

The Dead Beat



The Caregiver's Soapbox



Dedicated to providing information about the people and places involved in the funeral industry

Fall, 2009

www.thedead-beat.com

Volume 10 Issue 3

Burial and Cemeteries in Haiti

By Charlie Shipman

I traveled to Haiti in July on a church mission trip. We flew from Miami to Port Au Prince then jumped on an 18-seat plane and flew across the island to Les Cayes. From Cayes, which is at sea level, we drove four hours on a narrow mountain road to the mission compound 3,000 feet up in the mountains close to the city of Jeremie



Community Cemetery

located on the far northwest coast of Haiti. The temperature was a pleasant 80 degrees during the day and 75 degrees at night. Where we were, most people ate only one meal a day consisting of black beans and rice. The more prosperous people owned a few chickens, maybe a goat or two, or a calf. They grow coffee in their gardens. Bananas grow wild.

Even though the official govern-

ment of Haiti is basically nonexistent and most officials with any clout are on the take; the government has a thriving land office. Every parcel of land is surveyed and platted and ownership certificates are issued. Land ownership dates back to when the French left and the slaves took over from their former plantation owners.

Most families have their mausoleums on their own property up in the mountains, closer to the larger villages and towns they have community cemeteries. Within the cemeteries, families own their plots just like in the U.S. To make extra money, families rent out extra spaces in their mausoleums to other people



Mausoleum



Pit inside the Mausoleum

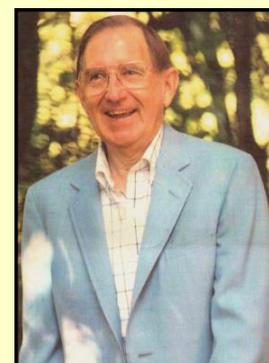
who live in the immediate area. They recycle the spaces. As a new body needs a resting place, they place a coffin with body in the slot in the mausoleum and cover the opening with a concrete slab and plaster it over. When another death occurs and they need the slot, they simply break it and dump the coffin and body in an eight foot deep pit dug underneath the mausoleum, and slide in the new customer. Of course, the bodies and coffins continue to deteriorate and decompose over time.

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Stilwell-Taylor Mortuary Services
By Mynde Taylor



Stilwell-Taylor Services is located at 15931 FM 2493 (Old Jacksonville Hwy.) in Tyler, TX. The business was established in January of 2007 by Jim and Mynde Taylor. Jim and Mynde are both Licensed Funeral Directors and Embalmers and originated from The Black Hills of South Dakota in Rapid City. Jim graduated in 1997 from John A. Gupton

College in Nashville, TN and Mynde Stilwell-Taylor graduated in 2005 from Arapahoe College in Littleton, CO

Jim and Mynde work the Mortuary Service as a husband and wife team with over 20 years of combined experience. The Mortuary Service strives to meet the needs of our Funeral Home clients by providing: First calls, embalming, ship-outs, transport and direct cremations. We have a vast service that extends beyond Tyler and we try our best to accommodate all of our client needs. Our business is based on trust, reliability and professionalism with attention to detail. Our goal is to meet your needs and your requests.

We would like to take this opportunity to show our gratitude and thank our funeral home clients who have supported our business for the past 2 1/2 years. Our progress and success would not be possible and is attributed to your loyal and repeat business. You are appreciated and we look forward to serving you in the future.

Amy Howard Art Gallery



The editor's daughter Amy, who was mentioned in our previous issues, was quite the artist and we've decided to display some of her artwork every issue in her memory.



Amy Howard



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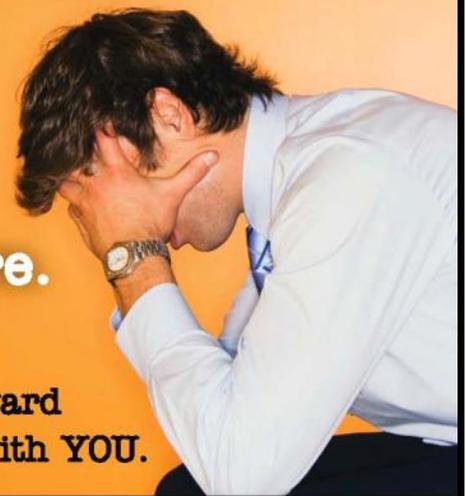


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Mortuary Muse*

*to think or consider deeply; meditate
By Lowell

We are such a miniscule funeral establishment it is hard to believe we could be a bell-weather indicator for anything. Yet we have hosted holiday memorial services, scattered cremains on a natural area and established our own scattering garden with a memorial cenotaph years ago. Last month within less than an hour we had discussions with two families living 30 miles on either side of us about green burials.

Recently we got in one of those situations that calls for an additional charge for services that were outside the normal criteria of the non-declinable charge and not an item separately listed on the GPL. Perhaps it is time to list concierge services as suggested by Alice Adams, **Texas Director**, August, 2009. Alice is the editor of the Texas Director.

A former resident of this community

died in Chicago. Her son arranged for a visitation at a funeral home there and contacted us for graveside arrangements to be held about 10 days later.

In what may be an indicator of tough times the son rented a minivan and delivered his mother's casketed body directly to the country cemetery shortly before the scheduled graveside service. In Chicago he only borrowed a memorial book, but was willing to buy pages there and use them here.

Along the lines of modern trends he had created a DVD of his mother's photo album to be played during a buffet luncheon for family members. He also displayed other pictures on our equipment at the luncheon following the graveside service.

For the service he had opted to have Joanne (manager at funeral home) fulfill Master of Ceremonies duties, read-

ing the obituary and leading the singing. There was no minister. A cousin read the 23rd Psalm and the son read from a prayer card and made a few remarks. Then each cousin took a white rose from a vase brought from Chicago and placed it on the casket and adjourned for group pictures before heading out to lunch.

Last year the local cemetery was the last stop on "Margaret's Road Show." Margaret's daughters put together a wonderful collection of photos reflecting their parent's lives on a DVD. They made several stops across the country to host receptions for family members and old friends showing and distributing copies of the DVD. The final sequence of pictures were of Margaret in her bed with a favorite quilt and other items. They were taken just before and after Margaret's death. I had mixed feelings about the closing sequence, but it added a really final touch.

A colleague commented the other day that we don't really need a staff geek anymore as most families can put a presentation together now better than we can. We

(Continued on page 8)

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Older Than Dirt

Sent by Reader, Patti

Patti, "Yep, I'm older than dirt!! Makes me long for the "good ol' days."

This is a test. How do you rate?

Someone asked the other day, "What was your favorite fast food when you were growing up?" "We didn't have fast food when I was growing up," I informed him. "All food was slow."

"C'mon, seriously. Where did you eat?"

"It was a place called 'at home,'" I explained.

"Mom cooked every day and when Dad got home from work, we sat down together at the dining room table, and if I didn't like what she put on my plate I was allowed to sit there until I did like it."

By this time, the kid was laughing so hard I was afraid he was going to suffer serious internal damage, so I didn't tell him the part about how I had to have permission to leave the table.



But here are some other things I would have told him about my childhood if I figured his system could have handled it.

Some parents NEVER owned their own house, wore Levis, set foot on a golf course, traveled out of the country or had a credit card. In later years they had something called a revolving charge card. The card was good only at Sears Roebuck. Or maybe it was Sears & Roebuck. Either way, there is no Roebuck anymore. Maybe he died.

My parents never drove me to soccer practice. This was mostly because we never had heard of soccer. I had a bicycle that weighed about 50 pounds, and only had one speed, (slow). We didn't have a television in our house until I



was 5. It was, of course, black and white, and the station went off the air at midnight, after playing the national anthem and a poem about God; it came back on the air about 6:00 a.m. There was usually locally produced news and farm show on, featuring local people.

I was 13 before I tasted my first pizza, it was called 'pizza pie.' When I bit into it, I burned the roof of my mouth and the cheese slid off, swung down, plastered itself against my chin and burned that too. It's still the best pizza I ever had.



We didn't have a car until I was 4. It was an old black Dodge. I never had a telephone in my room. The only phone in the house was in the living room and it was on a party line. Before you could dial, you had to listen and make sure some people you didn't know weren't already using the line.

Pizzas were not delivered to our home. But milk was. All newspapers were delivered by boys and all boys delivered newspapers — my brother delivered a newspaper, six days a week. It cost 7 cents a paper, of which he got to keep 2 cents. He had to get up at 6:00 a.m. every morning. On Saturday, he had to collect the 42 cents from his customers. His favorite customers were the ones who gave him 50 cents and told him to keep the change. His least favorite customers were the ones who seemed to never be home on collection day.



Movie stars kissed with their mouths shut. At least, they did in the movies. There were no movie ratings because all movies were responsibly produced for everyone to enjoy viewing, without profanity or violence or most anything offensive.

If you grew up in a generation before there was fast food, you may want to share some of these memories with your children or grandchildren. Just don't blame me if they bust a gut laughing.

Memories from a friend:

My dad is cleaning out my grandmother's house (she died in December) and he brought me an old Royal Crown Cola bottle. In the bottle top was a stopper with a bunch of holes in it. I knew immediately what it was, but my daughter had no idea. She thought they had tried to make it a salt shaker or something. I knew it as the bottle that sat on the end of the ironing board to 'sprinkle' clothes with because we didn't have steam irons.

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Behind the Back Fence

“Does Chris Really Get It?”

By Lowell

Chris Raymond, editor of NFDA’s **The Director**, explained his thoughts about electronically distributed words as opposed to the printed word in “**The Director**, August, 2009.” After worrying about the demise of the printed word he came to the conclusion that the creativity and ideas were what was important not how the message was delivered.

