

# The Dead Beat

## The Caregiver's Soapbox



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

Spring, 2005

Volume 6 Issue 2

### Forensic Physicians Fight Frustration and Fantasy

Compiled by Lowell Pugh and Joanne Howard

Scientists excavating an archaeological site in the Sierra Nevada range in the West looking for signs of cannibalism. \*\*\*\* Egypt's Supreme council of Antiquities CT scanned a mummy looking for a cause of death. \*\*\*\* A renown pathologist from San Diego performing a second autopsy on the body of a teenage girl dead since 1989 in Arkansas. Was her death an accident or murder? \*\*\*\* NYC giving up further attempts to identify remains from Sept. 11. \*\*\*\* Scientists, forensic sleuths and medical examiners in countless cities and counties are all searching for a common denominator —the often elusive **truth**.

These events and many more have been in the daily news the past few months. Their stories put a more realistic timeline to real-life incidents than a gaggle of television forensic detectives and technicians that solve complicated stories in 30 or 40 minutes among what seems like an hour of commercials. Let's look at a few details.

#### The Donner Party



A team of scientists and scholars from several universities in the West are examining a site in Tahoe National Forest, identified by archaeologists in the 1990's, as the area where the Donner family made their last camp. University of Montana historical archaeologist Kelly Dixon and University of Oregon archaeologist Julie Schablitsky are the dig's co-directors.

The Donner party included the Donner family and other members of an ill-fated wagon train of pioneers headed to California in the spring of 1846. Stranded in the mountains by snow in October and with few remaining resources only 45 survived to be rescued in April. Thirty-six members of the group died at this last camp, but the Donner's five daughters survived the ordeal.

The present dig site is said to contain the largest number of bone fragments along with shards of tea cups, condiment bottles, buttons and a writing slate. Mrs. Donner was a teacher and researchers wonder if she continued schooling her daughters while they were stranded. "When you begin to look at these collectively, you are reminded they were normalizing their situation... The mere existence of these artifacts alone has the power to revise the story," Dixon said.

Bone fragments will be sorted by Guy Tasa an osteologist from the University of Oregon

*(Continued on page 21)*

### Other Articles in this Issue

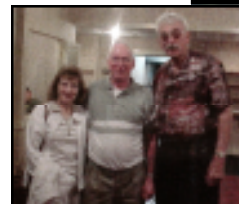


Mr. & Mrs.  
Adam Trevino  
& Beeville, TX  
State Troopers  
See Pg. 4

Claude &  
Joanne Howard  
& Graduate  
David Francis  
See Pg. 7



Carol & Francis Boone  
& Ted Kuhns  
See Pg. 10



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## How Long???

By Ken Doka

One of the most common questions of persons who are in the midst of grief is some variation of "how long?" How long will this pain last? How long before I am able to function like I did before? How long before I stop crying whenever someone mentions the name?

We sometimes think of grief as a condition—an illness that has to run a particular course. With a cold or flu, we can take comfort that in a few days we will recover. We will be back to normal. All signs of the illness will be merely a memory.

Grief is not an illness or a disease. It is a transition. We do not get better. We reconstruct our lives in the face of the loss. We learn to live with that loss.

Grief is a difficult journey. We may experience all sorts of reactions as we struggle with our grief. We may be troubled by all sorts of emotions—guilt, anger, sadness, loneliness—to name a few. We may find it difficult to concentrate, distressed by so many memories. We may hurt physically, feeling less than our best. It may influence the ways that we behave. We may find ourselves avoiding others or angry at the normal irritants of life. We may struggle with our faith, trying to sort out all our questions of why this had to happen.

It is an individual journey as well. Each of us grieves in our own way.

The journey in grief has no timetable. We may look at it as a roller coaster, full of ups and downs. Yet it is a ride that never quite ends.

A friend describes it differently. In the beginning, he says, there are mostly bad days. Later, we have good days mixed in the bad days. Then there are more good days than bad days. Finally the bad days are mercifully few.

Both these images of the process of grief remind us of three things. First, over time, for most of us, the pain of grief lessens.

Second, we begin to function as we once did before the loss. In the beginning we may find our work or study suffers, as we cannot focus as we once did. Now we find that we can perform as we did before. In some cases perhaps we achieve even more. We may have learned new insights, new skills as we struggled with our loss. We may be stronger spiritually. We may have developed new strengths or greater empathy.

There is a third lesson too. The journey never really ends. We may be surprised that even years later, we still feel pain. It may occur in all types where all of a sudden we are reminded that someone we loved is no

longer here to share this moment. When my grandson was born, I longed to share it with my dad. I missed him intensely even though he had died a decade earlier.

Yet, even these moments too can comfort. They reaffirm that we carry the memories and love of the people we lost with us even as we journey through life. At times they will be missed—sometimes intensely—and they are never forgotten.

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 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)*

### Leggett Family Returning to Funeral Home Ownership

Brad Leggett, third generation family funeral director will open a new facility to be named the Little Rock Funeral home. The new 9,000 square foot building is expected to be open this fall. The new funeral home returns the Leggett family to funeral home ownership in the Little Rock market since selling the original firm to a public company a few years ago. Brad's father Harry Leggett Jr. will come out of retirement to help in the new \$1.5 million venture.

# Mortuary Muse\*

deeply; meditate

\*to think or consider

By Lowell



A central Missouri family called Joyce the volunteer manager of an old rural cemetery. The father was terminally ill and they wanted his burial space marked. They told Joyce they were planning on handling the funeral themselves and asked if she knew how to put the casket in the grave.

When Joyce asked me how they could lower the casket she mentioned that the dying man's brother was a minister. He had built a casket and planned to bring the casketed body down to the cemetery in his pickup truck. The family also wanted to know if there had to be a funeral director at the burial. I told her how they could lower the casket but suggested that the grave digger might do it for them and pointed out that a regulation change last year now required a licensed funeral director at all interments.

A day later a son, who was on leave

from Afghanistan, phoned to ask how they could arrange what they wanted in the way of services and the cost. Joanne explained the paperwork, legal requirements and what charges would be incurred to finalize the services they wanted. He made it clear that they did not want any cards, books, flowers, obituaries or sheltering of the remains at the funeral home. He said that he had checked with two local funeral homes. Joanne based the cost estimate for the services they wanted on a package price we use for a local religious group that only wants minimal assistance.

The next evening we were notified of the death and called Thomas and Sons of Jefferson City for removal, embalming, cosmetics, dressing and casketing. The family sent the clothing with Mike and brought the casket the next day. They instructed Mike to secure the lid with the screws they furnished. There would be

no viewing. Mike called us that evening and told us the family would pick up the casket the following morning for the three-hour drive to the cemetery.

We arrived at the cemetery 40 minutes before the scheduled graveside service. The open grave looked stark naked in the warm sunshine. Two wooden boxes furnished by the grave digger sat beside the grave. Twenty minutes later family members parked their cars under the trees outside the cemetery and walked toward the grave. The expressions on their faces indicated they had expected a more traditional grave setting.

