

The Dead Beat

The Caregiver's Soapbox



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

Nov/Dec 2001 & Jan/Feb 2002

Volume 3 Issue 4 & 5



In This Combined Issue



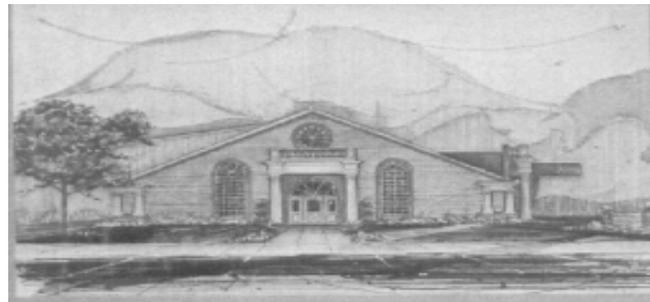
Charles Ferguson
Ferguson Funeral Home
See Pg 7



Paul Triplett



Memorial at Williams Funeral Chapel
Warrensburg, MO -See pg 25



Benton County Funeral Home, Bentonville, AR-See pg 19



Neal Baucom, Knell Mortuary
Carthage, MO- See pg 4

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THE DEAD BEAT
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1



Getting Over It

by Kenneth J. Doka

“Everyone says I should get over it. It has been a year now.” One of the myths of grief is that we get over grief in the same way that we say get over a cold. One day we feel pain, a few days later, we are fine.

But grief is not like that. The first thing we need to remember is that we all respond differently to a loss. Some of us seemingly show little signs of distress. We adjust quickly to life. Others of us find that they think of the person a great deal but do not feel overt pain. For still others, the pain is intense as we struggle with difficult emotions. We may cry at the slightest reminder of the person. However we experience grief, it is important to remember that it is not like an illness that we “get over.”

That is why terms like “recover” or “resolve the loss” make little sense in grief. If we lose car keys and recover them, it means we get them back again. If we resolve things it means that it is fixed or

settled. When someone we deeply loved dies, we never fix it or get them back. That loss is forever.

We do not get over grief. But over time, we do learn to live with the loss. One woman whose daughter died described it this way: “When I lost my daughter, it was like losing an arm. But I have learned to live as a one armed person.”

I like to use the term “amelioration” to describe what happens in grief. This term, which means “to get better,” give us hope of three things.

First, over time, the pain will lessen. Our experience of grief can be compared to a roller coaster. We have ups and downs, highs and lows, times when we seem to be doing better and times when we seem to struggle. Again each of us will ride the roller coaster in our own way. For some of us, it will be one where we experience

thoughts and memories. For others it will be periods of emotional distress. As the roller coaster continues, it will tend to lessen. We still have ups and downs but they are not as intense as they were, they do not last as long, nor do they come as frequently. Charles Corr, a colleague and Journeys author says it a slightly different way. In the beginning he would state, there would state, there are mostly bad days, then bad days with a few good days, then good and bad days, and finally mostly good days with an occasional bad day.

We also begin to function better. In the beginning our grief may have been somewhat disabling - impairing performance at work, at school, or at home, interfering with other relationships. Now we find that we can work at levels we could before. In fact, we may even do

(Continued on page 18)

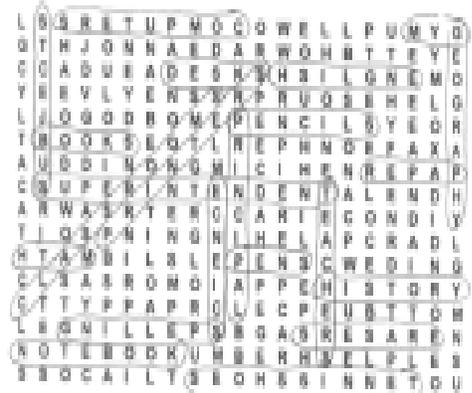
Word Search Relaxation- “Sports”

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 W D A Y K H M I T H O E B A T W B W O T U
 R L D C Y O O U L I K R T A U A B E A A F
 E A A N K O F E V I F E R Y S R S R P O R
 S R T Y O L U W P O O H O K U E S L D B E
 T A M B U P E S S Y O E E V E F B O N U S
 L R Y S E A S O M I T T N O Y E O A U W O
 I U L D G S U P E R B O W L E R T V L P R
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 O U P A N R T L I C L H N Y I S P A T Y E
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 D E G O L F O M G R T N E L O S E R S S N
 W E I G H T I S S F R E E T H R O W A N Y

- Baseball
- Basketball
- Bat
- Bonus
- Football
- Foul
- Free Throw
- High Jump
- Hoop
- Losers
- Mat
- Mitt
- Net
- Pass
- Playoffs
- Referees
- Running
- Score
- Serve
- Spike
- Stars
- Super Bowl
- Tackle
- Teams
- Touchdown
- Track
- Volleyball
- Weight
- Winners
- Wrestling

Find the words hidden in this puzzle horizontal, vertical, diagonal and backwards. Answer will be given in the next issue.

“Back to School” Solution



Mortuary Muse*

*to think or consider deeply; meditate
By Lowell



George Krieghauser, Area V.P. and Bill Branson, Maj. General retired and funeral director with Dignity Memorial Funeral Providers, along with other St. Louis area dignitaries were presented awards and given public recognition for the implementation of a homeless veterans burial program. Any time a funeral home steps up to handle the arrangements for indigents they should be applauded.

An incident last fall in which a man's body was returned to the domicile where he had lived caused a media ripple. The funeral director answered the original call in good faith. The live-in companion decided after the fact that she would not be responsible for funeral arrangements. The man's daughter, who lived out of state, refused to become involved and directed the funeral home to return the body to the companion's home.

Some persons connected with funeral service called for sanctions against the funeral home. The state board indicated they would inquire into the situation. Spokespersons stated that the problem could have been solved by body donation, coroner ordered cremation or some other mechanism supposedly in place. None of the proposed solutions are easily achievable in all counties and most are going to be paid for out of the funeral directors' pocket.

Instead of railing at the unfortunate funeral director they missed an opportunity to inform the public about a growing

(Continued on page 9)

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Man's best friend stone in Humansville Cemetery, Humansville, MO. It was a cemetery caretaker's pet.



Neel Baucom, Knell Mortuary, Carthage, MO, stands by his area to sign book for the Sept. 11 victims.



Fosset-Mosher Funeral Home
Mt. Vernon, MO



Ozark Funeral Home
Goodman, MO

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@thedead-beat.com.

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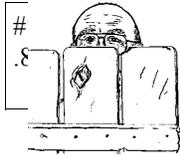
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Behind the Back Fence

I don't think I'll ever forgive the Reagan administration for blessing us with all of these wonderful telephone options that we have now days, brought to us through the courtesy of deregulation. Even the phone repairman said he was put on hold for 40 minutes while awaiting orders and then it disconnected. Endless voice mail can be a challenge even for those who do not have impaired hearing.

I suppose it is only a matter of time till you can call up your local funeral home and hear: Ring... Hello, you have reached ABC Funeral Home... we want you to know that your call is important to us and may be monitored to assure quality control. If you know your party's extension number you may enter it now and press the pound key...To review the menu of choices **press 1** at

anytime... If you want a funeral director **press 2**...A preneed counselor **press 3**...To inquire about credit policy or check your account **press 4**...Genealogy research **press 5**...to check prices **press 6** for the General Price List menu of 17 choices... If you want to speak to a live person please hold for the next available representative... please stay on the line your call is important to us...(appropriate funeral music playing)...thank you for holding if you died while waiting **press 7** for an embalmer or **8** for cremation... you call is importa(click).

The town of Seymore, Missouri and many friends and funeral directors from surrounding communities really turned out to

Paul Triplett's 90th birthday reception. It was a well deserved tribute to a super individual. I hope we all will be able to join Paul for a one hundredth party. At 90 Paul may be the oldest person with active licenses in Missouri. The former Bergman-Miller Funeral Home in Seymore is now part of Ken Howe's Holman-Howe group of fine funeral homes.

