

The Dead Beat



The Caregiver's Soapbox

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



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Issue 5

Observations on Japanese Funeral Customs

By Charlie Shipman

I recently spent a month in Japan acting as chief cook and bottle washer for my daughter and son-in-law (stationed in Japan). My daughter gave birth in February to a bouncing baby boy. My job was to take care of my 18-month-old granddaughter, so my daughter could devote her attention to the newborn. It wasn't all changing diapers and washing the dishes.

While I was in Japan I visited the local neighborhood funeral home. The staff and management of the Kuratoma Funeral Home near Zama City were very gracious in visiting with me and showing us around their facility. It was a four-story building with offices on one floor, the chapel on another floor, the family area on another floor, etc. Due to a lack of space in Japan, they build up, not out. There are 24 funeral homes in the Kuratoma Funeral Home family spread throughout Japan. I took along an interpreter to help in the translation.



Kuratoma Funeral Home
Near Zama City



Map of Kuratoma Funeral Homes

The following observations are mine alone and are not meant to be an all encompassing review of funeral homes practices in Japan. That would require

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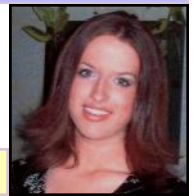
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Amy Howard Art Gallery



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



As We Drive By

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



Fairview Funeral Home
Fairview, Oklahoma



Pierce Funeral Home
Fairview, Oklahoma



Mortuary Muse By Lowell

While looking at the open front refrigerated shelving in a grocery store, I wondered if any funeral home has a casket-sized open front refrigerated viewing cubicle (alcove) at the front of a stateroom or chapel? Has this been invented yet? It might replace or reduce the dry ice hassle. Perhaps frigid air could be conducted into the casket. I think I am way past retirement time.

I consider myself pretty much an environmentalist, but can't grasp the concept that embalmed bodies are going to create much ground or water table pollution. It is not exactly the same as pouring out mixed solution on the ground. The fluid companies are trying to respond by making environmentally safe embalming chemicals. It is well that I no longer do embalming. I have enough trouble deciding what jelly I want for my biscuit at Cooky's Café. How could I choose among grape eucalyptus or cucumber embalming fluid?

Speaking of embalming fluid and the need for it. An undated, but very old newspaper clipping fell out of an old book on Labor Day weekend. It read, "The remains of Mrs. A. Hamilton were sent to Chicago on 11:25 Missouri Pacific this morning for burial. This is the first corpse that has

been shipped under the new rule established by the Missouri Pacific Railway Company and put into effect May 1st, which requires that every corpse embalmed before it can be shipped over their roads."

Now the "MOPAC" is gone along with rail shipping, replaced by air freight within a 50 mile drive which has been replaced by service only available from International terminals 150 miles distant. That is continuing progress in rural America.

A second old newspaper clipping also was found. This clipping described a problem with a life insurance policy. A grocer had died and had a policy with a lodge. The man had not made many friends at his new location and the policy required two members to certify that the man was dead. The article continued that they may have to exhume his remains to determine that he had died. Sometimes the insurance requirements lead to strange circumstances.

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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NWA Mortuary Service Opened New Facility

The NWA Mortuary Service in Springdale, Arkansas has recently opened a new facility. They are conveniently located near hospitals and nursing facilities and look forward to assisting in any way possible. (See directory ad on page 12).

Martha J. Adair Receives “Lifetime Achievement Award” from Arizona Funeral, Cemetery and Crematory Association.



The 2015 “Lifetime Achievement Award” granted by the board of Directors of the Arizona Funeral, Cemetery, and Crematory Association was presented to Martha J.

Adair on June 4, 2015 at the Association’s annual convention by her granddaughter Hillary Adair, Vice President of the association that was held at the Carefree Resort in Carefree, AZ. She and her late husband, Arthur J. Adair (1918-1973) opened their first funeral home in Tucson, Arizona in 1956. After his death, Martha and her sons Ron, and Hank added three more locations in Tucson and one in Nogales, Arizona. Her two daughters, Carol and Susan (1961-2004) were both active in prearrangements. Now she is proud to have her granddaughter Hillary Adair and grandson Taylor Adair as the third generation. Martha was the first woman president of the Arizona Funeral Directors Association. In 1977 she was presented the Jefferson Award, for public service. These accomplishments were made not only through the family but through the loyal staff over the years.