The minister's pickup truck stopped in the driveway near the grave. He walked to the rear of the truck and pulled the cargo box cover back revealing the handmade chest-style casket. Sons and other relatives placed the casket on the two boxes beside the grave. As other family members gathered around in small groups, Joanne greeted the son who had made the arrangements and they went to our van to complete

*(Continued on page 9)*

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## Trevino Funeral Home, Beeville, TX Show Texas State Troopers Appreciation with a Dinner



Mr. & Mrs. Adam D. Trevino, owners of Trevino Funeral Home in Beeville, Texas with Texas State Troopers of Beeville.

The Trevinos show their appreciation by having a dinner as a little token of their appreciation for their troopers' outstanding community service.

## Rick Bailey Joins Staff of Parker Mortuary, Joplin, MO



Rick Bailey

Rick Bailey has joined the staff of Parker Mortuary, 1502 S. Joplin Ave. in Joplin, Missouri.

Bailey has 20 years of mortuary experience, including time with Murdock Funeral Homes in Columbus and Oswego, Kansas.

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](mailto:editor@thedead-beat.com).

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## Behind the Back Fence

By Lowell

The minions who write the rules, for FTC, simply fail to grasp the real world. I get more service inquiries at the café and barber shop than at the funeral home, but who wants to carry a GPL everywhere. Even I was a little surprised when one of the pie chefs, Joyce, called me back to the kitchen and asked me how a family could lower a casket in a grave. See the story in Mortuary Muse and by the way the grave digger didn't do it like I told them.

\*\*\*\*\*  
In the last issue I mentioned that ICFA had written a rebuttal to a derogatory article in the American Legion Magazine. I also complained to the editor and received the

obligatory canned reply that thanked me for my commitment. Or maybe they meant I should be committed.

\*\*\*\*\*  
We appreciated a note and clipping from Perry Brockmeyer in Ft. Worth. The clipping, "The Savvy Consumer," by Tessa McUsic, **Ft. Worth Star Telegram**-4/11/05, tells about pending legislation and committee testimony by Janis Carter, a lobbyist for TFDA and an industry watchdog group, Funeral Consumers Alliance of Texas.

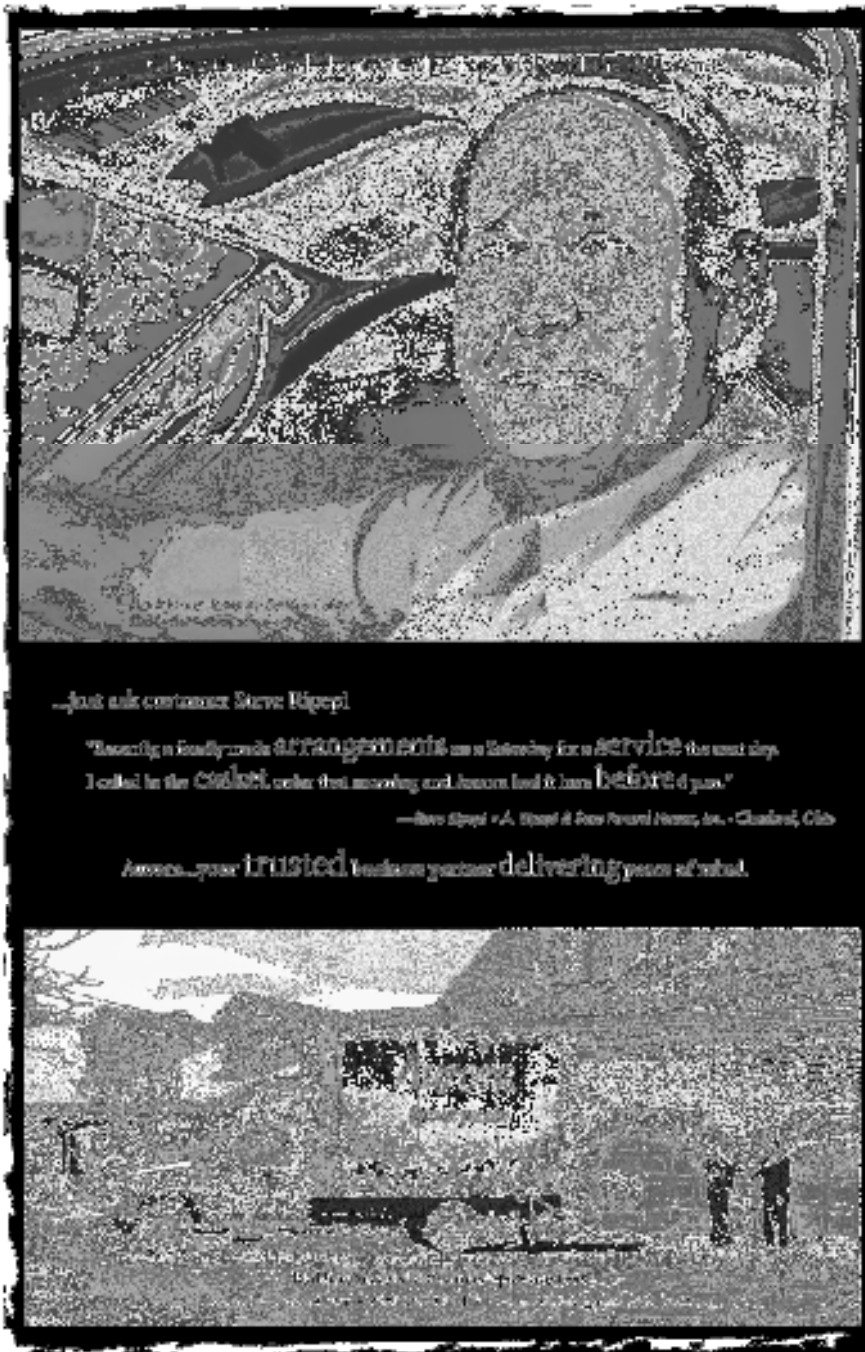
One issue in the bill demanded by the watchdog group would require funeral homes to disclose individual item prices in their discounted packages. They claim that without these item disclosures it is difficult to see whether there is an actual discount on the packages. Janis Carter pointed out that itemized discounts on package prices are not required in other industries. The Texas Funeral commission already requires an itemized price list that must include a minimum of 10 service items with a detailed written purchase agreement executed by client and funeral director.

The Texas Funeral Directors Association has abandoned for the moment their attempts to get legislation passed that would define cash advances in the Texas Statutes. Confusion, misrepresentation and derogatory comments about funeral service made it impossible to get majority support, according to TFDA lobbyist Janis Carter. TFDA had hoped passage would protect against future lawsuits such as the current class action suit against SCI in which cash advances are defined as anything funeral homes buy from third parties. The suit alleges that the GPL's did not disclose the funeral home's markup on all of these additional items the judge ruled were cash advances. There are fears that should the FCA win this suit it will have national implications as well as many funeral home bankruptcies.

Cremation was also a hot topic before the Texas House Public Health Committee. The bill as introduced would require the use of a licensed funeral director when Texans are cremated. Current crematory regulations certify only equipment and not crematory staff members, whereas licensed funeral directors have special schooling that includes legal and ethics training. There are 64 crematories in Texas only four are not presently affiliated with a funeral home or cemetery.

