

The Nassuff Newsbearer

Update From Recent NYSFDA Town Hall Meetings

Over the last month, NYSFDA had town hall meetings around the state. They were held virtually and Region 9's meeting was on October 29, 2020. A large number of NYSFDA members from Nassau-Suffolk as well as members of NSFDA joined Executive Director Mike Lanotte along with our Region Governor, Cindy Cavorti, and members of the NYSFDA Board. There were many topics and updates presented from changes to the residency requirements for registered residents; changes to the food and beverage law; and the idea of paraprofessionals.

The changes to the residency program require changes to the law and those changes have been discussed before and have been on the table since 2017. These changes include a discernment period and a preceptor who supervises the resident.

One topic that came out of a recent Government affairs meeting is the idea of enhancing services to families by including alcohol in the Food and Beverage Law. This would be an expansion of this law that was enacted in 2017. The idea is the ability to offer a "champagne toast" to a loved one in the funeral home during services. It also included the option of serving beer and wine along with food in the funeral home. This has not been fleshed out yet and the NYSFDA has not done its due diligence in examining the law. There has not been any further discussion up until the recent Town Hall Meetings. As a result of those meetings, it is now going to be recommended that a task force is formed to examine this idea further and do a deep dive to see if this is something possible. Any movement on this would require legislative changes.

Another discussed idea is adding a paraprofessional to funeral service. This idea has been looked at over the last few years with a special task force recommending further

work and discussion to further explore the idea of a Certified Funeral Assistant and a Certified Funeral Arranger. In summary, both would work exclusively with a funeral home under the direction of a funeral director from that said funeral home. They would not sign death certificates or sign amendments to them; they would not sign in a funeral or direct funerals to place of disposition; they would not sign contracts and they would not statement of goods and services selected. The Funeral Assistant would be able to transfer remains to the funeral home, assist with dressing and casketing, and more physical labor. The Certified Arranger could arrange for the transport of the remains into the care of the funeral home, religious services, merchandise, and coordinate and arrange final disposition.

Each of the Certified positions would require a certificate from the Bureau of funeral directing and renew every 2 years. CEU's would be required and certificate training would have to be achieved.

Both of these positions are going to be explored further over the next few months by various ad hoc committees appointed by NYSFDA President William Villanova.

More information will be provided at a later date. President Michael Gorton plans on having a virtual meeting regarding these topics to gauge memberships thoughts on these and present to our Regional Governor and the committees formed by NYSFDA. Please keep our eyes open for further news and discussions. And as always, please bring your concerns and questions to us to bring to the board and to the State Association. To watch the Region 9 Town Hall and other regions from around the state, please visit <https://www.nysfda.org/index.php/resources/regional-meetings> Keep in mind, this link only works for NYSFDA members.

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Greetings from NSFDA Board President: Michael J. Gorton



Hello All,

I hope that this email finds you well, enjoying the beginnings of fall and the preparation for the holiday and winter months. Since the last newsletter, your board has been working hard for the benefit of its members -- the funeral firms and funeral directors that work and reside in Nassau and Suffolk Counties. Because, in reality, that is what your local association does best; Lifting up each other and progressing forward, one day at a time. Change doesn't happen overnight, but you can see the beginnings of change with each new day.

Since we last "spoke", the board was able to investigate and report a Suffolk County Insurance Agent who was advertising "Burial Insurance". We all know that this is not permitted and has been supported by the legislature up in Albany as something that is not in the best interest of consumers. This agent was reported and reprimanded for his deceptive advertising. This is a perfect example of your board working in funeral services' best interest. Bring us your concerns and we will do our best to get to the bottom of it and shoot down falsehoods. Thanks to our VP, Jeff Davis, and Mike Lanotte, NYSFDA Executive Director for helping us.

The board has also been working on having virtual CEU offerings more frequently. We have had great attendance at the webinars we put on during the first half of the Biennium. And we are looking at more opportunities in the coming months and of course our symposium in May. Keep your eyes out for emails and get in on the opportunity. We are

committed to bringing you some of the best topics and most helpful for your business, staff, and well being.

