

The Dead Beat



The Caregiver's Soapbox

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



Volume 13

www.thedeath-beat.com

Issue 4

A Reminder of What We Do

By Anthony Whalen

As a funeral director, sometimes we seem to become complacent with death and dying and especially the dead themselves. As brand new graduates of Mortuary College we always thought, "That will never be me!" As the years pass and the phone has rang at 3:00 am more times than we would like to even count, we sometimes forget why we do what we do. At times we need a little reminder of why we joined this profession, whether it was because generations before us have been Undertakers, or because a funeral that you attended sparked the interest, or a host of other reasons.



At the end of graduation from Mortuary College we took the Funeral Service Oath. While reading over it recently, this part of it stood out: *That I shall not let the constant relationship and familiarity with death give me cause to yield to carelessness, or to violate my obligation to society or to the dignity of my profession.* And a little further down it states: *And that I shall be faithful to those*

who have placed their trust in me.

We serve families that we have either served in the past or families that this will be the first time we are entrusted with the care and undertaking of arrangements for their loved one. On occasions we are dealt with the task of serving our own family as a funeral director. It is something that we do not want to think about, having to bury one of our own relatives, but at times we are called upon to perform this responsibility.

Our family and friends know what it is that we do. There are the occasional "morbid" questions and jokes, but when experiencing a loss in the family, they turn to us to handle all of the arrangements and want us to take control. This is after all what we have spent countless hours in mortuary college classes and study sessions, and after spending all night in the Prep Room putting on a clean dress shirt so that we can meet with the family a few hours later in the Arrangement Room. It's what we do.

One February morning my phone rang at 6:30, it was my father's ringtone sounding off...I knew what that call was going to be before I even answered it. The night before, Grandma was declining, and pretty rapidly...after all she was 95 years old, and well she said it many times before that she was ready to "go home." I got dressed and went over to the house, which was only a mile and a half away, and so began the undertaking of my grandmother's funeral



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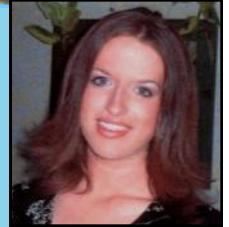


Restland Coppel Chapel
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Amy Howard Art Gallery



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

Flowers Around the Funeral Home



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Mortuary Muse By Lowell

Beware— that prowler sneaking in the back door may be—Anticipatory Grief.

Though experiencing Anticipatory Grief for many years, I had not even heard of the term until the 1990's. I first recognized it while reading Dr. Kenneth Doka's **Disenfranchised Grief** and Teresa Rando's **Treatment of Complicated Mourning**, when Joanne and I were researching material for our "Grief in the Workplace" series of articles and continuing education course.

It dawned on me that through the years as people spoke of their loved ones— "It's terminal" or "The doctor says she won't last through the night." The person speaking is probably experiencing Anticipatory Grief at that moment. And I felt bad that I had not realized what they were feeling as they expressed their sad news. Secretly I wished they had not told me or worse, my own anticipatory grief may be that I would not be able to make that trip with my family. Trivial, yes, insensitive, yes—but when you work 24/7 for years, it happens.

Understanding that our clients were actually experiencing Anticipatory Grief for their impending loss made

me feel a little foolish for my own selfish thoughts and hopefully has improved my attitude and responses.

Even though funeral directors are not psychiatrists, grief and mourning studies can be both interesting and rewarding. Fifteen or twenty years ago we funeral directors were encouraged to study grief and mourning aspects to better serve our clients. In today's challenging market I get the feeling that some of the consultants have changed the word SERVE to SELL.

As always I invite comments. Let me have it with both barrels.

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.

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Chino Valley Funeral Home Remodeling Open House

Chino Valley Funeral Home in Chino Valley, Arizona has recently completed a remodeling project and had a Chamber of Commerce Ribbon Cutting on Wednesday, October 2, 2013 at 2:00 p.m. and hosted an Open House the same day from 2:00-5:00 p.m. The public was invited to join them for refreshments, and meet their employees and see the newly remodeled facility.

Chino Valley Funeral Home is one of 8 Heritage Funeral Home locations in the Northern Arizona area. Each location is family-owned and operated by Stanley and Marilyn Stobierski. Please visit their website at www.heritagefuneralchapels.com for more information.



Chino Valley Funeral Home -Chino Valley, Arizona



Chino Valley Funeral Home's Lobby

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.

Comment from A Reader

Dear Lowell,

Couldn't help myself to finally write to you after reading the Mortuary Muse column in Volume 13 Issue 3. I will be happy to cast a negative reflection on the Missouri State Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers if you won't. Let me share my story of how they gravely affected the Meyers Funeral Chapel—Blue Springs and Parkville, MO, now that the NPS debacle has come to a conclusion.

In 2007 we started the Meyers Funeral Chapel in Blue Springs, MO. On December 23, 2007 we purchased the Webb-Freer Funeral Home in Blue Springs, MO. On January 8, 2008 we purchased the Heritage Funeral Home in Parkville, MO. These two chapels combined had approximately 3.9 million dollars' worth of NPS contracts.

After the collapse of NPS in May of 2008, I started to investigate how this could have happened. After many days, weeks, and months, we discovered that the Missouri State Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers, the Division of Finance and Insurance, the Missouri Attorney General's Office, and others knew in October of 2007 that this company was going under. How on earth could a state agency allow us to sign official documents with the board saying we would honor that much preneed when they knew full and well that the money was not there! This is a travesty and sin in my opinion.

What did the state board do? Absolutely nothing!! Why do we pay these fees to protect us? Did they do anything to go after the NPS executives? NO!! It was the FBI, United States Attorney's office, United States Postal Inspectors Service, and the United States Department of Justice that got these crooks put in jail. All the board did was try to cover their own behinds.

I say do away with the State Board, as Colorado seems to do just fine letting the public decide who stays in business and who doesn't. Let the law enforcement agencies take care of operators who don't do the right thing.

Martin R. Meyers
Meyers Funeral Chapels



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Behind the Back Fence

By Lowell

Infectious enthusiasm for life, profession, his colleagues and his hometown neighbors barely skims the surface of all the admirable qualities you might describe the newly, installed NFDA President Robby Bates.

Robby's colleagues who served with him at state and national association level are well aware of his abilities in those roles of official duties. I am fortunate and proud to have observed Robby at his home and with his DeKalb, Texas friends and neighbors.

We, Claude Howard, editor Joanne's husband, and I stopped by while Robby's new state of the art funeral home was under construction. Robby took us to lunch and the restaurant patrons would not have been more enthusiastic if L.B.J. or one of the Bush presidents had walked in their midst.

As we moved through the dining room the enthusiastic interaction between Robby and the restaurant patrons would have warmed the hearts of L.B.J. or a Bush.

Best wishes Robby and Betty!!!

Ron Hast, editor of Mortuary Management, who died in July will certainly be missed by many funeral industry colleagues. Ron's commentary in his publication left no doubt in the reader's mind about what his position was on any fu-

neral service issue. He was however always willing to let the reader share their own opinions. Ron might have the last word, however.

In the mid to late 1990s Ron graciously published several articles which Joanne and I wrote.

Steve Palmer, owner/operator of Westcott Funeral Homes in Arizona, was a longtime friend of Ron. Steve details Ron's very interesting funeral service life in the October issue of Funeral Home and Cemetery News.

An unusual—at least for us—succession of services during the last half of the third quarter might represent the beginning of one or more trends. This group of services ranged in size from 20 mourners to 1,100.

Now a funeral home the size of ours usually takes several years to reflect a trend. Whether trend or aberration we will always try to be flexible.

Most notable as a trend nowadays is the fact that a weekend is going to be involved whether the death occurs on Monday or Friday. Other trendy issues on the rise is the misinformation, confusion and delays by donor programs and hospice organizations. Then we have hospitals and doctors trying to decide who is going to sign

the death certificate and whether the doctor is on or is not online with the state.

Perhaps the most perplexing problem is related to personalization of services. We have had families decide to alter sequence of events during and after the services without informing us of the change. In one instance the family had planned to bury cremains at a private family committal at a later date. At the conclusion of the church memorial service, the family told us they had brought a shovel and were going to bury the cremains now. This meant a dash to the funeral home to change out the nice urn they had borrowed. One family member was confused by the switch in urns.