Then he commented about Amazon.com which has made the founder and CEO, Jeff Bezos wealthy. Why, then, would Bezos turn to the Internet as his “Kindle,” a handheld device for reading e-books, e-magazines and e-newspapers and thousands of book titles, to distribute his inventory? Chris says it is because Mr. Bezos, “Gets it.”

What does this have to do with funeral profession/industry? Chris completes his editorial with this commentary: “Funeral service pros resisted the rise of cremation nationwide four decades ago, viewing it as a threat to their cherished, longtime-lucrative funeral form. You know that I mean: sale of the expensive box, visitation in a high-overhead chapel, embalming fees, etc. Only recently, because of the relentless rise of consumer preference for cremation as just another form of disposition, are funeral pros starting to “get it” and realizing perhaps, that what matters less is the smell of casket and crepe and instead the creation of memories and meaning. The latter is the essence of your purpose as funeral pros, not selling ‘stuff’”

I assume the context of Raymond’s comments is to echo the sentiments of several of the contributing editors and

consultants. They perceive funeral directors are reluctant and resistant to change their operations in light of rising cremation rates. They had banded phrases like two million dollar facilities for visitations, baby boomers doing things their way and pointing out that different priorities are evolving as retirement incomes have diminished. Consultants are urging funeral directors to come up with new and creative ways to provide meaningful services and replace income lost without the sales of caskets, embalming and expensive facilities. (We might also have to replace expensive consultants).

Whatever Raymond’s intentions were, I was angered by his comments. I felt that he had insulted several generations of compassionate funeral service folks. “Undertakers” who had dedicated their lives to helping grieving families while—yes—selling “stuff.” “Stuff” that the families wanted. Who is to say that a casket as opposed to a rough box to embrace the remains of a loved one did not bring a bit of solace to a mother, husband or child. Or were memories better recollected in a comfortable gathering place as opposed to a cramped upstairs flat or a rain or wind swept cemetery.

And what about embalming: The overwhelming desire to have a loved one returned home from a distance or maintained until mourners can return for a last goodbye is still important for about half the families in the U.S. With the burgeoning delays in completing death certificates embalming may soon be a cheaper and more ascetic alternative to a long time residence in a communal cooler.

As for creating memories—well, we can help create a memorable event. (I can think of a few I wish weren’t so memorable.) The deceased is the one that created the memories. We may help or facilitate the sharing of those memories among family and friends. Assuming the family really wants to.

And guess what? We may help with this memory recollection and sharing process by providing families, at a cost to them, the use of electronic devices, internet connections, geek and catering service, mementos and remembrance items —STUFF. STUFF provided by many of our advertisers and **The Director’s** advertisers. Chris do you really get it?

About the Author: Lowell Pugh has funeral director and embalmer licenses in Missouri and Texas and continues the operation of the 105-year-old family funeral home. He is publisher of **The Dead Beat** which began in 1999. He can be contacted at **The Dead Beat** address.

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After-Thoughts *By Joanne Howard*

An interesting situation is in the making in relation to my mother in the nursing home. Her sister who was in a nursing home in a town several hundred miles away has passed away. It has been years since my mother has seen her sister. Her sister has tried to touch base with her by phone, but we never accomplished the phone conversation. My mother would probably not remember the call, but I feel bad that I didn't try harder to make the connection.

Her sister is going to be cremated with no service, so I don't have to coordinate her going to the service. I do not think she would have been able to go even if there were some service. Now I have to decide how to tell her. I feel I need to do it in person, but I really don't want to upset her. She will probably not remember it for long, but what about that time she realizes that all of her siblings have preceded her in death.

I can see my grandmother, her mother, with the three girls that have died and they are just waiting for my mom, the baby. It just seems like a comforting visual to me—but what about my mom? What will be a comfort to her?

I feel sad that I can't go and acknowledge my aunt. I have an interesting association with her since her birthday was the same day as my oldest daughter's death date. Weird associations do happen in life.

But I have always liked my aunt and having been on this planet for 92 years, I

just wish they were doing something for her. A memorial service would be nice. A time for us to all remember all the good times and even some of the bad ones. It seems a shame not to do something, but is that happening more than in the past?

I'm sure economics are entering this picture and I'm really not sure what is happening since I have not had a informative conversation with my cousin, her daughter, yet.

I remember several years ago that my aunt actually consulted with me as a funeral director of what should be done when she passed away in relation to cremation. I gave her some advice, but I'm not totally sure what that was. I hope I encouraged a memorial service, but maybe I didn't. As funeral directors we need to always make the families aware that a time of recognition is necessary.

That final recognition may actually help in the acceptance of the death. But this is the typical situation of a person being in the nursing home for years and not as connected as if they had been home.

But what about her nursing home family? How do these residents deal with the missing person, if they realize it? How does the staff handle it? Several people that my mother has been in the nursing home with have passed away. Family members of the residents who visit on a regular basis become acquainted with other residents and feel

bad when these residents pass away. There is really no way of acknowledging the grief. Isn't it interesting how many grief dynamics are involved with the nursing home? Actual death, death of the minds of the residents, loss of their physical capabilities are just a few considerations.

As funeral directors we deal with the actual family of the residents, but what about the extended family of the nursing home community? If you've ever heard of disenfranchised grief, this is a prime example. We should always be open to remember the total grieving community and try our best to meet their needs. Though people have been in nursing homes for long periods of time, when the loss actually happens it still hurts and we should encourage families to allow everyone to remember their loved one, friend, neighbor, fellow resident, or even the fellow resident's family. Let's be the one to encourage a time to allow a person to be acknowledged for the life they have lived.



About the author: Joanne Howard is the editor of **The Dead Beat**. She has been a licensed funeral director since 1992 with Pugh Funeral Home in Golden City, MO and also the aftercare coordinator. Much of her writing in this column is influenced by her loss of her two daughters Laura at age 10 in 1997 and Amy at age 19 in 2003. Any comments or questions can be directed to 417-537-4412, P.O. Box 145, Golden City, MO 64748 or email Joanne@thedead-beat.com.



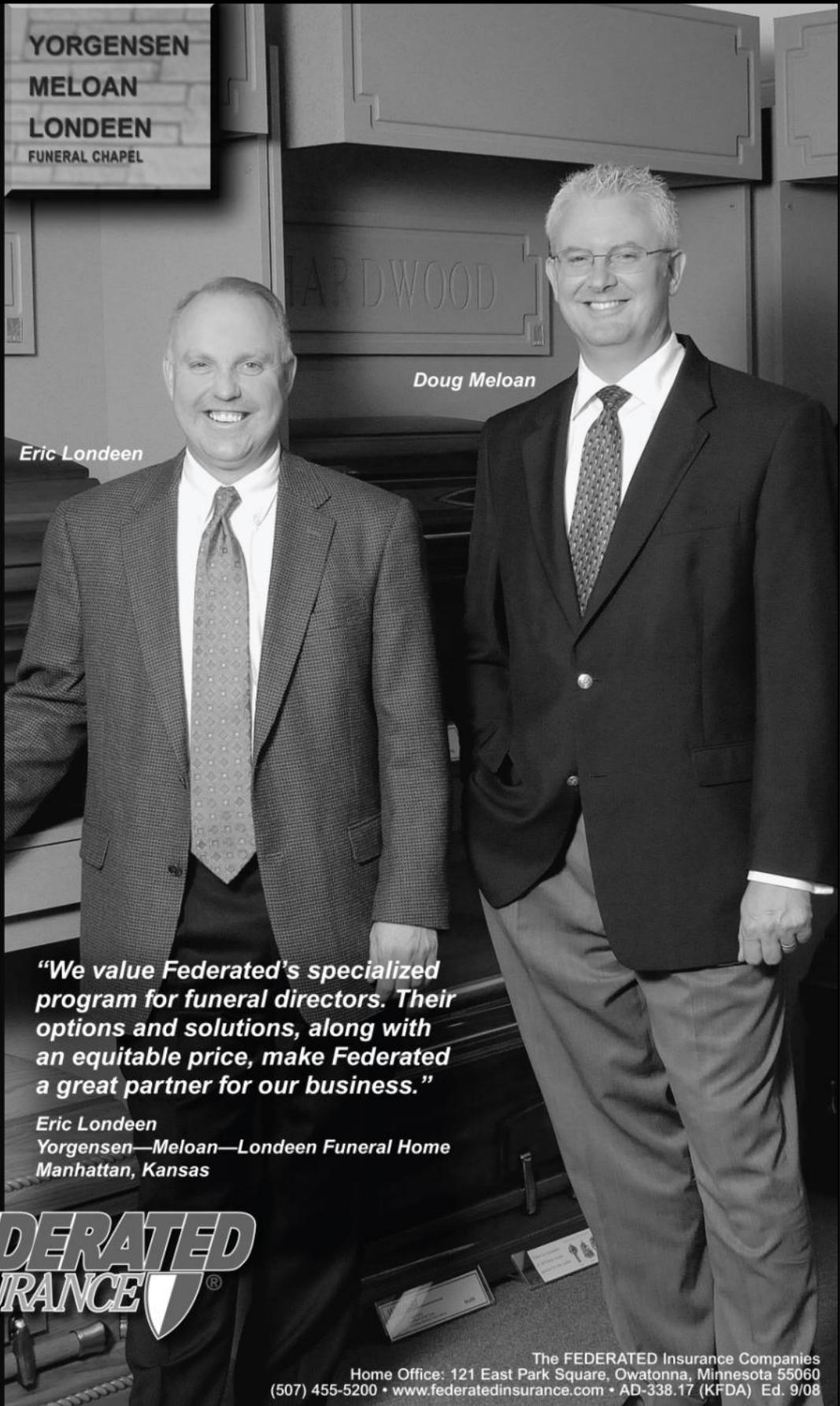
When a door closes, another one opens, but often we stand there so long looking at the closed door, that we do not see that one that's opened.

