

# The Dead Beat



## The Caregiver's Soapbox



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

Volume 17

www.thedead-beat.com

Issue 1

### 7 Reasons Funeral Directors Should Be Excited About The Movie 'Getting Grace'

From ASD Blog, written by Jessica Fowler



From the moment you see the credits appear on different casket lids, the movie *Getting Grace* hooks you. Within just the first five minutes, you become immediately invested in the movie's characters, setting and important themes. At the 2017 NFDA Convention, I had an opportunity to screen the first third of the film and was moved by its sharp writing, compelling acting and fresh portrayal on the funeral profession. The poignancy of the film, coupled with the way it dispels many misconceptions, make this movie a rare gem that every funeral director should see.

#### 1. Realistic Portrayal of Funeral Professionals

As Ed Defort, Publisher of *The Director*, stated before the film screening at the NFDA Convention, funeral director characters in movies are very rarely main protagonists. Their depictions in both film and television are usually relegated to shifty or untrustworthy characterizations. *Getting Grace* turns that well-worn formula on its head by telling the story of a disaffected funeral director who discovers how to better embrace life from a teenage girl with terminal cancer. At the [2017 NFDA Convention](#), ASD had an opportunity to meet **Daniel Roebuck**, who wrote, directed and stars in *Getting Grace*. It was a wonderful opportunity to learn more about the film and what is involved with directing a movie that largely takes place inside a funeral home.

Daniel plays Bill Jankowski, a funeral director who has difficulty relating to other people and whose perspective is completely transformed by Grace, a 16-year-old girl dying of cancer. In the film, you also get to meet Bill's sister, Mary Jankowski, who is played by **Diane Wagner**. The film does a wonderful job of showing how differently funeral directors might approach their work. There is a great line Mary gives early in the movie where she explains how in the funeral business, "there are huggers, and *ugh!*-ers" – meaning that some directors get involved in funeral service because they love to be around people and others prefer to work behind the scenes.

The dynamic between Bill and Mary is such a joy to watch because never before in any movie or television show have you seen a relationship like theirs. Sibling banter blends seamlessly with funeral home jargon, producing dialogue that is both hilarious and sincere. The characters are fully formed and seem very much like real people. While Bill is very cynical and disenchanted with his life in the beginning of the film, he is still a character the audience can easily identify with and relate to.

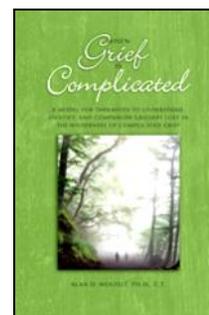
Although the TV show *Six Feet Under* did a superb job of showing what goes on behind the scenes in a funeral family, it had many adult themes, some of which were very

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New Alan Wolfelt Book on Complicated Grief—Pg 21

### "Dear Counselor...." By Bill Stalter



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## Amy Howard Art Gallery



## Makeup Tips from My Dad

By Holly Stansberry, daughter of Lowell

Last fall, I told Dad that the best makeup tips I ever got came from him. Usually, you think of a girl watching her mom apply makeup and learning from her. I did that, too. But, I was online, reading the latest reviews in anti-aging and makeup, when I ran across a link about makeup tips for women over the age of 50. Now that I am over 60, I thought I'd look and see what it said. Guess what? They weren't so different than what Dad told me, when I was a teenager starting to help apply makeup for cases at the funeral home.

Dad is blessed with artistic talent and was very conscientious about how he applied cosmetics. Even as a child, I heard praise from people in our community about how much better or "natural" people looked whom Dad prepared than those from neighboring establishments. This was a source of pride for me. So, I was careful to listen to his instructions on applying cosmetics.

As I've aged, I have some wrinkles and loose skin that don't always respond well to creams and powders. I've cut back on the eye shadow, liner and mascara, especially in my daily routine. I'd rather have an extra bit of sleep than an elaborate makeup ritual. My makeup is mostly gone by the end of the day, too, so why bother?

I have light skin with little color, so more and more, I rely on the makeup techniques Dad taught me to use at the funeral home. I'm lucky I don't have sensitive skin, so I've dispensed with expensive blush and lipstick. Once I've applied my moisturizer and foundation, all I use is a tube of "natural" lipstick from the dollar store and a good fine point eyebrow pencil. Lipstick is blended as blush on my cheek bones, my eyelids, a little on the forehead above

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

the brow bone on each side and applied to my lips. I use a fine tip eyebrow pencil to feather and fill in my eyebrows, just like Dad taught me, and I'm done.

So, what did I find out from that article and video about makeup tips for women over 50? The makeup artist applied and blended color from a fat stick that she developed for use as blush and lipstick. She put it on her cheek bones, corner of her eyelids, across her forehead, and on her lips for a warm healthy glow. It was a little different, but not so much. From my perspective and maybe due to my bone structure, I think Dad's technique turns out a bit better.

The only other thing she did was to apply and blend the color to the length of her neck on either side of the throat column. I didn't remember Dad telling me to do that. Then, I thought, you don't usually see the throat or neck on a person lying down. In the case of our clients, the chin and a higher neckline or collar usually covers it. So, I did add that tip to my routine. But overall, Dad's advice was all I needed. The best makeup tips I ever received came from my dad.



## Mortuary Muse By Lowell

My recent rant about “Where are my clothes? Where is my dignity?” brings to mind another potential emotional turmoil for families and the funeral directors who wish to ease the pain of loss for everyone and still get paid.

After listening to a radio discussion about an author’s new book, the author and her husband were a LGBTQ couple. They lived in a state where their marriage was legal and they were well-served by their selected funeral service provider and Christian spiritual advisor.

However, she explained, in some states where their choices are not considered legal, her husband’s death certificate would only show his assigned sex at birth—not his chosen sexual identity. And depending on the state’s survivorship laws and family relationships she might have had no control over his services and he might not have been attired in the clothing of his chosen sexual identity.

This certainly could be a difficult situation for a compassionate funeral director to come up with a realistic compromise. I’m glad I’m a retired funeral director.

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Is the prestige, honor and dignity of a funeral coach perceived by the public everlasting? Does the use of

minivans, crossover cars and suburbans as utility vehicles or long distance body transport dilute the image of the coach/hearse? As long as the vehicle has landau bars does the public still view it as a hearse? Does the medical or other care facilities in your area prefer that hearses not be used for removals? If you answered yes, no or perhaps to any of these questions, you may have too much time on your hands.

What prompted my questions was an observation of our oldest funeral records. Infants and small children comprised as much as 30% of the total volume. Most often a \$2 - \$5 cost of a child’s casket was noted, but the family was not charged for it. On the other hand there almost always a \$15.00 charge for the hearse. In the minds of these families was the trip to the burial ground in a hearse the ultimate tribute to a young life never lived? What now? How do families really feel about this? Are they grateful for a less expensive vehicle? What about a European style smaller window hearse for cremains?

About the Author:

**Lowell Pugh** has had funeral director and embalmer licenses in Missouri and Texas. 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**

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## ICCFA Names 2017 “Keeping It Personal” Award Winners

STERLING, VA (March 13, 2018)—The International Cemetery, Cremation and Funeral Association (ICCFA) has named its 2017 Keeping It Personal (KIP) Award winners, recognizing the best in personalization in the cemetery and funeral service profession.

Created by the ICCFA Personalization Committee, the KIP program honors recipients in five categories: Most Personalized Service/Memorial; Best Practices/Personal Touch; Events; Innovative Personalized Product (suppliers only); and Most Personalized Pet Service/Memorial.

This year’s contest attracted 51 entries from Bermuda, Canada, Guatemala, and the United States. Communications and marketing professionals from outside the cemetery and funeral service profession performed the judging.

More information on the winners is available on the ICCFA website at [www.iccfa.com/kip](http://www.iccfa.com/kip). ICCFA thanks all who entered the 2017 KIP Awards.