Another surprise change came in a church with an overflow crowd of mourners. At the conclusion of the service the minister announced that the next of kin and he would meet folks at a different location in the church. The changed traffic flow created a lot of congestion, but I suppose we were really the only ones that were exasperated.

One event that could have had serious consequences was a long slow moving procession with horses, mourners on foot and automobiles. There had been discussion about travelling a slightly different route to the cemetery. There was an objection by a family member about having a lead car and police escort. These issues were settled and coordinated with the sheriff's department. When the procession was ready to roll a civilian pick-up with an array of flashing lights pulled in front of the sheriff's escort vehicle. The driver led a stop and go way that was jerking the traffic flow, oh yes—he said the family told him he could lead. I'm sure he had a zillion dollars worth of liability insurance.

Is there a new trend? If so it may be like bull riding at the rodeo. Open the gate and hope you can hang on.



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

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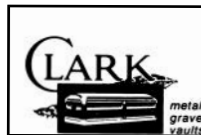
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After-Thoughts *By Joanne Howard*

After reading my Bible devotion today—The question, “What is the dream for your one precious life?” was asked. It made me think about my life and, of course, of others that have shaped my life.

A couple of months ago life at the funeral home had been rather challenging, with an abnormal number of funerals in a short amount of time for our small funeral home. But a variety of lives have been presented in that small amount of time. The end of these various people have ranged from a 94- year- old ready to die to a 12-year-old that had been kidnapped and murdered and really just starting her life. So what had been the dreams of their lives?

Our dreams seem to be molded by many factors. Our physical circumstances—our health, our surroundings, etc.—seems to be one thing that influences us. The people in our lives—our



parents, friends, neighbors, spouses and other relatives-siblings, grandparents and many more—have a great impact on our lives and dreams. Finally there is the spiritual factor or our influence by our feelings about God.

Considering all these different factors it's no wonder that there is a great variety to our dreams. Also those dreams don't always stay the same. We start in one direction to accomplish our goal and some factor turns us into an entirely different path.

Of course, I think our dreams are totally influence by our age and knowledge of the world. But don't you think our basic essence or even personality steers us in one way or another. I think our faith and how God created us is the beginning of our dreams and eve-



rything throughout our lives impacts our path.

As I write the obituaries and try to capture what has been happening during a person's life, hopefully you can get a glimpse of what that person's dreams were. But at times I would love to know what had really been important or what dreams those people really had.

So what is the dream of your life? I think at this point in my life, my hope and my dream is that I have been a person who cared and I have helped whenever I could. It sounds corny, but I hope I have made the world a better place because I tried to make it better. (I guess who writes my obituary may have an inkling of what to write.)

I now know a bit of the challenges of a high profile funeral from a tragic situation. As I mentioned earlier, we had a very heartbreaking funeral for a 12-year-old girl in our small town. She was kidnapped from a park across the street from the funeral home. She was missing three days with a large search of the area to find her. Regretfully she was kidnapped by a previous acquaintance of the family and recognized by the children who were around when she entered his car. He has been accused of kidnapping, rape and murder. After she was found the family met with us to plan her service at the school.

Because of many factors the body was not viewable and this led to many confrontations. Having lost a child the idea of not having that last look was a hard thing to present. But based on the experts dealing with the body and how it was prepared, the option to view was not possible. So we had the body brought just prior to the service for security and less confrontation.

After the preliminary decisions of the basics by the family, the arrangements for the actual service were coordinated with the school due to the fact that it would be held in the gymnasium for

accommodating the size of the attendance.

The superintendent actually called school off that day. It was a memorable beginning to the school year since the girl had been kidnapped after the first day of classes. He also helped the situation by not allowing the media to come on school grounds at any time.

The service was held at 1:00 p.m. I had to recruit several funeral directors to help. There were seven funeral directors and several other local people assisting me to coordinate all that was happening. Since there was no visitation, all flowers were delivered and set up that morning. Also numerous signs had been made by the children at school to display around the walls.

As far as the sign in of the attendees the school had made a square of the lunch room tables which we arranged some books and pages at about 8 sign- in positions with service folders on the table to pick up or were distributed as they were seated. Approximately 1,100 were in attendance.

The family sat in chairs on the floor in front of the casket, flowers and podium. Teachers and classmates sat behind the family along with several chairs for those who couldn't climb the bleachers. The majority of the people

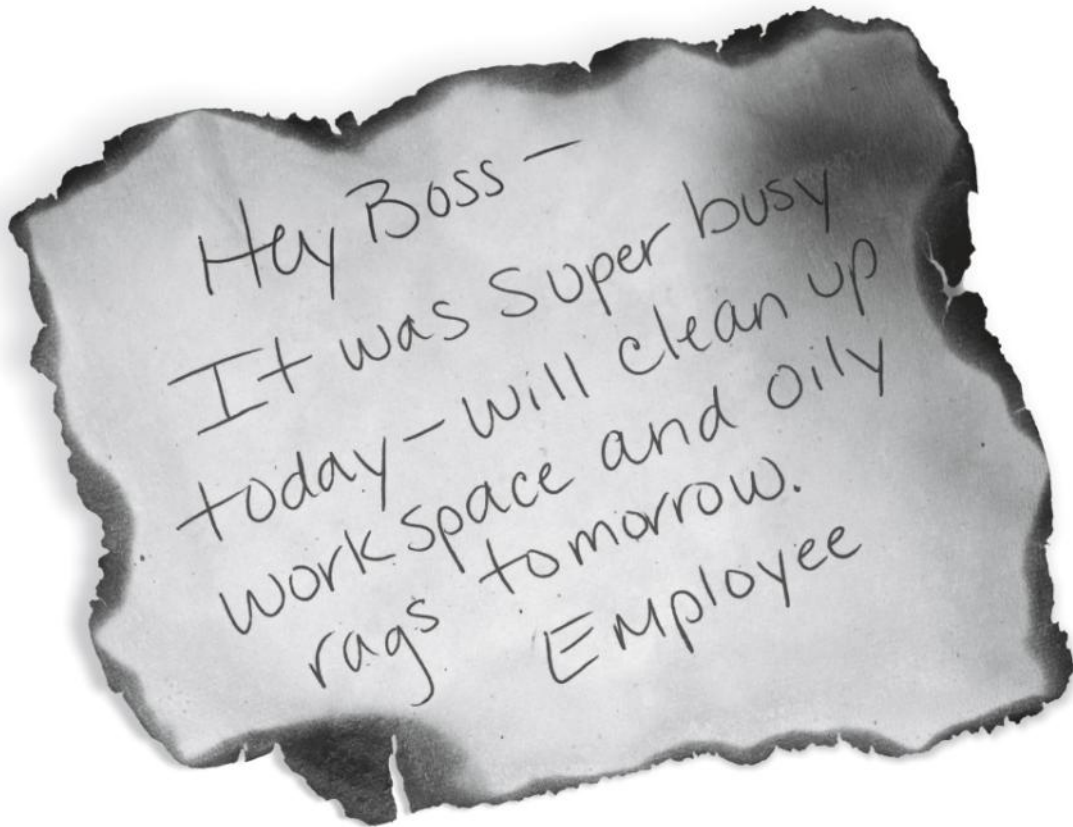


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About the author: Joanne Howard is the editor of **The Dead Beat**. She has been a licensed funeral director since 1992 with Pugh Funeral Home in Golden City, MO and also the aftercare coordinator. Much of her writing

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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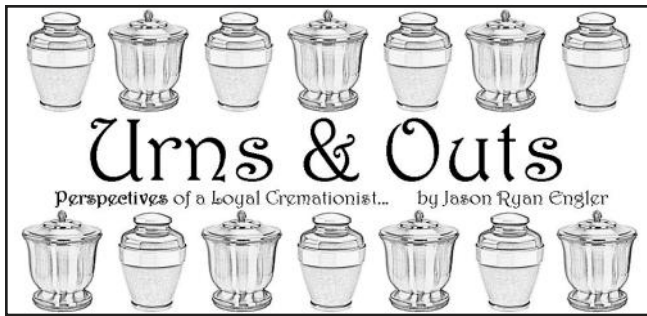
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What happens when we die? There probably is no other question that has perplexed the human race as this one has. We know death happens – and those of us in the profession of caring for the dead and the living that survive them, have heard countless philosophies, ideas, doctrines, poems, stories – all that relate the experience that death brings.

