

FUNERAL CONSUMERS ALLIANCE OF WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS

P.O. Box 994 ♦ Greenfield, MA 01302-0994 ♦ (413) 376-4747
www.FuneralConsumersWMass.org

September 2026

We Invite You to Join Us on October 4th! **Annual Fall Meeting and Educational Program**

Our annual business meeting and program will be held on Sunday, October 4th at 2:00 P.M. at the Unitarian Society of Northampton and Florence located at 220 Main Street, Northampton, MA.

We invite all members to join us to form a quorum to vote for Board Trustees and officer positions for the new fiscal year. After this brief business meeting we will hold an informational program on Natural Organic Reduction (NOR), also called Human Composting.

We are pleased to announce that our guest speaker for this educational program will be Mike Reagan. He will lead a thoughtful and engaging community conversation about Natural Organic Reduction. NOR is a process that gently transforms the body into soil in approximately 60 days.

Come to learn how the process works, the values behind it, and how families are incorporating ceremony and participation into this experience in ways that many describe as beautiful and healing. A Q&A discussion will follow, with time for open conversation and reflection.

Mike is a leader and collaborator in advancing natural organic reduction across the United States. He started his journey in end-of-life care as a cemetery laborer and funeral home apprentice in Massachusetts, followed by service as a hospice volunteer and end-of-life doula. Today, he is focused on helping families and communities to access meaningful, environmentally responsible end-of-life options that honor both their loved ones and the earth.

Please Preregister to attend via Zoom or in person.

Call us at 413-376-4747 and leave a message

or email FCAWMASS@gmail.com or visit

Funeralconsumerswmass.org/annual-meeting-program/

Meeting Agenda

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|------|----------------------------------|
| 2:00 | Welcome and President's Report |
| 2:10 | Treasurer's Report |
| 2:15 | Vote for Trustees and Officers |
| 2:25 | Door Prize drawing |
| 2:30 | Program and Discussion on N.O.R. |
| 3:45 | Questions and Answers |
| 4:00 | Adjournment |

Come learn about Human Composting at the FCAWM Annual Meeting and Program!

Sunday, October 4, 2026, 2-4 PM

**Unitarian Society of Northampton & Florence
220 Main St, Northampton, MA, 01060**

Attend in person or on Zoom – preregistration required

This free public presentation will begin after a brief business meeting. Our Keynote speaker will then discuss the ecological and energy saving benefits of returning the body to the earth by Natural Organic Reduction. NOR is currently available in 14 states including nearby locations in the Northeast. Come with your questions ready!



Keynote Speaker Mike Reagan

As a CEO of one of many companies now operating in this space, Mike is committed to revolutionizing the funeral industry. He envisions a future where families are empowered with dignified and ecological deathcare options aimed at changing the impact to our planet and communities.

FCAWM working for you: How do we help?

We help consumers find answers to questions concerning death care. Inquiries may come via email, via voice mails left on our 24/7 phone service, or in person when we are out at community health fairs. Our volunteers take turns monitoring the voice-mail line and the FCAWM email. We strive to respond promptly, usually within a day or two.

Usually we are able to answer questions in a single call or point the consumer to information published on our website, such as our price comparison table, benefit resources, directory of local funeral homes, and tips for saving money. We also refer to state and veteran resources. For complex questions we confer with other volunteers and/or reach out to other experts and then get back to the caller/email contact with our best response.

Here are examples of some typical inquiries and responses:

- A social worker at a Senior Center wanted help resolving a dispute for a client's family about a preneed plan that seemed to have gone awry. Her response: "Thank you, I feel that I've learned so much from this!"
- An elderly woman without computer access needed a print copy of our recent Price Comparison report, which we promptly mailed to her.
- A woman needed help resolving a dispute with a cemetery about a relative's crypt.
- A man asked questions about cremation and burial in preparation for discussion with his executor.
- "My husband passed away totally unexpectedly Saturday." Her reply: "Thank you for your time."
- A distraught daughter complained of a funeral home calling to insist on payment; they already had her mother's body (from a nursing home). No one had informed the daughter of the death.
- A man whose friend was in hospice alerted us that "his wife needed to talk to someone urgently to understand the details of the funeral process." The man thanked us for our prompt response and reported that the funeral home did a great job when the death occurred (four days after his call to us).

These are just a sample of the people that we have helped in recent months.

