

The Dead Beat



The Caregiver's Soapbox



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

Volume 16

www.thedead-beat.com

Issue 1

Wilbert Funeral Service & SI Precast Tour for Mortuary Students

Wilbert Funeral Service & SI Precast held a tour here at our Springfield, MO location March 10, 2017 for the School of Mortuary Science out of Mountain Home, Arkansas, whom are part of the Arkansas State University of Mountain Home. Terry Aldridge



(Co-Manager) and Joel Hall (Foreman) held the tour.



The future funeral directors and embalmers learned about how Wilbert Burial Vaults are manufactured, how they are personalized with the in-house large format printer to create custom Legacy Prints and how those are applied to the carapace of the burial vault, and they also learned about Signet Supply caskets.



Wilbert appreciates mortuary students taking time to learn the industry from the supplier side and we always welcome tours to our locations! If you're a mortuary science student or teacher and would like to arrange a tour, feel free to contact us at info@wilbert.com



After the tour a lunch was provided and a grab bag for them to take home.



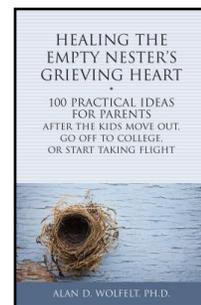
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Other Articles in this Issue



Ulmer Funeral Home
Pg. 4



New Book Pg. 29



Campbell-Lewis Funeral Home
Pg. 29

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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that mean so much.
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with us in our time
of sorrow,
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Today and tomorrow.
God gives us comfort
in the form of
good friends,
May His peace
be with you,
His love never ends.

A friendly smile,
A casual touch,
These are the things
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To know you are
with us in our time
of sorrow,
Sharing our prayers,
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Mortuary Muse

By Lowell

Ambiguous Loss

Last Week (March 3) I belatedly read Alice Adam's feature in **The Texas Director**, Oct., 2016, about Dr. Pauline Boss, Professor Emeritus, at the University of Minnesota. Dr. Boss explains that a person trying to deal with ambiguous loss is stuck in the realm of uncertainty when a loved one is missing and perhaps presumed dead—but they might not be dead! Can they truly grieve a death?

Do you offer condolences? Bystanders may treat the ambiguous griever as disenfranchised grievers are—the person does not have the need or right to grieve.

A few days after reading the story about Dr. Boss and ambiguous grief, I heard a perfect example on internet radio. The program "Talk to Joe" from Dublin, Ireland was in progress. They were speaking with women that had been victimized by the facility/organization involving unwed girls and women and the disposal of hundreds of children.

The woman told how she had given birth to a baby which was crying and put in an incubator. Then an attendant called for the doctor and the priest. Another boy was delivered but was not crying until shocked by the doctor and then put in another incubator. A priest asked for and was given the babies' names. A short time later she was told they would not survive. They did not let her touch or see her babies. Later they told her

that one lived three days and one lived five days.

The woman said she was shown an area where the babies were buried in little white coffins. It was not clear to me whether the burial was in a cemetery or on the grounds of the facility. She said she visited the site for years at Christmas until doubts began to arise. When she asked a caretaker she learned there were no burial records of her children. Further investigation found no death certificates or hospital records. The answer was always the same—lost in a fire!

And now there are on-going investigations to determine if there was child trafficking. The lady concluded her conversation with thoughts that perhaps her children had survived. Joe, the host started to offer his condolences—paused—and said. "You really don't know!"

This story has to be a classic case of Ambiguous Loss.

What does all this have to do with funeral service? Probably not much unless a sharp aftercare profession can review Dr. Boss' material and find some way to ameliorate ambiguous loss for those persons with missing family or friends. And let's forget about pitching preneed in the aftercare package.

About the Author: Lowell Pugh has had funeral director and embalmer licenses in Missouri and Texas and continues the operation of the family funeral home which started in 1904. He is publisher of **The Dead Beat** which began in 1999. He can be contacted at **The Dead Beat** address.

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Ulmer Funeral Home, Carthage, MO Lunch 'N Learn Seminar

Carthage, MO: Ulmer Funeral Home in Carthage, Missouri sponsored a free "Lunch 'N Learn" Seminar for the community. The event included professional speakers including a social worker, financial planner, attorney and police officer. About 20-30 individuals were provided



a lunch including sandwiches, chips and desserts while listening to several individuals speak about items pertaining to planning ahead and taking care of yourself and your business.



A representative from a local nursing home gave recommendations about handling your stay at a facility and what was available. The financial planner gave tips to consider when deciding about your financial situation. An attorney covered information dealing with wills, durable powers of attorney and health care directives. Finally a police officer covered many facets of fraud and scamming to beware of and how to handle properly.

Finally several drawings for items was done and the attendees were encouraged to take any paperwork provided.

A lot of good information was provided and was well received from the group. It was a very good community service provided by the funeral home.



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Behind the Back Fence

By Lowell

Is There A Memorable Family Vacation Trip in Your Future?

Over the years I have heard quite a few funeral service folks say they never took vacation trips with the entire family. The comment was most often stated by the co-owner of a small or medium sized firm. Unless they were a bona-fide workaholic, it was usually a case of limited help and one parent always stayed behind to run the funeral home.

In my own life I can remember only two memorable trips of more than three days when both of my parents and I went on a vacation trip for the better part of a week. Of course, my wife Betty and I did much better. In about 20 years we took about five extended trips.

One of the most memorable was in November of 1969. That year I convinced the two colleagues over at the county seat to join with me and we could quit the ambulance service. We proposed that the county operate ambulance service through the county hospital. This was about the time federal/state funds for ambulances became available. Our little town applied, was approved and received the first volunteer operated ambulance in the state of Missouri. The Barton County Commissioners balked at the idea and my colleagues chickened out for about a year.

So on November 1st with ambulance service as OUR responsibility behind us and the 1968 Van Ambulance loaded with camping gear –Betty, the three kids, Holly, Phillip and Ivy and me headed out for a truly memorable trip to Big Bend National Park down on the Rio Grande.

With the early morning start we made it to the north side of San Antonio and checked into a motel early enough to backtrack to the festival at New Braunfels. The second day

we visited the must sees in San Antonio and headed west to the Pecos with a brief stop at Judge Roy Beans' place before moving on to the Big Bend Park.

As the sun sank below the mountains, our camp was set up and Betty was cooking supper on the Coleman stove with the 'help' of one of the park's free roaming skunks. Needless to say the rest of us made no quick moves.

It was a fun and energy burning week exploring cool shear walled canyons, mountains and desert. The day before we left we were sitting by the water's edge a short distance from the entrance of the eastern canyon where the river once more disappeared into the canyon depths. Across the river to the south the desert stretched to infinity. About a quarter mile away we saw a few adobe buildings. In our foreground some children and an old horse were playing in the river.

As soon as they spotted us—two boys gathered some quartz-like stones from the river and came over to sell them to us. As they made their pitch they kept immersing the stones in the water to enhance the purplish tint they had when wet. Of course, we bought some rocks.

It really was a memorable family trip and in 10 days the business did not collapse.