There is a strange paradox that death brings – the realization that living means dying. Death is inevitable. Imminent. No person survives life. Death is one of the absolutes.

So what happens when we die? Those of us who experience death intimately and regularly know the regimen that comes when someone dies. We have made our lives about the care that is necessary to make a peaceful passage of the mortal remains of someone who has lived and loved. We know that when death happens a certain something happens to the body – planned or unplanned, natural or unnatural. We understand that the body is to inhumed, inurned, entombed, interred – and we understand the purpose of having a service to remember those who have experienced life around us.

But what of the soul? What of that life force that animates the flesh? Various faiths and cultures have taught us their ideas of the immortality of the soul: we have been taught that the spirit lives on – and each has an explanation as to how, where and why this hap-

pens. Heaven. Valhalla. Elysium. Purgatory. Universe. Hades. Underworld. Call it what you will, these are the utmost explanations of the spirit's continuous existence.

But what happens when we die? Is death truly the end? I have always been encouraged by something that Gandalf said in the epic *Lord of the Rings* movie: "End? Oh no. The journey doesn't end here. Death is only a path – one that we all must take. The grey rain curtain of this life rolls back, and all turns to silver glass – and then you see it: white shores – and beyond – a far green country under a swift sunrise."

We plead for some tangible existence of proof that life continues after death. Tonight when you lay down to go to sleep, perhaps you will recall reading this column and will be reminded of the effect, good or bad, that it had on you. In that way, the things I have written live on, even though they've been written in the past. How much more, then, do our loved ones live on in us? In the ways they experience and touch our lives. In the ways our lives have been part of theirs. The people I have known and loved in this life will always be part of me because my life has been experienced with them.

Perhaps, then, our focus doesn't only need to be on what may or may not happen when we die and leave this life. Perhaps our focus should be on the living and experience that life brings – and we can be more virtuous in the way our lives touch the lives of others.

What happens when we die? The answer can only be found in dying. So until then... LET'S LIVE!



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>.

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How Long???

By Ken Doka

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

There is a third lesson too. The journey never really ends. We may be surprised that even years later, we still feel pain. It may occur in all types where all of a sudden we are reminded that someone we loved is no longer here to share this moment. When my grandson was born, I longed to share it with

my dad. I missed him intensely even though he had died a decade earlier.

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

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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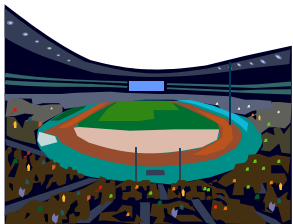


Chuckles

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

PONDERISMS— (Some things to think about)

1. I used to eat a lot of natural foods until I learned that most people die of natural causes.
2. There are two kinds of pedestrians...The quick and the dead.
3. Life is sexually transmitted.
4. Healthy is merely the lowest possible rate at which one can die.
5. The only difference between a rut and a grave is the depth.
6. Health nuts are going to feel stupid someday, lying in hospitals dying of nothing.
7. Have you noticed since everyone has a cell phone these days no one talks about seeing UFOs like they used to?
8. Whenever I feel blue, I start breathing again.
9. All of us could take a lesson from the weather. It pays no attention to criticism.
10. In the 60's, people took acid to make the world weird. Now the world is weird and people take Prozac to make it normal.
11. How is it one careless match can start a forest fire, but it takes a whole box to start a camp-fire?
12. Who was the first person to look at a cow and "I think I'll squeeze these dangly things and drink whatever comes out? Hmmmm, How about eggs?....."
13. If Jimmy cracks corn and no one cares, why is there a song about him?
14. Why does your OB-GYN leave the room when you get undressed if they are going to look up there anyway?
15. If corn oil is made from corn, and vegetable oil is made from vegetables, then what is baby oil made from?
16. Do illiterate people get the full effect of Alphabet Soup?
17. Does pushing the elevator button more than once make it arrive faster?
18. Why doesn't glue stick to the inside of the bottle?
19. Do you ever wonder who develops these lists?



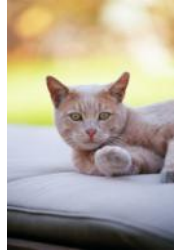
A friend of mine was at a college football game last fall when he heard a student challenge a senior citizen sitting next to him, saying it was impossible for the older generation to understand the younger generation. "You grew up in a different world," the student said loud enough for the

whole crowd to hear. "Today we have television, jet planes, space travel, man has walked on the Moon, our spaceships

have visited Mars, we even have nuclear energy, electric and hydrogen cars, computers with light speed processing and uh,..." Taking advantage of the pause in the student's litany, the elderly gentleman said, "You're right. We didn't have those things when we were young. So we invented them, you little twit! What the heck are you doing for the next generation?"

Cat & Mice in Heaven

A cat died and went to Heaven. God met her at the gates and said, "You have been a good cat all these years. Anything you want is yours for the asking." The cat thought for a minute and then said, "All my life I lived on a farm and slept on hard wooden floors. I would like a real fluffy pillow to sleep on." God said, "Say no more." Instantly the cat had a huge fluffy pillow. A few days later, six mice were killed in an accident and they all went to Heaven together. God met the mice at the gates with the same offer that He made to the cat. The mice said, "Well, we have had to run all of our lives; from cats, dogs, and even people with brooms! If we could just have some little roller skates, we would not have to run again. God



answered, "It is done." All the mice had beautiful little roller skates. About a week later, God decided to check on the cat. He found her sound asleep on her fluffy pillow. God gently awakened the cat and asked, "Is everything okay? How have you been doing? Are you happy?" The cat replied, "Oh, it is WONDERFUL. I have never been so happy in my life. The pillow is so fluffy, and those little Meals on Wheels you have been sending over are delicious!"

Ole was bragging about his knowledge of the state capitols of the United States. He announced, "Go ahead, ask me any ov da capitols. I know all ov dem." "Okay," Sven responded. "Vhat is de capitol ov Arizona?" Ole replied proudly, "Oh, dat's easy. It's 'A'."

Ole was having problems selling his old car because it had 340,000 miles on it. He discussed his problem with Sven. Sven suggested, "Dere may be a chance tew sell dat car but it's not going tew be legal." "Dat doesn't matter at all," replied Ole. "All dat matters is dat I am able to sell dis car." "Alright," replied Sven. "Here is da address ov a friend ov mine. He owns a car repair shop. If yew tell him I sent yew, he vill turn da counter back on your car tew 40,000 miles." Ole visited the mechanic. A week or so later he ran into Sven who asked, "Did yew sell your car?" "No!" replied Ole, indignantly. "Vhy should I? It only has 40,000 on it!"



A barber gave a haircut to a priest one day. The priest tried to pay for the haircut but the barber refused, saying, "I cannot accept money from you for you are a good man—you do God's

(Continued on page 11)

Chuckles (Cont.)

work.” The next morning the barber found a dozen Bibles at the door to his shop. A policeman came to the barber for a haircut and again the barber refused payment, saying, “I cannot accept money from you for you are a good man—you protect the public.” The next morning the barber found a dozen doughnuts at the door to his shop. A lawyer came to the barber for a haircut and again the barber refused payment, saying, “I cannot accept money from you for you are a good man—you serve the justice system.” The next morning the barber found a dozen more lawyers waiting for a haircut.



Fred was in the hospital, near death, so the family sent for his pastor. As the pastor stood beside the bed, Fred's frail condition grew worse, and he motioned frantically for something to write on. The pastor lovingly handed him a pen and piece of paper, and Fred used his last ounce of strength to scribble a note. Then he died. The pastor thought it best not to look at the note just then, so he slipped it into his jacket pocket. Several days later, at the funeral, the pastor delivered his eulogy. He realized that he was wearing the same jacket that he'd worn the day Fred died. “You know,” he said, “Fred handed me a note just before he died. I haven't read it but knowing Fred, I'm sure there's a word of inspiration there for us all.” He unfolded the note and read aloud, “You're standing on my oxygen tube!”