The consumer watchdog group complained that requiring crematory staff members to be trained and licensed could cost consumers mil-

(Continued on page 18)



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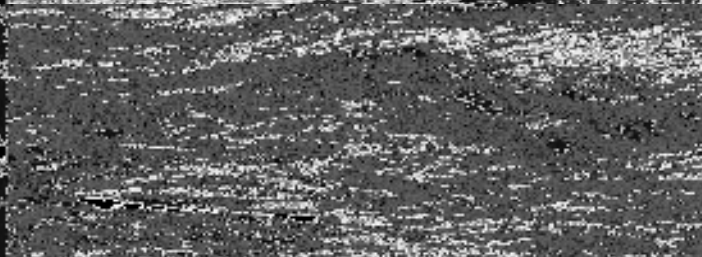
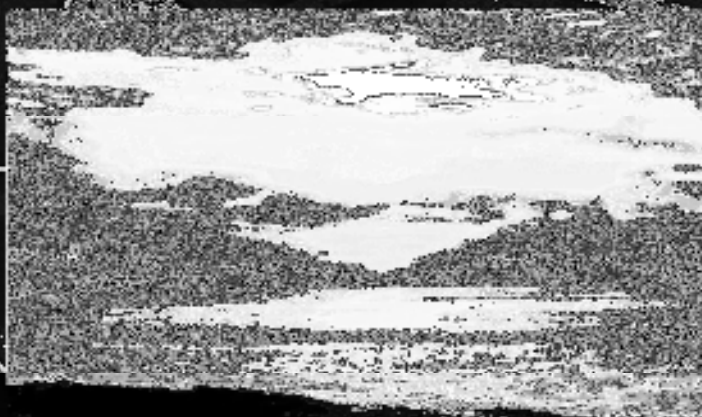
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# After-Thoughts-Milestones

By Joanne Howard

I've read in books that when you have lost a child the milestones in the child's life that you miss can be very upsetting. From my own personal experience I have to agree with this. As many of you know we lost our daughter Laura about seven and a half years ago at age ten to bacterial meningitis. This year she would have been graduating from high school.

I wanted to do something for each graduate and had to get permission from the school. Her graduating class is very small only 15 and she had been in class with nine of them. The class as a whole has been remembering her too. My husband Claude and I received an announcement of the ceremony signed by every one of the graduates which truly touched us. I asked one of the class sponsors if they had prompted the invitation and she said it was all the kids' idea.



Early in the year we had been asked about pictures of Laura for their slide show and the yearbook. I have since proofed the page in the yearbook. The class feels strongly about including her and I feel that's a real compliment to her after all this time. But then I was driving home from work one day and contemplating their strong urge to acknowledge her. It dawned on me that this was the first time since her death that they have been able to do this. Not only is this the only time, but it is the last. They will all soon be going on their separate ways to take on a new phase of their lives.

It made me wonder why schools have a tendency to not want to acknowledge the lost classmates. Regretfully many children are lost for many reasons. In high school many auto accidents claim lives in addition to those lost to illness or other causes. One local high school had banned the empty chair for the lost student. A couple of students got 700 signatures on a petition to present to their school board to change the policy. They accomplished their goal to have an empty chair for two missing students.



This is just a small example of how the fellow classmates feel and I can attest to similar actions with my own daughter's class. I have not asked them personally about their feelings because that's a bit hard on me, but their actions speak louder than words.

I miss Laura greatly and believe it or not it

helps to know others are missing her too. This Saturday, May 14 (which happens to be 7 years and 5 months to the day of my daughter's death) is graduation and Claude and I will be presenting a small scholarship in memory of our two daughters Amy and Laura. The scholarship had been initially started by friends of Amy (who had graduated from this high school and had been killed in an automobile accident in her second year of college). Since her younger sister Laura would be graduating we thought it wise to change the scholarship to honor both girls. When presenting the scholarship, I do the speaking and Claude gives the actual scholarship with a gift to the recipient. I have to admit I am apprehensive to look out while I make a very short speech to the graduates minus one beautiful girl. I'm writing this before the occasion and I'll probably have more to say later. This has been a very challenging time to anticipate, but I can't express how proud I am of Laura's classmates for remembering her and in a way helping me through this event.

\*\*\*\*\*

As Paul Harvey would say, "And now the rest of the story," the graduation is now a memory for the Golden City Class of 2005. The fifteen graduates have their diplomas and they are probably partying. So I'd like to fill you in on some of the details. The graduation started with the procession. In reference to my daughter, the graduates had spelled out "We Love You, Laura" on their graduation caps. The High School principal welcomed the guests and graduates and then as music played the graduates presented their parents with a flower and hug. One of my daughter's classmates presented me with a flower. Claude missed the presentation because he was watching the other kids and even hoping that someone would give me one. Many scholarships were then presented, one of



Mrs. Claude L. Howard, my husband and I went on stage. I read my speech of a few sentences and got choked up right off the bat

them being in honor of Amy and Laura. As the counselor announced a presentation by Mr. and

just explaining the memorial scholarship. I

couldn't seem to look at the graduates without choking up, so I read without seeing the people. Claude gave the certificate to the recipient and a present. The graduate started walking away and I called him back to hug him and then we left the stage. The next presenter went by us and she was a bit choked up to present the next scholarship. The salutatorian and valedictorian gave their speeches and the graduates received their diplomas and then they showed the slide show. As various pictures were shown the audience cheered individual graduates. About midway through the presentation there was one slide of a collage of pictures of Laura. I wondered if anyone would clap and the whole audience seemed to applaud. As my tears flowed, I was very proud of that girl in the slide. After singing the school song the recessional began. The traditional throwing up of the caps was followed by the graduates lining up in front of the stage where we had a flower arrangement in front of the podium. We had prepared for each graduate a white rose with a little black bottle of bubbles looking like a graduate with "Class of 2005" on it and a graduation cap keychain attached to it. On the bubbles I replaced the UPC sticker with a white label saying "In Memory of Laura Ann Howard." We handed each graduate a rose and they each hugged us and said thank you. My tears continued to flow. Many parents and friends came up to hug us after we gave out the roses. It was the end of our connection with Laura's class. But Laura would have been happy that they remembered her and we were too.



Laura Ann Howard  
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## Amy Howard Art Gallery



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

## New Embalming Service in Arkansas

The owner/operator/embalmer is William Newsome. He is 44 years old. In 1995 he graduated from Dallas Institute of Funeral Service. After graduation, he was licensed in Arkansas and Mississippi, and served as manager, director and embalmer since his career started in the funeral business. While in Dallas, he worked for a mortuary service. He wanted to have own his own mortuary service since he left Dallas. This is how Alpha Mortuary Service started but, most important, removals, embalming and all the paperwork will be done in a professional manner.

He feels like funeral homes of Little Rock and the entire state of Arkansas need a mortuary service that can produce a death certificate in a timely manner.

Mr. Newsome said, "We are open for business and there to serve you. We have nice removal vehicles and excellent facilities. Alpha Mortuary Service is located 5 miles from the Little Rock Airport. Just take exit #8 on Interstate 440 and the mortuary service is on your left side."