Speaking of Ken Howe, we look forward to his review of a very prominent minister's funeral in Texas that he participated in.

This newsletter should carry a warning label. Don't set your calendar by our dateline. We go to press when we have the time to compose it and the cash for

(Continued on page 13)

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Aurora Media Kit Focuses on Veterans, Launches Contribution Campaign

Aurora, Indiana - Aurora Casket Company has created a new veterans product promotion that includes a financial contribution to selected veterans organizations and a media kit for funeral homes.

“According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, veteran deaths are expected to increase more than 10 percent a year for the next 7 to 10 years,” says Steve Penman, Aurora’s Director of Marketing. “Families will want to continue to pay tribute to these American heroes in a personal and expressive way. The family-owned funeral homes we serve share that commitment by offering a number of products that symbolize the duty, honor and love of country these veterans embraced. Our goal is to help funeral directors create a lasting tribute with all members of their community by helping the families to better understand the specific products that are available to them. I am pleased to announce the addition of these two programs in conjunction with our current Personal Expressions by Aurora offerings.”

Personal Expressions by Aurora includes a variety of personalization choices for service veterans, such as casket insert panels featuring the American flag and the slogan “With Love and Honor” as well as specific casket hardware portraying the American eagle or the United States flag. There are also beautifully designed custom panels that represent the official seal of the appropriate military

branch of service. Cremation urns are available with sculpted American eagle and flag or with the flag and military branch seal. Hardwood flag cases, “American Veteran” tribute plaques and American flag memento pins add meaning to the memorial service.

With the new Veterans memorial program, Aurora Casket Company will make a financial contribution to a veteran’s organization, selected by the family when an Aurora casket or urn is chosen. Families can direct the donations in memory of their loved ones. Each family will then receive a certificate confirming that the contribution has been made on behalf of the loved one by Aurora.

In addition, there is a media kit provided to each funeral home that chooses to participate. Each kit includes camera-ready print advertisements, a press release template for local publication and scripts for radio advertising. These kits are designed to assist funeral directors with local promotional activities and provide helpful tips for working with the media.

For more information about Personal Expressions by Aurora and the new veterans memorial program, call 800-457-1111 or go to www.auroracasket.com. Headquartered in Aurora, Indiana, Aurora Casket Company is the nations’ largest privately owned manufacturer and distributor of caskets, cremation services, memorial

As We Drive By

We love to take pictures as we go by funeral homes, but we’d welcome picture if you send them to us.



**Murray Funeral Home
Humansville, MO**



**Sheldon Funeral Home
El Dorado Springs, MO**



**Laurel Land Funeral Home
Ft. Worth, TX**

Awards for Excellence in Distance Learning

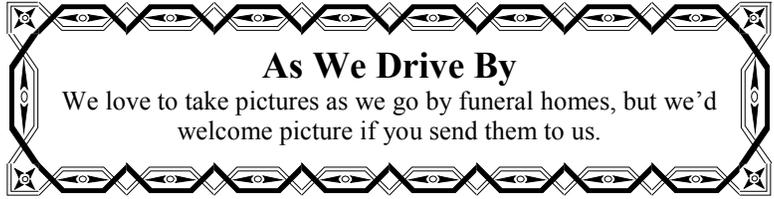
Charleston, WV- In January, 2002, 80 licensed embalmers and funeral directors around the world received the "Continuing Education Excellence Award" from Dr. and Mrs. Jerry L. Keller, Inc., Business Consulting Services. This annual award is given to those who successfully demonstrate excellence in our continuing education distance learning (home study) courses over a prolonged period of time. This year, there were approximately 60 licensees who have had an excellent record for a least 5 license renewal periods, and approximately 20 licensees who have had a record that continues for at least 10 license renewal periods.

Dr. Keller stated, "This year's award winners clearly deserved their recognition. Each winner has submitted very professional work, demonstrating both a thorough understanding of the funeral industry, and educational growth. The requirements for continuing education should provide us with education at a level that continues to develop our skills, without rehashing what we already know and practice every day."

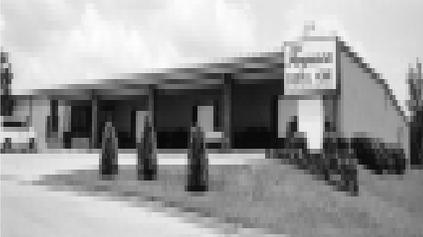
Dr. Keller continued, "Born of necessity, distance learning has rapidly become the platform of choice for adult educational development. Most colleges now offer distance learning courses and some even offer complete degree programs. Much to the benefit of all of us, the funeral industry does not lag far behind in this effort because they too have embraced this form of advanced learning. I am very proud to be recognized as one of the first providers of this type of service within the funeral industry. I am also very happy that the information contained in our courses, along with our quality service, has allowed us to remain one of the recognized leaders in this field."

If you would like more information about our continuing education distance learning courses or our Professional Consulting Service, please write:

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Fax: 1-304-776-6636
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Web: <http://www.DrJerryKeller.com>



Some funeral homes in Chickasha, Oklahoma



Ferguson Funeral Home- Charles Ferguson
Spacious Foyer. The 20,000 sq. ft. funeral home is a remodeled former furniture store.



Fletcher's Funeral Home

McRay Funeral Homes
Mark McRay, owner
Other FH in Verden, OK & Cyril, OK



Sevier's Funeral Home

Christian Funeral Home



Missouri Business Professional Earns Preplanning Certification

Brookfield, Wis- A national certification program for consultants whose firms plan funeral services in advance has awarded the designation of Qualified Certified Preplanning Consultant (CPC) to Greg D. Russell, Senior Sales Executive of Capital Reserve Insurance Company, Jefferson City, Missouri. Russell who is also a CFSP is one of two individuals in the state of Missouri to earn the CPC designation.

“The CPC designation means that families who are planning funeral services in advance should receive the highest quality, most ethical service possible,” according to Colleen Murphy Klein, who coordinates the program for the Funeral Service Foundation (FSF).

“Those who have earned the CPC designation are uniquely skilled to deal with ethical, contractual, funding, customer service, and consumer protection issues,” she added.

The CPC program was instituted in 1995 by FSF, a foundation dedicated to advancing professionalism in funeral service and enhancing public knowledge and understanding through education and research. FSF is headquartered in Brookfield, Wisconsin, near Milwaukee.

Missing Casket & Flowers???

Thomas Richards, a Springdale, Arkansas, local character, sold his bicycle and borrowed a Suburban conversion vehicle from the Backstrom-Pyeatte Funeral Home. He did not recognize the vehicle as a hearse, or the casket and flowers. While making a turn enroute to where he works part time, cleaning out chicken houses, he felt something bump the seat. On discovering the casket he became frightened, stopped, locked the car and walked to his father’s house where police arrested him. The police had already been alerted with a description when someone had reported a suspicious person outside the funeral home.

Family members were relieved that the body was undisturbed. The burial of 82 year old Merle Armes was rescheduled for the next day. . . . The Rev. Loy Counts said his wife called him on his way to the cemetery and asked him to return to the chapel. “When I got back she said, ‘Hey, somebody stole the hearse and the body.’ I thought she was kidding. And then I saw her expression on her face that she wasn’t.”

From article in **Springfield News Leader**. 12/30/01

New Embalming Services Available

Vernie Fountain, former owner/operator of Fountain Mortuary Service in Columbia, Missouri announces the opening of a new embalming facility in Springfield, Missouri. Fountain Embalming Services is conveniently located just 1/2 mile from the junction of Interstate 44 and Highway 13. Fountain offers removals, general embalming of all types of cases and will specialize in Post Mortem Reconstructive Surgery. He has long been known for his dedicated position regarding open casket viewing and the immeasurable value it gives the family at its greatest time of need, especially following sudden, traumatic death.