While driving down the highway recently I saw this on the T-shirt of a man on a motorcycle that pulled ahead of me: “If you can read this, my wife fell off.”

“What do you love most about me?” a husband asked his wife. “My great athletic ability or my quick intellect?” “What I love about you,” responded the wife, “is your enormous sense of humor.”

Two friends had been playing a round of golf every Saturday for a few years with one golfer always winning. One particu-

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lar Saturday the match was closer than usual. In fact, it was tied when they came to the eighteenth. Try as he might, the losing golfer couldn't seem to pull out a victory, and started swearing and throwing his clubs. “Hey, calm down,” said the winning golfer. “You played a great game and had me worried right up to the end.” “That's why I'm so angry,” said the losing golfer. “I cheated like crazy and *still* couldn't win!”



A traveler entering a small country store noticed a sign on the door warning, “Danger! Beware of dog!” Inside, he saw a harmless old hound dog asleep on the floor. “Is that the dog folks are supposed to beware of?” the traveler asked of Ole, the store owner. “Yep, dat's him,” came the reply. The traveler couldn't help but be amused. “He doesn't look dangerous. Why the sign?” “Vell,” Ole answered, “before I posted dat, people kept tripping over him.”



A young doctor had moved out to a small community to replace a doctor who was retiring. The older doctor suggested that the young one accompany him on his rounds, so the community could become used to a new doctor. At the first house a woman complains, “I've been a little sick to my stomach.” The older doctor says, “Well, you've probably been overdoing the fresh fruit. Why not cut back on the amount you've been eating and see if that does the trick?” As they left, the younger man said, “You didn't even examine that woman? How'd you come to the diagnosis so quickly?” “I didn't have to. You noticed I dropped my stethoscope on the floor in there? When I bent over to pick it up, I noticed a half dozen banana peels in the trash. That was what probably was making her sick.” “Huh,” the younger doctor said, “Pretty clever. I think I'll try that at the next house.” Arriving at the next house, they spent several minutes talking with a younger woman. She complained that she just didn't have the energy she once did and said, “I'm feeling terribly run down lately.” “You've probably been doing too much work for the Church,” the younger doctor told her. “Perhaps you should cut back a bit and see if that helps.” As they left, the elder doctor said, “I know that woman well. Your diagnosis is almost certainly correct, but how did you arrive at it?” “I did what you did at the last house. I dropped my stethoscope and when I bent down to retrieve it, I noticed the preacher under the bed.”



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"Dear Counselor...." By Bill Stalter

Dear Counselor,

Our funeral home has a long standing practice of working with individuals that want to use a small insurance policy for their funeral. Recently, we provided a funeral in exchange for a policy that we have held for years, only to find out weeks later that the death benefit was only half of what was described in the policy. What can we do about the unpaid portion of the funeral bill?

From the way you phrased your question, I have to assume you did not enter into a written contract with the individual when they brought the policy to you. While many funeral directors approach this practice as an accommodation to the individual, a court would find that a contract was formed when you accepted the policy, and could quite possibly say shame on you for not spelling out the terms of that contract. As a business, you had the duty to define the terms of each contract, and the most important term was whether you had accepted the policy as full payment for the individual's funeral. The hurdle for recovering the unpaid balance through a lawsuit is also complicated by the fact that you had two opportunities to define your terms for acceptance of the insurance policy: when the individual brought the policy to you and then again at the arrangement meeting after the death. If the individual came to you with specific requests for the funeral arrangement, then that would have been the best time to set out the details for the family to follow at the time of death. The problem with making promises about price guarantees is that you may not know with certainty what that policy will be worth at the time of death. Accordingly, funeral homes often use a form of non-guaranteed contract (I'll apply the insurance proceeds to your service, but someone will have to assume responsibility for any unpaid balance). Even if the individual wants price guarantees, that promise would have to be conditioned on what is paid on the insurance policy. On the other hand, if the individual simply sought to have the policy proceeds applied to her funeral costs (leaving the arrangement selection to family members), that understanding needs to be documented at both the time of the assignment and again at the at-need arrangement. The survivors need to know they have a legal obligation for the costs that exceed the policy proceeds. They also need to agree to cooperate with your efforts to recover the policy proceeds. More than one client has experienced a survivor making the arrangements and then subsequently surrenders the policy for its cash surrender value. The contract paperwork signed at the arrangement meeting proved that the survivor was guilty of fraud, and the insurance company was required to pay the funeral home.

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 editor@thedeat-beat.com
Or Fax: 1-417-537-4797



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.



Death Notices of Fellow Funeral Service Colleagues



INDUSTRY COLLEAGUE



Cal Wilkerson, 79, of Altamonte Springs, FL died October 3, 2013. He was vice president of U.S. Cremation Equipment. He dedicated his life to building U.S. Cremation Equipment into a great company. Cal developed enormous respect both inside and outside the company over his many years in the industry. Cal created a sense of affection and loyalty throughout the company with candor, openness and his unique sense of humor.

ILLINOIS



Roy E. McDaniel, 97, of Sparta, Illinois passed away on August 10, 2013. He served in the United States Army in the 816 Med Air Evacuation Squadron in WWII in the European Front from 1941-1945. He began to work in Funeral Service in April 6, 1950. He graduated from St. Louis College of Mortuary Science in 1952. It was then that McDaniel Funeral Homes were established. He served the Sparta area for 57 years retiring at the age of 91. His services were conducted by McDaniel Funeral Home.

KANSAS



Sylvester "S.J." Applehaus, 90, of Hays, passed away August 29, 2013. He entered the U. S. Army Air Corps serving as a B29 Bomber mechanic in the Marshall Island of Kwajalein. He attended Worshan College of Mortuary Science in Chicago, Illinois. He returned to Hays and worked at Brock's Funeral Chapel. He became co-owner with James Gustin of Brock's North Hill Chapel in 1957 until his retirement. He continued service as a monument salesman for Stockton Monument of Stockton, KS and later for Schmidt Monuments in Hays. His services were handled by Keithley Funeral Services— Brock's North Hill Chapel.



Joseph A. Butler III, 89, of Mission Hills, passed away on July 30, 2013. He began working at the funeral home when he was an eager 8-year-old, installing and collecting folding chairs from houses when funeral services were still held in family homes. He graduated from the Kansas City Kansas College of Mortuary Science in 1949. During WWII, he served with the Army Air Corps and 3rd Army in Europe. He entered the family business founded by his grandfather in 1905. In 1964, he and his father formed a business partnership with Phil and Paul Gibson. He served as president of the KC Funeral Directors Association and was elected Wyandotte County Coroner in 1951-1963. Services were directed by Joseph A. Butler & Son Funeral Home.



Terry M. Cavanaugh, 69, of Lawrence, passed away August 29, 2013. He received his Associates Degree in Mortuary Science from Kansas City Kansas Community College. Terry is a 3rd generation funeral director and embalmer who had worked for Warren-McElwain Mortuary since Feb., 2002. Arrangements were under the direction of the Warren-McElwain Mortuary.

KANSAS (Cont.)

D. Grant Elder, 67, of Wichita, passed away on August 8, 2013. He joined the Kansas Army National Guard and transferred to the California Army National Guard in 1967. He graduated from the California College of Mortuary Science in Los Angeles and returned to Arkansas City to join his grandmother, Bernice Grant, and his mother, Duana Elder, in the family-owned Grant Elder Funeral Home which his grandfather had founded in 1922. He moved to Wichita where he worked for Cochran Mortuary, Downing & Lahey Mortuary and ServiceMaster. Funeral arrangements were under direction of Broadway Colonial Funeral Home in Newton, KS.

Mary Ann Feltner, 74, of Lyndon, passed away on August 18, 2013. She was married to Marvin Dean Feltner and they purchased the Shaffer funeral Home and retired in 1997. She maintained her funeral director's license and assisted her sons in the funeral home. Feltner Funeral Home handled her services.



Ivan E. Miller, 91, of Hesston, passed away September 8, 2013. He owned and operated Miller Funeral Home in Goessel starting in 1956 and later opened Miller Funeral Home in Hesston in 1976. He graduated from Goshen College and Kansas City School of Mortuary Science. Miller-Ott Funeral Home in Goessel handled the arrangements.