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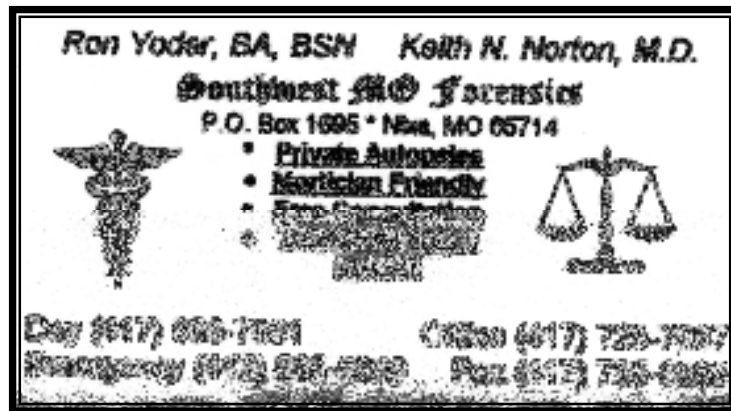
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## Eatin' On the Road

John Cox recently retired after 40 years at Greenlawn Funeral Home in Springfield, MO. John and Mrs. Cox were in Cooky's Cafe the other day. The 62-year-old restaurant is a favorite stopping place for a lot of funeral directors on the road. A few mornings ago, Shawnda, the early morning waitress gave me Ronald W. Ocker's card, Ocker-Putnam Funeral Homes, Van Buren, AR. She said Ronald was in the day before about 30 minutes after I had left. He may have been on his way to the lake.



Guess who went on a trip to the Grand Canyon??? The editor-Joanne. So look for a lot of pictures from our trip and this was a great restaurant we stopped at for lunch in Canyon, Texas, which happened to be right across the street from the funeral home.

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## Mortuary Muse (Cont.)

(Continued from page 3)

the paperwork. They hastily returned to the graveside as the decedent's brother decided to fulfill his role as minister 10 minutes early.

The minister reminisced about his life with his brother—sprinkled with an occasional Scripture passage. When he stopped speaking everyone stood in silence looking at the casket. A son stood at the head of the casket and stroked the varnished wood. The daughter began singing a hymn as tears welled in her eyes. All was silent again when she finished, except for sporadic bird calls. A small child kept getting too close to the grave until restrained by a parent. There was more silence.

Finally the eldest son nodded for the grave digger to bring his ropes and move the casket to the grave. Lifting the casket from the box stands with ropes and moving over the grave was awkward. The grave digger and one son swayed precariously as they tried to step over the grave. The stationary wooden bar handles scraped the sides of the grave as it settled to the bottom.

The casket lowered—there was still more silence. The brother/minister, announced that the service was concluded and that they should meet at a restaurant 20 miles away. No one moved. The grave digger backed his trailer of dirt to the grave. The son that had stroked the casket threw in a shovel of dirt and others tossed in a handful. A few mourners left the cemetery while some divided the single spray of flowers among the graves of other family members. The son in charge of arrangements returned to our van with Joanne and completed the paperwork and discussed what style of monument he wanted.

After the minister backed his pickup out of the cemetery, a son-in-law moved his van beside the grave and unloaded a 20-inch tall concrete elephant with a damaged front leg. The elephant which had stood in the father's yard was placed at the head of the filled grave. After several minutes of silent reflection while looking at the elephant — everyone left.

A few days later the daughter called Joanne for suggestions about writing the obituary and help to get it published in their local paper. Their paper required funeral home authorization which we gave before running the obituary. The ex-wife has also talked to Joanne about monument details since her son had returned to Afghanistan. The immediate family was diligent in following daddy's last wishes — but it appeared that for some of the mourners the service had fallen short of their emotional needs and expectations.

Could everyone's needs on this service been met? I doubt it. For some in this immediate family a personalized service meant — without a funeral director.

## Miller Coach Expands to Denver

**Miller Coach & Limousine Sales of Dallas** announced on April 15 the opening of their new sales office in the Denver suburb of Aurora.

Conveniently located in the **Oakbrook Business Park** at 11821 East 33rd Avenue in Aurora, the new dealership will serve as a sales and showroom facility for customers throughout Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, Western Kansas and Nebraska.

Frank Miller, owner of the 15-year-old family-owned firm, also announced the appointment of Mr. David Lee as regional sales manager. David and his wife make their home in Denver, and minister to a local church founded by the couple when not traveling for Miller Coach. Lee has been a local-based sales representative for the firm since January of this year.

"This has been a long term personal goal to have our dealership in

the Denver area," stated Miller. "And it fulfills a promise we made to our many friends and customers whose patronage and friendship made this possible."

Miller Coach has had a sales presence in the region for over ten years but felt the funeral community was underserved lacking the convenience of a full service funeral car dealership with new and used vehicles on site.

Miller Coach is the authorized distributor for two of America's leading funeral car manufacturers—Eagle Coach Company of Cincinnati, Ohio and Superior Coach of Lima, recently appointed Miller Coach as its authorized Kansas dealer.

The Dallas based firm will celebrate its 16th anniversary as a funeral car distributor in June of this year.

### Kiddie Jokes

John and Marsha decided that the only way to pull off a Sunday afternoon quickie with their 8 year old son in the apartment was to send him out on the balcony with a popsicle and tell him to report on all the neighborhood activities. He began his commentary as his parents put their plan into operation: "There's a car being towed from the parking lot," he shouted. A few moments passed. "An ambulance just drove by." A few moments passed. "Looks like the Andersons have company," he called out. "Matt's riding a new bike." "The Coopers are having sex!!" Startled, Mother and Dad shot up out of bed!!!! Dad cautiously asked, "How do you know they are having sex??" "Jimmy Cooper is standing out on his balcony with a popsicle too."

\*\*\*\*\*

A Sunday school teacher was telling her class the story of the Good Samaritan, in which a man was beaten, robbed and left for dead. She described the situation in vivid detail so her students would catch the drama. Then, she asked the class, "If you saw a person lying on the roadside, all wounded and bleeding, what would you do?"

A thoughtful little girl broke the hushed silence, "I think I'd throw up."

\*\*\*\*\*

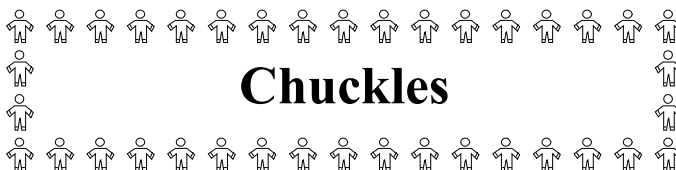


Three avid golfers happened to meet at the Pearly Gates one morning while waiting for St. Peter. St. Peter finally arrived and told them that through the gates of heaven was the greatest golf course ever created. He also said that each man would be given a set of golf clubs based on how faithful each had been in his marriage. The first man admitted to St. Peter that he had cheated on his wife twice. St. Peter said that it was a bad thing that he did, so he gave him a middle-of-the-line set of clubs. The second man told St. Peter that his had cheated on his wife once. St. Peter said

that it was a bad thing that he did, but since he only did it once, he gave him a pretty decent set of clubs. The third man said to St. Peter that he had never cheated on his wife and was happily married for fifty years. St. Peter gave this man a set of Big Bertha oversize clubs and irons.