In addition to Fountain Embalming Services the facility serves as the world headquarters of Fountain National Academy of Professional Embalming Skills. FNA provides continuing education seminars for professional embalmers from around the globe. It is also home of Forensic Investigative Resources of the Midwest (F.I.R.M), which is a licensed and insured private detective agency specializing in death investigations.

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Consumers Drive E-Business Innovations at Aurora Casket Company

Aurora, Indiana - By some accounts, Aurora Casket Company has done the impossible. The 110-year-old manufacture of caskets, urns, plaques and other memorial products has successfully merged the warmth of personalized service with the speed of technology. That blending of tradition and high-tech has strengthened the company's bottom line and earned Aurora a spot on the "Interactive 500," the e-business equivalent of the Fortune 500. It has also earned the company high praise from funeral directors and families alike.

"More and more families appreciate the speed and comfort of digital funeral planning," say Chris Barrott, Aurora's Executive Vice President of Operations. "Thanks to virtual selection rooms, websites and online ordering, the family-owned funeral homes we serve are enjoying increased business and lower inventory costs. E-business is the way families and funeral directors want to do business."

Striking a balance between personal services and "impersonal" technology, Mr. Barrott says, has been the key to his company's success. "We listen and we answer," he explains. "We create and support e-business tools that make it easier, more efficient and comfortable for funeral directors and families to gather information and make decisions. We don't create technology for technology's sake. Our e-business success is directly linked to consumers, who tell us this is their preferred way to do business."

Feedback from funeral directors and families is a core ingredient in the technology Aurora creates and uses. "Everything we do in the e-business world is focused on our customers," Mr. Barrott says. "Just as consumer feedback inspires us to offer new casket features or urn collections, it also helps us improve the functionality, appearance and content of our e-business tools. We always seek out and use feedback to ensure we're providing what our customers want. One message that comes across loud and clear is that we're on the right track, that our

Mortuary Muse (Cont)

(Continued from page 3)

problem with unclaimed bodies. The public should be aware that it is not the responsibility of their neighborhood funeral home to care for every indigent or unclaimed body that dies within their trade territory. Few government entities have an allowance that covers a funeral director's basic cost for direct disposition—much less an amount that would provide services that relatives and street friends desire. An additional problem arises when well meaning friends (drinking buddies) want to jump in and arrange services without money or authority. For some funeral service providers it can become a severe financial burden to accommodate every indigent death.

technology *toolkit* is providing what funeral directors and consumers need.

"We constantly hear from consumers that products like Family Advisor helped them evaluate their options, compare casket features and prices, and make the right decisions," he says. "Funeral directors tell us that families are relieved they can choose a casket from a virtual selection room rather than face the emotionally-charged experience of entering a room full of caskets. That's true regardless of the size or location of the funeral home and regardless of the age of the person planning the memorial. When given the right tools and the right products, Generation Xers and seniors alike prefer to make arrangements electronically."

Aurora's technological focus is evident in its array of computer applications. Beyond its own website (www.auroracasket.com), the company has developed a variety of high-tech products, including Family Advisor, Funeralplan.com, Web templates, Family connections and Plaques.net.

Family advisor: Launched in 1998, Family Advisor provides all the tools needed to plan a funeral or memorial service—including a virtual selection room where families can examine caskets, urns and other

Most funeral directors go out of their way to work with families to provide a service in the hopes that a scaled down bill will eventually be paid. Sometimes it is better to donate a removal to a neutral refrigeration unit with the understanding you are declining to become further involved. If and when law enforcement agencies find a next of kin they can advise them to call the funeral home of their choice and you may be off the hook.

The Kansas City Star, 1/29/02, reported that Jackson County had settled with Lawrence A. Jones & Sons Chapel and Watkins Brothers Memorial Chapel for indigent burials. According to the funeral homes the county had failed to pay more than \$45,000 for 110 burials dating back to 1993.*

When an entity does provide a minimal fee of \$500-\$1500, and funeral homes accept it, officialdom has a tendency to assume that is how much all funerals should cost. It is the same kind of mindset that consumers receive listening to insurance pitchmen quoting the latest average cost of a funeral. Eventually the public may demand some sort of governmental disposal administered as part of Medicare for everyone. Hospice counseling would then take over memorialization and aftercare. Where no governmental or charitable entity provides resources, is it time for funeral service to develop its own plan for sharing the burden of services for unclaimed or indigent bodies?



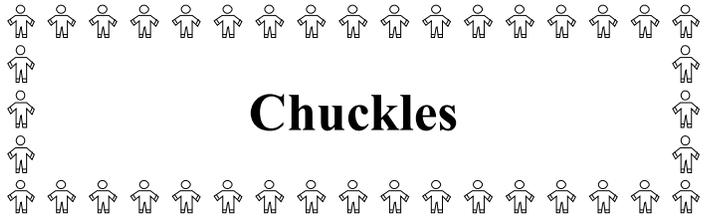
(Continued on page 11)

Comments from our Readers

“As my favorite past time is eating out when we can get away from the funeral home three great places are Dowds Catfish House in Neosho, Freds Catfish in Ash Grove and The Steak Inn at Shell Knob all are great.

Love the Dead Beat!”

Lane Garner, Morris-Leiman-Mosher FH Miller, Missouri



Chuckles

Sent by one of our readers:

A minister was having their baptism at a local river when a drunk came by. The minister asked him if he would like to find Jesus? He replied, “Sure why not?”

The minister took him under the water, brought him up and asked did you find Jesus? He replied, “No he didn’t.”

So the minister took him under and held him a little longer, he brought him up and asked, did you find Jesus. “No I didn’t,” he replied.

So the minister took him under again and held him for a long time when he brought him up he asked again did you find Jesus. The drunk replied, “Are you sure this is where he fell in?”

A minister, a priest and a rabbi die in a car crash. They go to heaven for orientation. They are all asked, “When you are in your casket, and friends and family, and congregates are mourning over you, what would you like to hear them say?”

The minister says, “I would like to hear them say that I was a wonderful husband, a fine spiritual leader, and a great family man.”

The priest says, “I would like to hear that I was a wonderful teacher and a servant of God who made a hugh difference in people’s lives.”

The rabbi replies, “I would like to hear them say, ‘Look, he’s moving!!!’”

Dead Cat Test . . .

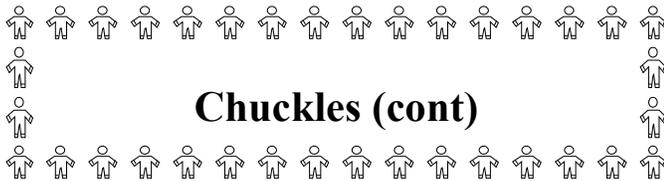
Out of the mouths of babes comes the Dead Cat Test, a true story (?):

A kindergarten pupil told his teach he’d found a cat. She asked if it was dead or alive. “Dead,” she was informed. “How do you know?”, she asked. “Because I pissed in his ear and it didn’t move,” said the child innocently.

“You did WHAT!?”, the teacher squealed in surprise.

“You know,” explained the boy, “I leaned over and went ‘psst’ and he didn’t move.”

Two robins were sitting in a tree. “I’m really hungry, “



Chuckles (cont)

said the first one.

“Me, too,” said the second. “Let’s fly down and find some lunch.”

They flew to the ground and found a nice plot of plowed ground full of worms. They ate and ate and ate and ate ‘til they could eat no more.

“I don’t think I can fly back to the tree,” said the first one.

“Me either. Let’s just lay here and bask in the warm sun,” said the second. “O.K.” said the first. They plopped down, basking in the sun. No sooner than they had fallen asleep, a big fat tom cat snuck up and gobbled them up. As he sat washing his face after his meal, he thought to himself.....