Do not look at physical appearances, they can be deceiving. Do not look at riches, for they are only temporary. Look for someone who makes you smile. Because it only takes a smile to brighten up a very dark day. Look for someone who makes your heart sing.



Dream what you want to dream; go where you want to go; try to be who you really are; because life is short, and often only gives one chance to do things.

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Mortuary Muse (Cont.)

(Continued from page 3)

probably also do not have to worry about the ability to broadcast the services live on the Internet. Just reserve seating for the picture/video phone contingent. It really has been a short time since a few funeral homes put in a drive-up viewing window. Are today's various high tech presentations with banquet facilities any more satisfying to families than yesteryears families gathering in the dining room with the deceased laid out in the parlor and the whole affair recorded on tin type photographs?

About the Author:

Lowell Pugh has funeral director and embalmer licenses in Missouri and Texas and continues the operation of the 105-year-old family funeral home. He is publisher of **The Dead Beat** which began in 1999. He can be contacted at **The Dead Beat** address.

Too Late for the Last Issue

In our last issue, Lowell was writing about reduced formaldehyde fluids. He had asked Champion about possible time lapse before decomposition set in on a body embalmed with their Millineum New Era. Lisa Dorsey responded with the following e-mail.

"Millineum New Era glutaraldehyde fluids deliver protein cross-linking and preservative effects that are long term and duplicate or exceed results obtained with formaldehyde-based chemical. Really, nothing can be said to be indefinite in duration, but the time frames are expected to be long. Anatomical bodies have been used successfully several years after embalming with Millenium, and disinterment have found Millenium New Era bodies to be fully preserved and the viscera to be almost mummified."

We would like to thank Lisa for this update given after we had gone to press.

How Many Do You Remember?

- ◆ Headlights dimmer switches on the floor.
- ◆ Ignition switches on the dashboard.
- ◆ Heaters mounted on the inside of the fire wall.
- ◆ Real ice boxes.
- ◆ Pant leg clips for bicycles without chain guards.
- ◆ Soldering irons you heat on a gas burner.
- ◆ Using hand signals for cars without turn signals.

Older Than Dirt Quiz: Count all the ones they you remember, not the ones you were told about. Ratings at the bottom.

1. Blackjack chewing gum
2. Wax Coke-shaped bottles with colored sugar water
3. Candy cigarettes
4. Soda pop machines that dispensed glass bottles
5. Coffee shops or diners with tableside juke boxes
6. Home milk delivery in glass bottles with cardboard stoppers.
7. Party Lines on the telephone
8. Newsreels before the movie
9. P.F. Flyers
10. Butch wax
11. TV test patterns that came on at night after the last show and were there until TV shows started again in the morning. (There were only 3 channels, if you were fortunate)
12. Peashooters
13. Howdy Doody
14. 45 RPM records
15. S & H Green Stamps
16. Hi-Fi's
17. Metal ice trays with lever
18. Mimeograph paper
19. Blue Flashbulb
20. Packards
21. Roller Skate Keys
22. Cork Poppuns
23. Drive-Ins
24. Studebakers
25. Wash tub wringers.

If you remembered 0-5 = You're still young

If you remembered 6-10 = You're getting older

If you remembered 11—15 = Don't tell your age

If you remembered 16—25 = You're older than Dirt.



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Be Patient With Yourself

By Ken Doka

One of the biggest problems we experience in grief is that we often become extremely frustrated with a person. This person simply is not operating as we have come to expect. He does not work as efficiently. She seems unable to concentrate or focus. Often the person claims not to be feeling well. Yet, we tire of the constant excuses. This person seems emotionally unstable even at times—crying or lashing out in anger at the most inappropriate times in the most unfortunate ways.

We are this person.

Grief affects us in all kinds of ways. Sometimes, grief upsets our physical health. We experience all sorts of aches and pains. We seem listless, devoid of any energy. Grief may influence our emotions. We may struggle with guilt. We may fume with anger. We may experience sadness, withdrawing into our shells.

We may be unable to concentrate. Tasks once readily accomplished now become tedious and burdensome. Our behaviors may seem out of control. We may cry at any occasion. We may feel empty spiritually.

This is the experience of grief.

The problem is that we become impatient with ourselves – resenting our inability to bounce back. We expect more of ourselves. Perhaps others share the same expectation that once the funeral is over that we can return to

the way we were before the loss.

That simply cannot and will not happen. We are in a process that has its own time.

The first step is simply to acknowledge that process. We are grieving. This process has no discernable timetable. It is often unpredictable. We may have good days and bad days.

We need to accept that we cannot perform yet at our old levels of efficiency and feeling. This loss has changed us. We are in a stressful difficult period as we discover who we now are after this loss. We need to give ourselves time to cope with all the changes and to readapt to a world now different.

We need to nurture ourselves. We have to concentrate on taking care of ourselves. The basics become important once again. Are we eating right, sleeping well, exercising regularly, and monitoring carefully any medications we may be taking? Are we avoiding destructive habits such as isolating ourselves from others, ignoring our spiritual selves (however we define spirituality), or escaping into alcohol or frantic, meaningless activity.

More than simply avoiding bad habits, we need to cultivate self-care. What has helped us in the past? Do we need to walk in the woods, listen to soothing music, talk with a confidante or counselor, pray or meditate?

We need to be patient with ourselves.

A colleague, Jim Miller, once described grief in a series of photographs that depicted the seasons. Grief seems like a long wintertime. We seem to hibernate, feeling little progress or warmth. Everything seems dead.

Yet, this belies the slow subtle progress we may not see. Spring and the promise of a new, changed life seem so distant. But in its time, it will come.

This article was originally printed in *Journeys: A Newsletter to Help in Bereavement*, published by Hospice Foundation of America. More information about *Journeys* can be found at www.hospicefoundation.org or by calling 800-854-3402 and is published monthly by the Hospice Foundation of America, 1621 Connecticut Ave., NW, #300, Washington, DC 20009. Annual subscription-\$12.00.

Kenneth J. Doka, Ph.D., is a Professor of Gerontology at the College of New Rochelle. Dr. Doka's books include: **Disenfranchised Grief; Living with Life Threatening Illness; Living with Grief: After Sudden Loss; Death and Spirituality; Living With Grief: When Illness is Prolonged; Living with Grief: Who We Are, How We Grieve; AIDS, Fear & Society; Aging and Developmental Disabilities; and Children Mourning, Mourning Children.**



In addition to these books, he has published over 60 articles and chapters. Dr. Doka is the associate editor of the journal **Omega** and editor of *Journeys*, a newsletter of the bereaved. Dr. Doka has served as a consultant to medical, nursing, hospice organizations, as well as businesses, educational and social service agencies. As Senior Consultant to the Hospice Foundation of America, he assists in planning, and participates in their annual Teleconference. In 1998, the Association for Death Education and Counseling honored him by presenting him an Award for Outstanding Contributions to the field of death education. In March 1993, he was elected President of the Association for Death Education and Counseling. Dr. Doka was elected in 1995 to the Board of the International Work Group on Dying, Death and Bereavement and elected Chair in 1997. Dr. Doka is an ordained Lutheran Clergyman. (And a heck of a nice guy— Editor & Publisher)

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Chuckles

Editor Note: My apologies if anyone has been offended by jokes in this column

Dentist: "Try to relax. I'll pull that aching tooth in five minutes."

Patient: "How much will this cost?"

Dentist: "It'll be \$100."

Patient: "That much for just five minutes' work?"

Dentist: "Well, if you prefer, I can pull it out very slowly."

After directory assistance gave me my boyfriend's new telephone number, I dialed him and got a woman. "Is Mike there?" I asked. "He's in the shower," she responded. "Please tell him his girlfriend called," I said and hung up. When he didn't return the call, I dialed again. This time a man answered. "This is Mike," he said. "You're not my boyfriend!" I exclaimed. "I know," he replied. "That's what I've been trying to tell my wife for the past half-hour." Reader's Digest

**From John H. Carter,
Edgar Funeral Homes, Burnet & Marble Falls, TX**

I have a new one for Jeff Foxworthy..... But this one is not made up!

"You May Be a Redneck If....."

Last week I am sitting at my desk and filling out paperwork and I heard on the scanner a 911 call out to the Sheriff and EMS asking them to go out to CR 340 to see about a bucket truck that is parked under a power line with the bucket extended all the way to the power line. A passerby has stopped and has been yelling up at the bucket because he can't see anyone in the bucket due to them possibly falling down into the bucket and says that he can't get a response back from the bucket. The truck cab is locked up. That it seems that there is no way to get it down to get the possibly electrocuted guy/gal. The deputy sheriff gets there along with Texas Highway Patrol, EMS, and Fire Department. Now this is a small Texas town mind you....so the whole gang of rescuers are out there. They all are frantically running around trying to get to him/her by climbing the arm to the bucket and some are yelling up to the bucket that help is on the way hoping that who ever it may be can hear them. Now picture this....Two men drive up in a pickup and get out and walk over to the deputy sheriff; who is with others yelling and screaming up at the bucket and say, "What's going on?" The deputy says, "You need to step back out of the way! We are trying to get to the electrocuted guy/gal in that bucket there!" The guy says, "How did he/she get up there?" The deputy sheriff shares with him how he thinks it might have happened. The guy says, "That's impossible; I extended the bucket up there and locked the truck so that it could not be messed with while my friend and I went to lunch!"Go figure!

Driving a hearse can have its advantages.....

