

FCA REPORT

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Good news for consumers in new funeral price survey

By Jim Fitzpatrick
FCA-GKC Treasurer

Financially speaking, this is a pretty good time to die. The average cost of a standard funeral in the Kansas City area has barely budged since 2009.

The Funeral Consumers Alliance of Greater Kansas City recently completed its periodic price survey of area funeral homes and found that the average price of a standard funeral in the KC area rose by 1.4 percent over the last three years -- from slightly less than \$6,300 to \$6,365. During the same three-year period, the consumer price index increased 7.85 percent in Midwestern urban areas. The survey prices include the lowest-priced caskets and grave liners listed by area funeral homes but do not include cemetery costs.

So, why have funeral-home prices generally lagged the last few years? The Great Recession and the lame economic recovery had a lot to do with it. "Some people like to say about our business, 'You never run out of work,' but we're seeing more and more families that have fallen on hard times," said John Frownfelter, Director of Missouri Operations for D.W. Newcomer's Sons. In addition, competition is fiercer than ever. More funeral homes have opened than have closed since 2009.

Newcomer's, with eight locations, and McGilley, with 10, are the two largest funeral home operations in the area. Both are owned by national, publicly-traded companies. Newcomer's is owned by Stewart Enterprises, Inc., with headquarters just outside New

2012 Average	2009 Average	'09-'12 Difference	'09-'12 % Change
6,365	6,279	86	1.4%
Consumer Price Index Change 2009-2012 = + 7.85%			

Orleans, while McGilley is owned by Houston-based Service Corp. International (SCI).

In the fold of companies answerable to their stockholders, Newcomer's and McGilley continue posting generally higher prices than most other funeral home operators in the area. At seven of the eight Newcomer's chapels, for example, the average price of a standard funeral rose 12.5 percent between 2009 and 2012. (More about its eighth location in a minute.)

Ten of the 11 area funeral homes owned by SCI are operated by McGilley. The eleventh SCI property, Chapel Hill-Butler Funeral Home, is independent of McGilley. Overall, the average increase for a standard funeral at the 11 SCI locations was 5.3 percent.

Another factor keeping downward pressure on funeral prices is the ever-increasing competition for direct cremations. Direct cremation involves taking the body to a funeral home; reducing the body to a sand-like consistency at a crematory; returning the cremains to the family; and filing the death certificate. It is the most reasonable way to go, so to speak.

Continued... on Page 7

Bern-Klug returns to keynote FCA annual meeting

By Sally King,
MSW, LCSW, LSCSW
FCA-GKC Vice President



Mercedes Bern-Klug



Sally King

Mercedes Bern-Klug is something of a legend in social work circles in Kansas City. Having worked with seniors over the past several years, I had heard of her great work championing rather "un-sexy" causes related to nursing home care and end-of-life issues. Mercedes, a KU graduate with a PhD in Social Work, spoke in Iowa at a regional aging/mental health gathering a few years ago, and I was wowed by her humble, good-humored nature, despite her high standing in academic circles.

Do a quick Google search and you'll see that she's published several best-practices books and journal articles on the emotional needs of those in long-term care. Last summer when researching an end-of-life project and feeling overwhelmed, I called Mercedes and she gave me time and guidance, yet another example of her generous spirit.

Certainly the Kansas City community is in for a treat when she keynotes our Sept. 14 annual meeting at the Kauffman Foundation Conference Center, speaking on the topic: "We Don't Die Like We Used To: A Dozen New Challenges Facing Families Today." Mercedes

Continued... on Page 2

Funeral industry trends and pressures

By Steve Nicely
FCA-GKC President

We live in an exciting period of seismic change --- and resistance to change --- on many fronts. The funeral industry is no exception.

Natural burial

We see a couple more cracks in the stone wall of resistance to natural burial, also known as green burial. Mount Muncie Cemetery in Lansing has joined Lawrence's Oak Hill Cemetery in offering natural burial sections. And the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth now offer this option to members of their order at their private cemetery at the Motherhouse. Now if we could just get a few cemeteries closer to the heart of the city...

Our board member Nancy Petersen returned from the FCA national convention believing that natural burial will eventually overtake cremation in popularity. Why? It's much better for the environment. One turns the body into rich, nourishing soil; the other pipes it up a chimney into the atmosphere as carbon dioxide, heat, hydrocarbons and vaporized mercury from tooth fillings. I wouldn't want to live near one. When people realize that, they'll demand natural burial, she thinks. Meanwhile, I've heard of a couple of cases where a cemetery provided natural burial for special cases against its own policy. A couple more cracks in the wall.

I got a little insight recently into the resistance of Catholic Cemeteries of Northeast Kansas to natural burial. Driving through Mount Calvary Cemetery at 38th and State Ave. in Kansas City, KS, I noticed how full it was and how well-groomed it was. I learned later, it contains 25,000 graves, most with large stones, and has fewer than 200 graves left to sell. Can you imagine mowing and trimming around all those stones? The income from sales is exhausted, but the expense of Mount Calvary's maintenance goes on and on and on.

No metal casket, no embalming and no vault cut into profits and increase ground maintenance costs. The growth of cremation also cuts sharply into cemetery profits. Still, there is no excuse why Catholic cemeteries on both sides of the State Line, representing a church that

considers the earth as sacred, a manifestation of the divine, do not open space in one or two of their cemeteries to offer the option of natural burial. The Wichita diocese has done it. These two should also. As you may have guessed, I am a disgruntled Catholic on this issue.