(You’re going to regret this...)

(The tension is mounting!)

(Here it comes.....)

“I just love baskin’ robins.”

HERE’S SOME SILLINESS

“Sorry, just couldn’t resist”

She Was Soooooooooooooo Blonde:

...she took a ruler to bed to see how long she slept.

...she sent me a fax with a stamp on it.

...she thought a quarterback was a refund

...she tried to put M&M’s in alphabetical order

...she thought Boys II Men was a day care center

...she tripped over a cordless phone

...she studied for a blood test

...she spent 20 minutes looking at the orange juice can because it said “concentrate”

...she thinks Taco Bell is the Mexican phone company

...she had a shirt that said “TGIF,” which she though stood for “This Goes In Front”

...she thought Meow Mix was a CD for cats

Mommy's Love

by Lydia Pugh

Her whole world was love. Anyone that knew or even barely talked to her would agree. From the day she could speak, love was her whole life. Her loving words, arms and heart are the things that stick with me through the long days and cold nights. I remember and admire my mother, Carol Ann Pugh, for her love of music, her children and her Lord.

The gift of music fueled the flame of power and strength buried deep inside my mommy's heart. To play the piano and to sing were the tools she used to bring glory to the Lord her God. Playing the piano, I believe, served as her quiet time to take her mind off the difficult things in her life, so that she could be a happy, loving mother to my sister and me. I remember every month she would sing a special song for the church. Every time, someone would cry, she would say, "My job is now done." When she sang or played, she did it with all her heart. She loved music so very much.

I remember my mommy always being there. Every day she took my sister and me to school and picked us up. All day long she made things for us, cooked dinner and sat around praying for us. Her loving and soft arms are what I remember most. She would hold me when I cry or hug me just because she's happy to see me. In church I always leaned on her shoulder and would fall asleep. She was like a pillow to me. She did anything for me. My mommy would give her life for me. She gave up so much of what she wanted to do so that she could spend as much time as possible with me. I wish I would've been more thankful.

The Lord carried her on. She let the Lord her God guide her through every trouble that passed her way. My mommy was very trusting in the Lord. She praised Him in the morning and she praised Him in the evening. My mommy prayed and knew her bible very well. She was one of the most religious women I knew or know of now. There is no doubt that I will see my mommy in heaven one day because she chose to be different from the world and love rather than hate.

My mommy. It's her love that I will remember and miss for the rest of my life. Her sweet voice, her gentle arms, her heart. Just this year, I realized how big a part of my life my mommy was, and how much I truly need her. A girl needs a mother's love and advice. I only wish she wouldn't have been taken, because I never got to thank her for her love.

Consumers Drive E-Business Innovations at Aurora Casket Company (Cont.)

(Continued from page 9)

products or watch video clips about the manufacturing process. "Family Advisor offers families a great deal of information about funerals," says Mr. Barrott. "It tastefully and tactfully educates them on the services of funeral homes as well as the products available to them. It also provides a greater selection of products than funeral homes might have. Families say they prefer making arrangements this way because they can do it in one easy process."

Funeralplan.com: Families planning a funeral-or those wanting to pre-plan their own arrangements- can find the information they need at Aurora's consumer website, www.funeral.com. The most comprehensive funeral planning website available, funeralplan.com provides 500+ pages of information for consumers, including a directory of family-owned funeral homes and services as well as resources for grief counseling and other needs. The site's "Ask the Experts" section offers online help from funeral and grief professionals.

Web Templates: Aurora Casket Company strives to share its technological success with the family-owned funeral homes it serves. That strategy is evident in Web Templates, websites funeral homes can set up and configure on their own in a matter of hours. Using Web Templates, funeral directors can create and update personalized sites with features such as virtual tours of their facilities, biographies of employees and online obituaries. Although Aurora offers technical support, funeral directors can develop the sites without special training or outside help. The templates are so user-friendly that these personalized sites can be up and running in as little as one hour.

Family Connections: An extranet on the auroracasket.com website, Family Connections is another vehicle Aurora uses to share the fruits of its technology investment with the funeral homes it serves. The site includes Aurora's product catalog, information on product availability as well as substitute products for items that are out of stock. Through this feature, funeral homes can access Aurora e-business consultants to ask questions and gain insight into ways to build their own online presence.

Memorial-markers.com: Memorial markers can be designed and ordered online at Aurora's www.memorial-markers.com site. The site features products by Meierjohan-Wengler, a wholly owned subsidiary of Aurora Casket company. Users are able to design then view their memorial markers before ordering. These customized plaques are comprised of quality bronze and are available to funeral directors.

Aurora Casket Company launched its technology initiative in 1998 and has enjoyed solid growth since establishing itself as the industry leader in the technology-driven e-business enterprise. Due in part to its high-tech vision, Aurora is the fastest-growing manufacturer serving family-owned funeral homes. Headquartered in Aurora, Indiana, Aurora Casket Company is among the nation's two largest manufacturers and distributors of caskets and cremation and memorial products.

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Behind the Back Fence (cont.)

(Continued from page 5)

printing and postage. It is still a cheaper hobby than some other activities.

As funeral directors or embalmers, our hearts are warmed when we really feel that something we did made a difference for a grieving person. There are some wounds though that leave us feeling totally helpless. The essay by Lydia Pugh, age 15, Sand Springs, Oklahoma brings that home (See page 11). Lydia's classmates from fourth grade through eighth are not strangers to grief. In five years they were grieved by the deaths of six parents. One of Lydia's classmates asked Lydia to stay with her during the funeral period after the child's step-father died. That child had been close to Lydia when her mother died in 1998.

We have been blessed(?), chosen(?), commanded(?) by the Labor Department to be a participant in an OSHA workplace injury survey during 2002. It seems they are surveying 80,000 businesses of all sizes and kinds.

Last week we received a complimentary copy of **AI JUMUAH**, Your Guide To An Islamic Life, Vol. 13, Issue 10, Shawwal 1442 H. This week a cousin in California sent me a pair of skull caps. Is there some kind of identity crisis going on here?

In light of the Georgia crematory fiasco, can you



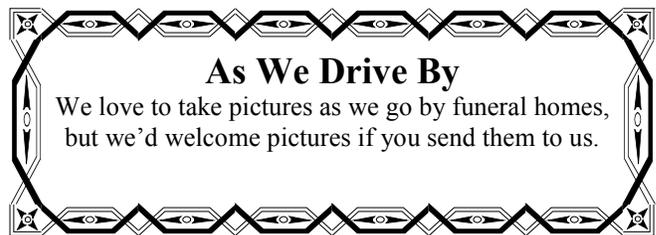
Armed Robbers Heist Embalming Fluid

Three gunman walked into the Hudson Funeral Home in Little Rock, Friday morning Oct. 19, and demanded embalming fluid. After learning that embalming fluid was not stocked at that funeral home they tied employees up with phone cords, left them in a back room and stole their wallets. About four hours later two men entered the Miller Funeral Home and demanded the same thing. Employees gave the men 12 bottles of the chemical.

Pulaski County sheriff's narcotics division head, Lt. David Doty said that the robbers likely intended to smoke it by dipping marijuana cigarettes in it or they could try to sell it as counterfeit PCP. Jeff Gray, with the Arkansas Central Mortuary Service, Inc., in Little Rock, pointed out that embalmers wear gloves and try to avoid inhaling formaldehyde fumes. Doty said this was the first time he had heard of people

NFDA's 2001 Pursuit of Excellence Emeritus Award- Geo M. Wittich-Lewis Funeral Home Muscatine, Iowa

The **Quad-City Times** reported that Geo M. Wittich-Lewis Funeral Home of Muscatine, Iowa, received NFDA's 2001 Pursuit of Excellence Emeritus Award. The award was given for outstanding community service, professional integrity and dynamic public relations programs. To earn the Emeritus award a funeral home must meet the criteria for a minimum of six consecutive years. Thanks to Fraley Funeral Supply for the clipping.



