

The Dead Beat



The Caregiver's Soapbox

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



Volume 13

www.thedead-beat.com

Issue 2

You Can't Un-Answer A Call

By Kevin R. Czachor

Funeral Director: Hello?

Caller: Hi this is Jane Doe. I'm at my lawyer's office and we're about to make settlement on my mother's estate. I need a copy of her death certificate faxed over immediately.

Funeral Director: You'll have to file first with the state Vital Statistics Office. I can order them for you or if you'd like I can give you their contact information so you can...

Caller: WHAT?!? No, I NEED this today! I know you have it on file there she was cremated by you six months ago. Here's the fax number for my lawyer...

Funeral Director: I'm sorry but we don't simply have it on file now. There is a procedure that must be followed and we must....

Caller: We're making settlement today and you're doing this to me now? Unbelievable.

Funeral Director: I'd be happy to put in the request but there is a standard...

Caller: Thanks for nothing!

Click

You have probably taken a call such as this many times during your career as a funeral director. Consider how many times you have picked up the phone at your funeral home and instantly regretted it. Whether it is a caller who expects you to drop everything when you are the middle of a service to look up death records from 1924 for their genealogy project or a relative demanding to pick up ashes late on a Sunday night, there are a lot of calls that leave you feeling frustrated and impatient by the time you hang up the phone.

A recent Gallup poll found that 73 percent of Americans felt people's manners were worse today than 20 or 30 years ago. While mobile and internet advancements have made life more convenient, there is no denying that we have become a culture of instant results. Since websites can be accessed 24/7, people now call funeral homes at all hours of the day asking for an immediate call back for help with sending an online condolence. Society as a whole has become less accustomed to having to wait for answers.

When you watch a show like *Bridezilla* and see brides-to-be having a meltdown over a scuff mark on the floor, it's obvious how stressful planning a milestone event can be for everyone involved. Every minor detail and worst case scenario must be considered. For funeral directors, this pressure is compounded by the short window of time and the emotional intensity of planning a funeral. When the memory of a person is at stake, the grief that loved ones feel is often exacerbated by the burden of having to plan such an important event in so little time. It is often the case that the funeral director will bear the brunt of

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Scattering Remains can now be a Family Affair! With something for every family member.

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

By Lowell

The new kid on the block in the final disposition neighborhood is making himself known. A few years ago when we first read about AH, Alkaline Hydrolysis, my first thought was ...ICKKK! Well, when you really think about it the ICKKK factor, for some folks, applies to Earth Burial or cremation.

Two years ago a friend from Ohio brought the AH processed remains of his wife to scatter on Golden Prairie and have her name added to the monument we maintain for a memorial to persons scattered on the native prairie (a registered natural landmark) or elsewhere. The family was so pleased with the AH

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Mystic Images keepsakes are designed by artist Lynnette Kring. They are individually handcrafted in Phillips Wisconsin. Each keepsake comes with an accompanying card bearing an inspirational message of comfort, hope and peace.

"Each year we have two remembrance trees displayed in our funeral home for our annual holiday service. One tree is for remembering those loved ones who have died and is filled with the Butterfly's Message ornaments! The other tree is for remembering our beloved pets, the "Paw Print" ornaments are hung on it. The ornaments are truly treasured. It seems as though each year our ornament order gets larger."

Thompson-Miller Funeral Home, Inc. Butler, PA

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Gentle Landings



into her life's work in 1988. Since then she has developed her skill through working with various mediums such as wood carving and clay. She is currently creating fine porcelain designs. Many of her creations have been sought after and utilized by mold companies, businesses and organizations nationwide.

The keepsake line has grown from one design, "Christopher's Angel" to over 40 designs of lasting keepsakes that bring comfort to grieving families and individuals. Each keepsake is accompanied with a card bearing an inspirational message. The back of the cards may be customized with a business name and contact information. The keepsake designs are individually handcrafted at Mystic Images Studio in Northern Wisconsin.

In addition to the Mystic Images line of keepsakes, Lynnette creates custom-

Memory Tree



(Continued on page 5)

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Columbia Cremation Care Center Renovation



Before



After



Brian Gardner, Columbia Cremation Care Center in Columbia, Missouri sent pictures of the exterior after recent repaint and addition of the porch .

Signet Supply Announces New Director of Operations



Signet Supply, a division of Suhor Industries, Inc., is pleased to announce Ms. Amy Zhen has accepted the role of Director of Operations. This newly created position is a result of Signet Supply's rapid sales growth and expansion of its distribution network. Signet Supply has forty-one distribu-

tion centers across the country with an expectation of fifty locations by mid-2013.

Ms. Zhen will work directly with Signet Supply's distribution centers in managing replenishment orders, inventory levels, shipping & logistics, and order deliveries. She will also manage production schedules with Signet Supply's manufacturing facilities. "Amy Zhen is a significant addition to our management team. Her operational leadership will help ensure we sustain best-in-class service to our funeral home customers and allow the balance of our team to focus on enhancing the product mix, expanding the distribution network, and growing sales." stated Don Robinson, President of Signet Supply.

Ms. Zhen comes to Signet Supply with extensive experience in global logistics and has worked in the funeral supply industry for the past four years. Along with her undergraduate degree in Industrial Design, Amy has MBA's in both Finance and Accounting.

Robinson added "It is exciting to see the overwhelming response and trust shown Signet Supply by our funeral home customers. Their feedback confirms our rapid growth has come from the value we deliver to funeral businesses with every order – next-day delivery from all distribution locations, excellent selection of top selling casket models, and everyday low prices without contracts and long-term commitments."

Signet Supply is the fastest growing casket supply company in the country with distribution locations in twenty-one states. Please reference www.signetsupply.com to find the nearest distributor as well as other helpful information.

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.



Behind the Back Fence

By Lowell

Back during the goose-hunting season, Betty and I went to Cooky's Café for lunch. The restaurant was crowded



and a solo diner invited us to share his table. With my Macular Degeneration eyesight, I hadn't realized the table companion was

Bruce Howell, Gorman-Scharp Funeral Home in Springfield, Missouri. Of course we talked a little shop as well as goose-hunting. Bruce was headed out to the local waterfowl hunting range. I hope his luck was as good as ours. He picked up our lunch tab. Thanks, Bruce.

In the late 40's and early 50's there were about ten casket companies within an hour or so drive of our town. Three or four were fairly large and their sales force covered several states. Nationwide brands included Merritt, Crane-Breed, York-Hoover, Progress, Belmont and others were also readily available.

Nearly every company or brand was represented by a live, smiling person who came through your front door usually on schedule. Hard to imagine today. Our most frequent contact now is a dis-

tributor of Chinese caskets.

Though our family has been in the funeral business 109 years, we never built coffins in our own woodshop. The great uncles sold factory-finished caskets and a few coffin shells which they lined and trimmed to order.

Fast forward to today and we are beginning to see some home-crafted caskets. Some are just a basic box, but others look like some of the nicer factory-made cremation or green burial caskets.

My friends "W" and "M," who live one county over were in Cooky's for breakfast the other morning. "W" showed me a phone picture of a lovingly, hand-crafted casket that his grandson has made for him. The pride and love was apparent as we looked at the picture. I do hope that "W" does not plan to use it right away.



About the Authors:

Lowell Pugh has had funeral director and embalmer licenses in Missouri and Texas and continues the operation of the family funeral home which started in 1904. He is publisher of **The Dead Beat** which began in 1999. He can be contacted at **The Dead Beat** address and editor@thedead-beat.com

Mystic Images (Cont.)

(Continued from page 3)

ized designs. A recent example of this type of customization was a commissioned porcelain leaf. A loved one's name and dates of birth and death are placed on the leaf by the funeral home. The leaf is then attached to a beautifully crafted "Memory Tree" wall installation. The leaves are added to the tree throughout the year. The leaves are handed out to the families they serve during the annual holiday service of remembrance.

They make unique gifts for special occasions such as a wedding, the birth of a baby, birthdays, anniversaries, confirmations, Christmas and other holidays. The ornaments of remembrance offer heartfelt and touching messages and have been chosen by funeral homes, hospices and various grief support groups across the United States.

One of the surprising benefits our funeral homes have experienced is that the keepsakes become self supporting. Upon giving a keepsake to their families, additional keepsakes are requested for purchase. The sales of the additional keepsakes offset the expenses of providing a wonderful annual service of remembrance to all the families they serve.

The clients of Mystic Images are also pleased at the number of handwritten thank you cards and letters they receive from the families and individuals who are given a keepsake of remembrance.

Founder, Lynnette Kring says, "Within each of us lies the empowerment of unlimited possibilities. Each gesture of compassion and empathy is an expression of this empowerment. The sum of these gestures helps define who we are and ties us to the common thread of our humanity."

Lynnette adds new designs to her catalog each year. To view Mystic Images keepsakes go to www.mysticimageskeepsakes.com/funeralhome

To request a catalog and a free sample contact by email mysticimages@pctcnet.net or call 866-366-3166.

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Colleagues Lost or Found!!!