Steve Nicely

Cremation

The trend in favor of cremation continues here and nationally. Jim Fitzpatrick's funeral price survey article on the cover makes a couple interesting points. The cremation rate in our area has doubled in 10 years to 40 percent. It's a demand that cannot be denied resulting in more ovens operating around town for longer hours. That trend is costing the funeral industry a lot of lost business. You can get a direct cremation for \$675 versus the average funeral of over \$6,000 not counting cemetery costs. The industry resisted cremation as long as possible. It is resisting natural burial the same way.

Funeral directors grumble

As in the past, about half of the area's funeral homes did not respond to our written request to send their General Price Lists (GPL) for our survey. Thus, we had to visit many of those funeral homes in person to obtain their prices. They cannot deny us without breaking the law.

We are apt to hear complaints during such encounters with funeral directors. FCA is preoccupied with prices. They also say they provide a valuable service of a higher quality than others, which justifies the numbers in their GPLs. And if a family arrives under hardship conditions, "we will work with them," an owner told me. "We will find a way."

Sometimes (and I know it's true), funeral directors do not get paid. We have to sympathize with situations like that. It's also true that FCA-GKC is preoccupied with prices. You cannot look at all those numbers on pages 4 and 5 and think otherwise. But we don't try to tell people how much to spend. We think they should spend as much as they want. We just want them to be informed and to know their options. That's all.

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Bern-Klug keynotes annual meeting

continued from Page 1

said she will focus "on ways in which dying has changed during the 20th century and what that means for us in the 21st century."

Mercedes is an Associate Professor of Social Work and Aging at the University of Iowa. Her specialty is long-term care, particularly nursing home care, and the emotional issues that residents and families often face. But what makes Mercedes a legend in our eyes is her dedication in volunteering for our Kansas City FCA from 1994 to 2004, and her behind-the-scenes work making our price surveys happen during those years. Thankfully, Mercedes' advocacy didn't end once she moved to Iowa. She continues to work with students to conduct funeral price list surveys in Iowa as well.

The annual meeting also will feature the release of our 2012 Funeral Price Survey, as well as the heartwarming personal account of Nancy Jobe (see article on page 3), who arranged a grassroots, green burial for her beloved husband after his sudden death this year. Contact hour certificates for social workers will be offered as well. Our annual meeting will be at 3 p.m. Friday, Sept 14, in the Kansas City Room at the Kauffman Foundation Conference Center, 4801 Rockhill Road, Kansas City, MO 64110. The public is welcome.

An RSVP would be helpful at fca.gkc@gmail.com or 816-561-6322.

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He wanted a natural burial but...

By Steve Nicely
FCA-GKC President

Nancy Jobe attended a presentation in Kansas City some months ago given by FCA-GKC Vice President Sally King in which the topic of natural burial was discussed. That evening at their Gardner, KS, home, Nancy told Randy, her husband of 27 years, what she had learned at the presentation. Part Native American, Randy said he liked the idea of his body being returned to the earth in its natural state following death, meaning no embalming, no metal casket, and no concrete vault.

On April 22 this year at the age of 57, Randy suffered a massive heart attack at home and died. Nancy dialed 911. It seemed to her like “everyone and their brother” responded including Med Act, volunteer firefighters, and county sheriff’s officers. She sat on the floor with her back against the wall while they tried to revive him. It was no use.

Then came the awful question: Where did she want his body taken? Her own unanswered thoughts raced through her mind: *We have made no arrangements. I’m not ready. What should I do? How can I honor his wishes for a natural burial?* One answer became clear: *Leave him alone until I make some calls.*

She contacted a funeral home in

Nancy Jobe will discuss the details and answer questions about her husband’s death and burial as a guest speaker at the annual meeting on September 14 of the Funeral Consumers Alliance of Greater Kansas City. She is a trainer and regional liaison for CLAIM, the state health insurance assistance program in Missouri. The FCA-GKC annual meeting will be at 3 p.m. in the Kansas City Room at the Kauffman Foundation Conference Center, 4801 Rockhill Road, Kansas City, MO 64110. An RSVP would be helpful at fca.gkc@gmail.com or 816-561-6322. The public is welcome.

Lawrence, KS that would charge \$3,900 for its part in a natural burial process. When she asked, “What do I get for that?” the funeral director seemed defensive. Pick up the body. Prepare it. Use of our facility. File the death certificate and obituary.

“I am basically a cheap person,” she told our Funeral Consumers Alliance



The Jobes on their 25th anniversary.



Handprints of 9 grandchildren.

board later. “Randy and I have always felt that funeral homes take advantage of grief ...” Her continued search found First Call, a private morgue service. They arrived within an hour of the call, which happened to be four hours after Randy’s death, and transported the body to their refrigerated facilities in Kansas City, KS. Now she had time for necessary planning.

She got on the internet researching “green burial.” The city-owned Oak Hill Cemetery in Lawrence popped up. She and her three sons went for a look. At first, they were put off by the backhoe and pile of dirt near the entrance to Oak Hill’s natural burial section. But when they entered the wooded canopy, it was beautiful.

“Dad would like this,” one son said. “You boys decide where you want him buried,” she said.

Randy died at 1:45 Sunday afternoon. At 1 p.m. Tuesday, family and friends gathered at the cemetery for private services and burial. First Call prepared the body, placed it in a shroud and then inside a cardboard



Firefighter son Daniel as honor guard.

cremation container. It was delivered to the cemetery and then placed on a cart with boards (to support the cardboard container) with three coiled ropes on each side. Randy’s children decorated the container attaching a scroll with the handprints of the Jobe’s nine grandchildren (all 9 years and younger) to the box. Once a professional bass fisherman, Randy’s fishing shirt, hat and award patches were placed on the lid. One son, a firefighter and member of the Memorial Guard, wore his dress uniform. Another, who works at an airport, arranged a flyover of two vintage airplanes. Native American flute music was played during the processional of his body to the gravesite.

