


*Donate Your Body
To Science*

**AND OTHER 'NONTRADITIONAL' PLANS FOR
YOUR BODY WHEN YOU ARE DONE WITH IT**

Sydney @ Peters Township Public Library
Thursday, October 24, 2024



You've got to approach dying the way you live
your life. With curiosity, hope, experimentation,
and with the help of your friends.

- Timothy Leary

Rest in Pieces by Bess Lovejoy

- **Our Bodies After Death**
 - **Popular Post Mortem Options in the US**
 - **Nontraditional and Lesser Known**
 - **Unfortunate Happenings**
-



Death is just another path,
one that we all must take.

- Gandalf, *Return of the King*

Our Bodies



livor mortis

the blueness
of death

algor mortis

the coldness
of death

rigor mortis

the stiffness
of death

Cremation

- 2015: Cremation surpasses burial
 - 2022: 59.3% cremated (projected)
 - Top States: Nevada, Maine, Oregon
 - PA has 243 crematories (2021)
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Cremation

- Pacemakers removed
- Cardboard or wooden boxes
- 1600 to 1800 F and 1 to 4 hours
- Average adult = 6-8 pounds of cremains

Cremation

- 41% Direct Cremation
- 35% Cremation with Memorial Service
- 24% Casketed Adult Funeral with

Viewing and Cremation

Cremation

- 41% Buried or Interred
- 26% Returned to Families
- 18% Scattered in a Sentimental Place
- 14% Split Among Relatives

Scattering on Land

- Pennsylvania
 - No state laws
 - Check local ordinances or rules
- National Parks or Federal Lands
 - *Allowed*, but permission required



