

No Keys? No Problem!

By Cindy Rott

One of the best things we recently added while remodeling our home was a keyless deadbolt on the front door. No longer do we fumble with keys trying to find the right one; we simply punch in a 'secret' code. When we leave the house the deadbolt locks with the touch of just one button. This lock is extremely easy to install. There are many different types and styles available at your big box hardware store and, of course, there are countless choices online.

We love this new addition to our home because we can now go for a run or a walk, and not have to carry our keys. We don't have to hide a key if house guests or a repairman arrive when we are not home, we just program in a temporary code and then delete it when that person has left. Our

lock kit cost less than \$120, and was installed (by a pro), in less than 30 minutes. But I am told that most home owners with a minimum of skills could do it themselves.

A certain party with whom I live has admitted how life has become so much easier, now that he does not need to search for his keys (his car is also keyless). He who is always in a hurry has now found the time to lock up, since it is so easy -- the quick push of a button is all it takes on his way out the door.

The lock can be programmed with an easy-to-remember code, but it shouldn't be too easy so thieves could guess the code. Previous to this lock, our deadbolt was almost more trouble than it was worth to lock. The key had to be found, inserted, turned, sometimes jiggled, and then checked

to see if it was really locked. When in a hurry to leave the house, we often would skip this step and just turn the knob lock. And guess what we learned? Dumb thing to do. Our door was kicked in, and more important than what was stolen, our sense of security in our quiet Severna Park neighborhood went right out the door with that thief.

Now, since it is so simple and because we learned something the hard way, we just push the button, listen for the bolt to lock and off we go.



Ask the Undertaker

By Ryan Helfenbein

As you can imagine, people ask me interesting questions on a daily basis about my work in the funeral business. "Can I scatter my cremated remains in the Chesapeake Bay?" "Do I need a special permit to fly my husband's urn to Ohio?" "Can you be sure to see that I am in my birthday suit when my visitation takes place?" I've pretty much heard it all, and nothing is a surprise anymore. Nonetheless, it has made me realize that many people today want to know more about what is available to them and what funerals are all about than ever before. So I have been asked to write a regular column to answer your questions about this business.

Let's start with a commonly asked question when I meet with a family to make advance funeral plans: "What do I do if a death occurs out of town?" This is a very good question. We've seen Hollywood create some very memorable moments based on this situation. For example, how can we forget

Clark Griswold tying his grandmother-in-law to the roof of his station wagon, with his entire family in the car, so he could make sure her body was returned home in the 1990s film National Lampoon's Vacation? I would strongly recommend not using the "Griswold method" and instead contact a licensed funeral establishment.

When a death occurs away from home, you first need to contact the funeral home who assisted the deceased in making advance funeral plans or "prearrangements." If this was not done in advance, then you need to contact the funeral home that would have normally been called if death did in fact occur near home.

Funeral homes have affiliates, or at least a resource book that they can reference, throughout the United States. This doesn't mean they are all owned by the same company, although some are, this just means that your local funeral home will contact a reputable firm in that area to assist them in seeing that your remains return home. This is so important. When a family contacts a funeral home when death occurs and also contacts their hometown funeral home, they may receive charges for two professional service fees and possibly other expenses. Not only is it a smart financial decision to contact your hometown funeral home, but by using your hometown funeral home, you will have one

contact, one company to oversee the entire process and one point of reference for any information and questions your family may have. It reduces the confusion at a very overwhelming time.

But what if death occurs in a third world country? Many times in a third world country when a death occurs the deceased is buried within 24 hours if a funeral director is not contacted. I think you get the point: Contact your hometown funeral home as soon as possible.

Ryan Helfenbein is a licensed funeral director and certified planning counselor. He assists local residents with end-of-life decisions offered by Advanced Funeral Planning and Insurance Solutions through Fellows, Helfenbein and Newnam Funeral Home, P.A. To book Ryan for a group presentation or a private consultation please call (410) 758-3987 or contact him via e-mail at ryan@shnfuneralhome.com

Is it going to matter that you were here?