Donald A. Moore, Jr., 65, of Salina, passed away August 13, 2013. He served in the United States Army and then graduated from mortuary science school. From 1974-1986 he worked in funeral homes in Indiana and Kansas before becoming owner of funeral homes in Stockton and Plainville from 1986-1996. Ryan Mortuary directed the services.

MISSOURI



Genelle Clark, 83, of Brookfield, MO formerly of Clarence, MO, passed away Sept. 30, 2013. She is the mother-in-law of MFDEA president John Pautz. Her arrangements were under the direction of Greening-Eagan-Hayes Funeral Home in Clarence, MO.



Bob Crain, 77, of Cario, IL, passed away on July 3, 2013. A licensed funeral director and embalmer for 57 years, Bob devoted his career from 1956 to 1999 to serving families of the area at Crain Funeral Homes and Cemeteries. He was very proud to see the family tradition carried on by his children and grandchildren. In addition to serving families in the capacity of funeral director and cemeterian, up until 1974 he provided ambulance services as well. His services were conducted by Crain Funeral Home.



James P. McGilley, Jr., 85, of Kansas City, MO, passed away July 21. He served in the U.S. Coast Guard aboard the USS LST 21 during WWII. He graduated from the K.C. College of Mortuary Science in 1949. His funeral director career started in high school working part-time for his father, the late James P. McGilley, Sr. He joined full-time in 1946 and became president of the firm in 1973. He served as President of the Missouri State Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers for many years. Funeral services were directed by McGilley State Line Chapel.

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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MISSOURI (Cont.)



Edward Daniel Meisenheimer, 68, of Pilot Grove passed away October 14, 2013. He graduated from Dallas Institute of Mortuary Science in 1967. He worked for various funeral homes in Seda-lia, Fulton and Boonville before entering the Army in 1969. In 1975, he and his brother purchased the Painter-Woodard Funeral Home in Pilot Grove and Otterville, currently named the Meisenheimer Funeral Home. In 1989, they built a new funeral home in Tipton, MO. He received the Purple Heart serving during the Vietnam War. His services were directed by Meisenheimer Funeral Home.



Chirley R. Miller, 84, of Farmington, MO passed away Sept. 7, 2013. She was the mother of Herb and Kate Miller owners of Miller Family Funeral Home in Perryville, MO. Arrangements were under the direction of Cozean Funeral Home in Farmington, MO.

Marguerite Thurman, 84, of Richmond, MO died Aug. 13, 2013. She is the wife of W. Levan Thurman of Richmond, former owner of Thurman Funeral Home in Richmond. Her services were directed by Weiker Funeral Home in Slater, MO.

NEW MEXICO



Patrick Lawrence Sanchez, 56 of Grants, passed away on Sept. 9, 2013. Services were handled by Compassion Mortuary in Grants, NM.

TEXAS

John W. Amey, 76, of Austin, passed away Nov. 8, 2013. He began his career in funeral service at Cook funeral Home. In 1983 he was appointed to Texas Funeral Commission and continued on the board until 1989. In 1976 he purchased Wilke-Clay Funeral Home and later became Wilke-Amey-Clay Funeral Home. He also had the Amey Funeral Home in north-west Austin. His funeral arrangements were directed by Weed-Corley-Fish Funeral Home.



Alex William "Boo" Broussard, of Beaumont, passed away Sept. 6, 2013. He was a longtime member of TFDA and Past President of Selected Independent Funeral Homes and chairman of Broussard's Mortuary. He was a third generation funeral director and served in the United States Army as a First Lieutenant in the Korean War and was awarded the honor of Bronze Star. On his return from Korea, he began his career with his father and brother in the family business, Broussard's Mortuary. Services were under the direction of Broussard's Mortuary.



Ric Brown, 63, of Mission, passed away on Aug. 7, 2013. He began his career as funeral director with Virgil Wilson Mortuary in McAllen in 1979 and moved to Mission in 1984. He and his wife Kathy started the Ric Brown Family Funeral Home in 1999. He was past president of TFDA and the South Texas Funeral Directors Association and owner of Ric Brown Family Funeral Home, who handled the arrangements for his service.



Noma Ann "Granny B" Byrum, 97, of Lancaster, passed away on Aug. 14, 2013. She was owner and operator of Byrum Funeral Home in Lancaster since 1950. Her services were directed by Byrum Funeral Home.



Bernice Cottle, 88, of Elgin, passed away Aug. 5, 2013. She was mother of Gene Cottle and former owner of Cottle Funeral Home in Troup and Overton. Her services were arranged by Cottle Funeral Home.



Jack Diamond, of Dallas, passed away Sept. 1, 2013. He served in the Air Force for 5 years and flew 96 combat missions for which he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. He was a sales representative for Batesville Casket for 38 years. His services were directed by Sparkman Hillcrest Funeral Home.



Raye Juanita Evers, 95, of McGregor, passed away Oct. 24, 2013. She was the mother of Dale Evers and receptionist for Cole Funeral Home in McGregor who handled her service arrangements. While there, she took great pride in ironing the flags for veterans to drape their caskets.

(Continued on page 17)



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Death Notices of Fellow Funeral Service Colleagues (Cont.)

(Continued from page 15)

TEXAS (Cont.)



Hugh John Farrell, III, 81, of Dallas, passed away Sept. 21, 2013. He was the editor of the *Morticians of the Southwest* Magazine. His service arrangements were done by Grove Hill Funeral Home in Dallas.

Charles J. Franklin, 76, of Floresville, passed away Oct. 31, 2013. He was owner of Franklin Funeral Home and former vice president of Mission Park Funeral Homes and Cemeteries. His services were handled by Franklin Funeral Home.



Robert L. Holt, 87, of Navasota, passed away on Oct. 12, 2013. He served in the U.S. Marine Corps. He graduated from the Texas Funeral Service Institute and became a funeral director in 1991. He is the father of Grant Holt, past president of the Southeast Texas FDA and owner of Lindley-Robertson-Holt Funeral Home in Navasota who handled the services.



Billy Ray Harper, 82, of San Angelo, passed away on Oct. 10, 2013. He was in the U.S. Navy and after returning got his funeral director's license and owned Johnson's Funeral Home for over 40 years. He also helped form the Funeral Directors Life Insurance. Service arrangements were handled by Johnson's Funeral Home.



Bailey Henry Jones Jr., 85, of Dallas, passed away Sept. 30, 2013. He was graduate of Dallas Institute-Gupton Jones College of Mortuary Science in 1954 and has been a practicing

funeral director for over 50 years. He worked in the funeral business as a boy doing odd jobs. He worked at funeral homes in Greenville, Hillsboro and Mineral Wells before beginning a career as a casket wholesaler. In the 1960's he was a salesman for Pine Bluff Casket Company, then after moving to Mesquite joined the Rex-Metallic casket company in the 1970's. He formed his own company in 1975. In the 1980's he returned to funeral directing at Restland Funeral Home where he retired in 1993. Sparkman/Hillcrest Funeral Home handled his arrangements.



Anne A. Keever, 88, of Ennis, passed away Aug. 27, 2013. She was the mother of TFDA Past President David E. Keever of J.E. Keever Mortuary. Services were directed by J.E. Keever Mortuary.



Doris Graham Kyle, 91, of San Marcos, passed away Oct. 28, 2013. She was the mother of Linda Pennington and mother-in-law of Bill Pennington, Pennington Funeral Home in San Marcos that also handled the arrangements for her service.



Kathrine W. McChesney, 84, of Cuero, passed away Sept. 26, 2013. She was former co-owner of Oak Memorial Funeral Home. Her services were conducted by Freund Funeral Home, Cuero.



John W. Morrow, Jr., 77, of Houston, passed away Oct. 6, 2013. He was Past President of the Texas Funeral Directors Association and Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service Regent and treasurer. He was a licensed funeral director for over forty years. In 1957 he began at his family's funeral home, Settegast-Kopf until it sold in 1990 to SCL.

He also was a retired Executive Vice President of Service International. His services were directed by Geo. H. Lewis & Sons.