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

After-Thoughts *By Joanne Howard*

I have struggled as usual on what I wanted to share in this issue. I carried around a list of thoughts, but as usual I have lost track of it again. But so much has happened in the last few days, I feel I have plenty to talk about.

Our issue is running behind because of many things happening at the funeral home that has kept me occupied. Lowell had some health problems and ended up back in the hospital and yes, I was in the middle of trying to do a funeral when he got sick. After that happened, (since it's a pretty much one person operation with a little help from another funeral home) I was left brain scrambled and tired with the magazine left on the back burner.

On to some items for discussion. This week we've all been praying for the people in Boston due to the bombing and all the events related to it. Then there was the fertilizer plant fire and explosion in West, Texas. It seems like the number of disasters, natural or man-made are increasing or we just know about them and sooner. We have overwhelming sympathy for all the concerned and wonder what we can do to help.

Being in a business that deals with death, we are exposed to it rather frequently, but that does not mean we do not feel for those that lose-life, limbs or possessions. A loss is a loss. So how do we help?????

I was impressed when TFDA put out requests for help and how many funeral professionals came forward to volunteer products and services. It made me feel good and proud of my fellow funeral professionals.

Then as I came home from an evening out I heard about the capture of the second suspect in the Boston bombing situation. It also gave me a good feeling that they had made progress in that situation.

It's good to make progress, but what about all the people that these situations,

among many others, that have left people with consequences to last the rest of their lives. You go to watch a loved one or friend compete in a race and now you will have to learn to live without limbs or some other medical situation. You've driven by the fertilizer plant for years and now your house has been destroyed by an explosion at it.

Life gives us many challenges and sometimes rising up to the challenge seems beyond our capability. But we all seem to do it. Of course, I give God all the credit to making it through, but some question why did it happen in the first place. We may never know what the ultimate plan is, but we just need to trust that it will all work out okay.

I try to keep my optimism up, but sometimes things seem like they have reached my limit. In my lifetime I've dealt with many sad moments and have made it through. But some times I seem to be pushed to the limits, by greed of people. I totally understand that we do not want to be taken advantage of and certain situations happen that require financial compensation, but I am getting totally fed up with lawsuits.

Lawsuits must be very lucrative endeavors. People have a minor reason to pursue legal counsel and it snowballs up to ridiculousness. Now who's greed we are dealing with client or lawyer, I don't know. I only know that it makes you uncertain about anything and everything and it seems to last forever. Regretfully you wonder whether resolution will ever be made and if it will last if you get it. In the meantime, it leaves a cloud over you. Now we have enough clouds in life without the legal profession and greed adding a few more.

Oh, well, I'll get off my soapbox and try not to worry. After all, it's only money. I've dealt with losses so much more precious than money ever could be. But survival at times is dependent on

money which is why it becomes so important and the source of such greed.

Now, back to my notes that I have finally found. In the realm of dealing with grief years later, I had quite the experiences all in one day.

First, I was filing some past funeral information and it happened to be in the same container as one of my daughter's death records. So I started my day seeing her picture in her casket.

The day continued with visiting with a salesman who did not know about my daughters and I pointed out their memorial corner in the funeral home.

Then I had an arrangement conference in which the conversation about caskets ended up with my talking about my daughters' caskets.

All in all this day left me feeling a bit sad since it came after the Easter holiday with not having a lot of family to celebrate with which in the past I had done.

The relevance of this discussion is that life continues through births, lives, and deaths. These challenges are met with God's help and guidance. Some great times are experienced by all, but also so not so great times.

Let us enjoy our good times to help make it through the tough times-bombings, explosions, lawsuits, and having to recall deaths of children.



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

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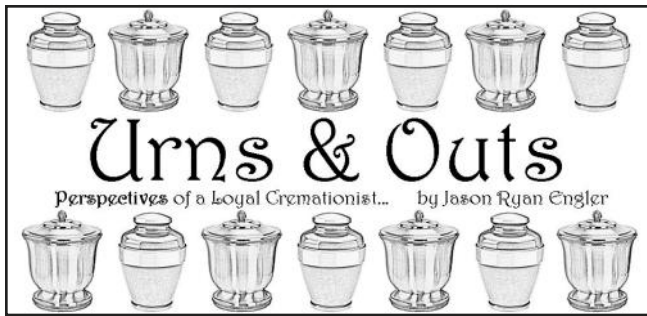
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Cicero wrote of memory that it “is the treasurer and guardian of all things.” In my time as a funeral professional, I have known this to be so. When someone touches our lives so deeply it is frequently the memories we have of them that fulfill the need we have to be in touch with those who are no longer part of our lives – whether separated by space, time, disagreement, or death. I have often noticed also that memory can serve as an ever-present reminder of things past – both good and bad.

I have missed people in my life; people who have come so close and have been so instrumental in the formation of who, what and where I am; people that I have been separated from by circumstance and by death. In the recent months I have said goodbye to two people who have played a very important part in my life – one by circumstance and one by death. Sadly, in both instances, as with so many, I had no choice but to say goodbye. The memories I have of both of these individuals have brought me so many emotions – and the grief I have experienced at their going from my life is immeasurable.

While I often find it difficult to focus on all things at hand (which is a good reminder of what the families we serve experience at the loss of their loved ones), I know that the grief I experience is not permanent. Time may not heal all pain, but the passing of time and the pursuance of happiness and the remembrance of happy memories I hold in my heart will ease the hurt.

Hugh Robert Orr made the point in his poem, “They Softly Walk.” He reminds us:

They are not gone who pass
Beyond the clasp of hand,
Out from the strong embrace.
They are but come so close
We need not grope with hands,
Nor look to see, nor try
To catch the sound of feet.
They have put off their shoes
Softly to walk by day
Within our thoughts, to tread
At night our dream-led paths
Of sleep.

They are not dead who live
In hearts they leave behind.
In those whom they have blessed
They live a life again,
And shall live through the years
Eternal life, and grow
Each day more beautiful
As time declares their good,
Forgets the rest, and proves
Their immortality.

While his poem is clearly poised to surmount the daunting task saying goodbye to someone because of death, it can easily be applied to the equally painful saying goodbye to someone who is separated from us by circumstance. Knowing that those we love and have loved are only a thought away is a double-edged sword. It is bittersweet in that this fact is both good and bad news. We often remember both joyfully and painfully how people have influenced our lives.

As we all go through life, it is my opinion that our interactions with others should always be remembered. The old saying reminds that people may not remember what you said or what you did, but they will always remember how you made them feel. The feelings instilled and inspired in us and in others lasts beyond the time that we say goodbye. Let us remember this as we touch lives around us – and when it is necessary to say goodbye perhaps absence will make the heart grow fonder.

At least, that’s my perspective...



Jason Ryan Engler is a funeral director and cremation historian in Northwest Arkansas. He is the unofficial historian for the Cremation Association of North America and is a frequent contributor of cremation information to trade journals and organizations.

Read his blog at <http://urnsandouts.blogspot.com>.

He can be reached at cremationhistorian@hotmail.com,

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Ken Doka

Meanwhile, where is God? ...go to Him when your need is desperate, when all other help is vain, and what do you find? A door slammed in your face...."

Those dispirited words were written by no other than the deeply religious author, C.S. Lewis. Yet, when his beloved wife was dying even Lewis felt abandoned.

Grief can affect every aspect of our being. It can distress our bodies and influence our emotions as we reel from all the feelings that grief can create. Grief clouds our thoughts and changes our behavior. It is no surprise that it can challenge our faith and rattle our beliefs.

Not every loss will do that. When my aunt died at 94 years of age, we grieved her loss deeply. She was the matriarch of the family, the last surviving member of that generation.

But her death did not shake our faith. She died after a fullness of many years, surrounded by family. As we mourned, our beliefs, even as they differed amongst family members, gave us comfort.

Some deaths though, will shatter our beliefs. We may find it hard to believe that there is meaning to the universe or any point in life. The circumstances of the death or the extent of suffering may make it hard to believe in a benevolent

God. We feel lonely and abandoned. Our faith seems to offer little comfort.

Our beliefs seems to be another casualty of our grief.

One of the tasks of grief, then, is to rebuild faith or philosophies that have been challenged by our loss. We need not do it alone.

One of the biggest mistakes we can make during this period is to isolate ourselves from our beliefs. We need instead to share our struggles within our faith community. This is a time to identify those within our faith communities who can journey with us, who are comfortable in hearing our struggles and sharing their own. Sometimes we may have to look to find those people.

When Tom's wife died, he tried to share his question with his minister. His minister, however, could not seem to relate to Tom's struggle. Instead he seemed to offer empty reassurances. Tom found that his daughter's minister was willing to engage in serious discussions about Tom's concerns. Together they studied and conversed. Tom credits that experience with deepening his own faith.

We should maintain our own spiritual discipline. Prayer, meditation, ritual, and readings are all ways to con-

nect with our faith traditions. Each spiritual tradition and every philosophy has encountered death and loss. Each has writings that speak to that encounter.

