

Funeral Consumers Alliance of the Virginia Blue Ridge

Funeral home survey posted

Our biennial funeral home survey is now posted on the FCAVBR website at <https://www.fcavbr.org/surveys>. It is arranged by city/town and then alphabetically. It is in a downloadable PDF format. If you request one, a hard copy will be mailed to you. We applaud the funeral homes that have their current price lists online and we have included direct links to them on the survey. Ask if they are willing to work with families who choose to do a home burial. Be sure to ask if the medical examiner's fee is included for direct cremation. People want to know the total cost including all fees. Some funeral homes decreased their prices. It may be the result of seeing their competitors' prices in our survey.

A Family Undertaking matinee May 2 at Blacksburg's Lyric Theater

Come to the Lyric Theater, 135 College Avenue in Blacksburg, from 1:00-3:00 PM for a screening of the PBS documentary followed by a panel discussion on home funerals. Sara Williams, former board member of the National Home Funeral Alliance, and Katherine Chantal, member of the Floyd green death community, will be our guests and participate on the panel.

This program is free and open to the public. Bring your friends for an interesting, informative afternoon.



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Special points of interest

- FCAVBR gifts to a children's museum
- FCAVBR monitors the state legislature in the consumers' interests



Forest Rest: natural, hybrid cemetery

Forest Rest Cemetery in Boones Mill has been certified as the only natural burial cemetery in Virginia. Owner Don Wilson, developed the “green” cemetery in Franklin County just south of Roanoke in 2012. He saw there was a need for burial with no vault, embalming, or grass maintenance that a conventional cemetery requires. The site is the only green burial option between Lexington, Virginia and Raleigh, North Carolina.

Because Forest Rest is beside Mountain View, a conventional cemetery also owned by Wilson, it was recently accredited as a hybrid cemetery and the only one in Virginia. Wilson says it's a less expensive option than cremation and traditional burials because it involves no burial vault or embalming. The body is placed in a biodegradable casket such as wood or wicker, or simply wrapped in a shroud. As Wilson states, "There's a lot of fossil fuels that go into the cremation process and here that is all eliminated. The body goes right into the Earth and back to the Earth just like it was done 150 years ago. It appeals to people who want to keep it simple."

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Generous support continues

Thank you for responding to our once-a-year request. This organization depends on the generosity of our members. Perhaps we have not made it clear that we levy no yearly dues. You really are a member for life. We leave it to you to remember us when you receive our letter. We have no paid personnel, only dedicated volunteers. Thank you to everyone who donated to our cause. It is through you that we can continue our work.

Although some donors wish to remain anonymous, these folks agreed to be thanked publicly:

Jeanie Anderson in memory of Beth & Sidney
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Are you willing to help us contact our legislatures and let them know whether to support or oppose a bill?

Every year we monitor the General Assembly. It helps to have people to add to our voices of support or opposition to proposed legislation which affects us as funeral consumers.

Next January we would notify you of what bills need our attention, whom to contact, and a sample script to use.

Please send us your email address if you are willing to be part of our lobbying email group. It does make an impact on legislators when they hear from their constituents.

This year we monitored five bills and actively supported HB641, even helping to improve the wording before it was submitted to the House of Delegates. This finally brings Virginia into compliance with the federal rule which says that funeral homes must accept a casket from a third party.



We presented three children's books to Wonder Universe, the children's museum located in the New River Valley Mall. The three books are about death and help children and their families realize that all things die. The books are highly acclaimed picture books.

The Tenth Good Thing About Barney by Judith Viorst. A boy's cat dies and he knows 9 good things about Barney. Then he realizes, "The tenth good thing is that Barney is in the ground and he's helping grow flowers and that's a pretty nice job for a cat."

Lifetimes by Bryan Mellonie and Robert Ingpen. Beautiful illustrations depict lifetimes and how everything living dies: plants, people, birds, fish, everything everywhere.

Duck, Death and the Tulip by Wolf Erlbruch. An intriguing story about a duck who discovers that death is a friend.

Board of Directors opportunity

Would you or someone you know like to join our Board, which meets monthly to do the day-to-day work of FCAVBR? Our meetings last one hour and this is an opportunity to serve as well as learn. Our meetings are always open to members and the public.

We do not make decisions for others or have an agenda other than keeping consumers informed and providing our information at no cost. If you have a name to suggest to our nominating committee, please call 540-953-5589 or send an email to fcavbr@gmail.com.

