

SIGNATURE SUNSETS

Initiatives To Advance Learning About End of Life



POINTS of INTEREST

Wildflower Week (second week of May)

As part of proceedings on certain natural burial grounds, guests have been given wildflower seeds to toss over gravesites.



Bluebird Meadow
natural burial section at
White Haven Memorial Park
in Rochester, NY.

UPCOMING ONLINE OPPORTUNITIES

Death Cafe

Tuesday, May 6, 7:00-8:00 pm EDT

Hosted by Heather Massey from Falmouth, MA and conducted in accordance with established guidelines, per <https://deathcafe.com/>

The discussion, with no agenda or objectives, will proceed spontaneously according to whatever is on the minds of participants, who engage as mortals rather than as end-of-life specialists.

Participation is active, not passive, so it is expected that all cameras will be turned on for face-to-face contact.

The Zoom room will open shortly before 7:00, when attendees will be admitted from the waiting room.

National Bike Week (third week of May)

In an effort to reduce emissions at Sunset Hill Cemetery in Eugene, Oregon, about fifteen years ago funeral director, Wade Lind, conceived and constructed a tricycle hearse with a casket on board that he pedaled to the burial site.



May 2nd

International Tuba Day

For most of his adult life, a podiatrist and Vancouver resident has wanted to have a brass band play at his funeral. Spurred by advancing age, he realized, "You don't find them in the Pacific Northwest anymore. If I was to have a brass band at my funeral I'd better start the band myself."



Death Cafe: Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81737644447>

Meeting ID: 817 3764 4447

Conservation Burial Wednesday, May 28, 7:00-8:15 pm EDT

Viennia Lopes Booth and Tanja Ryden, representatives of the newly established non-profit group, Returning to Our Roots (RTOR), will present an in-depth exploration of conservation burial and RTOR's efforts to create a conservation burial ground cemetery in southeastern Massachusetts.

<https://www.returningtoourroots.org/>

Focal points:

- What constitutes "Conservation Burial"
- The difference between natural/green burial and conservation burial
- Efforts to obtain appropriate land (by purchase or donation) to create a conservation burial cemetery in SE Massachusetts
- Other examples of conservation burial grounds nationally
- A national organization, the Conservation Burial Alliance, supporting national conservation burial start-ups



<https://www.conservationburialalliance.org/>

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87990993719>

Meeting ID: 879 9099 3719

So more than fifteen years ago, Dr. Marc Lindy founded The Homegoing Brass Band, an ensemble of four horns (two trumpets, a trombone, a tuba) and drums that plays at funerals and other sombre occasions. The tuba enthusiast had played the cornet and French horn growing up, but learned to play the tuba specifically for this purpose, instilling in him joyful satisfaction.

<https://vancouver.sun.com/news/local-news/tuba-playing-podiatrist-leads-vancouver-funeral-brass-band>

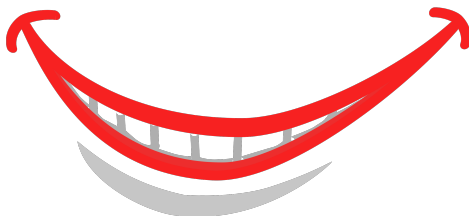


<https://www.linkedin.com/in/marc-lindy-33448a65/overlay/photo/>

May 5th

Cartoonist Day

One might think there would be minimal or no applications for this designation in the funerary world. But creative sorts have had a field day with all sorts of inspired drawings, infusing the domain with potential for giggles along the way.



OTHER HAPPENINGS

IN-PERSON in Rochester, NY

Storytelling Through Obituaries

Funeral Consumers Alliance of Greater Rochester
(FCAGR) Annual Meeting

Saturday, May 3, 2025, 10:00-12 noon,
refreshments at 9:30 am.

Valley Manor, 1570 East Ave., Rochester

* Please park at 1530 East Ave.

Who will tell your story? What will be said?
Who will write it? What do you want others to know?
What would you say about a loved one or friend?
Where should I start? Do you want someone who
doesn't know you to write your story?

Please join us for suggestions and ideas, whether
you write it for yourself or for someone else.

Free and open to the public. All are welcome.





Paving the Way for Dying Well

Monday, May 12, 1:00-2:30 pm

Lifespan, 1900 Clinton Ave., Rochester

Death and dying is a topic that many people attempt to avoid, but in recognizing death is inevitable, it's important to prepare for our own death and the death of our loved ones. This workshop will offer resources for transition preparedness, with an objective of capturing fulfilling moments when life is ending.

Presented by Mary Ellen Markant,
End-of-Life Educator



REGISTRATION:

<https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/>

You can also register by calling Lifespan's workshop registration line at 585-244-8400 ext. 201. You will be instructed to leave a voicemail.