With membership renewals around the corner, we are trying to discover new and exciting opportunities to bring you value to your membership and the importance of being a member. Obviously, with a unified voice, there is strength in numbers. Those numbers are you. And I want you to see the value of belonging to a local association. One that builds bridges to people and groups and vendors and communities in your backyard. The board strives hard and believes in our association and we are only as strong as the members who join. If you are not a member, and you happen to get this newsletter, please consider joining. You may find something interesting at our table and more importantly, you may want a seat at our table.

I want to finally conclude by wishing the happiest and healthiest to you and your family during the Holiday season!

"As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them." - John F. Kennedy

Best wishes,

Michael

Did you Deputize Agents During the Covid-19 Pandemic Outbreak?

During the beginning of the Covid-19 outbreak, many of you had deputized agents to help you provide services to the families in your community. Those went above and beyond the call to action. We are in the process of completing a list to recognize those who help our funeral directors and firms perform duties they normally don't do. If you know someone who was a deputized agent or had deputized agents for your firm, please send us their name and time served as an agent. We hope to recognize them in the future. Please send the info to Holly via email at Hollynsfda@yahoo.com.



**Board
Spotlight:
Melissa
Schmidt**

*“Why a Funeral
Director?”* is

probably the

most frequently asked question I get. I still find it a difficult question to answer - not because I don't know, but because I find it almost impossible to explain. A lot of Funeral Directors will say it's "a calling", and I absolutely agree. To try and explain each and every thought or event that brought me here, well, we would be here a very long time. I do think of my "calling" as more of a feeling that eventually brought me to such a unique career.

Growing up, (and still very much so) I always wanted to help - anyone, anytime. I've always enjoyed making others happy, and fixing things that others didn't.

My family would say that I really lived up to my name as "Sweet Melissa". I also love to craft, and create, especially making gifts for others. It's something I've been doing since I was a young girl, and still do to this day. (I even sell my crafts on Etsy!) That to me is a perfect reflection of my career choice, I just want to do what's right, to make a difference, to show others they're not alone, that I'm thinking of them, and I understand.

One thing I learned

during quarantine: How important self care truly is.

What's on my playlist: It's all country, but I do love 70's rock!

Person I admire the most: My Dad!

Favorite place: Anywhere near the ocean, I'm a real beach bum!

An invention I couldn't

live without: My curling irons! (the one for work, and the one for me!)

The first place I'd like to travel to once the

pandemic is over: Croatia

What motivates me to

work hard: To paraphrase, there's only once chance to have a funeral, and only chance to get it right. Give it your all.

My nickname: "Mel"

My words of wisdom are:

"Emancipate yourself from mental slavery, none but ourselves can free our mind" - Bob Marley

What is one thing most people don't know about

me: I'm a licensed hairdresser!

In Memoriam:

It is with much sadness and a heavy heart that we announce the passing of Kacie Yvonne Buchanan, daughter of Marty & Karen Kohler. Marty is a member and Past President of the NSFDA. Please keep Marty, Karen, her sister Karlie, Kacie's husband Anthony and the entire family in your prayers.



A Message from the Executive Director Holly O'Brien

The year 2020 is coming to an end and I am sure, like me, you are

looking forward to its exit and welcoming in the new year. I will say that I admire the resiliency of people during these trying times and how everyone comes together to support one another. Thank you to every Funeral Director and sponsor for kicking it into high gear this year and continuing to into the next.

A new year brings membership renewals. We have reconstructed the dues and are now offering online registration through our website using a credit card. <https://nsfda.org/Forms/NSFDA-New-Member-Renewal-Application/52/index.html#form-start> If you have any questions regarding

the online service, please reach out to me. If you chose to mail in your renewals, please note the NSFDA has a new address. Information on logging into the member section of the website will be mailed to the firm after the renewal is processed and emailed to the Funeral Directors.

The NSFDA now offers student membership for any New York State resident who is enrolled and registered with an accredited school of Mortuary Science School or a Registered Resident with the NYS Department of Health. Student will be entitled to all correspondence and can attend all association functions.

