

Pre-planning most important

The funeral business is unique, one that Mike Ritchay, co-owner of Ritchay Funeral Home in Wisconsin Rapids and Feldner-Ritchay Funeral Home in Nekoosa, is happy to talk about.

He shared information about pre-planning, funeral trusts, cremation and more at the Alzheimer’s Caregiver Support Group meeting in June.

Pre-planning -- which is not pre-paying and doesn’t cost anything more than your time

-- is easier for you, your spouse and your family members. Figuring out what sort of funeral you want, writing it down and sharing that information with your family members and funeral home will make things easier. Rather than guessing at what a person wanted, it’s better to have a plan to follow. It takes the pressure off family members, Ritchay said.

“You assume your kids know” what you want, Ritchay said. “They don’t. You’d be surprised.”

Pre-planning is important for everyone. In the case of caregivers, it’s possible the caregiver could die before the person with the illness. Someone with Alzheimer’s disease or dementia would not be able to help plan a funeral.

People don’t want to think about dying, but it will happen to everyone. Often people will be relieved once they begin the planning process, Ritchay said.

Pre-arranging a funeral entails two parts: a financial component and the informational component. The financial part is determining how much you want to spend and perhaps setting up a funeral trust to cover

funeral expenses. The informational part is all of the details, such as: Will you be buried or cremated? Will you have a church service? Who will give the eulogy? Do you have a flower preference? What do you want in your obituary?

A funeral trust is an irrevocable financial trust, usually an interest-bearing CD, which can only be used for specific funeral expenses.

No one can use that money for any other purpose.

Your funeral director will help you determine the cost of your funeral. You can set aside an approximate amount, but it’s impossible to determine all of the costs up front. Flowers, food and even a burial plot can go up in price, Ritchay said.

Family dynamics have changed through the years. Second marriages, far-flung families and discord among family members can make planning a funeral challenging, Ritchay said. People today aren’t as connected to churches as they once were. Decades ago, every funeral was similar and people wanted them to be that way. Now a funeral can be as unique as you are.

For more information about funeral planning, contact your preferred funeral home. Ritchay’s offers a booklet to help your planning process. We have several copies at the Hilltop office.



Activities



We enjoyed a variety of activities in June. Here are a few highlights: Finger-lickin' frosting on cookies, clockwise from top left, Father's Day project, "family tree" project at Hilltop of Pepper, enjoying the garden and celebrating Kay and Don's 60th wedding anniversary. Follow us on Facebook to see more frequent activity photo posts.



Becky's breakfast pastry recipe



Fresh breakfast for seniors made by Becky at Hilltop Affiliates. Fresh blueberries, strawberries, oranges, peaches, bananas and cottage cheese with a German sour cream twist.

Hilltop cook Becky made a German pastry recently for breakfast. Pair it with fresh fruit and cottage cheese for a delicious meal. The recipe follows.

Recipe for German Sour Cream Twist

Ingredients

- 3½ cups sifted special for bread flour
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 cup shortening (part butter)
- 1 pkg. active dry yeast
- ¼ cup warm water
- ¾ cup thick sour cream
- 1 whole egg and 2 egg yolks, well beaten
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1 cup sugar

Directions

Sift flour, salt into mixing bowl. Cut in shortening. Dissolve yeast in water. Stir into flour mixture with sour cream, eggs, vanilla. Mix well with hand. Cover with damp cloth and refrigerate 2 hours. Roll half of dough on sugared board into an oblong, 8 inches by 16 inches. Fold

ends toward center, ends overlapping. Sprinkle with sugar, roll again to same size. Repeat a third time. Roll about a quarter-inch thick. Cut into strips 1 inch by 4 inches. Twist ends in opposite directions -- stretching dough slightly. Put in shape of horseshoe, if desired. Repeat with rest of dough.

Heat oven to 375 degrees.

Bake about 15 minutes or until delicately browned. Take from baking sheet immediately. Makes about 5 dozen.

Remember when?