Randy’s sons lowered the container into the grave with the ropes, and then refilled the grave with shovels. On Father’s Day an engraved native stone boulder was installed as a headstone and a redbud was planted on the grave. The grandchildren threw wildflowers.

The cemetery costs totaled \$2,280 including \$800 for the plot, \$750 for opening and closing the grave, \$485 for the boulder and \$245 for the tree. All remaining costs totaled \$485 for a grand total of \$2,775, which was still \$1,025 less than the Lawrence funeral home was going to charge for its services alone. There was no viewing or visitation or service apart from the cemetery.

Nancy’s comments about the experience: “It gave me so much peace. It was way more personal, almost healing. And this way is better for the earth.”

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Local Funeral Home General Price List Survey August 2012

Prices collected in May-July 2012																		
Funeral Home (Ownership)	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	
	Price List Date	Direct Cremation Alt. Cont.	Immediate Burial Min.Casket	Basic Services	Embalming	Transfer Body to FH	Viewing/Visitation at FH	Funeral Service at FH	Hearse	Limo (Family Car)	Casket Lowest Priced	Grave Liner Lowest	2012 Totals Items D-L	2009 Totals Items D-L	2009-2,012 Difference	2009-2012 % Change		
1	Alden-Harrington FH (Local)	1,982	3,858	2,845	795	425	495	545	295	300	648	812	7,160	6,321	839	13.27%	1	
2	The Amos Family (Local)	1,985	3,765	2,425	795	338	375	395	450	275	590	905	6,548	7,138	(590)	-8.27%	2	
3	Belden-Larkin FH (Local)	2,915	4,235	1,995	1,095	525	195	495	325	225	225	755	6,605	5,935	670	11.29%	3	
4	Bross & Spidle, Excelsior S (Local)	975	2,095	1,595	815	450	395	495	395	295	495	895	5,830	6,725	(895)	-13.31%	4	
5	Bruce FH, Gardner (Local)	2,790	3,195	2,045	675	325	425	525	345	250	795	925	6,310	5,695	615	10.80%	5	
6	Bruce FH, Spring Hill (Local)	2,790	3,195	2,045	675	325	425	525	345	250	795	925	6,310	5,695	615	10.80%	6	
7	Carson-Speaks Midtown (Local)	2,715	3,245	1,995	895	375	490	590	295	245	675	695	6,255	5,930	325	5.48%	7	
8	Cashatt Family Funerals (Local)	675	1,995	2,390	550	N/A	200	300	350	250	500	500	*	**	-	-	8	
9	Cedar Crest Mem Chapel (Local)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9
10	Chapel Hill Butler FH (SCI, Inc.)	2,495	4,340	1,995	995	545	395	495	495	395	695	395	6,405	5,875	530	9.02%	10	
11	Chapel of Memories FH (Local)	1,695	2,250	2,995	600	275	500	500	375	300	1,295	399	7,239	8,560	(1,321)	-15.43%	11	
12-15	Charter Funerals (Local)	1,195	2,620	1,350	475	275	325	425	300	100	675	675	4,600	4,860	(260)	-5.35%	12-15	
16	Church Funeral Asso (Local)	850	1,545	750	475	175	350	350	275	275	495	645	3,790	*	-	-	16	
17	Cremation Center of KC (Local)	895	N/A	355	N/A	N/A	N/A	1,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	*	**	-	-	17	
18-19	Cremation Society, KS/MO (Local)	1,095	not listed	595	595	220	345	595	335	295	95	not listed	*	*	-	-	18-19	
20	Cullen Funeral Home (Local)	2,090	3,215	1,295	610	355	395	390	375	345	345	955	5,645	5,400	245	4.54%	20	
21	Davis Funeral Chapel (Local)	1,975	3,275	1,200	675	300	300	450	300	275	1,100	795	5,395	5,045	350	6.94%	21	
22	Duane E. Harvey FH (Local)	1,570	1,945	1,695	665	275	275	275	455	395	695	700	5,380	5,380	50	0.93%	22	
23	Eley & Sons Funeral Chapel (Local)	975	1,670	1,695	675	260	560	310	385	325	695	655	5,560	4,900	660	13.47%	23	
24	Elite Funeral Chapel (Local)	995	not listed	1,600	895	285	400	400	550	275	500	695	5,600	5,620	(20)	-0.36%	24	
25	Fry, Bross & Spidle, Kearney (Local)	975	2,095	1,595	815	450	395	495	395	295	900	905	5,830	6,725	(895)	-13.31%	25	
26	FuneralCenterKC.com (Local)	1,620	N/A	1,940	795	270	220	316	360	275	900	905	5,981	**	-	-	26	
27	George F. Porter & Sons (Local)	1,997	3,295	2,566	695	260	100	230	395	395	658	698	5,752	5,521	231	4.18%	27	
28-29	Heartland Crematn-KS/MO (Local)	1,045	1,695	575	845	745	395	395	275	275	545	850	4,900	**	-	-	28-29	
30	Hidden Valley FH (Local)	995	2,690	1,395	995	355	325	395	295	215	495	795	5,265	**	-	-	30	
31	Highland Park FH (Local)	1,255	2,155	995	795	250	450	450	250	250	795	695	4,930	5,250	(320)	-6.10%	31	
32	Hixson-Klein Funeral Home (Local)	1,595	N/A	1,595	425	200	450	700	425	100	1,295	1,095	6,085	**	-	-	32	
33	Joseph A Butler & Son FH (Local)	1,125	3,205	2,096	595	265	300	300	285	250	1,109	750	5,650	5,561	389	7.00%	33	
34	KC Funeral Directors (Local)	750	2,140	990	275	125	895	400	285	260	805	175	3,805	3,560	245	6.88%	34	
35	Langsford Funeral Home (Local)	1,790	not listed	2,290	695	350	490	690	425	375	1,290	790	7,395	6,980	415	5.95%	35	
36	Lawrence A. Jones MO (Local)	1,200	1,600	1,695	695	295	355	395	350	325	995	695	5,804	5,804	-	0.00%	36	
37	Lawrence A. Jones KS (Local)	1,200	1,600	1,695	695	295	355	395	350	325	995	695	5,804	5,804	-	0.00%	37	
38	Lawrence Chapel Oaks (Local)	975	3,315	1,314	485	250	250	300	250	200	not listed	not listed	*	**	-	-	38	
39	Louis Memorial (Local)	2,350	5,026	2,324	950	365	419	549	375	375	1,109	1,060	7,526	6,966	560	8.04%	39	
40	Maple Hill F. H. Cemetery (Local)	1,508	3,180	1,905	690	240	365	495	235	275	800	675	5,680	5,910	(230)	-3.89%	40	
41	Mary Butler Meyers FH (Local)	1,525	3,230	2,295	788	385	375	375	485	475	995	490	6,663	*	-	-	41	
42	McGilley Antioch (SCI, Inc.)	2,495	3,790	3,095	995	545	395	595	495	395	695	395	7,605	7,075	530	7.49%	42	
43	McGilley & Frye (SCI, Inc.)	2,495	3,790	2,695	995	545	295	495	495	395	695	395	7,005	6,475	530	8.19%	43	
44	McGilley & George-Granv (SCI, Inc.)	2,190	3,790	1,995	995	545	395	495	495	395	695	395	7,005	6,475	530	8.19%	44	
45	McGilley & George-Beltn (SCI, Inc.)	2,190	3,790	1,995	995	545	395	495	495	395	695	395	6,405	6,475	(70)	-1.08%	45	
46	McGilley & Hoge (SCI, Inc.)	2,495	3,790	3,095	995	545	395	595	495	395	695	395	7,605	7,075	530	7.49%	46	
47	McGilley Midtown (SCI, Inc.)	2,190	3,790	1,995	995	545	395	495	495	395	695	395	6,405	5,875	530	9.02%	47	
48	McGilley & Sheil (SCI, Inc.)	2,495	3,790	2,695	995	545	295	495	495	395	695	395	7,005	7,075	(70)	-0.99%	48	
49	McGilley State Line (SCI, Inc.)	2,495	3,790	3,580	995	545	395	495	495	395	695	395	8,190	7,675	515	6.71%	49	
50	Meyers F C - Blue Springs (Local)	1,795	2,590	1,995	995	495	395	495	395	395	695	895	6,455	6,455	-	0.00%	50	