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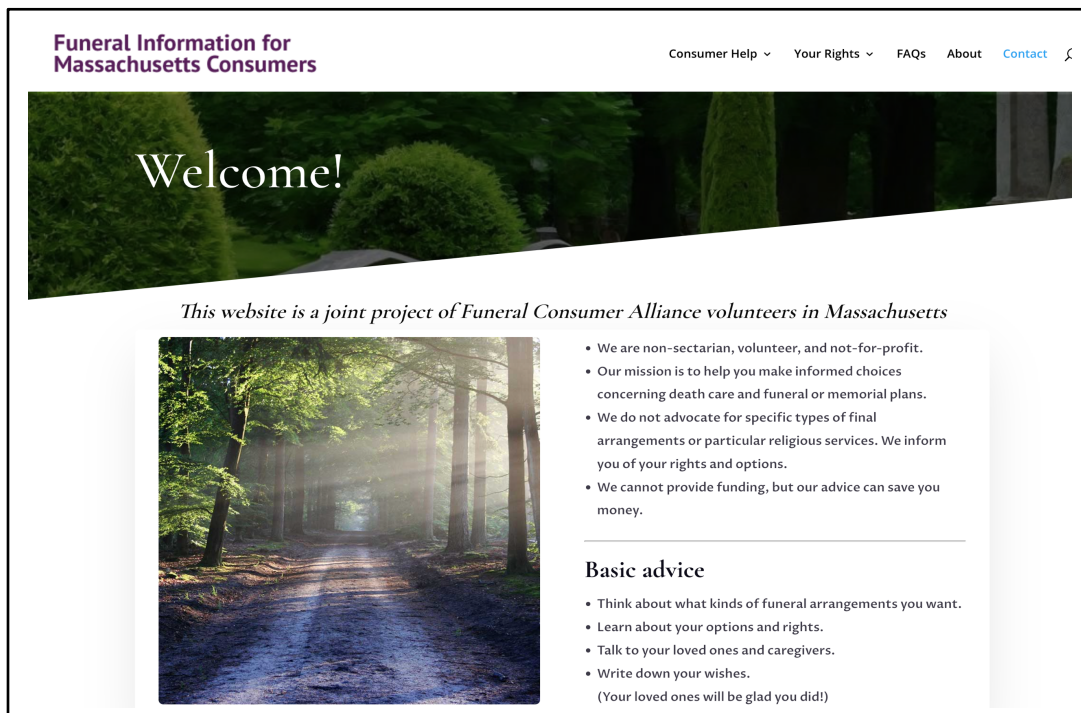
The FCA of Western Massachusetts is a non-sectarian, all-volunteer, and non-profit corporation dedicated to protecting a consumer's right to choose meaningful, dignified and affordable final arrangements.

You may have noticed that this mailing is shorter than our usual newsletter. We've been very busy with many other projects: giving interviews, developing publicity, planning talks, improving webpages, and answering questions from the public. Clearly we need more volunteers!

We've hardly had time to recruit candidates for our Board election Oct 4<sup>th</sup>. *Please consider this opportunity!*

We encourage election of people who have **not** served before in order to reinvigorate this Alliance. We welcome those who would like to help continue our mission.

# Major Expansion and Redesign of Statewide Website! “Funeral Information for Massachusetts Consumers”



We have just launched a much-expanded version of the website titled, “Funeral Information for Massachusetts Consumers.” You’ll find it at [www.funeralsma.org](http://www.funeralsma.org). In recent years, that website had been a “portal” introducing general information about Massachusetts laws relating to funerals and the funeral industry. Viewers were invited to select an appropriate regional website (FCAWM in the west or FCAEM in central & eastern MA) for more information. Now the redesigned website provides more comprehensive information all in one place. We hope this expanded website will help Massachusetts residents understand their rights and options regarding funerals and death care.

Two webmasters (one professional and one volunteer) collaborated on this project, beginning in January 2026. FCAEM paid for the professional who had designed their excellent website years ago and also set up the original statewide one in 2018. Sandy Ward, a retired reference librarian and FCAWM’s volunteer webmaster, selected content from a variety of sources, planned the arrangement of information, and edited many of the pages.

Please visit [funeralsma.org](http://funeralsma.org) and explore what’s there. We welcome comments, especially if you find something that needs fixing or improvement. You can use the contact form on the bottom of the front page to submit your comments. Sandy will review the comments and strive to keep the website up to date.

## What’s next?

We need to plan for future maintenance of this site. Who will be the next webmaster(s)? The professional webmaster has now moved away from Massachusetts and has many other projects. Sandy Ward, at age 83, will continue for a while, but hopes for help from younger heads and hands.

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**Address Service Requested**

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FCAWM board members will be in many Western Massachusetts communities this Fall. Visit us in person and bring your questions. We have many helpful consumer brochures that you could share with loved ones.

**September 17 (Thursday)**

Adams COA Community Fair, 3 Hoosac St., Adams MA, 10:00 - 2:00

**October 2 (Friday)**

Williamstown COA Health and Wellness Fair, 118 Church St, Williamstown, MA 10:00 - 1:00

**October 4 (Sunday)**

FCAWM Annual Meeting and Program, Unitarian Society of Northampton and Florence,  
220 Main St., Northampton 2:00 - 4:00

**October 8 (Thursday)**

Holyoke Council on Aging Health Fair, 291 Pine St., Holyoke 9:00 - 12:00

**November 16 (Monday)**

End of Life Planning talk, Teague Senior Center, 917 Main St, Great Barrington 4:00 - 6:00 pm.

**Invite us! See: [https://funeralconsumerswmass.org/speaker\\_for\\_your\\_group/](https://funeralconsumerswmass.org/speaker_for_your_group/)**

**NOTE: Please notify us if you change your address, wish to unsubscribe, or wish to change your preference (electronic vs. print) for our newsletters (2 per year).**

**Call 413-376-4747 or email [fcawmass@gmail.com](mailto:fcawmass@gmail.com). THANK YOU!**