



# SPRING 2019 NEWSLETTER

## How To Find The Right Words For Someone in Hospice

After spending 15 years researching the best ways to support people whose lives end in hospice, professor Elizabeth Bergman has advice for friends, neighbors, family members and co-workers who want to send them a final, poignant message: Mail cards, but choose them carefully.

“Please don’t send a ‘get well’ card,” pleads Bergman, chair of Ithaca College’s Gerontology Institute. By its very definition, hospice is for patients who will not get well.

While more Americans are likely to have a relationship with someone who chooses hospice, Bergman expresses frustration that commercial greeting card companies have not created thoughtful and sensitive cards specifically for these patients.

Friends worry that they will say the wrong thing or that what they say will not be received in the way it was intended, so they don’t send a card or write a note at all. It’s too bad. There’s no second chances for these connections. We assume people know what they mean to us, but they don’t.

When Kevin Ellsworth was at the end of his life, he received a flurry of those blank cards with personal messages. His wife displayed them near his bed where he could gaze at them.

“He got such heartfelt messages. He was blown away that people took the time to reach out,” recalls his widow, Patty. “It was the last chance to send a fond thought, to say, ‘I’m thinking of you, may you find comfort and peace.’”

Patty says she and Kevin were particularly touched by messages that came from people she called “on the fringes of our life.”

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### Save the Date!

**CMS Annual Meeting**  
**Sunday, October 27, 2019**  
**2 - 4 p.m.**

Where: Unitarian Universalist Congregation  
of Ohio  
21600 Shaker Blvd., Shaker Heights

**Keynote Speaker: Josh Slocum, Executive  
Director, Funeral Consumers Alliance**

*~Refreshments will be served ~*

See page 2 for more information

## Price survey update

Last fall, our Board and some volunteers collected 28 General Price Lists (GPL) as part of our ongoing effort to keep our website (<http://clevememorialsociety.org/price-comparison-tool/>) reasonably current with prices for services at area funeral homes. We now have posted prices from 71 of the larger funeral homes (more if you count multiple locations for the same director).

Ranges of prices reported:

Direct Cremation: \$545 to \$3,950

Immediate Burial: \$595 to \$4,500

Full Service Funeral: \$2,675 to \$7,830

As a CMS member, you are locked into some of the lowest rates available for a simple burial or cremation. Tell your friends how much they could save by becoming a CMS member too. But even if they are not interested in simple and inexpensive services, let them know about our price comparison tool that might help them save several thousand dollars by selecting a different funeral director.

Don Stimpert, Board member

### Speaker, Josh Slocum

*Josh Slocum is Executive Director of the National Funeral Consumer's Alliance and a graduate of Sarah Lawrence College. He worked as a newspaper reporter in Virginia before joining FCA in 2002. He earned several statewide awards for business and financial writing and for coverage of law and justice issues. He is now the recognized expert on funeral issues in the national media and has testified before Congress. His articles have appeared in The New York Times, CNN, AARP Magazine, and CBS News.*

### Funeral Consumers Alliance Working For You Coast to Coast

Several local memorial societies got together way back in 1963 to form a national organization to speak for them. In the 56 years since, Funeral Consumers Alliance - the national organization you belong to - has grown into the most respected nonprofit watchdog group guarding the grieving from funeral fraud. With the strength of 95 local organizations, and more than 300,000 members like you, FCA has grown far beyond just bargaining for inexpensive cremations.

Featured regularly in national media such as the New York Times and NPR, FCA national gives sound advice on funeral planning to counter the \$15-billion-a-year funeral industry sales machine

FCA is your voice in Washington - the national organization helped draft a bill that would finally set national standards for cemetery consumers, bringing every American the same protections they're entitled to when they use a funeral home.

FCA is watching out for you - as the only national organization tracking the burial business, we monitor industry trends and state legislation that affects your rights (and your wallet) at the end of life.

Join us to hear all about it, and to learn how you can help keep the funeral consumer movement going forward (and have fun doing it).

