

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 2

The Essence of a Small Town Funeral Director

By Jeff Nichols

He was awakened at 3:00 a.m. by the shrill ring of the telephone. Phones rang more intrusively back in those days, especially in the middle of the night. Nevertheless, he answered the call about a wreck on the highway.

Quickly he donned the uniform which consisted of his suit and tie, dark shoes and a white shirt. With a brief comb through the hair, he rushed out the door to the funeral home in the rain to get the ambulance, which was nothing more than a stripped down hearse with a rotating red beacon on top.

Everyone in town knew the location well on the south highway out of town, at a curve that is too sharp for fast driving, especially at night and in this rain. It was a single car accident and the tree didn't budge. With the help of the officers and bystanders he loaded the barely breathing driver into the ambulance and rushed away to the hospital nearby where he watched the futile efforts of the doctor to save the man.

Of course, he knew the driver well. He had coffee with him at the local café just three days ago. Before sunrise, he would meet the town's newest widow and fatherless child at the hospital and provide his best effort to console them and then prepare the man's remains for a funeral later in the week.

By noon he was off to the weekly meeting of the local civic club where he would smile, catch up on local events and listen to loose jokes. The presentation today was on irrigation for some village in some region of Africa. He feigned attentiveness as his mind was still focused on the tragedy of the wreck and the widow and child. But he rarely missed these weekly meetings and he always smiled and interacted with his peers and never let them see what he really kept inside.

The next decade saw the drudgery of the ambulance finally leave the funeral home and move on to the medical profession where it belonged.

Today he will direct the funeral of an 18-month-old child who died suddenly of a respiratory illness. It was the first child for the young couple. He knew the parents well, known them both since they were born. That's the way it is in small towns, everyone knows everyone and most are related. This is a blessing when things are good and life is in full bloom, but he knows too well how hard it is in times of sadness and death. They were high school sweethearts, she was a cheerleader and he was a linebacker. They married just after graduation and made a life for themselves in this small town. He would stand by them through the ordeal of death, preparation for the funeral and the services to bury their baby, ensuring they had everything he could possibly provide to get them through this week.

On Friday he would be at the football stadium, standing with his hand over his heart for the national anthem, cheering on his son playing football, and respecting the band at halftime. There would be a smile on his face and kind words and laughter with friends but inside his thought kept drifting back to celebrating football and fall weath-

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**Lowell
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Pg. 18**

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



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good friends,
May His peace
be with you,
His love never ends.



Mary and David,
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the beautiful funeral
arrangement that you met
for Mother.

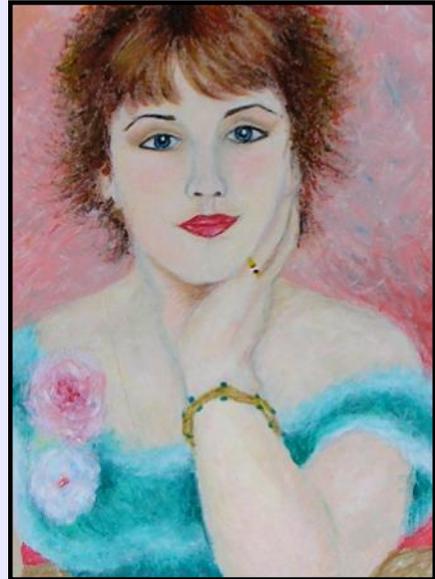
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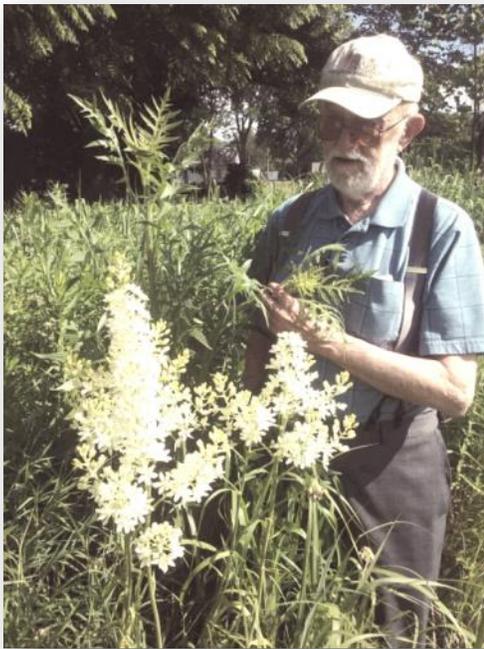


The editor's daughter Amy, who was mentioned in our previous issues, was quite the artist and we've decided to display some of her artwork every issue in her memory.



Amy Howard

Lowell in His Train Garden



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Mortuary Muse

By Lowell



Is the compassionate care given by the hospice caregivers being tarnished by hospice managements intrusion into the space between the families they serve and the funeral professionals? Some funeral directors think so!!

A few years ago we contacted eight hospice organizations that serve our area. We asked for their protocol regarding interactions with funeral directors to secure funeral pricing for the families under hospice care. None responded with a written reply. One called and said that their hospice workers are not to be included in the process of making funeral arrangements. Yet many funeral homes have reported incidents of hospice workers calling to check on the price of a funeral home's services. Nearly always ONE item—DIRECT Cremation with NO services!

I seem to recall that a few years back that NFDA announced plans to improve relations with hospice organizations apparently that effort faded away.

If hospice management is not taking an active role in their client's funeral arrangements perhaps the bond between caregiver and the families becomes so strong that the caregiver just wants to help make things easier for the client family. But why is it almost always a request for the price of cremation without services?

Cremation without services is certainly becoming the trend,

but is still only one option among many. A helpful caregiver should or would remain neutral in their advisory capacity or unless their employer has some financial interest in some facet of the cremation industry.

The 21st century has changed the face of most industries including death care and near death care. We used to think of hospice as a wonderful free-standing edifice staffed by a compassionate staff and probably funded by charity, religious or benevolent interests. Unfortunately their services simply weren't available to the masses.

Now hospice services are widely available from what seems to be an increasing number of not-for-profit organizations with or through hospitals, nursing homes or perhaps other non-profits in the health care industry. The ownership of these hospice local/regional non-profits and their affiliation with hospitals and nursing homes seems a little vague to the average observer, and even some of the families they serve. Since they appear to operate on insurance and Medicare funds— hope someone is watching the hen house in case the fox is lurking nearby.

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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Behind the Back Fence

By Lowell

“Creating a Newsletter for Families Read” was Joe Weigel’s article in **The Dead Beat-Volume 15 Issue 6**. The article had some great tips. If you missed it go to the website and check it out.

About the same time we ran the newsletter article a friend brought me a copy of the newsletter of one of the large funeral homes in SW Missouri that mails it to clients they have served. The newsletter had originally been mailed to a family in Oklahoma. The newsletter was basically filled with aftercare content, coming events and deaths of the past month. Importantly it was being shared.