A few days later the first two men were setting up to tee off on the first hole when they noticed the third man with his Big Bertha clubs, sitting on the side of the fairway crying. "What in the world are you crying about? You got the best set of clubs," said one of the men.

"I know I should be happy, but I just saw my wife coming off the eighteenth and all she had was a five-iron and a putter."

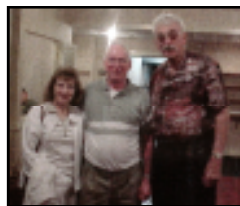


### Chuckles

Submitted by Theodore W. Kuhns, PA licensed funeral director now living and working in Las Animas, CO at Powell-Kuhns Mortuary.

#### OOPs!

On May 4, 2003, Theodore and Barbara Kuhns were having breakfast at the The Days Inn, Clarion, PA with Francis and Carol Boone of Carlisle, PA. When Mr. Boone heard that Ted was a funeral director, he started to tell about some incidents that happened to his grandfather, George McPherson of Enola, PA several years ago.



Carol & Francis Boone  
& Ted Kuhns

Francis told us that his grandfather married a mail-order bride from Erie, PA. The bride Myrtle showed up with a daughter Mary Irene. George and Myrtle got married and Francis is Mary Irene's son.

One day George died and was pronounced dead by Dr. Reisinger in Enola, PA. A funeral director took him to Harrisburg to his funeral parlor, and put him on the slab. The funeral director then went out to eat. A while later, George woke up and got off the table, went out, got a bus and went home. His wife almost had a heart attack when he arrived home!

Then another time, George was stuck under a building and couldn't get out. Francis asked what he could do to help. Grandpa said, "Go tell your grandma to give me some chew." So that's what he did. Then grandpa still couldn't get out and asked for more chew. The third time that Francis asked Grandma for more chew for Grandpa, she said, "Piss on him." So that's what he did, and he came out from under that building in a hurry.

When George died finally several years later, the grandson, Francis, 12, at the time was watching him closely lying in the casket. All at once, Francis yelled, "HE MOVED!" At that moment his mom jerked him out of the room and he never got back in for the service. This time George (grandpa) was really dead.



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<u>Year</u>	<u>Chassis</u>	<u>Manufacturer</u>	<u>Exterior</u>	<u>Interior</u>	<u>Information</u>	<u>Mileage</u>
2005	Lincoln	Eagle	White	Tan	\$2750.00 Rebate	1
2001	Cadillac	Krystal	Black	Black	Great condition	73,000
2000	Cadillac	Federal	White	Blue Leather	Exceptional	25,000
2000	Cadillac	Krystal	White	Blue Leather	Ultimate	54,000
2000	Cadillac	Krystal	White	Blue Leather	Terrific	72,000
1999	Cadillac	Superior	White	Blue Leather	Exceptional	19,000
1999	Cadillac	Eagle	Black	Blue	Crown Roof-Nice	52,000
1999	Cadillac	Eagle	Black	Burgundy	Extend Table-Crown Roof	95,000
1999	Cadillac	Eagle	White	Blue Leather	Ultimate	98,000
1996	Cadillac	Eagle		Burgundy	Great Condition	
1994	Cadillac	Federal	White	Blue Leather	Low Mileage	40,000
1990	Buick	Custom	Silver	Blue	Very Nice	49,000
1988	Cadillac	Eureka	White	Blue Cloth	Exceptional Condition	13,000
1988	Cadillac	S & S	Blue	Blue Cloth	Low Mileage	37,000
1988	Cadillac	Eureka	Black	Blue	Immediate Delivery	51,000
1985	Ford	Custom	Silver	Blue	Station Wagon	56,000
1983	Cadillac	Superior	Silver	Blue	3-Way	116,000

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2000	Cadillac	Eagle	White	Gray	Full Conversion	80,000
1998	Plymouth	Custom	Silver	Gray	Full Conversion	100,000
1999	Dodge	Custom	White	Gray	Full Conversion	85,000

## Funeral Car Limousines

2000	Lincoln	Federal	Black	Blue Leather	24-Hr Car	
2000	Cadillac	S & S	White	Blue Leather	Low Mileage	13,300
2000	Cadillac	S & S	White	Blue Leather	Low Mileage	15,000
2000	Lincoln	Federal	Black	Blue Leather	24-Hr Car	66,000
1999	Cadillac	Federal	Black	Black	6-Door	27,000
1999	Cadillac	Eagle	Black	Black	6-Door	28,000
1999	Lincoln	Federal	Black	Blue Leather	6-Door	40,000
1998	Cadillac	Eureka	White	Blue Cloth	Low Mileage	15,000
1996	Cadillac	S & S	Silver	Blue Cloth	6-Door	27,000
1996	Cadillac	Federal	Black	Blue	6-Door	52,500
1995	Cadillac	S & S	White	Blue Leather	6-Door	56,000
1993	Cadillac	Eureka	White	Blue Leather	6-Door	43,000



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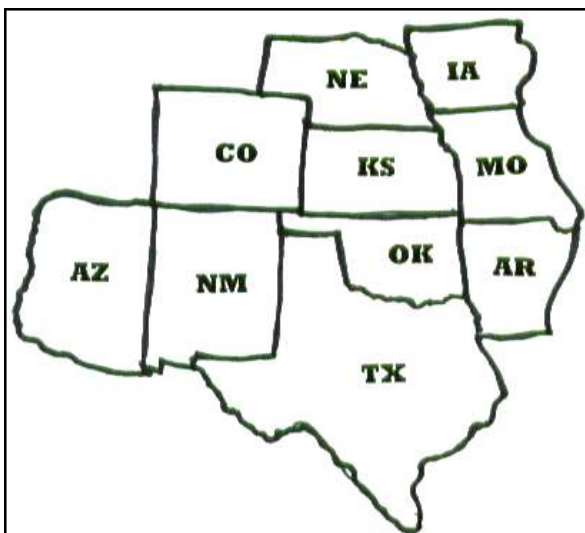
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#### Elliott-Gentry-Carder Funeral Home

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(417)962-3123

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## MISSOURI

**O'Garlan C. Ricks**, 89, died May 28, 2005. Mr. Ricks was a 50-year licensee, Past President of the MFDA and a past member of the Missouri State Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors. Funeral services were in the care of the Carter-Ricks Funeral Home in Elsberry.

## OKLAHOMA

**Helen Elaine Davis**, 84, died recently. She was co-owner of Davis Funeral Home in Cushing.

**Alan Gene Graham Sr.**, 76, was a former funeral director with Neekamp Funeral Home in Bartlesville. Services were conducted by Neekamp-Luginbuel.

**Timothy T. Key**, 53, funeral director and co-owner of Key Funeral Home in Pryor, died Sunday, May 22. To describe Tim you could say "**Providing Funeral Service Was His Ministry**" His survivors include: his wife, Clara Mae, their daughter and son-in-law Clarissa and Jeff Yates and his grandson Zak. Tim enjoyed involvement in the community activities, but providing caring funeral service was his priority. Tim was introduced to funeral service by his late father-in-law the Rev. Gene Jones and funeral service became Tim and Clara's ministry to the people of Mayes County. Tim was proud to have their daughter Clarissa assisting in the business and was probably looking forward to working with grandson Zak.