		10/25/2010	1,995	2,590	1,995	995	495	395	495	395	395	395	395	395	395	395	6,455	6,455	-	0.00%	51	
51	Meayers F C - Northland (Local)	10/25/2010	1,995	2,590	1,995	995	495	395	495	395	395	395	395	395	395	395	6,455	6,455	-	0.00%	51	
52	Missouri Funeral Care (Local)	1/1/2010	1,045	1,695	1,045	845	745	395	395	395	395	395	395	395	395	395	4,900	4,900	*	-	52	
53	Mrs. J.W. Jones Mem Chapel (Local)	1/1/2011	1,625	2,020	1,625	725	225	500	600	600	600	600	600	600	600	600	5,935	5,935	(645)	-10.87%	53	
54	Mt. Moriah & Freeman (SCI, Inc.)	5/21/2012	2,495	4,340	2,495	995	545	395	695	695	695	695	695	695	695	695	8,190	8,190	7,675	5.15	54	
55	Mt. Moriah Terrace Pk (SCI, Inc.)	5/21/2012	2,495	4,340	2,495	995	545	395	695	695	695	695	695	695	695	695	8,190	8,190	7,675	5.15	55	
56	Muehlebach FH (Local)	10/1/2011	2,500	3,720	2,500	995	435	465	495	495	495	495	495	495	495	495	7,595	7,595	6,645	9.50	56	
57	Newcomers Chr-Arc-Pas (Stewart)	11/4/2011	2,360	4,170	2,360	1,495	375	495	495	495	495	495	495	495	495	495	9,440	9,440	8,390	1,050	12.51%	57
58	Newcomers Floral Hills (Stewart)	11/4/2011	2,360	4,170	2,360	1,495	375	495	495	495	495	495	495	495	495	495	9,440	9,440	8,390	1,050	12.51%	58
59	Newcomers Johnson Co (Stewart)	11/4/2011	2,360	4,170	2,360	1,495	375	495	495	495	495	495	495	495	495	495	9,440	9,440	8,390	1,050	12.51%	59
60	Newcomers Longview (Stewart)	11/4/2011	2,360	4,170	2,360	1,495	375	495	495	495	495	495	495	495	495	495	9,440	9,440	8,390	1,050	12.51%	60
61	Newcomers Noland Rd (Stewart)	11/4/2011	2,360	4,170	2,360	1,495	375	495	495	495	495	495	495	495	495	495	9,440	9,440	8,390	1,050	12.51%	61
62	Newcomers OP KS (Stewart)	11/4/2011	2,360	4,170	2,360	1,495	375	495	495	495	495	495	495	495	495	495	9,440	9,440	8,390	1,050	12.51%	62
63	Newcomers Stine-McClure (Stewart)	11/4/2011	675	3,730	675	2,495	375	375	495	495	495	495	495	495	495	495	7,880	7,880	8,390	(510)	-6.08%	63
64	Newcomers White Chpl (Stewart)	11/4/2011	2,360	4,170	2,360	1,495	375	495	495	495	495	495	495	495	495	495	9,440	9,440	8,390	1,050	12.51%	64
65	New Salem FH (Local)	1/1/2011	1,200	4,115	1,200	675	275	395	N/A	395	395	395	395	395	395	395	6,130	6,130	*	-	65	
66	Northern Star Mortuary (Local)	6/15/2011	1,827	2,264	1,827	750	300	N/A	N/A	430	430	430	430	430	430	430	*	*	1,014	750	-	66
67-69	Park Lawn Funeral Homes (Local)	1/1/2011	1,295	3,405	1,295	750	295	395	400	425	425	425	425	425	425	425	5,775	5,775	**	-	67-69	
70	Passantino Bros. FH (Local)	2/1/2010	1,495	1,595	1,495	695	295	275	275	475	275	265	295	295	295	295	4,615	5,000	(385)	-7.70%	70	
71	Penwell-Gabel FH (Local)	12/1/2011	2,680	3,225	2,680	995	495	360	665	250	275	995	995	1,100	1,100	1,100	6,495	6,495	5,655	840	14.85%	71
72-74	Polley Funeral Homes (Local)	10/1/2009	2,105	3,000	2,105	895	350	500	500	500	375	not listed	895	995	995	*	*	*	-	-	-	72-74
75	Porter FH & Crematory (Local)	1/1/2011	2,197	3,092	2,197	745	295	100	330	445	330	395	395	395	395	395	6,054	6,054	5,946	108	1.82%	75
76	Quisenberry FH (Local)	1/1/2012	2,250	2,900	2,250	795	300	250	500	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	6,045	6,045	5,815	230	3.96%	76
77	Reflections Mem Service (Local)	6/1/2011	625	N/A	625	795	175	400	400	400	550	550	550	550	550	550	5,865	**	-	-	-	77
78	R.L. Leintz FH (Local)	12/1/2011	2,300	2,900	2,300	600	300	250	550	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	5,150	**	-	-	-	78
79	Rumsey - Yost FH (Local)	11/1/2008	1,695	2,990	1,695	550	175	275	350	300	235	585	630	630	630	630	5,800	**	-	-	-	79
80	Sebbeto Funeral Home (Local)	1/11/2012	1,295	2,385	1,295	575	210	400	450	275	255	1,160	870	870	870	870	5,690	5,690	5,560	130	2.34%	80
81	Signature Funerals (Local)	1/1/2012	1,295	2,735	1,295	700	400	550	550	400	350	595	700	700	700	700	6,900	**	-	-	-	81
82	Skradski Family Chapel (Local)	11/1/2011	1,695	1,900	1,695	550	135	200	150	300	270	1,000	650	650	650	650	4,950	4,950	4,730	220	4.65%	82
83	Slider Funeral Home KCKS (Local)	1/1/2012	900	942	900	895	215	250	375	400	375	269	495	495	495	495	4,964	4,964	4,784	180	3.76%	83
84-85	Speaks Chapels (Local)	1/1/2011	2,715	3,245	2,715	895	375	490	590	295	245	675	695	695	695	695	6,255	6,255	5,930	325	5.48%	84-85
86	Thatcher's Funeral Home (Local)	2/1/2011	995	2,076	995	850	175	200	485	380	395	896	565	565	565	565	5,441	5,441	5,413	28	0.52%	86
87-88	Warren-McElwain Mortuaries (Local)	1/10/2012	1,875	4,609	1,875	760	365	365	495	410	200	695	875	875	875	875	7,605	**	-	-	-	87-88
89	Watkins Bros. Heritage (Local)	10/1/2011	1,095	1,500	1,095	600	260	300	300	365	345	800	699	699	699	699	5,294	5,294	5,135	159	3.10%	89
	SCI, Inc. = Service Corp. International Stewart = Stewart Enterprises		Direct Cremation	Immediate Burial	Basic Services	Embalming	Transfer Body	Visitation at FH	Service at FH	Hearse	Limo	Casket Lowest	Grave Liner	Grave Liner	Average	2012 Average	2009 Average	Difference	% Change			
	2012 Mean Average		1,743	3,066	2,087	827	357	379	476	372	303	770	712	712	6,365	6,279	86	1.4%				
	2012 Count		88	80	88	87	86	86	87	87	84	86	84	84	79	62						
	2009 Mean Average		1,983	2,923	2,066	800	326	362	472	349	295	793	686	686								
	2009 - 2012 Difference		(240)	143	21	27	31	17	4	23	8	(23)	26									
	2009 - 2012 % Change		-12.1%	4.9%	1.0%	3.4%	9.5%	5%	0.8%	6.6%	2.7%	-2.9%	3.8%									
	Consumer Price Index Change 2009-2012 = + 7.85%																					
	* Comparable total can not be displayed when some prices are missing.																					
	** A complete General Price List was not received or obtained by the FCA-GKC for its 2009 survey. Version - 7/26/2012 - REVISE-001																					