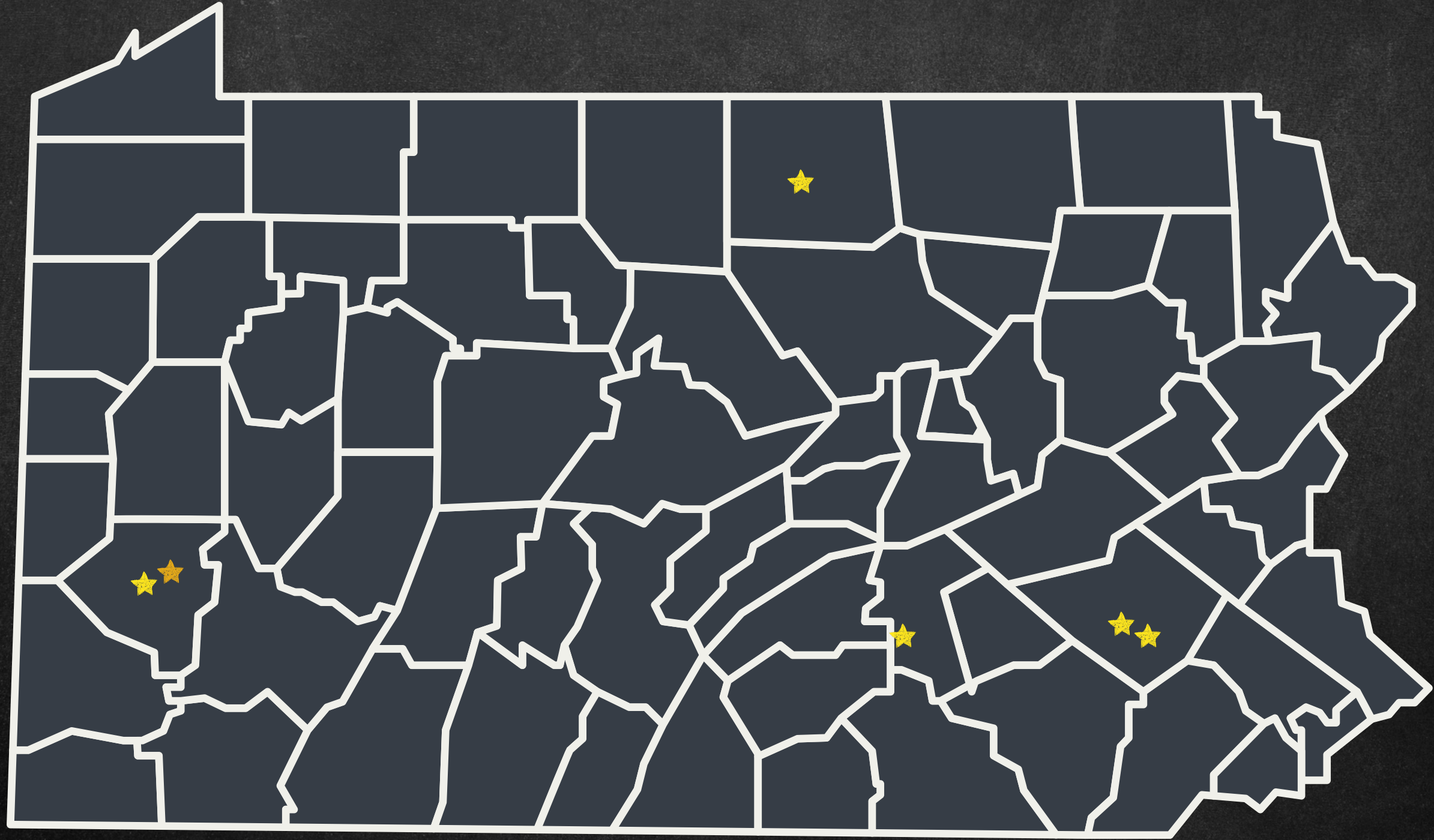
Burials

- 2022: 35.7% buried (projected)
 - Top States: Mississippi, Alabama, Kentucky
 - Steadily declining in popularity
 - More expensive option traditionally
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Green burial is a way of caring for the dead with minimal environmental impact that aids in the conservation of natural resources, reduction of carbon emissions, protection of worker health, and the restoration and/or preservation of habitat.

- The Green Burial Council

Hybrid & Natural Cemeteries



Penn Forest

Natural Burial Park

- No embalming fluids & Biodegradable materials only (no vaults)
 - Flat markers and DIY Digging
 - 3 feet of cover soil
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DIY??

- PA State Requirements
 - 2 feet depth from natural surface
 - Near any water supply is PROHIBITED
 - Permission to transport body
- 24 hours to chill or final resting place

At Sea

- 2020: 2,544 buried at sea (bodies/cremains)
- Must be three nautical miles from shore
- Human remains only
- Readily decomposable materials only
- Must notify the EPA within 30 days



Staying at Sea

- Non-cremated, non-casketed
 - Wrapped in a natural fiber
 - Additional weight like a steel chain
- Non-cremated, casketed
 - No plastic (Navy uses metal)
 - Holes drilled in top, bottom, and sides
 - Additional weight, like sand or concrete
 - Banded at least six times