**Francis Joseph Morton**, 82, of Sand Springs, was a Pearl Harbor survivor and a funeral director in the late 1940's at Luginbuel Funeral Home in Vinita. Services were by Freeman Harris Funeral Home, Tulsa.

## TEXAS

**Carroll Paul Clayton**, died January 17, 2005, he was a funeral director for 40 years. Services were directed by Holden-McCauley Funeral Home, Haskell.

**J.D. Craft**, a retired funeral director, died January 21, 2005. Services were directed by Crawford-Crim-Bryan Chapel, Henderson.

**C. Arvin Harrell**, died Friday, May 13, 2005. Arvin was the owner of Harrell Funeral Home, Austin and the father of Jason and Jerry Harrell. Services were conducted by Harrell Funeral Home, Austin.

**Edbert L. Henneke**, a funeral home assistant, died May 14, 2005. Mr. Henneke was the father of Robert Henneke. Services were conducted by the Henneke Funeral Home in Columbus.

**Peter B. Phucas, Jr.**, died January 2, 2005. Mr. Phucas was a funeral director and an instructor with the Commonwealth College of Mortuary Science. Services were directed by David Funeral Directors of Houston.

**Billy Joe Seale**, founder of Funeral Directors Life Ins. Co. and past co-owner of several funeral homes, died May 15, 2005. Services were directed by The Hamil Family Funeral Home, Abilene.

**Cecile L. Roden**, died April 8, 2005. Mrs. Roden was the widow of P. Gene Roden, Sr. and the mother of Paul Gene Roden, Jr., Marcus L. Roden and Kathy Roden Floyd. Services were directed by Gene Roden's Sons Funeral Home, Paris.

**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@thedeat-beat.com**



## An Embalmer's Hands

By Ellie Bryant—

Inspired by Bill Farrer of Farrer Funeral Homes,  
Jefferson City, Dandridge and White Pine  
Published in **Texas Director**, July 1993

God gave us hands to use for Him—to use in different ways. Doctors use their hands to bring life into the world and to maintain life as long as possible. Artists use their hands to capture life on canvas. Authors write of life with its joys and heartaches. Sculptors use their hands to give shape to their creative ideas.

But you, the funeral director, take that from which life is gone and attempt to work miracles and you do. You have no life with which to work, but you are expected to make your masterpiece life-like. Family and friends pass by and inspect your work—not knowing how many hours were spent—nor understanding the agonizing of the heart that went into the masterpiece which you created.

You know that in a few short hours your masterpiece will return to Mother Earth, never again to be viewed by mortal eyes. Yet, you

must go on—another day, another masterpiece. You cannot arise in the morning and say, "I think I will write another chapter in my book today," or "I think I'll work on my picture today." When you arise you can say, "God gave me hands and a job to do—a job that is different from that of my friends."

"God gave me a special job to do. Today I am going to take that which authors write about, artists paint, and doctors work hard to keep alive. I am going to create another masterpiece today. Together, God and I. Yes, my masterpiece will return to Mother Earth, but God's masterpiece, man's soul, can live forever. I am a funeral director—using my hands for God."



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2002 Cadillac Superior Coach	Blk/Blk Ext /Blk Int	10,600 mi
2000 Cadillac Superior Coach	Blk/Blk Ext /Blk Int	19,400 mi
2000 Cadillac Eureka Coach	Wht/Wht Ext/Blue Int	50,400 mi
1999 Lincoln Federal Coaches(2)	Dk Blue/Dk Blue Ext / Blue Int	16,500 mi



2000 Cadillac Superior Coach



2000 Cadillac Eureka Coach

1999 Cadillac Eureka Coach	Blk/Blk Ext /Blue Int	41,500 mi
1998 Cadillac S&S Masterpiece Coach	Blk/Blk Ext /Blk Int	44,350 mi
1998 Cadillac Federal Coach	Wht/Wht Ext /Blue Int	34,000 mi
1998 Cadillac M & M Coach	Blk/Blk Ext /Blue Int	40,500 mi
1997 Cadillac Ultimate Eagle Coach	Wht/Wht Ext /Blue Int	25,500 mi
1993 Cadillac Eureka Coach	Dk Blue Ext/Blue Int	38,000 mi
1992 Cadillac Federal Coach	Wht/Wht Ext/Blue Int	22,000 mi
1990 Cadillac S & S Vict Coach	Blk/Blk Ext/Burg Int	72,700 mi
1989 Cadillac S & S Vict Coach	Wht/Wht Ext/Burg Int	61,000 mi
1989 Cadillac S & S Vict Coach	Wht/Wht Ext/Blue Int	66,000 mi
1989 Lincoln M & M Coach	Blk/Blk Ext /BlueInt	49,000 mi



1999 Lincoln Federal Coach

## Limousines



1999 Cadillac Eureka Coach

1999 Cadillac Eureka 6-Dr (3)	Wht/Wht Ext/ Dk Blue Int	38-44,000 mi
1996 Cadillac Superior 6-Dr	Blk/Blk Ext/Blk Int	78,300 mi
1995 Cadillac S & S 6-Dr (2)	Dk Blue Ext/Dk Blue Int	27,000 mi
1995 Cadillac S & S 6-Dr	Blk/Blk Ext/Blue Int	14,500 mi
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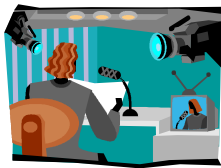




## Funeral Service PR - Or Lack of It

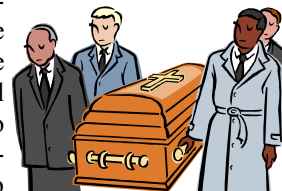
The number of hits funeral service has taken in the media lately makes me wonder if the evening news producers plan on finding some negative funeral service story to boost their station's ratings during the "sweeps period." Do funeral service critics coordinate their broadsides with the "sweeps periods?" I understand that the "sweeps" method is on the way out with more sophisticated audience sampling techniques, but many stations still rely on the information to boost their advertising revenues within their market.

So where do funeral adversaries get their information. Internet Blogs may be a possibility. **Public Relations Tactics**, May, 2005, commented on the growing use of blog sites and the advisability of covering employee blogs in a company's policy. Is this a situation where employees, well-intentioned or otherwise might put out harmful information to funeral service adversaries? Maybe we should be reading our employees' blogs??



## An Unfortunate Mix-Up

In Central Arkansas the paperwork and two bodies were mismatched when a funeral home employee returned the decedents from a mortuary service. The mix-up resulted in one premature burial, an exhumation and delayed burial. The funeral home notified the State Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors, extended apologies to the families, upgraded the services and reported their efforts to make amends to the families involved. Clergy supported the funeral home's longtime record of community service and efforts to work with the families. Some family members graciously accepted the funeral home's apology and some did not. At this time we don't know of any board action. Newspaper accounts offered no explanation why only the second family noticed the mix-up. The matter is yet to be truly settled.