The attendance for the webinars the NSFDA offered was amazing and we will continue to offer more in the future, the next one being on

December 15, 2020. Please watch your emails and visit our website for information on the presentations being offered and how to register.

We are also going to be utilizing our Facebook page to get out information and news regarding the association and the Funeral industry to our members and others working in the industry. Please make sure to visit our Facebook page and get the word out to others to like our page.

If you ever have any questions, comments, or ideas on how we can enhance the association please feel free to reach out to me. I look forward to working with you all again. Wishing you all a very Happy Holiday season as well as a Happy and Health New Year.

Holly

NSFDA 2021 CALENDAR

January 12, 2021 – Board Meeting Only at 5pm
February 9, 2021 – Board Meeting Only at 5pm
March 9, 2021 – Board Meeting Only at 5pm
April 13, 2021 – Board Meeting Only at 5pm
May 11, 2021- NSFDA Symposium at The Larkfield

NO MEETING JUNE, JULY and AUGUST

September 14, 2021 Board Meeting at 4pm,
General Meeting at 5:30pm
October 12, 2021 Board Meeting Only at 5pm
November 9, 2021 Board Meeting at 4pm,
General Meeting at 5:30pm
December 14, 2021 Board Meeting Only at 5pm

Fall Family Fun



The LoBue Girls



Logan Sakowitz



The Taglia Kids



Anastasia, Vanessa and Andrew Frangiadakis



Raegan Byrnes



Christian Casey



The Casey Family



Gabe Gorton



The White Girls

meet the author

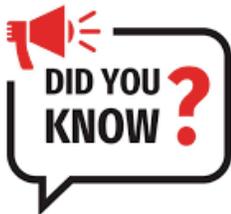


Meet Katerina T. Bernius, daughter of John Bernius, Funeral Director at Fredrick J. Chapey & Sons Funeral Homes and Stephenie Bernius, a Funeral Director at Fairchild Funeral Home. Katerina is 10 years old and the proud author of The Magical Flower, a book about friendship. Katerina lives in North Massapequa with her mom, dad, younger sister, Annabel, and her pet snake, Cupcake. She started writing books in 3rd grade because she loved reading and writing so much. Katerina wants to encourage people to follow

their dreams and to, "Do something if you think you can."

Magical Flower is available now at Mascot Books: <https://mascotbooks.com/mascot-marketplace/buy-books/childrens/picture-books/the-magical-flower/>

Pre-order at Amazon: https://www.amazon.com/Magical-Flower-Katerina-Bernius/dp/1643075292/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=The+magical+flower&qid=1603410236&sr=8-1



Please note the new address for NSFDA:

**PO Box 640
Kings Park, NY 11754**

•If you need to obtain discharge papers for a deceased veteran, the deceased owns a home and is receiving the veteran's discount, you can reach out to the municipality that the veteran lives in and the municipality can supply you with those papers if the family can't locate them on their own.



Please register for NSFDA Presents: Gatherings From Afar-Now and Then. Presented by Glenda Stansbury, MA, CFSP on Dec 15, 2020 3:00 PM EST at:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/8352074353679936014>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar. Brought to you by GoToWebinar®, Webinars Made Easy®

The Neighborhood House Needs Your Support

As we continue to get through this pandemic, there has been a significant rise in deaths by suicide and drug overdose. Rich D'Andrea, owner and Funeral Director of Raynor & D'Andrea Funeral Homes and Suffolk County Representative on the Board of the NSFDA started a not-for-profit in 2012 along side Michelle Virga, a licensed clinical social worker. This partnership started in response to the increase in the number of deaths by suicide and drug overdose. The Neighborhood House has recently been offered a \$50,000.00 grant that will match any donation dollar for dollar through the end of the year and they are working to raise awareness and some much-needed financial assistance. Fund-raising has been extremely difficult this year and they are working hard to get some help from anyone who is willing. Please contact Rich at: raynor.dandrea@mac.com more information or to make a contribution.