The winners are as follows:

### MOST PERSONALIZED SERVICE OR MEMORIAL

*First Place and Grand Prize Winner*

**Pray Funeral Home: The Celebration of  
Evan Adams Memorial  
Charlotte, Michigan**

*Honorable Mention*

**Mountain View Funeral Home: Memorial for  
“Princess” Kaia Howard  
Lakewood, Michigan**

### BEST PRACTICE/PERSONAL TOUCH

*First Place*

**Striffler-Hamby Mortuary: Cremated Remains with  
a Personal Touch  
Columbus, Georgia**

### EVENTS

*First Place*

**French Funerals-Cremations/Sunset Memorial Park:  
Scatter Day  
Albuquerque, New Mexico**  
*Honorable Mention*  
**Los Parques, S.A.: Memories of Light  
Guatemala**

### INNOVATIVE/PERSONALIZED PRODUCT

(SUPPLIERS)

*First Place*

**Heaven’s Maid: Heaven’s Maid - Graveside Cleaning  
Online Platform  
Hazel Park, Michigan**  
*Honorable Mention*  
**Memorial Reefs International, LLC: Reef Balls  
Hamilton Parrish, Bermuda**

### MOST PERSONALIZED PET SERVICE OR MEMORIAL

*First Place*

**Clock Timeless Pets: A Hero’s Final Farewell  
Muskegon, Michigan**  
*Honorable Mention*  
**Timberland Urns: Chad’s Labrador Retriever Photo  
Urn  
Eagan, Minnesota**

The grand prize winner, Pray Funeral Home, receives a free registration to the 2018 ICCFA Annual Convention & Exposition, April 18-21, at the Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada. All first place and honorable mention winners will be recognized at the Convention. The award ceremony will take place on Friday, April 20 at 8:40 a.m. in the general session area, Oceanside A of the Mandalay Bay. Winners will also be featured in the May issue of the *ICCFA Magazine*. ICCFA congratulates this year’s winners for their commitment to honoring the life stories of the families they serve.

Founded in 1887, the International Cemetery, Cremation and Funeral Association (ICCFA) is the only international trade association representing all segments of the cemetery, cremation, funeral and memorialization industry. Its membership is composed of more than 9,100 rooftop locations and 18,000 professionals in the cemetery, funeral home and crematory industries, as well as memorial designers and related businesses worldwide. To learn more, please visit [www.iccfa.com](http://www.iccfa.com) or connect with IC-

Have you had an OPEN HOUSE, built a NEW ADDITION to your funeral home, developed a new PROGRAM FOR GRIEVING CLIENTS, RECEIVED AN HONOR from your community, have an interesting HOBBY or DONE SOMETHING THAT WAS JUST PLAIN FUN? If so, tell us about it. We want to tell your story (WE LOVE PICTURES, TOO) call us 800-575-2611, fax us 417-537-4797 or e-mail us: [editor@thedeat-beat.com](mailto:editor@thedeat-beat.com).



# After-Thoughts *By Joanne Howard*

Well, in the continuing saga of my life, I've taken on a few new things and been experimenting with the changes in our facility.

My newest skill I'm trying to learn is stained glass. A friend offers a 10-week class to learn and work on different stained glass projects in his home studio. He has about 12 people participate in the fall and spring. He's been doing this for 20 years and has completed many beautiful projects.

I was one of three new students that had never tried stained glass before. My first class seemed a bit overwhelming. There are several activities in stained glass that can damage you.

First, cutting the glass can sometimes end up cutting you. Yes, I did get a small cut on my hand, but it taught me to be more careful and to bring liquid bandage with me.

Second, having never used solder before, you can really burn yourself. No, I didn't burn myself, but had great difficulty mastering what I was supposed to do and probably used way too much solder.

Finally, we tackled one of the harder things to do—making a circle and having a crescent fit on circle. Believe it or not I actually completed the project and it didn't look too bad. That was week one.

I have now completed 6 weeks and am feeling a bit more comfortable with the skills that I need. I have completed a star ornament, a sun catcher and a small angel. One of the main problems with continuing with the skills I am learning, it would take a healthy investment in equipment that my teacher has accumulated over the many years of classes. So, I am appreciating learning a new art form, not sure of my future accomplishments after the class is completed in a few weeks.

I guess I'll have to come up with something new to learn. Just like learning to live without a loved one.

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Now to let you know how the event center is going. We've had only a couple events because we are now in some minor renovations. We've had a couple of birthday parties. One for a one year old and one for my husband.

The facility seems to adapt rather well to different events than funerals. It's been most difficult to not call the building a funeral home. Part of our changing the function of the building is to give a different image should we want to sell the building in the future. It had been a residence before being a funeral home and hopefully someone might want it for a residence again.

We have utilized several different sized tables around what used to be our main chapel room. The room has also had track lighting added for future art shows. The tables have been quite flexible to accommodate food or displays or even presents. Having numerous chairs from the funeral home has been quite helpful to set around for visiting during the events. Decorations have been used to create a personalized atmosphere.

With my husband's birthday party it was all golf. I had many of his collections of golf things displayed on tables. We displayed many pictures, had a putting area and beverage room and people could mingle around the house comfortably.

The proposed events that are possible in addition to the birthdays, would be parties of any sort—anniversaries, reunions, baby or wedding showers. It also could accommodate small weddings. This



change for us is different but providing many opportunities. After all we have been providing events at this location for many years.

Our new name is opening up many other venues. We are calling our establishment, "The Prairie Sunshine Art and Event Center." Now you're probably wondering exactly how we came up with this name.

Lowell has been quite involved with prairies in the past. His family sold a prairie to the Missouri Prairie Association in the past. He also is a previous board member of that association and has been involved with the management until his eyesight curtailed his activities. We have many prairie pictures and literature distributed around our facility. Hopefully in the future we may be a starting point for tours around the state of Missouri.



Now in reference to the sunshine part of the title. Our new adventure is definitely more sunny than our previous activities in the building. We had cloudier times with the funerals but now are turning to the sunny events of life.

So hopefully my retirement will turn into more sunshine moments filled with happy events and Prairie moments at the "Prairie Sunshine Art & Event Center."



About the author: Joanne Howard is the editor of **The Dead Beat**. She has been a licensed funeral director since 1992 with Pugh Funeral Home in Golden City, MO and also the aftercare coordinator. Much of her writing in this column is influenced by her loss of her two daughters Laura at age 10 in 1997 and Amy at age 19 in 2003. Any comments or questions can be directed to 417-537-4412, P.O. Box 145, Golden City, MO 64748 or email: [joanne@the-dead-beat.com](mailto:joanne@the-dead-beat.com) or [jfhoward53@yahoo.com](mailto:jfhoward53@yahoo.com)

# The Accidental Celebrant

## “Curiosity”

By Michael K. Jones

When I first began leading funeral services on a regular basis I did so out of sheer need. The congregation I was serving had closed and I needed something to help me keep going. As my life has evolved one of the things that has helped keep me in the game is something completely different - curiosity.

When I sit down with a family to plan a service the most important part of our time together is hearing about the life of the deceased. To do this I ask a lot of questions. What have they done? What did they believe? Whose lives have they touched? Who have they inspired? What is their story?

Each of our lives is a unique combination of experiences and encounters. We've experienced joy and tears, laughter and fear. This is a story that

survivors want to hear as their loved one's lives reach their closing moments.

It's for this reason I encourage families to ask at least one person to speak at the funeral and tell as much of the deceased's story as time allows. I ask speakers to share stories of how they have touched the lives of those around them. For me the most effective funerals are built around these stories.

What helps me understand the people with whom I'm working is learning more about the times in which a person lived. I've read a lot about military and recent history. I've learned a lot about the generation who grew up during the depression and war. This reading includes the fiction and everyday news articles that helped feed their minds and spirits. This reading comes in handy when I lead services for veterans, retired politicians, athletes, and so many others.

All of this leads me to a couple of conclusions that come in handy when working with survivors: the best funerals are built around stories and our leadership of these services fueled by curiosity.



### About the Author:

A native of Fredericton, New Brunswick, Michael K. Jones was born and raised in Atlantic Canada. A former minister in the United Church of Canada he has ministered to a variety of congregations for over twenty years. *Dead Reckoning* is his second book. His previous release is *Empty Houses: A Pastoral Response to Congregational Closure*. When Mike is not writing he is enjoying walking and reading. He resides with his wife Trish in Calgary, Alberta.

