




Fall 2009

**Events/Dates**



More Than a Funeral Home  
to register click the boots

**OGR Fall Forum**

November 8-10, 2009  
[Hyatt Regency Riverwalk Hotel, San Antonio](#)

**OGR Audio Seminars**

October 15, 2009  
[Demanding Families: An Arrangements Conference Challenges](#)

November 19, 2009  
[Innovative Ideas to Better Serve Families](#)

December 17, 2009  
[What to Know Before Expanding or Acquiring](#)

### What is The Independent Brief?

This e-Newsletter, The Independent Brief, is designed to provide you important news, trends and ideas as part of OGR's initiative to take bold, new steps toward keeping you well-informed and engaged in the international community of independent funeral homes. It will be issued mid-point between each issue of the magazine and at other times as situations warrant. (see related article below). As OGR improves its electronic communications, you can expect to see more features such as interactive capabilities and a presence in various social media. Meanwhile let us know what you think at [info@ogr.org](mailto:info@ogr.org).

### OGR headquarters relocating to Texas

OGR headquarters is relocating to Austin, Texas, effective November 1. The new address will be 3520 Executive Center Dr., Suite 300, Austin, TX 78731. The "800" number should remain the same but the local direct and fax numbers will change. The Golden Services Group's direct sales phone number to Maureen is (217) 532-6591 and the fax line is (217) 532-9344.

Please note that all system communications will be interrupted for several days during the move.

The move is part of a continuing transition of OGR programs and operations as the association reviews its value in support of making your funeral home exceptional. The relocation will strengthen OGR's leadership position in the independent funeral home industry

### Fall Forum: Still time to register; room rate cutoff Oct. 18

Rooms are filling up for the OGR Fall Forum in San Antonio. [Registration](#) has been reduced by more than 20 percent for main registrants. And there is still time to take advantage of the great room rate at the Riverwalk's premier hotel, the [Hyatt Regency](#). Please be aware that an interruption in OGR communications during relocation to Austin may interfere with late Forum registration.

[Read more >>>](#)

### NFAM program postponed for now

## [New Facility](#)

### 2010 OGR Annual Conference

April 22-25, 2009  
[Five-star Broadmoor in Colorado Springs](#)

Following careful evaluation of expenses and minimal OGR member participation, the OGR Board of Directors accepted the recommendation of the Communications Committee to shelve NFAM in consideration of a project that may be more broadly supported by OGR membership. [Read a full letter >>>](#) to members from Interim Executive Director Dianne Hughes.

### 2010 OGR Annual Conference set for Broadmoor in Colorado Springs

Plan now to join your colleagues at the award-winning, spectacular, five-star Broadmoor in Colorado Springs, CO, April 22-24, 2010. Room rate is only \$205. Visit the [Broadmoor](#) online.

[Read more >>>](#)



## [Co-op Buying Program](#)

Maximize your ability to operate efficiently and serve your families "by the Golden Rule"

### The Independent - Next Issue: Winter

As part of the ongoing realignment of OGR programs and services, The Independent moves to a quarterly publication beginning with the Winter issue. Previously OGR President Koven Brown and Interim Executive Director Dianne Hughes announced that everything that impacts the operations and well being of OGR is under review. Just as you work to address the needs of the families you serve, your Board and committee members, are aligning a vision for the future of OGR. This e-Newsletter, The Independent Brief, will be issued mid-point between each issue of the magazine to keep members updated on important news, views and trends (see above).

[Get to know our new GSG suppliers and representatives](#)

### Winter Issue: Best practices for delivering exceptional service

The Winter issue of The Independent will present a line-up of practical articles on those best practices that result in unparalleled client-family satisfaction. Given the wide range of rapid changes born largely of technology, only those independent funeral homes that stay current will enjoy the competitive edge. Both longtime readers and those new will find the familiar sections that report the news on association members: Exemplary Service Recognition, New Member Welcome, Milestone Anniversaries, In memoriam, Resource guide and some that will be new.

[Download a current list of GSG Suppliers \(pdf\)](#)



### James Walsh hosts 1,500 townspeople in U.S. at mobile museum, Reflections: The American Funeral

More than 1,500 townspeople toured a mobile museum depicting the history of the funeral in America. The exhibit, arranged inside a semi-truck trailer, was hosted in a local parade by OGR member James Walsh, owner of Faulmann & Walsh Golden Rule Funeral Home, Fraser, Mich. Named Reflections: The Funeral in America, the 1,000 square foot display has been touring the U.S. since the summer of 2008 and is available for appearance.

[Read more >>>](#)

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## **Other Funeral Home News & Views**

### Read what AARP is saying about the high cost of funerals

A report in the current issue of the AARP Bulletin (circulation 24 million) that explores

the high cost of dying, is stirring interest among OGR members and others. In part the report states: "There is a way to avoid pressure tactics and indecision at the funeral home... (A non-profit consumer group) advises families to discuss funeral plans in advance... avoiding the topic will make the funeral more difficult, and likely more expensive." The entire report is available [here](#).

OGR would like to hear from members on how independent funeral homes and OGR might respond to this report. A couple of thoughts to get you started...

1. OGR should develop a consumer-targeted "positive image" program members could use in community outreach.
2. Revise and enhance the consumer section on the OGR Web site. Write to OGR at [info@ogr.org](mailto:info@ogr.org)  
[Read more>>>](#)

### New federal cemetery and funeral consumer protection legislation introduced in wake of Burr Oak Cemetery scandal

U. S. Rep. Bobby Rush, Ill., introduced the Bereaved Consumer's Bill of Rights Act, Oct. 3, in the wake of the Burr Oak Cemetery scandal in Chicago when police charged four Burr Oak employees for moving buried bodies to re-sell burial plots.

Rush chairs the House Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade and Consumer Protection. In a written statement, he says his act would bring more regulations to the cemetery industry. In late September a state panel investigating the Burr Oak matter also called on more government oversight of the industry.

[Read more >>>](#)

### Funeral sciences benefit from a moribund economy

Schools in the U.S. that provide an education in the business and science of death, not surprisingly, report a surge in student interest which has historically spiked when unemployment hits 8 percent, said Stephanie Kann, program director at the Worsham College of Mortuary Science in Illinois, saw a 20 percent increase this year over last.

[Read more >>>](#)

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