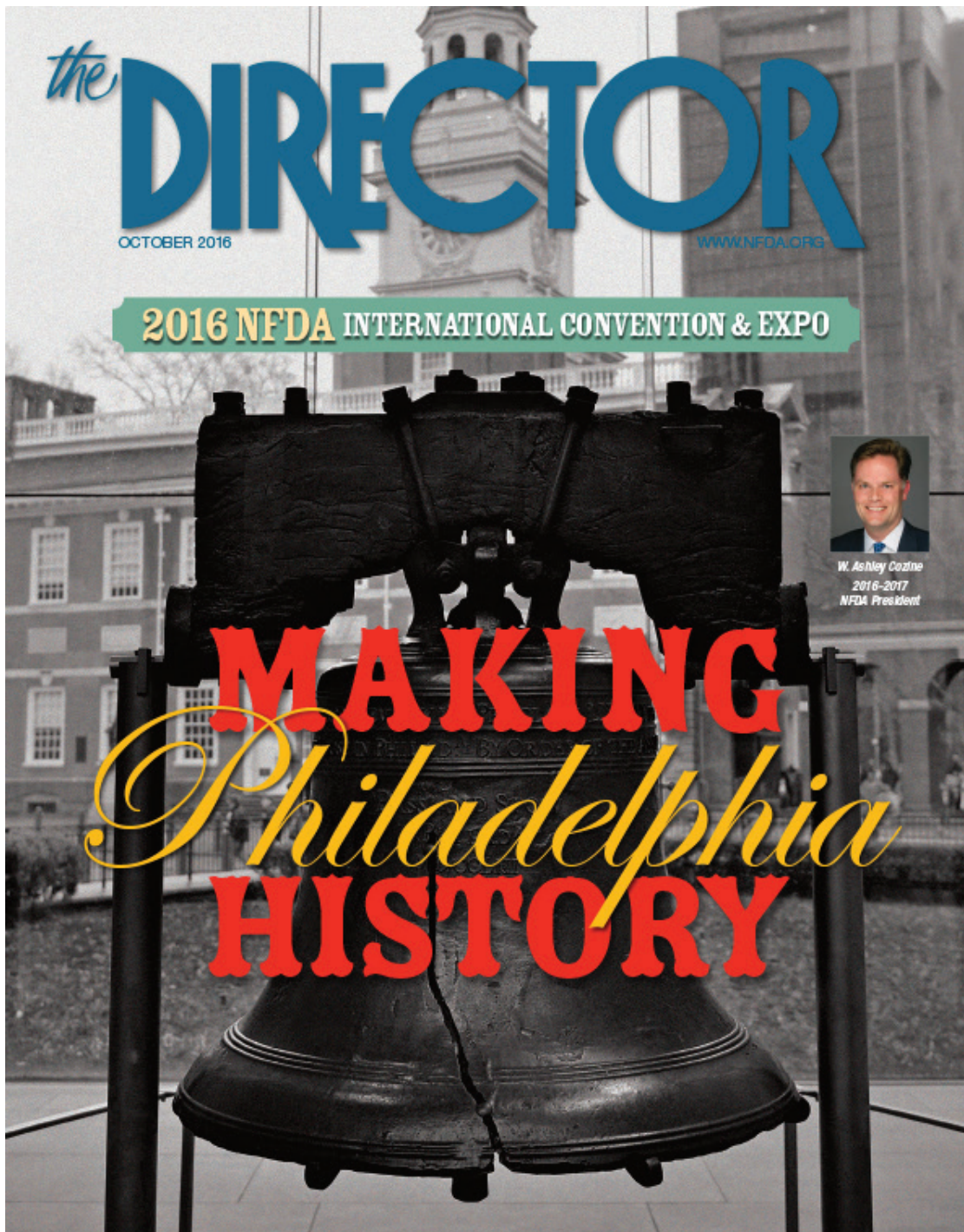


Cooperative Funeral Fund Inc.

Who in the World Would Want to be a
Funeral Director?

as seen in:



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Who in the World Would Want to Be a Funeral Director?

Me, me, me – pick me! I want to be a funeral director! It is the world’s greatest career.