## **CYBER FUNERALS....WH-WHAT?!**

Excerpted from The Weird Rise of Cyber Funerals, by Ruby Lott-Lavigna  
Wired Magazine, 2/17/19

When you die, your body is disposed of in some way or another. But your online digital corpse? That's going to be around for a while, floating in online purgatory, never to receive salvation. Unless, of course, you set it free.

Yes, there are such professionals as "cyber undertakers," whose sole job is the act of erasing and tidying up your digital public data after you die.

The tricky task is to contact the social media companies, search engines or even media companies who publish personal information, and request for it to be deleted when their client dies. If that doesn't work, then companies – be they in South Korea, the USA or UK – can bury search engine results by flooding Google with new, conflicting data about the deceased.

The process comes with a price – of course. While digital undertakers don't provide any expensive casket or magnolia arrangement, you're still going to have to spend a fair bit to get rid of your personal info. Current rates range from DigitalOx's one-time search engine removal at about \$400 to a company named Santa Cruise that charges about \$2000/month – with about 100 posts removed in those four weeks.

But here's the thing: when more and more of our lives are lived online – from tweets to dating profile and even medical information – how we dispose of that personal data matters, arguably more than what happens to our physical body. That corpse will decompose over time, as will those magnolias, but our digital legacies could last forever.

### *New News or Old News??*

First Unitarian Church has changed its name!

In combining forces with the Unitarian Universalist Society on Lancashire Blvd. in Cleveland Heights, the two entities have agreed upon the new name of

*Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Cleveland*

### *....Speaking of Social Media.....*

Remember, we have a new and improved means to help you stay informed! Visit our Facebook page, click "LIKE", and offer your own comments and insights or peruse ours! Simply put *Cleveland Memorial Society* into the Facebook search box and watch the magic unfold!

Don't forget our own independent website:  
[clevememorialsociety.org](http://clevememorialsociety.org)



## Pledge to Talk About Death

Paul Hébert, MD & George Heckman, MD  
excerpted from Physician magazine, March 13, 2019

As physicians, we see death every day. We see death made worse and more painful by poor advance care planning. Yet, despite the certainty of death in all our futures, it is astonishing how often families and loved ones have neither discussed nor planned for the inevitable. Discussing death is hard. But not having these crucial conversations is far worse.



Over 60% of Americans who die each year do so in hospitals. We no longer die quickly at home from acute illnesses like infections, but from chronic illnesses whose protracted course often ends in hospitals. Death has been removed from daily life and is managed for us in sanitized institutional environments. Perhaps because death is less familiar, it is easier to fear. It is certainly much easier to ignore.

Because we do not have crucial discussions, as many as 30 percent of frail nursing home residents are admitted to an intensive care unit and 50 percent to hospitals in their last month of life. Because we have not normalized difficult conversations around death, we will never know whether this is what they would have wished.

A key reason is fear.

Fear of death, fear of the unknown, fear of dying in pain and alone. Fear of talking to doctors and nurses who are also afraid to discuss death. They have limited training with difficult conversations. They fear the sense of defeat from the sense that they are giving up on patients. Fear is why these discussions don't happen.

So, this year, pledge to overcome your fear of death and have an end-of-life discussion with your frail loved ones and with your doctors and nurses.

Once your wishes are clear, it is critical that they be honored. Write them down. Share them with your loved ones and powers of attorney, who need to know because they might have to speak on your behalf one day if you lose that ability. Share them with your doctors and nurses. Know that you are allowed to change your wishes, especially as your health changes.

Our health care system must pledge to overcome its inertia and engage decision-makers and community stakeholders to ensure that all people have equitable access to quality services that support their wishes as they approach the end-of-life.

Failure to do so is a pledge to continue with 3 a.m. "do everything" resuscitation attempts that prevent natural death and that many frail patients would never have wished for had that crucial discussion taken place.

