Annual General Meeting
Tuesday, 1st June, 2010, 7:30 pm.
First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa (Fellowship Hall),
30 Cleary Ave. Ottawa, ON. Parking on the church property
(Cleary Ave joins Richmond Rd. at traffic lights about one km east of Woodroffe Ave.
OCTranspo buses #18 and #2 stop at Cleary Ave. The church is at the end of Cleary Ave.)

AGENDA
1. Welcome (Mary Nash)
2. Minutes of 2009 AGM (Gunther Abrahamson)
3. President's Report (Mary Nash)
4. Treasurer and Auditor's Report (Gunther Abrahamson)
5. Appointment of Auditor (Gunther Abrahamson)
7. By-law amendments
8. Other business
9. Adjournment of Business Meeting
10. Speaker: Jack Wright (former Unitarian chaplain) "Reflections of a Chaplain"
   Slideshow: Buddhist burial in Vietnam
   (Gillian Macdonnell and Mary Nash)

FISO BOARD FOR 2010-11
Mary Nash
Gunther Abrahamson
Bob Stevenson
Betty Ann Rollo
Louise Watson
plus ...Yourself
Your neighbour
Your friend
Your colleague

PLEASE CONSIDER
VOLUNTEERING ... FOR THE
HEALTH OF THE SOCIETY
Nominations will be accepted
from the floor

In Support of Simplicity, Dignity and Moderate Cost in Funerals
P.O. Box 32057 at 1386 Richmond Road,
Ottawa, ON K2B 1A1
Telephone: (613) 828-4926
Email: fiso@ncf.ca
Web address: http://fiso.ncf.ca
MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT
This year has sped by as usual and your Board has worked hard to further the aims of the Society. We have repatriated and redesigned our website. It is now managed by us and hosted by Ottawa’s Freenet. Our new email address is fiso@ncf.ca and our website is http://fiso.ncf.ca. Have a look at and let us know what you think. You will also notice that we have a new logo.

This year we were invited to have an information table at the Glebe EcoFair in November free of charge and took the opportunity to particularly displayed materials on green burial. We continue our quest to bring the possibility of green burial to Ottawa and you can read about our progress elsewhere in this newsletter.

We have been short of volunteers for Board members again this year. The three people who volunteered for Board positions at the 2009 AGM all had resigned for various reasons by Dec. 2009. This caused us to put out an interim newsletter by email and Bob Stevenson very kindly stepped up but we need more people to do so. Read about the benefits of volunteering elsewhere in this newsletter. The situation is serious and if no one steps forward either as a result of this plea or at the AGM, your Board will seriously consider dissolving the Society, which would be a pity for consumers in Ottawa. Volunteer now by contacting me, Mary Nash, at the contact points on the first page of this newsletter.

Hope to see you at the AGM.

Mary M. Nash, President

THANK YOU
Many people help with the work of the Society.
– We would like to acknowledge the work of Eric Clyde in putting the newsletter together year after year. We really appreciate your efforts, Eric.
– Some Board members are retiring and we hope that others will come forward to take their place. Many thanks to Don Moore and Gillian Macdonnell for your assistance over the years.
– Also, our thanks to John Rutherford for continuing to audit our finances, we appreciate the assistance.
– And a big thank you to April Forsberg, one of our members, for outlining a publicity campaign for us, which we would like to carry out if we had the volunteers to do it.
– To the Federal Superannuantes National Association, Ottawa Branch for once again giving us a table to display our brochures at their AGM.

EMAIL EMAIL EMAIL
Over the past few years we have been asking those of you who have email addresses to allow us to send you the newsletter electronically. It saves us on postage and printing which are among the biggest expenses for the Society. If you are reading this electronically, you have obviously already sent in your email address. However, some of you who previously sent in an email address may be surprised to get it in paper. This is because when we sent out an interim email newsletter just before Christmas, about 40 email addresses came back as undeliverable. If you have changed your email address in the past few years, please let us know and if you change it in the future, remember to let us know as well, just as you would notify people of your regular address change when moving. Thanks for your help.

Please send your email address to fiso@ncf.ca if you have not already done so.

LETTER WRITING CAMPAIGN--URGENT
The Ontario government has been working for almost 10 years to change the legislation dealing with the funeral industry. One proposed change has come to our attention which would be detrimental to consumers’ interests. It has been suggested, by funeral service providers, that they should be allowed to keep 10% of any prepaid funeral plans. This would mean that at the time that the services would be provided, the consumer would only have 90% of the deposited amount to work with. The Ministry claims that ‘consumers would continue to benefit from the guarantee of a fixed price at the time of need and could not be charged additional amounts at the time the supplies and services are to be delivered.’ We do not see how this would not lead to the consumer being charged more at the time of need. The shortfall of 10% has to be made up somehow.