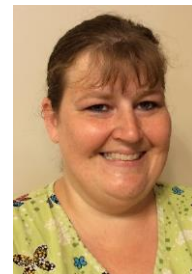
On July 2, 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed into the law the historic Civil Rights Act in a nationally televised ceremony. Hundreds of guests were invited to the ceremony at the White House. Johnson used more than 75 pens to sign the bill, then gave them away as mementoes of the occasion, according to tradition. One went to Martin Luther King, who called it one of his most cherished possessions.

The Civil Rights Act prohibited racial discrimination in employment and education and outlawed racial segregation in public places.

The History Channel features stories every day in its Today in History feature. Check it out at <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history>.

Employee spotlight

Becky Starkey has been cooking at Hilltop of Pepper for nearly two years. She's been a cook for 18 years – it's something she's always liked to do. Cooking here puts her in touch with the residents – her favorite part of the job. "I just enjoy being around them," she said. It's "always interesting."



When she's not making home-cooked meals, she is making soap for her home-based business. She makes soaps and lotions out of beeswax and sells them at a

variety of events. Her grandfather was a beekeeper. Her dad took over and got her husband interested, too. She said her family jokes that if their basement springs a leak, theirs is the only house that will float from all the soap bubbles.

Becky doesn't have a bucket list. "Live life every day as it comes," she said. She has been married for 12 years and has three children.

Something to do

If you're looking for something to do, check out <http://visitwisrapids.com> for a list of upcoming events as well as numerous places to visit in the Wisconsin Rapids area.

On top of a low hill, behind St. Philip's Church in Rudolph, are the sprawling grounds of the Grotto Gardens and Wonder Cave. The Rudolph Grotto, started in 1920, was a fulfillment of a promise that Father Philip Wagner made to the Virgin Mary in thanks for healing a lingering illness while studying for the priesthood. The Grotto, 6957 Grotto Ave., consists of more than 5 acres of lush flower beds, numerous shrines, a museum and a gift shop. The Grotto is set among meandering paths and crooked bridges, with shady, intimate areas for meditation as well as more formal memorials and open picnic grounds. Go to www.rudolphgrotto.org or call 715-435-3120.

For your calendar

>> Something new has started in Wisconsin Rapids for people with early stage dementia, mild memory loss or cognitive impairment. Memory Café will meet the first Friday of the month from 10:30 a.m. to noon at McMillan Memorial Library. It's a time for caregivers and their loved ones to meet for discussion, information sharing, refreshments, camaraderie and creative fun. The next meeting will be **July 3**. Call Karen Bradbury, RN, Park Place Adult Day Services, 715-422-2795.

>> The Alzheimer's caregiver support group will meet at 9:30 a.m. the second Thursday of the month at the Aging & Disability Resource Center, 220 Third Ave. S., Suite 1,

in Centralia Center by Rapids Mall. Future topics include: **July 9**, Rock Larson, Wood County Veterans Service officer, eligibility and procedure to inquire for veterans benefits; **Aug. 13**, Katie Schneider of Riverview Medical Center will discuss the importance of having a health care power of attorney. It is open to family members, caregivers and anyone who has questions about Alzheimer's disease and other dementia. There is no cost to attend and no donations. Meetings include a time for discussion and sharing. Find the calendar for the rest of 2015 on our website:

<http://hilltopaffiliatesinc.com/news.html>.

>> The Lowell Center monthly newsletter is online at <http://www.seekandfind.com/find/the-city-of-wisconsin-rapids-lowell-center> or pick up a paper copy at Hilltop. We are proud to help sponsor this publication.



IMAGE COURTESY OF STUART MILES AT FREEDIGITALPHOTOS.NET

Happy Birthday!

We wish a happy birthday to all on their special day. July birthdays will be celebrated with parties at the facilities featuring cake and games.

- **July birthdays:** Bonnie, Edith, Duane

Try this!

Need a stake for a plant or basket to hold a card? Try a metal kebab skewer. Tape the card to the round top and stick it the plant.

Brighten up old terracotta pots with a coat of paint – whatever kind or color you have. Then "distress" them with a little sandpaper and add your favorite flowers. They look great in a grouping, or give one as a gift.

Have a suggestion of your own? Send it to Mystique at mystique@hilltopaffiliatesinc.com or mention it to her in the office.



IMAGE COURTESY OF SMARNAD AT FREEDIGITALPHOTOS.NET