

# The Dead Beat



## The Caregiver's Soapbox

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



Winter, 2010

[www.thedead-beat.com](http://www.thedead-beat.com)

Volume 10 Issue 5

### The Pursuit of Information— On the Internet??

By Joanne Howard

So how do you keep track of what's going on in our funeral profession? Do you get all the trade journal magazines? Do you hopefully hear things from your colleagues, salesmen, going to district meetings? Or do you turn to the internet?



There seems to be many sites that are more than willing to provide information. Sometimes the information seems to be biased, but you can always have the opportunity to comment on whatever anybody has to say. But who has the time to check all these things out? Let alone comment...

For this publication we try to look at many different sources of information, but as I prepared this issue, I was feeling bombarded by all the internet opportunities. Or are they distractions at times???? Since we are a small funeral home, we have a bit more time on our hands. What about the funeral homes that are constantly busy, very busy? When do they have a chance to pursue this information?



I guess that's why the little snippets are sent to tease you into reading, like the titles on the covers of magazines. But who wants to read long articles on the internet and keeping track of all the user-ids and passwords and everything else that goes along with the internet including cost.

Some information is provided free even if you have to register to get it and advertising is what allows it to be free. But some magazines and newsletters charge quite a lot of money for the luxury of reading anything but the teasers. I was surprised at the cost of some new publications subscription costs, but considering they provide up-to-date information weekly that might explain part of the expense. The question is who has time to digest information on a weekly basis unless it is a crucial item to you?



Well, if you have a chance you might want to check out **Connect-  
ingDirectors.com**, **yourfuneralguy.com**, and the new **Memorial  
Business Journal** by Edward J. DeFort. I'm sure there are many more and if you like one in particular that you would like to share with us let me know-editor@thedead-beat.com.

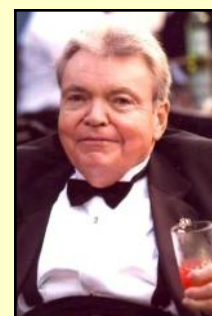
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## Amy Howard Art Gallery



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



Amy Howard

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## Mortuary Muse\*

\*to think or consider deeply; meditate  
By Lowell

**The Dead Beat** readers represent a diverse group of death care folks from the Mississippi River to Arizona and Texas to Wyoming. Naturally there is a lot of variation in funeral service trends when you try to categorize them.

I kept track of newspaper death notices for a few weeks in hopes of getting some imprecise data that would at least give some idea about service trends in our corner of the region. The area covered by one paper was about 7,500 square miles and more than 400,000 people. It included eight counties in Missouri and five stretching across SE Kansas and NE Oklahoma. I kept more specific detail on 27 funeral homes and 10 branches

located in the eight counties in Missouri.

After compiling the results and incorporating them in this column, editor Joanne pointed out that my results were a bit confusing. She was correct. After looking at it again I decided the column was not repairable.

Part of the dilemma is that with today's service options even clients using services with caskets and vaults may be difficult to categorize by full service or some other niche. Narrow the selection down to burning or non-burning and yes, burning is a growing segment.

Broaden the categories-include cremation with memorial services

and/or visitations. Graveside interment and columbarium inurnment services. Scattering service with family participation, visitation and perhaps lunch. Do you still chart these services as just a cremation?

Cremation may be a growing trend, but with a broad selection of options, this service may be preferable to a direct burial with casket and outer container. There is one caveat however. A firm must be prepared and willing to sell these services. I suspect that often times charges for the memorial services may just be thrown in. This is to mask the fact that the family actually just paid for a direct cremation.

*(Continued on page 8)*

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## Final Service

By Chandra Hart  
Sunset Vista Funeral Home

On Monday, January 11th, Sunset Vista Funeral Director Vicki Bertucci and Office Manager Roberta Wylie set out on a 50-mile journey to take a deceased woman to a service in Dateland, from Yuma, Arizona.

When they arrived at the community center, they got out of the hearse to find out where the service was going to be. Five minutes later Vicki saw smoke coming from the hearse. After a scramble to get the deceased out of the back and retrieve person belongings, the car was engulfed in flames.

After the service was over two ladies who knew the deceased said that she was always having barbecues, and she would love that at her funeral service there was one last barbecue. We bid our hearse a fond farewell after twenty years of service.



## Corpse Mix-Up: Funeral Home

**Pays to Apologize**  
From China Daily, Jan. 2, 2010  
Sent from SPC Brian Gers

A funeral home in Guizhou province paid two families as an apology for mixing up the dead. Minutes before the cremation of a relative, one of the families realized that the deceased was not their kin.

Staff at the funeral home said they might have already cremated their family member at another ceremony a few meters away.

*Editor Note: Mix-ups happen everywhere.*

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## Jason De Leon Attending Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service

Jason De Leon recently began his studies at Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service in Houston. Jason is pursuing his Associate of Applied Science Degree as a funeral director/embalmer. He is a graduate of Lindenwood University in St. Charles, Missouri where he earned a degree in Business Administration. Upon graduating from Commonwealth Institute he plans to serve his provisional licensing period at Memorial Funeral Home in San Juan and Edinburg. Jason is the son of Leon and Velma Sue De Leon of San Juan, Texas.

## SESAC Reminding Funeral Homes to Comply with U.S. Copyright Law, Secure Music License

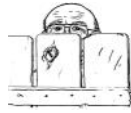
Brookfield, Wis—The National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA) was informed by SESAC that it was sending postcards to more than 16,500 funeral homes throughout the country informing owners of their obligation to comply with U.S. copyright law by purchasing a 2010 music license authorization.

SESAC is one of three music licensing organizations in the United States, and the second to increase its scrutiny of funeral homes that perform copyrighted music recently. Late last year, an inspector from ASCAP, another music licensing agency, arrived at a funeral home in a small town in South Dakota during a funeral. After determining that the funeral home was allowing copyrighted music to be performed during the funeral service, the ASCAP inspector gave the firm a choice: pay for an ASCAP license for the remainder of the year or face a copyright infringement suit with penalties of up to \$30,000. The funeral home had no choice but to pay for the individual ASCAP license. ASCAP has since expended its enforcement efforts to different parts of the nation.



**Colleagues Lost or Found!!!**

(If you would like to find someone in the funeral industry, let us know-  
**editor@the-dead-beat. Com)**



## Behind the Back Fence

By Lowell

The sky has fallen!! Are we still alive? I can't tell.

Pick up about any funeral industry journal or trade paper and one or more knowledgeable consultants will be warning of impending doom. Firms that have not embraced every conceivable internet option with links between their websites and those of everyone connected with the industry are leaving sales and commission dollars on the table. Commissions on all kinds of memorial gifts, flowers and you-name-it items and services from suppliers that are linked to your website or one of the online obituary sites. Perhaps that is why Batesville has developed a reported relationship with Legacy.com. How much inventory of gift merchandise will you have to stock to make up for reduced sales and a diminished death rate?

Open up your umbrellas—the sky is a little closer. According to the above maligned consultants, the profession apparently still has not realized that baby boomers want it their way. I think we have been hearing this for ten years now. Surely about half of the funeral home owners and managers today are baby boomers. How can they be so short-sighted?

As for memorial event planning, let's take a page out of the colonial past. We will open the ceremony with a furious fusillade (Is this allowed in town?) even though it is a waste of good powder and shot. Then roll out the whiskey barrels.

From *The History of American Funeral* by Habenstein & Lammers, Bulfinch Printers, Inc, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, (1955), "The funeral of "John Griggs of York County," tallied, a roast pig, geese, other domestic poultry, several bushels of flour, twenty pounds of butter, sugar and spices and also twelve gallons of different kinds of spirits."

Don't forget the memorialization gifts for all of the invited

guests—gloves, rings, hat bands and scarves. Also they may have rented a velvet pall and hanging crapes for the house and carriages. Some even provided mourning clothes for the invited guests. (For a contemporary touch we can add a golf outing, fireworks, pigeons, online streaming and a DVD of the event for all attendees.) Of course, all the expense comes out of the estate. It will be a memorable final event though. Mercy sakes—look at the bill to the estate! The activists may lobby the state to regulate funeral prices. Massachusetts did do precisely that in 1721, 1724 and 1742. The General Court of Massachusetts passed laws prohibiting "Extraordinary Expense at Funerals."