Finally, we may read of the struggles of others. C.S. Lewis, for example, writes of his struggles in *A Grief Observed*. These writings not only remind us that such moments are natural valleys in the journey of faith and grief; they offer insight on how to cope. And they offer hope.

This article was originally printed in *Journeys: A Newsletter to Help in Bereavement*, published by Hospice Foundation of America. More information about *Journeys* can be found at www.hospicefoundation.org or by calling 800-854-3402 and is published monthly by the Hospice Foundation of America, 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

There once was a little boy that was a big fan of Bach and visited him quite frequently. When Bach died, this little boy was very sad and he visited his grave every day. On the eighth day he began to hear music. He brought some of Bach's friends to listen. He asked them if they heard the music. They said yes, but that it sounded wrong like it was backward. Maybe because he was decomposing.

An old man wanted to plant his tomato garden, but it was too difficult to do, due to his health and the ground being too hard. His only son, Vincent, whom he was used to helping him was in prison at the time. The old man wrote his son this letter. "Dear Vincent, I am feeling sad today because I won't be able to till the ground and plant my tomato garden this year. I am too old already. I know that if you were here, you would have assisted me with this just as you always did for all these years before. Love, Papa." A few days later, he received a letter back from Vincent. "Dear Papa, I am sorry that I cannot be there to help you plant your tomatoes this year, Papa. Don't go digging in that garden! That's where the bodies are buried! Love always, Vinnie." At 4 a.m. the next morning, FBI agents swarmed the garden area and dug up and sifted through all the garden area inch by inch without finding one body or any evidence of any bodies ever being buried there. The FBI apologized to the old man for any inconvenience that they may have been and left. That very next day, he received another letter from his son. "Dear Papa, Go ahead and plant your tomatoes now, this was the best way I could think of to help you under the circumstances. Love you, Papa. Vinnie"

When I Say I'm Broke—I'm Broke

A little old lady answered a knock on the door one day; to be confronted by a well-dressed young man carrying a vacuum cleaner. "Good Morning," said the young man. "If I could take a couple minutes of your time. I would like to demonstrate the very latest in high-powered vacuum cleaners..." "Go away!" said the old lady. "I'm broke and haven't got any money!" and she proceeded to close the door. Quick as a flash, the young man wedged his foot in the door and pushed it wide open... "Don't be too hasty!" he said. "Not until you have at least seen my demonstration..." And with that, he emptied a bucket of horse manure onto her hallway carpet. "Now, if this vacuum cleaner does not remove all traces of this horse manure from your carpet, Madam, I will personally eat the remainder." The old lady stepped back and said, "Well, let me get you a fork, 'cause they cut off my electricity this morning."



Comments

See response to comments on Page 23.

Dear Editor:

I just wanted you to know that Kansas now requires a Crematory Operating License.

The following was taken from the Kansas Mortuary Arts website. Requirements for licensure are that you are of legal age (18 years old), employed at a licensed Kansas crematory and have either successfully completed training in performing cremation services and received certification by an organization whose program with a minimum of six (6) hours has been approved by the board or you will complete the training within twelve (12) months of licensure. A copy of the certificate of crematory operator training should be provided either with the application or within one year of licensure. Failure to complete and provide proof of training within one year of licensure will result in automatic suspension of licensure until such time as approved training has been completed. Two (2) hours of continuing education in the specific area of cremation will be due with your SECOND full two-year license renewal. No CE will be due with your first full two-year renewal. Approved courses will be posted on the web site of the Kansas State Board of Mortuary Arts (KSBMA) under a separate section for licensed crematory operators.

Hope Keith, Funeral Coordinator, Advantage

Thanks for putting in the article about the clock. I will share it with Pat's brother Bill, he is very proud of the restoration. The back story is that he took it apart when he was very young and it had been hauled around by us for years in a non-working condition. He is now retired and able to spend time on projects. We have it in our house now (just chimed) and plan to share it with the other siblings, 3 months at a time..... Keep up the good work on the paper.

Al Walden, Springfield, MO

A friend told a blonde man: "Christmas is on a Friday this year." The blonde man then said, "Let's hope it's not the 13th."

Two blonde men find three grenades, and they decide to take them to a police station. One asked: "What if one explodes before we get there?" The other says: "We'll lie and say we only found two."

A woman phoned her blonde neighbor man and said: "Close your curtains the next time you and your wife are having sex. The whole street was watching and laughing at you yesterday." To which the blond man replied: "Well, the joke's on all of you because I wasn't even at home yesterday."

A blonde man is in the bathroom and his wife shouts: "Did you find the shampoo?" He answers, "Yes, but I'm not sure what to do.. It's for dry hair, and I've just wet mine."

(Continued on page 11)

Chuckles (Cont.)

A blonde man goes to the vet with his goldfish. I think it's got epilepsy," he tells the vet. The vet takes a look and says, "It seems calm enough to me." The blonde man says, "Wait, I haven't taken it out of the bowl yet."

A blonde man spies a letter lying on his doormat. It says on the envelope "DO NOT BEND." He spends the next two hours trying to figure out how to pick it up.

A blonde man shouts frantically into the phone, "My wife is pregnant and her contractions are only two minutes apart!" "Is this her first child?" asks the Doctor. "No," he shouts, "this is her husband!"

A blonde man was driving home, drunk as a skunk. Suddenly he has to swerve to avoid a tree, then another, then another. A cop car pulls him over, so he tells the cop about all the trees in the road. The cop says, "That's your air freshener swinging about."

A blonde man's dog goes missing and he is frantic. His wife says, "Why don't you put an ad in the paper?" He does, but two weeks later the dog is still missing. "What did you put in the paper?" his wife asks. "Here boy!" he replies.

A blonde man is in jail. Guard looks in his cell and sees him hanging by his feet. "Just WHAT are you doing?" he asks. "Hanging myself," the blonde replies. "It should be around your neck," says the guard. "I tried that," he replies, "but then I couldn't breathe."

An Italian tourist asks a blonde man: "Why do Scuba divers always fall backwards off their boats?" To which the blonde man replies, "If they fell forward, they'd still be in the boat."

Things to Think about:

- ◆ A day without sunshine is, like, night.
- ◆ On the other hand, you have different fingers'
- ◆ Getting lost may put you in unfamiliar territory.
- ◆ 99 percent of lawyers give the rest a bad name.
- ◆ Perhaps you are diagonally parked in a parallel universe.
- ◆ Honk, if you love peace and quiet.
- ◆ Remember, half the people you know are below average.



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- ◆ Despite the high cost of living, it is still extremely popular.
- ◆ He who laughs last thinks slowest.
- ◆ The early bird get the worm, but the second mouse gets the cheese.
- ◆ Drive too fast and you don't have to worry about cholesterol.
- ◆ If you intend to live forever, so far, so good.
- ◆ Borrow money only from pessimists, they don't expect it back.
- ◆ Support bacteria; they're the only culture some people have.
- ◆ If at first you don't succeed, destroy the evidence.
- ◆ A conclusion is the place where you get tired of thinking.
- ◆ Experience is something you don't get until after you need it.
- ◆ For every action, there is an equal and opposite criticism.
- ◆ Bills travel through the mail twice as fast as checks.
- ◆ No one is listening until you make a mistake.
- ◆ Success always occur in private, failure in full view.
- ◆ The colder the x-ray table, the more of your body is required on it.
- ◆ The severity of the itch is inversely proportional to the ability to reach it.
- ◆ To steal an idea from one person is plagiarism; to steal from many is research.
- ◆ To succeed in politics, it is often necessary to rise above your principles.
- ◆ You never really learn to swear until you learn to drive.
- ◆ The problem with a gene pool is there is no lifeguard.
- ◆ A clear conscience is often the sign of a bad memory.
- ◆ If you think nobody cares, try missing a couple of payments.
- ◆ If at first you don't succeed, skydiving is not for you.
- ◆ Florida bumper sticker: "Don't blame me, I voted for BOTH of them."

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"Dear Counselor...." By Bill Stalter

Dear Counselor,

We are seeing more families purchasing from a casket store that is on the other side of the state line. What rules govern the casket store's business?

It depends on whether the transaction is at-need or preneed, where the consumer resides, and whether the casket store markets to out of state residents. If the transaction involves the sale of a casket for immediate delivery, the casket store may only be subject to the consumer protection laws where it is located. If the casket store is located near the state line, it will also have to comply with other states' consumer protection laws when marketing is directed at their residents.

The question funeral directors ask is whether the casket store has to comply with their licensing requirements. That question was the subject of a recent US Appeals Court decision involving the Louisiana Funeral Directors Board and the monks of St. Joseph Abbey. That decision found the licensing requirement unconstitutional because the restrictions were not found to be "rationally related to protection of public health, safety, and consumer welfare".

The decision is similar to one that struck down a Tennessee law, but it also contradicts an US Appeals decision that upheld an Oklahoma law that restricts casket stores. This split between the Appeals Courts could be the grounds for review by the US Supreme Court, but that depends upon whether the Louisiana Funeral Board appeals the decision. However, these Appeal Court decisions do not shed much light on the answer to your question when the sale involves the future delivery of a casket, vault or marker.

