

SIGNATURE SUNSETS

PUNCTUATED
DISTINCTION
AT THE END OF LIFE



BLOG

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BOOK

PONDERING LEAVES:
Composing and Conveying
Your Life Story's Epilogue



WEBSITE

ponderingleaves.com

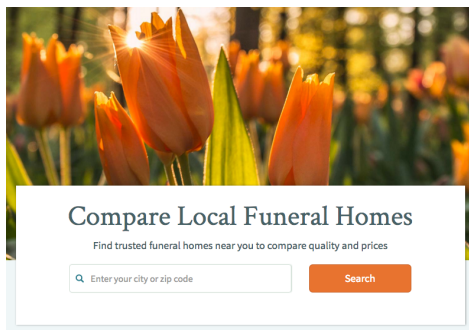
JULY NEWSLETTER

UNUSUAL AND OFTEN ODDBALL "HOLIDAYS" PROVIDE THE FRAMEWORK FOR CONTENT, ALONG WITH OTHER ITEMS OF NOTE. HOPEFULLY, THE PROCESS OF READING THESE PIECES WILL HELP INSTILL A COMFORTABLE WILLINGNESS TO BRING MORTALITY MATTERS OUT OF THE CLOSET FOR A CLOSER LOOK AT THEM.

CONSIDER SHARING... BY FORWARDING THIS MATERIAL TO OTHERS IN AN EFFORT TO LIFT THE VEIL OF DEATH AND SPUR PREEMPTIVE CONTEMPLATION ABOUT PREFERENCES FOR MANAGING END-OF-LIFE DETAILS.

July 1: International Zip Code Day

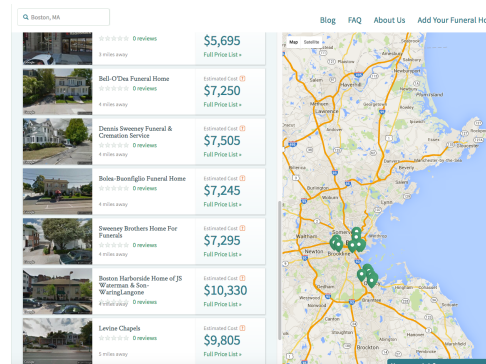
Accessing region-specific information for funeral planning often can be a simple matter of inputting your zip code on websites.



For example:
If searching for a funeral home, there are multiple sites that can be tapped for comparative purposes.

The website, parting.com, at no cost to the user, lists funeral homes in a

particular area, with a coordinating map that identifies the exact location of an establishment on it. A photo of the facility is accompanied by a listing of prices and a synopsis of an average estimated total cost.



July 1: **National US Postage Stamp Day**

To accent a pending occasion of love, often stamps with germane images are applied to wedding invitations. Likewise, consider using stamps with designs that reflect an aspect of a decedent's life when sending funerary information or acknowledgment cards by mail.

Images might depict the state in which the person lived, a musical instrument he played, or an element of life that was especially enjoyed. Customized stamps (zazzle.com/stamps, tinyprints.com, etc.) would confer an even more pronounced personal association.

It's just one more small detail that can contribute to a spirit of commemoration.



July 6: **International Kissing Day**



July 7: **National Macaroni Day**



Question: What can you do to involve a child in preparations for a memorial affair to celebrate the life of someone whose passion was Italian cooking?

Answer: Pour out the contents of a box of naturally colored vegetable macaroni or other form of pasta, give him/her an appropriately-sized string, and suggest making a necklace or bracelet to wear at the commemorative event.

Given enough leeway to prepare ahead of time, consider a preliminary craft project for transforming the pasta to effect bold colors.

<http://www.123homeschool4me.com/2013/11/preschool-craft-pasta-necklace.html>

July 7: **National Strawberry Sundae Day**

A man who died at the age of ninety-seven had been a lifelong member of a local Presbyterian church. As an elder and active congregant, he had served on many committees. One of them was the strawberry sundae festival committee, which entailed making arrangements, year after year, for an annual event that attracted many salivating partakers from the community. Every July the lawn of the expansive church property was transformed into a mass of card tables and chairs with white tablecloths under heaping dishes of strawberry sundaes.

At his request, following his funeral in the church sanctuary, an indoor social gathering took place in the church hall, mimicking in all respects the strawberry sundae festivals of which he had been a pivotal part for so many years. The colorful dessert festooned tables with white tablecloths while being consumed by life companions who realized the significance of what they were eating.