Perhaps the sky hasn't fallen yet, but we all need to keep open minds about what our clients may desire and what we can realistically afford. Change continues with or without us. Heck, the mortuary's in-house geek needs more CE's than the funeral directors.

I read in "Connecting Directors" that Batesville had bought the intellectual property of Gorla Vaults. Is an adult size combination casket/vault in the future?

In the comments section a reader takes us to task for not researching the origin of a feel good fable instead of taking the word of some guy on a bus. He is correct. We do not research the origins of obvious feel good fables. Besides I can't even remember the last time I took a bus.

About the Author: Lowell Pugh has funeral director and embalmer licenses in Missouri and Texas and continues the operation of the 105-year-old family funeral home. He is publisher of **The Dead Beat** which began in 1999. He can be contacted at **The Dead Beat** address.

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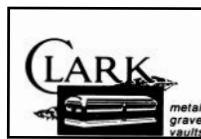
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tender, for tomorrow I may  
have to eat them.*

*"Kind words are like honey, sweet to  
the soul and healthy for the body."*

NLT Bible

## After-Thoughts *By Joanne Howard*

I sat down the other evening and collected a few thoughts that I wanted to discuss. I was just writing down whatever came to mind in relation to my girls and the continuing challenge of them being gone.

Now, first I want to dispel the thinking that just because they have been gone several years (*Laura has been gone 12 years and Amy has been gone 6 years*) that doesn't make hurting any less at times. Yes, it's not the same and you usually don't exactly show that you are upset. But down deep you still feel sad and it hurts in a way that is very hard to describe.

What has been most challenging lately is some connections with the girls are no longer there. In the past I mentioned when the dog that had been with the family when both girls were living died, I was sad about losing the dog but also she had known the girls. Lately a few more connections have left the immediate area.

Our minister and his wife who knew our oldest daughter very well, have retired and left our church. On the day of the final sermon, I felt quite emotional. This was surprising because I really wasn't that upset about the departure. But several times I was actually choked up. It dawned on me later maybe because another connection to Amy wouldn't be there any more.

Then the other day our clothes dryer stopped heating and we had to get a new one and they took the old one away. I felt bad about the dryer, but also I thought about how both girls had used it. I know this sounds like a weird association, but situations like that happen when you lose loved ones.

I had to go on a trip recently and some people in our group were going have to use sleeping bags. I knew that we had had one for Amy when she went on trips, but I really wasn't sure where it was, so I didn't volunteer. Before the trip I found the sleeping bag and actually took it along, but it was difficult for me to think about using it. Why it wasn't comforting

to be using her belongings, I don't really know. I think it just made me feel sad that she wasn't here to use it. Though I had brought it on the trip, I ended up on a sofa sleeper and it was along for the ride.

The sadness that I feel every once in awhile with the girls' items is probably why I haven't gotten rid of a lot of their things. You would think that I would want to discard things that make me unhappy, but it's an approach/avoidance type situation. I haven't found the appropriate situation when I can let go of their lives.

A young woman that helps at the funeral home was needing some shoes a few months ago. I looked at her feet and asked what size she wore. After I heard, I asked her if she would like some of Amy's shoes. She agreed and we had what seemed like a whole shoe store for her to try on. It was comforting to be helping someone and remarkable how the woman loved the same style shoes that my daughter had. I could part with them with no sadness and felt that my daughter would have been happy with my decision to share.

But there are times that I get quite upset with people who tell me to just get rid of everything or they could do that for me. Why can't they realize that if I want to dispose of their possessions, I will. Their items of clothing, toys, books, just everything was part of their lives. It's my physical connection to them still. I like looking through belongings and the things prompt many memories that I treasure. It's good to remember and yes, it's sad sometimes. But what difference is it than when children move on with their lives and parents keep mementos. Everybody keeps mementos, so why should I get rid of everything. It seems very hard to communicate these feelings to some people.

Now, back to some other situations that have happened. I had been involved with a local Compassionate Friends group that was re-organized a few years

ago. I went to their first few meetings, but it was almost more upsetting than comforting. I still financially support them in a small way and have been receiving their newsletter. Their bi-monthly publication usually has a column dedicated to the children's birthday and death anniversaries that take place in the months the newsletter is covering. Our children have always been noted until December, our youngest Laura's death date was not mentioned. In my head I thought to Laura, "Well, you finally have stopped being remembered." This did not make me feel too good, then in January, her birthday was omitted. Now, as an organization to provide comfort to parents that have lost children, this was not the way to do it. If I hadn't gotten the newsletter, I would never have known. But why eliminate my girls? If it was because I wasn't a member or something else why not let me know?

I e-mailed the newsletter editor about the situation and never got a response. I may have been spammed out, so I guess I should write a real letter. But I'm not sure what the usefulness would be except to possibly spare future parents that may be upset when they stop acknowledging their children.

As I have said many times before, as funeral directors, we must always remember that many events are happening with our families that have lost loved ones. They may not always be showing that they are feeling bad, and we need to be compassionate and careful that we don't add to the challenges they may be feeling. They just may have lost some connections.



About the author: Joanne Howard is the editor of **The Dead Beat**. She has been a licensed funeral director since 1992 with Pugh Funeral Home in Golden City, MO and also the aftercare coordinator. Much of her writing in this column is influenced

by her loss of her two daughters Laura at age 10 in 1997 and Amy at age 19 in 2003. Any comments or questions can be directed to 417-537-4412, P.O. Box 145, Golden City, MO 64748 or email [Joanne@thedead-beat.com](mailto:Joanne@thedead-beat.com).



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## Mortuary Muse (Cont.)

(Continued from page 3)

Some colleagues think that graveside service with visitation is also a growing segment that takes away from the so-called full service funeral. Here again it may take some discipline to put these charges in a profitable bracket.

So what is your cremation rate? Does it matter what the rate is if you price your services to ensure the survival of the firm? If this is not possible due to demographics or competition, at least you tried. There is nothing wrong with starting over again in a new endeavor. Look what Colonel Sanders did.

PS. Back to my confusing data. The five largest volume firms on my chart had cremation rates ranging from 13% to 31%. The rates for cremations that had additional services ranged from 42% to 100%. The two firms with the lowest overall cremation rate did the best job of selling memorial services. Remember this was only newspaper notices for a relatively short time.

### About the Author:

Lowell Pugh has funeral director and embalmer licenses in Missouri and Texas and continues the operation of the 105-year-old family funeral home. He is publisher of **The Dead Beat** which began in 1999. He can be contacted at **The Dead Beat** address.

## Illinois Cemetery Oversight Act

Interesting legislation prompted by the Burr Oak Cemetery situation. On Sunday, January 17, 2010 Illinois Governor Pat Quinn signed the state's Cemetery Oversight Act into law. It deals with policies, laws, rules, and regulation that should be implemented to ensure that care for the deceased is humane and respectful. Among the Act's key protections is the establishment of a Consumer Bill of Rights. For more details check out the website of the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Registration ([www.idfpr.com](http://www.idfpr.com)) under "cemeteries."



## Save Time With ASD's FuneralSync

Media, PA—FuneralSync is an innovative system developed by ASD-Answering Service for Directors that will automatically transfer funeral service information from your funeral home management program to ASD both effortlessly and efficiently.

"FuneralSync is a great feature," says Joe Bivona, funeral director of Sinatra Funeral Home in Hastings on Hudson, New York. "It makes our lives a lot simpler. We enter our service information into one program and are able to disperse to ASD with one click of a button.

Vice President of ASD, Kevin R. Czachor, says the FuneralSync is revolutionary. "Not only do funeral directors save time and eliminate chances for error associated with data duplication, but they save money using this automatic feature."

As of January 1, 2010, vendors such as SRS, Continental Computing, MIMS and Terradise are FuneralSync enabled. Other software providers are in the process of adding this feature.

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The funeral director's relationship with callers can be impacted for generations with each call answered. ASD's systems, facility and infrastructure will rival any 911 services or Fortune 500 communication centers. ASD, now run by the second generation of Czachors, serves over a quarter of the country's funeral homes.

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## Re-Entry By Ken Doka

I feel like an astronaut coming back to earth, " Marge, a young widow, told me. "I'm in re-entry." I thought about it for awhile and decided that her analogy was a sensible description of how we often feel in grief. When astronauts return from prolonged spaceflight, they need a period of time to readjust to gravity. They need to reacclimatize themselves to living once again on earth.