Death Cafe

Thursday, May 22, 1:00-2:30 pm

Lifespan, 1900 Clinton Ave., Rochester

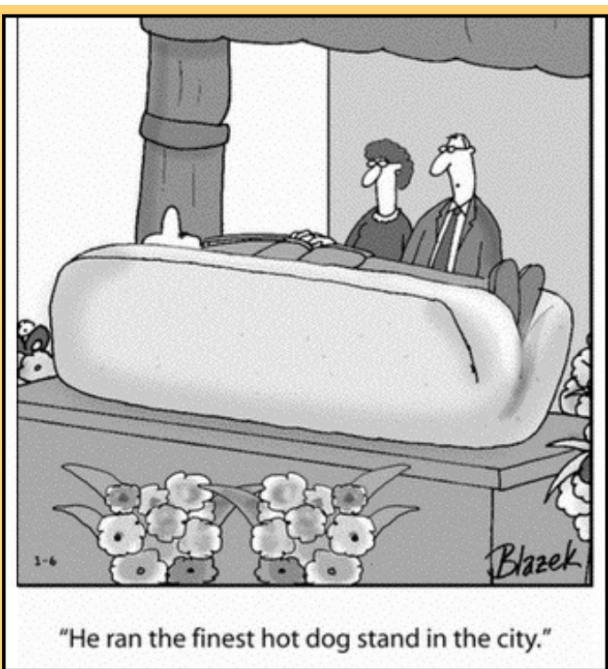
Death cafes are gatherings to share thought-provoking, engaging, and respectful conversations on death. They are not intended as a bereavement support group, counseling, or therapy. If you are looking for space to talk about and learn other perspectives on death, this is the opportunity for you!

Facilitated by Mary Ellen Markant,
End-of-Life Educator

REGISTRATION:

<https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/>

You can also register by calling Lifespan's workshop registration line at 585-244-8400 ext. 201. You will be instructed to leave a voicemail.



May 18th
International
Museum Day

National Museum of Funeral History
Houston, Texas



America's largest collection of
authentic, historical funeral
service items...

It contains a collection of artifacts
and relics that aim to "educate
the public and preserve the
heritage of death care." The
35,000-square-foot museum
opened in 1992. (Wikipedia)



IN-PERSON in Raleigh-Durham, NC

**The Cost of Goodbye:
Confronting Funeral Poverty
In Our Communities**

June 26-29

Embassy Suites by Hilton,
Raleigh-Durham, NC

National Funeral Consumers Alliance
2025 Biennial Conference

Keynote Speaker Dr. Pamela Prickett

"The Unclaimed: America's Forgotten Deaths"

Agenda includes:

Screening of film, *The Burial*

Speaker sessions:

<https://funerals.org/biennial-conference-speakers/>

Receptions

Tour of Endswell Funeral Home's
alkaline hydrolysis facility

Tour of Bluestem Conservation Cemetery



<https://funerals.org/2025-biennial-conference/>

Open to the public!

For out-of-towners, an opportunity for an extended
weekend getaway to capture end-of-life enlightenment
and a change of scenery!

REGISTRATION:

<https://funerals.org/2025-conference-registration/>

May 19th

National Devil's Food Cake Day

Might this be a relevant food to serve at someone's funeral reception? Or would angel food cake be a better representation of the decedent?



May 25th

National Wine Day



A "wine cellar" room at Hodges Funeral Home in Naples, Florida where families can congregate for a catered reception adjacent to the room where funeral services are held.

OTHER HAPPENINGS

ONLINE

Thursday, May 8, 12:00-1:00 pm EDT

End Of Life Midwives In Conversation

Hosted By Bridging Transitions:

Birgitta and Cheserae invite us to join a conversation on death, dying, and grief. Inviting questions, wonder, and stories, they share insights from their lived experience as end-of-life midwives.

REGISTRATION:

<https://letsreimagine.org/76768/end-of-life-midwives-in-conversation-35>



Thursday, May 8, 7:00-8:30 pm EDT

Oh, Broken-Open Heart: A Mother's Day Poetry Gathering for Mourners

Hosted By Reimagine:

Join Reimagine and Evermore for an hour and a half of poetry, writing, conversation, and connection. Poets James Crews and Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer provide a virtual refuge for people who have lost a mother/mother figure or a child.