July 8: **Collector Car Appreciation Day**

This Senate-appointed day was conceived as a way to recognize the automobile's historical significance in American history. It raises awareness of the societal value of automotive restoration and collection as a means of underscoring periods of the past.

A number of funeral directors around the country take pleasure in procuring vintage cars that become part of their vehicular offerings for client use during proceedings.

At a funeral home based in Michigan where the automotive industry has been a dominant force in clients' lives, a longtime local funeral director purportedly sought to honor personal work histories in this car manufacturing culture. A project at the Pray Funeral Home was the restoration of a 1937 LaSalle funeral coach that has large wooden panels carved in the side to resemble the drapes that in years past hung from windows of such coaches and horse-drawn hearses. Contrary to focusing only on the past, though, another of the Pray family owners participated in configuring prototypes for two 2005 Cadillac vehicles, one a "State Coach" with a full glass design that allows for viewing of the casket, and the other a limousine with a painted hard top.

<http://www.jonesfunerals.com/vintage-cars>



<http://www.prayfuneral.com/prays-unique-options/unique-funeral-vehicles>

1951 Cadillac Hearse



1957 Ford Flower Car



The Jones Funeral Home in St. James, Missouri offers a vintage fleet of four antique vehicles to their clients at no extra charge... a Cadillac hearse and sedan, a Ford flower car, and a police car:



1952 Cadillac Sedan Four Door



1953 Police Car



At any given facility, in addition to common transport vehicles, there might also be a classy contemporary car, like a Mercedes-Benz hearse, and/or an old classic suggestive of a well-worn shoe. Perhaps more businesses will seek to diversify or dress up their “wheels” as part of campaigns to expand transportation options. Growing numbers of avant-garde clients are apt to want varying elements of presentation that connect the present with the past or that reflect style. Some may want simply to use this means as a way to make a statement that proclaims their uniqueness.

July 13: **International Puzzle Day**

Can you fill in the blanks?

- 1) In a funeral home, a casket is placed on a ____.
- 2) A trade ____ preserves bodies at more than one funeral home or related establishment.
- 3) An economical ____ casket, used repeatedly, accommodates the body in a fabric-covered cardboard insert that slides out through a drop-down door at the end of it.
- 4) At Jewish funerals, a close family member's garment may be ____ as part of a ritual.
- 5) ____ pallbearers accompany a casket, but don't carry it.
- 6) A customary religious or ethnic practice at funeral services is termed a ____.
- 7) According to Chinese tradition, ____ is a forbidden color at Chinese funerals.
- 8) States ordinarily stipulate minimum time requirements before a ____ can take place.
- 9) After a body's demise, the ____ may be donated for Alzheimer's Disease research.
- 10) At a committal ceremony for a veteran, a ____ is given to a family member by a military representative.
- 11) A ____ is removed from a body before cremation to prevent explosion.
- 12) The most common type of rock used for cemetery monuments is ____.
- 13) A ____ or liner is often required by cemeteries to prevent ground depressions.
- 14) Though a pre-planner need not purchase goods and services before death, simply stating or recording ____ is likely to be tremendously appreciated by family members.

(Answers are toward the end of the newsletter, before the Photo Depot)

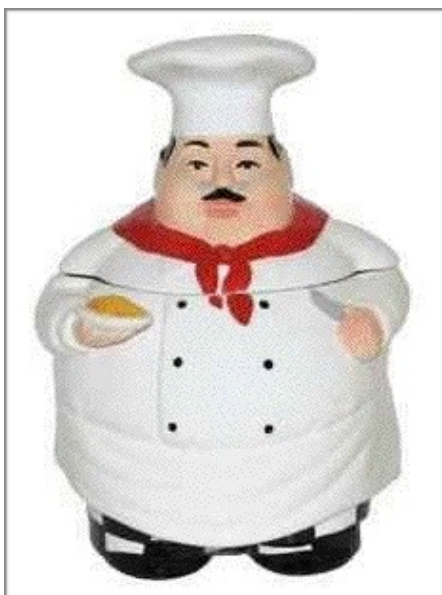
July 15: **National Give Something Away Day**

Downsizing before dying can generate opportunities for personal bestowals. There are many options for designating or producing things to be presented as legacy gifts, without sinking a dime into the endeavor or at least with minimal outlay of money. Probably the most endearing gestures are the ones that would illustrate nuances of a relationship with a particular person or group, or those symbolically associated with family history and ancestry.