Marge was right. Whenever we experience a major loss, we have to prepare for re-entry into our lives.

A significant loss, such as the loss of a spouse, changes us in many ways. All of our small habits, our daily activities, may change. For many people, like Marge, this really happened twice. When her husband Tony first became ill, they no longer went for their daily walks. Weekends at a small country cottage ceased. Their daily routines ended.

But Marge began a new set of daily activities. Life took on a new pattern—regular rituals and activities based on her new care-giving responsibilities. Then, with Tony's death, this too ended.

Our perspectives and priorities may change. Things that were once important may now seem less so. Behaviors we once tolerated may seem less acceptable as we struggle with the strains and stresses of grief. We may have to assume new stances and new attitudes just to survive.

Our identities may change. Marge's did. She was no longer wife, but widow. She was no longer married, but single. As

she adjusted to single life after a twenty-three year marriage, she used an even more telling analogy once a few years had passed. "I feel like Rip Van Winkle, coming in to a dating system very different from the one I remember."

Relationships change, as well. We may find that relations with one's family or in-laws become modified. For Marge, her father became very protective, "almost like I was still that girl fresh out of high school, that girl he escorted down the aisle." Friendships change, as some friends may find it difficult to adjust to the changed circumstances in our life or to who we are becoming. In other cases, relationships may deepen as we find that certain friends, perhaps even surprisingly, become pillars of strength and support. They may accept our need to find new roles and even encourage us to try new activities and make new friends.

Even our own goals and aspirations may change. For Marge, her job was a source of discretionary income before her husband became ill. She worked so that she could pay for extras and provide a financial cushion. After Tony became ill, she realized she might not always be able to count on his support. She became more focused on her job and eventually turned the job into a career.

We need to recognize, then, that a significant loss, the death of someone we love, someone deeply involved in our lives, dramatically changes our lives as well. Not only are our situations and our lives different, we are different, too. We

are no longer the people we were. Significant losses change us significantly.

We are now in the process of becoming. That will take time. And we need to give ourselves that gift. We need to avoid dramatic changes until we are sure of who we are and where we are going. We need to reenter just like an astronaut—slowly, carefully.

\*\*\*\*\*

This article was originally printed in *Journeys: A Newsletter to Help in Bereavement*, published by Hospice Foundation of America. More information about *Journeys* can be found at [www.hospicefoundation.org](http://www.hospicefoundation.org) or by calling 800-854-3402 and is published monthly by the Hospice Foundation of America, 1621 Connecticut Ave., NW, #300, Washington, DC 20009. 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)



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## Chuckles

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

### The Irish: Bless Them!

Father O'Malley rose from his bed. It was a fine spring day in his new Washington D.C. parish. He walked to the window of his bedroom to get a deep breath of air and to see the beautiful day outside. He then noticed there was a jackass lying dead in the middle of his front lawn. He promptly called the US House of Representatives for assistance. The conversation went like this: "Good morning. This is speaker Pelosi. How may I help you?" "And the best of the day te yerself. This is Father O'Malley at St. Brigid's. There's a jackass lying dead in me front lawn. Would ye be so kind as to send a couple o'lads to take care of the matter?" Speaker Pelosi, considering herself to be quite a wit, replied with a smirk, "Well, now father, it was always my impression that you people took care of last rites!" There was dead silence on the line for a long moment. Father O'Malley then replied: "Aye, that's certainly true, but we are also obliged to first notify the next of kin."

\*\*\*\*\*

### Possible Change of Words for Oklahoma's State Song

Snow....klahoma  
Where the cold front's sweepin' down the plain'  
And the piles of sleet beneath your feet  
Follow right behind the freezing rain,  
Snow...klahoma  
Ev'ry night my honey lamb and I  
Travel home from work and hope some jerk  
Doesn't wreck our car in passing by!  
We know we belong to the land  
But it sure needs more salt and more sand!  
That's why we say.....WHOA!  
We're sliding the other way.....YIKES!  
We're only sayin'  
You're slick as snot SNOWklahoma  
SNOWklahoma  
SNOW-K-L-A-H-O-M-A  
SNOWklahoma SNOW-K

\*\*\*\*\*

### IRS

The IRS decides to audit Grandpa, and summons him to the IRS office. The IRS auditor was not surprised when Grandpa showed up with his attorney. The auditor said, "Well, sir, you have an extravagant lifestyle and no fulltime employment. Which you explain by saying that you win money gambling. I'm not sure the IRS finds that believable." "I'm a great gambler, and I can prove it," says Grandpa. "How about a demonstration?" The auditor thinks for a moment and said, "Okay, Go ahead." Grandpa says, "I'll bet you a thousand dollars that I can bite my own eye." The auditor thinks a moment and says, "It's a bet." Grandpa removes his glass eye and bites it. The auditor's jaw drops. Grandpa says, "Now, I'll bet you two thousand dollars that I can bite my other eye." Now the auditor can tell Grandpa isn't blind, so he takes the bet. Grandpa removes his dentures and bites his good eye. The stunned audi-

## Comments

In the second paragraph you state that the meaning of the 21-gun salute stands for the sum of numbers in the year 1776. I wish you would do more research on this subject instead of printing what you heard from some guy you met on the bus.

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/21-gun\\_salute](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/21-gun_salute)

[www.lilesnet.com/old\\_glory/21\\_gun\\_salute.htm](http://www.lilesnet.com/old_glory/21_gun_salute.htm)

[www.snopes.com/military/21gun.asp](http://www.snopes.com/military/21gun.asp)

[usmilitary.about.com/od/jointservices/a/twentyonegun.htm](http://usmilitary.about.com/od/jointservices/a/twentyonegun.htm)

[www.history.army.mil/faq/salute.htm](http://www.history.army.mil/faq/salute.htm)

If you need anymore let me know.

Thanks

Billy Bishop

P.S. The 13 fold thing is B.S. also.

*(Editor: Interesting myths)*

tor realizes he has wagered and lost three grand, with Grandpa's attorney as a witness. He starts to get nervous. "Want to go double or nothing?" Grandpa asks. "I'll bet you six thousand dollars that I can stand on one side of your desk, and pee into that wastebasket on the other side, and never get a drop anywhere in between." The auditor, twice burned, is cautious now, but he looks carefully and decides there's no way this old guy could possibly manage that stunt, so he agrees again. Grandpa stands beside; the desk and unzips his pants, but although he strains mightily, he can't make the stream reach the wastebasket on the other side, so he pretty much urinates all over the auditor's desk. The auditor leaps for joy, realizing that he has just turned a major loss into a huge win. But Grandpa's own attorney moans and puts his head in his hands. "Are you okay?" the auditor asks. "Not really," says the attorney. "This morning, when Grandpa told me he'd been summoned for an audit, he bet me twenty-five thousand dollars that he could come in here and pee all over your desk and that you'd be happy about it!" Don't mess with Old People!!



\*\*\*\*\*

### Retarded Grandparents

A teacher actually reported this:

After Christmas, a teacher asked her young pupils how they spent their holiday away from school. One child wrote the following: We always used to spend the holidays with Grandma and Grandpa. They used to live in a big brick house but Grandpa got retarded and they moved to Arizona. Now they live in a tin box and have rocks painted green to look like grass. They ride around on their bicycles and wear name tags because they don't know who they are anymore. They go to a building called a wreck center, but they must have got it fixed because it is all okay now, they do exercises there, but they don't do them very well. There is a swimming pool too, but they all jump up and down in it with hats on. At their gate, there is a doll house with a little old man sitting in it. He watches all day so nobody can escape. Sometimes they sneak out, and go cruising in their

*(Continued on page 11)*

## Chuckles (Cont.)

(Continued from page 10)

golf carts. Nobody cooks, they just eat out. And, they eat the same thing every night—early birds. Some of the people can't get out past the man in the doll house. The ones who do get out, bring food back to the wrecked center for pot luck. My Grandma says that Grandpa worked all his life to earn his retardment and says I should work hard so I can be retarded someday too.. When I earn my retardment, I want to be the man in the doll house.. Then I will let people out, so they can visit their grandchildren.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Golf Quotes

"Columbus went around the world in 1492. That isn't a lot of strokes when you consider the course." Lee Trevino

"If you think it's hard to meet new people, try picking up the wrong golf ball." Jack Lemmon

"If I'm on the course and lightning starts, I get inside fast. If God wants to play through, let him." Bob Hope

"After all these years, it's still embarrassing for me to play on the American golf tour. Like the time I asked my caddie for a sand wedge and he came back ten minutes later with a ham on rye." Chi Chi Rodriguez

\*\*\*\*\*

Did you ever wonder why there are no dead penguins on the ice in Antarctica—where do they go? Wonder no more!!!! It is a known fact that the penguin is a very ritualistic bird which lives an extremely ordered and complex life. The penguin is very committed to its family and will mate for life, as well as maintaining a form of compassionate contact with its offspring throughout its life. If a penguin is found dead on the ice surface, other members of the family and social circle have been know to dig holes in the ice, using their vestigial wings and beaks, until the hole is deep enough for the dead bird to be rolled into and buried. The male penguins then gather in a circle around the fresh grave and sing: "Freeze a jolly good fellow." Then they kick him in the ice hole. C'mon you really didn't believe that I know anything about penguins did you?