Do you remember "The Life of Riley?" It was an old radio and TV show. There was a character on there by the name of "Digger." He was an undertaker. He had this real low voice and talked slowly. His catch phrases were "You are looking very good, very natural" and "Would you like a ride" and "Why don't you get in?" One day I was on the way back from the city cemetery and noticed some boys bothering a girl. I was in the hearse so

Comments

I love your magazine; I always look forward to each issue.

John H. Carter, Edgar Funeral Home, Burnet & Marble Falls, TX

I slowly drove beside them and they stopped the heckling and turned toward the hearse. We have dark tinted windows so I cracked the window just far enough that they could hear me. I said in a voice like Digger, "Would you boys like a ride?" Their eyes got real big and said, "No.....Sir" real shaky and slowly. I then said, again in that same low voice but put emphasis on the words, "WHY DON'T YOU GET IN?" The boys scattered, so I rolled the window down all the way and laughingly told the young lady, "I don't think they'll be you bothering again."

Three Grandmas

Three mischievous old Grandmas were sitting on a bench outside a nursing home when an old Grandpa walked by. One of the old Grandmas yelled out saying, "We bet we can tell exactly how old you are." The old man said, "There is no way you can guess it, you old fools." One of the old Grandmas said, "Sure we can! Just drop your pants and under shorts and we can tell your exact age." Embarrassed just a little, but anxious to prove they couldn't do it, he dropped his drawers. The Grandmas asked him to first turn around a couple of times and to jump up and down several times. Then they all piped up and said, "You're 87 years old!" Standing with his pants down around his ankles the old gent asked, "How in the world did you guess?" Slapping their knees and grinning from ear to ear, the three old ladies happily yelled in unison, "We were at your birthday party yesterday!"

Catholic Horses

Mitch, a hard-shell Southern Baptist, loved to sneak away to the race track. One day he was there betting on the ponies and nearly losing his shirt when he noticed this priest who stepped out onto the track and blessed the forehead of one of the horses lining up for the 4th race. Lo and behold, this horse— a very long shot— won the race. Mitch was most interested to see what the priest did the next race. Sure enough, he watched the priest step out onto the track as the 5th race horses lined up, and placed this blessing on the forehead of one of the horses. Mitch made a beeline for the window and placed a small bet on the horse. Again, even though another long shot, the horse the priest had blessed won the race. Mitch collected his winnings and anxiously waited to see which horse the priest bestowed his blessing on for the 6th race. The priest slowly blessed a horse, Mitch bet on it and it won! Mitch was elated! As the day went on, the priest continued blessing one of the horses, and it always came in first. Mitch began to pull in some serious money, and by the last race, he knew his wildest dreams were going to come true. He made a quick stop at the ATM, withdrew big money and awaited the priest's blessing that would tell him which horse to bet on. True to his pattern, the priest stepped out onto the track before the last race and blessed the forehead, eyes, ears and hooves of one of the horses. Mitchell bet



(Continued on page 11)

Chuckles (Cont.)

(Continued from page 10)

every cent, and watched the horse come in dead last. Mitchell was dumbfounded. He made his way to the track and when he found the priest, he demanded, "What happened, Father? All day you blessed horses and they won. The last race, you blessed a horse and he lost. Now I've lost my savings, thanks to you!!" The priest nodded wisely and said, "That's the problem with you non-Catholics. You can't tell the difference between a simple blessing and the Last Rites."

As a traffic safety consultant, I often gave talks on accident prevention. One night after I spoke to a PTA group, the program chairperson thanked me profusely and gave me a check for \$50. "Giving these presentations is a part of my job," I said. "Could I donate the money to one of your causes?" "That would be wonderful!" she gushed. "We have just the program that could use it. We're trying to raise money so we can afford better speakers."

For weeks, a six-year-old boy kept telling his teacher about the baby that was expected at his house. One day, his mother let the boy feel the movements of the unborn child. He made no comment and stopped talking about it to his teacher. When the teacher asked him about the expected event, the boy burst into tears and said, "I think Mommy ate it."

Bernard Brunsting

A man and a woman were asleep like two innocent babies. Suddenly at 3 o'clock in the morning, a loud noise came from outside. The woman, bewildered, jumped up from the bed and yelled at the man, "Holy cr.... That must be my husband!" So the man jumped out of the bed; scared and naked jumped from the window. He smashed himself on the ground, ran through a thorn bush and to his car as fast as he could go. A few minutes later he returned and went up to the bedroom, "I AM your husband!" The woman yelled back. "Yeah, then why were you running?....." And then the fight started.

My wife and I are watching "Who Wants To Be A Millionaire," while we were in bed. I turned to her and said, "Do you want to have sex?" "No," she answered. I then said, "Is that your final answer?" She didn't even look at me this time, simply saying, "Yes." So I said, "Then I'd like to phone a



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friend".... And that's when the fight started. (from Mona Culbertson)

A deaf-mute is about to tee off on the first hole of a municipal golf course when a large burly guy yells, "Hey, you! Nobody tees off ahead of me." Being deaf, the guy continues to prepare for his shot. Thinking the deaf-mute is ignoring him, the big guy runs up and knocks the poor guy to the ground, kicks his ball away, and prepares for his own shot. After the big guy hits the ball and proceeds down the fairway, the mute gets up, brushes himself off, waits a moment, and again prepares his shot. The deaf-mute then hits a beautiful shot straight up the middle of the fairway, striking the big guy in the back of the head and knocking him unconscious. The mute then walks down the fairway, rolls the big guy over, brings him to and holds up four fingers in front of his face.



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COLORADO



Pete E. Ortega, 64, of Walsenburg, died August 16, 2009. He served in US Army during the Vietnam War. He worked for the Boies-Ortega Funeral Home for 30 years, after his stroke in 2007 he continued working for the funeral home on a part-time basis. 

KANSAS

Barbara Ann Dunsford, 78, passed away on June 24, 2009. She was a retired funeral director and co-owner of Dunsford Funeral Home.

Paul Kirkendoll, 86, of Overland Park, passed away May 17, 2009. He was treasurer of Suhor Industries until his retirement in 1988. He was an Army veteran of WWII. 

MISSOURI



Keith Fraley, 84, of Joplin passed away Sept. 15, 2009. He served in the U.S. Army during WWII actively serving in England; Normandy; Northern France; Ardennes; Rhineland and Central Europe. He was owner of Fraley Funeral Supply and had actively called on funeral homes for 63 years. He had been a sales representative for Bass-Mollett Publishers for many years. His services were directed by Parker Mortuary in Joplin. 



Gary M. Stumpff, 66, of Galena passed away August 19, 2009. He attended the Dallas Institute Gupton-Jones College of Mortuary Science where he graduated in 1963. He owned and operated Stumpff Funeral Homes in Crane, Galena, Reeds Springs and Kimberling City for over 30 years. Funeral services were directed by Manlove-Stumpff Funeral Home, Crane.

John M. Stygar, of St. Louis, died July 26, 2009. He joined the Stygar Family Funeral Home in 1951 and assumed the role of president in 1965. Prior to joining the firm, he served in the United States Air Force during WWII. He was active in the Missouri Funeral Directors Association and Funeral Directors of Greater St. Louis. Funeral services were directed by The Stygar Family of Funeral Service at Stygar Florissant Chapel. 



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TEXAS

Margaret Crittenden Clayton, of Terrell passed away August 10, 2009. She was Mother of David Clayton, TFDA Past President. Her services were under the direction of Anderson-Clayton Bros. Funeral Home.

Mary LyBrand Estes, of Wills Point died September 11, 2009. She was the former owner of LyBrand Homes, Wills Point, Edgewood, Quinlan and Wills Point, TX. Her daughter was Lucia LyBrand, inactive funeral director and son Herschel L. LyBrand, funeral director at Corley Funeral home in Corsicana, TX. Services were under the direction of Hiatt's LyBrand Funeral Home.

Reverend Robert D. "Bob" Hayes, of Hitchcock, passed away Sept. 23, 2009. He was associated with Hayes Funeral Home and Hays Grace Memorial Park. His services were handled by Hayes Funeral Home.

Raymond Callaway Jones, CFSP, of Bryan passed away Aug. 17, 2009. Co-owner of Callaway-Jones Funeral Home and Crematory in Bryan and grandfather of Cody D. Jones. He was also a 50-year licensee. His services were directed by Callaway-Jones Funeral Home and Crematory.

Sherryl Hart, of Houston, died July 3, 2009. She was the office manager for ten years at Woodlawn Funeral Home and Cemetery which directed her service.

Virginia D. Locke, of Dallas passed away on August 10, 2009. She is the mother of Terry Parrish, Registrar of the Dallas Institute of Funeral Service. Her services were directed by Laurel Land Funeral Home.

Colin Owens, of Wolfe City, died Sept. 1, 2009. He was son of Dick and Ola Owens, Past President and First Lady of TFDA and was with R.W. Owens & Son Funeral Home who handled the services.

Robert Y. Patterson, of Mesquite, died August 5, 2009. He was the grandfather of David Patterson with Global Mortuary Affairs. Anderson-Clayton Funeral Home directed the services.

Austin E. Raney, Jr., of Irving passed away on August 19, 2009. He was past president of North Texas FDA, North Texas Funeral Director of the Year for 1996-1997 and Dallas Co. FDA Funeral Director of the Year 2008. His services were directed by Chapel of Roses Funeral Home.

Finnie Seale, of Snyder, passed away on August 5, 2009. She was the mother of Kris Seale, president of Funeral Directors Life Insurance Company of Abilene. Services were under the direction of Bell-Cypert Seale Funeral Home Chapel.