Even though we did not anticipate using **The Dead Beat** as a funeral client message, most families would pick up one or more copies and continue reading successive issues.

Sometime back we started leaving 5 to 10 press overrun copies in the waiting area of our town’s nationally acclaimed “Cooky’s Café.” We place two loose sheets in each copy of the magazine. One sheet is about our funeral home and examples of services and prices that are available and the other is a subscription form. We haven’t been doing this long enough to track, but **The Dead Beat** is more popular than some travel brochures.

Recently my friend Charlie told me that ads he placed on cablevision billed not by the TV airtime but rather by the internet activity they generate. The cable company knows how many hits the website had. They knew how many read the whole ad and who went to the physical location due to GPS tracking in certain specified areas. I’ve

got to rethink our funeral home’s marketing strategies. I was about to order some cardboard fans on a stick in case a couple of our village’s churches reopened.

Since writing my comments about hospice workers being involved in funeral arrangements another colleague called.

One of his own family had passed. He said a hospice worker had tried to share information about being an organ donor, but the person was very misinformed about the procedures that are involved and the problems of mortuary care that result.

Has any kind of funeral service business closed in your neighborhood lately? If so, perhaps you should dial their former phone number and see what happens.

Friends had operated a funeral supply business in our area for three generations. The business closed some time ago, but the owner had continued representing another company and we continued listing the phone number in **The Dead Beat**. I dialed the number recently and was surprised by the AT&T recording. The number was discontinued but at no extra charge they would help me find a similar business. Press #1 for Dignity Memorials, press #2 for Parker Mortuary or press #3 for 4state Cremation Society (owned by Parker Mortuary). A couple of calls the next day and the list had rotated with #1 Parker, #2 4states and #3 Dignity Memorials. I suppose I got someone in Houston when I punched in Dignity. The person informed me that my closest Dignity firm was in Bentonville, Arkansas, which is about one hundred miles away. Later a Dignity person called, but I was out of the office. I wonder if AT&T solicits business for this service?

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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*

I don't know if you remember from issue to issue what I wrote, but I heard from a friend of mine who also lost a daughter and it was commenting on my last column about social media and lost loved ones. She also had experienced positive responses to expressed grief online.

I have since been sensitive to what has been shared online in relation to losing loved ones. I've noticed that losing pets is one thing that people need to share and the responses are very supportive. Everyone seems to relate to losing pets and acknowledging them as members of the family. Isn't it remarkable how sharing about our losses online seems to help, especially with all the love shown toward us in our losses, even our pets? It seems that brings out our memories of similar losses. I hope this positive way of sharing is encouraged.



On another note dealing with funeral directing and the future....

So what's the deal with Hospice? I had an interesting situation today.

On Saturday I got contacted from our answering service that someone was at my door wanting to do a preneed. Regretfully I was out of town but I contacted the person and scheduled an appointment for Monday at 10. Well, about quarter to ten, my appointment

showed up. It was a son making a preneed for his mother who had taken a turn for the worse.

One of the first things he told me was he had a check from Hospice for \$500 to put toward the funeral (made out to our funeral home). After we talked, he had decided upon a visitation with body present, cremation following and memorial service at a later day. We worked through the information collection and then details of the services.

I had just finished copying the paperwork and his partner came in and without words he knew his mother had passed. I hugged him and sent him on his way and I had all the paperwork, including the check and told him to let me know what's happening.

After he left I got a call from a Hospice worker to say she was on her way to the deceased's home. I let her know that the son had been with me when the death had happened. She said she would call me after she had completed the paperwork.

A short time passed and I got another call. The hospice worker called and said could I tear up the check because the family had decided to go with another funeral home. She asked me if I had a problem with that or did she need to come pick it up. I said no I would shred it and that was it.

So I have no idea why they changed their minds, but I wonder if that \$500 was supposed to be for a direct cremation and that was what Hospice will pay for? Or you lose the money? Or the family just changed their

mind? Or what? It made me feel like I had done something wrong, but when you don't know why, you don't know what to think.

I realize what good things that Hospice does, but why the involvement with the funerals, especially monetarily? Who is paying for Hospice? Any thoughts or opinions would be welcomed by me. I'm not sure if this situation is just the first of many.

Additional info since I wrote this column; I never found out what funeral home or crematory handled her arrangements. But several days later, a newspaper obituary surfaced with information on the individual and saying private viewing was held per her request. No funeral home was mentioned. So the mystery goes on as to what really happened and why.



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

Are Professional Associations Headed Toward Obsolenscence? By Professional Colleague

Before you read more, answer the yes (Y) or no (N) questions below:

- ___ 1. Is the attendance at your association's functions increasing?
- ___ 2. Did you attend your association's 2016 Convention?
- ___ 3. Is lack of time the reason you haven't run for office?
- ___ 4. Has your region planned for succession of leadership, i.e., identified and groomed young directors to lead your association in the future?
- ___ 5. Have you personally invited another funeral director to attend an association-sponsored event in the last six months?

If you've answered three or more questions with an 'N,' read more.

Several ominous red flags have begun appearing before now, but directors across the country say their convention this year was poorly attended. Once-crowded regional meetings are attracting less than a dozen members. NFDA convention? I hear the same thing and that's worrisome...principally that the funeral service profession may be careening in this same direction.

What are obvious causes of this short-fall of interest among directors? Officers of associations around the country believe more directors aren't attending conventions because people don't want to spend the money, take time away from their families or cannot spare time away from work.

If you don't believe this trend exists, just look back to the 1950s -- when Masonic Lodges were turning away men, when Dad's once-a-week lodge meetings were a traditional part of a family's schedule, where everybody who was anybody was a Shriner...and Shriner's Hospitals were solely supported by monies from various Shrines, not through TV ad donations.

Well, most of those lodges have faded away because they became irrelevant. Fewer men are joining Masons and many long-standing civic organizations are only attracting members who want to drink with their buddies.

Many -- not all but many -- young directors say, other than networking opportunities, conventions don't offer much in the way of new information and skills they can take back home and incorporate into their daily routines immediately. Still others complain about conventions not

offering enough family-centric activities.

One executive, speaking anonymously, said association leadership is not strong enough or charismatic enough to share and implement their vision with the group. "All of our officers do a good job," the exec said, "but it's evident, few are passionate enough about funeral service to be visionary. Maybe it's because we have such a small pool of candidates running for office every year...or maybe being an association officer doesn't offer enough ROI (return on investment), i.e., personal growth and development."

So, is change possible among professional associations?

Maybe, but as we all know, change is difficult, even painful...and unless execs and board members encourage members to become first adapters to innovative approaches, efforts to remain relevant may be useless.