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### Girly Wisdom

1. A friend of mine confused her Valium with her birth control pills .... She has 14 kids but doesn't really care.
2. One of life's mysteries is how a 2-pound box of chocolates can make a woman gain 5 lbs.
3. My mind not only wanders, it sometimes leaves completely.
4. The best way to forget your troubles is to wear tight shoes.
5. The nice part about living in a small town is that when you don't know what you are doing, someone else does.
6. The older you get, the tougher it is to lose weight because by then, your body and your fat are really good friends.
7. Just when I was getting used to yesterday, along came today.
8. Sometimes I think I understand everything and then I regain consciousness.
9. I gave up jogging for my health when my thighs kept rubbing together and setting fire to my knickers!
10. Amazing! You have something in your closet for a while and it shrinks 2 sizes.
11. Skinny people irritate me! Especially when they say things like... "You know sometimes I forget to eat!"...Now I've forgotten my address, my mother's maiden name and my keys, but I have never forgotten to eat. You have to be a special kind of stupid to forget to eat!
12. The trouble with some women is that they get all excited about nothing and then they marry him.
13. I read this article that said the typical symptoms of stress are eating too much, impulse buying and driving too fast. Are they kidding? That's my idea of a perfect day!





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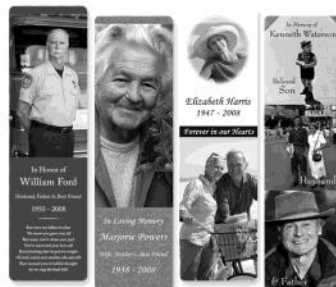
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## Death Notices of Fellow Funeral Service Colleagues



### ARIZONA



**Cameron S. Nerison**, 58, of Tucson, died November 23, 2009. "Cam" worked eight years in Phoenix prior to moving to Tucson where he enjoyed a thirty-two year career with Bring Funeral Home, Inc. He was a member of the National Funeral Directors Association; served as a Board Member and President of the Arizona Funeral Directors Association; name AFDA Funeral Director of the Year in 2002 and was a Board Member for the Diocese of Tucson Catholic Cemeteries. Cameron was a dedicated to his profession and will be deeply missed.

### IOWA

**Bruce A. Overton**, 66, of Dysart/Traer died Jan 23, 2010. He graduated from Wisconsin Institute of Mortuary Science, joined his father in the funeral business as the third generation in the Overton Family Funeral Homes. He was a Certified Funeral Service Practitioner (CFSP), served as Iowa Funeral Director Association President in 1986-87, president of NFDA in 1995-96. Past president of National Funeral & Memorial Information Council (FAMIC) and the Academy of Professional Funeral Service. Arrangements under the direction of Overton Family Funeral Homes.

### KANSAS

**Todd Swanson** of Ness City, died December 13, 2009. He was a funeral director at Fitzgerald Funeral Home in Ness City. Arrangements were handled by Fitzgerald Funeral Home.

**Russell Lynn "Rusty" Moore** of Baxter Springs passed away on January 16, 2010. He was the assistant funeral director at Derfelt Funeral Homes. Arrangements were done by Derfelt's Baxter Chapel in Baxter Springs.

### MISSOURI

**Edna N. (Vasterling) Schumer**, of Ste. Genevieve, died December 23, 2009. She was the mother-in-law of Leo "Chipper" Basler of Ste. Genevieve, owner of Basler Funeral Home. Services were directed by Basler Funeral Home.

### NEW YORK



**John J. (Jack) Hogan, Jr.** 71, of Flushing, NY died on January 25, 2010. He was born, raised, lived & worked in Flushing and grew up over the family business, Fogarty Funeral Home of which he had been president since 1960. He held leadership positions in the Metropolitan, New York State and National Funeral Directors Association.

He was the 2006 NFDA president. He also held high offices in numerous community, charitable, civic and church organizations. His services were handled by Quinn-Fogarty Funeral Home in Flushing.

**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**

### OKLAHOMA




**Christie Janeen (Cook) McCaslin**, 35, of Poteau, died on February 6, 2010. Wife of Lee McCaslin, mother of Whitney Way, daughter of Jim & Jan Cook, daughter-in-law of Roy & Kathleen McCaslin, granddaughter of Steve & Glee Worley, sister to JD and "Zac" Cook. Services handled by Evans & Miller Funeral Home.

### OREGON

**Phillip "Gene" Bateman**, 69, of Newport, Oregon died in Yuma, Arizona on January 5, 2010. He attended the San Francisco College of Mortuary Science graduating in 1964. He followed his father, Robert Bateman, into the funeral profession and was active in the business from 1955 until the time of his death. He was past president of the Oregon Funeral Directors Association. He served on the Oregon State Cemetery and Mortuary Board. His celebration of life was handled by Bateman Funeral Home.

### TEXAS

**Samuel Kip Altieri**, 42, serving in the U.S. Army in Tallinn, Estonia passed away on January 27, 2010. His brother is Jason Altieri, President of Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service in Houston, TX. 

**Ruth Boutwell**, 85, of Denton passed away December 22, 2009. Services conducted by Mulkey-Mason, Jack Schmitz and Son Funeral Home.

**Wanda Bratton**, 71, of Waxahachie, passed away on January 19, 2010. She was an Ordained minister and wife of Wayland Bratton, salesman for Miller Coach and Limousine. Her services were handled by Waxahachie Funeral Home.

**Margaret Cole**, of McGregor, TX, passed away on February 6, 2010. She was former co-owner of Cole Funeral Home, Inc. Her services were handled by Cole Funeral Home.

**Frank H. Ellis**, of Muleshoe passed away on December 17, 2009. He was TFDA president 1977-78 and is the father of Todd Ellis. Arrangements were conducted by Ellis Funeral Home.

**Ronald D. Gilbreath**, of Stanton, TX, passed away on February 6, 2010. He was a funeral director and former owner of the Gilbreath Funeral Home who handled his funeral services.

**Sam B. Harvey**, of Mount Vernon, died on February 3, 2010. He was a 63-year licensee and father of Craig Harvey and they were both owners of Sam B. Harvey Funeral Home who handled the services.

**Junior Grant Layton**, 90, of Safford, AZ passed away December 21, 2009. Caldwell-Funeral Chapel handled the arrangements.

**David William Malaby, Sr.**, of Texarkana passed away on December 10, 2009. He was the former owner of East Funeral Home and father-in-law of Brad Thomas, General Manager of East Funeral Home. Arrangements were under the direction of East Funeral Home—Downtown in Texarkana, TX.

(Continued on page 21)



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**Editor Joanne Howard's daughter Amy's Peacock. Last year Joanne tried creating a three-dimensional picture with Quilling (Paper Curling)- This was a present for a friend.**



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## Interesting Monuments

Sent from some of our readers





**The Dead Beat -The Caregivers Soapbox**

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## Brian Boyer Named Daily Journal Citizen of Year in Bonne Terre, Missouri



John H. Moore, Moore Funeral Homes sent us this information from the **Daily Journal, January 25, 2010.** He said, "This young man is from C.Z. Boyer and Son Funeral Home in Bonne Terre,

Desloge and Leadwood. A very deserving young Funeral Home co-owner."

At the Bonne Terre Chamber of Commerce banquet several awards were given out and Brian Boyer was named, "Daily Journal Citizen of the Year."

