
SIGNATURE SUNSETS

PUNCTUATED
DISTINCTION
AT THE END OF LIFE



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BOOK

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



WEBSITE

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JUNE 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 IN AN EFFORT TO LIFT THE VEIL OF DEATH AND SPUR PREEMPTIVE CONTEMPLATION ABOUT PREFERENCES FOR MANAGING END-OF-LIFE DETAILS.

Aquarium Month

An Example of Meaningful Memorialization:

Let's suppose an avid recreational fisherman by the name of Robert has died. His entire life encompassed activities that reflected his passion for aquatic vertebrates and the sport they engendered. He had always been filled to the gills with chums, many of whom shared his hobby and had been harpooned into participating in tournaments with him. This boatload of dear friends affectionately dubbed their pal, "Bobber," a moniker that stuck for their many years together.

Needless to say, at ebb tide when Bobber's life ended, his companions sank into the drink of despair. After sharing many fish stories at his funeral service, they arranged a time to meet at a local watering hole down the pike for a brainstorming session. At that meeting they trolled for ideas for a relevant remembrance item that would cast a spin on the nature of the life they had shared.

Ideas flowed just as readily as the beer had during their lifelong fishing expeditions. Certainly, the wind was in their sails as they set their collective minds in motion and

tackled the task. It wasn't long before they reeled in a big one... the catch that didn't get away because everyone agreed it was a keeper. With such a large group of Bobber's pals involved in the mission, contributions to fund their commemorative plan streamed in generously.

Before long a new attraction enhanced the wildlife center on the wooded shores of the lake where these mates had baited many a catch. Centrally featured in the middle of the exhibition hall there now stands a voluminous, eight-foot-long aquarium billowing with life. Its waters ripple with the acceleration of multi-colored inhabitants swiftly darting from one end to the other. Besides providing containment, each crony personally researched inventories and selected a unique fish of his own choosing. Each unique species became a companion of others in the new aquatic domain, symbolically alluding to the fishermen's shared relationships with one another.



It is a showpiece of splendor, but more importantly, this thoughtfully conceived memorial reflects the passion of Bobber's life and that of the anglers who were part of it.

Beyond its significance as a monument to the past, though, is the entertainment and intrigue it invokes among all who visit this shrine of natural beauty nestled in the woods. The lure of the display has swelled, thanks to media publicity. People visit not just to snag a few moments of visual stimulation, but especially because they've become hooked on the poignant ramifications of such a relevant masterpiece. It is a living tribute to a man regarded as a big fish in a small pond, someone whose presence on earth commanded the affection of so many who swam with him in the sea of life.

National Camping Month

A Caveat of Customization:



Gather around the campfire in a spirit of unity. With luminous flames accentuating the encircled faces of other guests, share anecdotal recollections of time spent in the great outdoors with your beloved decedent. Raise your voices in renditions of her favorite campfire sing-a-

longs. With crackling sounds as a backdrop, watch and listen as each person tosses a branch in the fire while simultaneously noting a quality of the individual who is no longer present. Revel in these riveting moments of mourning, powerfully addressing the sinews of grief while rendering enduring memories and an ongoing connection with the person you loved.

Given the personalization trend of recent years, inspirations for memorial services such as this one may utilize atypical sites. No longer moored to funeral home chapels and local parishes, people can engage in proceedings likely to linger in their minds long afterward and far more effectively than conventional services that decay due to forgettable standardization.

However, an occasion of this sort could easily become one of exclusion. That is, probably some of the decedent's mourners would be physically incapable or disinclined to attend a gathering of this nature. Imagine frail or elderly individuals attempting to plod tentatively and precariously along a primitive wooded trail. Consider also the widespread, ever-growing concern for exposure to mosquitoes and ticks. Many factors might keep a person at home rather than joining a community of comrades whose lives had been entwined with that of the departed loved one. Alone in their grief, they could unintentionally be denied an opportunity for communal mourning.

So, if planning a memorial service for yourself or someone else, consider the needs of everyone.

Maybe the location could be similarly oriented, but more easily reached... perhaps a lakefront spot, close to a parking lot, where a sunset could be observed.



Or plan that campfire in the woods, perhaps just for close relatives and friends or a small group. But, also, arrange to have a separate, more accessible service for all others. A service wouldn't have to be at a traditional site, it wouldn't have to conform to a customary format, and it wouldn't have to be devoid of personalized elements. Instead, a planner could simply aim to permit universal participation at some time in some form while engendering unanimous appreciation for an opportunity to mourn with others.

National Oceans Month

A Stone Memorial That's All Wet:



Since coral reefs serve as ecosystems that support a large proportion of marine species, it's important to implement measures that sustain them. All around the world, such natural habitats have been in decline, partially because of detrimental human influences.

Photo Source: nationalgeographic.com

Fortunately, funerary innovators have plunged into development of artificial reef projects that promote underwater life while offering an alternative to cemetery burials of cremated remains. Structures they produce are molded into forms that are uniquely designed and specific to each business.