Consider the following recommendations. Whether associations choose to act on them is yet another story:

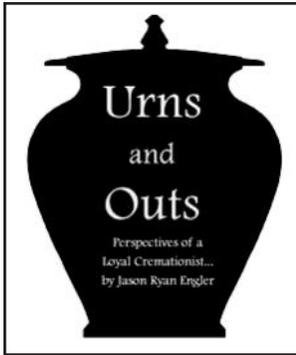
1. Hold one-third to one-half of association board meetings via conference calls. It costs board members time and money to attend meetings and it costs the association money to host them (when you count exec and office time, food, refreshments, etc.)...much more than a reliable teleconferencing company would charge.

2. Committees don't function well because most don't meet more than once a year...and most committees are stuck in a rut, otherwise known as "comfort zone"; otherwise known as "we've always done it this way." The result is people volunteer to work on committees, year after year, because they want to be involved (or is it they want to list all their committee work on their resume?) In general, most committees fail to make a tangible difference. With more communications more often, committees could set higher goals and get more done.

3. Sorry, Baby Boomers! Your peak years are waning and across the country, the same trends are repeating. Membership numbers are diminishing and if funeral service professional associations are going to survive past 2020, these associations should be recruiting Millennials and the board should be tweaking "we've always done it this way" programs and traditions to acknowledge the changing needs of the new generations of funeral directors and take action to revamp existing offerings to remain relevant.

4. Current and past association leadership will agree...too much in the way of time away from work and travel is expected.

(Continued on page 21)



I often find myself thinking on the past. I guess being a historian can produce that side effect. I often find myself wondering if I have made the right

choices in life, taken the right opportunities, made every effort I can to treat others fairly and compassionately. I hope I have at least made a positive difference in the life of my family and friends.

A recent significant life changing move to pursue professional endeavors has brought many feelings and realizations to surface. Taking a new job, moving to a new city, making changes and taking chances in my own life... Even with the downsides those things often make me feel the need to pinch myself to make sure I am not dreaming.

I remember as a young man wanting to be a funeral director, with daily encouraging phone conversations with my patient mentor Rene Ferrer, and being inspired by the urn wielding manager of the Undertaker, Paul Bearer, I tried with all my might to pursue the dream of a career in funeral service. It was because of Paul Bearer that I first started to have an interest in cremation urns. The particular urn he carried was unique, and I wanted to find one just like it. So I began the search – one that would elude me for more than a decade – but a search that would instill in my memory the importance of cremation memorialization, the make and model of countless urn styles, the drive to learn all I could about cremation and its history.

Years later, I would learn more about the history of cremation. I found it fascinating that this was such a largely ignored topic of the history of death care practice. It would be even later that I would be named the historian for the country's original professional crema-

tion organization, the Cremation Association of North America (CANA). Most recently, I was offered to be the cremation historian for the National Museum of Funeral History where we are working on the world's first History of Cremation exhibit.

Just a few weeks ago, I was walking through the Funeral History museum with one of my longest-time friends, Keith Kobayashi. Giving him the tour I showed him where the upcoming History of Cremation Exhibit will be located, and where I remember the various exhibits being set up when I was about 14 and my parents took me for a visit. He asked me something I had not considered. "How does it feel, to know that as a 14 year old you had no idea that you would one day be a part of this museum?" It had not dawned on me until then, but he was right. Some 23 years prior, I walked through that very space, though the exhibits have changed and the space has grown considerably, and longed to have a place in funeral service.

To say that I am humbled at the opportunities that have been presented to me, with the encouragement of Barbara Kemmis of CANA, Scott MacKenzie, Nikki Nordeen, Genevieve Keeney, and the legendary Robert Boetticher, Sr., is the understatement of the century.

I have spoken at national events, designed cremation urns, guided up and coming funeral professionals in their endeavors, written articles, published a book, received distinguished service awards, served on boards. I have been featured in the pages of TIME magazine. I have the opportunity to influence the future of cremation memorialization. And it all started with a desire, and an urn.

Now before anyone calls me out for bragging or for seeking adulation, I want to affirm that is not the intent of my writing. A couple of years ago, I was honored to be invited by the New England Cemetery Association to speak at their annual meeting in

Rhode Island. As I sat on the long flight to Boston, my large frame having been blessed with upgraded seating, I found myself sitting next to a young man with whom I struck up a conversation. He told me of his recent graduation and his pursuance of his Master's degree in some scientific field that I don't understand. I told him as I have told my own son and the apprentices I have had the opportunity to help serve families: follow your dreams, strive to be the very best at whatever you set out to do. Learn all you can and become the expert. Then someday, when you are being flown to share that dream and passion and knowledge with others, you too can have the chance to inspire a person who is facing the great wide world of possibility that they can do great things.

I hope to instill and inspire in all who read my words that, even with rough patches in the road, even when it seems overwhelming, even with blood, sweat, tears, heartache; in the midst of all of these things, success and fulfillment are yours for the taking! You can do great things. You can be somebody. You can make a difference. You too can live your dreams.

That's my 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 Houston, Texas with his miniature dachshund, Otto.

More Than Memories By Ken Doka

“When my wife died,” John, a 76-year-old widower, reflected, “people tried to console me by reminding me I would always have my memories of Beth. They were right but I have so much more.” John then described all the other ways that he remained connected to his wife. He could see pieces of her in his children, grandchildren, and even great-grandchildren, one of whom was even named after her. Most importantly, he could see some of Beth in himself. He had picked up some of her habits and, more importantly, John recognized how they had molded each other in over 50 years of marriage. He would not be the man he had become were it not for Beth.

John realized a basic truth about grief. We never lose the connection with the people we love. Grief is not like a cold. It is not a condition that we get over—it is one we live with. Grief is a journey.

Sometimes that has painful aspects. Even years after a loss, we may experience surges of grief. For Katrina, it was her wedding. Her grandmother had died many years before that event. But when Katrina was a little girl, her grandmother would talk about weddings, and how proud she was that all of the women in the family had worn her wedding dress. At her own wedding, which took place after her grandmother had died; Katrina was flooded with memories of beloved Nana while walking down the aisle.

There is another aspect of the continuing bond, one that can be comforting even in the midst of grief. We realize that even though someone we love has died, some bonds remain. We do have our memories.

And we have more. We have the legacies they leave us. Sometimes these legacies are physical. As John looks at his progeny, he sees his wife’s smile in one of his grandkids, while other children or grandchildren mirror other characteristics such as Beth’s hair, or certain gestures.

John also recognizes the legacies left to him. He now makes a list whenever he shops—something Beth always impressed on him. And even more deeply, he recognizes Beth’s effect on his own identity.

He also recognized other connections that bind him to Beth. He occasionally dreams of her. Sometimes, John feels he even smells her perfume when he walks into a room. A religious man, John also believes that someday they will be reunited. So even though he misses her, and deeply grieves her death, he takes comfort in the bond they retain.

We do continue our bonds. The people we love remain in our life—always. They become part of us. We respect their legacies in our lives as well as the memories we retain. Perhaps, like John, we may have experiences where we encounter them or beliefs that reassure us. Love lasts longer than life.