HELP WANTED

Funeral Home Manager - Long Island
Manage the daily operations of a single Funeral Home location and single line of business. Foster a sense of ownership in the location and pride in the staff, manage costs in a disciplined manner, and encourage profitable case volume growth. Responsible for short-term planning as well as achieving annual sales revenue and pre-need targets, Profit & Loss (P&L) goals, developing a professional and effective staff, and exceeding client family expectations. Managerial experience is strongly preferred. Contact Peter D'Arienza @ 631-669-3800 or peter.darienzo@sci-us.com



Back in the 1960's Funeral Directors were issued badges instead of pocket cards. Past President Rich O'Shea investigated it and found a company that produces badges

like they did in the 1960's. Then it was signed off by the Bureau of Funeral Directing Director, Thom Fuller, allowing us to order our own and carry them. What a beautiful way to enhance your pocket card with a badge with your License number on it. Order yours today by visiting: <https://www.badgeandwallet.com/nys-funeral-director-badge>

Please note: This info is also found on our members-only section on our website.

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NYSFDA Chapter Model Idea

Over the last 18 months, the New York State Funeral Directors Association has been exploring the possibility of creating chapters across the state. Instead of associations, the local funeral director associations would become chapters that fall under the umbrella of NYSFDA.

Current President, Michael Gorton, and Immediate Past President Rich O'Shea have been on a workgroup during this time to explore the idea statewide. They have put extensive work into the thought process and concept.

Recently, NYSFDA President William Villanova visited with the board of directors and was able to further explain the chapter model idea.

In the recent issue of the NYSFDA publication, "The Calling" he made the chapter model his message for December.

Bill wrote, "The purpose and goals of the Chapter Model concept are to: unite the funeral directors of the chapter for the mutual welfare of all funeral directors statewide; encourage and provide networking opportunities and cooperative endeavors among funeral directors; enhance the funeral service industry's charitable, community and legislative endeavors and; carry out all purposes embraced and defined by NYSFDA."

Bill continued, "We were excited to receive support from many funeral directors and local associations from across our state. Some local association leaders have already asked to be part of the "pilot program." Others have asked for more information and clarification on some processes and structure. Our Association

Leadership will ensure all questions are answered and proper direction is given."

After additional discussions following a November Virtual Town Hall hosted by NYSFDA, your board of directors voted unanimously to join the "pilot program". We're not sure when that will take place, but we eager to engage in this opportunity.

Bill concluded with some final observations, "The opportunity to establish NYSFDA Chapters throughout our state will elevate communication, strengthen our footprint throughout our Regions and enhance our responsiveness to our members. It is most certainly encouraging to receive positive support from many of you. We eagerly look forward to establishing the steps to begin the pilot program alongside our local associations."

There is more when you begin to uncover the layers of this Chapter Model idea. There are local associations across the state who are not as strong, organized and financially

solvent as we are. This idea is needed for them. While on the surface we may not need the help of this, but some concepts would benefit us. Hence the reason the board felt we should take the chapter model for a test drive.

Our president, Michael Gorton plans on holding a special virtual meeting to discuss this further. A more detailed discussion with members of NYSFDA staff and board will be on hand to explain what this could mean for the future will be held mid-December. Please keep an eye out in your email.

Delays in Obtaining Military Documents for Eligibility Determinations

NFDA recently received the following communique from the Department of Veterans Affairs:

As you may be aware, the government's primary repository for military personnel records, the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC), has been closed to the public since March due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to numerous COVID-19 exposures occurring with increasing frequency, the NPRC has informed us they have shut down most of their remaining operations indefinitely. This decision negatively impacts our ability to obtain documents to determine eligibility for interment in national cemeteries. We will continue to make every attempt to assist veterans and their families, but if a service members records cannot be obtained through any source other than NPRC, we may not be able to make a timely eligibility determination. We ask you to inform family members of this issue and ask them to search for any additional military documents which may be in their possession. Documents kept by the veteran may be the only documents available at this time to verify his or her eligibility for burial.