The purpose for preneed laws, protecting consumer payments until delivery is made, would seem to be equally applicable to funeral homes, cemeteries, casket stores, monument vendors or trappist monks. However, most state legislatures seemed to have assumed that all casket, vault and marker sales would be made by a death care licensee, and as a result, the preneed regulatory system often reflects that assumption.

Consequently, there may not be an examiner or auditor checking whether the store is complying with the preneed law. If the casket store is making preneed sales, and marketing to out of state residents, multiple preneed laws could be implicated. The casket store's website may reflect whether it offers deferred delivery. If so, you may want to refer that information to the applicable state regulator and ask for their answer to your question.

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 or bill@stalterlegal.com or
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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.preneedresource.com.



Death Notices of Fellow Funeral Service Colleagues



IOWA



Kathryn Jean Fawcett, 84, of Independence died March 3, 2013. She was the wife of Lester "Bud" Charles Fawcett who owned the Fawcett Funeral Homes and Furniture Store in Winthrop. Arrangements were under the direction of Fawcett Funeral Home.

KANSAS

Gene W. Boomhower, 79, of Dighton, passed away on December 29, 2012. He served as Sergeant in the U.S. Army during the Korean Conflict. He is the father of Craig Boomhower, partner in the Garnand Funeral Homes who handled the service.



W.A. "Bill" Forsyth, 89, of Medicine Lodge, died December 21, 2012. He was a U.S. Navy veteran of World War II from 1943-1946. He attended St. Louis Mortuary College in 1947-48. He was a funeral director and former owner of the Forsyth Funeral Home and Furniture Store in Medicine Lodge, KS. He served as President of the Kansas Funeral Directors Association in 1981 and also served on the National Funeral Directors Association Board.



H. T. "Bud" Minnis, Jr., 84, of Bucklin, died March 3, 2013. He is the retired owner of Minnis Mortuaries in Minneola and Bucklin. Minnis Mortuary in Bucklin directed the funeral service.



Katherine L. "Kay" Penick, 87, of Topeka, died January 24, 2013. She is the wife of retired funeral director R.O. Penick. Her funeral arrangements were handled by Penwell-Gabel Parker-Price Chapel Funeral Homes in Topeka.



Lois E. (Dunn) Webb, 88, of Wichita formerly of Clearwater, passed away January 10, 2013. She and her husband Richard L. Webb were co-owners of Webb Mortuary. Arrangements were directed by the Webb-Shinkle Mortuary.



S. Ron B. Williams, 75, of Atwood, died March 18, 2013. He graduated from McCook College and San Francisco College of Mortuary Science and was a member of the Kansas and Nebraska Funeral Directors Association. He owned and operated the Williams Funeral Home in Atwood for 34 years. His funeral was handled by Williams Funeral Home of Atwood.



Larry Wilson, 71, of Oswego passed away on Dec. 5, 2012. He graduated Gupton Jones Mortuary School in Dallas in 1965. He owned and worked in the funeral business for the next 50 years, owning Wilson Funeral Home in Hays (1971-1986). He later worked for Murdock Funeral Home in Oswego. Garnand Funeral Home in Garden City handled the arrangements.



Clara M. Youngberg, 97, of Waterville, died December 15, 2012. She married Clem Youngberg and they owned and operated Youngberg Funeral Home where she was a licensed funeral director. Her services were directed by Kinsley Mortuary in Marysville.

MISSOURI



Bert R. Boyer, 83, of Leadwood passed away April 12, 2013. He was a third generation funeral director, who owned and operated the Bert L. Boyer Funeral Home in Leadwood for over 30 years retiring in 1993. Arrangements were under the direction of C. Z. Boyer & Sons Funeral Home in Desloge.



Thelma Lois Brown, 101, of Pleasant Hill, passed away on April 13, 2013. She is the mother of Jim Brown, owner of Mid-State Professional services in Pleasant Hill. Her arrangements were handled by Stanley-Dickey Funeral Home in Pleasant Hill.



Betty Jo (Harmon) Fountain, 65, of Columbia died February 19, 2013. Former wife of Vernie R. Fountain when they operated Fountain Mortuary Services in Columbia for 20 years. She graduated from the Kentucky School of Mortuary Science in Louisville, KY in 1976 and was licensed as embalmer and funeral director in 1978. She worked with the Boone and Callaway County Medical Examiner's office from 1986 to 2004. Her services were directed by Walnut Lawn Funeral Home in Springfield.



Nelda F. Fraley, 81, of Joplin, passed away Feb. 25, 2013. She was the wife of Keith Fraley and they were the owners of Fraley Funeral Supply. Beth Zentner, their daughter and son-in-law Eric now are the owners. Her services were under the direction of Parker Mortuary in Joplin.



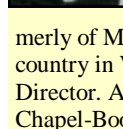
Corey Gresham, 41, of Macon passed away March 27, 2013. He graduated from Kansas City Kansas School of Mortuary Science in 1991. He was employed at Hutton & McElwain Funeral Home as a funeral director from 1991 to 1999, and then started with Batesville Casket Company as a sales representative. His arrangements were handled by Greening-Eagan-Hayes Funeral Home in Macon.



Robert Len "Bob" Hunter, 73, of Aurora passed away March 5, 2013. He served in the U.S. Navy for 10 years. He then worked for Pav Chemical Company and later Clark Grave Vault company. He also worked with his brother Gene at Marshfield Casket company and then became a salesman for Artco Casket Company. His arrangements were under the direction of Fohn Funeral Home, Cassville, MO.



Carl Giamalva, 93, of Arnold, passed away on March 6, 2013. He is the father of Dennis C. Giamalva, owners of The Global Urn Company and sales representative for Criswell Casket. His services were handled by John L. Ziegenhein & Sons (South County).



Vernon Dallas Howard, Sr., 87 of Boonville, formerly of Marshall passed away April 28, 2013. He served his country in WWII. He was grandfather to Chris Howard, District 5 Director. Arrangements were under the direction of Davis Funeral Chapel-Boonville.



Continued on page 15

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



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Death Notices of Fellow Funeral Service Colleagues (Cont.)

MISSOURI (Cont.)

Continued from page 14



Blanche R. Kriegshauser, of St. Louis, passed away April 10, 2013. She was the beloved wife of 57 years of Herman L. Kriegshauser, mother of "Trey" Jr., Douglas and Keith Krieghouser of Kriegshauser Brothers Funeral Service, Inc. who handled the arrangements.



Suzanne Meierhoffer, 92, of St. Joseph died April 6, 2013. She was the vice president of Meierhoffer-Fleeman Funeral Home until 1992. Arrangement were under the direction of Meierhoffer Funeral Home and Crematory.



Gayle Collier Smith, 70, of Louisiana, MO, passed away March 8, 2013. She is the daughter of George Collier who established the Collier Funeral Home. Her husband Allen R. Smith joined the firm in 1962 and purchased upon the retirement of Mr. Collier in 1990. Collier Funeral Home handled the services.



Douglas King Wickware, 73, of Pittsburg, KS, passed away April 1, 2013. He graduated from Gup-ton-Jones Mortuary Science School in Dallas in 1963. He owned and operated Morticians Service for several years. He was a member of the Missouri Funeral Directors Association. He is the father of Josh Wickware with Clinkingbeard Funeral Homes,

Inc. Arrangements were under the direction of Brenner Mortuary, Pittsburg, Kansas.

TEXAS



Wendy White Bellenger, 48, of Weatherford passed away on April 25, 2013. She was the fourth generation funeral director at the White's Funeral Home and the daughter of Bob and Carolyn White. Services were directed by White's Funeral Home.



Fana Roberta Chenault, 96, of Abilene, died February 3, 2013. She was mother of Ben Chenault, a sales representative of SE Matthews Casket Co. Funeral services were directed by Englands Funeral Service in Slaton.



John R. "Bob" Corley III, 83, of Corsicana passed away on April 14, 2013. He served in the U. S. Army in France. When he came back from the service he joined his grandfather and father in the family business. He was former Owner of Corley Funeral Home and a 50-year licensee. Funeral arrangements were directed by Corley Funeral Home.



Marjean M. Holmgreen, 90, of Alice passed away on Feb. 18, 2013. She was 1st Lt. Army Nurse in WWII. She was president of Holmgreen Mortuary, Inc. and her services were directed by them.



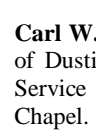
JoAnn P. Holt, 69, of Navasota died on Feb. 23, 2013. She was funeral director and wife of Grant Holt with Lindley-Robertson-Holt Funeral Home. She attended the Dallas Institute for Funeral Service. Her arrangements were directed by Lindley-Robertson-Holt Funeral Home.



Michael Jamison, 63, of Yoakum passed away April 13, 2013. He was a licensed embalmer and funeral director. Arrangements were under the direction of King-Tears Funeral Home, Austin, Thiele-Cooper Funeral Home, Yoakum and Victoria Mortuary Service, Victoria.