You may choose to give such presents to a few close associates, one special person in your life, or a group of close companions. Naturally, one's immediate tendency would be to select beloved family members as recipients, but consider also expanding your giving effort to those more peripheral to your everyday life... anyone who is apt to be affected by the loss of an interactive relationship with you. When sorting through possessions, you might even come across relics that you'd like to donate to a historical society.



Throughout ensuing years, you can be on the lookout for possessions that you value and would want others to have at the end of your life. Initially, the easiest ones to identify will be those with monetary value, such as collectibles, jewelry, and fine china.



But stay attuned also to the things you cherish for other, more personal reasons.

Take stock of your inventory and take notes (or use a tape recorder), perhaps even labeling objects with names of intended recipients if you are far along in life. Or you could take pictures of items and establish a pictorial record. To clarify and magnify their significance, include notations about the relevance of each and its history as related to your life, along with your reasons for selecting particular people for secondary ownership. Maintain an ongoing file with your other final arrangements.

Often as people reach advanced age they initiate a process of presenting these types of keepsakes before they die, enjoying the pleasure of recipients' responses. At that point they are ready to whittle down.

Although separation from cherished items can be emotionally traumatic, there is consolation in deliberate dispersal as opposed to the risk of haphazard distribution or disposal after death in the absence of specified designations. As with everything else, a person's own style will determine how such items are gifted. It may be done anonymously. Or some individuals will invite family members to survey household wares for the sake of identifying pieces they would like to have, perhaps labeling them with colored tape or notes for distribution later.

Others, favoring a surprise element, may use gift wrap with ribbons and bows to heighten the impact of their gestures.

Some people may enjoy structuring an occasion for this purpose. A birthday, anniversary, new birth, or holiday may afford just the right backdrop. Perhaps an exceptional meal at home or in a restaurant may support significance with an opportunity to discuss stories associated with objects. Or maybe returning to a special place for a special presentation would lend accentuation while further accumulating fond memories.



July 24: Tell an Old Joke Day

My old aunts used to come up to me at weddings, poking me in the ribs and cackling, "You're next!" After a while, I figured out how to stop them. I started doing the same thing to them at funerals!

After grabbing his suitcase from the luggage carousel, Jim headed outside to hail a taxi, which promptly picked him up. Twenty minutes into the ride Jim had a question for the taxi driver. "Excuse me sir," said Jim tapping the driver on the shoulder.

"AHHHHHHH" screamed the taxi driver, swerving the car across three lanes of traffic and finally stopping the it on the opposite shoulder. "What the heck was that all about?" demanded Jim, thoroughly shaken. "I'm sorry," said the taxi driver, wiping his brow, "this is my first day on the job. I've been driving a hearse for the last fifty years!"

I was a little taken aback when I got my receipt from the funeral home. On the bottom, underneath the bill, it read, "Thank you. Please come again."

<http://www.greatcleanjokes.com/jokes/death-humor/funeral-jokes/>

July 25: **International Red Shoe Day**



This is a remembrance day that was established in 2014 in memory of a particular Australian woman and all others who died as a result of Lyme Disease. It also recognizes individuals worldwide whose deaths were due to other invisible diseases. "In the broad sense of the term, invisible illnesses are those that are generally 'invisible,' not only from the outward appearance of the person, but also seemingly invisible to appropriate research, treatment and care of the thousands of people that are living with them."

It was a Lyme Disease support group that inspired the tribute. In anticipation of planting a tree in a garden to honor their cohort who had died, a desire to have a sign in her favorite color elicited a friend's comment. "Her favourite colour was green, unless it was shoes! She loved red shoes." So on this day every year, people are encouraged to wear red shoes and post a picture on Facebook along with notations of associated memories.

<https://www.lymedisease.org/red-shoe-day-lyme-2/>

Beyond heightening awareness of Lyme Disease, individuals who have been afflicted with it at some point during their lifetimes have an opportunity to contribute to the study of its effects on the human body. Donations of bodily substance enable post-mortem investigations, which are conducted at Columbia University Medical Center's Lyme and Tick-Borne Diseases Research Center. Arrangements can be made to have one's brain, spinal cord, and other tissues removed upon death and sent to the research center. Next of kin must be made aware of this intention, with quick access to one's medical history and lab test results, including documentation of the disease condition.

http://www.columbia-lyme.org/research/columbia_specimen_bank.html

Puzzle Answers

- 1) bier 2) embalmer 3) rental 4) torn 5) Honorary 6) ritual 7) red 8) cremation 9) brain
10) flag 11) pacemaker 12) granite 13) vault 14) wishes/preferences

The PHOTO DEPOT

Images related to an aspect of death management, sometimes obtained by way of nationwide travels, illustrate examples of merchandise, facilities, services, or concepts – often featuring novelties to broaden viewers' horizons beyond purviews of standard funerary fare.