(Continued on page 29)



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ASD's Solicitor Shield™ Feature Awarded Patent from U.S. Patent Office

MEDIA, PA—ASD – Answering Service for Directors is pleased to announce that the United States Patent Office has issued a patent for the company's Solicitor Shield™ feature. Solicitor Shield™ is the only answering service tool proven to dynamically shield against dial storms from unwanted, automated solicitors. On an average day, ASD's Solicitor Shield™ system automatically blocks 3,500 calls from robocallers. This is the second patent ASD has received this year. The company was awarded a patent in June for their exclusive First Call Connect™ feature.

A funeral home's phone is vital to making a positive first impression and securing new business. ASD's Solicitor Shield™ ensures that callers always receive a prompt answer. For funeral professionals, the potential value of even one missed call can be substantial. Too often, calls from telemarketers and recorded solicitations tie up phone lines, waste time and prevent critical calls from getting through.

ASD has recorded incidents when in a single minute, a barrage of incoming calls tracing back to just a few toll-free numbers flooded phone lines throughout the country. These recorded solicitations would be a nightmare for most call centers, but Solicitor Shield can immediately recognize a dial storm. The system has successfully blocked more than 1,000 spam calls in less than a minute and over 493,700 calls in past 12 months.

"Funeral Directors rely on ASD to promptly and compassionately answer their phones when they cannot. Solicitor Shield™ helps make that possible," says ASD Vice President Kevin Czachor. "Our clients also save money because they are not charged for these blocked calls from telemarketers. This is just one of the many details that sets ASD apart from the other thousand answering services in business today."

Assisting callers without delay protects the funeral home's reputation for excellence and lets families know they are the highest priority every time they call. Solicitor Shield™ helps ASD Call Specialist to answer calls at a

ASD's Second Patent!



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faster rate than at other call centers. Currently, ASD answers 90 percent of all calls by the first ring and 98 percent by the fourth ring. Unlike other answering service companies, ASD provides this unmatched level of service without putting callers on hold to answer other calls. By closely monitoring call volumes and creating defenses against dial storms, ASD remains the number one choice for funeral homes that expect the highest quality of service.

Solicitor Shield™ is registered under Patent No. 8,548,149. For more information, visit patft.uspto.gov.

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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Is Your Marketing Message On Target?

By Joe Weigel

Funeral homes invest time and money to promote their services. But all too often, they overlook the most obvious meanings and messages that would connect with their community. They end up wasting their investment and losing the opportunity to make a sale.

Consider the remarkably humorous example on television for wireless telephone service. (To protect the guilty, I'll call the company ""ITT.") The commercials in this ad campaign feature a "spokesperson" sitting among a number of children having a conversation on several topics. The spokesperson's banter is engaging and the children are adorable – who doesn't like ads with kids?

Sadly, the message or consumer benefit is finally revealed at the close of the commercial, but by that time it's lost its effect. This campaign is not an isolated example. Companies frequently look right past the most important messages when creating marketing materials. One common reason is that they are so focused on the finer points of their products and the aspects that differentiate them that they forget why customers buy. Or they get caught up in trying to be clever.

Funeral homes tend to focus on what's important to them, instead of on what's important to their families. Internally, they obsess over some minor detail such as how long they have been in business, and they assume that it's just as important to their families. Or they're over-sensitive about what the competition has to offer. "The funeral home down the street has a reception center -- how can we compete?" Well, maybe a reception center isn't all that important to your target audience. Instead of fearing what you perceive as the competition's strengths, develop the confidence to focus on your own.

Far too many funeral homes fail to take the time to get to know their families and what really matters to them. Instead, they make assumptions based on their own biases. Many years ago, I worked with an owner of a fast food restaurant who laughed off the idea of adding a drive through window. "Who cares about getting a quick sandwich served in their car to go – all my friends want to come inside to eat?" he scoffed. But for the restaurant's customers in the community it served, many times they were in a hurry and didn't want to come inside. That didn't stop the owner from trying to use a different marketing message he thought would appeal to his friends, who had nothing in common with all the other customers he was trying to reach.

If you're not getting the mileage you want out of your marketing efforts, maybe it's time to take a closer look at the messages you're sending. And when you look, don't do it from the funeral home's perspective. Look at it through the consumer's eyes. If you don't know or don't understand why families choose your funeral home, stop wasting money and start taking the time to learn what's important to them.

Joe Weigel is the owner of Weigel Strategic Marketing, a communications firm delivering expertise and results across three interrelated marketing disciplines: strategy, branding and communications. For more information, he can be reached at 317-260-8515 or joseph.weigel@gmail.com.

ASD – Answering Service for Directors Launches myASD 4.0

Media, PA—ASD is pleased to introduce myASD 4.0, a newly enhanced web portal for funeral professionals. The updated internal website offers an expansion of features that were available to clients through the previous website along with added tools and options. ASD's Award-Winning mobile app, ASD Mobile, first showcased these features and now they have been integrated into myASD 4.0.

With myASD 4.0, funeral directors have increased control and oversight with the ability to manage every aspect of their ASD account online. A link to a pre-release version of myASD 4.0 has been posted on ASD's login page so clients can try out all of these new features prior to the official release.

The enhanced myASD 4.0 provides individual monitoring capabilities. The website can identify not only what funeral home is logging in, but also which employee. This enables the website to function more intuitively with greater security. A Fast Login tool allows clients to log on to multiple ASD accounts simultaneously and leave comments for other directors.

Funeral Homes with a rotating schedule will appreciate added options when updating their on-call information. Clients can set a weekly or daily on-call status and even create a complex schedule weeks into the future. This provides convenience, extra time and gives funeral directors one less thing to worry about at the end of the day. The new website also includes a calendar feature so clients can view their on-call schedule as a weekly or monthly calendar anytime and confirm contact instructions are set correctly.

ASD's new online tools make it easier than ever for funeral professionals to monitor and evaluate telephone activity. Every message dispatch is displayed on the Message Log and includes a link to a recording of the dial out. Directors can review who was contacted with the message and how long before they were reached. Like the ASD Mobile app, myASD 4.0 is updated in real time so clients are notified through the site if a message is currently being dispatched.

The updated myASD 4.0 includes a 'Make Service' button that allows directors to quickly transfer information gathered on a First Call into ASD's online obit editor, simplifying the process of sending ASD service details. Other features include a redesigned Billing section with user-friendly options and links to ASD Mobile for iPhone and Android conveniently located on the login page.

According to ASD Vice President and Family Member Owner, Kevin Czachor, "ASD's newly redesigned website, my ASD 4.0, is a reflection of ASD's growth and 40 year commitment to the funeral profession. These features empower funeral professionals to stream line operations and save time while maintaining maximum oversight of their operation."

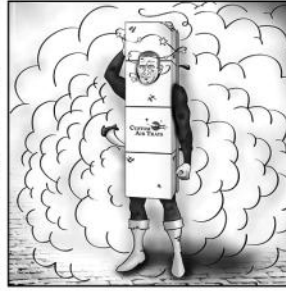
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Afterthoughts (cont.)

(Continued from page 6)

sat in the bleachers at the back of the gym. The stage was only used for overflow flower arrangements. There were several large photos of the girl displayed around the casket and among flowers. There were three casket pieces all with horse themes.

The service began with her church choral group singing several songs. The minister gave his service and then a relative of the mother sang a song that she wrote about the girl's life and death. Several recorded songs were played as the family said their final goodbyes. The family was dismissed to the front of the school where the procession would begin. Due to the girl's love of horses the procession included family members on horses before and after the horse-drawn hearse and also a horse with no one in the saddle for her. The father and grandfather's connection to motorcycles led to motorcycles leading the procession and protecting streets on the path to the cemetery. After the horses were people who walked to the cemetery and then the procession of cars.

At the cemetery the minister completed the committal, but we did not pass the people by since they were meeting in the park afterward to receive people. The family made their final goodbyes by leaving several things on the casket. I had previously left several items in the casket with her before sealing the casket shut. We left a picture of her, several letters, stuffed animals, a necklace from her mother, and her cell phone (that I hoped would not go off since I hadn't remember to check to see if it had been off). On top of the casket many flowers and items of clothing from her dad were left which created an interesting situation with the steel vault, since there is not a lot of room at the top between vault and casket. As the family was saying their goodbyes the paternal grandmother passed out, but we had an ambulance present at the school and the cemetery. These were just a few of the details for this unique send-off of a wonderful little girl. She totally did not deserve her life to be cut so short that she hadn't really had time to decide on the dreams for her life.