*Dead Reckoning* is now available online through Amazon.ca.



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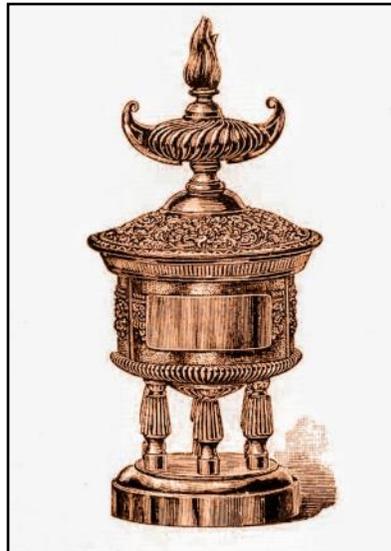
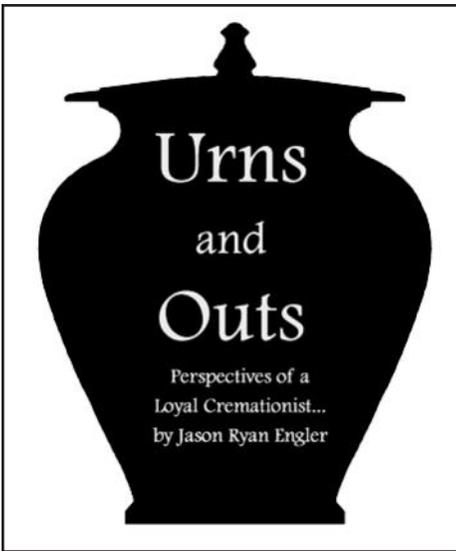
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Jason Ryan Engler is a licensed funeral director and certified celebrant. He is The Cremation Historian for the Cremation Association of North America and the National Museum of Funeral History and a frequent speaker and writer on the subject of cremation in the US, urns, and their history. He is the cremation products buyer for Service Corporation International and lives in Houston, Texas, with his miniature dachshund, Otto.

Continuing in the new series on historic urns from my collection. This edition's urn is Design "C" from the Art Urn Co, a division of the US Cremation Company in New York, circa 1895. At 19" tall, this beauty had a retail price of \$10. A rare, unused surviving example donated by Fresh Pond Crematory will be on display in the new History of Cremation Exhibit opening this fall at the National Museum of Funeral History in Houston. (Image Engler Cremation Collection)

## 7 Reasons Funeral Directors Should Be Excited About The Movie 'Getting Grace'

(Continued from page 1)

dark and not appropriate for minors. *Getting Grace*, on the other hand, gives funeral families the opportunity to watch a movie together and see their lives represented on screen for the first time.

### 2. Authenticity

In addition to its genuine portrayal of funeral directors, *Getting Grace* has done an exceptional job at authentically depicting the profession as a whole. Every detail was considered heavily to ensure that the film was a true reflection of what goes on inside a funeral home.

ASD learned that much of the basis for Daniel's understanding of the funeral profession came from real-life funeral directors, **Demetrios and Paula Herron**. Daniel and Demetrios attended the same High School in Bethlehem, PA where the movie takes place and where **John F. Herron Funeral Home & Crematory** is located. Daniel knew that his friend's advice and wisdom would be instrumental in developing his character, not to mention the filming of the movie. Much of the film is shot within the John F. Herron Funeral Home in Bethlehem, PA as well as the

Sell-Herron Funeral Home in Allentown, PA which are owned and operated by Demetrios and Paula.

"If it wasn't for Paula and Demetrios, it would not be authentic," Daniel stated during the Q&A Panel that took place after the movie screening. "They were always concerned about making things look dignified and making sure filming was respectful to families in the funeral home."

How many times have you seen a funeral scene in a movie or TV show only to find yourself counting inaccuracies rather than watching the action? How many times have you asked, 'why couldn't they have just asked a funeral director?' The producers of *Getting Grace* were careful not to make this mistake. According to Daniel, Demetrios and Paula helped the film producers with set design and the placement of props in the funeral scenes. They also read over the script to assist with terminology. The entire funeral profession owes a debt of gratitude for these directors who took time out of their busy schedules to help ensure this movie accurately represented the funeral home business. The outcome of their efforts will no doubt have a positive impact for all.

"I wish that more people could see that funeral directors are just normal people," Paula stated during the Q&A Panel. Indeed, *Getting Grace* will certainly go a long way in helping people to better understand the rewards and challenges of being a funeral home director in a way that no other movie has done before.

### 3. The Storyline

While funeral directors will find a lot to love in the movie *Getting Grace*, the storyline of the heartfelt dramedy will resonate with many people. It is a story about finding the right perspective to fully live your life and explores how people can unexpectedly alter your preconceived notions. The movie is centered around Grace, an exuberant teenager with terminal cancer who is determined to explore every aspect of life. This journey along the spectrum of human emotion results in Grace having a profound effect on just about every person she encounters in the movie, inspiring them to ask themselves, *am I really living my life?*

In an interview with PBS, Daniel Roebuck explained, "It is weird when you say I've got this comedy about a teenage girl dying of

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## When Older Parents Die

By Ken Doka

“They call the term *adult child* an oxymoron, or two opposites linked together; but in a way it is very real.” All who have or had older parents resonate with Tamara’s comment. Even as adult children age, marry, and have children, parents still may play major roles in the live of their children. When parents die, the effect of that loss can be difficult.

Parents help in many ways. They may help financially, validate memories, and give moral support. We may turn to them for many reasons; for instance, they may be great sources of support as we parent.

Grandparents may help by babysitting on occasion, picking up a sick child at school, subbing for parents at sports events or recitals when the parent may not be available; or simply offering respite from the ongoing demands of a young child. Other grandparents might offer financial assistance, pay camp bills, or buy those special extras.

Beyond these contributions of time and money, grandparents may offer considerable advice and validation. That may be important to parents as they struggle with this new and demanding role. *Jack isn’t walking yet, I’m worried.* Such comments may be calmed with the wisdom of experience. You did not walk till you were 13 months all children are different. Whether a child is 11 months or 11 years, our parents offer perspective.

We may count, too, on the presence at significant milestones, whether they are graduations from kindergarten or college. There is something special, too, about simply sharing the day-to-day triumphs and tragedies with someone who shares your love for the child.

It is tough, then, to be a parentless parent. It may affect us in ways that might be surprising. Tom experienced that. His dad died at age 47, when Tom was a senior in college. As Tom’s daughter was approaching college graduation, Tom began to have anxiety

attacks. In counseling, Tom realized that his own father’s premature death haunted him, creating a lifelong fear that he would never live to see his own children graduate.

Whatever the effect that a parent’s death has on parenting, we need to understand and acknowledge it. Think about the ways parenting has changed in both very practical and emotional ways. Understanding those effects is the first step in adapting to the loss.

We also can fill voids. Is there anyone else in our life who can offer advice and counsel? Is there someone who would welcome the opportunity for involvement? They cannot replace the bond now changed by death, but they may help fill a critical need.

It is important to acknowledge that not every parent or grandparent is so positive, or relationships so helpful. In situations where the relationships were more complicated, our grief may be more complex as well. We may struggle with unresolved questions, continued resentments, or unfinished business. We may need to seek out counseling or other forms of support as we cope with this new loss.

Even then we learn one final piece of wisdom. The effect of a parent, whether good, bad, or in between, is lifelong.

\*\*\*\*\*

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](http://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*

### Senior Thoughts:

- \* Any woman can have the body of a 21-year-old, as long as she buys him a few drinks first.
- \* My memory's not as sharp as it used to be. Also, my memory's not as sharp as it used to be.
- \* Know how to prevent sagging? Just eat till the wrinkles fill out.
- \* I've still got it, but nobody wants to see it.
- \* I'm getting into swing dancing.. Not on purpose. Some parts of my body are just prone to swinging.
- \* It's scary when you start making the same noises as your coffeemaker.
- \* These days about half the stuff in my shopping cart says, "For fast relief."
- \* I've tried to find a suitable exercise video for women my age, but they haven't made one called "Buns of Putty."
- \* Don't think of it as getting hot flashes. Think of it as your inner child playing with matches.
- \* Don't let aging get you down. It's too hard to get back up.
- \* Remember: You don't stop laughing because you grow old, You grow old because you stop laughing.