To protest this potential situation, please contact your own member of the Provincial Parliament and the Minister of Consumer Services, Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis, 6th fl, Mowat Block, 900 Bay Street, Toronto ON M7A 1L2 or email her at saggelonitis.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org

NEED FOR BOARD MEMBERS
The need for new Board members is urgent! Please consider volunteering.

CONFESSION OF A BOARD MEMBER
I am a sinner. I committed the deadly sin of volunteering: something my experiences in the army said was a complete no-no. The mantra was never ever volunteer. But then I up and did it. I volunteered to be a member of the Board of trustees for FASHD. No arm-twisting, no inducements and no idea what I was getting into!

Then, low and behold, I found sinning to be very pleasurable. It was a new experience and full of fun because of my fellow sinners. People from all walks of life, all faiths and all shapes and sizes with one thing in common, a desire to make a difference in our one small sphere of influence. A desire to help people make important rational decisions for the most emotional moment of their lives.

So I give a little of my time, a little of my life experiences and a little of myself. In doing so I enriched my life and my families’ lives. I learned about others experiences with death, funerals, the funeral industry, legislation, and the bureaucracy. I also learned...
that while death and its emotional baggage is a very serious matter, it is also something that can be treated with some levity when discussed with detachment. I met extremely interesting people, I achieved some targets and I made valuable use of my time. In short, if I had known sinning was so pleasurable, I would have sinned long ago. So come and join us, its better than reality TV, it really is.

Andrew Macdonald
Andrew is a member of the Board of the Funeral Advisory Society of Hamilton and District.

NOTICE OF RECOMMENDATION TO THE AGM
In accordance with the by-laws of the Society, notice is hereby given that, taking into account the financial position of the Society, the support of the membership, and the practice of other Memorial Societies, the Board recommends that all current memberships be converted to lifetime memberships, and that all new applications will be for lifetime memberships at $25 for one person or $35 for a family.

CHARITABLE STATUS by Gunther Abrahamson
We are frequently asked whether FISO is registered as a charity under the Income Tax Act and can issue receipts for donations for income tax purposes. The short answer is NO. But here is some background.

The Ottawa Memorial Society, as FISO was known until 2002, was granted charitable status in 1967 and subsequently issued receipts for income tax purposes. In 1994 Revenue Canada completed a comprehensive review of all memorial societies in Canada and generally found that these should never have been registered as charities. With respect to the Ottawa Memorial Society, Revenue Canada determined that OMS, like many other memorial societies, had failed to devote all of its resources to charitable activities and as a result did not meet the definition of a charitable organization.

In 1995 Revenue Canada advised OMS that its status as a registered charity had been annulled but gifts made in previous years were not challenged, and would not be taxed, as they had been made in good faith.

FISO is one of eleven member societies of the Federation of Ontario Memorial Societies (FOOMS) which provides a unified voice for all memorial societies in Ontario. FOOMS gave serious consideration to appealing Revenue Canada’s decision. Having sought legal advice, FOOMS came to the conclusion that, given its other priorities, an appeal was not worth the effort nor the estimated legal costs.

However, your donations are always appreciated and we rely on these to sustain our work. We are sorry that we do not qualify as a charity under the Income Tax Act and therefore cannot issue receipts for income tax purposes. FISO is incorporated under the Ontario Corporations Act as a non-profit organization without share capital and as such is exempt from income tax.

To keep operating expenses to a minimum we ask you to accept your cancelled cheque as your receipt. We will acknowledge your contribution in our newsletter and on our website and by email if we have your address.

UPDATE ON GREEN BURIAL IN OTTAWA AND AREA by Betty Ann Rollo
Over the last few months, the Directors of FISO have been contacting representatives of various Ottawa and area cemeteries to ask if “green” burials will be allowed at their cemeteries. Some cemeteries are under the mistaken impression that if they offer cremation spaces that they are offering green burial, which is a mistaken notion. Basically, green burial is no embalming, no cremation and placing the body in a shroud or biodegradable container for direct earth burial. Many cemetery operators had not heard of green burials so this gave us the opportunity to provide them with considerable information, thereby spreading knowledge of this ecologically favourable alternative to the traditional options of burial or cremation.