He was a 1997 North County graduate and the fifth generation Boyer to join the family business, C.Z. Boyer and Son Funeral Home. He is the vice president at the funeral home but also is co-owner of Good Earth Monuments. After the Bonne Terre Chamber of Commerce was awarded the bid for the Bonne Terre License Office, he was named contract manager.

Brian was the president of the Chamber of Commerce in 2007 and was instrumental in getting the license office contract. In addition to his other duties, he has been housing coordinator for a Regional MABA baseball tournament.

He has been a past and present member of many organizations including St. Francois County BackStoppers, Samaritan Masonic Lodge of Bonne Terre, St. Francois County Relay for Life, Bonne Terre Senior Apartments Board of Directors, Bonne Terre Cemetery Board of Directors; and several other Bonne Terre city committees.

Finally in 2006, he was the recipient of the 110 Percent Award from KJTT/KREI.

**Congratulations, Brian!!!!!!!!!!!!**

## God's Wings

(Story Sent to Us)

*One of our elders who works for the forestry department told us this story one morning. I love it and have repeated it many times. It was from an article in National Geographic several years ago providing a penetrating picture of God's Wings.*

After a forest fire in Yellowstone National Park, forest rangers began their trek up a mountain to assess the inferno's damage. One ranger found a bird literally petrified in ashes, perched statuesquely on the ground at the base of a tree. Somewhat sickened by the eerie sight, he knocked over the bird with a stick. When he gently struck it, three tiny chicks scurried from under their dead mother's wings. The loving mother, keenly aware of impending disaster, had carried her offspring to the base of the tree and had gathered them under her wings, instinctively knowing that the toxic smoke would rise. She could have flown to safety but had refused to abandon her babies. Though the blaze had arrived and the heat had scorched her small body, the mother had remain steadfast. Because she had been willing to die, those under the cover of her wings would live.

"He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge." (Psalm 91:4). Being loved this much should make a difference in your life. Remember the One who loves you, and then be different because of it.



**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).**

## Fountain National Academy of Professional Embalming Skills Announces Its 2010 International Conference

Springfield, Missouri—Vernie Fountain, Founder of Fountain National Academy (FNA) has announced plans for FNA to sponsor/host an additional event in 2010. FNA has conducted educational seminars for professional embalmers for 19 years and 2010 will mark its 20th year of providing this type of education.

In addition to providing the FNA regular seminar format each May and September, 2010 will be the beginning of what Fountain hopes will be its biennial International Embalming and Reconstructive Surgery Conference for Professional Embalmers. The conference is not designed to compete with any other state or national convention because it is designed strictly for the working embalmer. It was designed to impart the largest amount of technical information at one place at one time.

Mr. Fountain has engaged 12 hand-picked speakers, and all have graciously confirmed their participation. Each will conduct one hour presentations detailing various specific technical subject matters and participate in an open roundtable discussion on various topics. In addition to the hand-picked speakers the agenda allows for as many as eight concurrent 30-minute presentations conducted by exhibitor representatives that will allow exhibitors to speak about their products and specific product capabilities. The theme of the conference is "Dedicated to The Value of Open Casket Viewing." Mr. Fountain has been a strong worldwide advocate of the values associated with embalming, reconstructive surgery, viewing the body and of the value of visitations for the families professional

embalmers serve.

Fountain states there will be around 22 table-top exhibits featuring only items related to the theme of the conference. In other words, there will not be any displays of urns, jewelry, or miscellaneous items like displayed at many funeral-related conventions. In addition to all the conference activities and speakers, Mr. Fountain has selected three Guests of Honor. These individuals will be recognized in a special way for their many years of contributions, dedication and professionalism toward embalmer education.

The conference is scheduled for August 5-8, 2010 at the Holiday Inn Convention Center in Springfield, Missouri, USA. This venue was chosen to help hold down the costs of travel and lodging for those who attend.

"If I accomplish my goals for the conference attendees, the attendees from many parts of the world will learn new exciting techniques, make new friends, network with other embalmers, have fun and relax, and leave the conference GLAD that they attended." Fountain goes on to say, "I want it to be very educational and worthwhile."

Further information contact:

Vernie R. Fountain Fountain National Academy  
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## Death Notices of Fellow Funeral Service Colleagues (Cont.)

(Continued from page 14)

**James H. "Aggie" Maxfield**, of Temple died January 15, 2010. He was a 50-year licensee, 2001 Winner of TFDA Supplier of the Year and was employed by Tarrant County Mortician Services in Ft. Worth. Services were under the direction of Scanio-Harper Funeral Home in Temple.

**Robert A. Owen**, died December 29, 2009. He was the father of Mark A. Owen, the Regional Sales Vice President of Funeral Directors Life Insurance Co. of Abilene, TX. His services were under the direction of Adams Funeral Home of Ralls in Ralls, TX.

**Ralph Roberts**, 82, of died January 21, 2010. He was licensed over 50 years and had owned funeral homes in Texas. He attended Dallas Institute of Funeral Service and was employed with Pace Funeral Home in Livingston.

**Ellen Fischer Saunders**, of San Antonio died December 30, 2009. She was a former 23-year employee of Porter Loring Mortuary and was the widow of Harold C. Saunders, a past TFDA President & Former owner of Riebe-Saunders Funeral Home of San Antonio. Her services were under the direction of Porter Loring Mortuary North.

**Traversia Julius Viola, Sr.**, 91, of West Columbia died December 31, 2009. He took pre-med courses from Prairie View A & M in 1941. Taking advanced courses in restorative art, he attended and graduated Mortuary College in Houston, TX. He was the owner and operator of E. Viola and Son Funeral Home in West Columbia for more than 70 years. He was a 73 year licensee Funeral Director and Embalmer.



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## Interesting Facts About the Bible

This is pretty strange how it worked out this way. Even if you are not religious, you should read this.

1. What is the shortest chapter in the Bible?  
 Psalm 117
2. What is the longest chapter in the Bible?  
 Psalm 119
3. Which chapter is in the center of the Bible?  
 Psalm 118
4. There are 594 chapters before Psalms 118.  
 There are 594 chapters after Psalms 118.  
 Add these numbers up and you get 1188.  
 What is the center verse in the Bible?  
 Psalm 118:8
5. Does this verse say something significant about God's perfect will for our lives?  
 Psalms 118:8 (NKJV) -  
 "It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man."  
 Now isn't that odd how this worked out... or was God in the center of it?



## Beware of Terrorist Groups in Church

Latest news reports are that five terrorist cell groups have been operating in many of our churches. The have been identified as: Bin Sleepin, Bin Arguin, Bin Fightin, Bin Complainin, and Bin Missin.

Their leader, Lucifer Bin Workin, trained these groups to destroy the Body of Christ. The plan is to come into the church disguised as Christians and to work within the church to discourage, disrupt and destroy.

However, there have been reports of a sixth group. A tiny cell know by the name Bin Prayin is actually the only effective counter terrorism force in the church. Unlike other terrorist cells, the Bin Prayin team does not blend in with whoever and whatever comes along.

Bin Prayin does whatever is needed to uplift and encourage the Body of Christ. We have noticed that the Bin Prayin cell group has different characteristics than the others. They have Bin Watchin, Bin Waitin, Bin Fastin, and Bin Longin for their Master, Jesus Christ to return.

**NO CHURCH IS EXEMPT!**

(However, you can spot them if you bin lookin, bin goin and bin active.)

## “Dear Counselor....” By Bill Stalter

Dear Counselor,

In a recent AARP bulletin, a consumer advocate recommended the Totten Trust as a method for funding a pre-planned funeral. What is a Totten Trust?

The Totten Trust is essentially a ‘payable on death’ account that has very little application today. The term dates back more than 100 years to when banks would set up small trust accounts for clients that could not afford a formal probate estate. The bank would hold the client’s property in trust until death, and then distribute the property to a beneficiary. On paper, the arrangement sounds perfect for the consumer who may face a spend down situation and does not want to purchase a preneed contract. However, the Totten Trust is not a realistic answer to funding a preplanned funeral arrangement.

Banks and trust companies have minimum fees that typically involve hundreds of dollars to set up the trust. The bank also has minimum monthly administrative charges that can also exceed hundreds of dollars per year. Consequently, the small trust can prove to be a very expensive arrangement to the consumer who only plans to set aside \$5,000 for funeral and burial expenses.

For the consumer looking to qualify for public assistance, a payable on death depository account may not satisfy the government rules for excluding assets from eligibility testing. While the trust is a more acceptable vehicle for assistance testing, the cost proves too high a hurdle.