As We Drive By

We love to take pictures as we go by funeral homes, but we'd welcome pictures if you send them to us.



Wayne Boze Funeral Home
Waxahachie, TX

Zinc Caskets Have Been Around Quite Awhile

A story by Steve Weizeman told about archaeologists finding the remnants of a zinc coffin in a grave a few hundreds of yards from the site of the cave where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found in 1947. The bottom of the coffin was all that remained. Hanan Eshel a professor at Tel Aviv's Bar Ilan University said, "The coffin was made out of zinc, and this was the first time that we have a zinc coffin found in Palestine and Israel."

Death Notices of Fellow Funeral Service Colleagues

KANSAS

Noah Plank, 88, Waverly, died January 9, 2002. He was retired funeral director and former manager of Jones Funeral Home.

MISSOURI

B.W. "Bob" Bath, 69, Joplin, died March 9, 2002. He was former owner and director of the Bath-Naylor Funeral Home in Pittsburg, Kansas. retired funeral director and former manager of Jones Funeral Home.

Robert L. Hassebroek, Sullivan, forformer owner of Hassebroek's Memorial Funeral Home. Memorial services were held on February 10.

Frederick Gerth, Jr., 86, Memphis, died January 23, 2002. He was former president of Gerth Funeral Service.

Helen A Jackson, Kansas City died January 23, 2002.

Kathy J. Knell, 48, Carthage died February 23 and was Robert H. "Rob" Knell's wife.

Robert H. "Rob" Knell, 52, Carthage, died February 8. He was co-owner of Knell Mortuary and past Jasper County Coroner. (See below for detailed obit).

Edwin J. "Ed" Miller, 61, Branson, died December 30, 2001. He was owner of Whelchel Funeral Chapels in Branson and Forsyth.

Leonard C. "Bull" Passantino, 76, Kansas City, MO died October 27, 2001. He co-owned Passantino Bros. Funeral Home.

NEBRASKA

Eldon E. Higby, 87, Aurora, died December 14, 2001. He was owner of Higby Mortuary, served as 1970-71 Nebraska FDA president and was recognized as 50 year licensee in 1986.

Aubyn E. Marshall, 69, Tilden, died January 9, 2002. She was associated with Marshall Funeral Chapels, Tilden, Falls City and Nebraska City.

Peter J.V. Merten, 85, Grand Island died Aug. 1, 2001. He worked at Livingston-Sondermann Funeral Home in Grand Island from 1942 until he retired in 1991.

OKLAHOMA

Doris Elaine (Ilene) (Harrison) Stumpff, 64, Bartlesville, died January 16, 2002 from an automobile accident. In 1966 she and her husband established Stumpff Funeral Home in Bartlesville.

TEXAS

Russell Alexander, Atlanta, died February 6, 2002. He was funeral director of Hanner Funeral Service in Atlanta and father of Kenneth Alexander of Alexander Funeral Home in Naples.

TEXAS

Mrs. Ann Keen, Vidor, died February 19, 2002. She was mother of Clayton Keen and owner of Memorial Funeral Home.

Tom Land, Hurst, died February 24, 2002. He is father of D. Michael Land, co-owner of Forest Ridge Funeral Home.

Werner Lange, Ballinger, died February 26, 2002. He was father of Larry Lange, Rains-Seale Funeral Home.

Mrs. Wanda Waltrip McGee, Houston, died December 9, 2001. She was mother of R.L. Waltrip.

Maurine Neel, Crockett, died February 16, 2002. She is the mother of Belinda Allee, owner of Callaway-Allee Funeral Home.

Mrs. Margaret Lois Butman Newby, Troup, died December 1, 2001. She was mother of Paka Goodwin, retired owner of Stone-Goodwin Funeral Home in Gladewater and Phyllis Cottle, owner of Cottle Funeral Home in Troup.

Mrs. Sarah L. "Sally" Walker, Coleman, died February 7, 2002, She was co-owner of Tom G. Walker Funeral Home.

Evelyn F. Wise, Honey Grove, died March 2, 2002, She was owner of Wise Products Inc.

Robert H. "Rob" Knell died Friday, February 8 following a brief, but intense battle with lung cancer. He was born August 10, 1949 in Carthage to the late Robert Sr. and Doris Ralston Knell. Rob grew up in Carthage and graduated from Carthage Senior High School. He attended Missouri Southern State College and graduated from the Dallas Institute of Mortuary Science in August, 1972. Following his apprenticeship he returned to Carthage on Mothers Day, 1974 when he joined the family firm, Knell Mortuary fulltime. Rob married Kathy Hadley on September 5, 1975 in Neosho. They had three children, Ryan, Jason and Jennifer who survive him. In 1984 Rob was elected to the office of Jasper County Coroner, which he held

for 13 years until shortly after his father's death. Rob resigned to be able to devote his full time to Knell Mortuary which he became co-owner in December, 1998 and worked up until the time of his death. Former member of Carthage Jaycees and Lions Clubs; member and past president of Carthage Kiawanis Club, past president and member of Missouri Coroners and Medical Examiners Association; member of Missouri Funeral Directors Association, District 8, National Funeral Directors Association and National Selected Morticians.

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

New Owners for Caldwell-Johnson Mortuary Service

Mike and Pam Thomas have purchased Caldwell-Johnson Mortuary Service in Jefferson City, Missouri from Daniel Johnson on January 1, 2002. Mike previously worked for the John L. Ziegenhein & Sons Funeral Home in St. Louis before purchasing the mortuary service. He has also worked part-time for the Schaeffer Mortuary Service in St. Louis. Before moving to St. Louis Mike worked for Springfield Mortuary Service in Springfield, Missouri.

Mike is a 1983 graduate of Dallas Institute of Funeral Service. He will be assisted in the business by his wife Pam and two sons, Blake and Preston. Mike has added a toll free number to the business. You can call them at 866-659-8222.

Good Luck to Mike and Pam and family!

Eggs 'n Gritsa little ham on the side

The discussion among the breakfast crowd at the neighborhood cafe was focused on the Georgia crematory debacle. A number of questions were raised about cremation, crematories and cremains disposition and offered the opportunity for some frank discussion.

After a bit one of the men, Carl, told about attending a relative's funeral in St. Louis. He said the family had asked him to make a few remarks at the service as well as some other friends who were speaking or singing. He asked the family when he should speak and they told him to ask the funeral director.

Arriving at the funeral home the funeral director greeted him as the minister and wanted to know what he was going to do at the cemetery. Carl explained that he was seeking directions not giving them. The funeral director passed the ball back to Carl who found out that some one else would speak at the cemetery and the participants worked out the details themselves. He said they were all surprised that the funeral director had not worked out the details of the service with the family, especially since it was so expensive.

Carl didn't remember the name of the funeral home, but said they had more than one location. He was amused and philosophical though because as the minister designate he got to ride in the Rolls Royce.



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Brooks Thomas Funeral Home



After-Thoughts

Normally this issue would have come out before the holidays, but we seem to be running a bit behind on our issues. Therefore this is coming out after the first of the year. I've commented on my personal experiences with grief related to losing my daughter. Since she died while she was in the 5th grade and about a week before Christmas, there are many milestones she missed out on and this time of year seems to make me contemplative.

A few days before her death she participated in the school Christmas

program and even had a solo in it. My husband and I also have another daughter who is a senior in high school this year. She participates in chorus and Jazz Band which at our school has a program with the elementary students. Well this year was her last year to participate and therefore my last year of required attendance.

So even though my daughter that died would have been a freshman this year this was my last year of sharing in their Christmas programs. It was

another incident that made my loss evident. Though it wasn't like I cried through the program but the sadness was there. The feeling like something was missing and the remembering of past programs was very strong. Of what use is this information to you? I'm not sure except to make you aware again of all the underlying feelings someone may be having even years later. As Ken Doka talked about in his article in this issue, you don't get over it but you deal with it. I will always be able to see my daughter singing and still feel she's



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singing with her classmates if only in spirit. Her classmates still remember her and that makes us feel better and helps us deal with our loss.