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, 1710 Rhode Island Ave, NW Suite 400, Washington, DC 20036. Annual subscription—\$25.00.

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*)

Chuckles

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

Ugly Suit

When the store manager returned from lunch, he noticed his clerk's hand was bandaged, but before he could ask about the bandage, the clerk has some very good news for him. "Guess what, sir?" the clerk said. "I finally sold that terrible, ugly suit we've had so long!" "Do you mean that repulsive pink-and-blue double-breasted thing?!" the manager asked. "That's the one!" "That's great!" the manager cried, "I thought we'd never get rid of that monstrosity! That had to be the ugliest suit we've ever had! But tell me, why is your hand bandaged?" "Oh," the clerk replied, "after I sold the guy that suit, his seeing-eye dog bit me."



Old is When

- Your friend compliments you on your new alligator shoes and you're barefoot.
- You don't care where you spouse goes, just as long as you don't have to go along.
- A young babe catches your fancy and your pacemaker opens the garage door.
- "Getting a little action" means, "I don't need to take any fiber today."
- You are cautioned to slow down by the doctor instead of the police.
- An "all nighter" means not getting up to go use the bathroom!
- "Getting lucky" means you find your car in the parking lot.

A contestant on "Who Wants to be a Millionaire?" had reached the final plateau. If she answered the next question correctly, she would win \$1,000,000. If she answered incorrectly, she would pocket only \$32,000 milestone money. And as she suspected it would be, the million-dollar question was no pushover. It was, "Which of the following species of birds does not build its own nest, but instead lays its eggs in the nests of other birds? Is it A) the condor; B) the buzzard; C) the cuckoo; or D) the vulture? The woman was on the spot. She did not know the answer. And she was doubly on the spot because she had used up her 50/50 Lifeline and her Audience Poll Lifeline. All that remained was her Phone-a-Friend! Lifeline. The woman hoped she would not have to use it because.. Her friend was well... blonde. She had no alternative. She called her friend and gave her the question and the four choices. The blonde responded unhesitatingly: "That's easy. The answer is C: The cuckoo." The contestant had to make a decision and make it fast. She considered employing a reverse strategy and giving Regis any answer except the one that her friend had given her. And considering that her friend was a blonde, that would seem to be the logical thing to do. On the other hand—the blonde had responded with such confidence, such certitude, that the contestant could not help but be persuaded. "I need an answer," said Regis. Crossing her fingers, the contestant said, "C: The Cuckoo." "Is that your final answer?" asked Regis. "Yes, that is my final answer." Two minutes later,

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, Paris, Texas

So today I read your article in the Dead Beat about social media. You hit it on the head for me today... anniversary of Jessica's angel day. The words and remembrances from friends made me smile today....."

A friend of the editor

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

Chuckles (Cont.)

Regis said, "The answer is ...absolutely correct! You are now a millionaire." Three days later, the contestant hosted a party for her family and friends including the blonde who had helped her win the million dollars. "Jenny, I just do not know how to thank you!" said the contestant. "How did you happen to know the right answer?" "Oh, come on," said the blonde. "Everybody knows that cuckoos don't build nests. They live in clocks."

A new supermarket opened near my house. It has an automatic water mister to keep the produce fresh. Just before it goes on you hear the sound of distant thunder and the smell of fresh rain. When you approach the milk cases, you hear cows mooing and experience the scent of fresh hay. When you approach the egg case, you hear hens cluck and cackle, and the air is filled with the pleasing aroma of bacon and eggs frying. The veggie department features the smell of fresh buttered corn. I don't buy toilet paper there any more.

Lena was making a breakfast of fried eggs for Ole. Suddenly, Ole burst into the kitchen yelling, "Careful. CAREFUL! Put in sum more vater! Yur cooking too many at once! TOO MANY! Turn dem! TURN DEM NOW! Dey're going to STICK! Don't burn dem!" Lena stared hard at Ole and said, "Vhat da heck is wrong vit you? You tink I don't know how to fry a couple eggs?" Ole calmly replied, "I yust wanted to show you vhat it's like vhen I'm driving and yur in da car!"

Guinness Accident

Brenda O'Malley is home making dinner, as usual, when Tim Finnegan arrives at her door, "Brenda, may I come in?" he asks. "I've somethin' to tell ya." "Of course you can come in, you're always welcome, Tim. But where's my husband?" "That's what I'm here to be tellin' ya, Brenda. There was an accident down at the Guinness brewery...." "Oh, God no!" cries Brenda. "Please don't tell me..." "I must, Brenda. Your husband Shamus is dead and gone. I'm sorry." Finally, she looked up at Tim. "How did it happen,

(Continued on page 11)



Chuckles (Cont.)

Tim?" "It was terrible, Brenda. He fell into a vat of Guinness Stout and drowned." "Oh my dear Jesus! But you must tell me true, Tim. Did he at least go quickly?" "Well, no Brenda... no. Fact is, he got out three times to pee."

Lena went to her doctor for her annual checkup. After checking her over and running some tests, the doctor said, "Lena, I guess you just have to realize you're not getting any younger." "I don't want to get any younger," retorted Lena. "I just want you to fix me up so I get older!"

Hang Gliding

Here in Kentucky, you don't see too many people hang-gliding. Bubba decided to save up and get a hang-glider. He takes it to the highest mountain, and after struggling to the top, he gets ready to take flight. He takes off running and reaches the edge—into the wind he goes! Meanwhile, Maw and Paw Hicks were sittin' on the porch swing talkin' 'bout the good ol days when Maw spots the biggest bird she ever seen! "Look at the size of that bird, Paw!" she exclaims. Paw raises up, "Git my gun, Maw." She runs into the house, brings out his pump shotgun. He takes careful aim. BANG ... BANG ... BANG ... BANG! The monster size bird continues to sail silently over the tree tops. "I think ya missed him, Paw," she says. "Yeah," he replies, "but at least he let go of Bubba!"



The Phone

The place where I work decided to provide company-paid cell phones to the "suits" upstairs. After negotiating a deal with a cell phone company, we arranged for the phones to be sent to the homes of the various VIP's. The day after delivery, I received a call from a partner screaming about how his cell phone didn't work. He said he charged it overnight just like the sheet said, but in the morning, it wouldn't power up. I asked EXACTLY what he did with the phone when he got it. "I took it out, plugged the charger into the wall and into the phone." "Did you put the battery in the phone?" "Not the extra one." "Sir, the phone only came with one battery." (Pause) "Oh, I think I figured out what's wrong with it."

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Small Ranch

A man owned a small ranch in Montana. The Montana Work Force Department claimed he was not paying proper wages to his help and sent an agent out to interview him. "I need a list of your employees and how much you pay them," demanded the agent. "Well," replied the farmer, "there's my farm hand who's been with me for 3 years. I pay him \$200 a week plus free room and board. The cook has been here for 18 months, and I pay her \$150 per week plus free room and board. Then there's the half-wit. He works about 18 hours every day and does about 90% of all the work around here. He makes about \$10 per week, pays his own room and board, and I buy him a bottle of bourbon every Saturday night. He also sleeps with my wife occasionally." "That's the guy I want to talk to.....the half-wit," says the agent. "That would be me," replied the Rancher.

