



San Diego Memorial Society

Humphrey Mortuary Contract Terminates Effective May 25

Spring, 2007 Newsletter published by
San Diego Memorial Society

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Special points of interest:

- Pre-need trust assets are safe and available
- Transferring arrangements to a new mortuary is relatively easy
- New mortuaries will be located throughout San Diego County
- Many members will pay less under new arrangements
- More choices, more convenient and more volunteers needed!
- Send email to:
john@sdmsonline.com

San Diego Memorial Society Future

For almost 50 years the Society has operated as a "buyers club." We have negotiated with a contracting mortuary to provide funeral services for our members.

In 1958 this was the only way to deal effectively with an after-death industry that often manipulated and exploited people at a time when they were especially vulnerable.

The approach worked. The power of collective bargaining for funeral services was a significant factor in changing the entire culture of death and dying in the USA and today fair pricing for simple funeral and cremation services is the rule rather than a rare exception.

Our method of serving members can now be more refined. There are a number of mortuaries throughout the county that meet the high standards of the San Diego Memorial Society. A number of them have agreed to serve our members at a substantial discount, adhere to strict ethical requirements and to care for members with excellence at time of

need. Mortuaries may offer unique services or are uniquely qualified to address the needs of a family with cultural, religious or ecological preferences. We can refer members to a mortuary that will best meet their needs.

A San Diego Memorial Society List of Qualifying Mortuaries will be sent to members this summer. We hope members will pre-plan by making arrangements with one of these mortuaries.

We are recruiting volunteers to regularly survey the mortuaries in San Diego County because we want to know quickly when changes occur. We will know who owns the mortuary and we will advise members to avoid those that have a reputation for unsavory or questionable business practices.

Another volunteer opportunity is to join the San Diego Memorial Society Legislation Committee. These volunteers monitor the

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Annual Membership Meeting

Additional details about the future of San Diego Memorial Society will be shared during the Annual Membership Meeting on **April 15 beginning at 2:00 PM in the Meeting House at First Unitarian Universalist Church** of San Diego, 4190 Front Street in the Hillcrest neighborhood. Please attend this gathering.

In addition to conducting business matters as required in bylaws of the Society,

members will hear from the Board President, Maggie Moody, and Executive Director, John K. Davis. Representatives of mortuaries selected by the Board to provide services to members will be introduced and members will have an opportunity to meet with them following the meeting during a social hour where refreshments will be served.



SDMS Annual Membership Meeting at First Unitarian Universalist Church, 4190 Front Street in Hillcrest



**San Diego Memorial
Society President**

Board Members:

- Maggie Moody, President
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- Paul Ward, Vice President
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- Russ Armstead, Treasurer
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- Gerry Newall, Secretary
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- Dean Smith, UU Appointed
- Paul Marsh, Director
- Doris Milton, Director
- Clancy Finley, Director
- Phyllis McGrath, Director
- Ken Barnett, Director
- "Louise" Peacock, Director
- "Kitty" Clinton, Director



**Members will now be
able to work with a
nearby mortuary!**

Maggie's Message

Friends,

This first newsletter of the new year brings exciting good thoughts and actions. We have been working hard for you.

In this newsletter you will read about new directions the San Diego Memorial Society has taken. We hope you like what we are doing.

Please attend the Annual Membership Meeting on Sunday, April 15, at 2:00 PM. We will gather at First Unitarian Church to hear more about these new ways of serving Society members. You will be

able to meet Board members, ask as many questions as you wish of several funeral directors, enjoy good refreshments and talk with fellow Society members about our new plans. You can't beat that for a Sunday afternoon of fun and interesting activities!

We have other good news for many of you. We are selecting new mortuaries for you to consider when making your final plans. In addition to three geographically diverse full-service mortuaries, we will soon have a few additional specialty mor-

tuaries. All of the mortuaries have agreed to offer simple, dignified cremation or burial services for a low but reasonable price.

I hope to see all of you at our meeting on Sunday, April 15, 2007 at 2:00 PM at the Unitarian Church, 4190 Front Street, across from UCSD Medical Center in Hillcrest. Free Parking!

Maggie Moody

New Mortuaries

The San Diego Memorial Society is negotiating new relationships with a number of full-service mortuaries in the county. One is in Chula Vista, a second is in central San Diego and another is in North County.

Our members will soon be able to make arrangements with a full-service mortuary near them. Pricing for these services will not change for the time being.

In addition to these full-service mortuaries, the Society is working with a small mortuary that assists families to arrange traditional home and family-directed funerals. The body remains in the home for a few days while the family directs the funeral. Loved ones can also participate in transporting the remains to a crematory or cemetery for final disposition. This traditional approach to caring for the dead can be arranged at prices far below those charged by a full-service mortuary.

Another service that provides only simple cremation services at a rock-bottom price is talking with San Diego Memorial Society representatives. Many of the Society's members prefer cremation and obtaining removal of the body, transportation of remains to a crematory, preparation of required paperwork and pick up of cremains by family members at a convenient location is exactly what they want, and nothing more. This can be arranged for as little as \$500, over \$200 less than the Society's negotiated price for cremation services from a full-service mortuary!

The Society is also looking into forming business relationships with mortuaries that would serve members who want to follow special cultural or religious traditions when caring for their dead. Just because a family wants to adhere to a special tradition is no reason for them to spend thousands of dollars unnecessarily. We think the

San Diego Memorial Society can negotiate fair pricing for members with mortuaries that provide these specialized services.