Information from the **Arkansas Democrat-Gazette**, 4/28/05 and 5/6/05

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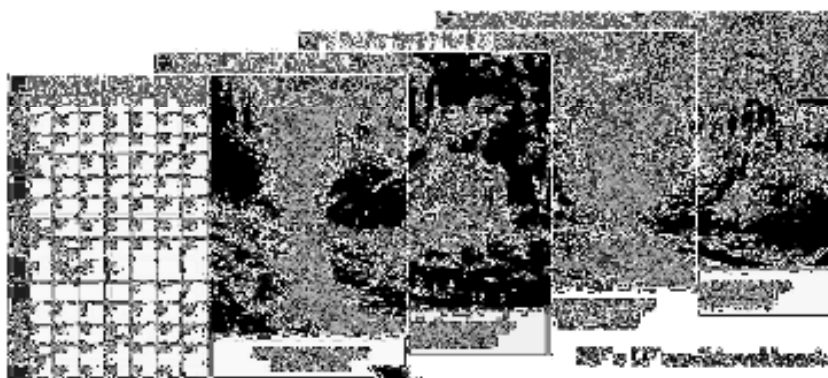
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## Behind The Back Fence (cont.)

(Continued from page 5)

lions. Jim Bates, director of the north Texas affiliate of the Funeral consumers Alliance of Texas said, "A crematorium in North Texas will charge \$300-\$400, while a funeral director using a crematorium will charge between \$800 and \$4000 depending on other services purchased."

Perry Brockmeyer's note said, "This may prove to be a dog fight in Texas. Texas funeral directors are a bunch of hard nosed businessmen."

Speaking of dogs—I wonder what the requirements are to become a consumer watchdog? Where do you go for consumer watchdog certification—obedience school?

\*\*\*\*\*

Recent copy in the Wall Street Journal about FCA's accusation of price fixing by SCI, Alderwoods, Stewart and Batesville, with additional players such as NFDA and Aurora also included, makes me wonder if FCA really knows anything about how funeral service companies work. I find it hard to believe they could all sit down and decide who is going to pay for lunch.



## Coroner's Office Rental Questioned

The Benton County Daily Record, Arkansas, called for the Quorum Court and the Coroner Kimberly Scott to relocate her office to avoid the perception of impropriety. The coroner had rented office space in the Benton County Funeral Home. Area funeral directors had voiced their concerns at a Quorum Court meeting in April. The coroner had also stirred up a fuss when she decided she would no longer permit Hospice nurses to pronounce their in-home patients dead. In 1995, Hospice workers were given deputy coroner status for pronouncing death in the homes of their patients. Hospice workers claim the coroner's actions turned the deathbeds of people trying to die in dignity into virtual crime scenes. Reasons claimed for the change were concerns over recordkeeping and prescription drug disposal. After a brief furor in which funeral directors supported the hospice workers, the coroner rescinded her previous order after a two-hour meeting.

Information from a story by J. Turner,  
The Benton County Daily Record, 4/15/2005.

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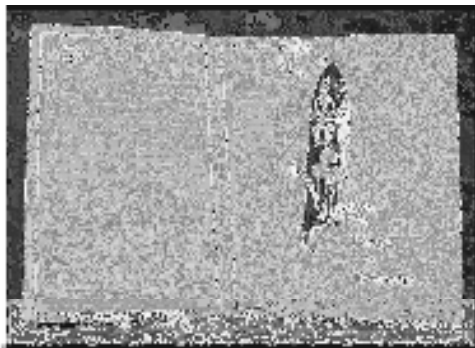


**Stanley and Son Funeral Home  
Pleasant Hill, Missouri**



**Hepler Funeral  
Home  
Camp Verde, AZ**





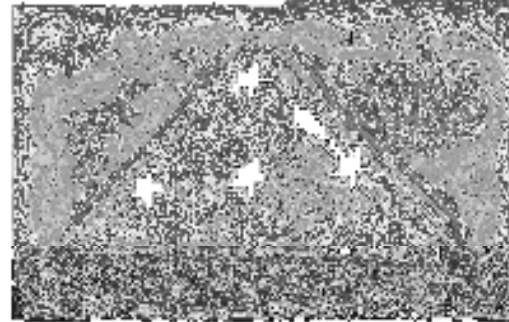
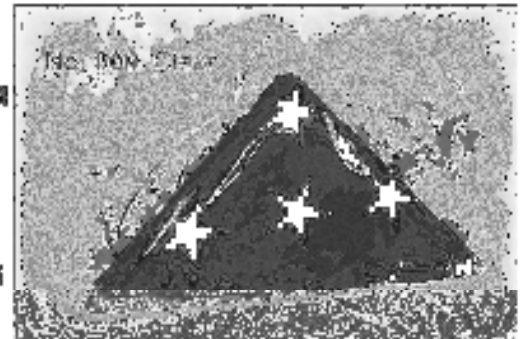
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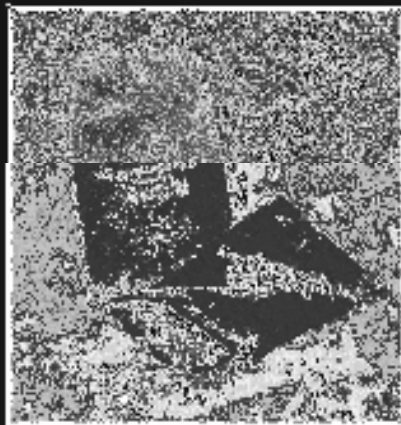
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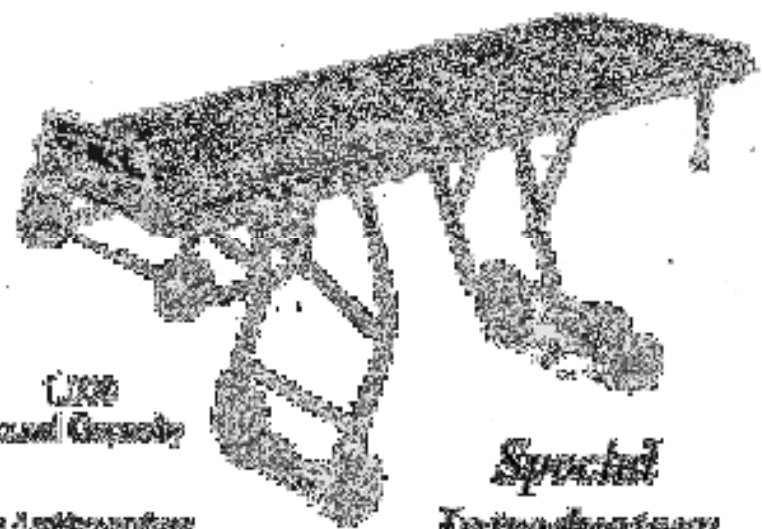
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### Forensic Physicians Fight Frustration and Fantasy (Cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

in an effort to separate human from animal fragments. Out of the thousand fragments only a few are as large as two inches. Those thought to be human will be submitted for mitochondrial DNA testing.