Lawrence L. Layland, 92, of Fort Worth, died Feb. 20, 2013. He was a WWII veteran. He was a funeral director at Owens Brumley Funeral Home and at Shannon Funeral Chapels from which he retired in 2007 and Shannon Rose Hill Memorial Park. His arrangements were directed by Shannon Rufe Snow Funeral Chapel.



Carl W. Newquist III, 59, of Dallas died Feb. 20, 2013. He was the father of Dustin W. Newquist, funeral director at Calvary Hill Funeral Home. Service arrangements handled by Sparkman/Hillcrest Funeral Home Chapel.



Benny Pettus, 86 of Terrell formerly of Mesquite, died Feb. 26, 2013. He was in U.S. Navy during WWII. He graduated from the Dallas Institute of Funeral Service. He was former manager of Anderson-Clayton Bros. Funeral Home. Arrangements were directed by Allan Fuller Funeral Home in Wills Point.

(Continued on page 29)



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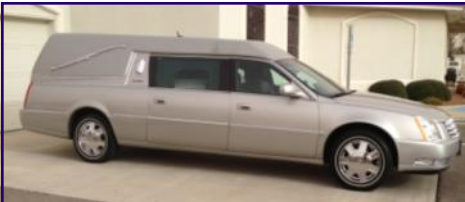
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The Lighted Path

By Harel R. Lawrence

He who follows the right path will find his true self.
But first he must understand that the path he now follows
Will lead him in different directions, that to find the right path
He must not search with his eyes, but with his heart.

The path he sees with his heart will take him in the right
direction.

He will understand his true self lies only within his spirit and
not his body.

The person he is searching for will be on this path,
And whoever this person might be will lead him where he must
go.

You will not need the light of the sun to show you the way,
Because the person with you will have the light and
Guide you through with open arms and open mind.
You will then have the same light to give to others who follow.

You must not keep the light for yourself,
But share it with others to come.
Be patient my child, your guide will come in due time.
When the brightest stars fill the midnight skies, then you will
know the answer.

Poem meaning: We search a lifetime for meaning, always looking in the wrong places, using our senses when we can only discover our path through the spirit, which is right there to guide us all the time, at hand as it were. Once on the path, we inevitably find someone who has entered ahead of us, someone who can serve as our guide so we avoid the pitfalls any human is heir to, someone of great compassion whose only demand of us is to pass it on, to provide this same guidance for someone else one day.

Poem from **Take a Closer Look- A Spiritual Journey into the Soul.**



Harel R. Lawrence, author of *Take a Closer Look: A Spiritual Journey into the Soul* Harel Ray Lawrence (04/23/1965) was born and raised in Lamar, Missouri. He graduated from Lamar High School in 1983. He is unmarried and has no children. Harel enjoys attending his local Methodist church, where he is active in working with the children's ministry. He enjoys bowling, camping, occasionally playing golf, and being active in the church. He is a current member of the Civil Air Patrol.

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Five Secrets for Setting More Appointments by Phone

By Mike Brooks, www.MrInsideSales.com

Setting appointments with families to discuss their pre-need goals and options is the cornerstone to successful revenue goal attainment. Funeral and cemetery directors rely on a variety of techniques to create these opportunities including sending mailers and surveys and coupons, and the tried and true practice of active door knocking or canvassing is still widely used. While the benefit of meeting someone in person while canvassing is invaluable, driving around and knocking on doors is not the most efficient way for advisors to spend their time. In this respect, the power of the telephone cannot be matched.

Connecting with people by telephone remains the most powerful and effective way of reaching hundreds of people each week and provides the best opportunity for setting the most amount of appointments. It's a great tool to follow up on all the mailers and surveys you send and to follow up with families who have just had a service with you. It's a quick, effective, time saving way of making a connection and getting in front of families. The only problem is, most advisors and counselors would rather do anything else than pick up the phone and make a call! In fact, in a recent survey we did, we found that one of the main obstacles to having a successful call night was in even getting the counselors to attend.

If calling is such an effective way of reaching your appointment and revenue goals, then why are your counselors so resistant to using it? The answer is simple: they are afraid of rejection. And this leads us to the point of this article. The real problem in this industry is that most counselors and advisors have no real phone skills training and because of this they find many other things to do instead of the one thing that can make them more successful – make calls.

The good news is that with the right training and reinforcement, anyone can learn to successfully and confidently make appointment calls to both new prospect families and to families that have had a service. My experience in teaching effective phone skills in this industry has enabled me to identify five skill sets or 'secrets' that, once taught and reinforced, can transform any group of family counselors/advisors into a confident, empowered and successful sales team. Here they are:

Secret Number One: On any given phone call, your counselors are going to face the same five to eight objections over and over again. In other words, the objections in this sale are, for the most part, well known in advance. "I'm not interested," "I have insurance," "My kids are going to handle that," etc, should sound familiar to you because your counselors have to deal with them (and others) on every call. Because the objections are clear, the solution is, too.

Providing your counselors with effective, word for word scripts that teach the best practice approach to dealing with these common objections is the key to secret number one. Someone once said that practice makes perfect, but that's not accurate. Practice only makes permanent. If your counselors are practicing poor sales skills each time they get these objections, then they will not only won't improve, but they will grow frustrated and unmotivated as well. Providing them with effective scripts is the key to both their attitude, activity level and their success.

Secret Number Two: There is a big difference between an objection and an initial reflex response, and once your counselors understand this difference, and are trained on how to handle it, they will immediately be more successful at setting appointments. The best way to illustrate this is to think about your own reaction when you go to a store like Best Buy. Let's say you're in the market for a new TV set and you finally get to the store on a Saturday morning. You walk in and there to greet you is a guy in a bright blue Best Buy shirt and he says, "Hi, how can I help you?" And you say.... "I'm just looking."

Even though you are there for a specific reason, it is our reflex to resist a sales person and this is the same thing your counselors encounter. The so called 'objections' they get when they cold aren't really objections and that's why they get into trouble. Many times counselors will argue and try to overcome initial reflex statements and this is what gets them into trouble. The solution is to understand the difference and then script out the proper responses that acknowledge they heard the statement but that moves the conversation away from it and into a benefit statement.

Secret Number Three: Persistence is the key to resistance. It's a fact: the average number of times a counselor must ask the appointment before a prospect will say yes is between four to six times, but the number of times a counselor will ask before giving up is one to two times. This lack of persistence is due to being unprepared and to inappropriately handling reflex resistance and unfortunately it is self-perpetuating. The more rejection they get, the more call reluctance it creates.

The solution, again, is to give your counselors the tools (scripts) to successfully deal with the initial resistance they get which will allow them ask for the appointment enough times to finally get it.

Secret Number Four: Recording your counselors to reinforce proper training and skill sets. The fastest way to improve the overall performance of your team is to implement the first three secrets and then to record them making calls and correct them when they aren't using your best practices and reinforce them when they do. And the best way to do this is in a group setting during your training sessions.

Recording and listening to your own calls brings awareness to how we are handling a call and it gives us a chance to fully listen to what our prospects are saying as well. This combination is always enlightening, sometimes amusing and always valuable. This training technique is the perfect addition to secret number five.

Secret Number Five: Hold motivational call nights. One of the reasons some counselors won't even come to calls nights is because of the call reluctance mentioned earlier. Once you have given them the proper training and provided them with the tools to be successful, then they will be more motivated to try again. The way you make this experience successful is to make these sessions productive and fun. The productive part will take care of itself once you have developed proper the tools, and the fun part is easy.

One way to make your call night fun and instructive is to have a bingo night. Replace the typical numbers on a bingo board with objections your counselors face and have them claim each space once they successfully over that objection on a call. The first one to overcome five in any given row wins the "Bingo!" There are other ways to make these call nights fun and I'm sure you have some that you use now. The key is to teach proper sales skills while also helping your counselors see it as a game.

I have used the five secrets above and literally transformed team's phone skills and results. The key is to provide your counselors and advisors with the tools they need and then reinforce their proper use of them. Once you do that, you'll have a lot more people attending your call nights and a lot more appointments – and deals – each month.

Mike Brooks is founder and principle of Mr. Inside Sales, a Los Angeles based inside sales consulting and training firm, and author of the award winning books on inside sales: "The Real Secrets of the Top 20%," and his new book, "The Ultimate Book of Phone Scripts."



Mike has been voted one of the most Influential Inside Sales Professionals two years in a row by The American Association of Inside Sales Professionals, and is the recognized authority in the industry. Mike is hired by business owners to implement proven sales processes that help them immediately scale and grow Multi-Million Dollar Inside Sales Teams. For more information, visit his website: www.MrInsideSales.com

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Bluefin Payment Systems and ASD Partner for Merchant Services

Partnership brings Bluefin's secure payment gateway to ASD clients

Atlanta, GA and Media, PA – Bluefin Payment Systems and ASD - Answering Services for Directors, the leading answering service for funeral professionals, announced today that they have entered into a partnership to make Bluefin's payment gateway, PayConex, available to ASD's customer base.

Bluefin is a leading provider of payment processing solutions for the funeral profession. The company's PayConex payment gateway features debit/credit/ACH acceptance, plus recurring billing, a virtual terminal and a hosted payment page – all backed by security features such as tokenization and point-to-point encryption (P2PE).

