

Tudor and Cashel residents learn about living responsibly



By Mike Riley

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Tudor and Cashel Township hosted a Lunch and Learn on Feb. 21 at the township community centre. Tim Baragar, funeral director at Neuman Family Funeral Home in Bancroft talked about living responsibly and planning for the realities of life to make fulfilling these realities, like funeral planning, easier in the long run. Councillor Elain Holloway, chair of the Community and Communications Advisory Committee, comments on this event. Baragar told attendees at the Feb. 21 Lunch and Learn about Living Responsibly at the Tudor and Cashel community centre that living responsibly and preparing makes fulfilling life's realities like funeral planning, more attainable than not, reducing stress and financial burdens in the process. Baragar said the biggest misconception is that you have to prepay to prearrange your funeral, which you don't. The biggest advantage of prepaying is that whomever is in charge of your affairs knows exactly what your wishes are. I've been doing this for nearly 43 years and we've had a few situations where the family will slightly tweak the arrangements recorded but not in a major way. They're just so thankful to have a blueprint to go by, he says. Baragar told a personal story of his parents pre-planning their funeral arrangements and how it subsequently avoided conflict between him and his sister when his mother passed away. Because we had Mom's blueprint, the only thing she told us was that she didn't need a fancy casket but she wanted a waterproof vault. I told her that the cemetery she was going to that there has never been water there and she said that's good because I've never been any hell at the backstroke! he says. Baragar said the only person who can make major changes to someone's prearranged funeral plans are the executor/executrix of the estate, which he said thankfully has not happened very much in his experience, although it did happen once and created a lot of conflict within that specific family at a difficult time. Baragar also answered some frequently asked questions like; do I have to be embalmed? (No, only if there's a viewing and there's a potential health risk to having that person not embalmed such as a viewing or if they're entering or leaving Ontario or Canada), if I pass at home, can I still be an organ donor? (No, advance notice must be given at the hospital and you need to be kept on life support for organs to be viable for donation, except for the eyes, which can be donated), and many other queries covering cremation versus burial, donating one's body to science (which he did not recommend as in his experience the families and the bodies are treating poorly), how deep does a grave need to be (four feet deep), if a concrete vault is required for burials (no, only if there's an environmental concern) and the necessity of having a will in place prior to one's passing to minimize the confusion and stress on family members. I'd like to think that I speak for any funeral director, please know that we're not someone you need to avoid. If you want to get valid funeral information, don't rely on the gossip circle at Tim Hortons, because in all likelihood, you're going to hear something you don't like and assume it's right and it is likely not correct. We're just members of the community. We have to live here too. If you have a question, or want to know something like funeral costs, pick up the phone or stop in and ask the question, he says. For more information, contact Baragar at 613-332-3990 or in person at Neuman Family Funeral Home at 38 Bridge Street West in Bancroft. (www.neumanfamilyfuneralhome.com) Holloway told Bancroft This Week that her own personal experience spurred her into wanting to help others become aware of the importance of living responsibly. Leaving our families with our wishes, a plan, learning the truth about what actually happens and how to prepare for end of life. Tim Baragar made this often-difficult discussion, mixed with a little humour, easier to absorb. I'm so grateful

we've had the opportunity to offer these sessions through the Ontario Seniors Accessibility Program Grant and hope to continue this program into the future," she says. "Next month, [April 17 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.] we will be hosting a Physical and Mental Well Being Lunch and Learn and plans are already underway."