All prices in the above chart were taken from the General Price Lists (GPLs) that funeral homes are required by the Federal Trade Commission to provide to consumers. See Page 6

for a numbered directory of Kansas City area funeral home addresses and phone numbers.

Columns A, B and C stand alone. The prices in **columns D through L** are the nine items in a standard funeral with the lowest-priced casket and grave liner offered. **Column M** totals the nine prices in this year's survey, and **Column N** lists the comparative totals from 2009. **Columns O and P** measure the difference and percentage changes.

Column A, lists the effective dates of the General Price Lists provided by the funeral homes.

Column B, direct cremation in an alternative container (such as cardboard or fiberboard), is the least costly way to dispose of a body. It does not involve embalming, visitation, service, casket or cemetery costs.

Column C, immediate burial in a minimum casket, is the least costly funeral offered leading to burial. It bypasses embalming, visitation and a full service.

(Cemetery costs are extra. Cemetery prices, locations and contact information from our 2011 Cemetery Survey are posted on our www.funeralskc.org website.)

Funeral Consumers Alliance of Greater Kansas City

2012 Funeral Home Directory

1 Alden-Harrington, 214 Oak, Bonner Springs, KS, 913-422-4074	46 McGilley & Hoge, 8024 Santa Fe Dr., OP KS, 913-642-3565
2 Amos Family, 10901 Johnson Dr., Shawnee, KS, 913-631-5566	47 McGilley Midtown, 20 W. Linwood Blvd, KC MO, 816-753-6200
3 Belden-Larkin, 707 S. 6th St., Leavenworth, KS, 913-682-2820	48 McGilley & Sheil, 11924 E. 47th St., K.C., MO, 816-353-6555
4 Bross & Spidle, 217 W. Broadwy, Excelsior Sprgs, MO, 816-630-3131.	49 McGilley State Line, 12301 State Line, K.C. MO, 816-942-6180
5 Bruce, 106 S. Center, Gardner, KS, 913-856-7111	50 Meyers, 1600 West Main, Blue Springs, MO, 816-229-3276
6 Bruce, 712 S. Webster, Spring Hill, KS, 913-592-2244	51 Meyers Northland, 401 Main, Parkville, MO, 816-741-0251
7 Carson-Speaks Midtn, 1501 W. Lexington, Indep., MO 816-252-7900	52 Missouri Funeral Care, 6113 Blue Ridge, Raytown, MO, 816-353-1700
8 Cashatt Fam, 7516 NW Prairie View, PlatteWds MO 816-587-8200	53 Mrs. J. W. Jones, 703 N. 10th St., K.C., KS, 913-321-0253
9 Cedar Crest, 35665 Lexington Ave., De Soto, KS, 913-583-1002	54 Mt. Moriah & Freeman, 10507 Holmes, K.C., MO, 816-942-2004
10 Chapel Hill-Butler FH, 701 N. 94th St., K.C. KS, 913-334-3366	55 Mt. Moriah Terrace Park, 801 N.W. 108th , K.C., MO, 816-734-5500
11 Chapel of Memories, 3000 E. Valor Dr., Grain Vally, MO 816-463-4030	56 Muehlebach, 6800 Troost, K.C., MO, 816-444-2060
12 Charter Blue Ridge, 5000 Blue Ridge Cutoff, K.C. MO, 816-921-5555	57 Newcomrs Chur-Arch-Pasl, 119 E Franklin Liberty MO 816-781-2000
13 Charter KS, 10250 Shawnee Mn Pkwy Shawnee, KS, 816-921-5555	58 Newcom Floral Hill FH, 7000 Blue Ridge, K.C., MO, 816-353-1218
14 Charter Northland, 77 E. 72nd St., Gladstone, MO, 816-921-5555	59 Newcomers Jo Co.F Chapel, 11200 Metcalf., OP, KS, 913-451-1860
15 Charter Sunset, 16731 Springdale Rd., Leavenw., KS, 913-682-5400	60 Newcomers Longview, 12700 Raytown, KC, MO, 816-761-6272
16 Church Funeral Asso, 5845 Horton, Mission, KS, 913-789-9600	61 Newcomers Noland Rd, 509 S Noland Rd, indep, MO, 816-252-8900
17 Cremation Center of KC 4926 Johnson Dr, Mission, KS 913-384-5566	62 Newcomrs O.P., 8201 Metcalf, Overland Park, KS, 913-648-6224