We also encourage you to ask family members to check the following:

- *Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) such as the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) or the American Legion. These organizations may have discharge documents on file for members.*
- *Any orders the service member may have received or any documents showing a military service number would be helpful.*
- *County clerk of the county where the service member would have returned from service. The service member may have filed their documents with the county upon discharge from military service.*
- *If the service member has a set of dog tags, please send a clear photograph of them to our agency.*

Any additional information provided may improve our ability to locate records. You may send any additional information or documents by fax at 866-900-6417 or by email at NCA.Scheduling@va.gov. Please follow up on the fax or email with a phone call to 800-535-1117, Option 1, to alert us to this additional information. We apologize for the delay and thank you for your assistance in this emergency.

NFDA is aware the NPRC's decision to close is going to be a real hardship on funeral directors and families who need documentation of an individual's military service. NFDA is working with the Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administration to help find a solution to this unfortunate situation.

Learn more about the NPRC: <https://www.archives.gov/personnel-records-center>.

New York State minimum wage 2021: A raise is coming

By Rick Moriarty | rmoriarty@syracuse.com
Syracuse, N.Y. —

The minimum wage is set to rise in all parts of New York State outside of New York City next month.

The minimum hourly wage will rise to \$12.50 from \$11.80 on Dec. 31, 2020 everywhere outside of New York City, Long Island and Westchester County. That 70-cent an hour raise will mean an extra \$28 a week in the paycheck of a person working a full-time job paying minimum wage.

Long Island and Westchester County will see their minimum wage rise to \$14 from \$13 an hour on Dec. 31. That will mean an extra \$40 a week for a person working full-time in a minimum wage job.

New York City will see no change in its minimum wage, which already stands at \$15 an hour. (Employers in New York City with 11 or more workers have been required to pay a minimum of \$15 an hour since Dec. 31, 2018. Employers in New York City with 10 or fewer workers have been required to pay a minimum of \$15 an hour since Dec. 31, 2019.)

Long Island and Westchester are scheduled to go to \$15 an hour at the end of 2021.

But it is not clear when the rate will rise to \$15 in the Upstate area. Starting in 2021, annual increases in Upstate New York will be determined by the commissioner of labor on or before Oct. 1, based on economic indices, including the Consumer Price Index.

The state's tiered schedule for minimum wage increases was established by the Legislature in 2016, with the goal of eventually raising the wage to \$15 an hour everywhere in the state.

Lawmakers decided to raise the rate to \$15 sooner in the downstate area because of the higher cost of living there.

There are different rates for fast-food and tipped workers. The table below summarizes the state's entire minimum wage schedule: The state has created an online tool to help workers quickly determine their minimum wage. The tool takes into account the date, location of employment and any tips an employee receives.

BASIC MINIMUM HOURLY RATE (per hour)

...as of	12/31/16	12/31/17	12/31/18	12/31/19	12/31/20	12/31/21
GENERAL MINIMUM WAGE						
NYC - Large Employers (of 11 or more)	\$11.00	\$13.00	\$15.00			
NYC - Small Employers (10 or less)	\$10.50	\$12.00	\$13.50	\$15.00		
Long Island & Westchester	\$10.00	\$11.00	\$12.00	\$13.00	\$14.00	\$15.00
Remainder of New York State	\$9.70	\$10.40	\$11.10	\$11.80	\$12.50	TBD
FAST FOOD WORKERS						
						07/01/21
New York City	\$12.00	\$13.50	\$15.00			
Rest of State	\$10.75	\$11.75	\$12.75	\$13.75	\$14.50	\$15.00

TIPPED FOOD SERVICE WORKERS (per hour)

...as of	12/31/16	12/31/17	12/31/18	12/31/19	12/31/20	12/31/21
CASH WAGE PAID BY EMPLOYER (minimum)						
NYC - Large Employers (of 11 or more)	\$7.50	\$8.65	\$10.00	\$10.00	\$10.00	\$10.00
NYC - Small Employers (10 or less)	\$7.50	\$8.00	\$9.00	\$10.00	\$10.00	\$10.00
Long Island & Westchester	\$7.50	\$7.50	\$8.00	\$8.65	\$9.35	\$10.00
Remainder of New York State	\$7.50	\$7.50	\$7.50	\$7.85	\$8.35	TBD

COVID-19

UPDATE

Covid Restrictions Around the World

As states across the country dial-up COVID-19-related restrictions on public gatherings, NFDA has compiled a list of some international stats:

AUSTRIA: maximum capacity allowed for a funeral ceremony is limited to 100 participants. The total number of deaths to date is 1,064.