I guess the thing to remember is that you must always be aware that underlying things are going on with people that have had losses. Even if they are not overtly showing things they may be hurting. You can't do anything about that but knowing is sharing which is caring.

As funeral directors you might be able to remember their losses better than others since you might have handled the funeral arrangements. But acknowledging their loved ones that are no longer there still helps them feel that their losses are not forgotten. Having memorial services annually yet including persons that may have died a couple of years ago, helps their family and friends deal with the fact that they won't see someone again until Heaven but you still remember them.

I expect many times that I will have my loss emphasized especially when my other daughter goes off to college and my lost daughter will not be participating in things like graduating, getting married, having children, etc, but I always have my memories to treasure.

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Normal By Kenneth J. Doka (cont)

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(Continued from page 2)

better in some ways. Since John's wife died, he mentioned that he felt calmer. "I have a new perspective, a new appreciation for what is really important. Little things do not upset me any more."

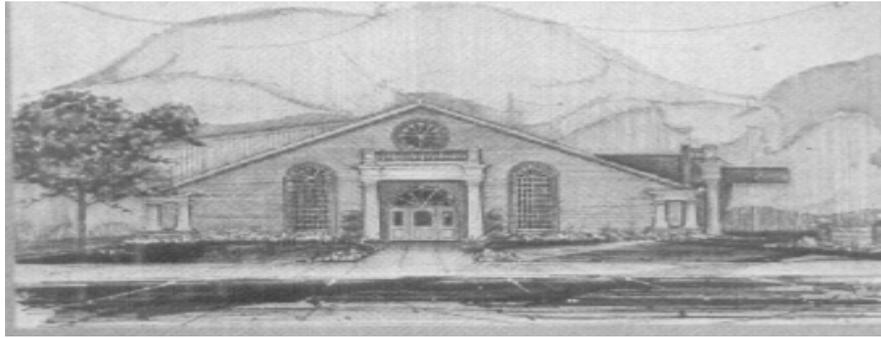
But we always retain parts of the relationship - the memories and legacies. And there may be moments that these memories, even years later, affect us. For John, it was when, twelve years after the death of his wife, he had his first grandchild. "I missed her deeply then, the grief felt so raw. I so much wanted to share this time with her. I thought I had gotten over my grief."

But we never do, instead, we learn to live a different life, without our loved one. We eventually learn how to live with our loss.

Reprinted from Hospice Foundation of America **Journeys**. **Journeys** is published monthly by the Hospice Foundation of America, Jack Gordon, president, 777 17th Street, Miami Beach, Florida 33139. Annual subscription-\$12.00.

Kenneth J. Doka, Ph.D., is a Professor of Gerontology at the College of New Rochelle. Dr. Doka's books include: **Disenfranchised Grief; Living with Life Threatening Illness; Living with Grief: After Sudden Loss; Death and Spirituality; Living With Grief: When Illness is Prolonged; Living with Grief: Who We Are, How We Grieve; AIDS, Fear & Society; Aging and Developmental Disabilities; and Children Mourning, Mourning Children**. In addition to these books, he has published over 60 articles and chapters. Dr. Doka is the associate editor of the journal **Omega** and editor of **Journeys**, a newsletter of the bereaved. Dr. Doka has served as a consultant to medical, nursing, hospice organizations, as well as businesses, educational and social service agencies. As Senior Consultant to the Hospice Foundation of America, he assists in planning, and participates in their annual Teleconference. In 1998, the

Benton County Funeral Home Bentonville, Arkansas



Tradition of Service Continues at Benton County Funeral Home

The William F. “Buddy” Burns Chapels of the Benton County Funeral Home are continuing a tradition that began when Burns opened his Centerton funeral home in 1934. After moving it to Bentonville in 1935 he opened a branch in Rogers in 1938. This branch location has since moved to full equality, giving the same full service to Rogers area residents that the Bentonville location gives to those living nearer it. The new name, Benton County Funeral Home reflects the growing use of both locations by families from throughout Northwest Arkansas.

“Buddy” Burns, as he was known, worked with his wife Jessie Parker Burns to bring modern funeral service to northwest Arkansas in the Depression years. Franklin D. Roosevelt was president, Sam Walton was only 17 years old and Bella Vista was still farmland.

The area’s growth in recent years has presented unique challenges to Karla Tedford, the firm’s current manager. “We love the ambiance and tradition of the old home that Mr. Burns transformed into a funeral home, but found that the facilities no longer met the standard of service that we insist on- and that we know Mr. Burns would have demanded, as well.” After studying many options, the firm’s current owners, Prime Succession, decided to reinvest in downtown Bentonville by building Northwest Arkansas’ most modern funeral home,

one fully designed for the services that today’s families expect. The new building is expected to open in Summer, 2002.

“Convenience, accessibility and privacy are key elements in our approach to serving area families,” noted Tedford. “When you want to help bereaved friends and families you don’t need any obstacles in your way. This has always been my philosophy of personal service. And it’s why we see our investment in our new building as an investment in our commitment to the families we serve.” The new building, which is two-thirds larger than the old, will have Benton County’s largest multi-faith funeral chapel. The chapel will seat over 165 people in comfortable pews, more than four times the number that could squeeze into the old chapel’s individual chairs. In addition to two separate visitation rooms, the new Benton county Funeral Home will also have a separate clergy room, children’s and visitors lounges and ample parking. A covered entry area will protect families and their guests from rain and snow.

Burns Funeral Home Announces New Name & Building

Manager Karla Tedford said that more and more families from throughout Benton County and Northwest Arkansas were availing themselves of the firm’s services, so the new name, Benton County Funeral Home, “ was chosen to reflect the trust and confidence our growing area is

placing with us. At the same time, we felt it was important to recognize our founder and the tradition of community service that the Burns family continues to promote in both Bentonville and Rogers. That’s why we’re naming our building after our founder, William F. “Buddy” Burns.”

The old Bentonville funeral home will be replaced by a new building that will be two-thirds larger and offer ample parking, handicapped access and the area’s largest multi-faith chapel.

Statistics on New Benton County Funeral Home

Size: 8,700 sq. ft

Parking: 32 Designated Parking Spaces.

including 2 handicapped and 7 close-in designated family spaces. Can hold up to 60 vehicles for organizing processions.

Seating: Chapel seats 165 in comfortable pews with special sections for family, choir and pallbearers. Can be expanded by opening up access to the two visitation rooms.

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- Family lounge
- Visitors’ Lounge
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- Separate service entrances keep floral and other deliveries from disturbing family

More Than Just Another Acronym

By Gregory D. Russell, CFSP

The funeral profession certainly has its share of trade jargon and acronyms. There is OSHA, FTC, ASCAP, and BMI just to mention a few. Ask anyone on the street and they probably would not recognize what you were talking about. One preneed insurance company has TCP (total casket protection), which apparently freezes the wholesale cost of a casket if a certain manufacturer is specified in the preneed contract and that casket is subsequently used. Other companies have even copied this conditional arrangement and formed agreements so funeral homes will get some adjustment in the casket cost when a preneed contract is serviced, but only if the funeral home uses a certain preneed product and a certain kind of casket.

It seems that this benefit is grossly over rated. Now don't get us wrong. If a company is giving something away, by all means take it. It is a benefit. However, some funeral directors think of it as the primary benefit, and they fail to see what they may be giving up in other areas such as growth and commission. The point is that the wholesale cost of a casket is a small component of the overall price of a complete funeral service.