18 Cremation Soc. of KS/MO, 8837 Roe, Prairie Village, KS 913-383-9888	63 Newcomrs Stine & McClure, 3235 Gilham, K.C., MO, 816-931-7777
19 Cremation Soc. of KS/MO, 5561 NW Barry Rd., KC, MO, 816-822-9888	64 Newcom White Chp, 6600 NE Antioch Gladstone MO 816- 452-8419
20 Cullen FH, 612 W. Foxwood Drive, Raymore, MO, 816-322-5278	65 New Salem FH, 1823 N. Blue Mills Rd, Indep., MO, 816-796-8600
21 Davis Funeral Chap, 531 Shawnee, Leavenworth KS, 913-682-5523	66 Northern Star Mortuary, 5029 Leavenwth Rd. KC KS, 913-400-3766
22 Duane E. Harvey, 9100 Blue Ridge Blvd., K.C. MO, 816-763-9100	67 Park Lawn Funeral Hm, 8251 Hillcrest Rd., K.C., MO, 816-523-1234
23 Eley & Sons, 4707 E. Truman Rd., K.C. MO, 816-924-8700	68 Park Lawn FH - Liberty, 1640 N. St-Rt 291, Liberty, MO 816-781-8228
24 Elite Funeral Cha, 11525 Blue Ridge Blvd, K.C. MO, 816-765-0141	69 Park Lawn FH - Lathrop, 901 Clinton St, Lathrop, MO 816-740-4658
25 Fry, Bross & Spidle, 208 S. Jefferson, Kearney, MO, 816-628-4411	70 Passantino Bros FH, 2117 Independence Blvd, KC, MO, 816-471-2844
26 FuneralCtrKC.Com, 10913 Johnson Dr, Shawnee, KS 913-667-2952	71 Penwell-Gabel FH, 14275 Blackbob Rd, Olathe, KS, 913-768-6777
27 George F. Porter & Sons, 1835 Minn. Ave., K.C., KS, 913-621-6400	72 Polley FH, 5951 Hwy 10, Excelsior Springs MO, 816-630-3388
28 Heartland Crem Soc., 6113 Blue Rgd, Raytown, MO, 816-313-1677	73 Polley FH, 214 N Pennsylvania Ave, Lawson, MO, 816-580-7704
29 Heartland Crem Soc, 7700 Shawnee Mn Pkwy, OP, KS 913-789-8998	74 Polley FH, 122 N.W. Main St., Richmond, MO, 816-776-2255
30 Hidden Valley FH, 925 E. 92 Hwy, Kearney, MO 816-903-8888	75 Porter FH, 8535 Monrovia, Lenexa, KS, 913-438-6444
31 Highland Pk FH/Crematy, 41st & State Ave., KC KS, 913-371-0699	76 Quisenberry FH, 604 E. 4th St., Tonganoxie, KS, 913-845-2740
32 Hixson-Klein FH, 104 Church St, Smithville, MO 816-532-9212	77 Reflections Mem, 14 Westport Rd, KC MO 816-561-1312
33 Joseph A Butler & Son, 19th & Minn. Ave., K.C. KS, 913-371-7000	78 R.L. Leintz FH, 4701 10th Ave, Leavenworth, KS 913-351-0200
34 KC Funeral Dirs, 4880 Shawnee Dr, KC KS 913-262-6310	79 Rumsey-Yost FH, 601 Indiana St, Lawrence, KS 785-843-5111
35 Langford FH, 115 SW 3rd St, Lee's Summit, MO 816-524-3700	80 Sebbeto Funeral Hm, 901 E. 5th , K.C., MO, 816-221-4400
36 Lawrence A. Jones, 1800 E. Linwood Blvd., K.C., MO, 816-921-1800	81 Signature, 8019 State Line Rd, KC MO 816-214-5174
37 Lawrence A. Jones, 2065 N. 5th St., K.C., KS, 913-371-2823	82 Skradski Family Chapel, 340 N. 6th, KC, KS, 913-371-1404
38 Lawrence Chapel Oaks, 3821 W. 6th, Lawrence, KS 785-841-3822	83 Slider FH, 1734 Washington Blvd., K.C. KS, 913-573-2020
39 Louis Memorial, 6830 Troost Ave., K.C., MO, 816-361-5211	84 Speaks Buckner, 300 Adams, Buckner, MO, 816-650-5555
40 Maple Hill Funeral H, 3300 Shawnee Dr., K.C., KS, 913-831-3345	85 Speaks Suburban, 18020 E. 39th, Indep., MO, 816-373-3600
41 Mary Butler Meyers, 6300 Parallel Pkwy., K.C. KS, 913-334-6300	86 Thatcher's FH, 1520 N. 5th , K.C., KS, 913-321-1211
42 McGilley Antioch, 3325 N.E. Vivion Rd., K.C. MO, 816-453-7700	87 Warren-McElwain, 1003 John Wms Dr, Eudora, KS 785-542-3030
43 McGilley & Frye, 105 E. Loula, Olathe, KS, 913-782-0582	88 Warren-McElwain, 120 W 13th St, Lawrence, KS 785-843-1120
44 McGilley & George, 611 Chestnut, Belton, MO, 816-322-2995	89 Watkins Heritage, 4000 Cleaver II Blvd., KC, MO, 816-861-3030
45 McGilley & George, 12913 Grandview Rd Grandv MO 816-966-0250	