GERMANY: Funerals are allowed as long as the established hygiene measures are maintained: respect the minimum distance of 1.50 m [4.92 feet], except in the case of close relatives, and the use of a mask. Similarly, funerals for 25 or more attendees must be held outdoors; the ceremony conductor may not wear a mask, and catering services are prohibited. The number of those infected by COVID-19 is increasing rapidly (more than 19,000 people a day as of October 31, 2020), and the number of deaths has increased very slightly.

ITALY: The measured number of deaths caused by COVID-19 is 200 a day and the number of infections increases daily, having reached 20,000. Meetings of more than six people cannot be held.

NORWAY: The Nordic country is experiencing a growth in the number of infected, although the number of deaths from COVID-19 is very low: 275. In funeral ceremonies, up to 200 participants are admitted, and private meetings are restricted to 50. In some municipalities, this figure is limited to 20.

PORTUGAL: Since the start of the pandemic, Portugal has reported 144,341 cases of COVID-19, of which 81,771 patients have recovered. The death toll stands at 2,544. Last October, there was a daily average of 3,596 new positives (512% more than April) and 30 deaths per day (7% more than April). These figures indicate that the pandemic is increasing and the capacity of health centers is worrying. For this reason, the authorities recommend that the population stay in their homes and establish teleworking whenever possible. Meetings of more than five people are not allowed.

SPAIN: The rate of new infections has increased considerably and, in total, Spain has reported 1,190,000 cases of COVID-19 and 35,877 deaths. The daily number of hospital admissions is also increasing and authorities anticipate a collapse of the health system in a few weeks. In spite of everything, the restrictions are beginning to show positive effects in the territories where their application began earlier. The number of daily deaths from Covid-19 has risen but is well below the levels reached in March and April.

SWEDEN: The mortality figure is very low although, in recent weeks, there has been a higher rate of infections. Despite this, the capacity at funerals has increased, from 50 attendees to 300.

-Taken from NFDA's monthly Memorial Business Report un "Notebook", Edward J. Defort, Editor



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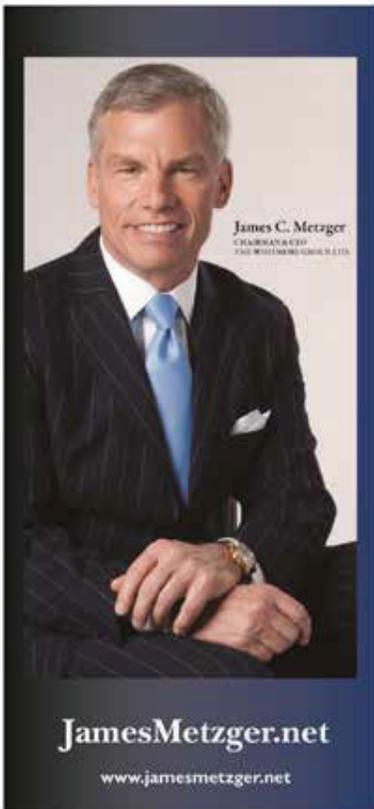
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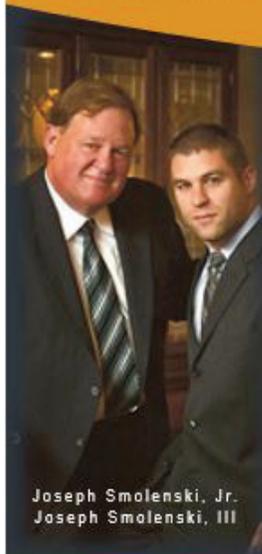


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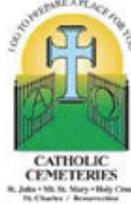
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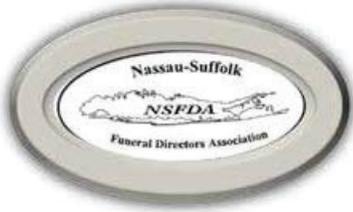
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