If you know of a fellow funeral service colleague that has died that we have not included, please send the information and picture if available (The Dead Beat, P.O. Box 145, Golden City, MO 64748) or fax it to us (417-537-4797) or E-Mail to Joanne@thedead-beat.com



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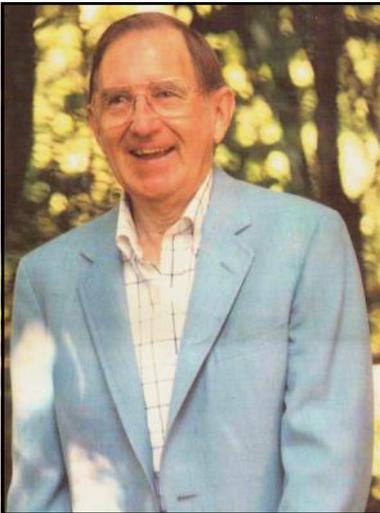
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In Memory of Keith Fraley

Another of the Greatest Generation of Americans, Keith Fraley, has disappeared into the mists of eternity. Keith's jolly yet gentle persona belied the terrible European conflict he had passed through during WWII.

Keith took over his father's travels and called on us for 63 years. Last spring he mentioned that his doctor had told him the business was what kept him going. His body had long since told him it was time to quit. But that giant spirit of his never wavered in his efforts to provide the very best service with a personal touch to his long-time funeral service customers and friends.



Fraley Funeral Supply (see ad on page 8) is operated by Beth Fraley-Zentner and Eric Zentner from a nearly new facility built especially for today's funeral service requirements. Beth and Eric have continued the same dedica-

tion to their customers that Fred and Keith had maintained since the start of the business in 1938. We will miss Keith with his wife Nelda at his side, but we know Beth and Eric will continue to provide us with quality service.



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The Dead Beat -The Caregivers Soapbox

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Sunset Funeral Home
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A new funeral home has opened in the Rio Grande Valley, Sunset Funeral Home near Los Fresnos, Texas on State Hwy 100. It is family-owned and operated by Mr. & Mrs. Noe Ortiz and family. It opened on September 1, 2009. Any questions call telephone (956-233-6333) or fax (956-233-1148) or email Christ Garza at cgarza@sunsetfuneralhomegv.com.



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Burial and Cemeteries in Haiti (Cont.)

(Continued from page 1)



Another Mausoleum

Most people in Haiti practice Voodoo. It is a strange combination of Catholicism and East African Spirit religion. The missionary we visited told us he asked his school students how many demons their parents worshipped. The children reported as

many as 150 demons. The demons have mostly Christian names. The different colors of paint on the mausoleums, indicates certain demons are protecting the dead.

Casket makers along with the witchdoctors are the more prosperous people in Haiti. Both charge for their services. On the road from Cayes up to the mission compound there were no less than six casket makers with their shack workshops set up right by the side of the road for all to see. They always have one casket done and ready to be used. Another casket is just about finished, and a third is just under construction. The casket makers are not afraid of theft and leave their products out in the open.



Casket Maker's Shack

The mortality rate is high in Haiti, 95% of the medical services are provided by Christian missionaries. In fact, Haitians who get sick would much rather wait to see a Christian doctor, than go to their own hospitals. Survival rates



Unfinished Mausoleum

are not good.

Haiti is the poorest nation in the western hemisphere. The state department discourages travel to Haiti, however the people we met were just trying to get by and feed themselves. People live on a dollar a day and hear the voodoo drums at night in the distance.



Female Witchdoctor's House

Everest Corporation... FTC's National Data Base of Funeral Pricing???? By Lowell Pugh

A few months ago the Everest Corporation, Houston, Texas decided to build a nationwide data base of funeral home GPL items. They contracted with a call center to call all funeral homes and get the pricing on their current GPL. Some funeral homes resisted because they did not think it a valid inquiry. A closer check of the rule reveals that a request from anyone must be honored.

Apparently enough firms declined to give the information that Everest went to their friendly FTC staff person for help. Lately, Everest has faxed a letter from an FTC staff person that explains that Everest is fulfilling the FTC's intent that funeral pricing be made available to anyone who requests it. The letter also cited



the appropriate sections of the rule.

In the fax cover letter Everest made it plain that it was their intention that all funeral homes should abide by the rule and everyone will reply to their request. The implication being that they would report those that had declined to the FTC as rule violators.

I was puzzled as to why they would even want our prices. The operator indicated it was Everest's intention to sell funerals nationwide. I told the call center person that we would not be interested in servicing funerals that they might sell.

A colleague told me this week (mid-September) that Everest planned to market funeral service packages to



corporations. How and under what circumstances is unclear to me. Employee benefits? An EAP service? Funerals sold at need? Pre-need? Would this conflict with some states' preneed or licensing laws?

It irks me to think someone else is making money off our proprietary information. And what of the FTC—would they regulate Everest? Obviously I know little of what I'm writing about. Maybe the FTC should maintain their own database of national funeral prices and we merely e-mail them changes as they occur. Hmm...would it go as smoothly as the internet death certificates are expected to flow?

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If I Had My Life to Live Over

By Erma Bombeck

(written after she found out she was dying from cancer.)

1. I would have gone to bed when I was sick instead of pretending the earth would go into a holding pattern if I weren't there for the day.
2. I would have burned the pink candle sculpted like a rose before it melted in storage.
3. I would have talked less and listened more.
4. I would have invited friends over to dinner even if the carpet was stained, or the sofa faded.
5. I would have eaten the popcorn in the 'good' living room and worried much less about the dirt when someone wanted to light a fire in the fireplace.
6. I would have taken the time to listen to my grandfather ramble about his youth.
7. I would never have insisted the car windows be rolled up on a summer day because my hair had just been teased and sprayed...
8. I would have sat on the lawn with my grass stains.
9. I would have cried and laughed less while watching television and more while watching life.
10. I would never have bought anything just because it was practical, wouldn't show soil, or was guaranteed to last a lifetime.
11. Instead of wishing away nine months of pregnancy, I'd have cherished every moment and realized that the wonderment growing inside me was the only chance in life to assist God in a miracle.
12. When my kids kissed me impetuously, I would never have said, "Later. Now go get washed up for dinner." There would have been more "I love you's." More "I'm sorry."
13. But mostly, given another shot at life, I would seize every minute, look at it and really see it, live it and never give it back. STOP SWEATING THE SMALL STUFF!!!!

Don't worry about who doesn't like you, who has more, or who's doing what. Instead, let's cherish the relationships we have with those who do love us.

Drafting Guys Over 60

This is Funny & Obviously written by a Former Soldier

New Directive for any war: Send Service Vets over 60!

I am over 60 and the Armed Forces thinks I'm too old to track down terrorists. You can't be older than 42 to join the military. They got the whole thing backwards. Instead of sending 18-year-olds off to fight, they ought to take us old guys. You shouldn't be able to join a military unit until you're at least 35.

For starters: Researchers say 18-year-olds think about sex every 10 seconds. Old guys only think about sex a couple of times a day, leaving us more than 28,000 additional seconds per day to concentrate on the enemy.

Young guys haven't lived long enough to be cranky, and a cranky soldier is a dangerous soldier. "My back hurts! I can't sleep, I'm tired and hungry." We are impatient and maybe letting us kill some jerk that desperately deserves it will make us feel better and shut us up for awhile.

An 18-year-old doesn't even like to get up before 10 a.m. Old guys always get up early to pee so what the heck. Besides, like I said, "I'm tired and can't sleep and since I'm already up, I may as well be up killing some fanatical idiots...."

If captured we couldn't spill the beans because we'd forget where we put them. In fact, name, rank and serial number would be a real stretch.

Boot camp would be easier for old guys. We're used to getting screamed and yelled at and we're used to soft food. We've also developed an appreciation for guns. We've been using them for years as an excuse to get out of the house, away from the screaming and yelling.

They could lighten up on the obstacle course however. I've been in combat and didn't see a single 20-foot wall with rope hanging over the side, nor did I ever do any pushups after completing basic training. Actually, the running part is kind of a waste of energy, too. I've never seen anyone outrun a bullet.

An 18-year-old has the whole world ahead of him.. He's still

(Continued on page 23)

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Old Saybrook Metals: Creating Beautiful Memories

By Jason Engler

In our profession, the increasing number of families choosing cremation has caused some companies to recoil in fear, and has caused others to step up and grab hold of the opportunity. One such company is Old Saybrook Metals, which has been devoted to classic craftsmanship of quality cremation urns since its inception in 1981. They are one of the exclusive manufacturers of cremation urns in the United States.

When speaking of pewter in cremation urns, many erroneously think of brass urns with a pewter finish, some of which are even labeled as being pewter. Those urns, however, are not pewter, and are not anything like what Old Saybrook Metals produces. Genuine pewter is an alloy containing mostly tin, with copper and antimony added for color enhancement and their hardening properties. Pewter has been used historically and in modern applications for tableware, figurines, and hollowware, and was prized among aristocrats for its beauty and durability.

Garry and Nancy Lea are the artists behind the Old Saybrook line. In 1979, Garry was approached by a friend and master metal spinner, William Cook, who offered to teach him the trade. Soon after, they opened a pewter retail store in Ft. Myers, Florida, where they developed a line of pewter hollowware. It was upon the death of their beloved German Shepherd in 1981 that Garry entered the cremation urn business. Following their pet's cremation the cremated remains were placed in a ceramic urn provided by the local Humane Society. Being that he was a metal spinner, Garry asked if he could provide his own urn, which he did, and the Humane Society loved it. It was a lidded sugar bowl with legs, handles, and a finial. At that point, Garry began making a less expensive version for the Humane Society, and the same urn (model #301) is still made.

Shortly after making this first urn, Garry began making full-sized urns, starting with model #102, and started attending conventions and trade shows. Business took off, and the company discontinued their hollowware line and focused exclusively on cremation urns.