Cremated remains are either mixed into the concrete construction material or contained in a separate chamber subsequently embedded in the memorial reef.



The Eternal Reefs company has emerged as the most publicly recognized among providers of this option. As partners with The Reef Ball Foundation and Reef Innovations, leaders in worldwide marine environmental restoration and preservation, it is headquartered in Decatur, Georgia, with a manufacturing base in Sarasota, Florida.

Currently, prices for purchase and placement of one of four available concrete reefs range between \$3,000. and \$7500., depending on the size selected.

Six deployment sites are located along the Atlantic Coast and the Gulf of Mexico.



Participation by families is encouraged, but not required. They can choose to be present at a deployment location for final reef preparations, visitations, and ceremonies on land, followed by observation of placement in the water on board a chartered boat with multiple families in attendance (\$75.per person).

Or they may delegate personnel to manage all aspects, prior to being informed about the date and GPS location.

eternalreefs.com



A similar option that was inspired by the Great Burial Reef enterprise, which originated in Bradenton, Florida, is available in New England through New England Burials At Sea. A substantial concrete reef with cremated remains sealed inside its core differs in appearance from the Eternal Reefs version, but is conceptually aligned.



It can be deployed with or without family in attendance aboard an accompanying yacht.

<http://www.newenglandburialsatsea.com/great-burial-reef/more-great-burial-reef-information/>

Photo Sources:

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/114982596707781106/>

<http://www.newenglandburialsatsea.com/great-burial-reef/>



The Living Reef Memorial, operating off the Pacific coast between San Diego, California and Mexico, is a division of the Global Preservation Project, an international ecological nonprofit operating projects in South American countries.

Various sizes and single, double, or multiple containment of remains determine prices, with a range up to \$4,000. Alternatively, a family can mail cremated remains to be incorporated into a small, urn-like memorial reef that is then returned to the sender.



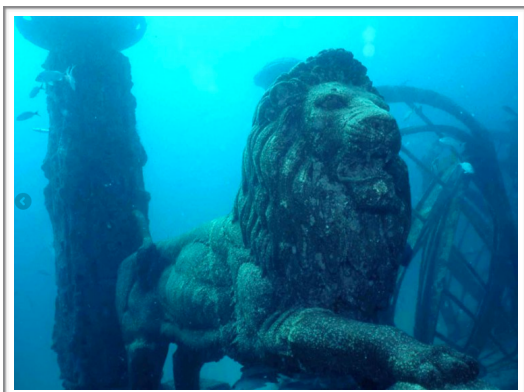
<http://www.livingreefmemorial.com/the-living-reef-memorial-collection/>

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The Neptune Memorial Reef, under the auspices of The Trident Society, is a memorial cremation site. The circular replica of the mythical lost city of Atlantis with multiple themed areas was erected on a sixteen-acre expanse of sandy sea terrain. Located under waters three and a quarter miles off the coast of Key Biscayne, Florida, this artistically interpreted creation was conceived to become the world's largest man-made reef.



Concrete and bronze constitute the substance for multi-variant, intricate structures with spaces for inurnment cylinders, termed "placements." These cylinders, composed of concrete that has been impregnated with cremated remains, are set within statues, columns, domes, arches, platforms, and other configurations, some rising to within twenty-five feet of the ocean's surface.



A premium haven for eternal dwelling is within the bowels of two lions that guard the gates to this fantasy city.

Alternatively, there are less costly options for integration of remains into small, singular formations by mixing them with concrete to form a small structure. Families can participate in the mixing process and may add small mementos or embed handprints.



After about ninety days the structure is deployed to the reef site. Families may return at that time to observe deployment from a boat or by diving, and if conditions permit, by participating in adding the structure to its final location on the ocean floor.



Later, since the memorial city is so close to the water's surface, they are encouraged to don scuba gear for a visit to it by way of a dive boat operator.

<http://www.nmreef.com/#>

<http://www.tridentsociety.com/memorial-reef>

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If you have an affinity for water and maybe even have spent your life submerged in it for recreational or vocational purposes... or if ecological concerns dictate your actions... if you'd like your death to be associated in a unique manner with life... and you want a memorial marker of some sort... consider the possibilities at the bottom of the sea.



Rose Month

A Simple, Solitary Element:

One doesn't need to think beyond the obvious when planning a church funeral for a woman by the name of Rose. Yet this visual accent is a poignant touch that is apt to be remembered by guests, perhaps long after spoken words have been forgotten.

June 7th World Pet Memorial Day

A Unique Cemetery Event:



On February 16, 2013, amid hallowed burial grounds at Venice Memorial Gardens in Sarasota, Florida there was no need to admonish anyone with a directive to “quit clowning around.” In fact, in this milieu that ordinarily invokes subdued reverence, antics and activities common to the Big Top were the order of the day. Against a backdrop of crypts and columbaria, a circus of sorts “came to town.”

It was a sunny day when the circus theme materialized here to commemorate the life and conduct the burial of a dog named Gizmoe, who had been a cherished companion of one of the funeral directors. Her interment served as a prelude to the grand opening of the cemetery's new pet burial section half an hour later.