ASD serves more than 5,000 funeral homes and is the preferred choice among Independent Funeral Homes and Funeral Home Directors. The company's custom-built funeral communication systems and extensive, 6-month training program have made ASD the answering service trusted by more than one quarter of all funeral homes in the United States.

"ASD has created a new class of answering services exclusively for funeral homes," says John Perry, CEO of Bluefin. "This falls in line with our commitment to the funeral profession, and combined we can offer superior products and services that will provide efficiency and convenience to funeral homes, directors and families."

Per the partnership, all of ASD's clients will have access to Bluefin's secure payment gateway by simply applying online for a merchant account. Funeral professionals can take advantage of Bluefin's virtual terminal to process customer payments from any PC, tablet or smartphone, while offering their families the convenience of paying for services over time with Bluefin's recurring billing feature. This will allow ASD clients to process payments without ever tying up the funeral home's phone line. Additionally, clients will receive an exclusive discount on each transaction with Bluefin in the form of an ASD credit.

"From inception to delivery, technology is the driving force behind all business transactions," stated ASD Vice President and Family Member Owner Kevin Czachor. "And, due to the large cost of a single sale in the funeral business, cash flow is vital. By using Bluefin's payment gateway, our customers can accept credit and debit payments and ACH one-time or recurring payments, providing customers flexibility while receiving payments faster and in full."

About Bluefin Payment Systems

Bluefin Payment Systems specializes in providing secure payment gateway solutions to over 15,000 U.S. and Canadian merchants. Bluefin's PayConex payment gateway en-

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ables debit/credit card acceptance, ACH processing, recurring billing and more, all backed by secure solutions including end-to-end encryption for POS transactions, transparent redirection, hosted pay page, store and convert processes and PCI consulting for large companies. Bluefin serves major E-Commerce merchants and partners with leading Independent Software Vendors (ISVs) in a variety of industries to bundle payment processing with their software offerings, enhancing product value and increasing customer satisfaction. Bluefin Payment Systems is headquartered in Atlanta, GA, with offices in New York, Chicago and Tulsa.

About ASD

ASD - Answering Service for Directors has created a new class of answering service exclusively for funeral professionals. Family Owned and Operated, ASD has been helping funeral homes manage their calls and their lives since 1972. With a visionary approach to business, ASD has redefined the way Funeral Directors serve families through combining unparalleled levels of training and advanced technology. For more information, visit www.myASD.com or call 1-800-868-9950.

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Reader's Comment

“A Mortician's Response to Response(s) !”

This year marks my 40th year in our profession since graduation from DIMS in 1973 & Nat'l Board Certification. I've seen many changes in our profession, some good, many not so good. Most of the “not so good” changes I attribute to greed and absence of ethics via fellow colleagues. Competitor firms belonging to so-called prestigious funeral organizations consistently demonstrate, to me, the most flagrant lapses of those two traits, especially when Pre-Arrangement solicitations are thrown into that mix. NPS capitalized on the “make a sale, period” philosophy. NPS was far too aggressive for me, when NPS went adios I had less than 10 NPS contracts (mainly transferred-in) on my books. Look at the fruit harvested by NPS's efforts. Three, 40+ year morticians retired from this firm when I acquired it in 1977. These three openly commented they saw things that if continued, feared would not be favorable for our profession. Those same three are probably spinning in their graves re: what's “commonplace” in our industry nowadays.

I enjoy receiving your magazine and it's one of the publications I will try & digest cover-to-cover at first chance. Vol. 1 / Issue 1 is “spot-on” in 2 articles. Lowell's “Mortuary Muse” critiquing organ donations is very timely. The practice of “organs for cash” is something I've suspected for decades and this practice was confirmed and exposed via St. Louis media a few months ago. As a mortician it is no doubt a conflict of interest, to dissuade families from considering this option. We are “neutral” with our families. I am NOT against organ donations. I am against aggressive solicitations by medical practitioners usually occurring at the time of death, and typically (in my experiences) with little or no honesty about what families can expect. Case in point: Years ago I was making funeral arrangements with a family who's loved one died the day previous. Out of the blue the next-of-kin stated: “can you believe it – they wanted to harvest his/her organs”! They were upset at the nature; timing & insensitivity of the solicitor. I about fell out of my chair due to the fact that their loved one arrived at my funeral home shortly before the family did and had undergone a “full-blown” harvest (skin, large bones; eyes; etc.). The family was unaware; much less gave consent to the harvest. I excused myself and asked my wife to continue the arrangements as I made my way to the prep room to phone the organ bank director (a friend). I explained my situation and was stunned once again to not get anything near an apology. I did learn later (on my own) that the family declined organ donation in the ER and left for home. The solicitor then told some other family & friends what they were wanting to do. A “friend” (not a relative) signed the consent form (forging the next-of-kin signature) & paraphrasing, said “if he/she were rational, they would want this.” Later, I spoke about this matter at length to the organ bank director. I kept that info to myself; did NOT reveal any of this to the family & will take that information w/me to my grave. Like many morticians, I ignored my feelings and spent many hours in the prep rm (at no add'l cost to the family) to hide the organ harvest damage(s) giving the family the best results I could

with preparation of their loved one. Maybe that was a mistake on my part, but one I made after contemplating if the family could “handle” learning of the trauma to their loved one – also realizing their trust had been violated. What trust I might have had with the Organ bank went out the window too.

Also via this email I want to give “Kudos” to Mark H. Shearon. I've said the exact same thing to my wife for 10+ yrs. about what he penned via his “Response to Mortuary Muse In Last Issue” re: cremation pricing. I sense we price somewhat higher than local competition, not anywhere near Mark, although I'm on-board with his philosophy as a means of survival to our industry. A number of my competitors price cremations so low (to me) they're trying to out-do ea. other in essentially cutting-their-own-throats, thereby facilitating making themselves extinct. Our costs continue to rise via personnel; insurance; overhead; etc., etc., etc., & just hold onto your hats (& wallets) when healthcare costs via The so-called Affordable Health Act (Obamacare) manifest themselves. A CEO of a local hospital, via a radio interview yesterday, advised his hospital expects to lose no less than \$1 million next year when Obamacare is implemented and he foresees a number of smaller hospitals that will be forced to close. He expects to remain open & solvent via his affiliation w/BJC.

In the last 15+ yrs. or so I've seen competitors near and far seemingly slowly do what they can to minimize our justification and existence as funeral directors. I'm probably in the minority preferring overnite visitations to allow families to mourn their loss and not take the “Express-Lane” 1-2 hr visitation approach. I thought it would never come to this during my career. I see this trend accelerating and I fear it will morph into “why have a visitation at all” logic. I shake my head and wonder how other firms meet their overhead by a logic (again, to me) “How can I cut my throat even more?” Back to Mark, I'm not ashamed of my pricing, I want to be able to maintain my facilities; my staff and everything it takes to give FULL SERVICE to those families that appreciate that (to me) fading facet of our profession. I am NOT advocating not offering abbreviated services –or- cremation. Those are here to stay. I know abbreviated services, “reduction packages,” are pushed by other funeral directors.... Families shopping –or- “window shopping” with us have mentioned that, time-after-time. We too offer “reduction pkgs” – mainly consisting of substantial discounts to clergy and children services. That started before I arrived here & we've continued. Cheaper is not always better, case in point – when's the last time you saw a Yugo ???

Mark's quote says it best: “I only hope they (funeral directors) get on the right track soon and realize before it is too late that this is their own fault that they charge so little and make cremation seem like a lesser value to the families loved one.”

In closing, I've done a “re-write” of this epistle, after the editor sought my permission to publish this & offered to run it as an “anonymous” letter. I told her I stand behind everything I say & give permission to run it in its entirety.

Respectfully,
DW Taylor

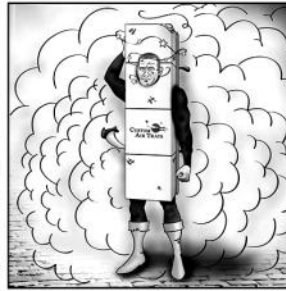
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Alkaline Hydrolysis: Insights from Your Colleagues

By Samantha "Sam" Wilson-Sieber

Alkaline hydrolysis, flameless alternative to cremation. It's an option that a handful of pioneers are now offering their families, each with slightly different marketing strategies. Many states have already approved alkaline hydrolysis as an option for human disposition. Some states are pending approval right now, as you read this article. We sat down with four funeral directors who encouraged their regulators to allow them to become industry leaders.

Mark Riposta of Riposta Funeral Home and Direct Cremation of Maine has been vocal about his interest in alkaline hydrolysis since early 2010. His low-temperature system was delivered to his Searsport crematory on March 22, 2012, and he performed his first flameless alternative on March 23.

Ryan Cattoni is a licensed funeral director in South Holland, Illinois. His company, AquaGreen Dispositions, offers alkaline hydrolysis services to the greater Chicago area. He chose a high-temperature alkaline hydrolysis system for his facility.