Apples

The children were lined up in the cafeteria of a Catholic elementary school for lunch. At the head of the table was a large pile of apples. The nun made a note, and posted on the apple tray: "Take only ONE. God is watching." Moving further along the lunch line, at the other end of the table was a large pile of chocolate chip cookies. A child had written a note, "Take all you want. God is watching the apples."

35 Years

It was mailman George's last day on the job after 35 years of delivering the mail through all kinds of weather. When he arrived at the first house on his route, the whole family came out, roundly congratulated him, and sent him on his way with a tiny gift envelope. At the second house they present him with a box of fine cigars. The folks at the third house handed him a selection of terrific fishing lures. As the next house, he was met at the door by a strikingly beautiful woman in a revealing negligee. She took him by the hand, and led him up the stairs to the bedroom where she blew his mind with the most passionate love he had ever experienced. When he'd had enough, they went down stairs, where she fixed him a giant breakfast. When he was truly satisfied, she poured him a cup of steaming coffee. As she was pouring, he noticed a dollar bill sticking out from under the cup's bottom edge. "All this is just too wonderful for words," he said, "but what's the dollar for?" "Well," she said, "last night, I told my husband that today would be your last day, and that I wanted to do something special for you. I asked him what to give you. He said, "Screw him. Give him a dollar." "Breakfast was my idea."



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Death Notices of Fellow Funeral Service Colleagues



INDUSTRY PROFESSIONAL

TEXAS (Cont.)



William D. "Bill" Backman, Jr., 85, of Aurora, Indiana died on March 1, 2017. He was employed at Aurora Casket from 1948 until his retirement in 1993. During this time, he served as president from 1978-1993, CEO from 1983-1996 and chairman of the board from 1989-2002. He graduated from Wabash College in 1953 and later established the William D. Backman Sr. Scholarship. His services were conducted by Fitch-Denney Funeral



R. Davis Harper, 58, of Temple, died March 4, 2017. He worked as a fourth general funeral director at Harper-Talasek Funeral Home before he and his partner Philip Scanio established Scanio-Harper Funeral Home in 1997. He graduated from the Dallas Institute of Mortuary Science in 1979. His services were handled by Scanio-Harper Funeral Home.

MISSOURI



John D. Wilson, 68, of Ash Grove passed away June 2, 2017. He graduated with honors from The Kentucky School of Mortuary Science on August 29, 1970. Following graduation, he returned to Springfield, Missouri and began his professional career and completed his 12 month apprenticeship with the Klingner Mortuary. He served in the U.S. Army in 1971. John and wife Carolyn purchased the Daniel Funeral Homes of Ash Grove and Walnut Grove in April, 1973 and he served those communities for 44 years. His arrangements were under the direction of Wilson-Griffin Funeral Home in Ash Grove.

Calvin W. Hunter, 87, of St. Charles, MO and Labelle, FL, formerly of St. Ann, MO, died June 3, 2017. Funeral service arrangements under direction of Schrader Funeral Home, Ball-



Jose F. "Pepe" Hernandez, 94, of Rosenberg, passed away on May 17, 2017. He was a WWII veteran in the Pacific Theatre. He then enrolled in the Landig School of Mortuary Science in Houston and graduated in 1947. After working some years in San Antonio, he moved to Rosenberg in April 1950 and established Hernández Funeral Home. He was licensed for 70 years and former owner of Hernandez Funeral Home who handled the funeral arrangements.



Mr. John Marvin Kennedy, 84, of Lufkin passed away on April 21, 2017. Mr. Kennedy was a graduate of Dallas Institute of Mortuary Science in 1952 and was a licensed funeral director for 57 and a half years. He was senior funeral director at Oakley-Metcalf Funeral Home for 35 years. He proudly served as a Navy Corpsman from 1952 to 1954. He was a funeral director with Oakley-Metcalf Funeral Home in Lufkin who directed his funeral services.

TEXAS



Bill DeBerry, Sr., 84, of Denton, died on May 13, 2017. He went to work for J.B. Floyd at Schmitz-Floyd-Hamlett Funeral Home. While working for J.B. Floyd, he went to the Dallas Institute of Mortuary Services and began his lifelong career in Denton of over 59 years. He worked for J.B. for many years and later for Bob Schmitz at Jack Schmitz and Son Funeral Home. At the time Bob retired, Bill went back to work for J.B. Floyd until the fall of 1988 when Bill made a huge commitment to open his own funeral home in Denton in 1990. In his 64 years in the Funeral Service he dedicated himself to the families he served. Bill DeBerry Funeral Directors handled his funeral services.



Margaret Ann Garza, 31 of Round Rock, passed away on May 30, 2017. She was a former employee of Texas Service Life Ins. Co. of Austin. Her services were under the direction of Joe Jackson North Funeral and Cremation Services in Laredo.

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@thedead-beat.com



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Some Interesting Latest Death Trends

An article about a Dutch Funeral Expo that took place in Amsterdam's historic central Westkerk church gave some really interesting alternative. About 3,500 visitors viewed new gadgets to help with the final farewell of a loved one.

A hollow walking stick could contain cremains that could be scattered at a touch of a button and would give the GPS coordinates. There were funeral blocks that were small plastic building blocks that would allow children to make their own hearses with a coffin and a crematorium with imitation flames at the back or a graveyard. These could help children understand the funeral process.

Also shown was cultivating a vegetable patch on top of the loved one's grave. The veggies grow in self-



Somewhat of a Side Note

By Lowell

Somewhat of a side note to my comments about using this magazine as a public newsletter happened about three months ago.

One afternoon we received a phone call from a gentleman in Enid, Oklahoma. He explained that his wife was in a nursing home and was terminally ill. He was requesting permission to use Rev. Janice's column in that current issue in his wife's funeral service. His minister had suggested that he should first request permission from us.

Of course, Rev. Janice, Joanne and I were honored by the request. The next morning when Joanne called him to inform him of Rev. Janice's reply he told her his wife had just passed.

A day earlier when he initially called I assumed he was a funeral director or funeral home employee. I asked him which funeral home he was with. Surprise! He was not employed by the profession.

He had gotten his copy of **The Dead Beat** out of the POST OFFICE TRASH! He said he regularly went through the trash looking for magazines to take to nursing homes and shut-ins. We thought this was a really nice gesture on his part and volunteered to put him on our mailing list. He indicated that this was not the first time he had seen **The Dead Beat** and he enjoyed reading it.

So as we have noticed in the past that many people besides funeral personnel enjoy the magazine and it provides knowledge and help to many individuals.

contained holders so there was not risk of contamination. Numerous casket designs were offered including a shuffleboard game and another shaped like a football boot. Also a mail-order coffin was offered that could be assembled by the family.