Now for the political commentary, with the news events of the last few weeks—I've been pondering the future. What will the scene I just described look like through a barrier fence? I guess if it is a concrete wall high school students could paint the scene on the wall.

Perhaps the wall will be come a tourist attraction like China's Great Wall or the Berlin Wall and others in the dust bin of history.

Are we bent on confining ourselves within our own Guantanamo? What ever happened to the spirit of the old song— "Don't Fence Me In?"

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About the Author:

Lowell Pugh has had funeral director and embalmer licenses in Missouri and Texas and continues the operation of the family funeral home which started in 1904. He is publisher of **The Dead Beat** which began in 1999. He can be contacted at **The Dead Beat** address and editor@thedead-beat.com

After-Thoughts *By Joanne Howard*

After hearing so much good and bad of social media, I have to share a personal experience that was good. I had just come back from the cemetery where I had sang "Happy Birthday" to my oldest daughter's grave. I went on Facebook to check what was happening and I posted, "Happy Birthday,



Amy." No long description, just those words. Immediately I started getting likes and additional birthday greetings. It made a mom feel pretty good for her child to be remembered. It's actually going on 14 years since she's been gone yet within that day and the next about 40 people or more had responded in some way. Whether it was a comment about her or just a "like" or a "heart" or other symbol, it just was comforting to me. How could this have happened in the past without this outlet? It wouldn't have been possible and that's a real positive to those who have lost loved ones. So that's one positive situation.

Now on to the next positive in the realm of social media, this also was a Facebook experience. There is an aspect of this medium that you can do direct messaging to someone. I had been corresponding with a sister-in-law and went to check on a re-

sponse and noticed something from someone I didn't know. I had been checking recently and this message was from August. I clicked on it and I was quite amazed.

This message was from a friend of my daughter Amy from college. It was not a short message. I printed it out for my husband to read and it was three pages long. This young man met my daughter through a roommate and they had attended the college Christian organization.

It was a casual acquaintance from the first year for my daughter and they had just met again at the start of her second year. He had taken her to Aldi and gotten ingredients for chocolate chip cookies. But he had never gotten any cookies because she had gone home for the weekend and never returned. She had died over the weekend due to her automobile accident.



I had vaguely recalled someone talking about this at her college memorial service. I had actually met this individual, but didn't remember because at that time my memory was a bit fuzzy and overwhelmed. Now, almost fourteen years later he is reaching out.

The reason for his contact had to do with the Orlando nightclub killings and a comment about hoping people remembered those that died. He was letting us know that he remembered Amy and her smile.

Also he commented about her influence on his faith. Now that really made me proud and to say the least brought a few tears to my eyes.

You just never know what impact you or your loved ones have made on other people. He also mentioned that in his research to find us he had also found out about our other daughter's passing and expressed his sympathies for her. That made me realize her memory is still out there too.

So to me this is a very positive facet of social media. It gives us all a chance to be remembered many years after we are gone. Reminiscent of walking around the cemetery and reading the names on the stones, but it is a bit more personal contact.

I hope others have good experiences about their loved ones, because it really helps to know others thought enough of you and your loved ones to let them know they are remembered years later.



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: jfhoward53@yahoo.com

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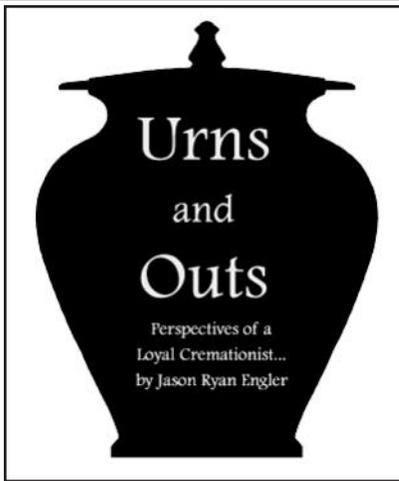
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I was asked many years ago by my friend and historic crematory photographer Dan Baker about the connection of the shape of cremation urns and, more specifically, why they are traditionally in the vase shape. I admit that, while I can recognize the difference in manufacturers of urns almost instantly. I know how many twists of the hand open a typical modern brass urn or even an antique bronze urn, and though I have seen almost every urn that was manufactured as an urn since cremation's modern revival in 1876, I did not have the answer.

Desiring this knowledge, I began to seek avenues to learn the specific answer only to find that I am apparently the only person to have sought this information. While I have still not found any precise answer, I have formed a hypothesis based on knowledge acquired over years of research on the subject.

Firstly, ancient cinerary urns in the traditional vase shape have been discovered in many ancient Asian civilizations, some dating as far as 2000 years BCE. In ancient western culture, Greek customs indicate urns in the vase shape were used to store cremated remains, while the Romans favored highly-sculptured cinerary chests that were placed in columbaria,

though they also were known to use the vase shape.

With this information, I arrived at my next realization: the influence of the classic Greek vase on today's modern cinerary containers. Typically Greek vases were created in terra cotta or bronze, the former often found with images in red and black painted on their surfaces.

Three types of Greek vases are arguably the most common. The *Krater*, classified in bell, volute, and calyx shapes, is one of the most recognizable of the Grecian vases and was most often used for mixing and diluting wine. The *Amphora*, most commonly in shapes known as neck and belly, with large vertical handles, a narrow base, and cover, was used for storage of grain and wine. The *Stamnos*, probably the least-known style of Greek vase, characterized by its narrow footed base, wide mouth, horizontal handles, and cover, was used as a wine vessel. This last vase, the *Stamnos*, is the most akin to today's modern cremation urn, and all three styles have been used as cinerary containers.

With all my research, even into the beginning of cremation's modern revival in western society, it seems that the containers used to hold cremated remains were not always designed for that specific purpose, but were in fact common vessels used in everyday life. It wasn't until the turn of the 20th century that the business of making urns became a business at all – and even then, the mantle of their creation was taken up by companies who created household items.

So it seems that there is no precise answer as to the original idea of form for cinerary urns. It is true, though, that the decorative vases that, even to the present day, represent the sacred vessels used to contain the mortal remains of our loved ones have always been utilized for two common reasons: functionality and inherent beauty.

The poet John Keats concurred with the beauty of the form of an ancient urn in his poem "Ode on a Grecian Urn." He ends his well-known poem with the urn's symbolism that will outlast time, writing "Beauty is truth, truth beauty, – that is all ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

I'm inclined to share that perspective.



Jason Ryan Engler is a funeral director and "The Cremation Historian" who serves as the official historian for the Cremation Association of North America. He is the Senior Cremation Advisor to the National Museum of Funeral History and serves as Secretary/Treasurer of the Northwest Arkansas Funeral Directors Association. He is a frequent contributor to deathcare publications and often speaks about cremation and its history to funeral, cemetery, and cremation trade associations. He resides in Northwest Arkansas with his miniature dachshund, Otto.

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Doing for One By Ken Doka

In a scene in the classic Frank Sinatra movie, "A Hole in the Head," a young widow tells Sinatra's character that her most difficult moment of the day is walking into a butcher and ordering "one lamb chop." This poignant scene captures a reality of grief—now having to do things so differently. To do for one.