## Exploring the Heart of Dying Through Courageous Conversation Discussion Group

The Heart-of-Dying offers us a forum to discuss any and all questions surrounding conscious dying, living life reviews, to bucket list or not bucket list, and anything related to end-of-life thoughts.

Everyone is encouraged to bring their thoughts, queries and anecdotes to the discussion.

Held on the 2nd Tuesday of every month at the  
Coventry Library from 7 - 8:30 p.m.  
1925 Coventry Road, Cleveland Heights 44118



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“When a dying person is aware and conscious, they are often inclined to go over their lives,” Bergman says. “Receiving kind words can support that process and help them realize the ripple they’ve made in the world. It can help them be at peace.”

She believes that some people shy away from acknowledging hospice patients because of their fear or denial of their own death.

Through four decades of working with the terminally ill, Shary Farr can attest to the impact of such cards, notes and letters. She is an advance planning advocate who teaches classes about end-of-life preparation and whose company provides clients with personal and practical planning for aging, illness and end-of-life arrangements.

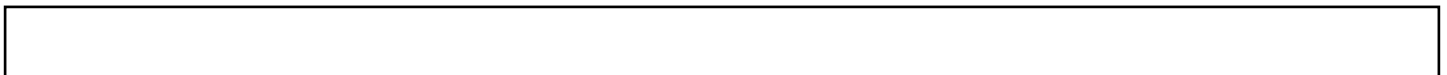
“This is the time to acknowledge the beauty or gentleness or humor or significance that they brought to us. It’s a real gift to them,” Farr says. “Every time we practice [an authentic message to a dying acquaintance], we can become a little more comfortable with our own fears and denial of our own death. And if we diminish fear, we have more room for love,” Farr says.

Farr recommends crafting a personal, handwritten message that can be no more than a few lines at the bottom of a “Thank you” or “Thinking of you” greeting card or on a sheet of stationery. She offers a few sentence starters for friends who are grasping for the right words:

- Without you I never would have known...
- You showed me the importance of...
- You taught me to appreciate...
- Hope today is one of the good days
- There is a circle of caring all around
- Be gentle with yourself
- It’s also perfectly fine to admit to this: “There’s so much I want to say, but I don’t know how.”

“Remind the person what they’ve meant to you, what you have learned from them, the role they’ve played in your life, even if it’s small,” says Farr.

Excerpted from *How to Find the Right Words for Someone in Hospice*, by Kevyn Burger.  
[NextAvenue.org](http://NextAvenue.org), March 6, 2019



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Phone: 216-751-5515  
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**DATED MATERIAL - DO NOT DELAY**

**These funeral directors are our contracted participating firms**

**Best Funeral Home**  
15809 Madison Road  
Middlefield, OH 44062  
(440) 632-0818

**Busch-Boswell-Jones-Deck  
Mortuary**  
4334 Pearl Road  
Cleveland, OH 44109  
216-459-2660

**Corrigan Funeral Services**  
27099 Miles Road  
Orange Village, OH 44022  
440-349-1900

**Cummings & Davis Funeral  
Home**  
13201 Euclid Avenue  
East Cleveland, OH 44112  
216-541-1111

**Dicken Funeral Home**  
323 Middle Avenue  
Elyria, OH 44035  
440-322-3224

**Fioritto Funeral Home**  
5236 Mayfield Road  
Lyndhurst, OH 44124  
440-442-5900

**Maher-Melbourne Funeral  
Home**  
4274 Mayfield Road South  
Euclid, OH 44121  
216-382-4500

**Malloy Memorial Service**  
1575 W. 117th Street  
Cleveland, OH 44107  
216-221-3380

**Shapiro Funeral Services**  
27099 Miles Road  
Orange Village, OH  
44022-2130  
440-498-1993

**Thompson, Smith,  
Nesbitt Funeral Home**  
345 Main Street  
Conneaut, OH 44030  
440-599-8106

**Vitantonio & Son Funeral  
Home**  
6330 Center Street  
Mentor, OH 44060  
440-255-1655