Old Saybrook urns are made by spinning a pewter disc on a lathe with a chuck or form. This is done strictly by hand with spinning tools on forms and chucks in the different shapes of the urn's parts. Then the parts, some of which have embossed designs, are either clenched or soldered together, cleaned, given a satin finish, and coated with a clear metal lacquer, not only to add beauty to the urn, but to add a degree of protection. Several of their urn models, including their most popular model #601, are available in several colors.

Garry is the hands-on President of the company and oversees the creation of each urn from start to finish. Nancy handles shipping and paperwork, and assists her husband in the assembly and construction. "Dealing with the funeral indus-

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try has been very enjoyable," says Garry, "but I am concerned about the import of urns from foreign countries. In some cases, the quality is lacking. At one time we lost a portion of our business to the Chinese manufacturers. The lower cost was there, but the quality was not. All of our urns are hand-made in the U. S. A." And it's true, each urn is created by hand in their Ft. Myers facility, from its placement on the lathe to its placement in the shipping container, Garry Lea meticulously handles each of these sacred vessels.

The company has a core line of thirteen urns available to funeral professionals; but if you have seen urn catalogs from some of the major urn distributors, you'll see Old Saybrook's urns, several of which are exclusive designs available only through these suppliers.

After almost thirty years, Old Saybrook Metals is the only manufacturer of genuine pewter urns in the United States. Their elegant urns have become not just the standard, but the premier in pewter cremation urns.



Jason Ryan Engler is a Funeral Director in Rogers, Arkansas. He has studied cremation and its history throughout most of his life. He can be reached at arcremationist@hotmail.com.

“Dear Counselor....” By Bill Stalter

Dear Counselor,

With all the requirements imposed on Missouri funeral homes by Senate Bill No. 1, can a funeral home change from trust funded preneed to joint accounts? Is it possible to use joint accounts to minimize or avoid the new law requirements? Who would provide the proper contracts, especially with all the new Missouri state law changes?

I have received questions from funeral directors wanting to change their existing preneed contracts from trust funded to joint accounts. The topic has been raised during the State Board hearings on the implementation of SB1, and the advice given by the Board’s legal staff is that the funding of existing contracts cannot be changed without the consumer’s consent. The question is being asked in part because some banks are exiting the business because SB1 imposes new duties on the trustee, even for contracts written before the law’s effective date.

Preneed contracts must set out their method of funding, and accordingly, it’s not possible to change the form of funding without entering into a new agreement with the consumer. Another concern for the State Board is that the joint account does not offer the same level of protections as the trust.

Funeral directors wanting a change to joint accounts also need to consider that the new licensing requirements and the \$36 contract fee apply to joint account preneed contracts. Regardless of how few contracts the funeral director sells, he still must have the licenses, pay the fee, and file an annual report listing each preneed contract. Payments made towards a joint account must be deposited with the bank within 10 days of their receipt.

Funeral directors have raised with the State Board the need for a standard contract. However, the Board has rejected the idea, with good cause.

The creation of a bank account is now governed by the Patriot Act, which requires all parties to the account to be present when the paperwork is prepared. If the State Board were to dictate the terms of the joint account contract, some banks would likely refuse the transaction. So, unfortunately, the task of preparing a compliant contract falls to the funeral home.

Bill Stalter answers our questions for educational purposes only. It is **The Dead Beat’s** intent to give the reader general information about legal issues, not to provide legal advice. If a reader needs legal advice, he or she should hire an attorney. Reading **The Dead Beat** should not be used as a substitute for legal advice from an attorney. When Bill provides legal advice he does so for Stalter Legal Services in Overland Park, Kansas. Bill also provides consulting services through Preneed Resource Consultants, which can be found at www.prenneedresource.com.



We need some questions for the “Dear Counselor....” column.

Please send your questions to Bill’s e-mail or The Dead Beat’s and we will get some answers in future issues.

**email: wastal@swbell.net or bill@stalterlegal.com
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At the NFDA 2009 Convention and Expo Cherokee Child Casket Company will be showing all of their upgrades and additions in their product line. Their “Urns with a Soul™” and Keepsakes, “Eternal Image’s PRECIOUS MOMENTS®” caskets and “PRECIOUS MOMENTS®” medallions, Specialty Size Metal Redesigned Vaults and a Memorial Book for Child will be shown.

You need to visit their new website for the most updated product information. Simply email them at info@cherokeechildcaskets.com or call them at 800-535-8667.

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***Funeral Ticker*®
By Tom Monahan**

Tom Monahan has been involved in the death-care profession for about 16 years. During the last 12 months he’s developed an interesting piece of software designed especially for those in this profession. It’s called **Funeral Ticker**® he got the bright idea watching the scores scroll across the bottom of his TV screen on the ESPN channel. **Funeral Ticker**® does the same thing with funeral news as it sits on your computer’s desktop.

Funeral Ticker® has one channel that sorts approximately 30,000 sites looking for funeral profession news. It has another channel which reports on the stocks and movements of those consolidators and large suppliers to the funeral industry. A third channel is reserved for news provided by professional organizations like ORG, NFDMA, CANA etc., on calendars, conventions, etc. Finally, he reserved a fourth emergency channel for things like hurricanes and pandemics. Right now, he’s using it for information on the H1N1 pandemic.

If interested go to <http://www.funeralticker.com> and check it out.

New Priest's Ideas

The elderly priest, speaking to the younger priest, said, "It was a good idea to replace the first four pews with plush bucket theater seats. It worked like a charm. The front of the church always fills first now." The young priest nodded, and the old priest continued, "And you told me adding a little more beat to the music would bring young people back to church, so I supported you when you brought in that rock 'n' roll gospel choir. Now our services are consistently packed to the balcony."



"Thank you, Father," answered the young priest. "I am pleased that you are open to the new ideas of youth."

"All of these ideas have been well and good," said the elderly priest, "but I'm afraid you've gone too far with the drive-thru confessional."

"But, Father," protested the young priest, "my confessions and the donations have nearly doubled since I began that!"

"Yes," replied the elderly priest, "and I appreciated that. But the flashing neon sign, 'Toot 'n Tell or Go to Hell,' cannot stay on the church roof."



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Drafting Guys Over 60 (Cont.)

(Continued from page 20)

learning to shave, to start up a conversation with a pretty girl. He still hasn't figured out that a baseball cap has a brim to shade his eyes, not the back of his head.

These are all great reasons to keep our kids at home to learn a little more about life before sending them off into harm's way.

Let us old guys track down those dirty rotten coward terrorists. The last thing an enemy would want to see is a couple of million aggravated old farts with attitudes and automatic weapons who know that their best years are already behind them.

How about recruiting Women over 50... with PMS!!! You think Men have attitudes!!! Ohhhhhhhhhh, my Lord!! If nothing else, put them on border patrol...we will have it secured the first night.

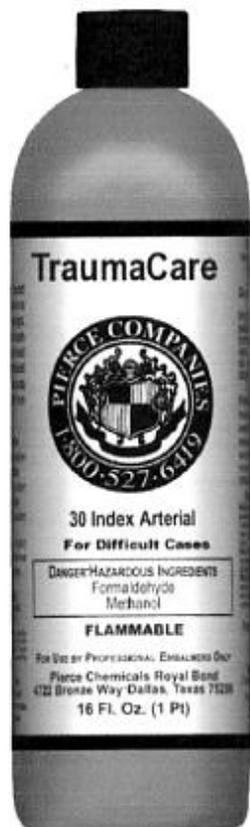
[http://
embalmingproonly.blogspot.com](http://embalmingproonly.blogspot.com)
By Robert Borning, Columbia, MO

Robert N. Borning (fdprofessional@gmail.com) has set up a blog to share embalming and funeral information and stories.

Please sign up to follow the blog, you might be able to submit commentary and information (after it has been scrutinized). This is to exchange information between funeral professionals ONLY.

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NFDA Member Funeral Homes Recognized for Outstanding Service to Families and Communities

Brookfield, Wisconsin: The National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA) announced its Pursuit of Excellence® program's 2009 award recipients on August 19, 2009. Out of 182 registrants—a 5.2% participation increase from 2008—167 firms have been recognized for adhering to strict ethical and professional standards and providing outstanding service to families and communities. Award recipients will be honored on October 26 at the “All-Star Recognition Ceremony and Reception” during the 2009 NFDA International Convention & Expo in Boston, Massachusetts.

The categories have five Pursuit of Excellence Award Recipients Recognized with “Best of the Best.” Then there are ten Pursuit of Excellence Award Recipients inducted into the Hall of Excellence. Finally there is a list of the 2009 Pursuit of Excellence Award Recipients.

(Editor's Note: We have listed those in our circulation area.)