Stories about the survival of the remaining members of the party have claimed they resorted to cannibalism after they had exhausted supplies, animals and rawhide. G. Richard Scott, an anthropologist at the University of Nevada at Reno says, "To establish cannibalism, you look for the 'three B's' — burning, breakage and butchery." Signs of the "three B's" are charring to some degree, cut marks on the bones and breakage as inflicted with a heavy stone to retrieve the marrow. "Archaeologists also will be checking for a fourth B, boiling, which can be established by finding "pot polish" - microscopic smoothness at the ends of bones caused by rolling around in boiling water. Many of the fragments show evidence of being cooked in a fire for a long time.

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Scott said cannibalism would have been abhorrent to the Donners and their peers, but he believes the survivors did eat the bodies of the dead. The team members hope to humanize the people involved by getting a clearer picture of survival at this last camp. Dixon sums things up by pointing out they... will never have all of their questions answered about the Donner part...we will come up with a more complete picture. "We would love to be uncovering the truth."

#### King Tut's Death

There had been some speculation over the years about King Tut's death because of his relatively young age. X-ray examination of his mummy in 1968 had indicated bone fragments in the head leading some to believe he may have been murdered by a blow to the head. Some thought the mummy may have been damaged in previous examination attempts. A recent CT scan detected a broken thigh that may have punctured the skin with resulting death by infection a new possibility, but ruled out the head injury. Zahi Hawass, head of Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities said, "The study allowed him to rule out violent death, but left him with no idea how Tut died." Further studies will look at his viscera.



#### Trade Center Bombing

It's been more than three years since the Trade Center bombing and forensic scientists have identified nearly 1,600 of the dead. But the limits of DNA technology have now been



(Continued on page 22)

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## Forensic Physicians Fight Frustration and Fantasy (Cont.)

(Continued from page 21)

reached and more than 1,100 will remain unidentified. Some families with no one left to bury have chosen to bury mementos and photographs.

### Arkansas Teenager

An Arkansas family went to court to get the body of their teenage daughter, buried since 1989, exhumed and a private autopsy performed. The second autopsy by San Diego pathologist Dr. Harry Bonnell disputed a number of findings from the original state medical examiners findings. The family has drawn a lot of public support due to the efforts of Mike Masterson an investigative journalist. A special prosecutor has been appointed, but many state and county officials are reluctant to re-open the investigation. In January Dr. Bonnell was quoted as saying, "Perhaps the most telling aspect of this cover-up is that the medical examiner and state Crime Lab, which should be interested in the truth and objective investigation, did not have anyone attend the second autopsy, nor did they allow us to use the only forensic facility in the state."

### Arkansas State Crime Lab

A news story in the **Arkansas Democrat-Gazette**, December 12, 2004, commented about the backlog of cases at the under-

funded and under-staffed state crime lab. In 1994 the lab handled 16,458 cases and had a backlog of 2,764. By 2004 they had 27,444 cases with a backlog of 16,656 cases. "Among the untested evidence are 415 rape cases and 7,949 drug cases. At the time of the article there was a back log of 1,087 toxicology results further hampering the timely completion of autopsy reports and completed death certificates. One family quoted was desperate to learn the results of their daughter's autopsy after five months and were told it might take up to a year.

The Arkansas judicial system is often at a stand still and "the speedy trial clock stops running" as cases back up awaiting lab reports. The lab was established in 1977 and within a year prosecutors were complaining about the length of time it took to get autopsy reports. The transportation to the labs for autopsies or investigation also gets challenging. Due to lack of cooling units in some counties, pickup trucks without air-conditioning and long distances that the bodies have to make, they sometimes decomposed so badly that families can't have open-casket funerals. This is of consequence to funeral directors and their clients. Jim Clark, past executive director at the Arkansas lab for 19 years before retiring last year, sums it up, "You can't do what's on television. It's just not physically possible."


### Implications

The foregoing examples were sparsely detailed but they emphasize the fact that the **truth** sought by forensic scientists involves a lot more time, expertise and extenuating circumstances than the average television drama portrays. Yet TV forensics are now

(Continued on page 23)



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## Forensic Physicians Fight Frustration and Fantasy (Cont.)

(Continued from page 22)

having an effect in the real courtroom that has coined a new phrase, "The CSI Effect."

### The CSI Effect



Juries are now demanding to hear and see forensic evidence that is often not obtainable or was non-existent while ignoring other investigative case work. As explained in an article by Kate Coscarelli, Newhouse News Service, "the CSI effect has also spawned legal literature." As a consequence lawyers are urged to watch for confused jurors and be prepared to ward off the CSI effect by asking prospective jurors if they watch the programs. The attorneys need to explore whether the juror's judgment may be effected by the TV program's oversimplification of obtaining evidence and it's rapid scientific examination by state of the art facilities and equipment. An executive assistant prosecutor was quoted as saying, "When I tell jurors how things really work, it's like you told them there is no Santa Claus."

### Conclusions

What does all this have to do with funeral directors and embalmers? While you are making a crime scene removal be careful, observant, follow directives given by official investigators and don't have a conversation with the deceased. You may be on "News at 10."

Information from articles by Trine Tsouderos, **Chicago Tribune**, Paul Garwood, **The Associated Press**, Mike Masterson, Amy Upshaw & C. S. Murphy, **Arkansas Democrat-Gazette**, Sara Kugler, **The Associated Press**, Kate Coscarelli, **Newhouse News Service**, **Arkansas Democrat-Gazette** editions, 12/12/0-4, 1/1/05, 2/24/05, 3/9/05, 3/27/05 and 4/24/05.

## McNeese Consulting Announces New Website

Charles W. McNeese of McNeese Consulting announces that he had launched a new website: [www.mcneeseconsulting.com](http://www.mcneeseconsulting.com). The website contains free information, home study courses, and information on Collection Practices for Funeral Directors, Growing Market Share and Revenue and OSHA Compliance. McNeese Consulting works exclusively with the funeral industry conducting In-House Training and Seminars. Charles may be contacted directly through the website or at (785) 223-0490.

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Dixie & Greg Zabka, Seward, Nebraska, attending seminar.



Jeff Stygar presenting Larry Stroud with Robert H. Knell Leadership Award



Steve Watkins, 2005-06 MFDA president, Watkins & Sons Funeral Service, Dexter, MO, past president Jeff Stygar, Stygar Mid-Rivers, St. Charles, MO

More in future issues





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### Burial Vault Company Announces Name Change

Overland Park, KS: Suhor Industries, Inc., a concrete burial vault company founded in 1933, has changed its name at all of its locations to **SI Funeral Services**, according to Dennis Welzenbach, Exec. VP/CFO. The SI logotype will be utilized throughout the organization’s funeral service entities including SI Mortuary & Cremation Services, SI Memorials and SI Veteran Memorials.

SI Funeral Services is the largest licensee of Wilbert Funeral Services, Inc. And also manufactures and distributes Doric and Trigard Burial Vaults. The company operates 81 facilities in 11 states and provides concrete, steel and thermoplastic burial vaults as well as graveside services, grave digging, cemetery lettering, monument manufacturing and setting, cremation, embalming, disinterment and transfer services.

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