We often speak of the many emotions and other reactions experienced as we cope with loss. Yet, it is also a challenge to adjust to a life without the presence of someone who has been part of our life for so long. One writer, Dr. Tom Attig, described it as "relearning life."

This is more than simply taking on the chores or household tasks that the other person once did. If we have long cooked for two, we now have to learn to make single portions. If we slept with someone for fifty years, we now have to learn to sleep alone. Even such simple tasks like watching television are now different experiences when alone.

While this is especially true when we lose a partner and spouse, we may experience it with other losses as well. When a parent dies, we may need to relearn how to do the holidays and birthdays, creating new traditions in place of older ones. When a child dies—at any age—we have to readjust our life to the absence of that presence. One mother described how long it took her, after the death of her youngest daughter, to stop listening for the school bus and no longer expect the door to burst open.

Perhaps the first thing we need to do is to acknowledge that life is now

different—and more difficult. Since change is never easy, we need to be careful to dose it. So much has changed; so much is different after the death of someone important in our life. We need time to adjust and to accommodate these changes—to relearn our world.

That is one reason it is prudent not to make other dramatic changes quickly in our life if we can avoid it. There is already so much on our plate!

We should also examine the ways we cope with change. What has helped us in the past? What have we done that has complicated our ability to accommodate change?

Once we understand our strengths, we can build on them. This is the essence of problem solving. We can examine the issues that are especially difficult and find ways to cope with these issues effectively. For Abby, Sunday dinner was a tough time. This was a time she really enjoyed—sitting down for a quiet dinner with her husband. She decided that she would join a church group that visited and shared a meal with local residents at a nursing home. That act gave Sundays new meaning and reminded Abby of a great truth—in helping others, we help ourselves.

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 call-

ing 800-854-3402 and is published monthly by the Hospice Foundation of America, 1710 Rhode Island Ave, NW Suite 400, Washington, DC 20036. Annual subscription-\$25.00. Order online: store.hospicefoundation.org.



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

Just because someone doesn't love you the way you want them to, doesn't mean they don't love you with all they have.

Ralph and Edna were both patients in a mental hospital. One day while they were walking past the hospital swimming pool, Ralph suddenly jumped into the deep end. He sank to the bottom of the pool and stayed there.



Edna promptly jumped in to save him. She swam to the bottom and pulled him out. When the Head Nurse Director became aware of Edna's heroic act, she immediately ordered Edna to be discharged from the hospital, as she now considered her to be mentally stable. When she went to tell Edna the news she said, "Edna, I have good news and bad news. The good news is you're being discharged, since you were able to rationally respond to a crisis by jumping in and saving the life of the person you love. I have concluded that your act displayed sound mindedness. The bad news is, Ralph hung himself in the bathroom with his bathrobe belt after you saved him. I am so sorry, but he's dead." Edna replied, "He didn't hang himself, I put him there to dry...How soon can I go home?"

The old man in his mid-eighties struggles to get up from the couch and starts putting on his coat. His wife, seeing the unexpected behavior, asks, "Where are you going?" He replies, "I'm going to the doctor." She says, "Why, are you sick?" He says, "Nope, I'm going to get me some of that Viagra stuff." Immediately the wife starts working and positioning herself to get out of her rocker and begins to put on her coat. He says, "Where the h#@!\$ are you going?" She answers, "I'm going to the doctor, too." He says, "Why, what do you need?" She says, "If you're gong to start using that rusty old thing, I'm getting a tetanus shot."

Hymns & Praise Songs

An old farmer went to the city one weekend and attended the big city church. He came home and his wife asked him how it was. "Well," said the farmer. "It was good. They did something different, however. They sang praise choruses instead of hymns." "Praise choruses?" asked the wife. "What are those?" "Oh, they're okay. They're sort of like hymns, only different," said the farmer. "Well, what's the difference?" asked the wife. The farmer said, "Well, it's like this... If I were to say to you, 'Martha, the cows are in the corn,' well that would be a hymn. If, on the other hand, I were to say to you, 'Martha, Martha, Martha, Oh, Martha, MARTHA, MARTHA, the cows, the big cows, the brown cows, the black cows, the white cows, the black and white cows, the COWS, COWS, COWS are in

Comments

"I really enjoy reading every single page of "The Dead Beat." Although I am not licensed in the funeral industry, I have been involved with it through my transportation company and as a funeral assistant for many years."

Jeff Nichols, Nichols Transportation Service, Paris, TX

Feel free to share comments and thoughts to the editor at editor@thedead-beat.com or mail to The Dead Beat, PO Box 145, Golden City, MO 64748.

Chuckles (Cont.)

the corn, are in the corn, in the CORN, CORN, CORN, COOOORRRNNNN,' then, if I were to repeat the whole thing two or three times, well that would be a praise chorus."

As luck would have it, the exact same Sunday a young, new Christian from the city church attended the small town church. He came home and his wife asked him how it was. "Well," said the young man, "It was good. They did something different, however. They sang hymns instead of regular songs." "Hymns?" asked the wife. "What are those?" "They're okay. They're sort of like regular songs, only different," said the young man. "Well, what's the difference?" asked the wife. The young man said, "Well, it's like this...If I were to say to you 'Martha, the cows are in the corn,' well that would a regular song. If on the other hand, I were to say to you, Oh, Martha, dear Martha, hear thou my cry, Inclinst thine ear to the words of my mouth. Turn thou thy whole wondrous ear by and by, to the righteous, glorious truth. For the way of the animals who can explain, there in their heads is no shadow of sense, Hearkenest they in God's sun or his rain, Unless from the mild, tempting corn they are fenced. Yea those cows in glad bovine, rebellious delight, have broke free their shackles, their warm pens eschewed, Then goaded by minions of darkness and night. They all my mild Chilliwack sweet corn chewed. So look to that bright shining day by and by, where no vicious animal makes my soul cry, and I no longer see those foul cows in the corn, then, if I were to do only verses one, three and four, and change keys on the last verse, well, that would be a hymn."

Two Texas Highway Patrol Officers were conducting speeding enforcement on Highway 77, just south of Kingsville, Texas. One of the officers was using a hand-held device to check speeding vehicles approaching the town of Kingsville. The officers were suddenly sur-



(Continued on page 11)

Chuckles (Cont.)

prised when the radar gun began reading 300 miles per hour and climbing. The officer attempted to reset the radar gun, but it would not reset and then it suddenly turned off. Just then a deafening roar over the mesquite tree tops on Highway 77 revealed that the radar had in fact, locked on to a USMC F/A-18 Hornet which was engaged in a low-flying exercise near its Naval Air home base location in Kingsville. Back at the Texas Highway Patrol Headquarters in Corpus Christi the Patrol Captain fired off a complaint to the U.S. Naval base Commander in Kingsville for shutting down his equipment. The reply came back in true USMC style: "Thank you for your letter... You may be interested to know that the tactical computer in the Hornet had detected the presence of and subsequently locked on to, your hostile radar equipment and automatically sent a jamming signal back to it, which is why it shut down." "Furthermore, an air-to-ground missile aboard the **fully armed** aircraft had also automatically locked on to your equipment's location. Fortunately, the marine pilot flying the Hornet recognized the situation for what it was, quickly responded to the missile system alert status and was able to override the automated defense system before the missile was launched to destroy the hostile radar position on the side of Highway 77, south of Kingsville." "The pilot suggests you cover your mouths when swearing at them, since the video systems on these jets are very high tech." "Sergeant Johnson, the officer holding the radar gun, should get his dentist to check his left molar. It appears the filling is loose. Also the snap is broken on his holster." Semper Fi