Pursuit of Excellence Award Recipients Inducted into NFDA Hall of Excellence

Aspen Mortuaries, Lakewood, CO
Garnand Funeral Home, Inc., Garden City, KS.
Olinger Chapel Hill Mortuary & Cemetery, Littleton, CO

2009 Pursuit of Excellence Award Recipients

Adair Funeral Homes, Inc, Tucson, AZ
Aspen Mortuaries, Lakewood, CO.
Bring Funeral Home, Inc., Tucson, AZ.
Callaway-Jones Funeral Home, Bryan, TX
Carson-Wall Funeral Homes, Parsons, KS

Cobb Funeral Home, Blytheville, AR
Cozean Memorial Chapel, Farmington, MO
Cozine Memorial Group, Wichita, KS
Crist Mortuary and Mountain View Memorial Park, Boulder, CO
Evergreen Mortuary, Cemetery & Crematory, Tucson, AZ
Garnand Funeral Chapel, Inc, Ulysses, KS
Garnand Funeral Home, Inc., Garden City, KS
Hackett-Livingston Funeral Home, Shenandoah, IA
Heritage Memorial Funeral Home, Waldron, AR
Holman-Howe Funeral Homes, Lebanon, MO
Humphrey Funeral Service, Inc., Russellville, AR
Kerrville Funeral Home, Kerrville, TX
Larrison Mortuary, Ltd., Pratt, KS
Lentz Funeral Home, Algona, IA
Memorial Funeral Home, Edinburg, TX
Memorial Funeral Home, San Juan, TX
Ochiltree Funeral Service & Aftercare, Winterset, IA
Olinger Andrews Caldwell Gibson Funeral Chapel, Castle Rock, CO
Olinger Chapel Hill Mortuary & Crematory, Littleton, CO
Olinger Crown Hill Mortuary & Cemetery, Denver, CO
Olinger Hampden Mortuary & Cemetery, Denver, CO
Olinger Highland Mortuary & Cemetery, Thornton, CO
Olinger Moore Howard Chapel, Denver, CO
Olinger Woods Chapel, Golden, CO
Resthaven Funeral Home, Oklahoma City, OK
Roland Funeral Service, Inc., Atlantic, IA
Roller-Ballard Funeral Home, Benton, AR
Roller-Chenal Funeral Home, Little Rock, AR
Roller-Daniel Funeral Home, Searcy, AR
Roller Funeral Home, Mountain Home, AR
Roller-McNutt Funeral Home, Conway, AR
Roller-Owens Funeral Home, North Little Rock, AR
Schrader Funeral Home, Cheyenne, WY
Strode Funeral Home, Stillwater, OK

Crabby Old Man (How Will We Be Remembered?)

When an old man died in the geriatric ward of a nursing home it was believed that he had nothing left of any value. Later, when the nurses were going through his meager possessions, they found this poem. Its quality and content so impressed the staff that copies were made and distributed to every nurse in the hospital.

One nurse took her copy to press. The old man's sole bequest to posterity has since appeared in the Christmas edition of the News Magazine of the Association for Mental Health..

A slide presentation has also been made based on his simple, but eloquent, poem.

And this little old man, with nothing left to give to the world, is now the author of this "anonymous" poem winging across the Internet.

Crabby Old Man



What do you see nurses?.... What do you see?
What are you thinking?.... When you're looking at me?
A crabby old man,not very wise,
Uncertain of habit.....with faraway eyes?

Who dribbles his food... and makes no reply.
When you say in a loud voice... "I do wish you'd try!"
Who seems not to notice.... The things that you do.
And forever is losing.....a sock or shoe?

Who, resisting or not.... Lets you do as you will,
With bathing and feeding... The long day to fill?
Is that what you're thinking?..... Is that what you see?
Then open your eyes, nurse... you're not looking at me.

I'll tell you who I am.... As I sit here so still,
As I do at your bidding...as I eat at your will.



I'm a small child of Ten...with a father and mother,
Brothers and sisters.....who love one another.

A young boy of Sixteen...with wings on his feet
Dreaming that soon now...a lover he'll meet.
A groom soon at Twenty...my heart gives a leap.

Remembering, the vows....that I promised to keep.



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At Twenty-five, now....I have young of my own.
Who need me to guide...and a secure happy home.
A man of Thirty...My young now grown fast,
Bound to each other...With ties that should last.

At Forty, my young sons.... Have grown and are gone,
But my woman's beside me....to see I don't mourn.
At Fifty, once more....Babies play 'round my knee,
Again, we know children.....My loved one and me.

Dark days are upon me..... My wife is now dead.
I look at the future...I shudder with dread.

For my young are all rearing...young of their own.

And I think of the years... And the love that I've known.



I'm now an old man.... And nature is cruel...
'Tis jest to make old age....look like a fool.
The body, it crumbles...grace and vigor, depart.
There is now a stone....where I once had a heart.

But inside this old carcass... A young guy still dwells,
And now and again...my battered heart swells
I remember the joys... I remember the pain.
And I'm loving and living ... life over again.

I think of the years, all too few....gone too fast.
And accept the stark fact....that nothing can last.

So open your eyes, people.... Open and see..
Not a crabby old man. Look closer....see.....ME!!



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The Northwest Arkansas Funeral Directors have a yearly Golf Classic and this year it was changed to the Hannah's Hope Foundation Golf Tournament with all proceeds going to support this foundation.

Hannah's HOPE is on a mission to **H**elp **O**thers **P**ay **E**xpenses. They want to help support families that have a child battling cancer, raise awareness about childhood cancer, and to help find a cure to eliminate this terrible disease.

They help Arkansas families that have a child with cancer pay their day-to-day expenses. They give their services free of charge or they will get special needs taken care of at a substantial discount. Hannah's HOPE was founded in 2009 by Jon and Tiffany Boles in memory of their daughter who died at 17 1/2 months old, after a four-month long battle for her life. Hannah was in a fight against a rare childhood cancer called AT/RT, Atypical Teratoid Rhabdoid Tumor.

They wanted to help families that are going through a similar situation. So when your child is diagnosed with cancer your world stops, although the world around you continues. They believe that parents should be with their children while they are fighting for their lives. They have seen firsthand children alone at the hospital while their parents are working to pay the family bills.

Hannah's HOPE is designed to help parents during this difficult time and to make an already difficult situation less stressful. Parents are already worried and stressed about their child, they do not need to worry about losing a job, car or home.

If you are interested in this foundation, check out their website: <http://www.hannahshopefoundation.org>.

(Editor's note: It's great to see funeral directors supporting a worthy cause with their annual golf tournament.)

Great Western Hires Chris Fantasky as New Regional Manager

Ogden, UT: Great Western Insurance Company is pleased to announce the hiring of Chris Fantasky to the position of Regional Manager. Her region will include Nebraska, Oklahoma and Kansas.

With a combined 14 years of experience in funeral service, Fantasky has assisted thousands of families with their preneed funeral and cemetery arrangements. As a manager of successful sales teams, she has recruited, trained and mentored family service agents that continue to serve their communities today. "Chris brings a wealth of experience on the national level to Great Western both from the sales and marketing of funeral merchandise to marketing management for a large cremation organization," said John Baker, National Sales Manager.



Fantasky is a Baker University graduate where she received her degree in education and taught school in Winfield, Kansas. Captain Fantasky also served for ten years in the United States Army. The funeral industry is a natural fit for Fantasky, where "service" has always been part of her professional work.

Great Western Insurance Company, founded by John E. Linquist, is an industry leader in preneed funeral insurance. Great Western's commitment to provide the highest quality products and services comes from the owner's funeral director background. Being owned and operated by a funeral service family, five generations strong—Linquist Mortuaries/Cemeteries in Utah—sets Great Western apart from other preneed insurance companies.

(See page 15 for advertisement)

Funeral Industry Getting a Reality TV Show?

The funeral industry is going to be getting its own reality TV show and you could be a part of it. The authors of "**Grave Expectations: Planning the End Like There's No Tomorrow**" and fellow members of ConnectingDirectors.com, Sue Bailey and Carmen Flowers are preparing a reality TV show based on their book. Working with an accomplished and acclaimed producer the ladies are going to build a reality show around people planning out their very own funeral detail for detail. If you have read the book or even pieces of it, then you know we are not talking about normal funerals. Grave Expectations challenges you to push the envelope and make your funeral a personal celebration/part.

(Editor Note: Interesting concept, we'll have to watch when it makes it to the airwaves.)

Pet Keepsakes By Antal Products

Antal Products is a leading manufacturer of Pet Bereavement and Pet Keepsake products. They now are offering their Pet Keepsakes in three colors, three designs and in new clip strip packaging. This product is designed to be used as a keepsake for your favorite photo, hair clipping, ashes or other memento of your pet. Made of dense stone like polycresin these make a great desk paperweight, unique picture frame or can be place anywhere. A great product for any pet enthusiast and a fun way to make something special...precious. Interested... www.antalproducts.com.



Casket Seller Booted From Flea Market From ConnectingDirectors.Com

Hours after he set up his display inside a large warehouse-turned flea market, the seller was asked to leave. "This guy comes up to me and says, 'you're not supposed to be here,'" "He says, 'I can't have you selling this here.'"

An employee of a six-week-old flea market had approved the request to rent space last Saturday. But when the market's owner noticed he was selling caskets, he pulled the plug on the booth. The owner had said that he had studied a lot of flea markets before opening this one and hadn't seen anyone selling caskets.

The casket builder, makes his caskets in his backyard and was approached by several interested people while manning his booth at the flea market. He feels that he is helping out anybody he can by offering caskets less than the most basic models offered by the funeral homes. He felt a flea market was a logical place to market his wooden boxes, which were aimed to older people on fixed incomes. Supposedly shoppers had complained and the owner felt the sight of caskets forces onlookers to think about death. He continued to comment that it was a difficult subject, we're all going to die, but I don't want to promote it at the market.

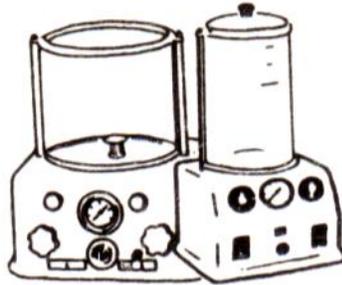
Editor: I loved a blog response, "do patrons detour streets where there are funeral homes so they won't have to think about death...I don't think so. To the management— shame on you; the man had a legitimate product. If they had been pet caskets instead of human, would the vendor been asked to leave?"