Some additional thought comments from Lowell about this service.

Large public funerals following terrible tragic events that have received national media coverage take on a life of their own. Most of them come together beautifully from

the public's perception. That is a tribute in itself for all the funeral service colleagues and the supporting cast of industry and public participants.

A small firm like ours could never handle an event like our community recently suffered without help. Of course we had more offers of help than we could have possibly used, but we are extremely grateful to Claude Howard, Joanne's husband; Jo Jurgens and Roger Hibdon, Daniel Funeral Home, Lamar, MO; David Brown, Knell Mortuary, Carthage, MO; and Brian Simmons, Springfield Mortuary Service, Springfield, MO. These great funeral directors and helpers along with Joanne, Betty and me comprised a funeral service team with more than 250 years of combined service to the profession. Other local volunteers supplemented our team while the R-3 Golden City School staff readied the school facility for the service. Parking was coordinated by The Search and Rescue Volunteers who had previously spent days searching for the deceased. Finally the school superintendent Kevin Baldwin helped keeping the media at a respectful distance.

A couple of days before the service Joanne and I sat down and listed every unexpected surprise that we could think of and what contingency plans we should make which I thought would help—but—Nope, we didn't think of everything.

It was about one and a quarter mile from the school to the cemetery. The casket and three sprays were carried on a white horse-drawn wagon with a raised deck for the casket (thankfully not a heavy lift to shoulder height).

Some family members and friends rode along side on horseback and many walked behind the wagon and were followed by cars. A motorcycle group provided intersection guards. A couple of the procession participants weren't shared with us until the day of the funeral. This all took place on a very warm day in August.

A flower car with casket rollers followed the lead car in front of the horse-drawn hearse in case a casket transfer became necessary. It wasn't needed.

These were just a few additional things and within a half hour we arrived at the cemetery with no great glitches. Another day in the funeral business.

Bass-Mollett and FrontRunner Team up to Create a New Technology Program

Bass-Mollett announced today a new partnership with FrontRunner Professional to create a new technology offering for its valued clients. The new offering will be named TributeSuite™ - by Bass-Mollett and will be built on FrontRunner's powerful technology platform.

TributeSuite™ differentiates itself from other print on-demand or free website programs on the market through its all-encompassing features. TributeSuite™ - by Bass-Mollett includes matching stationery and personalization packages, a powerful website, the professions best memorial tribute websites, and the industry's highest revenue generation opportunities. All of these features come with no set-up fees and no charge hosting.

This new system can be used with any existing website, or customers can utilize the free website that is included in the package. Best of all, the system is designed to scale as customer needs grow. TributeSuite™ - by Bass-Mollett can be truly customized by adding optional modules and Apps, right up to a full management solution. This solution follows FrontRunner's fully integrated "enter data once" logic, saving customers time and money on reducing data entry.

Bass-Mollett is proud to be one of the leading suppliers in the funeral industry. The reputation, extensive services, and alliances of the FrontRunner Solution made them the natural choice to work with.

"The partnership with FrontRunner will raise the bar significantly for new services available to our customers, and help fulfill Bass-Mollett's passion to become the Funeral Director's Complete Funeral Resource. TributeSuite™ - by Bass-Mollett will allow funeral homes to meet all their technology and stationery needs with only two vendors in one complete integrated solution that is completely scalable to meet the needs of any customer", says John Flowers, Bass-Mollett President / CEO.

"We aspire to make a difference in funeral service and for the families it serves. It's what has allowed us to become the professions leading technology provider, and we're just getting started. The partnership with Bass-Mollett will accelerate our growth, and allow us to continue to reinvest in innovative solutions designed to drive more families to the firms that use FrontRunner technology. We are setting a higher online standard for funeral service and there has never been a better time to switch to FrontRunner technology." says Kevin Montroy FrontRunner CEO and Founder.

For more information on this powerful new offering, contact your Bass-Mollett sales rep or visit us online at www.Bass-Mollett.com or www.tributesuite.com/bass-mollett

Maybe, The Last Wishes of Alexander the Great

I have no idea if this is really about Alexander the Great or not, BUT whoever thought of this it should be shared with as many people as we know.

The last wishes of Alexander the Great:

On his death bed, Alexander summoned his generals and told them his three ultimate wishes:

1. The best doctors should carry his coffin;
2. The wealth he has accumulated (money, gold, precious stones) should be scattered along the procession to the cemetery, and
3. His hands should be let loose, hanging outside the coffin for all to see.

One of his generals who was surprised by these unusual requests asked Alexander to explain.

Here is what Alexander the Great had to say:

1. I want the best doctors to carry my coffin to demonstrate that, in the face of death, even the best doctors in the world have no power to heal.
2. I want the road to be covered with my treasure so that everybody sees that material wealth acquired on earth, stays on earth.
3. I want my hands to swing in the wind, so that people understand that we come to this world empty-handed and we leave this world empty-handed after the most precious treasure of all is exhausted, and that is TIME.



TIME is our most precious treasure because it is LIMITED. We cannot produce more time. When we give someone our time, we actually give a portion of our life that we will never take back. Our time is our life.

A Reminder of What We Do (Cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

arrangements. We had discussed it before, what was going to happen, on a few occasions. Her husband, my grandfather, was a funeral director, my great-grandfather was a funeral director and I have generations of cousins that are funeral directors. Of course since my grandfather had already passed away, the responsibility fell to me to handle.

As part of the requests from my grandmother, the one thing that most embalmers do not want to hear came out of her mouth, "When I die, I want you to embalm me." I wasn't sure how I was going to react when the time came, but surprisingly, I was able to perform that ancient rite of preserving the dead. Of course, I do have to credit the Apprentice Embalmer, James, who did help me get through that embalming. I'm sure he was as nervous as I was, since he did have a licensed Embalmer, who was also the grandson of the deceased, standing there watching his every move.

After the visitation in Texas, my uncle drove Grandma back to Ohio so that she could be buried next to my Grandfather. We took her to the parish church that we all grew up in, St. Leo's, and then proceeded to the cemetery where both sides of my family lie in eternal rest. It was a beautiful funeral in Ohio, since it was February there was some snow on the ground. Even though many people think I'm crazy, I have always thought that the cemetery looked the best when there was a nice blanket of snow on the cemetery grounds.

Recently I was reading an article in Funeral Times, a magazine for Funeral Directors in Ireland, where the author (Gus Nichols) said: "It was a reminder to me that as funeral directors, what our friends and family need from us is for us to be strong." While I was thinking about the burial of my grandmother this was a powerful statement. From the moment of death to the burial, my family was looking to me for the guidance and direction of the funeral rites. They needed me to be strong to handle all of these details and to make decisions in certain areas. It wasn't until a few days of returning home from Ohio that it actually hit me that my grandmother, who I was very close to, was gone and thus began my grieving process.

Over the years of tending to the arrangements and burial of many deceased members of the community, but in the hustle and bustle of meeting with family after family, we tend to forget that Mr. Doe or Mrs. Doe is someone's grandmother or father. Burying my grandmother made me realize in a new way that each family that I serve at the funeral home does matter and that I am caring for someone's loved one and relative.

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Anthony Whalen is a Licensed Funeral Director & Embalmer in the State of Texas and has been in the funeral profession since 1997. He is a graduate of the Community College of the Air Force and Dallas Institute of Funeral Service. Anthony served in the US Air Force for 8 years. He is active in the National Kidney Foundation and the Donate Life Program and received a Kidney Transplant in 2013.



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Volume: **Thirteen** Issue : **Four**

Editor: **Joanne Howard**

Publisher: **Lowell Pugh and Joanne Howard**

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

Subscriptions:

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

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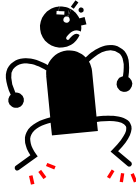
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Temper and Nails

Author Unknown

There once was a little boy who had a bad temper. His father gave him a bag of nails and told him that every time he lost his temper, he must hammer a nail into the fence. The first day the boy drove 37 nails into the fence. Over the next few weeks, as he learned to control his temper, the number of nails hammered daily gradually dwindled down.



Finally the day came when the boy didn't lose his temper at all. He told his father about it and the father suggested that the boy now pull out one nail for each day that he was able to hold his temper. The days passed and the young boy was finally able to tell his father that all the nails were gone.