A man asked his wife what she'd like for her birthday. "I'd love to be six again," she replied. On the morning of her birthday, he got her up bright and early and off they went to a local theme park. What a day! He put her on every ride in the park: the Death Slide, the Screaming Loop, the Wall of Fear, everything there was! Wow! Five hours later she staggered out of theme park, her head reeling and her stomach upside down. Right to a McDonald's they



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went, where her husband ordered her a Happy Meal with extra fries and a refreshing chocolate shake. Then it was off to a movie, the latest Star Wars epic, a hot dog, popcorn, soda, and M & Ms. What a fabulous adventure! Finally she wobbled home with her husband and collapsed into bed. He leaned over and lovingly asked, "Well, dear, what was it like being six again?" One eye opened, "You idiot, I meant my dress size." The moral of this story: Even when the man is listening, he's still gonna get it wrong.

A priest was preparing a man for his long journey into the night. Whispering firmly, the priest said, "Denounce the devil! Let him know how little you think of his evil." The dying man said nothing. The priest repeated his order. Still the dying man said nothing. The priest asked, "Why do you refuse to denounce the devil and his evil?" The dying man said, "Until I know where I'm heading, I don't think I ought to aggravate anybody."



A guy came home after his round of golf, tossed his clubs in the garage, and promptly slammed the door. "How did you do today?" his wife asked. "Good and bad," said the husband. "I got a hole in one on the fifth hole." "What could possibly be bad about that?" "I still shot a 135 for the day"



"How come you're late?" asked the bartender, as the blonde waitress walked into the bar. "It was awful," she explained. "I was walking down Elm street and there was a terrible accident. A man was thrown from his car and he was lying in the middle of the street. His leg was broken, his skull was fractured, and there was blood everywhere. Thank God I took that first-aid course." "What did you do?" asked the bartender. "I sat down and put my head between my knees to keep from fainting."



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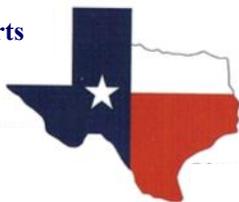
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Death Notices of Fellow Funeral Service Colleagues

ARKANSAS



Virgil R. Boyd, 87, of Lonoke, died on Dec. 20, 2016. His love for the funeral profession started at a young age, when he helped with graves and tent setups at age 17. From there, he helped drive the ambulance and then assisted with funerals. He received his funeral director's license in 1957, at which time he worked for Bailey Funeral Home in Cabot. In July, 1957 he was asked to come to Lonoke to manage that funeral home. In 1972, he was offered the opportunity to buy Weaver Funeral Home and the name was changed to Boyd Funeral Home. He served Lonoke County as coroner for several years. His services were handled by Boyd Funeral Home.

Leroy Brown, 79, of Stamps, died Sept. 26, 2016. Upon his retirement from education, he started his second career of funeral directing. He completed an apprenticeship at Smith Funeral Home in Stamps and received his certification. He was a dedicated employee of Smith Funeral Home for more than 30 years. His services were conducted by A.O. Smith Funeral Homes, Inc.



Lawrence Ray Chandler, 70, of DeQueen, died Jan. 21, 2017. He was the owner and funeral director of Chandler Funeral Home in DeQueen. He graduated from Dallas Institute of Mortuary Science and dedicated his life serving as a funeral director and county coroner. He broke ground in 1998 for Chandler Funeral Home who handled his funeral arrangements.



Daniel "Dan" Webster McBride, 93, of Paragould, formerly of Rector, died Dec. 21, 2016. Dan was a veteran of World War II, serving as a captain in the Marine Corps as a night fighter pilot. He was funeral director, embalmer and owner of Irby Funeral Home for 35 years from 1946 thru 1981. He served on the board of directors and was past president for both the Arkansas embalmers and Arkansas State Burial Association. Arrangements were under the direction of Irby Funeral Home in Rector.

ARIZONA



John Lowell Abramson, 66, of Phoenix, Arizona passed away December 6, 2016. He worked for the Diocese of Phoenix Catholic Cemeteries for over 40 years, who handled his services.

COLORADO

Paul D. Telleen, 64, of Ft. Collins, died Dec. 9, 2016. He graduated from San Francisco College of Mortuary Science in 1976. He was licensed as funeral director in Colorado and certified as a mortuary science practitioner in 1982. He worked at Goodrich Mortuary and for Allnutt Funeral Service in Fort Collins for many years. His services were directed by Vessey Funeral Service in Ft. Collins.



KANSAS

Richard L. Ebersole, 85, of Conway Springs, passed away on March 24, 2017. He attended and graduated valedictorian from the Dallas Institute of Gupton Jones Mortuary School in 1957 and moved to Elliott Funeral Home in Hutchinson to serve his apprenticeship. He returned to Dallas and became a member of the faculty at Dallas Institute until 1960 when he returned to the family mortuary business. He purchased the funeral home and provided service for the next 57 years. Ebersole Mortuary directed his services

KANSAS



Parker "Tom" Irwin, 80, of Wichita passed away on Feb. 21, 2017. His family established the Irwin Funeral Home in Enterprise. He attended Dallas Institute-Gupton Jones, College of Mortuary Science. He joined the staff of Broadway Mortuary in Wichita and he retired from there 43 years later.



David Miles, 69, of Winfield, passed away on Feb. 20, 2017. He attended and graduated from Central State University with a degree in funeral service. He was employed as a funeral director and embalmer for Grace Memorial Chapel in Ponca City, OK for 3 years. He returned to Winfield in 1978 where he built his first funeral home, operating Miles Memorial Chapel. In 1992, he built a replacement funeral home in Winfield, operating as Miles Funeral Service who handled his funeral arrangements.



Darel Dee Olliff, 83, of Phillipsburg, died on Feb. 22, 2017. He obtained his Mortuary Science degree at Wayne State University. He was inducted in the U.S. Army in 1953 and served during the Korean War until 1955. He partnered with his brother-in-law Ron Boeve, to purchase what is know today as the Olliff-Boeve Memorial Chapel, they provided quality funeral service for over 58 years. He was a past board member Kansas Board of Mortuary Arts. Olliff-Boeve Memorial Chapel conducted his services.



William "Bill" H. Young, 74, of Shawnee, passed away on March 14, 2017. He obtained his degree in Mortuary Science in California. He worked for Amos funeral Home for a number of years prior to Lewis Matney building Maple Hill Funeral Home in 1973. He owned and operated Maple Hill funeral Home until 2008. He was a past KFDA President, Commander of DMOT 7 and President of the Kansas Board of Mortuary Arts. His services were under the direction of Maple Hill Funeral Home and Cemetery.