\*\*\*\*\*



Bill Stalter answers our questions for educational purposes only. It is *The Dead Beat's* intent to give the reader general information about legal issues, not to provide legal advice. If a reader needs legal advice, he or she should hire an attorney. Reading *The Dead Beat* should not be used as a substitute for legal advice from an attorney. When Bill provides legal advice he does so for Stalter Legal Services in Overland Park, Kansas. Bill also provides consulting services through Preneed Resource Consultants, which can be found at [www.prenneedresource.com](http://www.prenneedresource.com).

**We need some questions for the  
“Dear Counselor....” column.**

**Please send your questions to Bill’s e-mail or The Dead Beat’s and we will get some answers in future issues.**

**email: [wastal@swbell.net](mailto:wastal@swbell.net) or [bill@stalterlegal.com](mailto:bill@stalterlegal.com)  
or [editor@thedead-beat.com](mailto:editor@thedead-beat.com)  
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## Of Service To the Living By Caring for the Dead

By the Late Charles McNeese



Every day funeral directors are called upon to put their personal lives aside and devote all of their efforts to making arrangements with a family that has lost a loved one. This is what we do. For the most part, thank God, the families we are called upon to help have lost an elderly family member or friend. We like to think that “they have lived a long, rich full life,” and that dying is a natural process. A part of life that each of us must eventually face. We go through the process of making funeral arrangements as we have all done thousands of times by putting any personal emotions or feelings aside and dealing with the family to the best of our ability. Attempting to console them by arranging a fitting service according to their wishes. After all, the loss of this loved one is special and very personal to that family. It has always been personal even before someone thought up the term “personalization,” or invented the “memory board,” or thought of putting a photograph of the deceased on the memorial folder.

Someone once wrote, “The death of anyone diminishes the community and therefore diminishes me.” I believe this is true. Regardless of the age, the manner of death or the contributions the deceased may or may not have made to our society, the deceased while living made an impact on our society. Someone loved them and they are irreplaceable.

We are all very good at hiding our feelings. Years of practice have made us masters of disguising any real emotions. It’s as though we are not supposed to have personal thoughts of grief or remorse about the circumstances, or for the family we serve. We instead have “empathy” for the situation. By not becoming too involved with the reality of the situation we are supposed to better serve the family at their time of loss. While it is very true, someone must be in charge of the situation, and in order for the funeral director to help the family that someone must be you, the director that is meeting with the family.

To further hide our feelings we talk among ourselves about the death by only covering the details. “It will be a 10 o’clock Thursday Chapel going to Green Hills” - “Wednesday Visitation 6-8 P.M.” - “Memorials to Home Hospice.” As though three lines on the service schedule covers all of our involvement with the matter. After Thursday morning we will move on with our lives as if this brief encounter with the family never happened. We will block out most of the details over time and they will be replaced with the immediate matters at hand and the next family we serve.

I submit that this attitude of detachment and empathy for the event is often only a guise. A death does matter and a grieving family does affect every one of us. The challenge is to keep our emotions in check and be of service to the family. It is unhealthy to pretend to be so calloused about your work to not

*(Continued on page 23)*

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### Of Service To the Living By Caring for the Dead (Cont.)

(Continued from page 22)

have feelings, to act as if the matters at hand are merely another call. Hiding your emotions over time will lead to "burn out." You will reach your personal limit and be unable to effectively function as a funeral director.

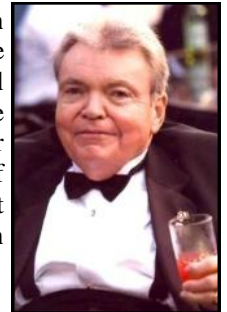
It is like the analogy that you start out every morning carrying an empty basket. During the course of the day everyone you meet puts a problem in your basket. By the end of the day your basket is very heavy. You have to find a way to deal with the problems as they are important, they do matter and you have been entrusted to help solve them. You must find a way to express your emotions, empty your basket and be of service to the next family. **That is what we do.**

### Fate and a Wrong Turn Ends in Friendship

A few years ago the Pugh Funeral Home/Dead Beat crew was wandering through a convention hotel's service area trying to find the correct meeting room for the next session. Our trail merged with some folks from New York state who were also trying to find their way. This chance meeting with John "Jack" and Mary Hogan, Quinn-Fogarty Funeral Home in Flushing, NY, resulted in delightful conversation and sharing over the next couple of days. Jack was working the convention circuit for support in his climb through the chairs at NFDA. Though our respective areas were a thousand miles apart and quite different, we all felt completely at home with one another.

A few weeks later we shared some time on the River Walk in San Antonio at the Texas convention. Jack continued his NFDA career becoming President with all of its rewards and stresses and continued to work for the good of funeral service as long as he was able.

Our paths have not crossed since then, but Joanne and Mary have continued communicating over the years. Jack and Mary were very supportive to Joanne and Claude when their daughter Amy died. The Hogans truly live up to their Christian faith and the ideals of the professional funeral director. Someone once remarked that when we leave this world the void we leave behind will fill as quickly as the one left when you pull your hand out of a bucket of water. I think he had not known anyone like John "Jack" Hogan.



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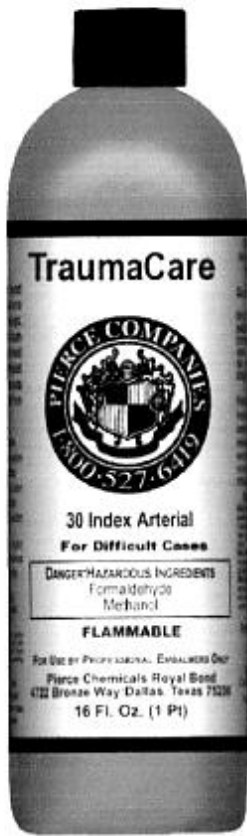
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## Study Finds the Lack of Flowers at Funerals May Hinder Grieving Process

From Connecting Directors, 12/31/2009

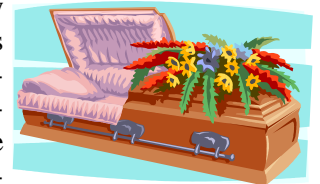


*“Recent research indicates that sympathy flowers may not only brighten and warm a funeral or memorial service setting, but also have a positive impact on the emotional well being of the bereaved. The phrase “In Lieu of Flowers” is now considered a major barrier to the healing process. Clay Atchison has archived this study, and related information, on the Website, [www.inlieuofflowers.info](http://www.inlieuofflowers.info), to support people in making the right decision regarding funeral flowers.”*

The giving and receiving of flowers during times of mourning is a long-standing tradition. Now picture a funeral without flowers.

“Beyond simply color and ambience, flowers play a

significant role in the grieving process,” shares Clay Atchison, of [www.inlieuofflowers.info](http://www.inlieuofflowers.info). But, despite the results of the 2006 study which tells us that flowers make the process more manageable and inject some degree of pleasure, the presence of flowers at and around funerals is actually diminishing.



The behavioral research study conducted by Nancy Etcoff, Ph.D., of Harvard University, underscores the importance of flowers in our lives and reveals some of the calming, fortifying feelings they can create. “The Role of Flowers and Plants in the Bereavement Process,

*(Continued on page 25)*

## Study Finds the Lack of Flowers at Funerals May Hinder Grieving Process ( Cont.)

(Continued from page 24)

funded jointly by the American Floral Endowment and the Society of American florists Information Committee, more than half of the bereaved surveyed strongly agreed that flowers were a critical component of the funeral ritual that helped them deal with their grief.

The study reveals that flowers feed compassion and chase away anxiety and worries. The research participants lived with fresh flowers for just a few days and reported increases in feeling of compassion and kindness for others. Overall, people simply felt less negative after being around flowers.

“What we learned is that flowers can have profound positive effects on our emotions,” said Etcoff. “We have an innate attraction to flowers,” she added, “and through research we are beginning to discover why that is so.”

The bereavement process is a pivotal time when worry, anxiety, and many sad emotions are present. With such compelling research that shows the presence of flowers make a positive impact on people’s emotional well-being, florists want the funeral industry to know flowers are a critical part of the bereavement process.