Consider the example where the wholesale cost of an 18 gauge casket is about \$800. If the casket company increases its price by an average of 5% a year, that translates to \$40 per year in savings. Over a long period of time, that could become significant and since the average life of a preneed contract is around 7 years, \$280 is nothing to be scoffed at. But the real test comes when the preneed contract becomes at need and a claim is submitted. Does the death benefit cover the now current cost of the



funeral? Have you traded the growth that should occur to cover a complete funeral increased by inflation for a wholesale casket price freeze?

This brings us to new terminology that is very relevant to preneed. We are introducing the phrase **TPI** or **total paid in**. This certainly is not a new concept, as smart consumers have often compared the total paid in on a preneed contract to the cost of the funeral that they have purchased. Funeral directors would also do well to consider the **total paid in** even though they are not the ones paying it. Clients will look first to them rather than an insurance company that they don't know when they finally realize just how much they have paid. A monthly payment may seem affordable, but it should be multiplied times the number of months paid to arrive at a true cost. In the products that some companies offer, a consumer may pay in several thousand dollars more than the cost of the funeral. Besides death benefit and commission, **TPI** or **total paid in** should be one of the fundamental factors used in evaluating any preneed product.

So, it would behoove a funeral home to consider who is paying for the extra bells and whistles that create additional benefits for the funeral home such as freezing the wholesale cost of the casket. It is easy for any company to offer

special features and tout extra benefits when it is the consumer who is actually paying for them.

The concept of **total paid in** generates some very important questions a funeral home must ask. Are these really value added benefits to the product? Is the real value of such benefits a trade off for a higher death benefit of other products? Is there a potential detriment to the funeral home's reputation when a consumer realized what the **total paid in** actually is and is unhappy about it? Will an excessive **TPI** result in more cancellations?

Most funeral directors are genuinely concerned about the families they serve. In addition to personalization, grief and healing, a meaningful service and all of the other issues they strive to address with each family, the **TPI** is part of a financial value aspect which is also the responsibility of the funeral professional. Where is the value when the consumer pays thousands of dollars more on a preneed plan than the funeral cost? Sure the consumer may have signed a contract, but most of us know that many preneed purchasers are depending on the funeral director to do what is in their best interest. One of the primary reasons they choose to write a preneed plan with you is because of the excellent reputation of the funeral home. To maintain that excellent reputation, the **TPI** or **total paid in**, must be considered when choosing what insurance funded preneed product to offer.

Although we may have added to the alphabet soup of acronyms and terminology which funeral directors must sift through, we believe that **TPI** or **total paid in** is a phrase well worth remembering and should be applied as a test when you

As We Drive By

We love to take pictures as we go by funeral homes, but we'd welcome pictures if you send them to us.



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**Paul Triplett-Possibly Oldest Licensed
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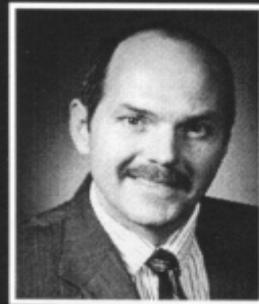
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Texarkana Funeral Home, Texarkana, TX

("I stopped by this fine funeral home early one morning and was totally ignored." Lowell)

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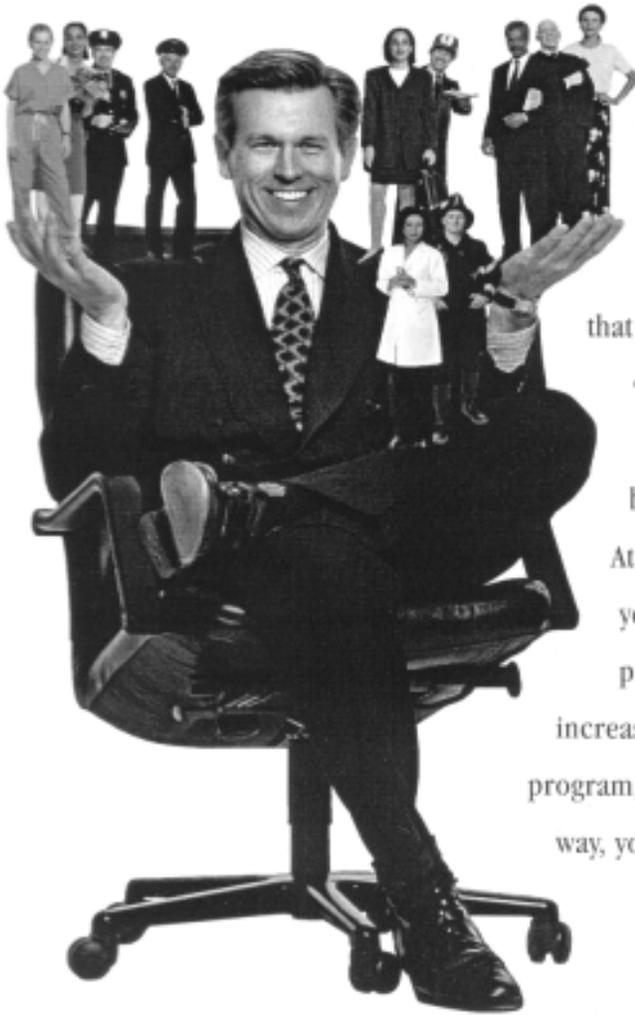
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Funeral Director and Intern Murdered

Funeral director Daniel O’Connell and intern James Ellison were found murdered in the O’Connell Family Funeral Home in Hudson, Wisconsin. The Coroner found the bodies when he stopped by to get a death certificate. No one has been charged in the February 5 shooting deaths as of February 20 news report by Robert Imrie of The Associated Press.

The article quoted investigators as saying that Kathryn Padilla, a self proclaimed prophet was a suspect. Eau Claire County prosecutors charged her on February 12 with disorderly conduct and stalking in connection with letters sent to funeral homes after the killings. A criminal complaint quotes the letters, “Thus saith the Lord, Because you have heard not the words of the Lord, I take from you your sons and daughters into early graves. Prepare for burial yourself.”

The article said, “Padilla told the AP she had sent about a dozen letters to funeral homes this month and another 400 last year.” Her followers number about 20” “... and she believes that embalming desecrates the body and the dead should only be wrapped in a white sheet.”

Robert Imrie, AP, Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, 2/2/2002

Third Party Casket Sellers Win a Round in Oklahoma

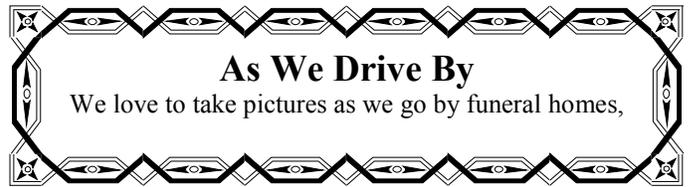
The U.S. District Court for the Western District Oklahoma denied the state’s motion to dismiss a lawsuit challenging a law restricting the sale of caskets in Oklahoma. Oklahoma requires anyone selling caskets to be a licensed funeral director meeting state educational requirements for a state funeral director’s license.

The Oklahoma law is being challenged by Kim Powers of Ponca City and Dennis Bridges of Knoxville, Tennessee, owners of Memorial Concepts Online. The Internet company sells caskets at discount prices.

The court’s decision clears the way for the case to proceed. Powers and Bridges are challenging the constitutionality of the law. They are represented by the Institute for Justice, a Washington public interest law firm. They claim the Oklahoma law conflicts with entrepreneur’s rights to earn an honest living without arbitrary government interference.

Institute attorney Clark Neily claims the law was passed to give licensed funeral directors a monopoly on caskets which are sometimes marked up as much as several hundred percent.

Information from an article by Chuck Ervin, **Tulsa World** 2/14/02. Thanks to Shipman & Associates, Bartlesville, OK for the clipping.