Daniel J. Werner, 48, of Topeka, passed away Jan. 27, 2017. He worked the past 10 years as a funeral director, first for Penwell Gabel Cemetery and the past 7 years managing Dove Cremation and Funeral Service who handled his arrangements.

MISSOURI



William Chapman, 74, of Imperial passed away March 29, 2017. He was a U.S. Air Force veteran and a manager for 27 years for Heilitag-Lang-Fendler Funeral Home in Arnold. After retiring in 2007 he became affiliated with Mahn Funeral Home who conducted his funeral services.

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 Editor@thedeat-beat.com



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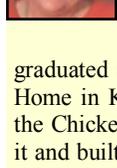
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Virginia Dorothy Otto, 80, of Chesterfield, passed away March 26, 2017. She was the mother of Donald C. Otto, Jr., executive director of MFDEA. Her services were handled by Schrader Funeral Home and Crematory in Ballwin.



Gary D. Peterman, 66, of Springfield passed away April 7, 2017. He attended the Dallas Institute of Mortuary Science and graduated in 1973. He served his apprenticeship at Newcomer's Funeral Home in Kansas City, MO. In 1980 he and Clarence Hackleman bought the Chicken Mary's Restaurant that had been fire damaged and remodeled it and built the Hackleman-Peterman Funeral Home of El Dorado Springs, MO. In 1987, Gary sold his half back. In 1982 Gary and Linda bought the Hathaway Funeral Home of Wheatland, MO. He bought land east of town and started construction of the Hathaway-Peterman Funeral Home of Wheatland, MO completed in 1986 and they handled his funeral services.



Jeffrey Wayne Sampson, 57, of St. Joseph, passed away April 2, 2017. He was the father of MFDEA District 1 Director T. J. Sampson. Jeffrey graduated from Kansas City Kansas Community College in 1983, earning his degree in Mortuary Science. He started his career as a Funeral Director and Embalmer in Kansas City. Then he continued in St. Joseph at Heaton-Bowman-Smith & Sidenfaden Chapel and Clark-Lindsey Funeral Home. In 1987, he purchased Clark-Sampson Funeral Home and in 2007 his son T.J. joined him. Clark-Sampson Funeral Home directed the services.



J.D. Wagster, 99, of Malden, passed away on Feb. 25, 2017. He was a funeral director for Knight funeral Home and Landess Funeral Home. His funeral was directed by Landess

TEXAS

Death Notices of Fellow Funeral Service Colleagues (Cont.)



John Douglas Harding, 64, of Jonesburg, passed away March 8, 2017. In 1987 he got his Funeral Directors License and after the passing of his dad, Carl, John helped his Mom full time. Harding Funeral Home was sold in Sept., 2011 to Pitman Funeral Home and he continued to work there. The Pitman Funeral Home directed his services.



Charles "Chuck" Tilt Hebner, 76, of Chesterfield passed away March 15, 2017. Hauss & Modetz Funeral Home handled his arrangements.



William "Bill" Fredwin Millard, 87, of Jefferson City passed away Feb. 10, 2017. He was the father of Reid Millard with Millard Family Chapels. He was then drafted into the United States Army and served his country honorably during the Korean War. Arrangements were under the direction of Houser-Millard Funeral Directors.



Betty Jane (Bedingfield) Abell, 87, of Lubbock, formerly of Ralls, died on April 4, 2017. She was the mother of Todd Abell with Abell Funeral Home in Abernathy. Her services were under the direction of Abell Funeral Home.



Everette Ballard, Jr., 77, of Katy, died on Feb. 9, 2017. On July 11, 1958, Everette graduated from Commonwealth College of Sciences, in Houston, with a diploma in Funeral Services. He worked diligently and long hours to complete the state required apprenticeship to earn his Embalmers license in September, 1960 and his Funeral Directors license in April, 1961. He worked at Garmany & Carden Funeral Directors in Rosenberg, Texas. He moved to McAllen, Texas in 1971, where he worked for Virgil Wilson Funeral Home in McAllen, Texas. In the late 1970's, Everette owned his own funeral home, Blooming Grove & Frost Funeral Home, in Blooming Grove & Frost, Texas area. In the 1980's, he moved to Alvin, Texas and worked for Froberg Funeral Home in Alvin; and later worked at Jack Rowe Funeral Home, in League City. He was a licensed funeral director and embalmer for 56 years, a sales representative with The Dodge Co. for 25 years, a longtime member

(Continued on page 17)

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Death Notices of Fellow Funeral Service Colleagues (Cont.)

(Continued from page 15)

of TFDA and SETFDA and Supplier of the Year in 1999. He had been a funeral director with Schmidt Funeral Home in Katy.



Arrangements were under the direction of Schmidt Funeral Home Grand Parkway Chapel.

Elizabeth "Libby" Clayton, 76, of Pearland passed away on Feb. 14, 2017. She was the wife of Past President David Clayton with Clayton Funeral Home in Pearland who conducted her services.



Sam C. Guess, 53, of Houston, passed away on Feb. 2, 2017. He was Chief Operating Officer of Johnson Funeral Home. He also was the first of his generation to lead the 83 year old family-owned business. He spent more than 31 years as a funeral director and business manager. He served as a board member of the Houston Metropolitan Funeral Directors, the Independent Funeral Directors Association of Texas (President) and as a member of both the Houston Funeral Directors and Morticians Association. His services were directed by Johnson Funeral Home.



Joel E. Levingston, 85, of Port Neches, passed away on Feb. 26, 2017. He attended Landig Mortuary College in Houston where he received his degree in Mortuary Science. 

He held both a Texas Funeral Director's and Texas Embalmer's license. Joel served in the United States Army during the Korean Conflict as head of a Graves Registration Lab. He established Levingston Funeral Home upon his return in 1955. Joel dedicated his life to funeral service. He also was TFDA Funeral Director of the Year in 1997. Levingston Funeral Home handled his services.



Marty Sue Marshall, 64, of Aransas Pass, passed away Feb. 12, 2017. She was the daughter of the late Charlie Marshall and was owner of Charlie Marshall Funeral Homes and Crematory in Aransas Pass & Rockport. She worked alongside her father, Charlie. She was his right hand gal, and after his passing, Marty Sue ran the company with the same commitment and ethical integrity that her father had taught her. Charlie Marshall Funeral Home handled her funeral arrangements.



Myra Bell Swindell Boggs Mumaw, 96, of Houston passed away on March 10, 2017. She was the mother of Alice Adams, who is the editor of **The Texas Director**. Her arrangements were under the direction of Syd Waldman Funeral Care of Houston and Restland Funeral Home in Dallas.



Edward F. Quinn, 64, of Fort Worth, passed away on Dec. 16, 2016. He graduated from Dallas Institute of Funeral Service and earned his license as a funeral director and embalmer. Ed was a life long resident of Fort Worth where he dedicated his life to the care of others in the Funeral Service Funeral Home in Hurst di-

(Continued on page 18)



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Death Notices of Fellow Funeral Service Colleagues (Cont.)

TEXAS (Cont.)

(Continued from page 17)
rected his services.