Drew Gray is on the cusp of being the first industry leader in Canada to offer alkaline hydrolysis. Yesterday he received delivery of his low-temperature system to his funeral home, Gray's Funeral Chapel in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan.

Curt DeBaun III is owner and operator of DeBaun Funeral Homes & Crematory in Terre Haute, Indiana. DeBaun, like many others, is eagerly awaiting approval for the process in his state.

Why did you make the move to offer alkaline hydrolysis?

Riposta: I was reading a trade journal and realized this was the future of cremation — kind of like an iPod versus an 8-Track. It's the environmentally responsible choice for the future.

Cattoni: I truly believe that it's a greener and gentler choice than burial and flame cremation. In searching for new, innovative ideas in the funeral industry, I decided that alkaline hydrolysis was the right choice.

Gray: My municipality will not allow flame cremation on my premises due to real and/or perceived air emissions. Thus began my search for incineration alternatives.

DeBaun: One day, I was sitting in my office when I noticed smoke from our crematory drifting past my window and enveloping the neighborhood. At that point, I decided to do whatever it took to have the first alkaline hydrolysis unit in Indiana.

What has been your experience offering the service to families?

Riposta: It has been easy, very natural. I just had to believe in it first. Flameless cremation (editor note: cremation alternative) makes environmental sense to my families.

Cattoni: I find it's easy to offer something when you are so passionate about it and truly feel that you are making a difference. Many of the families are choosing alkaline hydrolysis because they do not want burial, so their other option is cremation. I believe water is easier on the mind than fire. It's a green and gentle choice.

Gray: I began speaking with my families about their options ahead of time. The reaction towards alkaline hydrolysis has been extremely positive. I have families who have AH documented on their preneed, anticipat-

(Continued on page 28)

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Memorial Suppliers Band Together to Form All-American Organization



ST. LOUIS, MO (Feb 1, 2013)- In a day and age of global economics, consumers are often given the call to action to 'Buy American'. This appeal to a person's buying habits comes with the perceived benefits of the protection of the domestic labor force, more reliable and better quality products, and increased independence from American reliance on foreign manufacturing. Taking these factors into account, a group of twelve providers of funeral and cremation products has come together to form the Manufacturers And Suppliers of American Memorials (MASAM).

The Mission of MASAM is "to Actively Promote and Provide American-made Memorial Products to the Funeral and Cremation Industry so that Decision-Makers on all levels experience increased awareness and a heightened level of education with regards to choices and options of memorial products originating in the United States." The organization, based out of St. Louis, Missouri, collectively offers a vast selection of niche products by consolidating the resources of numerous small organizations and providing them on a large scale to funeral homes and crematories throughout the United States.

The acting director of MASAM, Terry Swalley, found inspiration for the creation of the organization while attending funeral industry conventions and trade shows with Kap-Lind Enterprises. "In going to the NFDA and ICCFA conventions, I found countless companies that were providing the same, low-cost, foreign-made urns. When I would walk by a booth and actually see a unique or distinctive product, it was often made in the U.S. by a small company that focused on perfecting of their craft. As I would discuss their products with them, I found that those companies shared many of the challenges faced by Kap-Lind. Their product did not hold appeal across all tastes and preferences and they couldn't effectively reach out to the large number of funeral service providers to get the message out," said Swalley.

As a result, Swalley took the idea of an organization focused on American-made products back to St. Louis and began to recruit support. "Lori Simmons, the owner of Kap-Lind, was on board right away. We started putting feelers out to organizations that we had a relationship with to see if we could really make this happen." Within weeks, the base of MASAM had been established and Simmons and Swalley began to put formal plans into place. "The key part of MASAM was the addition of Bass-Mollett as our distributor partner. Tad Flowers embraced the idea of supporting American-made products and Bass-Mollett has worked hard to establish solid relationships with hundreds of funeral homes and crematories throughout the nation," added Swalley. MASAM's initial efforts have focused on getting the collection of over 220 memorial products from 12 distinct companies in front of funeral

service decision-makers. In December of 2012, the first official action of MASAM was the mailing of a digital catalog and wholesale price list to over 500 funeral homes and crematories. "The effort put forth by all of the people involved was astounding," said Tad Flowers, Vice President of Bass-Mollett, "We were able to get all of the product information and specifications together and in one offering over the course of ten days. The fact that the variety of these products hold a wide-spread appeal and they are all American-made should definitely make an impact, and we are already starting to get positive feedback about MASAM."

As MASAM sets out on 2013, several initiatives should drive more attention to the newfound organization. "We are going to get the word out to organizations on both the national and state levels and we are going to make an attempt to get attention from industry publications," said Swalley. "We will have a comprehensive e-mail campaign and launch the MASAM website this month. If we can continue to draw positive attention, it will be a success for MASAM and a success for small American manufacturers throughout the country."

****The charter members of MASAM include:

- ◆ American Art Glass Urns (IN),
- ◆ Artistic Wood Urns (GA),
- ◆ Bass-Mollett (IL),
- ◆ BOL Productions (FL),
- ◆ Cast Paper Art (MO),
- ◆ Fox Ceramics (MT),
- ◆ Jim Flood Designs (MO),
- ◆ Kap-Lind Enterprises (MO),
- ◆ Let Your Love Grow & Verde Products (MO),
- ◆ Majestic Urns (IN),
- ◆ Timberland Urns (MN),
- ◆ Tom Ehmler Woodworking (IL).

For more information contact: Terry Swalley, Kap-Lind Enterprises, www.kap-lind.com or office: 636-717-6542.

The surge in membership led to greater exposure for All-American Memorial Product Organization. On March 28, 2013 an additional press release was given.

Inspired with the simple goal of garnering attention for small business creating American-made memorials, the Manufacturers and Suppliers of American Memorials (MASAM) has established a strong foundation within the world of funeral, cremation, and memorial services. Founded with twelve members in 2012, recent attention has piqued interest in the cooperative effort.

With joint efforts of the founding membership, MASAM has grown to include **Phoenix Urns** of Proctor, Vermont, **Memory Pendants** of Everett, Washington and **Flyboy Natural Rose Petals** of Myrtle Creek, Oregon. Each of these individual organizations adds a new product dimension to MASAM's collaborative offering and expands the footprint of what is becoming a representative organization for a true All-American organization.

Mortuary Muse (Cont.)

(Continued from page 2)

process that I feel it will grow at a faster rate than cremation has the past few years. Of course, this will depend on funeral service regulators who sometimes are slow to respond to advanced technology or changing attitudes.

Funeral service and state regulatory agencies should not delay in recognizing and legalizing the AH process. With its roots in the medical/veterinary fields, there may be more clout with the regulators than the funeral industry. AH could end up being the last item on your hospital or hospice treatment.

Some proponents of AH refer to the process as flameless cremation. This is a mistake as AH does not relate to the heat-related cremation process at all. It muddles the regulatory issues as some states mandates specific temperature requirements for cremations. Alkaline Hydrolysis should be treated as a separate method of disposition that has some already established medical and health guidelines.

About the Author: Lowell Pugh has had funeral director and embalmer licenses in Missouri and Texas and continues the operation of the family funeral home which started in 1904. He is publisher of **The Dead Beat** which began in 1999. He can be contacted at **The Dead Beat** address.

You Can't Un-Answer A Call (Cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

this frustration to help remove some of the tension from the family.

Consequently, funeral directors have to communicate professionally and empathetically with people who are often reacting to situations with extreme emotion. A grandchild's name left out of an obituary or a bible verse read incorrectly has the potential to enrage or devastate family members. Due to the time-sensitive nature of their work, funeral professionals are often forced to discuss major decisions over the phone. However, the telephone can often be a challenging communication medium. The lack of face-to-face interaction can be problematic when 55 percent of our messages are conveyed with body language, according to the University of Florida, while our actual words account for only 7 percent. While most funeral directors place a high value on personal interaction, ignoring the telephone is not an option when a call can come in day or night for a family in need.

Unfortunately, remaining available at all times may often mean dealing with callers who do not understand the demands of the funeral business or respect the nature of your work. When you're a funeral director working side-by-side with

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grieving families, you cannot let a bad telephone exchange ruin your mood. So how do you remain positive, find time for yourself and ensure that every call is answered promptly? For many funeral homes, the answer is to forward their phone lines to an answering service that can provide a protective shield between the staff and rude callers while ensuring they will be notified immediately if a family calls.

ASD – Answering Service for Directors helps funeral homes screen their calls by offering highly customizable account options that allow directors to be notified only for the specific types of calls they deem urgent. Directors can prepare in advance before speaking to a caller who might otherwise ruin their day. Every call is recorded, allowing funeral professionals to hear the emotional state of the person before returning the call. With so much at stake and so little time to plan such an monumental event, funeral professionals are constantly pulled in different directions and must prioritize their checklist of crucial tasks. With ASD, directors can reclaim the time they once spent responding to inconsiderate callers and focus on the families that require immediate attention.



Kevin Czachor, Vice President & Family Member Owner of ASD – Answering Service for Directors, has helped develop telecommunication strategies for 25 percent of funeral homes located in North America.

