

MARCH 2004 NEWSLETTER

Dear Members,

We are excited about our upcoming Summer 2004 Conference. We feel that we have speakers that will touch on subjects that are very important to each of us. Chris Kuhnen will give us proven ways to improve existing pre-need programs and how to put a workable action plan in place that will provide all the leads necessary for a successful program. Edwin Carpenter will speak on due diligence related to third party crematories, cremation forms providing internal & external controls, and contract considerations with families and crematories. JoAnn Baldwin will address the funeral director's need for information and the family's need for meaning. Dave FitzSimmons will speak to us on death care issues chronology, new millennium issues, the decade of recovery, your personal qualities will characterize your business and "If your ship doesn't come in, swim out to meet it!". Also, check our agenda for all the fun times we have arranged. Please make your plans for you and your family to join us July 26, 27 & 28th in Savannah.

Regarding our Preferred Provider agreements, please place your orders for your Batesville Caskets prior to June 30th for our program this year. The highlights of the York Casket Company program are 14% discount to member firms on gasketed metal & hardwoods, 5% discount on all other caskets and 25% discount on the installation of York Merchandising System room. A 1% rebate is paid to the association on all casket purchases. Southland Casket Company's program offers a 1% additional yearly rebate to any IFDG member successfully completing any Southland Advantage Level Program. For 2004 Southland is offering an additional 1/2 % yearly rebate of total yearly casket purchases by our membership if increases by 1% or more during 2004. Aurora Casket Company came to the board of directors with a proposal for a new buying agreement. After hearing their presentation, the IFDG board voted to approve the new program. It calls for a 16% up front discount for each of the IFDG members who sign a participation agreement and purchase one of five predetermined caskets offered with the program. The program requires each firm to purchase in 2004 a total of 10 caskets more than purchased in 2003 in order to participate in the program in 2005. Each firm can make its own decision whether or not to participate in the program. IFDG will receive a 1% rebate on all caskets purchased by the GA-CoOp with no minimums to meet to qualify for the rebate. Hopefully this is a program that will be a big asset for both our members and the association. Our thanks to Aurora for introducing the new program for our members.

IFDG received an invitation from a committee appointed by GFDA to meet and discuss the future of the two associations and to explore the possibility of a merger. The GFDA committee and a committee from IFDG met with in Forsyth, GA in January. It was explained that we were committed to combined interest in certain areas while maintaining the interests of the individual and family owned funeral firms in this state. The GFDA committee presented some ideas that could be explored which would serve the interests of both associations while being able to maintain the Independent status. After the meeting it was agreed that each committee would go back to each board, present the discussion and see what steps should be taken from here. It was agreed that regardless of what the outcome, it was important that an open and continuing dialogue be maintained. The IFDG committee reported to the board of directors where it was decided to withhold any further action until we received a response from the GFDA board. IFDG has received a letter from the president of GFDA stating the position that it currently would not be possible to limit membership to independently owned funeral homes only. GFDA also has a concern fearing their relationship with NFDA would be compromised. GFDA has stated they will be back in touch after discussion with their executive board. We will keep you apprised of any further communication.

Sincerely,

D. Tracy Joiner

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President

SUMMER 2004 CONFERENCE AGENDA

Casual Attire throughout the Conference

SUNDAY, JULY 25, 2004

5:00 PM - 6:00 PM

Board Meeting

6:30 PM - 7:30 PM

Wine and Cheese Reception with Exhibitors

MONDAY, JULY 26, 2004

8:00 AM - 9:00 AM

Registration - Meet with Exhibitors

8:00 AM - 9:00 AM

Breakfast Buffet - Meet with Exhibitors

9:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Effortless Ways to Improve Your Pre-Need Program Chris Kuhnen

10:45 AM - 11:00 AM

Break

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

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Visit with exhibitors

Lunch on Your Own & Free Afternoon for Sightseeing

12:30 PM

Golf Tournament

7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Boat Cruise with Dinner & Entertainment
Adult Tickets - \$45.00, Children under 12 - \$30.00, Under 3 Free