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The Yellow Shirt

The yellow shirt had long sleeves, four extra-large pockets trimmed in black thread and snaps up the front. It was faded from years of wear, but still in decent shape. I found it in 1963 when I was home from college on Christmas break, rummaging through bags of clothes Mom intended to give away. "You're not taking that old thing, are you?" Mom said when she saw me packing the yellow shirt. "I wore that when I was pregnant with your brother in 1954!" "It's just the thing to wear over my clothes during art class, Mom. Thanks!" I slipped it into my suitcase before she could object. The yellow shirt became a part of my college wardrobe... I loved it. After graduation, I wore the shirt the day I moved into my new apartment and on Saturday mornings when I cleaned.



The next year, I married. When I became pregnant, I wore the yellow shirt during big-belly days. I missed Mom and the rest of my family, since we were in Colorado and they were in Illinois. But that shirt helped. I smiled, remembering that Mother had worn it when she was pregnant, 15 years earlier.

That Christmas, mindful of the warm feelings the shirt had given me. I patched one elbow, wrapped it in holiday paper and sent it to Mom. When Mom wrote to thank me for her "real" gifts, she said the yellow shirt was lovely. She never mentioned it again.

The next year, my husband, daughter and I stopped at Mom and Dad's to pick up some furniture. Days later, when we uncrated the kitchen table, I noticed something yellow taped to its bottom. The shirt!

And so the pattern was set. On our next visit home, I secretly placed the shirt under Mom and Dad's mattress. I don't know how long it took for her to find it, but almost two years passed before I discovered it under the base of our living room floor lamp. The yellow shirt was just what I needed now while refinishing furniture. The walnut stains added character.

In 1975 my husband and I divorced. With my three children, I prepared to move back to Illinois. As I packed, a deep depression overtook me. I wondered if I could make it on my own. I wondered if I would find a job. I paged through the Bible, looking for comfort. In Ephesians, I read, "So use every piece of God's armor to resist the enemy whenever he attacks, and when it is all over, you will be standing up." I tried to picture myself wearing God's armor, but all I saw was the stained yellow shirt. Slowly, it dawned on me. Wasn't my mother's love a piece of God's armor? My courage was renewed.

Unpacking in our new home, I knew I had to get the shirt back to Mother. The next time I visited her, I tucked it in her bottom dresser drawer. Meanwhile, I found a good job at a

radio station. A year later I discovered the yellow shirt hidden in a rag bag in my cleaning closet. Something new had been added. Embroidered in bright green across the breast pocket were the words, "I BELONG TO PAT."

Not to be out done, I got out my own embroidery materials and added an apostrophe and seven more letters. Now the shirt proudly proclaimed, "I BELONG TO PAT'S MOTHER." But I didn't stop there. I zigzagged all the frayed seams, then had a friend mail the shirt in a fancy box to Mom from Arlington, VA. We enclosed an official-looking letter from "The Institute of Destitute." announcing that she was the recipient of an award for good deeds. I would have given anything to see Mom's face when she opened the box. But, of course, she never mentioned it.

Two years later, in 1978, I remarried. The day of our wedding, Harold and I put our car in a friend's garage to avoid practical jokers. After the wedding, while my husband drove us to our honeymoon suite, I reached for a pillow in the car to rest my head. It felt lumpy. I unzipped the case and found, wrapped in wedding paper, the yellow shirt. Inside a pocket was a note: "Read John 14: 27-29.. I love you both, Mother." That night I paged through the Bible in a hotel room and found the verses: "I am leaving you with a gift: peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give isn't fragile like the peace the world gives. So don't be troubled or afraid. Remember what I told you: I am going away, but I will come back to you again. If you really love me, you will be very happy for me, for now I can go to the Father, who is greater than I am. I have told you these things before they happen so that when they do, you will believe me."



The shirt was Mother's final gift. She had known for three months that she had terminal Lou Gehrig's disease. Mother died the following year at age 57. I was tempted to send the yellow shirt with her to her grave. But I'm glad I didn't, because it is a vivid reminder of the love-filled game she and I played for 16 years. Besides, my older daughter is in college now, majoring in art. And every art student needs a baggy yellow shirt with big pockets.



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Several references have been made so far to this website/blog. Daily e-mails are sent out about different things happening in the funeral profession and people can blog about the information provided. Here are a few of the things presented, you must become a member to get the full article and to comment.

“Funeral Home Mix-Up: Family Mourns Wrong Body” The blue suit and black boots were right, but mourners at a retired trucker’s funeral suspected they were gazing at the wrong man.....

“Research Reveals Consumer Desire for Graveside Services.” Wilbert Funeral Services, Inc. (WFSI), the leading single-source of burial vaults and cremation-related products and services to North American funeral homes, announced a benchmark survey on consumer attitudes towards funerals.....

“Funerals on The Cheap?” A veteran of the mortuary business plans to open a new funeral home that he said will lay to rest people’s fears about the high cost of burial or cremation.....

“Red-Light Camera Tickets Funeral Procession Drivers....Oops” Funeral processions are not an exception to laws governing stop lights, public officials say, but some driver had to learn that the hard way.....

The Tiny Cabin in the Hills

A social worker from a big City in Massachusetts recently transferred to the Mountains of North Carolina and Georgia and was on the first tour of her new territory when she came upon the tiniest cabin she had ever seen in her life. Intrigued, she went up and knocked on the door...”Anybody home?” she asked. “Yep,” came a kid’s voice through the door.

“Is your father there?” asked the social worker. “Pa, Nope, he left afore Ma came in,” said the kid. “Well, is your mother there?” persisted the social worker. “Ma, Nope, she left just afore I got here,” said the kid. “But,” protested the social worker with a catch in her voice..... “are you all alone....I mean, never together as a family?”

“Sure, lady...but not here,” said the kid through the door. “This is the outhouse!”

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Mercer Funeral Home—Holton, KS Celebrating 75 Years of Service

In 1934, Wendell L. Mercer moved to Holton with a vision for dignified and caring funeral service. Wendell and his wife, Wilma Horner Mercer, bought a home at the corner of 6th & New York Street in Holton.

Together, they restored each room to reflect the beauty they desired for the families who came to depend on them. Through additions and renovations over the next 50 years, they had built a beautiful funeral home. Their caring and compassion for the thousands of families they served over the years is still remembered by many.



Wendell L. & Wilma E. Mercer



The third generation is Chris Mercer and family. Chris was born in Holton in 1965 and graduated from Holton High School in 1983. He attended Kansas University and Washington University before receiving his Mortuary Science Degree in Kansas City.

Chris has worked at the family funeral home in some capacity for most of his life. He worked at the funeral home as a licensed insurance agent beginning in 1986 at the facility on New York Street. He later received his Funeral Director/Embalmer licenses and took over the operation of the funeral home with the retirement of his father in 1991.

Chris and his wife, Tracy who has been an assistant funeral director since 2004, purchased the funeral home several years ago and both work full time there now. They have three children (Kaleb, Grant and Megan) that lives with them and attend school in Holton. They are all members of the Evangel United Methodist Church in Holton.

Chris has been president of the Holton Cemetery Board since 1992. He has been on the Jackson County Friends of Hospice Advisory Board since 1992 and is a member and past president of the Holton Lions Club.



Second Generation—
Wendell "Bill" Mercer



Third Generation—Chris and Tracy and children Kaleb, Grant, and Megan

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Tracy has been a member of Holton Business Women and is involved in the Holton Optimist Club. Chris and Tracy work closely together to comfort the many loyal families Mercer Funeral Home has served for the past 75 years.

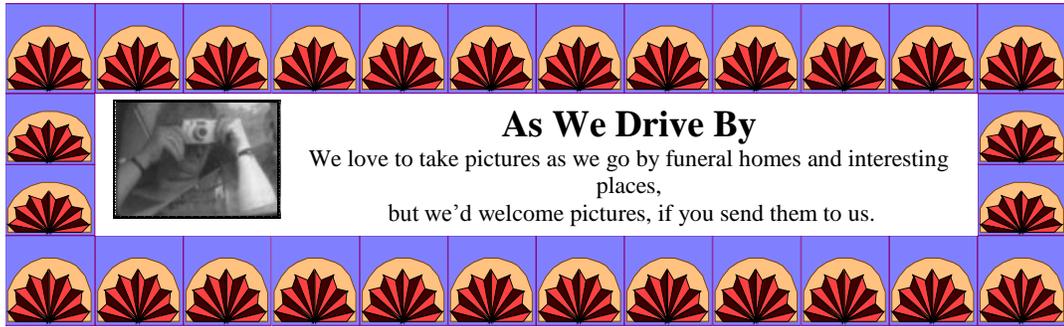
Other staff members besides Chris and Tracy include Bryan Shupe, Jim Braum and Richard Shove.

On Sunday, October 11, 2009 they will celebrate their 75 years of service to the community with an open house and tour of their new renovations with a new community/coffee room at the Holton, KS location at 1101 W. 4th St.. Also they will show a funeral home history video.

Congratulations Mercer Funeral Home for all of your service to the community!!!!



Other Facility—Mercer Funeral Home at Valley Farms, KS
Manager—Jim Braum



Robby Bates pointing out the spot where actor, Dan Blocker of the TV show "Bonanza" was buried in DeKalb Woodmen Cemetery in DeKalb, TX



Norwood-Nation Funeral Home, Idabel, Oklahoma



Mark Griffith Memorial Funeral Home
Tulsa, Oklahoma



The Dead Beat -The Caregivers Soapbox

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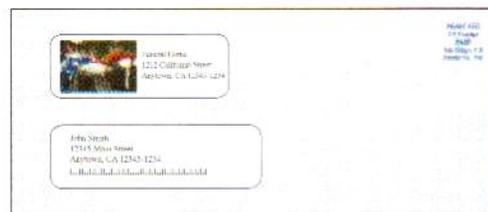
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