Those contacted have been pleased to receive this information and find this concept suitable for this time when more and more people are concerned about the environment but none have so far indicated a willingness to allow green burials in the cemeteries they represent. Even so, and with hopes of positive responses, our Directors will continue to contact representatives of other cemeteries in Ottawa and the outlying area.

If there are any members who know of a suitable cemetery or have special connections to a certain cemetery in the Ottawa or outlying areas (within 100 km. of Ottawa), please contact us at coordinates on pg. 1.

A THANK YOU TO ALL OUR GENEROUS DONORS
For $ 320 received in donations up to March 31, 2010
  Elizabeth Bowen
  William J. Ford
  Phillip Laundy
  Vernon & Dana Mullen
  John R. Rutherford
For $ 410 received in donations in 2009
  Jorge & Denise Acosta
  Farid R. & Jean Ahmed
  Mervyn & Blanche Brown
  Christine Dean
  Angus & Jean Gillingham
  Paul Leroux
  Mathew Lusick
  Margaret MacIntyre
  G. Kenneth Munro
  David & Mona McDonald in memory of Cécile Pelletier
  Wesley & Jane Weber
  Doug L. Martin
  David Townson & Margaret Tourond-Townson
For previous years see our website http://fiso.ncf.ca
BOOK REVIEW
Curtains: adventures of an undertaker-in-training by Tom Jokinen, Toronto: Random House Canada 2010
This book gives the reader an insight into what happens after a body is taken to a funeral home and before it appears again in a visitation room for family and friends to pay their last respects. The author describes the processes of embalming and cremation, body preparation and casketing, cosmetology and display. He injects humour into what would seem humourless as he learns the various aspects of the funeral industry.

The author, Tom Jokinen took a year's leave of absence from his job with the CBC in Winnipeg to investigate the funeral industry there and then wrote about his experiences.

He briefly discusses the history of the industry and sees the Jessica Mitford book (American Way of Death) of the 1960s as the pivot point for the industry and its survival in the 21st century. Despite the inevitability of death for everyone, the future does not look rosy for the traditional funeral home. There will be fewer deaths and more options for disposition. He describes funeral directors who have going into more elaborate catering facilities so as not to lose the mourners to the local legion or church hall for refreshments.

This book is a worthwhile read for everyone.

FUNERAL INDUSTRY IN OTTAWA
Once again the Society was able to gather information on the current costs of funeral services in our city. We thank all the funeral providers who participated. This year we expanded the information to include the number of service points of each provider, whether they are independent or part of a larger conglomerate and also the percentage increase or decrease in prices of services and containers in comparison to 2009. Please note, while there is not much change from last year, the new price list is available to members on request.

By this time next year there should be a new player on the scene.

A group of Ottawa citizens, concerned about the growing corporate control of the funeral sector, gathered at a meeting in April 2008. Over the past few years, many family owned funeral providers have passed into corporate hands. It is time to have a community response to this trend. To this end, the Funeral Co-operative of Ottawa was organized.

Funeral Co-operatives are a community based approach to providing funeral services on a non-commercial basis. In Quebec, the funeral co-op movement has dropped the price of funerals there from being the highest in Canada, to the lowest. Everyone in the community can join. There is a one-time non-refundable membership fee of $20 for each member of a household 18 years and older.

As all funeral providers in Ontario must, the Funeral Co-operative of Ottawa will be managed by a licensed funeral director. The business will operate in English and French. With the help of translators, community members will be served in many languages. All ethnic backgrounds and spiritual beliefs will be accommodated and non-denominational memorial services can be arranged. All services will be priced on a non-profit basis. Members will pay less than non-members. First and foremost, the Funeral Co-operative will provide funeral services with quality and compassion.

The goal is to sign up at least 1,000 members before the Funeral Co-operative of Ottawa can become a reality. Each person who joins will show that there is community support for this idea. If the membership drive is successful, a fund raising campaign to help finance the Co-op's start-up will follow.

The very successful Quebec funeral co-op movement is providing the co-op team with business information and advice that will contribute to the overall success.

You can join by sending a cheque to:
Funeral Cooperative of Ottawa, 8th Floor,
190 O'Connor Street, Ottawa ON K2P 2R3
or online through the web site at -
www.funeralcooperativeofottawa.coop
The telephone number is 613-288-2689

Please tell your friends, relatives and colleagues about the Funeral Co-operative of Ottawa.

It is hoped to launch the Funeral Co-operative of Ottawa by the end of 2010. Members will be kept informed of progress through periodic newsletters.

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF REVENUE AND EXPENSES

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