The San Diego Memorial Society has not worked with cemeteries in the past, but this may change in the not-too-distant future. Few of our members opt for burial and the majority of those that choose burial do so because they qualify for free burial at a National Cemetery taking advantage of their status as a Veteran, or spouse of a Veteran.

We are starting to hear interest from our members about "green burials." No cemeteries in San Diego County will allow a body to be buried wrapped in a shroud or a fast-deteriorating biodegradable container, without a casket and without an outer cement liner to maintain the integrity of the gravesite and avoid settlement of the soil. These are modern customs that cost a lot of money but have questionable value for consumers. We hope to find a cemetery that will forgo these expensive practices.

San Diego Memorial Society Future

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activities of city, county, state and Federal governments watching for new laws that may hurt consumers so we can take action to prevent those laws from being enacted.

We also monitor the California Department of Consumer Affairs, Cemetery and Funeral Bureau, so we can alert members when the Bureau reveals it is taking action against funeral establishments, funeral directors, embalmers, cemetery brokers, cemetery salespersons,

cremated remains disposers, crematories, and licensed cemeteries in San Diego County.

The San Diego Memorial Society will continue outreach to the community. We speak at various events and network with other organizations that have a mission compatible with the mission of the Society.

If you have connections with someone who should know about us, or with an organization that you think might appreciate a speaker to address planning for funeral

or cremation services, please be sure to share contact information with us. We will call, write or email to make arrangements with them.

The generosity of member contributions combined with a small initial lifetime membership fee makes all of this possible. Please use the enclosed envelope if you want to make a voluntary contribution. Your gift will be greatly appreciated.

The future of the San Diego Memorial Society is bright.



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Humphrey Mortuary Answers Questions

1. Will there be any cost for transferring a Service Instructions Booklet (SIB) and pre-need trust assets to a new mortuary? **No**
2. Is there a problem in having the new mortuary submit properly executed requests for an SIB and pre-need trust assets on behalf of SDMS members? **SIBs can be sent to the new mortuary agreeing to honor them (a request form is available); Trust assets must be sent to the owner of the trust. We will not be able to forward monies to other funeral homes. All requests for SIBs and trust assets must be notarized by the member who's name is on the SIB or trust.**
3. Will our members continue to receive the services they requested in their SIB if they leave their SIB and trust assets that are already with Humphrey Mortuary? **Yes**
4. Will our members with pre-need trusts who stay with you have to pay anything in addition to their trust assets at time of need? **Only for those services that are not covered by the SIB.**
5. Will you continue to honor the fixed price contracted to the members that joined in the 50s, 60s, 70s and early 80s? **Yes, if we have record of their SIB.**
6. What services will you provide and what price will you charge to our members who have SIBs with you but do not have trust assets with you? **Those services outlined in their SIB.**
7. How long will it take after receiving a request to have SIBs and pre-need trust assets either returned to the member or transferred to a new mortuary? **One or two weeks, but if we receive many requests in a short amount of time, the time may vary. We will work hard to stay within the one or two weeks.**
8. What happens to spouses who are members of the Society but who have not yet submitted their SIBs nor funded a pre-need trust even though their spouse did? **We will not be able to provide services to Society members if we do not have their SIB before May 25, 2007 even when we have received an SIB for their spouse before that date.**
9. Is there any timeline for any event other than the May 25 termination date? **No, it will be business as usual up until the 25th of May, if you have members that wish to be served by Humphrey Mortuary they must join and have their book in our office by 5pm May 25, 2007. We will also continue to provide after-death memberships until then.**

"Please use the enclosed envelope if you want to make a voluntary contribution. Your gift will be greatly appreciated."



Attend the Annual Membership Meeting to ask your questions



San Diego Memorial Society

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San Diego Memorial Society; a nonprofit, nonsectarian association dedicated to a consumer's right to choose meaningful after-death arrangements without emotional or financial exploitation.

We're on the Web!

www.funerals.org/SanDiego/



**"At my age flowers scare me."
George Burns**

Warning! Humor Below

- An elderly woman decided to prepare her will. Then she visited her minister. She had a final request. She was going to be cremated, and she wanted her ashes scattered over Wal-Mart. "Wal-Mart?" the minister exclaimed. "Why Wal-Mart?" The woman winked; "Then my daughters will visit me at least twice a week."
- Just before the funeral, the minister approached the elderly widower and asked, "How old was your wife?" "She was ninety-eight," he replied. "She was two years younger than me." "So you're one hundred then," the minister said. The widower looked up; "It hardly seems worth going home, does it?"
- "Do you believe in life after death?" the boss asked his employee. "Yes, Sir!" the new recruit replied. "Hmmm, you just might be right. After you left early yesterday to attend your grandmother's funeral, she came by to see you."
- A guy shows up at a girl's house to pick her up for a first date. She shows him into the living room. She excuses herself to go to the kitchen to make drinks. As he stands there waiting he notices a little vase on the mantel. He picks it up as she walks back into the room. He says "What's this?" She replies, "Oh, my father's ashes are in there." He goes, "Jeez... ah... I..." She interrupts his stammering; "Yeah, he tossed all of the ashtrays awhile ago when he decided to stop smoking."