The idea of this expo was to show you how you could celebrate and say farewell to your life and death.

For more information, check out the article presented on www.ctvnews.ca and search "Dutch Funeral Expo."

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Some Interesting "Oops"

- Classified ad: "An unexpected vacancy for a knife-thrower's assistant. Rehearsals start immediately."
- Newspaper ad: "Extremely independent male, 17 years old. Needs to rent room. Call his mother at..."
- Advertisement: "Try our cough syrup. You will never get any better."
- For Sale: Bull Dog. Will eat anything. Loves small children.
- Child to mother after school: "Our new teacher taught us all about fossils. Before she came to class I didn't know what a fossil looked like."
- Child's definition of syntax: "All the money collected at church from sinners."
- Job seeker on application: "I have an obsession for detail. I like to make sure I cross my i's and dot my t's."
- A small town newspaper announcement: "Gordie Jefferson celebrated his fifth birthday with a party for eight little fiends."
- Elderly lady to a friend: "I will just die if nobody comes to my funeral."
From "Let There Be Laughter!"



Cornflakes

There were two brothers, aged four and six. The six-year-old says, "You know, it's about time we started to swear." The four-year-old says, "Okay." The six-year-old says, "From now on I'll say 'hell' and you say 'ass'" The four-year-old says "Okay."

So they go downstairs and their mother says, "What would you boys like for breakfast?" The six-year-old says, "Oh, what the hell, I'll have corn flakes." WHACK! The kid goes flying across the room.

The mother turns to the four-year-old and asks "And what would YOU like for breakfast? The four-year-old says, " I don't know, but you can bet your ass, it's not corn flakes."



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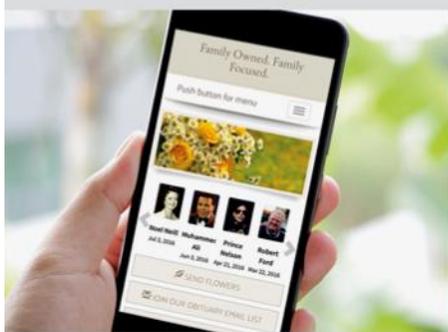
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Professional Associations (Cont.)

(Continued from page 7)

Rather than barring members from the leadership experience, change the rules. In fact, having officers pick three or four regional meetings per year to attend would entice more leaders to run for office. In the not too distant past, there were several choices to vote on for each office.

5. Back in the day, many directors were all too eager to get time away from their families, go to convention, see the old gang and spend too much time in bars. Millennials already spend more time than they want away from their young families. Rearing kids has become a shared and enjoyable task, not like the last century where raising the family was regarded as woman's work. Many have said, "Have conventions in towns that offered family-centered attractions. Let us play all day and have meetings in the evening."

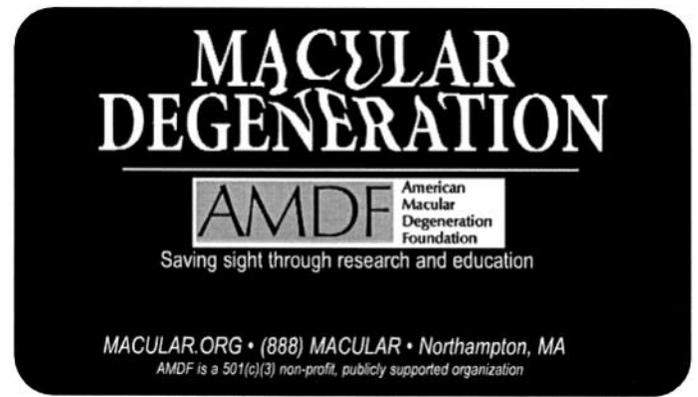
6. Millennials need information portability and accessibility. Offer CE's in podcast form with online tests. Presidential messages should be video-based and offered through "Members Only" files on the associations website. Use more text messaging, make more productive use of websites and ask for member suggestions to improve communications every year.

7. If a mortuary colleges is within 150 miles of your firm, include students in association board meetings. If there's no college in your area, think about funding students so they can attend meetings and/or conventions. It will benefit an association's future to bring students into active roles during school and provisional practice. This not only provides networking with strong role models but also encourages the student's valuable input and a lifelong participation in their state's professional association.

8. Offer discounted membership to new graduates who go to work for firms or funeral directors under 40 years of age who are not association members. Make it possible for these young directors to continue to take part in association activities. The new directors' enthusiasm may bring their non-member firm into the association as active members.

9. Offer webinars that can be downloaded. These do not necessarily need to be CEs, but -- instead -- an offering limited to members only that will be of value to their daily duties.

10. Continue to elect leadership who are visionaries. To survive, associations need leaders with a definite vision for the association's future. Especially with older associations, the founding members had one vision -- for a time that has come and gone. Today's leaders must



have a vision that aligns with the new century of funeral service, the new generations and their attitudes toward death as well as their individual needs after the loss of a loved one.

11. Because more women are enrolling in mortuary school and are becoming directors across the country, associations need to accommodate and embrace women with the same recognition their male counterparts have enjoyed over the decades.

12. NFDA should lead the charge in this still rather young century. For example, how many women have been NFDA president? How many woman have gone through the chairs. Are more women now serving on boards? Why has NFDA not organized an LGBTQ group similar to the Women's group? How many young leaders are setting NFDA policy? Are young people -- mortuary school students as well as young directors -- being given a voice on the national level? How many young directors are being invited to the Advocacy Summit every year? Why aren't officers mentoring new leaders into committees and boards?

Is your association stuck in the '80s or '90s? If it is, this is a short-lived luxury. Don't let too many years pass before your association has outlived its usefulness. By changing with the times, by considering the needs of younger and future directors, your professional association can remain a vibrant and relevant organization for the ever-changing funeral service profession, serving our nation's families.

Funeral service is evolving at a record-setting pace, compared to funeral service in the '70s or '80s. Cremation rates continue to climb. More firms are building pavilions or community spaces. Funeral homes are offering cremation services and many firms are excelling as event planners -- which, in most cases, create new income streams.

If this pace continues, professional associations are going to have to keep up in order to stay relevant. Otherwise, directors will invest themselves and their resources in local business groups, leadership organizations and roundtables that offer more tangible tools and experiences.

From My Purview “Why Do I Love Being a Funeral Minister”

By Reverend Janice Hoffman

Whenever I am asked what I do for a living my response is I am a Funeral Minister. The next question is usually, what does that mean? It is a question I never tire of answering. I never sought out this profession. I truly believe it chose me, either way I love what I do.

I love meeting with each family, especially when I am able to meet the family in person. I love asking them questions about their loved one and listening to their answers. For one brief moment, we bring their loved one back to life as they recall funny stories and share their memories with me.