According to funeral directors, more and more families are requesting that donations to charitable organizations be made in honor of their departed loved ones. When families request; these donations, the request is often through the obituary or announcement and reads something along the line of “in lieu of flowers, donations can be sent to...”

While a donation is certainly an appropriate tribute that immortalizes the deceased in both name and philanthropy, this trend has some florists worried, though not for the obvious reasons.

“Many people think that as florists, we’re upset because this inclination toward donations could potentially hurt the sales of sympathy flowers,” said Clay Atchison III, founder of InLieuof flowers.info, an informational website aimed at raising awareness of the role flowers play in the grieving process.



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“But that’s not what we’re actually concerned about. We’re passionate about flowers and plants, what they symbolize and the comfort they can provide. That’s why we’re in the industry, and that’s what we’re fighting to preserve,” added Atchison, who is also owner of the Texas-based McAdams Floral.

At the funeral service, flowers also help brighten a somber environment and provide a topic of conversation and a tranquil focal point. The study further demonstrated that because of their soothing qualities, sympathy flowers displayed at funerals actually had a positive impact on the emotional well-being of the bereaved.

Arrangements and plants after the funeral service act as keepsakes to brighten the home and in the case of flowering plants, can serve as a living memorial to the deceased, Atchison added.

Florists like Atchison are working to reach out to the funeral directors so that they will reconsider the wording used in obituaries and announcements. When some people read, “in lieu of flowers,” they may incorrectly assume that flowers aren’t welcome at all. This could result in a funeral without colorful foliage, which according to the study could be detrimental to the grieving process. “We do not want to dissuade people from requesting donations in memory of the deceased,” said Atchison. “We simply want to ensure that the obituary wording doesn’t deter people from expressing their condolences in different ways—in ways they may feel most comfortable.”



(Continued on page 26)



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## Michael Watkins, CFSP, Named NFDA Senior Vice President of Operations

Brookfield, Wis—Michael J. Watkins, CFSP, has been named senior vice president of operations of the National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA). In his new role, Watkins will oversee the Member Services Division, the International Relations Department, and the association's internal operations, which includes the Accounting, Information Technology and Human Resources departments.

Watkins most recently served as executive vice president of Palm Mortuary in Las Vegas, Nevada. Throughout the past 26 years, Watkins' professional experience in funeral service allowed him to work with funeral homes throughout the country. He has interacted with firms of all sizes (from less than 100 calls to more than 7,000 calls annually); firms that operate in urban and rural settings; and funeral homes where a majority of client families desire burial to firms where most desire cremation.

"I am eager to help NFDA continue to grow and improve," said Watkins. "Our members' focus is on providing the best possible service to each family that walks through their doors. On any given day, however, there are a multitude of additional issues—FTC and OSHA compliance, human resources, insurance and property liability, adherence to federal and state laws and regulations—that are critical to the operation of their business. I want to use the experience I have gained in this profession to seek new ways to make our member feel supported by their national association, allowing them to focus on doing what they do best—serving the bereaved."

"The diversity of Mike's experience, as a funeral director and in an administrative capacity, reflects the diversity of NFDA's membership and makes him an outstanding addition to this association's staff," NFDA CEO Christine Pepper, CAE. "Regardless of the position he has held—whether he was dealing directly with grieving families, or helping to develop the skills of those who serve families—Mike's central focus has always been to seek new ways to enhance the experience of the bereaved. I am confident his skills will help NFDA strengthen its outreach to members."

## Study Finds the Lack of Flowers at Funerals May Hinder Grieving Process ( Cont.)

(Continued from page 25)

**These Phrases are Suggested:**

- ♦ The family suggests memorial contributions be sent to....
- ♦ Should friends desire, contributions may be sent to....
- ♦ Memorials may be made to the charity of your choice.
- ♦ The .... Memorial has been established for those wishing to contribute.
- ♦ As an expression of sympathy, memorial contributions may be sent to....
- ♦ The family has designated the .... for memorial contributions.
- ♦ Remembrances may be made in the form desired by friends.
- ♦ Memorial contributions may be made to....
- ♦ Flowers are welcome. Contributions may be sent to....

For further details on the study and more information on this topic, visit [www.inlieuofflowers.info](http://www.inlieuofflowers.info).

### **Editor Comments:**

*Being a funeral director, I can relate to some of the things that have been covered here. I am reminded how important it is for the people to see who sent flowers, how barren the whole funeral setting is until the flowers arrive and the family cooperation that happens when the funeral is over and we deliver flowers to the family or they come pick them up at the funeral home or church. The flowers are such an asset to the funeral experience that it would be sad to see it diminish. As with all economic influences, the price of flowers is a factor that has not been mentioned. I hear a lot about wasting the money on flowers, but these people are not thinking about all the contributing facets of the flowers. I also think that people are influenced by "in lieu of flowers." Many people do think that the family doesn't want them. I felt some of the comments that were given after this article was on Connecting Directors were a bit harsh. Think of how happy anyone is when they received flowers. That someone thought enough of them to send this gift. It's no different with a funeral when the family and friends need that encouragement more than ever. As your world is falling down around you, flowers may be one of the things that lifts you up. And, yes, helping with the grieving process.*



## Follow Love By Steve Palmer

*Editor: This is a repeat of something near and dear to my heart and expressed so well by Steve Palmer in the January, 2004 issue of YB News ( Now known as Nomis Funeral Home and Cemetery News). Steve entered funeral service in 1971. He is an honors graduate of the New England Institute of Applied Arts and Sciences. Licensed on both coasts, he owns the Westcott Funeral Homes of Cottonwood and Camp Verde, AZ. Steve still offers his observations on current funeral service issues monthly in this publication.*

\*\*\*\*\*

"The death of a child is an impossible grief. In a culture that values youth above all, the death of a child is viewed as the greatest of all tragedies." Catherine M. Sanders, PhD.

**Joanne Howard** knew this Annual Remembrance Service, which she arranged every year at the **Pugh Funeral Home**, would be more difficult than the past eleven. Probably even more than the one in 1997 after the death of her youngest daughter. This year she would be remembering two lost daughters. She is a survivor of tragedy and an inspiration to those in mourning.

A longtime associate of the funeral home located in Golden City, MO, Joanne also co-edits *The Dead Beat: A Caregiver's Soapbox*, a regional, but nationally growing publication to funeral homes with **Lowell Pugh**, the funeral home's principal.

In December, 1997, Joanne's daughter Laura felt ill early one Sunday morning and missed church, her physical condition worsened during the day and they rushed her to the hospital where her heart stopped and could not be started again. This ten year old who loved to sing, was lost to meningitis.

Laura's casket was one of those that the mourners could write on and her many classmates did. As Joanne remembers, "To say the least it was covered with some very precious thoughts on it." Her casket contained many special possessions placed by her family including sports shoes, bracelets and letters from family and close friends.

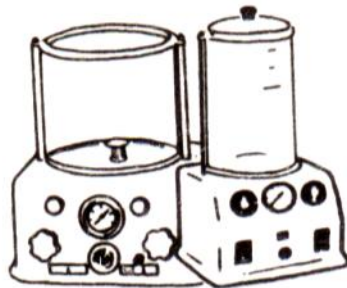


(Continued on page 30)

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## You Reap What You Sow

*Editor: This is from an e-mail forward sent from a friend. It's probably not a true story, but it has a great message. You should never judge a book by its cover and God's angels are all around us!!*

"Good Morning," said a woman as she walked up to the man sitting on the ground. The man slowly looked up. This was a woman clearly accustomed to the finer things of life. Her coat was new. She looked like she had never missed a meal in her life.

His first thought was that she wanted to make fun of him, like so many others had done before, "Leave me alone," he growled..

To his amazement, the woman continued standing. She was smiling—her even white teeth displayed in dazzling rows. "Are you hungry?" she asked.

"No," he answered sarcastically, "I've just come from dining with the president. Now go away."

Suddenly the man felt a gentle hand under his arm. "What are you doing, lady?" the man asked angrily. "I said to leave me alone."

Just then a policeman came up. "Is there any problem, ma'am?" he asked.

"No problem here, officer," the woman answered. "I'm just trying to get this man to his feet. Will you help me?"

The officer scratched his head. "That's old Jack... He's been a fixture around her for a couple of years. What do you want with him?"

"See that cafeteria over there?" she asked. "I'm going to get him something to eat and get him out of the cold for awhile."