**Golden Gate Funeral Home
Waxahachie, TX**



**Community Funeral Home
Waxahachie, TX**



**DuBose Funeral Home
Terrell, TX**

As We Drive By
 We love to take pictures as we go by funeral homes,

**Williams Funeral Chapel
 Warrensburg, Missouri**



**Williams Funeral Chapel
 Veteran's Memorial in front lawn**

**Highway Right-of-Way
 Memorials**

Ron Hast, publisher of **Mortuary Management**, March, 2002 reported that California will allow roadside memorials for persons killed by a drunk driver. A marker of a prescribed nature, may be allowed to remain up to seven years. The sponsor of the marker will have to pay \$1,000 to the highway maintenance service. The program will be evaluated in three years.

Markers are becoming so prevalent everywhere there have been a number of articles about the phenomena and considerable concern expressed by highway maintenance people. For family and friends roadside memorials have become a grief ritual.

A couple of years ago Oregon was about to have a court battle over private memorials on public right of ways. Opponents complained that the markers were eyesores and that the Christian cross blurred the constitutional line between church and state. Proponents claimed infringement on free speech. Atheists were countering with black crosses. I never heard how it turned out. A few states including California banned them and some have no policy or at least they aren't talking about it. Some officials were reported as stating that the laws prohibited anything, crosses, political signs, etc. on state property, but officials try to show families respect under the circumstances.

Some information from Mike O'Brien, News-Leader,
 Springfield, MO 1/31/00

Proposed Legislation in Missouri

Missouri SB 1096 would remove sales taxes from funeral merchandise. Given the current revenue shortfall we find it hard to believe this bill will go anywhere again. Another proposal on the table would remove most sales tax exemptions for a two year period, except for food and prescription drugs. Some estimate that this would recoup \$500 million dollars.

Other legislation would remove the two percent fee given to businesses for collecting and remitting sales tax back to Jefferson City. this fee reduction would bring about 20 million in new funding. Studies found that a business' cost of collection and remitting sales tax is \$2.93 for every \$100 the business collects and sends back to the State. Loss of this discount amounts to another hidden tax. Even the Missouri Department of Revenue keeps a percentage of various taxes it collects and sends on to different government entities.

Missouri has other pertinent bills under consideration and I'm sure the other states do too. Check with your state senator, representative or association.

Some legislative information came from the Western Association in Kansas City, MO and the MFDA Highlight.

One proposed bill in Missouri would require eight hours of Professional Development Credits before the bi-annual license renewal. The state board would approve the courses and shall not require more than 50% of the course work to be face to face contact with the instructor. I suppose this is the same bill that was called continuing education previously. As in the previous bill, those persons licensed prior to January 1, 1962 would be exempt from the requirement.

If all of us old people who were licensed back about the middle of the last century are so smart— that we have no need of any further training— how come nobody pays any attention to what I tell them? It sounds to me like some old undertaker is joined at the billfold with some old politician.



Some interests at Atkinson Funeral Home in Harrisonville,



Another Twist to the Georgia Crematory Tragedy

As the lake on the crematory grounds was being drained the number of human remains counted stood at 339. On Monday, March 4, District Attorney Buzz Franklin said investigators discovered photos of decomposed bodies on crematory owner Marsh's office computer. Marsh had been denied bail by Magistrate Jerry Day, noting that more charges are likely. Prosecutors said they worried for the prisoners safety if he was released. "...Sheriff Steve Wilson testified that at a victims' meeting one woman said she wanted to hang Marsh, and the threat was met with thunderous applause..." Defense attorney Ken Poston criticized the prosecution for discussing the threats. "If that isn't inviting trouble and torches and ropes, then I don't know what is."

Kristen Wyatt, The Associated Press, Arkansas Democrat/Gazette, 3/5/02

No Pay — No Stay— Graves Are Dismantled

You didn't pay the annual maintenance fee for your family plot? The graves are dismantled and your families ashes are put in a common grave? Are we talking consolidator cemetery operations here? Nope, ancient Japanese burial practices.

It is an ancient Japanese custom of maintaining hereditary family burial plots. Most bodies are cremated and the inurned cremains are placed in a vault under the marker. The oldest son inherits the family space and is responsible for paying the \$100-\$700 fee along with expected semi-annual visits around the time of the equinoxes. It is also the family's responsibility to clean the stone. There is no grass to mow and pebble or stone paths surround the monuments. If there are only daughters, a son-in-law may be adopted into the family to carry on the tradition with the burial plot as a means to perpetuate the family name.

When relatives fail to return or keep up the payments "within a couple of years the grave will be dismantled..." The family's ashes will be moved to a common grave so the plot may be resold. This is "considered a sad end to the family line."

But times are changing. Descendents move and don't wish to return to a distant burial place. Some women do not want to be buried with in-laws, they had conflict with, but preferring to set up a new burial site. With an increasing divorce rate there are more singles. Single or childless persons might have to rely on nieces or nephews to maintain the family plot and name.

Falling land prices and Japan's aging population have encouraged the establishment of many new small cemeteries on vacant land and former commercial lots. One man bought a two and one-half foot square plot in his neighborhood cemetery that was originally a trucking company parking lot. The average cost of a

grave there is \$30,000. From a distant cemetery he brought the urns of his parents in which he had combined his grandparents cremains and placed them under the marker in the new cemetery. This is not in the tradition of a family grave and will not have the family name on the marker.

Municipal and temple group graves for singles and couples have become "popular because they cost less and the future of the urn doesn't depend on the piety of the children and grandchildren..." A burial society, En-no-Kai, at the 400 year old Tohoji temple markets group graves instead of traditional family plots.

Oyama, a childless woman, paid \$6,500 for a membership in a group cemetery. Her urn and others will be cared for in a memorial hall in a Buddhist temple on the grounds and respect paid on the required dates for 33 years. Her cremains will then be combined with other in a common grave on the temple grounds. Her name will be read by the Buddhist priests every year. The temple also offers monthly memorial services, lectures, concerts, dances and tea ceremonies.

This is a break from tradition for Oyama, 55, whose cremains would have been placed with her parents' graves in northern Japan or had she married, with her husband's family. "I felt hugely relieved that I have solved the last and most difficult issue of my life," she said. "... Choosing a grave for yourself before death as proof of the life you steadfastly led is not unnatural. When I think about it, my life was just right for me. So I want my grave to be just right for me." she concluded.

Portions condensed from an article by
Kathryn Tolbert, *The Washington Post*,
reprinted in *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*,
11/4/02

Churchyard Cremains Burial Gardens Gaining Popularity

Parishioners are "standing on the shoulder's of past members" joked Calvary Episcopal Church Rector Fred Thayer in the **Columbian Missourian**. He was talking about parishioners that stand upon the cremains that are buried in the church's Memorial Garden. The courtyard on the grounds of Calvary Episcopal Church in downtown Columbia, Missouri was featured in a recent issue of **Columbian Missourian**.

A suggested \$700 donation allows members of the church to join the Memorial Garden Society. The money is used to maintain the garden and a bronze wall plaque honoring Memorial Garden Society members whose cremains are interred there. A few homeless persons also are buried in the garden.

"Joseph Kinney, funeral director and embalmer at Parker Funeral Service... said interment in Calvary was an economical choice." Kinney said cremation, which accounts for roughly 30 percent of all patrons of the funeral home is increasing.... "People think it's cheaper," Kinney said, "But what people don't know is it's not a replacement for service." Kinney pointed out that cremation alone could cost \$1,200 to \$1,500 with formal services at the funeral home the prices might range from \$5,000 to \$7,000.

Rector Thayer said the theme of the Memorial Garden, which was established in 1989, is white flowers and Society members usually have a memorial service before the cremains are buried. Glenna Kilfoil, chairwoman of the Memorial Garden Committee said she thought the courtyard, "should support the full circle of life." Kilfoil said the garden began as an avenue for people to give something to the church, especially those who do not have much money." In the summertime other activities such as summer classes and coffee hour are held in the "environment of serenity."

Information from *Columbia Missourian*,

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