I love being witness to the devotion, adoration and unconditional love the family members have for their loved one. I have the opportunity to see firsthand how much love is between a man and wife. The surviving spouse tells me of the undying love they had for each other as they have lived through the good times and bad. I see first hand how close a daughter was with her father or how devoted a son was to his dearly missed mother. Words on paper can't express what a privilege it is to witness pure love.

I love writing their beloved's memorial service. I want the story of their life to have depth and meaning, smiles mixed with pride. I write their story and do my best to put together a service

that truly honors and celebrates that individual. Many family members quickly forget what is said at their loved one's service. Because of that I write their service out verbatim and give the immediate family a copy so they can read it at a later date, as well as share a copy with other family members who many not have been able to attend the service.

I love to officiate the service itself. For many years I have taught meditation classes and spoken professionally across the county. This has worked out perfect for officiating memorial services as many times I will lead the guests on a guided visualization or meditation. Hearing a soothing voice is helpful, specially at such a high moment of grief. A brief moment for them to catch their breath.

I love watching the guests watch the video slide show of the loved one. They laugh, they cry, they reach to comfort each other with love. When someone weeps, they offer a hug. I love that for a brief time we can all feel our feelings without the fear of being judged for feeling so much love or for crying.

I love listening to guests share their stories of times spent together. They almost always chuckle recalling a memory. Whether young or old, man, woman or child, I love how articulate they speak many times through their

tears, reminding us all how very precious life is.

There is one thing I don't love about officiating memorial services and that is saying goodbye to the family. We have bonded in a very sacred way. What makes it even harder is I know it is the forever kind of goodbye.

I have the privilege to meet such lovely family members. I bond with each one of them in a way I treat holy and with honor. We share a unique bond together and they are forever in my prayers. Yes, I love my job. Some may say I am Funeral Minister, but I call it being close to pure love. I think it is the best job in the world and I wouldn't trade it for anything.



About the Author:
Ordained in 1999 as a non-denominational Christian Minister, **Reverend Janice Hoffman's** ministry has included facilitat-

ing 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.

Planning for the (Eventual) Sale of Your Business

By Richard S. Lee

The thought of selling your funeral business is one that most owners don't like to think about. Most owner's feel that there is no one else that can run THEIR BUSINESS as well and that no one else will treat THEIR FAMILIES as they need to be treated. The truth is that every owner needs to have some sort of succession plan in place in case of a sudden life changing event or once they finally realize it's time to retire.

There are some **MUST-DO'S** for an owner today.

START PLANNING EARLY

A sale does not happen quick-

ly and can take at least one year or longer to complete. By planning early (at least 3 - 5 years before a projected retirement time), an owner is able to work on any issues that may be important to them when a sale occurs. For instance, being able to find that right successor who will carry on the business and/or using that time to do some financial planning and structuring.

KNOW THE REALISTIC VALUE OF YOUR BUSINESS

Having a business valuation performed early on by an industry expert will bring up any concerns or issues that may affect the value

of your business. Knowledge of these issues gives you time to make any necessary changes so that your business value will be at its highest at the time of a sale. Also, being smart about tax planning and sale structure is very important and is key to a successful transition.

More importantly, if you're an owner who plans on passing down the business to your children or other family member, these must-do's are just as important. You don't want to turn over a business that is having or starting to have financial or operating struggles – especially if the sale proceeds are going to help fund your retirement.

A simple, well-prepared and professional plan could be the best investment you make in your future.



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**



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Easy Tips for Keeping Families Engaged on your Website

By Joe Weigel

For many funeral homes, the website is the key source of inbound leads. When families spend time on your website, they are more educated, more engaged and more likely to call when the need arises. As a bonus, Google rewards sites that keep visitors online with higher SEO rankings. One metric to look at in determining visitor engagement is your website's bounce rate, or the number of people who leave your site after visiting only one page. To determine your bounce rate, check out your Google Analytics dashboard. If your families are leaving after less than one minute, or your bounce rate is higher than 50 percent, you need to increase the time families are spending on your site.

Here are four tips for keeping visitors on your website longer:

1. **Make content "scannable."** Most people read only 25 percent of the words on a web page. Therefore, it's important to design pages so they are easy to read. Use attention-grabbing headlines and subheads to move readers through your content. Keep paragraphs short and include bulleted lists to break up large blocks of text. Bold or italicize key words and phrases.

2. **Add images and multimedia.** Although content is king when it comes to marketing, visual content is essential to website engagement. In a world of shortened attention spans, compelling

images, videos and infographics can enhance content, increase engagement and boost your funeral home's reputation and awareness.

3. **Use internal links.** One way to keep visitors moving through your site is to link them to related pages via internal links. This can be done on key website pages and blog posts and helps drive visitors to important areas on your site. When using internal links, be sure to make them easy to find with the standard blue color and use keywords to provide SEO value.

4. **Add new content regularly.** If your blog isn't updated regularly or if other information is outdated, families have no reason to return to your website. Keep blogs frequent and regular, highlight news and current events, and provide useful information that will keep families coming back for more.

The more engaging your website is, the longer families will stay. When they spend more time on your site, you'll increase your top of mind awareness with families and your community.



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.

Just Asking— Speaking of logical questions....

- * Why is the third hand on the watch called the second hand?
- * If a word is misspelled in the dictionary, how would we ever know?
- * Why do tugboats *push* their barges?
- * Why do "slow down" and "slow up" mean the same thing?
- * Why do we say something is out of whack? What is a whack?
- * Why do "fat chance" and "slim chance" mean the same thing?
- * Why is it called "after dark" when it is really "after light?"
- * Why are "wise man" and "wise guy" opposites?
- * Why do "overlook" and "oversee" mean opposite things?
- * Why is phonics not spelled the way it sounds?
- * How can you lose you life's savings on something called securities?
- * Why do we wash bath towels? Aren't we clean when we use them?
- * Why is the time of day with the slowest traffic called rush hour?
- * Have you ever noticed that just one letter makes all the difference between here and there?

Small Town Funeral Director (Cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

er in the very place where their love blossomed.

His own children would grow up in this small town, maybe they would stay, maybe not. Would they want to follow their father's footsteps? He worried they would and his worry was justified, in part, because he never really let them see the heartache only a small town funeral director could know.

"She lived a full life," that's what the neighbors said. She was married 56 years and stood by her husband's side until his end 4 years ago. She worked extra shifts at the sewing factory to help put their only son through school so he could take over the family business. In later years she did what most seniors do in small towns: work with children at church, volunteer at the hospital and play bridge. The woman died peacefully in her sleep at age 87. Known to everyone else as the maker of the "best biscuits within a hundred miles of here," she was known to him as Mama. Of course the other men at the funeral home would take care of preparation, arrangements and the service, but he would struggle between being the grieving son and the funeral director.