\*\*\*\*\*

Sent by Al Warden:

If you ever get caught sleeping at work, slowly raise your head up and say, "In Jesus, I pray."

\*\*\*\*\*

Sent by Karen Williamson:

A funny engraving I saw on a marker was, "Here lies my husband Tom.... Now I know where he is at night."

\*\*\*\*\*

### Food Spoilage Guide— A Guide for the Rest of Us!

EGGS— When something starts pecking its way out of the shell, the egg is probably past its prime.

DAIRY PRODUCTS— Milk is spoiled when it starts to look like yogurt. Yogurt is spoiled when it starts to look like cottage cheese. Cottage cheese is spoiled when it starts to look like regular cheese. Regular cheese is nothing but spoiled milk anyway and can't get any more spoiled than it is already. Cheddar cheese is spoiled when you think it is blue cheese but you realize you've never purchased that kind.

MEAT—If opening the refrigerator door causes stray animals from a three-block radius to congregate outside your house, the meat is spoiled.

BREAD—Sesame seeds and Poppy seeds are the only officially acceptable "spots" that should be seen on the

## Comments

...we appreciate your paper....

Jim Birch, Birch Funeral Home, Ash Grove, MO

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.)

surface of any loaf of bread. Fuzzy and hairy looking white or green growth areas are a good indication that your bread has turned into a pharmaceutical laboratory experiment.

FLOUR—Flour is spoiled when it wiggles.

RAISINS—Raisins should not be harder than your teeth.

POTATOES—Fresh potatoes do not have roots, branches, or dense, leafy undergrowth.

CHIP DIP—If you can take it out of its container and bounce it on the floor, it has gone bad.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Three Little Pigs

One day the first grade teacher was reading the story of "The Three Little Pigs" to her class. She came to the part of the story where the first pig was trying to accumulate the building materials for his home. She read, "...and so the pig went up to the man with the wheel barrow full of straw and said, 'Pardon me sir, but may I have some of that straw to build my house?'" The teacher paused than asked the class, "And what do you think the man said?" One little boy raised his hand and said, "I think he said, 'Holy S\*\*\*! A talking pig!'" The teacher was unable to teach for the next 10 minutes.

\*\*\*\*\*

After a round of golf, four ladies sat around the club house chatting. Seeing the ladies, the Pro approached them and asked, "How did your game go?" The first lady, a brunette, said she had a good round...making the comment that she actually had 25 riders. The Pro was a bit perplexed not knowing what a "Rider" was. The second was a blonde lady who quickly chimed in and said that she had a very good round as well with 16 riders. The third lady then said that her round was average and that she only had 10 riders. The fourth lady admitted that she played the worst round of the day and that she only had 2 riders all day long. The



(Continued on page 11)

**Chuckles (Cont.)**

Pro was completely confused not knowing what the term "Rider" meant. But, because he didn't want to look dumb, he made a quick polite remark, wished the ladies well and then left. He then approached the bartender and asked, "Hey, can you tell me what these ladies are talking about when they refer to "Riders?" The bartender simply smiled and said... "A 'Rider' is when you hit a shot long enough to ride on the golf cart to your ball."

\*\*\*\*\*

Haven't seen old Herman since high school?? Fifty-one years ago this week, Herman James, a North Carolina mountain man, was drafted by the Army. On his first day in basic training at Fort Polk, Louisiana, the Army issued him a comb. That afternoon the Army barber sheared off all his hair. On his second day, the Army issued Herman a toothbrush. That afternoon the Army dentist yanked out seven of his teeth. On the third day, the Army issued him a jock strap. As of this week, the Army has been looking for Herman for 51 years.

Sent by a reader

\*\*\*\*\*

*Some younger perspectives on a numbers of things. They have to be original and genuine. No adult is this creative!*

**Jack** (age 3) was watching his Mom breast-feeding his new baby sister. After a while he asked: "Mom why have you got two? Is one for hot and one for cold milk?"

**Melanie** (age 5) asked her Granny how she was. Granny replied she was so old she didn't remember any more. Melanie said, "If you don't remember you must look in the back of your panties. Mine says five to six."

**Steven** (age 3) hugged and kissed his Mom good night. "I love you so much that when you die I'm going to bury you outside my bedroom window."

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**Brittany** (age 4) had an earache and wanted a pain killer. She tried in vain to take the lid off the bottle. Seeing her frustration, her Mom explained it was child-proof cap and she'll have to open it for her. Eyes wide with wonder, the little girl asked: "How does it know it's me?"

**Susan** (age 4) was drinking juice when she got the hiccups. "Please don't give me this juice again," she said. "It makes my teeth cough."

**DJ** (age 4) stepped onto the bathroom scale and asked: "How much do I cost?"

**James** (age 4) was listening to a Bible story. His dad read: "The man named Lot was warned to take his wife and flee out of the city, but his wife looked back and was turned to salt." Concerned, James asked, "What happened to the flea?"

**Tammy** (age 4) was with her mother when they met an elderly, rather wrinkled woman her Mom knew. Tammy looked at her for a while and then asked, "Why doesn't your skin fit your face?"

**The sermon I think this mom never forgot....** "Dear Lord" the minister began, with arms extended toward heaven and a rapturous look on his upturned face, "Without You, we are but dust..." He would have continued but at that moment my very obedient daughter who was listening leaned over to me and asked quite audibly in her shrill little four-year-old girl voice, "Mom, what is butt dust?"

\*\*\*\*\*

I rear-ended a car this morning. So, there we were alongside the road and slowly the other driver got out of his car. You know how sometimes you just get soooo stressed and little things just seem funny? Well, I couldn't believe it...he was a DWARF!!! He stormed over to my car, looked up at me, and shouted, "I AM NOT HAPPY!!!" So, I looked down at him and said, "Well, then which one are you?" And then the fight started.



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# Death Notices of Fellow Funeral Service Colleagues



## INDUSTRY ASSOCIATES

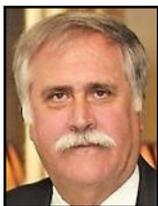


**Mark Own Elder**, 59 of Eaton, Ohio passed away on January 31, 2018. He was a former Casket funeral Supply Association Board member and was the Vice President of Sales for the Vandor corporation and the C.J. Boots Casket Company. The Doan & Mills Funeral Home in Richmond, Indiana handled his funeral services.



**Carson Wade Sprow**, of Union, South Carolina passed away February 18, 2018. He was President and founder of International Mortuary Shipping, LLC. He was a United States Army Ranger (1979-1989) and instructor in the Florida Phase and Desert Phase Ranger

School. He attended the Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service, Houston, TX and graduated in 1990. He taught Restorative Arts in Piedmont Technical College Mortuary program and served as Preceptor for students completing the internships required for licensing. He co-authored the Standard Operating Procedures for identification of human remains through prosthetics and orthodontics with the late Dr. Tony Manoukian, Chief Medical Examiner for the State of Hawaii. The SOP was first used following Hurrican Katrina and later adapted for use by other disaster organizations. His services were under the direction of Holcombe Funeral Home Inc., Union, South Carolina.



**Steve F. Vincent**, 70, of Galena, Illinois, passed away January 23, 2018. Steve became a fourth generation owner of J.P. Vincent & Sons in 1970. He was elected to the Doric Products, Inc. Board of Directors in 1991 and has served as President of Doric since July of 2006. His arrangements were under the direction of Furlong Funeral Chapel-Galena.

## MISSOURI



**Philomena "Phil" C. Buchholz**, 97, of Chesterfield, passed away on April 4, 2018. She was wife of the late Cletus F. Buchholz and mother to Tom Buchholz, owner/operator of the Buchholz Mortuaries Inc., who directed her services.