REGISTRATION

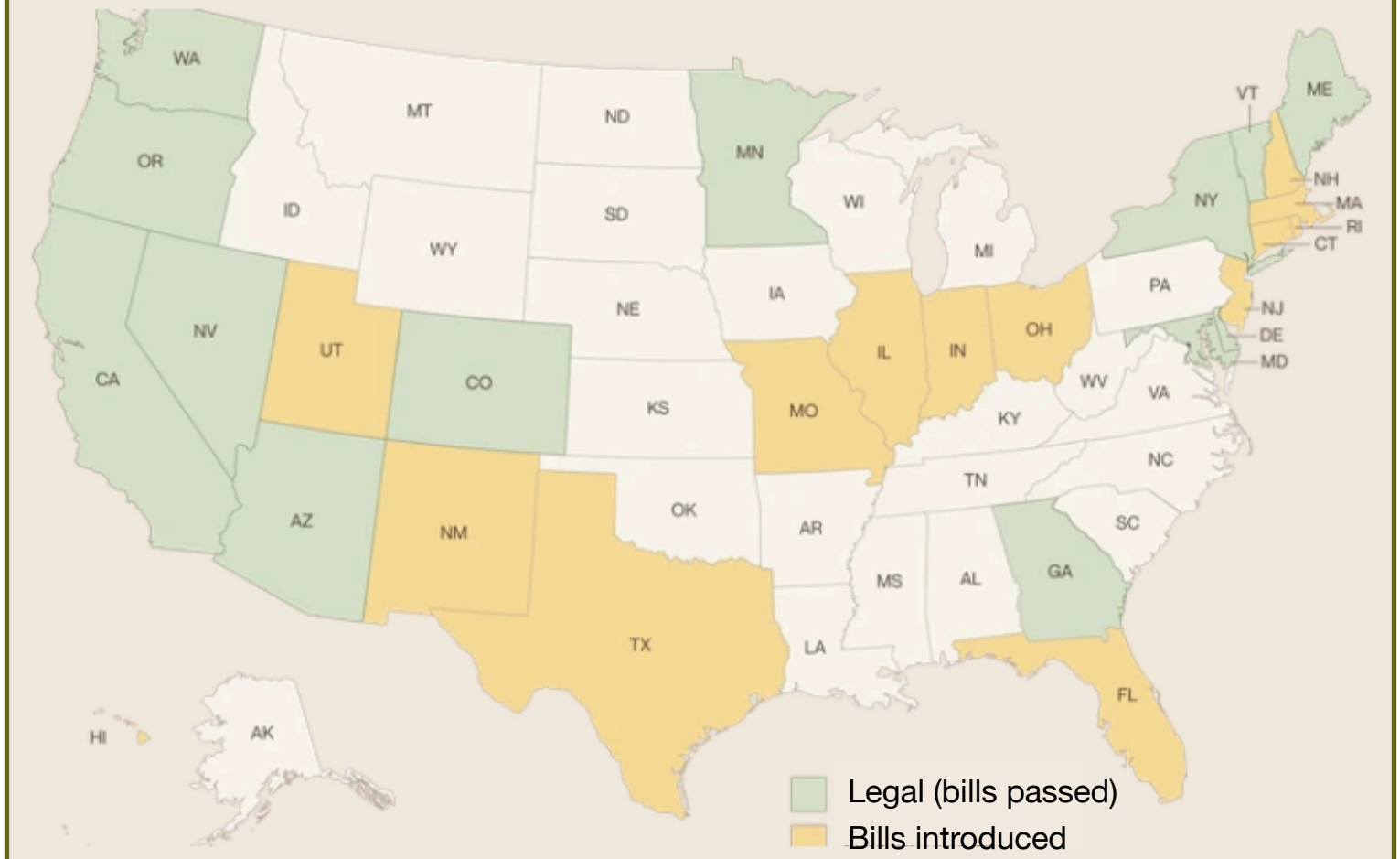
<https://letsreimagine.org/76768/oh-broken-open-heart-a-mothers-day-poetry-gathering-for-mourners>

May 29th

Learn About Composting Day

Human composting (aka natural organic reduction, terramation) facilities are operational in Washington State and Colorado. The process has been legally approved in other states, as well, with bills pending elsewhere.

Washington was the first state to legalize the process in 2019, with the law taking effect in May 2020. Since then, other states have followed and, with momentum building, further states are expected to do the same.



<https://earthfuneral.com/resources/tracker-where-human-composting-legal/>

A body is embedded in a container filled with wood chips, straw, alfalfa, and sometimes sawdust to promote natural decomposition. Oxygen flows through the vessel. Microbes from the organic material in concert with microbes within the body function expediently amid nitrogen and carbon emanating from the organisms. These elements serve as a food supply and support the growth and reproduction of the microbes. Sometimes the vessels are rotated to augment the supply of oxygen that's vital for the microbial workhorses implementing the aerobic process. And sometimes a mix of bacteria, fungi, and protozoa is added to the body's supply of bacteria to expedite the process. An internal probe monitors the level of oxygen and the degree of heat generated, with predictable variations as the process evolves.

Within a few weeks (with additional time for curing), the body is turned into compost, resulting in a substantial amount of nutrient-rich soil to support vegetative growth in whatever way a family wishes, whether for small plants, a garden, or donated to a wooded parcel of land, etc.

FACILITIES

Return Home, Auburn, Washington



The gathering space where families can hold services and conduct rituals.

Recompose, Seattle, Washington



Composting vessels in a honeycomb arrangement



Earth Funeral, Auburn, Washington, and Las Vegas, Nevada, and future facility under development in Baltimore, Maryland



The Natural Funeral, Lafayette and Loveland, Colorado



Dan Ziskin, Chief Scientist, with bags of regenerative living soil





MARY ELLEN MARKANT

Signature Sunsets

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