Continued... <http://signaturesunsets.blogspot.com/2015/06/pet-cemetery-circus.html>

June 14th Flag Day

A Recycling Opportunity

Many funeral homes sponsor flag retirement ceremonies to which the public may be invited. Community members and groups may be asked to deliver their unusable flags to the funeral homes prior to such events. Protocol dictates a sequence of proceedings that entails either burning of all the flags that have been collected or a representative one of them; in such instances, the remaining ones are later incinerated. Funeral homes often engage veterans' organizations and Boy Scout or Girl Scout troops to participate in ceremonies. There may be a Color Guard involved in performing rituals, and sometimes even a military gun salute.



Many countrywide funeral homes have established an alternative type of practice. Like the facilities that host retirement ceremonies, they request worn-out flag donations, sometimes by way of prominent signs on their properties.

But instead of ceremoniously burning the collective assortment outdoors as an event, they burn them individually in conjunction with cremation processes. That is, according to family wishes, a donated flag is draped over the casket of a veteran prior to its entry into the crematory chamber. Though hearts are no longer beating under the red, white, and blue, as in the "Grand Old Flag" song, the hearts of family members are warmed by the significance of this gesture.



The ongoing escalation of cremation rates has accelerated a uniquely patriotic opportunity for resourcefulness in funeral homes. This commemorative measure honors those Americans who have served to promote peace for fellow countrymen living under the high flying flag... in the land they love... the home of the free and the brave.

SURPRISE!

June 18th
Worldwide Knit In Public Day

You never know what you might find in funeral homes these days. In this case it was a gathering of ladies seated comfortably in a capacious space under a cathedral ceiling, immediately visible upon entering the building through the front door. A fireplace and grand piano in the background lent an aura of homespun hospitality. All heads were flexed downward, at first glance perhaps suggestive of a grief support group. But, no, these women, in concert with one another and in a spirit of congeniality, were knitting!



It was at the Geib Funeral Center and Crematory in Dover, Ohio – a funeral establishment with strong ties to local happenings – so much so that “and Community Center” could rightfully be added to their nomenclature. Sponsored programs, participation in community events, and availability of their facility for diverse purposes have popularized the facility as an inviting place to hang out.

The PHOTO DEPOT

Images related to some aspect of death management, often 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.

It's summertime and the livin' is easy here at this storied graveyard. At Hollywood Forever in Los Angeles, stargazers can nestle on the ground above deceased celebrity stars and under glistening moonlit stars to watch an evening flick. Every Saturday night, with picnic gear, blankets, and beach chairs in tow, moviegoers flock onto the grassy turf in front of which movies are projected onto the wall of a mausoleum.



Photo: Kelly Lee Barrett

<http://www.laweekly.com/arts/hollywood-forever-cemetery-movies-sell-out-every-weekend-because-douches-dont-go-video-5800562>

The cemetery's attraction, which originated fifteen years ago and in recent time has been dubbed, "Cinespia," consistently draws sold-out crowds of both the young and the old to capture the vibe of a cemetery screening. Classic movies are accompanied by a dynamic sound system, music, fun photo booth, and party-like atmosphere.

ANNOUNCING

A NEW PROGRAM... “EXITER UNIVERSITY”

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

THURSDAY JULY 14, 6:00-8:00 p.m.
First Unitarian Church, 220 Winton Road South, Rochester, NY

Topic: Funeral Home Novelties and New Directions
A 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!

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

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signaturesunsets.blogspot.com

FINISHING TOUCHES

Customized Event Planning for Distinctive Proceedings Following Death



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PONDERING LEAVES

Colorful End-of-Life Pre-planning



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Seminars, Workshops, and Discussion Groups

Introductory VIDEO

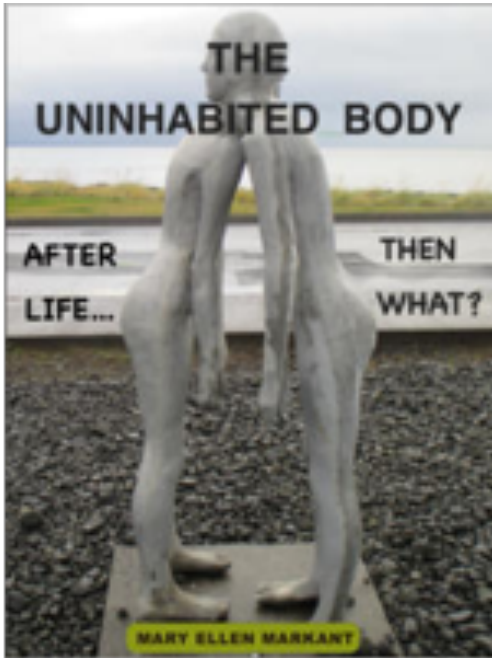
<https://www.educrations.com/lesson/view/end-of-life-pre-planning-to-die-for/29322450/?ref=app>



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>