**Raymond Loy Duffie (R. L.)**, 89, of Bernie passed away March 27, 2018. He graduated from the St. Louis College of Mortuary Science, December, 1947. Raymond served his internship with the E. L. Watkins Funeral Home, Dexter, Missouri and the Cotrell Funeral Home, Poplar Bluff, Missouri. In January, 1955, Raymond and Martha Duffie purchased the Drum Funeral Home in



## MISSOURI (CONT)

Bernie, Missouri and owned it until selling to Ray and Lucille Rainey in 1959. Raymond continued to manage the Duffie-Rainey Funeral Home until 1976. Raymond moved to West Memphis, Arkansas and became the assistant manager of Roller-Citizens Funeral Home. Following his duties in West Memphis, he became the manager of Roller-Daniels Funeral Home in Searcy, Arkansas. Following his retirement from active funeral service, he and his wife, Shirley, returned to their beloved home in Bernie. Raymond continued to work for the Roller Funeral Homes in the collection department from his home. Raymond worked a total of 38 years for Roller Funeral Homes of Arkansas. His services were under the direction of Rainey-Mathis Funeral Home in Bernie.



**Laquita McCulloch**, 85, of Desloge, MO passed away Feb. 18, 2018. She was the mother of John McCulloch Jr. and Steve McCulloch. Her services were handled by C.Z. Boyer and Son Funeral Home—Desloge.



**Kenton, Slankard**, 96, of Montgomery City, formerly of Springfield, MO died Feb. 14, 2018. He was the father-in-law of MFDEA Past President Robert Schlanker. He served as a pilot of B-24 Liberator Bomber with the 451st Bomb Group of the 15th Air Corps stationed near Bari, Italy. His services were under the direction of Schlanker Funeral Home, Montgomery City, MO.

## TEXAS



**Gary Finch**, 72, of Nixon, passed away Jan. 10, 2018. He was a licensed funeral director and embalmer and founded Compliance Plus in 1992. His OSHA Compliance column appeared in The Funeral Home & Cemetery News since 2003. His services were directed by Finch Funeral Chapel, LLC in Nixon.



**Roy "Gus" Carroway, Sr.**, 83, of Hudson, passed away April 8, 2018. The desire of his heart was to have a career in the funeral industry. That was fulfilled at the age of 65 when his son, Roy Jr. opened Carroway Funeral Home in 1999. He served and ministered to many families over

*(Continued on page 15)*



### Scattering Cremains in a Natural Area

#### Native Grasses and Flowers Reaching to the Sky

For those with a love for the natural landscape, arrangements have been made with the private owners of **Golden Prairie**, a registered natural landmark, to scatter cremains on their property. In addition to the arrangements, a picture and GPS location of the actual site is included.



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### Shake Off Your Problems

A man's favorite donkey falls into a deep precipice. He can't pull it out no matter how hard he tries. He therefore decides to bury it alive.

Soil is poured onto the donkey from above. The donkey feels the load, shakes it off, and steps on it. More soil is poured. It shakes it off and steps up.



The more the load was poured, the higher it rose. By noon, the donkey was grazing in green pastures.

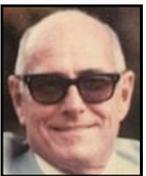
After much shaking off (problems) and stepping up (learning from them), one will graze on GREEN PASTURES.

### TEXAS (CONT.)

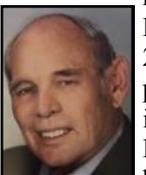
the years. His services were under the direction of Carroway Funeral Home, Lufkin.



**Gladys Newby**, 87, of Yoakum, passed away April 8, 2018. She was the mother of Joan Benbow of Dobie Funeral Home in Mathis. Her arrangements were handled by Thiele-Cooper Funeral Home, Yoakum, TX.



**John W. Stewart, Jr.**, 93, of Kenedy, passed away on March 31, 2018. He joined the Coast Guard at the beginning of World War II. After the war, John & his bride moved back to Texas to settle in Kenedy, where John found his place serving the community through the family business, Eckols Funeral Home who handled his funeral services.



**Don W. Theus**, 78, of Victoria, died April 1, 2018. He joined the US Army in 1958 and proudly served his country in Germany. He is the husband of Jean Theus (Grace Funeral Home Employee). His services were conducted by Grace Funeral Home.



**Claire H. Waltrip**, 85, of Houston, passed away March 15, 2018. She is the wife of Founder and Chairman Emeritus, Robert L. Waltrip, Sr. of SCI. Her services were directed by Geo. H. Lewis & Sons.



**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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## Potatoes, Eggs, and Coffee Beans

Once upon a time a daughter complained to her father that her life was miserable and that she didn't know how she was going to make it. She was tired of fighting and struggling all the time. It seemed just as one problem was solved, another one soon followed.

Her father, a chef, took her to the kitchen. He filled three pots with water and placed each on a high fire. Once the three pots began to boil, he placed potatoes in one pot, eggs in the second pot, and ground coffee in the third pot.

He then let them sit and boil, without saying a word to his daughter. She moaned and impatiently waited, wondering what he was doing.

After twenty minutes he turned off the burners. He took the potatoes out of the pot and placed them in a bowl. He pulled the eggs out and placed them in a bowl. He then ladled

the coffee out and placed it in a cup. Turing to her he asked, "Daughter, what do you see?"

"Potatoes, eggs and coffee," she hastily replied.

"Look closer," he said, "and touch the potatoes." She did and noted that they were soft. He then asked her to take an egg and break it. After pulling off the shell, she observed the hard-boiled egg. Finally he asked her to sip the coffee. Its rich aroma brought a smile to her face.

"Father, what does this mean?" she asked.

He then explained that the potatoes, the eggs and coffee beans had each faced the same adversity—the boiling water. However, each one reacted differently.

The potato went in strong, hard, and unrelenting, but in boiling water, it became soft and weak.



The egg was fragile, with the

## Biker Bar

A highly timid little man, ventured into a biker bar in the Bronx and clearing his throat asked, "Um, err, which of you gentleman owns the Doberman tied outside to the parking meter?" A giant of a man, wearing biker leathers, his body hair growing out through the seams, turned slowly on his stool, looked down at the quivering little man and said, "It's my dog. Why?" "Well," squeaked the little man, obviously very nervous, "I believe my dog just killed it, sir." "What?" roared the big man in disbelief. "What in the h### kind of dog do you have?" "Sir," answered the little man, "It's a four week old female puppy." "Bull!" roared the biker, "how could your puppy kill my Doberman?" "It appears that your dog choked on her, sir."

thin outer shell protecting its liquid interior until it was put in the boiling water, Then the inside of the egg became hard.



However, the ground coffee beans were unique. After they were exposed to the boiling water, they



changed the water and created something new.

"Which are you?" he asked his daughter. "When adversity knocks on your door, how do you respond? Are you a potato, an egg or a coffee bean?"

**MORAL:** In life, things happen around us, things happen to us, but the only thing that truly matters is what happens within us.

Which one are you?

# THE EMBALMER'S CREED

By Kenny Reding –Metro Mortuary & Crematory

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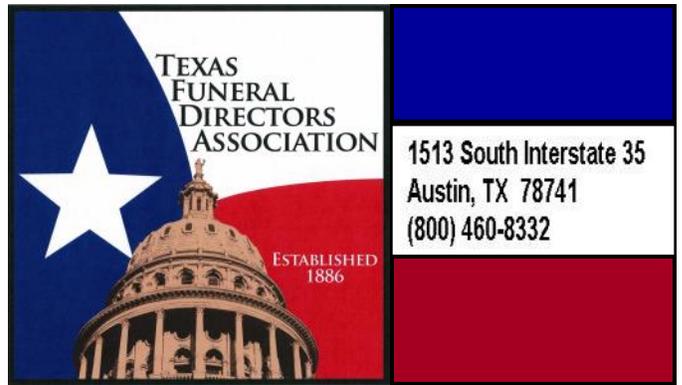
*ALWAYS REMEMBER WHY WE'RE HERE - TO PROVIDE OUR SERVICES TO THE FAMILY*

*LEAVE EVERYTHING ELSE AT THE DOOR BEFORE YOU BEGIN*

*MUST STRIVE TO ACHIEVE THE BEST POSSIBLE RESULTS WITH EVERY CASE*

*EXIT THE ROOM ANYTIME YOU BECOME FRUSTRATED OR LOOSE FOCUS*

*RESPECT THE DECEASED, THE FAMILY, YOUR TEAM AND YOURSELF, THE EMBALMER*



## A Dish of Ice Cream

In the days when an ice cream sundae cost much less, a 10-year-old boy entered a hotel coffee shop and sat at a table. A waitress put a glass of water in front of him. "How much is an ice cream sundae?" "50 cents," replied the waitress. The little boy pulled his hand out of his pocket and studied a number of coins in it. "How much is a dish of plain ice cream?" he inquired. Some people were now waiting for a table and the waitress was a bit impatient. "35 cents," she said brusquely. The little boy again counted the coins, "I'll have the plain ice cream," he said. The waitress brought the ice cream, put the bill on the table and walked away. The boy finished his ice cream, paid the cashier and departed. When the waitress came back, she began wiping down the table and then swallowed hard at what she saw. There, placed neatly beside the empty dish, were 15 cents, her tip. Try not to judge.....