Leslie Seibel, 64, of Austin died March 15, 2017. she was the wife of Ronald (Ron) Seibel, a TFDA Endorsed Provider, Advanced Benefit Solutions. Her arrangements were under the direction of Harrell Funeral Home in Austin.

Emma Florence Slavik, 96, formerly of Edna died March 14, 2017. She was the former co-owner of Slavik Funeral Home (est. 1946). Her arrangements were under the direction of Slavik Funeral Home.



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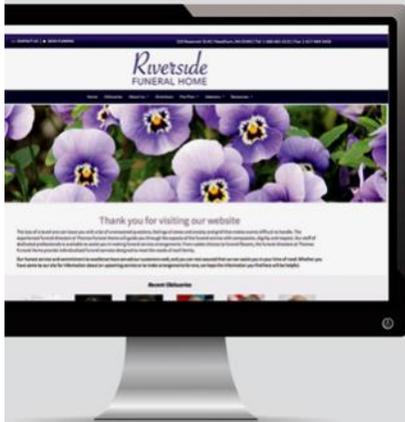


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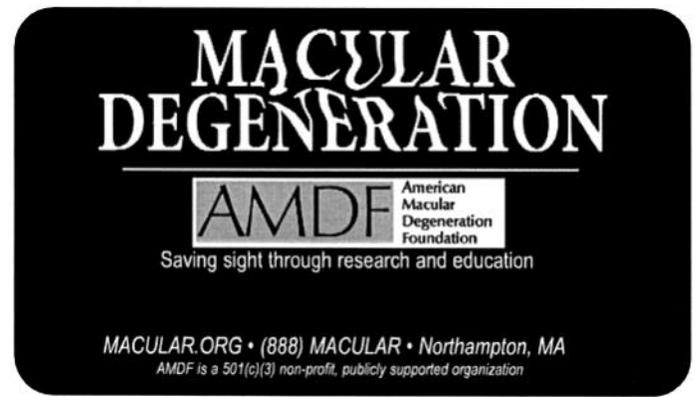
ASD's MobileFH™ Feature Awarded Patent from U.S. Patent Office

Media, PA—On February 28, 2017, the United States Patent Office issued **ASD – Answering Service for Directors** an official patent for the company's **MobileFH™** feature. MobileFH™ is an innovative telecommunication solution that allows users to control their outgoing Caller ID. It was developed by ASD's in-house Technology Team specifically to enhance communications between on-call funeral directors and the families they serve.

For years, funeral professionals have needed a solution for the communication problems they experience when using cell phones for business calls. MobileFH™ resolves these issues by giving directors control over their outgoing Caller ID. Directors can easily conduct business away from the office while keeping their personal numbers private. Rather than blocking their Caller ID and unintentionally insulting someone, ASD clients can use MobileFH™ as a discreet tool to keep their professional and personal lives separate. Families recognize incoming calls from the director and know what number they should use to call the funeral home. These combined benefits help protect new opportunities by reducing response time and eliminating the risk of miscommunication.

To activate MobileFH™, directors can simply tap on any phone number within ASD Mobile, tap on the funeral home number and the call will be connected displaying the funeral home's phone number as the outgoing Caller ID. The proprietary technology introduced by MobileFH™ also allows funeral directors to record these calls for future reference.

"We are thrilled to receive an official patent designation that identifies the unique and revolutionary technology introduced by MobileFH™," says ASD Vice President and Family-Member Owner, **Kevin Czachor**. "Before this technology was invented, on-call funeral directors had few choices when it came to returning calls. We developed MobileFH™ while brainstorming ways we could use our technical resources to provide funeral directors with much needed freedom when using their cell phones. By recording these calls, directors also have a detailed backup of their conversations with families. This is just another example of the ways ASD helps provide our clients with a competitive advantage



with solutions that can't be found anywhere else."

MobileFH™ was recognized with the 2015 NFDA Innovation Award, an honor that is given annually to a funeral service vendor whose product or service exemplifies creativity, innovation and excellence. The feature has become one of the most popular mobile tools available to the funeral profession, with more than 14,000 MobileFH™ calls per month.

"I have an out-of-area phone number. The ability to call families back with my location's [Caller](#) ID showing ensures that everyone I call will pick up the phone, thus improving my communication with the families I serve," explains Funeral Director, **Anne Christ**, of **Bradshaw Funeral and Cremation Services** in Saint Paul, MN.

MobileFH™ is registered under Patent No. 9,584,663. In addition to MobileFH™, ASD also holds patents for three other telecommunication solutions: First Call Connect™, Solicitor Shield™, and an Aural Volume Feedback tool that is used by ASD internally for quality control.

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From My Purview
“Would You Remember My Name?”
By Reverend Janice Hoffman

Once in awhile we meet someone who makes a profound difference in our lives. Lilly was one of those people for me. While walking down the crowded hallway at an emotionally tense funeral I officiated, I met an elderly woman I will never forget.

She introduced herself to me as simply “Lilly.” I said to her how difficult this must be for the family, especially the mother to lose her adult son. Lilly told me she can relate to how the mother of the deceased feels. She lost her children, two sons, in the attack on September 11th. My heart sank. The thought of any mother having to bury her child is a tragic one.

Lilly asked me if I would like to see a photo of her two sons. “Yes, of course,” I said. What handsome men, I thought. They looked like they walked off a magazine cover. Lilly shared with me how she found out the news that her only two children had perished in the Twin Towers. Lilly always thought she would see her sons again. She never dreamed that one day two police officers would knock on her

door to give her the heart breaking news. Her sons were killed because they were unable to make it to safety in time.

As a way to comfort Lilly, one of the police officers told Lilly the firefighters and volunteers looked for signs of life and any of her sons’ belongings amidst the rubble. They were able to recover her oldest son’s wallet. Unfortunately, regarding to her younger son, all they found was his femur bone. My heart sank. Tears rolled down my face.

Between these two mothers, Lilly and the mother of the deceased at the funeral, they have lost five children. Then came the words I will never forget. Lilly asked me, “Whenever you think of September 11th, will you remember my name? Whenever you do, you will be honoring my sons’ lives and that would bring my heart peace.” I gently reassured this sweet mother whose aching arms yearn for the embrace of her children. I most certainly would remember her name.

And now as you read this article, you are also honoring dear, sweet Lilly’s two sons. It only takes saying this wom-

an’s name to honor her sons. I realized there are many ways I show honor and respect for another. It needn’t be a grand motion, rather it can be summed up in a name. May Lilly’s sons and the many others who lost their lives in September 11th, know they are missed and will be remembered always.

About the Author:



Ordained in 1999 as a non-denominational Christian Minister, **Reverend Janice Hoffman’s** ministry has included facilitating a Course In

Miracles, leading an Attitudinal Healing support group, and hosting a guided meditation for a group that met weekly for over 13 years. Rev. Hoffman’s work with mortuaries and families began in 2008. After the first funeral service Rev. Janice officiated, she had a deep awareness that honoring the life of a family’s loved one was where she wanted to focus her ministry. Beginning with meeting with the family for an intake, Janice writes a custom service bringing comfort to families in shock and grief. None of us are promised tomorrow and bringing that awareness to others, fosters appreciation for those in our lives and the time we spend with them. Contact her at Janice@janicehoffman.com or 303-604-2222.

