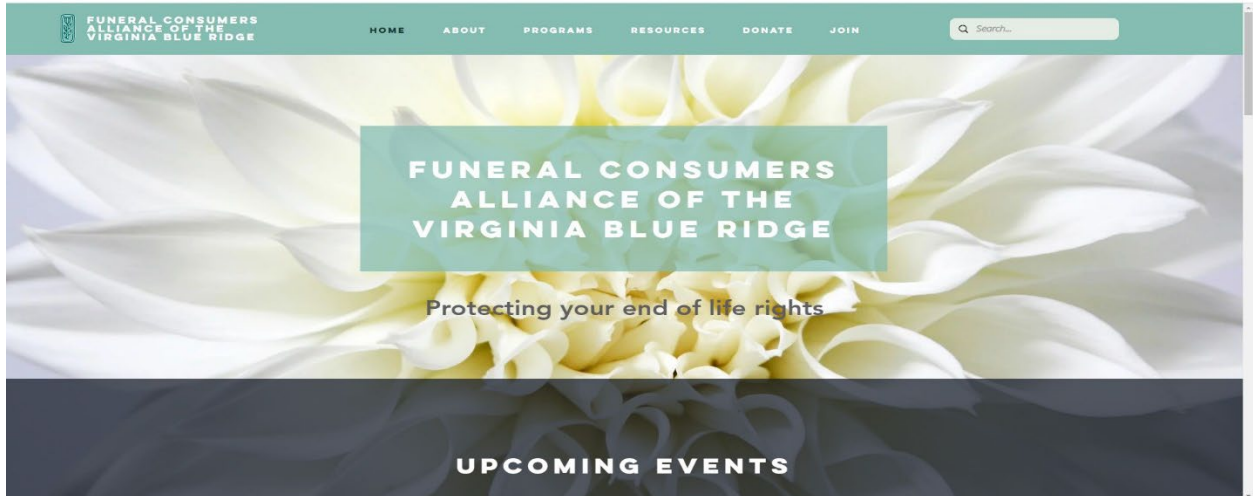
The status of the bills mentioned in the Spring newsletter is now known. **HB 1817** and **HB 2244** have both been signed into law by Governor Youngkin. However, **SB 1487**, regarding alkaline hydrolysis (AH), was "left" (not voted upon before the General Assembly adjourned). Alkaline hydrolysis, also called water cremation, has been discussed in previous FCAVBR newsletters.

Any bill that is "left", must be reintroduced for the next year's legislative session to be considered again. In 2023, the House submitted 2500 bills and the Senate 1547. The Virginia Legislature meets for an incredibly short time. More of our members are needed to help sift and review what is happening with end-of-life issues, to keep others informed so that they may take action to make our voices heard. This is an opportunity to influence the happenings in our state.

If you might like to help with this interesting activity, please email us at [fcavbr@gmail.com](mailto:fcavbr@gmail.com).

Final Exit Network - A presentation by Final Exit Network representative, Kevin Bradley, was given on May 20, 2023 in Blacksburg. This was recorded and may be viewed on the fcavbr.org website under "Programs and Events" tab.

Thanks to Newsletter Contributors  
Cynthia Luke, Kim Marye, Phil Olson,  
Linda Plaut, Helen Renqvist, Dianne Rencsok



### ***Home page of fcavbr.org***

*You are invited to visit our website which has been newly reconstructed. A new Event section provides current information. Resources offers surveys, book lists, the information pamphlets we have available and direct links to important forms such as a DNR – Do not resuscitate order.*

The Virginia Department of Health EMS provides these addresses for purchase of a DNR bracelet or necklace. Only these approved items will be recognized by Virginia's Emergency teams as valid authorization.

Sticky J Medical ID  
10801 Endeavor Way #B  
Seminole, FL 33777  
(866) 497-6262 {tollfree} PHONE  
FAX (727) 490-5446

Appomattox Drug Store, Inc  
P O Box 189  
Appomattox, VA 24522  
(800) 330-7225 / (434)352-7161  
FAX (434) 352-2180

#### EMAIL ADDRESSES

[customerservice@stickyj.com](mailto:customerservice@stickyj.com)

[jmgifts@jetbroadband.com](mailto:jmgifts@jetbroadband.com)

Both resources offer options to order online or to download a form to mail with the required Virginia DNR documents. Be sure to read the instructions carefully for both the Virginia documents and the website requirements.

Web address to order on line

[www.stickyj.com/category/dnr-jewelry-bracelets-virginia](http://www.stickyj.com/category/dnr-jewelry-bracelets-virginia)

[www.diabeticdrugstore.com](http://www.diabeticdrugstore.com)

**Funeral Consumers Alliance  
of the Virginia Blue Ridge**  
P O Box 10082  
Blacksburg VA 24062-0082  
**Change Service Requested**

Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Blacksburg, VA  
Permit # 235

## Annual Meeting

all are invited, bring your friends

The Funeral Consumers Alliance of the  
Virginia Blue Ridge

will hold its annual meeting on  
Tuesday, September 12, 2023 at 7:15pm.  
Christiansburg Library Community Room  
125 Shelton Street, Christiansburg, VA.

You may have heard of Birth Doula, but did you know  
there are also people who serve as Death Doula?  
Join us on September 12 to learn more.