TUESDAY, JULY 27, 2004

8:00 AM – 9:00 AM

Breakfast Buffet - Meet with Exhibitors

9:00 AM – 9:45 AM

Business Meeting - Nomination of New Officers

9:45 AM – 11:15 AM

Exhibitors Forum

11:15 AM - 11:30 AM

Break

11:30 AM - 1:00 PM

Control of Risks in Cremation Edwin P. Carpenter

Visit with Exhibitors

Lunch on Your Own & Free Afternoon for Sightseeing

5:30 PM - 7:00 PM

Reception - Hors d'oeuvres and Cash Bar with Music by “The Variations”

9:00 PM

Hearse Tour of Ghost Sightings and Cemetery

WEDNESDAY, JULY 28, 2004

8:00 AM - 9:00 AM

Breakfast Buffet - Meet with Exhibitors

9:00 AM - 10:00 AM

Balanced Funeral Arrangements: Building Your Family's Trust
Jo Ann Baldwin

10:00 AM - 10:15 AM

New Board Induction

10:15 AM – 10:30 AM

Break

10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Recovering from the 90's-One Industry Expert's Opinion
With Questions & Answer Session Dave FitzSimmons

Adjourn

IFDG/Chandler Family Scholarship

The first IFDG/Chandler Family Scholarship has been awarded at Gupton-Jones College of Funeral Service. Congratulations to Jacqueline C. Hughes who received this first scholarship.

This scholarship is awarded to provide deserving students with financial assistance in completing their education in the mortuary science field.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

As was reported earlier, OGR filed an opposition with the Trademark Office in Washington, DC on behalf of the Independent Network. The opposition was to SCI's supplemental filing for the trademark to the term, "Family Funeral Care". SCI has now officially responded to our opposition. They did offer OGR a settlement which did not include all independently owned funeral firms and therefore OGR will decline the offer. The attorney in Los Angeles has been directed to send a response to SCI notifying them of the decline of their offer. It looks as if SCI is planning to take this all the way through the process with the Trademark Office. Once any farther action is taken of either side, we will continue to keep you informed.

Our lobbyist, Mo Thrash and Charlie Watts, have been diligent in sending our Weekly Briefings regarding this year's Legislative Session. If you have not been receiving your faxes, please contact the association office at 770-445-3180 X 25 to verify your fax number.

IFDG Legislative Committee

INDEPENDENT FUNERAL DIRECTORS OF GEORGIA SUMMER CONFERENCE - JULY 26, 27, & 28, 2004 REGISTRATION FORM

CONFERENCE RATES: (per person)	MEMBERS	NON-MEMBERS
In Advance (before July 16, 2004)	\$100.00	\$175.00
DOOR OR AFTER JULY 16, 2004	\$125.00	\$200.00

HOTEL INFORMATION: THE WESTIN SAVANNAH HARBOR RESORT
ONE RESORT DRIVE
SAVANNAH, GA 31421
1-800-WESTIN-1 OR 1-912-201-2023
www.westinsavannah.com

ROOM RATES	SINGLE	DOUBLE
<i>RESERVE BEFORE JUNE 25, 2004</i>	\$139.00	\$139.00
Room Block will be released 6/25/04	Plus 12 % tax	Plus 12 % tax

A resort service fee of \$12.72 per room per day to cover water taxi, self-parking, health club access and other incidentals will be added. River view rooms can be confirmed in advance for an additional \$20.00 or Balcony view rooms can be confirmed for an additional \$30.00.

**Each attendee is responsible for his own hotel reservation. Please check rates, as they could change.

NAME (First, Last): _____
(Names of all persons attending)

COMPANY: _____

MAILING ADDRESS (Street or PO Box): _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

TELEPHONE: _____ FAX: _____ EMAIL: _____

NUMBER OF REGISTRATIONS: _____ @ _____ = \$ _____

RIVERBOAT TICKETS: _____ @ _____ = \$ _____

Please return form with check to: IFDG
168 N. Johnston St., Ste. 304
Dallas, GA 30132
Phone: 770/445-3180 Ext. 25
Fax: 770/445-3893

Information is believed to be correct at the time of printing. IFDG reserves the right to change this information as needed.