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**As We Drive By**

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**Hurley Funeral Home  
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Picture provided by Steve Lofkin



**Former  
Brinhall Funeral Home  
Hayti, MO**

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**Dickerson Funeral Home-  
Veedersburgh, IN**

Picture provided by Steve Lofkin

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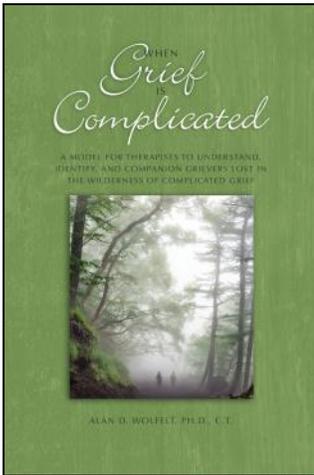
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## Dr. Alan Wolfelt Authors New Book on Complicated Grief



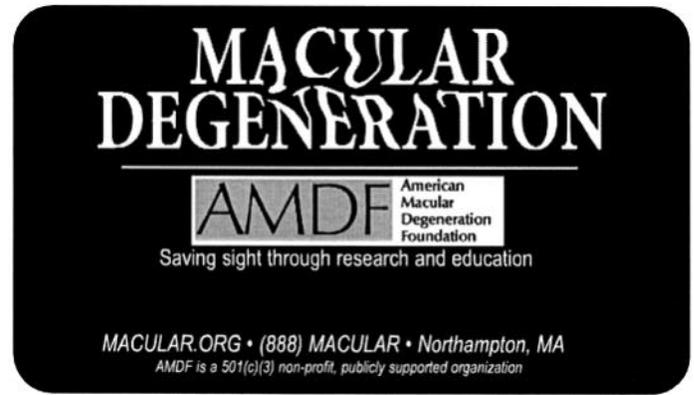
Fort Collins, CO.. Companion Press announces the publication of a new book entitled “*When Grief is Complicated: A Model for Therapists to Understand, Identify and Companion, Grievers Lost in the Wilderness of Complicated Grief*” by renowned grief educator Dr. Alan Wolfelt.

After a significant loss, grief is normal and necessary. But sometimes a mourner’s grief becomes naturally heightened, stuck or made more complex by especially difficult circumstances such as suicide, homicide or multiple losses within a short time period. This is called “complicated grief.”

In this primer, Dr. Wolfelt helps caregivers understand the various factors that often contribute to complicated grief. He presents a model for identifying complicated grief symptoms and, through real-life examples offers guidance for companioning mourners through their challenging grief journeys. This book rounds out Dr. Wolfelt’s resources on the companioning philosophy of grief care, making it an essential addition to any caregiver’s professional library.

Author, educator and grief counselor Dr. Wolfelt serves as Director of the Center for Loss and Life Transition in Fort Collins, Colorado. The author of “Understanding Your Grief” “Companioning the Bereaved,” 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 complicated grief.

“When Grief is Complicated” is priced at \$24.95 U.S, to order and to learn more about Dr. Wolfelt’s books on grief and loss, visit [www.centerforloss.com](http://www.centerforloss.com) or call (970)226-6050.



## My Experience with Macular Degeneration— by Lowell Pugh

Unintended consequences often arise from the different versions of vision anomalies caused by age-related macular degeneration. With my version a third to one-half of the center area of my vision is impaired. Looking at a landscape or street scene is like looking at an impressionist painting. I can not recognize faces or read. By keeping my eyes roving left to right and up and down, I can usually navigate. In an unfamiliar store or restaurant it’s best to stay right behind a companion and hope they don’t stop suddenly.

If I try to fix my gaze straight ahead in bright light, I just see fog or layers of smoke. It may be white or pick up the color of the background. If brightness diminishes, lines may appear that resemble a wadded up piece of screen wire or fishnet along with undulating lights of white, blue or gold. Sometimes there are changing illusions like seeing a face in changing patterns of tree leaves or wallpaper designs.

Once in a while bright sunlight will illuminate an object like a passing car that is seen through a hole in the bright fog. When that happens I instinctively raise a hand and wiggle a finger to see if a hole really opens up.

This happened the other day when Betty and I were in the car at a 4-way stop sign. I momentarily sighted a portion of a black pickup passing in front of us. As I was wiggling my finger ,Betty said the driver of a turning red pickup returned **The** finger to me.

# Where Is Your Joy?

From My Purview

By Reverend Janice Hoffman

Ancient Egyptians believed that upon death they would be asked two questions and their answers would determine whether they could continue their journey in the afterlife. The first question was, ‘Did you bring joy?’ The second question was, ‘Did you find joy?’

Bringing joy to others is part of our job. Being in the business of laying people to rest, there isn’t a lot of joy in the families we work with. Quite the opposite, the families are experiencing the onset of their grief.

Grief is never a lone visitor. Grief brings along fear, anger, sadness, regret, tears, and on and on. How can we find joy in the midst of such sadness? How do we bring light to a dark situation? I believe that is the crux of our job — to bring a flicker of light, a glimmer of hope to families that this pain will stop or at least subside. Whenever we feel we have accomplished this, we can feel like we have done our job.

Outside of work, who else can we bring joy to each day? Of course, family and friends are the first to mind but beyond our family and close friends, who can we bring joy to in our lives? Who can we help feel joy?

We all know how we make someone feel is what they remember about us. Something as simple as offering a compliment

to a stranger may seem like a shallow thing to do but it’s not. I still remember certain compliments I’ve received over the years because of how good they made me feel at the time. Those compliments most definitely brought and still bring me joy.

But what about *finding* joy? Is finding joy easier than bringing joy? Does everyone experience joy at some point in their life? Many of us find joy in our work and certainly with our family and friends, but beyond them, where have we found our joy? Where does joy live? Does joy live within each one of us? Do we experience joy with others? Do we experience joy in prayer or meditation? Is yes the answer to all?

I think it is important to daily inquire within about what emotions we are feeling—a daily checkin. I ask myself these questions: Do I enjoy my work in the funeral industry? Does what I do bring others joy? Does what I do add to my joy? Whenever we inquire within, we learn more about ourselves and our interactions with others. With added awareness, bringing joy to others comes more naturally. Whether bringing or receiving joy, we all thrive on the warmth and comfort joy brings.

Since we work in an industry where we experience sadness

and grief on a regular basis, perhaps putting “joy” on our calendar might be a good habit to create. The dictionary defines joy as *a feeling of great pleasure, thrill, treat, happiness, delight, jubilation, triumph, exultations, rejoicing, happiness, gladness, glee, enjoyment, exhilaration, exuberance, elation, euphoria, ecstasy, rapture and bliss.* Wow! With so many ways to experience joy, there is no time to waste!



### 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](mailto: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. They 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 quickly 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 fi-

nancial 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](mailto:Leebros@aol.com)**

## **A Very Special Bank Account**

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We all have such a bank. It's called Time. Every morning it credits you with 86,400 seconds. Every night it writes off, as lost, whatever time you have failed to use wisely.