"Are you crazy, lady?" the homeless man resisted. "I don't want to go in there!" Then he felt strong hands grab his other arm and lift him up. "Let me go, officer. I didn't do anything."

"This is a good deal for you, Jack," the officer answered. "Don't blow it."

Finally, and with some difficulty, the woman and the police officer got Jack into the cafeteria and sat him at a table in a remote corner. It was the middle of the morning, so most of the breakfast crowd had already left and the lunch bunch had not yet arrived...

The manager strode across the cafeteria and stood by his table. "What's going on here, officer?" he asked. "What is all this, is this man in trouble?"

"This lady brought this man in here to be fed," the policeman answered.

"Not in here!" the manager replied angrily. "Having a

person like that here is bad for business."

The woman turned to the cafeteria manager and smiled. "Sir, are you familiar with Eddy and Associates, the banking firm down the street?"

"Of course, I am," the manager answered impatiently. "They hold their weekly meetings in one of my banquet rooms."

"And do you make a goodly amount of money providing food at these weekly meetings?"

"What business is that of yours?"

"I, sir, am Penelope Eddy, president and CEO of the company."

"Oh."

The woman smiled again. "I thought that might make a difference." She glanced at the cop who was busy stifling a giggle. "Would you like to join us in a cup of coffee and a meal, officer?"

"No thanks, ma'am," the officer replied. "I'm on duty."

"Then, perhaps, a cup of coffee to go?"

"Yes, ma'am. That would be very nice."

The cafeteria manager turned on his heel, "I'll get your coffee for you right away, officer."

The officer watched him walk away. "You certainly put him in his place," he said.

"That was not my intent. Believe it or not, I have a reason for all this."

She sat down at the table Across from her amazed dinner guest. She stared at him intently... "Jack, do you remember me?"

Old Jack searched her face with his old, rheumy eyes.

"I think so—I mean you do look familiar."

"I'm a little older perhaps," she said. "Maybe I've even filled out more than in my younger days when you





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## You Reap What You Sow (Cont.)

worked here, and I came through that very door, cold and hungry.”

“Ma’am?” the officer said questioningly.. He couldn’t believe that such a magnificently turned-out woman could ever have been hungry.

“I was just out of college,” the woman began. “I had come to the city looking for a job, but I couldn’t find anything. Finally I was down to my last few cents and had been kicked out of my apartment. I walked the streets for days. It was February and I was cold and nearly starving. I saw this place and walked in on the off chance I could get something to eat.”

Jack lit up with a smile. “Now I remember,” he said. “I was behind the serving counter. You came up and asked me if you could work for something to eat. I said that it was against company policy.”

“I know,” the woman continued. “Then you made me the biggest roast beef sandwich that I had ever seen, gave me a cup of coffee, and told me to go over to a corner table and enjoy it. I was afraid that you would get into trouble... Then, when I looked over and saw you put the price of my food in the cash register, I knew then that everything would be alright.”

“So you started your own business?” Old Jack asked.

“I got a job that very afternoon. I worked my way up. Eventually I started my own business that, with the help of God, prospered.” She opened her purse and pulled out a business card.. “When you are finished here, I want you to pay a visit to a Mr. Lyons.. He’s the personnel director of my company. I’ll go talk to him now and I’m certain he’ll find something for you to do around the office.” She smiled. “I think he might even find the funds to give you a little advance so that you can buy some clothes and get a place to live until you get on your feet... If you ever need anything, my door is always

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opened to you.”

There were tears in the old man’s eyes. “How can I ever thank you?” he asked.

“Don’t thank me,” the woman answered. “To God goes the glory. Thank Jesus.... He led me to you.”

Outside the cafeteria, the officer and the woman paused at the entrance before going their separate ways. “Thank you for all your help, officer,” she said.

“On the contrary, Ms. Eddy,” he answered, “Thank you. I saw a miracle today, something that I will never forget. And..And thank you for the coffee.”

\*\*\*\*

*Have a wonderful day. May God Bless You Always and don’t forget that when you “cast your bread upon the waters,” you never know how it will be returned to you.....*

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## Follow Love (Cont.)

(Continued from page 27)

"The casket was made of the same wood that baseball bats were made of since she like playing baseball as well as basketball," Joanne reflected.

Laura's older sister Amy and mother Joanne sang and father Claude accompanied on the organ. "It was a celebration of her life and you were uplifted after the service," Joanne proudly states.

Joanne continued on in her work at the funeral home, even more determined to help others who have suffered loss.

On August 31, 2003, Joanne and Claude Howard experienced what few of us can imagine, the sudden and tragic loss of not only another daughter, but also their only remaining child.

Amy, 19, was home from college to attend a wedding and go to a friend's birthday party. On a rural road she and her roommate swerved to avoid something and their car flipped several times. Her roommate survived with severe injuries, but Amy, a commercial art major and talented artist, musician, singer, exerciser and cheerleader, died several hours later of head injuries.

They set up the funeral home like her own personal art gallery, which included paintings, charcoal sketches and several design projects. They put out a note pad along the long line of her visitors so these friends could record their thoughts and messages to the family. Five ministers helped conduct the services which included slide shows, family messages, shared memories from the gathered and a video of Amy herself singing her last special at church called "No Greater Love." Another memorial service was held the next day at her college for her classmates.

I asked Joanne whether being part of funeral service helped or hurt in these losses. She replied, "I would say it definitely helped as I was aware of what I could do for my children's funeral."

"It is challenging doing funerals now, but I am understanding of how people are feeling and they know what I have gone through and trust me."

The importance of personalization has only been strengthened by her experiences. "I encourage people to have funerals that totally express the essence of the person who has died. Funerals should be celebrations of the loved one's lives."

Her daughters will not likely be forgotten. At what would have been her youngest daughter Laura's 8th grade promotion, she gave out flowers to all her classmates in her memory. She has not yet decided what she will do next year when that class graduates from high school. Classmates of older daughter Amy have started collecting money for a scholarship in her name.

Joanne reflects, "Our Laura, like Amy was very special, of course I am biased. I miss my girls but I figure they're having a grand and glorious time together. My daughter Amy was impacted very much by losing her sister and best friend. It contributed to her being the caring person she was the next five and half years before she died."

At this year's 12th Annual Remembrance Service, Joanne did the message. She tried to comprehend her own losses as well as share hope with those attending,



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"I'll eventually understand why things have happened the way they have," she told those assembled, "but it won't matter then because I'll be with my loved ones and God."

She shared the lyrics to a song that was played at the Remembrance Service. The song is "Follow Love" by the Christian Rock Group called FFH:

*"So, here's goodbye,  
here's so long,  
I must go and follow love  
I feel my heart moving on  
I must go and follow love  
Carry on while I'm gone  
This is what I've been dreaming of  
I'll miss you so, but I must go  
Go and follow love"*



## Scattering Cremains in a Prairie Setting



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the scattering



Our funeral home has been offering families the opportunity to scatter the cremains of their loved ones in a natural setting for the last few years. We have an agreement with the Missouri Prairie Foundation to allow scattering on the Golden Prairie, west of Golden City, Missouri for a donation to the foundation.

Lowell Pugh, owner of Pugh Funeral Home and publisher of The Dead Beat had previously co-owned the prairie land and is a part-time caretaker of the prairie during the year.

In our last few scatterings we developed the book and service folders from the flowers that were blooming on the prairie. Lowell had established a path to take us into the land and we assisted the family in scattering their loved ones. One family came back to the funeral home and had a short remembrance service.

Some of the pictures on this page demonstrate our procedures. The foundation does not allow us to put permanent markers, but we give the GPS reading when available and also provide a monument in a cemetery that has one side dedicated to those buried in a natural environment. They can put their loved one's name on the monument for a nominal cost. Family members can visit the prairie and they can also go to the monument if they would like to leave flowers.

Scattering is a preferable way of disposition for many and with those concerned with the environment the prairie has a special appeal.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact us: Joanne Howard or Lowell Pugh, Pugh Funeral Home, Golden City, Missouri, 417-537-4412 or e-mail [editor@thedeat-beat.com](mailto:editor@thedeat-beat.com).

*Also see the ad on page 15.*



Left: Walking Back to the Cars



Gathering at the Funeral  
Home to go in proces-  
sion to the Prairie



Walking to the  
Scattering Site



Family members watch-  
ing the scattering



Remembrance Service at the  
funeral home. Then they went to  
a local restaurant for dinner



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