Maybe his own yard needed some attention, maybe his personal car had an extra dent or two, maybe he would spend just a little more than necessary on his kids or give away extra cash where he saw a need. Perhaps he realized there are parts of life more important than material things or money and that people can be gone in an instant. A dented car or broken lawn mower

were better than death any day, therefore small annoyances aren't all that bad. He would spend more time in the outdoors, hunting was his passion, for it was in the woods, fields and marshes where he would find solace. He didn't have to put on the suit and smile, he could dress the way he wanted and not talk to a soul, and surround himself with the tranquility and beauty of nature.

This story is loosely inspired by the life of Ed Lindeman, the longtime, previous owner of Clarksville Funeral Home in Clarksville, Texas. However, one could easily insert the name of any small town funeral director and the similarities would be apparent. Small town funeral directors are special people and most folks don't realize how important they are until their own hour of need. They are truly the constants in our lives: things that never change, are always where we expect them to be, always function the same way, never fail us, unflinching in their support and as reliable as the sunrise in our professionalism and security in knowing that our lost loved ones were in good hands. He was a constant for us, an icon of our community and a friend to all. I'm sure the same could be said about countless funeral directors in innumerable small towns all across America.

Jeff Nichols is the owner of Nichols Transportation Service based in Paris, Texas. www.nicholstransport.com

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Toll Free (800) 575-2611 Fax (417) 537-4797
Email-editor@thedeat-beat.com
Website: www.thedeat-beat.com

“Dear Counselor....”

By Bill Stalter

Dear Counselor,

As an accommodation to our families, we have a policy of purchasing burial spaces they own in a local cemetery. This creates good PR when the family choses cremation and no longer needs the burial space. However, the local cemetery is not honoring our request to transfer the grave space to a new family. What can we do to force the cemetery to honor our transfer?

First, you will need to determine the nature of families’ ownership interest in their grave spaces. There is a common misconception that when a person purchases a grave space they are purchasing a small piece of real estate, and that they may do anything they wish with that land. However, most cemeteries only transfer the right to use the grave space for the interment of remains of the lot owner, and that right is exclusive to the person named in the “deed”. It is also important to read the grave space deed in conjunction with the cemetery’s rules and regulations. It is very common for the cemetery to include rules that restrict transfers of grave spaces, and to reject any transfer that is not recorded on the cemetery’s lot book.



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.

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Funeral Service Foundation Announces Academic Scholarship

Brookfield, Wis. - Bill Wappner, chair of the Funeral Service Foundation Board of Trustees, announced that the Foundation awarded this year's first group of academic scholarship winners. The scholarships are part of the Foundation '45 Awards, which are designed to help funeral service professionals and students unlock their potential and take their careers to the next level.

In addition to the Career Development Awards and academic scholarships, the Foundation '45 Awards also include NFDA's Meet the Mentors program, and NFDA Professional Women's Conference scholarships.

"The Foundation '45 Awards are central our mission to support funeral service in building meaning relationships with the families and the communities it serves," said Wappner. "The scholarships, awards and opportunities help funeral service professionals access a great education throughout their career."

Since 1945, more than 6,000 funeral service professionals have benefitted from the Foundation's involvement in academic and continuing education.

Academic Scholarship Recipients

Awarded twice a year, the Foundation offers up to 12 scholarships, ranging from \$1,000-\$2,500, to full- and part-time students pursuing a degree in mortuary science from ABFSE-accredited schools. Available scholarships include the Foundation '45 Academic Scholarship (new this year); the Shipley Rose Buckner, Joseph E. Hagan and Dennis Schoepp Memorial Scholarships; and the Memorial Classic Scholarship. Scholarships are awarded based on essays and videos submitted by the applicants.

The current slate of scholarship recipients is:

- * Dennis Schoepp Memorial Scholarship: Mallory Jo Price, Batavia, Ohio (Cincinnati College of Mortuary Science, Cincinnati)
- * Foundation '45 Academic Scholarship: Rayna J. Brophy, Joliet, Ill. (Worsham College of Mortuary Science, Wheeling, Ill.)
- * Joseph E. Hagan Memorial Scholarship: Karoline Davidson, Chandler, Ariz. (Chandler-Gilbert Community College, Mesa, Ariz.)



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* Memorial Classic Scholarships: Rosemary Brinza, Countryside, Ill. (Worsham College of Mortuary Science, Wheeling, Ill.); Clyde Williams, Okolona, Miss. (East Mississippi Community College, Scooba, Miss.)

* Shipley Rose Buckner Memorial Scholarship: Brittany Carrington, Dallas (Dallas Institute of Funeral Service, Dallas)

"These six scholarship winners have strong records of achievement as evidenced by their thoughtful and focused submissions," said Wappner. "They truly demonstrate a passion for the funeral service profession that sets them apart from other candidates."

The Foundation will again accept academic scholarship applications from September

1-November 30. Those interested may apply online <<http://www.funeralservicefoundation.org/your-gift-at-work/foundation-45-awards/>> at FuneralServiceFoundation.org <<http://www.FuneralServiceFoundation.org>>.





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Ferncliff Dedicates Weekend to Fallen Soldiers and All Who Have Died

Springfield, OH, June 2, 2017 – During Memorial Day weekend, Ferncliff Cemetery, Arboretum and Crematory paid tribute to deceased military and all who have died. Ceremonies and activities brought together families, community members, military and religious dignitaries as well as government officials.

During Sunday’s fifth annual Floating Lantern Ceremony, families inscribed personal messages to their deceased loved ones on candle lanterns, and when night fell they released them onto the pond on the grounds of Ferncliff. Inspirational words were shared by Mandy Sanders, Associate Pastor of New Hope Church in Springfield, and participants had time to remember and reflect. Although families and friends were acknowledging loved ones no longer with them, the atmosphere was one of celebration. Refreshments were served and raffle prizes awarded including a TV and a girl’s and a boy’s bicycle.



A parade marked Memorial Day, followed by Clark County’s Veterans’ Honor Service at the War Memorial on the grounds of Ferncliff. The cemetery is the final resting place of more than

5,000 military, dating back to 1863, and has been a longstanding advocate of veterans and host of the honor service. Chaplin Jim Stewart, Jon Stewart of the Clark County Veterans Council and Springfield mayor Warren Copeland addressed the crowd. H. Eugene (Doak) Walker, Detachment 963 of the Marine Corps League, posted and retired the Colors.



“Ferncliff is honored to pay tribute to fallen military service men and women who sacrificed so much for our country,” remarked Stan Spitler, Ferncliff Superintendent.

The Superintendent also provided an update on Ferncliff’s House of Reflections, scheduled to open later this summer. The building, formerly the Superintendent’s House, circa 1890, is being converted to accommodate 368 glass-fronted indoor niches where family and friends of loved ones can privately reflect in comfortable, updated, tranquil surroundings.



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The Dead Beat
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Toll Free (800) 575-2611 Fax (417) 537-4797
Email-editor@thedead-beat.com
Website: www.thedead-beat.com

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