It carries over no balance from day to day. It allows no overdraft so you can't borrow against yourself or use

more time than you have.

Each day, the account starts fresh. Each night, it destroys any unused time. If you fail to use your day's deposits, it's your loss and you can't appeal to get it back. There is never any borrowing time. You can't take a loan out on your time or against someone else's. The time you have is the time you have and that is that.

Time management is yours to decide how you spend the time, just as with money you decide how you spend the money. It is never the case of us not having enough time to do things, but the case of whether we want to do them and where they fall in our priorities.

## “Dear Counselor....”

By Bill Stalter

**I own a Missouri funeral home and accept assignments of final expense policies. I do not receive a commission for the sale of such policies. Do I have to be licensed as a preneed seller to accept such assignments? Would the insurance salesman have to be licensed as a preneed seller?**

A few years ago, the Missouri State Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors approved a rule that would define your arrangement as a preneed contract. Despite the fact that rule has never been formally promulgated, the State Board has threatened disciplinary action against funeral homes for the manner in which insurance assignments and beneficiary designations are handled. It is our position that the State Board has authority under Chapter 333 to require a contract between the funeral home and the consumer, but we do not believe the State Board has authority under Chapter 436 for the proposed rule. When a funeral home accepts an insurance beneficiary designation, an implied agreement is made that the insurance proceeds will be applied towards future funeral expenses. The policy owner is relying upon the ‘professional trust and confidence’ contemplated by Section 333.330.2(14) of the Missouri statutes. In proposing 20 CSR 2120-3.210 to the State Board, the staff ignored the Board’s own recommendations to the Missouri Legislature. Those recommendations de-

scribed insurance sales where consumer funds were received by a funeral home. Senate Bill No. 1 was not intended to regulate insurance designations made with regard to existing policies. Nor does Chapter 436 give the Board authority to regulate insurance salesmen. This is an issue the industry may get to rectify when the State Board holds a special preneed meeting later this year.



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](http://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](mailto:wastal@swbell.net)**

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**A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Grave.....  
I Became an Undertaker  
\*\*Part 3\*\*  
By Lowell Pugh**

If the reader has been waiting with baited breath to find out what happened to our cemetery tent when the volunteer grave digger's forgot to remove the tent before shooting a half stick of dynamite to loosen rocks! Well, two weeks at Joplin Tent and Awning Company's intensive care unit took care of that tent. Needless to say we were pretty cautious when lending the tent in the future.

From age 10-12 most of my funeral home activities involved loading cemetery equipment, running errands, changing hearse/ambulance by removing flower racks and window drapes and replacing them with a rug, attendant seats and ambulance cot and supplies.

And then there was house cleaning. But uncle has a housekeeper. Oh....something called Spring Cleaning?? The three large rooms that comprised the funeral chapel had floors covered by 4 large area rugs. It was Spring Cleaning protocol that in addition to the weekly vacuuming, every spring on

a bright BREEZY day the rugs would be rolled up and taken outside and spread out on un-mowed grass or the porch railing and then beaten with a carpet beater. The carpet beater looked like an egg whip for the Jolly Green Giant. Holding the whip beater like a baseball bat you swung for a home run. Whap!! An interesting dust pattern appeared and was instantly gone with the spring breeze. It was interesting for maybe the first 500 whaps. Inside the house the wood floors were mopped, dried and fresh newspapers were spread out for the intensely beaten carpet. Memory fails, but I think I soon retreated to looking for comics in the old newspapers.

By the time I turned 12 in March of 1944, the war had drastically changed our community. There was no longer any unemployed young men available to hire for casual help. I was soon going on some night time and weekend removals and ambulance calls. Usually on ambulance calls I would go with my parents to the scene to help my mother with her side of

the cot and someone would drop me off back home.

Unexpectedly one day I was designated to be the attendant to ride with an older gentleman we were bringing home from a hospital 60 miles away. I knew him and was expected to merely visit with him on the return trip. About halfway home he asked to use the urinal. I don't believe I had been given any specific training in this matter—but I reached for the urinal that we carried in the supply box. And then reached again....where was the supply box? I had forgotten to put it in the vehicle.

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**The Dead Beat -The Caregivers Soapbox**

Volume: Seventeen Issue : One

Editor: *Joanne Howard*

Publisher: *Lowell Pugh and Joanne Howard*

The Dead Beat is published bi-monthly. Editorial and business offices are located at 400 Chestnut, Golden City, MO 64748.

Phone (417) 537-4412

**Subscriptions:**

Additional copies for U.S.A. are \$24.00/ 1 year (6 issues).

For subscription, address changes, circulation, advertising assistance, write, phone or fax

The Dead Beat

P.O. 145, Golden City, MO 64748

Phone: 417-537-4412

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Website: www.thedead-beat.com

## 7 Reasons Funeral Directors Should Be Excited About The Movie ‘Getting Grace’

(Continued from page 8)

cancer, but when you meet Grace in this movie, you will see why it’s a comedy. We have an irascible, wonderful, beautiful, charming, silly girl who in the last few months of her life goes in and teaches everyone else to remember to live life to the fullest and only a character like that could.”

In the beginning of the movie, Grace decides to visit a funeral home after seeing the funeral director out front and pondering what his existence might be like. Like most of her decisions in the movie, it is driven by a spontaneous whim. This type of mindset is foreign to people like Funeral Director, Bill Jankowski, who is immediately put off by Grace when she frightens off a couple interested in preplanning. Initially, Bill does not take Grace seriously when she says she wants to learn what will happen to her after she is gone. But then, when he realizes she isn’t going anywhere, he decides it would be better for his sister to talk to Grace.

Obviously Grace and Bill’s relationship does not end there but to see how it all plays out you’ll have to see the film for yourself. We will tell you that there is one part involving cookies inside the pocket of a corpse that is likely to become your new favorite funeral movie scene of all time.

From the *Getting Grace* website description: “It is an extraordinary story with a lead character who is able to affect a chain of positive events in the lives of all she come in contact with, be they doctors or morticians.”

### 4. The Acting

Everyone has a different movie or TV show they remember Daniel Roebuck appearing in. His career as a character actor spans three decades. Many recognize him from his roles in the movies like *The Fugitive* or *Final Destination*. TV fans might remember his characters on shows such as *Lost* (who could forget that dynamite stick scene?) and *Glee*. This documentary fan remembers being moved by Daniel’s performance in *Soaked In Bleach*, a film about the PI who investigated Kurt Cobain’s death. His range as an actor is pretty incredible and that is very apparent in *Getting Grace*. Of all the characters in the movie, Bill Jankowski (played by Daniel), undergoes the biggest transformation. We were very moved by Daniel’s honest and raw performance during the movie screening at the NFDA Convention.

The rest of the cast of *Getting Grace* rounded out by incredible veteran actors like **Dana Ashbrook** (Ron Christopher) and **Diane Wagner** (Mary Jankowski) as well as several talented young actors making their film debut.

“We cast all of our lead kids from the Lehigh Valley,” Daniel explains in the making-of documentary below.

Many of the actors were discovered at local theaters and performing art centers in and around Bethlehem, PA where the movie takes place (about 65 miles away from ASD). **Madelyn Dundon**, the young woman who plays the title character Grace, is truly a revelation. It is hard to believe this is her first starring movie role because she is so real it almost feels like she could walk right out of the film and into your life. While watching, you often have to remind yourself that you are watching a

scripted movie instead of a documentary because of the powerful and believable performances of the entire cast.

### 5. The Buzz

*Getting Grace* has certainly garnered a great deal of well-deserved attention and praise. At the 2017 Northeast Film Festival, *Getting Grace* was awarded the Audience Choice Award and was recognized as the Best Feature Film. Daniel Roebuck also scored a Best Director award, while actress Madelyn Dundon took home Best Actress in a Feature Film. The movie was nominated for a total of nine awards at the festival and it is likely that more accolades will follow once the movie hits theatres nationwide later this month.