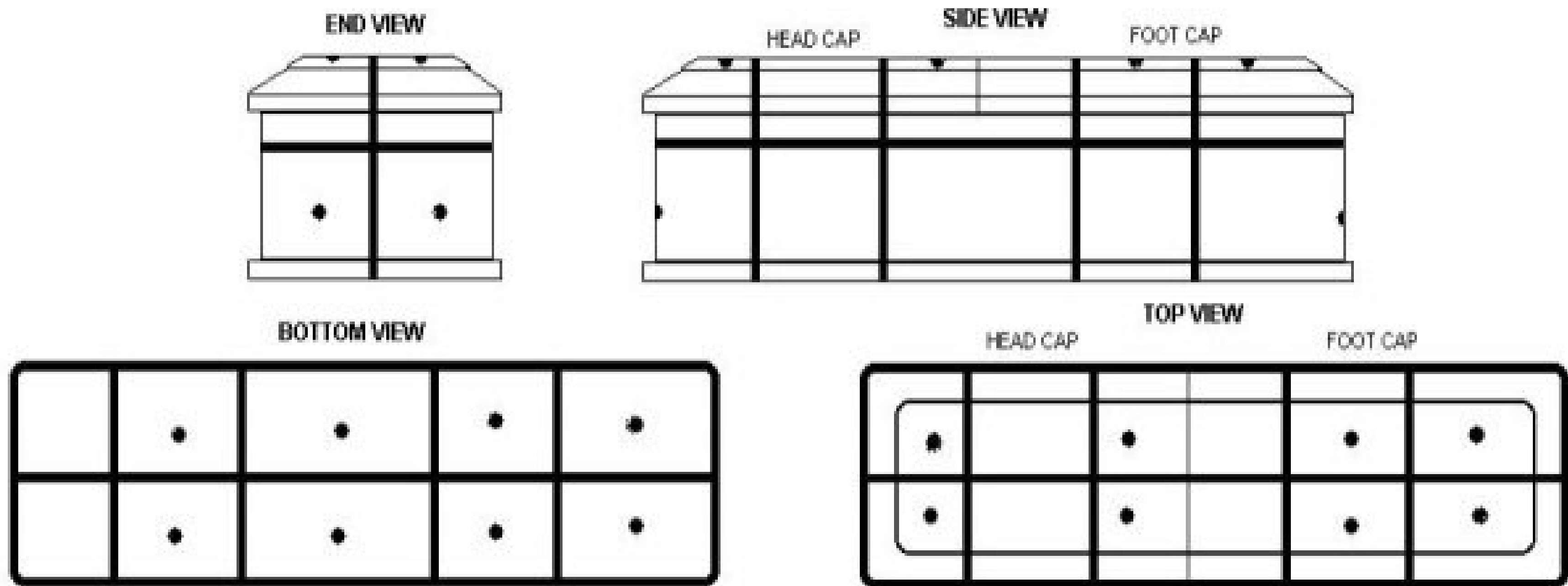


Diagram from the United States Navy Burial at Sea Program's *Guidelines for Casket Preparation* (2010).

Open Air Cremation



- Crestone End-of-Life Project
- Resident for 3 months before death

Composting



- Currently legal in Arizona, Colorado, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, Nevada, New York, Oregon, Vermont, Washington
- Legislation in PA was introduced and sent to committee in 2022

Tree Pods &
Mushroom Suits



Whole Body Donations

- Humanity Gifts Registry PA
 - First started in 1883
 - 10 Universities and Medical Colleges
 - Cremains returned to family or interred

Whole Body Donations

- The Body Farm at UTK
 - Research and Training
 - Skeletal Remains kept by UTK

Flesh decays; bone endures. Flesh forgets and forgives ancient injuries; bone heals, but it always remembers...

Dr. Bill Bass, Death's Acre



Alastair Cooke

Born: November 20, 1908

Salford, Lancashire, UK

Died: March 30, 2004 (aged 95)

New York, New York

Body Brokers

- Consensual Donation & Research Integrity Act:
Require registration, notifications to next of kin,
establish chain-of-custody rules, craft
requirements for labeling, packing, and shipment,
and create standards for final disposition
 - S. 2191: Referred to committee 6/22/23
 - H.R. 4275: Referred to committee 6/23/23



Further Reading

- *All the Living and the Dead* by Hayley Campbell
- *Death's Acre* by Dr. Bill Bass and Jon Jefferson
- *From Here to Eternity* by Caitlin Doughty
- *Gory Details* by Erika Engelhaupt
- *The Green Burial Book* by Elizabeth Fournier
- *Rest in Pieces* by Bess Lovejoy
- *Stiff* by Mary Roach

Information Sources

- National Funeral Directors Association, 2022 Cremation and Burial Report https://californiahealthline.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2022/09/2022_Cremation-and-Burial-Report.pdf
- EPA Burial at Sea Guidelines: <https://www.epa.gov/ocean-dumping/burial-sea#instructions>
- Final Rights: PA Specific Rules: <https://funerals.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/PA.pdf>
- Green Burial Council: <https://www.greenburialcouncil.org/>
- Penn Forest Natural Burial Park: <https://www.pennforestcemetery.com/>
- Crestone End of Life Project: <https://crestoneendoflifeproject.org/>
- Human Composting <https://recompose.life/>
- Humanity Gifts Registry: <http://www.hgrpa.org/>
- University of Tennessee Body Farm: <https://fac.utk.edu/>
- The Guardian, “Family’s dismay after Alistair Cooke’s bones stolen by New York Gang”
Thursday, December 22, 2005
<https://www.theguardian.com/media/2005/dec/23/bbc.usnews>

Questions?