The Fate of the 50 Call Funeral Home

By Richard S. Lee

If you are an owner of a small (100 calls or less) funeral home these days, you need to ask yourself the question – **What is the fate of my business?** The reason I pose this question is because a lot of small funeral businesses might not be viable 5, 7 or 10 years from now.

With revenues expected to decrease over time, families spending less on funerals and most operating expenses rising year over year, the profitability and viability of a small, single location funeral home could be less and less.

As an owner of a small funeral home, what should you do?

Well if you are still relatively

young and truly enjoy the business, then reaching out and buying another funeral home or two in your immediate area would be a good move for the future. By doing this and being able to utilize the same personnel spread over multiple locations, this strategy would be perfect for businesses with multiple family members who are actively involved in the day to day operations. This also allows everyone to be able to make a great income.

If you are close to retirement within the next 5 years, then seriously considering a sale soon would be your best option in order to realize the most value. If there is a neighboring funeral

home or even a competitor that would be interested in purchasing your business, this could be a great option as this should yield the best price to you as a Seller. Also, the structuring of the sale and possible tax implications should be addressed early on.

Just in the last few years, I have handled several of these types of transactions involving small funeral homes and having a business valuation performed early on by an industry expert will allow you to determine which direction may be the best for you.

I am always available for any questions and may be reached at 407-257-5024 or you may email me at Leebros@aol.com.



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Richard S. Lee is the President of Lee & Associates, a firm that represents funeral home owners in the sale and transfer of their funeral businesses. Since 1987, they have been involved in over 170 transactions

all over the United States. The scope of their work also includes business valuations, accounting solutions and general consulting services. **Richard is always available for questions and may be reached at 407-257-5024 or email him at Leebros@aol.com**

Writing for the Ears and Not the Eyes

By Joe Weigel

We all been there – waiting on hold to talk with someone at a local business – or worse yet – the customer service department of a big corporation. We’ve listened to many messages that are nothing short of agony. I’m not talking about reminders that I’m being kept on hold because the phone lines are incredibly busy – the problem usually shows up in the messages that pop up every twenty seconds or so.

Now, you probably think I’m going to complain about using the opportunity to sell to a captive audience with an on-hold message. Not at all. I think on-hold messaging can be an effective way to turn an often-unavoidable inconvenience into a marketing opportunity.

But few of those messages are as effective as they could be, and the reason is usually very simple: the people who write them are writing for the wrong medium.

It isn’t that they don’t know how to write; in fact, many of the messages are very well-written. But they’re written to be read, rather than read aloud. People who are accustomed to writing for the eye often don’t realize that writing for the ear demands an entirely different approach.

So does writing for the ears take some mysterious skills known only to a few experts? Not at all. By remembering – and practicing – a few simple guidelines, you’ll make your on-hold messages, and for that matter other spoken communications, far more effective.

Write to one person. Even if you envision an audience of thousands, choose one person and write to him (or her). If you find that difficult, imagine that your mother is going to be listening, and write your copy to her. When you write with a single listener in mind, your copy will be more personal and engaging.

Write about that person. Too many companies talk only about themselves in messages. Yes, you’re probably selling something, but it will be far more interesting to the listener if your message focuses on his or her world. Instead of saying “we conduct meaningful funerals,” let the listener know that “you can honor your loved one with a meaningful funeral here at Smith Funeral Home.”

Don’t sweat the grammar. You’re not writing term papers, and no one is looking over your shoulder. The more conversational your copy, the easier it will be for the listener to retain your message. It’s okay to use contractions - fragments, too.

Stick to short words. When you read something in print, you can linger over words with multiple syllables until you determine their meaning. You don’t have that luxury with the spoken word. Shorter words are also usually more well-known, so they tend to be more communicative.

Short sentences, too. Again, when you read, you can take the time to comprehend a complex sentence structure. When you’re listening, you can’t go back to re-hear the first part of a sentence. Four short sentences will usually convey a lot more than two long ones.

Read it aloud. If you choose to ignore all the other recommendations, don’t skip this one. By reading your copy aloud, you’ll be able to tell whether it will be friendly to the listeners’ ears. If you find yourself running out of breath in mid-sentence, or stumbling over the words you’ve chosen, rewrite it. After all, if you already know what it says and are having trouble saying it, how will it sound to someone hearing it for the first time?



Joe Weigel is the owner of Weigel Strategic Marketing, a communications firm focused on the funeral profession that delivers expertise and results across three interrelated marketing disciplines: strategy, branding and communications.

For more information, you can visit his website at

weigelstrategicmarketing.webs.com.

He also can be reached at 317-608-8914 or

joseph.weigel@gmail.com

Travel Plan 2017

I have been in many places, but I've never been in Kahoots. Apparently, you can't go alone. You have to be in Kahoots with someone.

I've also never been in Cognito. I hear no one recognizes you there.

I have, however, been in Sane. They don't have an airport. You have to be driven there. I have made several trips there thanks to my children, friends, family and work.

I would like to go to Conclusions, but you have to jump, and I'm not too much on physical activity anymore.

I have also been in Doubt. This is a sad place to go, and I try not to visit there too often.

I've been in Flexible, but only when it was very important to stand firm.

Sometimes I'm in Capable. I go there more often as I'm getting older.

One of my favorite places to be is in Suspense! It really gets the adrenalin flowing and pumps up the old heart! At my age I need all the stimuli I can get!

I may have been in Continent, but I don't remember what country I was in. It's an age thing. They tell me it is very wet and damp there.

From one unstable person to another. I hope everyone is happy in your head—we're all doing pretty well in mine!

It Was A Tough Year ...But I Made It

- ◆ The economy is so bad that I got a pre-declined credit card in the mail.
- ◆ I ordered a burger at McDonald's and the kid behind the counter asked, "Can I afford fries with that?"
- ◆ CEO's are now playing miniature golf.
- ◆ If the bank returns your check marked "Insufficient Funds," you have to call them and ask if they mean you or them.
- ◆ Hot Wheels and Matchbox stocks are trading higher than GM
- ◆ McDonald's is selling the 1/4 'ouncer'
- ◆ Parents of Beverly Hills and Malibu are firing their nannies and learning their children's names.
- ◆ A truckload of Americans was caught sneaking into Mexico.
- ◆ Dick Cheney took his stockbroker hunting.
- ◆ Motel Six won't leave the light on anymore.
- ◆ The Mafia is laying off judges.
- ◆ BP Oil laid off 25 Congressmen.
- ◆ Congress says they are looking into the Bernard Madoff scandal. Oh Great!! The guy who made \$50 Billion disappear is being investigated by the people who made \$1.5 Trillion disappear!

And Finally,

- ◆ I was so depressed last night thinking about the economy, wars, jobs, my savings, Social Security, retirement funds, and our bleak future, that I called a Suicide Lifeline and was connected to a call center in Pakistan. When I told them I was suicidal, they got all excited and asked if I could drive a truck.