The Tranquil Oaks cremation garden is a modern addition at the Glen Haven Cemetery in Winter Park, Florida.

When strolling around burial grounds, you never know when visitors might want to pause for a picnic or a game of chess!



Unique memorial structures in the “family estates” section here are particularly inviting.

A COMMUNITY PROGRAM... "EXITER UNIVERSITY"

End-of-Life Event Planning ~ Education for Enlivened Conclusions

September 2016 (date yet to be announced)
First Unitarian Church, 220 Winton Road South, Rochester, NY

Topic: The Gift of Preparedness for End-of-Life Management

A Preliminary Overview of Exit Strategies

Photo Slideshow and Discussion

An **OPPORTUNITY** to learn
about invigorating options
in the funerary realm!



A congenial way to find
the **FUN** in FUNeral
event planning!

A **GIFT** for your family...
planning well in advance
for the eventual end of life!



A pleasant way to design the **WRAP-up**...
getting together with other mortals
to explore the possibilities!

SPONTANEOUS DISCUSSIONS ABOUT DEATH

Wednesday, August 24, 2016, 6:00-7:45 p.m.

Legacy at Clover Blossom,
Rochester, NY

Register at:

meetup.com

or

ponderingleaves@gmail.com

For Information about the
International Organization:
deathcafe.com

DEATH CAFE



Signature Sunsets

Final Proceedings Reflecting Personal Style

For individual pre-planning assistance or to arrange a group planning session:

ponderingleaves@gmail.com

Blog

signaturesunsets.blogspot.com

FINISHING TOUCHES

Customized Event Planning for Distinctive Proceedings Following Death



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Website: www.ponderingleaves.com

PONDERING LEAVES

Colorful End-of-Life Pre-planning



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CONCEPT



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Seminars, Workshops, and Discussion Groups

Introductory VIDEO

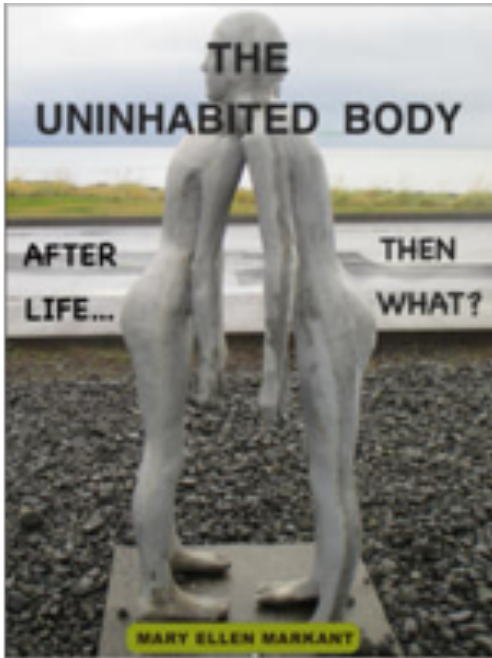
<https://www.educreations.com/lesson/view/end-of-life-pre-planning-to-die-for/29322450/?ref=app>



To Schedule A Photo Slideshow Presentation

Contact: passages@ponderingleaves.com

Publications



An eBook...

"You can't take it with you," including the most obvious of earthly possessions - one's body. What is to be done with this conspicuous leftover from life?

This resource provides specific information as a basis for making the most basic of funerary decisions: Given the choices, which of several possible means for bodily disposition and maybe even utilization best suits a particular individual?

By choosing a method for management of your body, you will have provided a foundation upon which other funerary decisions can be based.

iTunes store: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/book/the-uninhabited-body/id1100054732?mt=11>

A Two-volume Print Book...

Everything from soup to nuts is at this table of possibilities from which to choose one's own course of action.

An unusual format sprinkled with humor and surprising addendums underlies this enlivened review of funerary matters. Dry bones of familiar standardization are augmented and revitalized with funny bones of novel practices and products.

For Descriptive Details or Purchase:

<http://ponderingleaves.com/book.html>