Most funeral homes offer funeral packages, but the Federal Trade Commission's Funeral Rule requires itemized prices for easy comparison and to permit customers to choose only the goods and services they want. For more information about the Funeral Rule, see the FTC brochure "Paying final respects: Your rights when buying funeral goods and services." On the FTC's web site, www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/consumer/products/pro26.shtm. Problems related to the FTC's Funeral Rule should be reported to the state board that regulates funeral homes and/or the Federal Trade Commission. Complaint forms are on the web sites. You will be helping future families by speaking up:

Missouri: The Missouri Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors (573) 751-0813.

E-mail: embalm@pr.mo.gov.

Web site: www.pr.mo.gov/embalmers.asp

Kansas: Kansas State Board of Mortuary Arts (785) 296-3980.

Email: boma1@ksbma.ks.gov.

Web site: www.accesskansas.org/ksbma.

Federal Trade Commission: (877) 382-4357

Mailed complaints can be sent to: FTC Consumer Response Center
600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20580

Web site: www.ftc.gov

Version 7/24/2012

So many options around funerals

By Marci Michnick, MSW
FCA-GKC Board Member

A year ago I had never heard of the Funeral Consumers Alliance; this past June I attended the biennial national conference in Tucson. Unlike most conferences where my eyes glaze over and my brain turns to mush, I remained enthusiastically engaged the entire time. I had no idea there are so many options around funerals and caring for the dead.

Because I have dealt with the deaths of close family members, including my parents, I thought that made me an expert on funerals. Both Mom and Dad had prepaid for their funerals, picked out their own caskets and cemetery plots, and the only decisions my siblings and I had to make were to choose the clothing they would be buried in and the music played at the services. That hardly makes me an expert. I wonder if my grief would have been less intense if I had been more involved in caring for the bodies of my parents, at least for a few hours, instead of having them whisked away upon their last breath. I'm not sure we would have done things differently, but the most disappointing realization I have now is that I never knew we had options then. If a family has the means and desire for an expensive and elaborate funeral, then by all means do that. But if a simpler, less-expensive approach is desired, loved ones should be able to exercise that option as well.

As a new social worker, I am drawn to FCA's mission of advocating for individuals' values, which aligns so well with the values of my profession. I'm excited to begin spreading the word.