Alerts from members

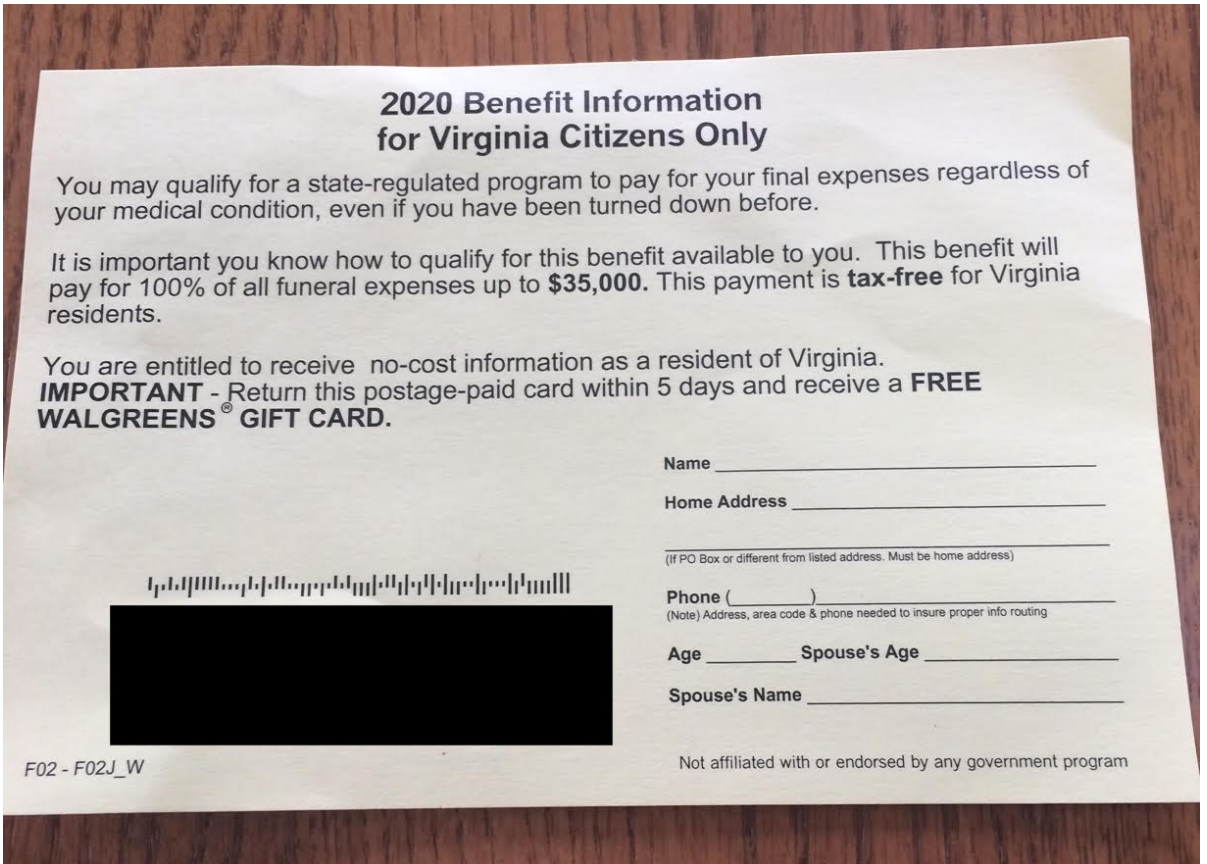
Laura K. Garcia contacted us by email:

I am writing to let you know that I got a postcard in the mail about signing up for funeral expenses. It appears pretty official. When I researched it online, however, it is, in fact, a scam.

I was thinking this would be a good topic to cover in the newsletter for the Funeral Consumers Alliance since it would be timely.

Franklyn Moreno got a similar offer to purchase funeral insurance saying, "You may qualify for Funeral Advantage..." These official sounding documents are just marketing ploys and unfortunately they often take advantage of people, especially seniors, who believe it is a way to "qualify" for a good deal.

If you do decide to buy funeral or burial insurance, make sure that the beneficiary is not the business or funeral home, but a trusted family member or friend who will use the money as you intend.



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Affiliated with Funeral
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Kroger Community Awards & Amazon Smile

Thanks to our members who have connected their Kroger Loyalty Cards to us. If you have a Kroger Plus card, consider signing up for Kroger Community Awards to give a percentage of your bill as a donation to FCAVBR.

Go online to <https://www.kroger.com>. If you already have a Kroger account, simply login. If not, you will be asked to create one. When asked to select the organization to receive your rewards, enter this number:

TK761.

Amazon also supports us. At your browser, type smile.amazon.com. If you have an Amazon account, sign in and you will see the choice to select a charity. If you type in Funeral Consumers Alliance, several affiliates come up and you can scroll down to select Funeral Consumers Alliance of the Virginia Blue Ridge.