With a visionary approach to business, the ASD team have redefined the way Funeral Directors serve their families through combining unparalleled levels of training and advanced technology. Kevin can be reached at 800-868-9950 or via email at kevin@myasd.com.

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Bass-Mollett Publishers Inc. to Provide Memorial Stationery Line Licensed by Major League Baseball™

By Tad Flowers Jr.

Greenville, IL – Bass-Mollett Publishers Inc. announced today that it will be entering a partnership with The Eternal Image Group, LLC. to provide an exclusive line of funeral stationery licensed by Major League Baseball™.



This unique and exclusive MLB™ Memoriam product line will be offered as Memorial Boxed Sets containing a leather picture-frame Register Book with team-specific interior, Service Folders, and Acknowledgement Cards all based on MLB™ approved artwork developed by artist Diane Davidson with Bass-Mollett.

Memorial Boxed Sets featuring the unique logos for all thirty teams of Major League Baseball™ will be available to the public May 1st, 2013.

Both Bass-Mollett and The Eternal Image Group believe this

product line will provide a unique opportunity to commemorate those who have played, coached, worked for, or been a lifelong fan of their favorite Major League Baseball™ team.

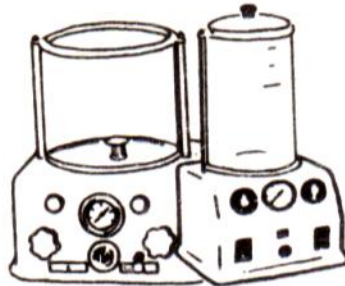
About Bass-Mollett Publishers Inc.

Bass-Mollett Publishers Inc., founded as a family-owned business in 1949, is an industry leading printer, manufacturer, and distributor of funerary products. Bass-Mollett specializes in offering high quality custom printed solutions, the finest funeral stationery, and the most complete selection of product lines in the funeral industry. Bass-Mollett's stationery selections include the work of such artists as Terry Redlin, Kim Norlein, and Ray Simon.

About The Eternal Image Group LLC

The Eternal Image Group LLC, formed in 2012, is a licensing company active in the memorial products industry. EI Group manages a growing portfolio of high-profile Brand names and oversees the design, manufacturing, and marketing of a wide range of licensed memorial products featured on BrandMemorials.com. Currently the company offers a selection of caskets, urns, monuments, vaults, memorial stationery, and memorial candles. Product galleries can be found on the Company's social media pages [facebook.com/brandmemorials](https://www.facebook.com/brandmemorials) and twitter.com/brandmemorials. For additional information, visit www.brandmemorials.com or call 248-994-7649.

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Alkaline Hydrolysis: Insights from Your Colleagues (Cont.)

(Continued from page 23)

ing the process initiative.

DeBaun: Without exception, everyone in the public that I have mentioned the AH process to has been not only receptive, but voiced a preference over cremation.

How do you view the industry's response?

Riposta: I could go on and on about this, but once the public is informed and starts asking for this service - that's when you'll see the industry respond. The process works for our staff and families. I have plans for at least four more systems by the end of 2014.

Gray: The AH technology is new enough that unless you have a pressing need in your market, the old technology of flame incinerative cremation is what we are familiar with and lean to. In Saskatchewan, biomedical waste is trucked to a neighboring province that still allows incineration. In time, this will change as well and alternate, cleaner processes will prevail out of necessity. Our funeral industry will need to follow suit at some point. I feel that I just got ahead of the curve a bit.

DeBaun: Any resistance that exists is from the funeral directors, much like the resistance given 25 years ago concerning cremation. We are a stubborn group, and because of this, I actually am surprised to see proposed legislation here in Indiana to approve AH. I feel that if left solely to the State Board of Funeral Service, it would be several years in coming.

Cattoni: I've been surprised by my families. I originally thought people would choose this method solely for the environmental benefits. My families are choosing alkaline hydrolysis because they are not comfortable with cremation by fire. They are relieved there is an alternative. That is the curveball the industry didn't expect.

Perhaps simplicity says it best. We asked our funeral directors to describe alkaline hydrolysis in three words. Mark Riposta chose responsible, caring, and complete. Drew Gray stated clean, gentle, and respectful. Curt DeBaun believes it to be, "simpler than cremation." Ryan Cattoni left us with, "future of industry."



Samantha "Sam" Wilson-Sieber, BS -Biology, Purdue University, is VP Research at Bio-Response Solutions, Inc., where she leads implementation of the alkaline hydrolysis product lines for both the human and pet systems. Sam is also responsible for regulatory compliance and assists customers with the approvals processes at State and Local levels .



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This photo shows a low temperature alkaline hydrolysis system next to two cremation units.

Luke Wilson of Bio-Response with a high temperature alkaline hydrolysis system.



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Batesville Names John Parlapiano East Division Vice President of Sales

BATESVILLE, IN, April 16, 2013 – Batesville, the leading provider of comprehensive solutions to the funeral industry, announced the addition of John Parlapiano as East Division Vice President of Sales.



“John brings a wealth of funeral industry knowledge, with more than 15 years experience working with customers of all sizes,” said John Schutte, Batesville’s vice president of sales. “His professional connections, leadership skills and strong personal drive will allow him to make an immediate impact in this role.”

Parlapiano is a proven leader with broad business expertise and a passion for developing people. “I get great satisfaction out of helping customers achieve their business and financial goals,” he said. “I’ve always had a healthy respect for Batesville and look forward to continuing the legacy of leadership.”

Parlapiano spent the last eight years owning, operating and growing an insurance agency, which he said helped him better understand and appreciate the challenges independent business owners face. Previously, he was West Division Director of Sales at Forethought Financial Services, where he also held several other senior sales roles. Parlapiano earned a bachelor’s degree in business administration from University of Northern Colorado.

ABOUT BATESVILLE

Batesville (www.Batesville.com), a wholly owned subsidiary of Hillenbrand, Inc. (NYSE:HI), is the leader in the North American death care industry. For more than 125 years, Batesville has been dedicated to helping families honor the lives of those they love®. Batesville’s innovation has changed the face of funeral service, from advancements in manufacturing and quality to patented features and memorialization offerings, technology and web-based solutions, and profit-enhancing merchandising systems and room displays. Our history of manufacturing excellence, product innovation, superior customer service and reliable delivery has helped Batesville become – and remain – a market leader.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, CONTACT:


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Director – Brand & Marketing Communications
Teresa.Gylafia@batesville.com
Phone: 812.931.5084

Death Notices of Fellow Funeral Service Colleagues (Cont.)

TEXAS (Cont.)

(Continued from page 15)



William Rutledge, 66, of Hico passed away on Feb. 13, 2013. He was a veteran of the U.S. Army. He was former owner of Rutledge Funeral Home. Services were directed by Harvest Hills Funeral Home in Hico. 



Ward Lynn Skinner, 61, of Edinburg/Mission, died Jan. 30, 2013. He was a 1975 graduate of the Commonwealth Institute of Mortuary Science in Houston. He was a third generation funeral director of Skinner-Silva Funeral Home. He was president and in charge of daily operations of the Hillcrest Memorial Park Cemetery. Skinner-Silva Funeral Home in Pharr directed the services.



Frances M. Streb, 76, of Beeville died Feb. 20, 2013. She is the mother of Cherri Dearing with Cage-Mills Funeral Directors in Corpus Christi who handled the services.



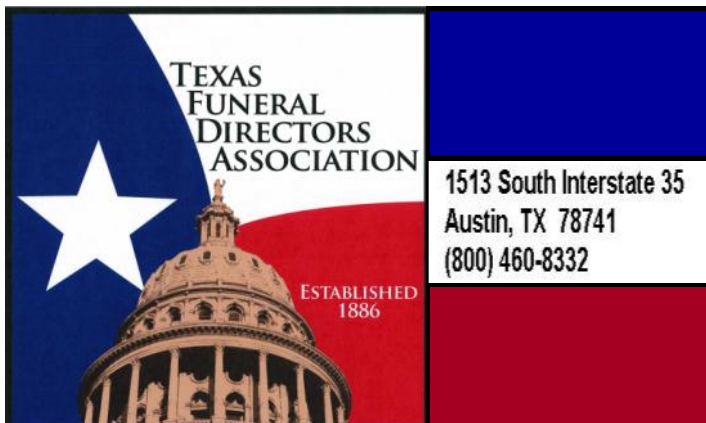
Stephen C. Walker, 56, of Conroe died April 25, 2013. He was the son of TFDA Past President, Charles E. Walker with Cashner Funeral Home. Arrangement were under the direction of Cashner Funeral Home.



Charles Austin Winter, 69, of Housston, died Feb. 18, 2013. He graduated from Dallas Institute of Funeral Service in 1968. He was a sales representative for Matthews Casket, a member of TFDA Sales Club and Past President of Commonwealth Institute. He was honored with Southeast Texas Funeral Directors Association Salesman of the year award in 1995-96, SETFDA Supplier of the year in 2005-2006 and Certificate of Recognition from Matthews for 15 years of service in 2012. Sam Houston Memorial Funeral Home in Houston conducted the funeral services.



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