Marci Michnick

Lessons from Tucson meeting

By Nancy Petersen, MSW
FCA-GKC Board Member &
National FCA Board Member



Nancy Petersen

I love to learn. If I could make a living taking classes I would, but since I haven't figured out how to do that, I take every opportunity to go to conferences, classes and trainings. One of my favorite conferences is the FCA conference held every two years. I meet wonderful advocates and people interested in our mission and sit in classes taught by wise people who are doing great work all over the country. I feel rejuvenated and more determined to come back to Kansas City and share what I've learned and better educate the public in presentations, panels and one-on-one. It's great.

Then there was this year... I taught a few of the breakout sessions so I was somewhat limited in the talks I could attend. The speakers I was most impressed by were those who have very little affiliation with FCA.

Randy Gardner is a funeral director from Vermont. He is an honest, caring man who owns a funeral home with exceptionally transparent pricing and who has an appreciation for FCA's mission to help inform consumers. He also helps us better understand things from a funeral director's perspective. Randy said this: "Keep up with the times. Get involved in social media. Stop using regular mail as your primary means of communication. Recognize that times are changing and change with them. Don't get left behind. Information is traveling down different paths and if

Continued on Page 8

Funeral prices beat inflation

Continued from Page 1

Newcomer's, for example, significantly dropped the price of a direct cremation at its Stine & McClure Chapel on Gillham Plaza. Indicative of how much profit padding there is in direct cremations, in March 2011, Stine & McClure cut its direct cremation price to \$675. It had been more than \$2,000. Newcomer's made that move after Marts Memorial Services, a midtown operation that offered the area's lowest direct cremation price, went out of business.

At all other Newcomer's locations, the price of a direct cremation is now \$2,360, up \$120 from 2009.

Jim Hawkins, manager of the



Jim Fitzpatrick (left) led three new FCA-GKC board members in the task of collecting data for the price survey. The others are Frank Cockrell (center), Lyle Van Vleet (right) and Marci Michnick (above left). The survey is posted on our website, funeralskc.org. Contact Jim with questions at (816) 361-1303 or e-mail him at jim.fitzpatrick06@gmail.com.

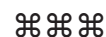
Cremation Center of Kansas City, based in Roeland Park, said the number of cremations in the Kansas City area has more than doubled since he got into the business 10 years ago. He estimated that the cremation rate is now about 40 percent in the Kansas

City area. The Cremation Center's price for direct cremation is \$895.

The rise in the percentage of cremations has put a significant dent in the "traditional funeral business," he said, adding that funeral homes that have not adjusted to the cremation trend "are not only losing traditional business but they're losing the cremation business to folks like us."

The Amos Family Funeral Home in Shawnee opened the Cremation Center in early 2010, and Hawkins said business has been much

higher than expected from the start. During its nearly 2 1/2 years in business, he said, the Cremation Center has done about 600 cremations, or about one per business day.



We know we can count on your generosity

By Jim Fitzpatrick
FCA-GKC Treasurer

Greetings, friends and enemies of FCA-GKC. In this line of volunteerism, we know we have both. Regardless, welcome to the dollars-and-cents division of our organization. We're having a pretty good year financially. Since January 1, we have received \$590 in contributions, and our checking account balance at Country Club Bank is \$680.

Ordinarily, we keep a balance of about \$1,000, which is how much it costs to print and mail a single issue our newsletter. We dipped below that threshold to spend \$500 in travel expenses to help send Marci Michnick, a new FCA board member, to the national Funeral Consumers Alliance Biennial Conference in Tucson. (See Marci's report on the conference on page 7.) So, this newsletter is being mailed despite insufficient funds to cover its costs. We are not worried. We know we can count on your generosity to make up that difference and then some.

As most of you know, the periodic funeral-home price surveys that we conduct are among our most valuable contributions to consumers. It's a big job, but we know it is worth it; this is the only place you will find the prices for virtually all area funeral homes assembled line-by-line so that you can review and compare prices. Every time we publish a new survey, as we do in this particular newsletter, it reaffirms our commitment to our mission – to help people make good, informed end-of-life decisions.

You have been very generous in the past, and I am asking you again for additional contributions to help us continue providing these services. Outside of an occasional grant, our funding comes from people who hear about us, read our newsletters and appreciate what we do.

As usual, you can contribute either through our website (www.funeralskc.org) or by putting a check in the self-addressed envelope included in the mailed newsletter. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at jim.fitzpatrick06@gmail.com or (816) 361-1303. Thanks for your ongoing support!

P.S. In the last edition, I published a list of recent donors. In this edition, unfortunately, we don't have enough room for that. I hope to get an up-to-date list in the next newsletter.

Funeral Consumers Alliance
of Greater Kansas City
P.O. Box 7021
Kansas City, MO 64113



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Email: fca.gkc@gmail.com
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Lessons from Tucson

Continued from Page 7

you want to stay current and speak to new generations, you must change tactics.”

Ed Howard also made an impression. He is a lawyer for the Center for Public Interest Law in Sacramento, CA and he found FCA after a horrible personal tour through the funeral industry when his father died. He asked some very difficult questions including, “What are your goals?” and “What are we doing to get there?” It seemed like we should have very clear, easy answers but no one did. He suggested we use our consumer advocacy reputation to encourage funeral homes to be more transparent, specifically by encouraging the listing of up-to-date pricing on their websites. I certainly hope we, as a national organization, heard him.

These lessons were not huge, but I think they are vital to the continued success of FCA. Truth is, our mission to educate consumers is still vital and we have years of work to do. I hope, if we take these thoughtful lessons to heart, we can continue to improve our work and serve those who need us. Stay tuned. We are building a new, more transparent box.

Presentations are available

Are you part of an organization that would benefit from an unbiased presentation about important practical aspects of funeral planning? Contact FCA-GKC at 816-561-6322 or email us at fca.gkc@gmail.com. We will line you up with one of our board members for a visit.