### 6. Setting

It’s possible that we may be a bit partial to movies that are set in small, quaint Pennsylvania towns. ASD’s office is only about an hour away from **Bethlehem, PA** where *Getting Grace* was filmed and we are very familiar with the majestic beauty the Lehigh Valley region of the state offers. Daniel Roebuck and the other film producers truly could not have chosen a better location for their film. In many ways, the setting is like a character in the movie.

“I’ve got this old character who is an old fashioned person. Bethlehem is an old fashioned town that’s kind of reborn, and this guy is reborn too,” Daniel explained in an interview.

There is something really special and authentic about a movie that is filmed in a real place, not on a Hollywood movie set. In addition to providing the perfect backdrop for the story, Bethlehem was essential to the filming of *Getting Grace* because so many people from the area contributed to the movie.

In a press release, Daniel explained, “*Getting Grace* will only be the first of many movies I hope to make here in the Lehigh Valley. We have the most beautiful locations, great actors, great young crew members, and the support of my fellow Pennsylvanians, which is heartwarming for a filmmaker.”

### 7. Humor and Heart

*Getting Grace* is a film that asks its audience, ‘what does it mean to be truly alive?’ It does not shy away from important themes or rely on clichés to tell the story. At the same time, it is a movie that understands how intertwined humor and tragedy are and how sometimes in life you want to cry so hard that you end up laughing instead. The film demonstrates how in life, many things are out of your control, but you can’t allow that to stop you from living fully.

“The movie is about faith, but we’re not dictating what type of faith that is, just that there’s something more,” Daniel states in an interview.

With sharp writing, compelling acting and an amazing story, *Getting Grace* is a movie that is likely to make you bust a gut laughing at some parts and wiping away tears at others. It truly is the perfect blend of humor and heart. We are certain that once you have “gotten Grace,” you won’t soon forget her.

***Getting Grace* opened nationwide on Friday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>.**

**About The Author**-Jess Fowler-Jess Fowler is a Public Relations Specialist and Staff Writer who has been a part of the ASD team since 2003. Jess manages ASD’s company blog and has been published in several funeral trade magazines. She has written articles on a variety of subjects including communication, business planning, technology, marketing and funeral trends. You can contact Jess directly at [Jess.Fowler@myASD.com](mailto:Jess.Fowler@myASD.com)

*Dylan's Directives*  
**Educating the Public**  
*By Dylan Stopher*

The general public... did you know that they don't know what they don't know? I know. And while I won't use this platform to discuss my particular branch of our funeral service profession, I can tell you that when I train in my capacity, I make mention all the time that our profession thrives on education. I am a vendor, and I educate the funeral directors and family service counselors so that they can educate the general public in time of need. And what is the goal?

The goal is simple: to allow the family to make the best emotional and financial decision for themselves.

Yes, I said "allow them" to make their own decision. And for all the funeral directors in the reading populous who all of a sudden want to cling to their "but I'm the DIRECTOR" mentality, I'll tell you now that you need to stop, because you're wrong. Research shows that families who choose what they want, even if it costs them more money, are far more pleased with their funeral experience than those who don't have that option. So while we're all "directors," and some of us don't want to be known as "arrangers" or as "sales professionals," we need to DIRECT ourselves back to the original purpose, and help the family to make the best choices they can.

So how do we educate? Well, as I stated above, I go and teach my territory about products and services we have to offer to the families through them, and then I follow up to see if the families are receptive to that same knowledge being transferred in arrangement conferences. But don't get it twisted, folks... the goal here is NOT to increase dollar amounts or revenue. No. The goal is to educate the families on their options. Think of it this way... if you were to be offered two sandwiches, one for \$1 and one for \$15, and you had no option to see them before making use of them, with little knowledge of either you would likely choose the less-expensive option. Any fiscally responsible person would. When you find out, however, that the \$1 selection is a miniature finger sandwich and the \$15 selection would've actually been a meal, things become a little different. Had you been educated on the available options, and what they meant, you might have chosen differently. You might not. But either way, without the information to make the educated choice, you have been robbed of that opportunity.

Yes, look again... I did equate it with robbing the family of something. I'll say it more clearly. If you choose not to educate every family about every option, you are robbing them of their opportunity to have the necessary information to make the right decision for themselves, both emotionally and financially.



Now let's examine the two things I keep throwing out there: the emotional and financial part of their decisions. We'll start with the latter, because it's the easiest to explain. Put simply, friend and fellow licensed funeral professional, it's not your money. Your sense and sensibility have zero bearing. You and the way you would do things are both completely irrelevant in this arrangement conference setting, unless you are directly related to the person who has passed away. Therefore, I'll reiterate with clarity: it's not your money. If the family has the money and wishes to spend it, let them. Our fiduciary responsibility is to keep them from overspending and going into debt and potential financial ruin, not to stand in their way of spending that which they already have designated for this purpose. So if you're a spendthrift and you want the nicest casket and vault that money can buy with excessive floral sprays and extra days of visitation, that's great... but you're not paying for the funeral, so let them choose. Likewise, if you're frugal and cautious about every purchase, that's great... but you're not paying for the funeral, so let them choose. It's not your money, and therefore it's not your choice.

Now for the emotional, that's a little more difficult. Some families attach a lot of emotion to their choice of disposition, or their chosen service of remembrance. It could be one or both of these things that really matter. Some are more focused on the method of disposition than on the service, some have religious requirements that cannot be violated or adjusted, some have so much feeling ascribed to the products purchased and the display of personalized items that they miss every other detail. These things matter, and they matter a lot. It makes an enormous difference to the family that the DVD works, that the spelling on the urn or the name plate of the vault is correct, that the casket isn't scratched or dusty, etc. But, again, if the family doesn't know what options they have, they'll never get to choose those things that "could" be the largest deciding factor in their loved one's services. And so, much like with money, it doesn't matter how we feel about burial or cremation. It doesn't matter what we think about music selection or floral

*(Continued on page 29)*

**Dylan's Directives— Educating the Public (Cont.)**

*(Continued from page 28)*

sprays. Our insight, if requested, can be delivered... but unless we're directly related to the decedent, this is not our choice.

So now that the proverbial brow-beating is done, what do we do if we cannot make the decision for them? We do what we are called to do... we serve. We educate. We inform. We answer questions and provide options. We stand in the gap to bridge what they want, what they need, and what they can afford. We do what is asked of us, what is expected of us, and what we're called to do. And we do it the way they ask us to do it.

If a family wants to talk about burial, we certainly provide information on spaces, options in the park, casket information, vaults, markers, and services related to all of it. If they want to talk about cremation, we talk about the paperwork, the process, urns, options for the cremated remains after the service which would include all of the scattering, home storage, niches, burial, shooting into space, formation into a reef underwater, etc. We give them the information to make the choice.

Granted, we should have spent the time to know them well

enough to make an educated recommendation ourselves on their behalf, sharing with them things that we are certain they would want to know, but that comes from listening to them and hearing what they like. Rapport matters. Relationship matters. Listening matters.

But at the end of the day, we're so much more than just their funeral director, funeral arranger, arranging director, or whatever other moniker you want to put on your business card at the front desk. My friend, we're educators. We share with them what is possible, knowing that we're fully capable, and we run at full speed in whatever direction they point us. And we do it, because whatever they ask of us is the decision they have made... the very best emotional and financial decision that is possible for their family, for their loved one.



**About the author:** - Dylan Stopher is a licensed funeral director and embalmer in the states of Texas and Louisiana, and currently serves with Wilbert Vaults of Houston, LLC. He is an active member of the SETFDA and the TFDA, and a regular contributor to both the Texas Director Magazine and the Millennial Director blog.

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The Dead Beat -The Caregivers Soapbox  
Volume: Seventeen Issue: One

Editor: *Joanne Howard*  
Publisher: *Lowell Pugh and Joanne Howard*

The Dead Beat is published bi-monthly. Editorial and business offices are located at 400 Chestnut, Golden City, MO 64748. Phone (800) 575-2611

**Subscriptions:**  
Additional copies for U.S.A. are \$24.00/ 1 year (6 issues).

For subscription, address changes, circulation, advertising assistance, write, phone or fax

The Dead Beat  
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