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Directory of Advertisers

American Crematory Equip. Co.	Pg 8
American Macular Degeneration Foundation	Pg 21
ASD, Inc.	Pg 20
Bailey Transfer Inc.	Pg 12
Baxter Vault Co.	Pg 5
CFL Pre-Need	Pg 11
Cherokee Child Caskets	Pg 2
Consolidated Funeral Services (CFS)	Pg 19
Custom Air Trays	Pg 15
Federated Insurance Co.	Pg 7
First Call & Funeral Directors Service-CO	Pg 12
Fleet Systems	Pg 30
Fraley Funeral Supply	Pg 9
Global Mortuary Affairs	Pg 11
Hanley Coach Sales	Pg 25
Hardin Mortuary Service	Pg 13
Lamcraft	Pg 2
Lee & Associates	Pg 13
Marshall's Mortuary Service	Pg 12
Metro Mortuary & Crematory	Pg 13, 17
Metro Mortuary of Texas	Pg 13
Miller & Sons Funeral Car Sales	Pg 16
Mooney-Keehley	Pg 32
Mor-Bid.com	Pg 15, 18
National Alliance for Grieving Children	Pg 18
Nomis Publications	Pg 26
NWA Mortuary Service	Pg 12
Olinger-Saenz Mortuary Service	Pg 13
Perches & Associates	Pg 4
Preneed Resources	Pg 27
Shields Southeast Professional Vehicles	Pg 29
Springfield Mortuary Service	Pg 3
Texas Funeral Directors Association	Pg 17
United Heritage Life Insurance Co.	Pg 28
Vantage Products Corporation	Pg 28
Victoria Mortuary & Cremation Service	Pg 13
Wilbert/Signet Supply	Pg 31
Yoder Embalming Services, LLC	Pg 12

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“Dear Counselor....”

By Bill Stalter

**Dear Counselor,
One of our families recently complained to us about the local cemetery removing decorations from a grandparent’s grave. What can we do to stop this?**

First, you will need to research the cemetery’s rules and regulations. Temporary decorations add to the maintenance work required of cemeteries, and therefore restrictions are frequently imposed about the types of decorations allowed, and the length of time they will be allowed. Some forms of decorations deteriorate quickly, and give a gravesite the appearance of neglect. Other decorations may not be consistent with the decorum of respect that the cemetery wants to project. The cemetery’s rules and regulations should set out any restrictions concerning temporary decorations. You will also want to determine whether

the cemetery sells gravespaces in fee simple or as rights of interment. When you purchase land “in fee simple” that means you acquire all rights of use except those uses excluded by the deed that is subject to a recorded plat. An example would be when you purchase a house in a neighborhood governed by a homeowners’ association. The terms of the homeowners’ association are a part of the plat used to develop your street. When a grave space is purchased in fee simple, the deed would have to disclose whether there are restrictions. But, the vast majority of grave spaces are sold as rights of interment. The cemetery may not even issue a deed, but rather an assignment of a right to have a body interred in the space. Under these circumstances, the cemetery has greater authority to limit the decorations that may be put on the grave. The cemetery can even change its rules and regulations to more restrictive after the grave space has been sold.



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

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Additional Musings

A friend from Texas (Alice Adams, editor of **Texas Director**) told me about an NPR (National Public Radio) investigative report that aired in February. Alice said that the program focused on the exorbitant prices charged to cremate and buy a woman's husband's service. She complained that these reports usually paint the entire funeral industry the same as the offending firm. At the same time they give no credit to the thousands of funeral directors that give help to mourning families.

The above mentioned program was broadcast in two segments. I did not hear the program, but I received a transcript of the second segment from my daughter Ivy in Oklahoma.

The NPR programs were hosted by Rachel Martin which featured the investigative reporter Robert Benincasa and aired on February 8, 2017. Other participants were Ed Howard, a lawyer specializing in consumer interests for the Center for Public Interest Law at the University of San Diego, Joshua Slocum, Executive Director of Funeral Consumer Alliance, Scott Gilligan, attorney for NFDA, and Will Chang, owner of a Silicon Valley startup "parting.com." "Parting.com" is a website to feature funeral prices from across the United States. There were no funeral directors included in the discussion about funeral prices and the lack of GPL information being posted on funeral home websites.

The consumer advocate lawyer thought that the pricing was difficult to understand. Well, was it not professionals like himself that determined the GPL format back in 1984? Will Chang is trying to place all funeral home price lists on his website "parting.com." He hopes to convince funeral homes to pay him a referral fee.

The group thought all funeral home price lists should be online. They also seemed to have trouble understanding price variances among different firms in the same city.

NFDA's Gilligan mentioned the \$40,000 FTC non-disclosure fine for firms not complying with the funeral pricing rule. However, Gilligan felt online pricing should be market driven. That was pretty much his defense of the funeral industry. Kind of wimpy unless he was severely edited out.

It would have been nice if a couple of real funeral directors had participated—say one a small/medium size firm and one in the 500+ range. Female funeral directors/owners should be included if not leading the change.

As for Mr. Slocum—"Josh," I am reminded of the



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mythical character Diogenes who wandered the earth with his lantern looking for an honest man. Joshua seems to be wandering around looking for an honest funeral director. I think he may have forgotten to light the candle in his lantern.

So why do these discussions take place without the main characters involved, funeral home personnel? Instead, they deal with peripheral people either out to get the funeral industry or have their own agendas.

Truly the FTC rulings should apply to websites since it's a venue to talk about funerals and we are required to show GPLs if we even talk to someone about funerals.

As far as paying to put your pricing online as a referral that seems a bit far fetched too.

Exactly what was the purpose of this discussion and who did it benefit? Regretfully funeral homes and crematories have no defense when they are not being included. But they need to be aware of what is being discussed because I am sure that their customers, friends or just about anybody will feel free to tell them about it!!! Beware and be informed.



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New Book Helps Parents and Families With Empty-Nester Grief By Dr. Alan Wolfelt

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ALAN D. WOLFELT, PH.D.

Fort Collins, CO... Companion Press announces the publication of a new book entitled *Healing the Empty Nester's Grieving Heart: 100 Practical Ideas for Parents After the Kids Move Out, Go Off to College, or Start Taking Flight* by renowned grief educator Dr. Alan Wolfelt.

This book helps parents understand their normal and necessary empty-nester grief. The 100 practical tips and activities are designed to help parents acknowledge

and express their feelings of loss, foster love and respect, build a new and rewarding kind of relation-

ship with their children, and, over time, re-install their lives with meaning and joy. Tips for nurturing a marriage or partnership through this challenging time are also included.

Author, educator, and grief counselor Dr. Alan Wolfelt serves as Director of the Center for Loss and Life Transition in Fort Collins, Colorado. The author of *Understanding Your Grief* and many other books for grief caregivers and mourners, Dr. Wolfelt is committed to helping people mourn well so they can live well and love well. He is available for interviews on empty-nester grief.

Part of Dr. Wolfelt's popular 100 Ideas series, *Healing the Empty Nester's Grieving Heart* is priced at \$11.95 U.S. To order and to learn more about Dr. Wolfelt's books on grief and loss, visit www.centerforloss.com or call (970) 226-6050.



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