But when you stop and truly think about it, only a glutton for punishment would want to do what we do. Seriously, who in their right mind would want to be a funeral director? How many times have you heard other funeral directors saying, “I don’t like hanging out with funeral directors.” Why would we say this when we are pretty much all the same deep down? We are crazy, crazy lucky is what we are. Where else can you work and have all of the free flowers you could ever ask for, a chance to drive really nice cars and people to hang around with who are really “cool.” Ba-dum-bum...

How could anyone *not* want to be a funeral director? Some of best things about being a funeral director:

1. How awesome to rarely have a day off. We are blessed to be given the chance to be available 24/7, 365 days per year. This means there is a very high possibility that while you’re on vacation, you may be lucky enough to have to go home early to take care of a family that has lost a loved one. Joyously, we miss most major family events, which is such a wonderful opportunity to disappoint your family. I get excited thinking about the prospect of leaving a Super Bowl party to make a house removal of a 300-pound man down a five-story walk up, without the fire department.

2. All of those glorious, stressful work-days. Our days are filled with joyous deadlines and fun-filled days in which we generally have to be in three places at the same time. Spectacularly, nothing ever seems to go as planned. The best days are those in which the priest calls the deceased the wrong name, the cemetery digs the wrong grave, the local newspaper spells the deceased’s name wrong and the family insists on blaming us for every wrongdoing that’s been done to them in the past century. I get the warm

and fuzzies just thinking about the Pri-losec I need to pick up at the pharmacy.

3. Enjoying our splendidly depressing work environment. It is such a pleasure to go to work, where the majority of people we meet are really bummed to be sitting in the same room with you. It is the most wonderful feeling in the world when someone you have been helping through their grief simply looks at you and says, “I hope I don’t see you again for a long time!” How could you ever take that the wrong way? How can talking about death and dying all day not make everyone laugh and smile? We certainly are the butt end of many a joke.

4. How cool is it to come home smelling like your work – and I don’t mean pizza! I love the look I get from my spouse after a particularly long day in the embalming room. Our effervescence has our significant others running into our arms and hugging and kissing us all night long. The adoring way we are told not to bring any of that crap into the house sets my heart on fire. It is so wonderful to be appreciated after working most of the day with a bottle of strong fluid in one hand and a trocar in the other.

5. So delighted that we are underpaid and overworked, which is funny since whenever we tell someone what we do, their first comment is always, “You guys make lots of money, don’t you?” Um, not really, but if you think so, that’s awesome. I am sure this needs no further explanation, as I believe my sarcasm is quite understood.

The definition of sarcasm by Merriam-Webster is the use of words that mean the opposite of what you really want to say, especially in order to insult someone, to show irritation or to be funny. As a fellow funeral director/embalmer/mortician/undertaker, I am quite sure you recognize a hint of sarcasm in my writing. In fact, it’s quite riddled with sarcasm in order to make an important point. There is no doubt we have a very difficult job;

however, most of us chose to do the job because we can. There is something that makes us “special enough” to want to do it. If you want to be successful in funeral directing, you can’t fake what comes naturally – giving of ourselves to help others during one of the worst times in their lives.

Right now, our profession is in a period of uncertainty. How do we ensure the livelihood of our industry? It does appear to be a daunting task. Face it, with all of the career options available, will there be enough of “our kind” in the future to do the job we do? Personally, I feel the best way to recruit those people who are meant to do this work is by being totally honest and sharing the “real” secret of why anyone would want to be a funeral director. And no, it has nothing to do with sarcasm, although it can be a great teaching tool.

Getting out into our communities and speaking to the younger generations about what our career truly has to offer is so valuable. Anyone listening will know it was a choice not taken lightly. We do what we do because it just seems to be the right thing to do and we can’t see ourselves being anything else! Yes, there are many things we have to “give up,” but in the grand scheme of things, we receive way more than we give, and not many careers can say that. So get your funeral directing butts out there and share, share, share! ✦

Ann Marie St. George, CPC, is New York regional manager for Cooperative Funeral Fund, a preneed and perpetual care fund management company. She has worked in the funeral industry for the past 30 years and is also a mortuary officer for both DMORT Region II and Kenyon International Emergency Services. She can be reached by email at annie@cffinc.com.