The father took his son by the hand and led him to the fence. He said, "You have done well, my son, but look at the holes in the fence. The fence will never be the same. When you say things in anger, they leave a scar just like this one. You can put a knife in a man and draw it out. It won't matter how many times you say I'm sorry, the wound is still there. Make sure you control your temper the next time you are tempted to say something you will regret later."

Ever Are We

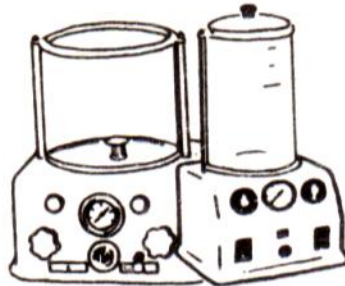
By Johnnie L. Swanson, Jr.

I wondered who you were
So I walked ten miles in your shoes
I wondered of where you went,
And I lived as such, from a tent,
I wondered of how you felt,
As I wondered with good intent;

Now I am where you've been
See what you saw,
Live as you lived and
I know all is well spent.

A tiger was walking through the jungle one day and saw two men sitting under a tree. One was reading a newspaper and the other was working feverishly on a manual typewriter. The tiger leaped on the man with the newspaper and ate him up. The tiger did not bother the other man at all, because any predator knows that readers digest and writers cramp.

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Weigel Strategic Marketing Announces Press Kit Packages

Firm Launches Bundled Publicity Kits That Deliver Key Elements Funeral Homes (And Funeral Service Suppliers) Need To Effectively Promote

Indianapolis, IN, November 5, 2013: Weigel Strategic Marketing, a leading communications company specializing in the funeral profession, has introduced simplified press kit packages designed to give funeral homes and funeral service suppliers a cost-effective tool for use in their promotional efforts. These packages consist of several publicity tools – including press releases, pitch letters, profile sheets and backgrounder pages – and start at \$750.

“These are ideal packages for those in funeral service to begin a media outreach program or be proactively prepared for a call from a reporter,” said Joe Weigel of Weigel Strategic Marketing. “It’s important to be ready to provide facts and other information to the media quickly and effectively when contact is first made. Having a completed press kit ready to quickly forward to a reporter reflects positively on the professionalism that is found at the company and starts to build a relationship with the media.”

What is a Press Kit and What’s in a Press Kit?


A press kit is simply an information packet about a business. A press (or media) kit is like a resume for a funeral company. It is a collection of relevant information and articles put together to address requests from the media as well as to provide information proactively in hopes of an interview or a story placement. Many times this information is also posted on the company website to make it readily available, not only to reporters, but to families as well.

A press kit can be comprised of many publicity tools, depending on the situation, the audience or the use. Although a press kit should be comprehensive, every promotional item or piece of marketing collateral ever produced should not be included. Only information that is current and most relevant should be incorporated into the kit.

Weigel Strategic Marketing has released three packages with program price points from \$750 to \$2000. If necessary, custom packages can also be created based on the specific need and situation of the firm. Once completed, components of the press kits can be printed and assembled in a folder for future use as well as posted electronically on the company’s website.

Packages

Basic – includes one press (or news) release, one



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executive profile sheet and one background information page. Package cost is \$750.

Premier– includes one press release, one executive profile sheet, one background information page, one area of expertise sheet and one pitch letter. Package cost is \$1250.

Premium Package– includes two press releases, two key executive profiles, one backgrounder information page, pitch letter, question and answer sheet, and areas of expertise page. Package cost is \$2000.

“A media outreach program can be an important tool to building and enhancing the brand image of a funeral company,” stated Weigel. “However, preparing a press kit can be a time consuming process, particularly if the company only has a handful of employees. These packages are a great way for funeral homes and funeral service suppliers to create a professional press kit without breaking the bank.”

Founded in 2012 in Indianapolis, Weigel Strategic Marketing is a communications firm delivering expertise and results across three interrelated marketing disciplines: strategy, branding and communications. To learn more, visit their website at <http://weigelstrategicmarketing.webs.com>, call (317) 260-8515 or email the company at joseph.weigel@gmail.com.



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Davis Whitehall™ Releases New Cremation Catalog

Catalog provides funeral homes a tool to effectively present cremation to families.

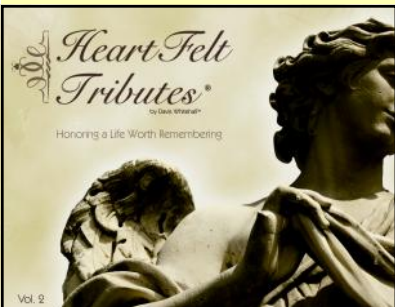
Colorado Springs, CO, November 4, 2013: The Davis Whitehall Co., the premier provider of personalized and customized urns to funeral homes in North America, has announced the availability of a new catalog that funeral professionals can use to more thoroughly inform families about cremation and the cremation process.

"The rising cremation rate continues to challenge many funeral home operators," said Terry School, president of Davis Whitehall™. "However, cremation can be a real opportunity when it is fully embraced by the funeral director."

The *HeartFelt Tributes®* by Davis Whitehall™ catalog provides more than a showcase for the urns in the ever-expanding Davis Whitehall line. The catalog offers families important information about the many options available when cremation is chosen as the means of final disposition before presenting the selection of urns.

The 56-page four color catalog features the latest urns from Davis Whitehall. This includes new hardwood urns like the premier series of photo urns as well as new offerings in cultured and natural marble, porcelain, blown glass, metal and biodegradable urns. The catalog is available by contacting Davis Whitehall at 800-818-8414 or design@davis-whitehall.com.

"The word 'cremation' should be a launching point for a discussion on services, not a road block," stated School. "The information in our catalog about the cremation process helps initiate a conversation on the many choices available, as well as presenting our urns."



The 56-page, four color HeartFelt® Tributes catalog offers important information about the many options available when cremation is chosen as well as showcasing the ever-expanding urn line from Davis Whitehall.

About Davis Whitehall™: Headquartered in Colorado Springs, CO, The Davis Whitehall Co. is a family-owned business founded in 1991 and is recognized as one of the premier sources for handcrafted, laser-engraved hardwood cremation urns. For more information, visit www.davis-whitehall.com.

Death Notices of Fellow Funeral Service Colleagues (Cont.)

TEXAS (Cont.)

(Continued from page 17)



Tommy Wayne Nelson, 69 of Midland, passed away Aug. 12, 2013. He was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1966. He was a funeral director with Ellis Funeral Home. His arrangements were conducted by Ellis Funeral Home.

Edward Pierce Redmond, 93, of Aransas Pass, passed away on August 10, 2013. He was a funeral director with Charlie Marshall Funeral Home. His services were directed by Charlie Marshall Funeral Home.



William "Bill" D. Spurlock, 92, of Garland, passed away on Nov. 7, 2013. He was a funeral director for 50 years in the Dallas area. He served in the U.S. Army during WWII in the Pacific Theatre. He graduated from the Dallas Institute of Mortuary Science in 1947. He was grandfather of Scott Smith, TFDA Past President, and father & father-in-law of Loretta & Charlie Smith with Charles W. Smith & Sons Funeral Homes and Eastgate Funeral Home which handled the service arrangements.



Jack Leroy Westerman, 83, of Irving, passed away on Oct. 2, 2013. He was father of Gary Lee Westerman, Past President of North Texas and TFDA Services, Inc. Board member who worked at Brown's Memorial Funeral Home. Services were directed by Strawser Funeral Home in Blue Ash, Ohio.

<p>TEXAS FUNERAL DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION</p> <p>ESTABLISHED 1886</p>	<p>1513 South Interstate 35 Austin, TX 78741 (800) 460-8332</p>
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 2000 Lincoln Eureka 46" Limo Blk #4857
 2000 Cadillac 47" Federal Limo Silver #0593

2001 Cadillac Eureka 41" Limo Blk #0923
 2002 Lincoln Federal 44" Limo Blk #3217
 2003 Lincoln Eureka 46" Limo Blk #1330
 2003 Lincoln Eureka 46" Limo Blk #1644
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SIFS-121b



The Dead Beat -The Caregivers Soapbox
Volume: **Thirteen** Issue: **Four**

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

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

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

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

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