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.

Hebron Memorial Funeral Home and Deshler Memorial Funeral Home Change Names to Kroll Funeral Home

Hebron Memorial Funeral Home in Hebron, Nebraska recently changed their business name to Kroll Funeral Home. Their second location Deshler Memorial Funeral Home in Deshler, Nebraska has also been changed to Kroll Funeral Home.

William G. and Cindy Kroll purchased the business in 1997. William has since completed his Mortuary of Science Degree as a funeral director.

Besides Bill and Cindy, John and Joyce Kroll are also owners. They are a home-owned and operated business and thoroughly have enjoyed serving the



The owners are Bill and Cindy Kroll and John and Joyce Kroll.

small communities of Hebron and Deshler.



Kroll Funeral Home—Hebron, Nebraska.



Kroll Funeral Home—Deshler, Nebraska.



Behind the Back Fence

The envelope was from the pre-need trust. Removing the check my first thought was "Joanne can pay those bills she was worried about."



The check covered a service which included a nice visitation and a graveside service in a nearby community. Merchandise was a 20-gauge non-sealer, a two-piece concrete box and a standard memorial package of book and folders. Cash advances were about \$700 including grave opening, death certificates and a couple of newspaper obituaries. I wondered what this service cost when I officially was employed here after returning from the service, so I looked up a 1955 record.

In 1955 a 20-gauge non-sealer was priced with a complete service (usually church or chapel and committal) for \$650, a concrete vault was \$145, grave opening \$40. Grave opening had just been raised from \$20. Memorial folders and

cards were included and newspaper obituaries were no charge. The wholesale cost of the casket was \$111 and the vault cost \$65 with tent service and no time constraints. So prices have increased to about 8 to 10 times more than 1955. The example is not exactly an accurate indicator. In 1955 a 20-gauge non-sealer was the most expensive casket on our floor. The depression was gone but we still displayed an assortment of cloth covered caskets with services prices from \$200 to \$550 with "this casket" included.

While living in the attic of Cullen & Kelly Funeral Home in St. Louis in 1952, the second from the bottom service was \$600, but my family was still in the "Great Depression" mode psychologically in our selection room.

At least in those days no one at the restaurant asked me how much a funeral cost or called to ask our price for a direct cremation with NO services.

I wonder if discount stores and internet price wars along with the

price of gasoline have conditioned consumers to pursue the lowest price for anything. I don't think Celebrants are going to be an event changing factor around this area.

Incidentally, does a funeral home staff member celebrant get an gratuity or is that part of the job description?

Oh well—we will thankfully cash that trust check even if it is 10 times larger that it would have been 60 years ago.



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 and editor@thedeadbeat.com

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Lowell's Prairie Support Recognition



On Aug. 22, 2015, the Missouri Prairie Foundation had a recognition meeting celebrating the Golden Prairie's 45th Anniversary which was donated by Lowell and Betty Pugh and also Lowell Pugh's (The Dead Beat publisher) 40 years of service with the prairies. It was held in Golden City and about 100 supporters and speakers turned out for this occasion. Shown in the picture is Lowell giving his speech citing, "The prairie is one of the greatest examples of what the creator gave us."

Congratulations, Lowell !!!!!

After-Thoughts *By Joanne Howard*

I have had a few challenging weeks trying to clean a room in my house. You know those rooms where things just keep building up until you just have a small path through it.



Well, one of my daughter's rooms was like that (really both daughters' rooms, but I am only tackling one right now). It was already a full room before I added a bunch of my mother's things after she passed. Also the room became the spot for all of the craft supplies for my quilling and other art hobbies.

It was time for me to do something, but I didn't think it was going to take weeks. I've been lucky to be able to be away from work to do it. The only problem has been the overwhelming emotional toll it has been for me to deal with all of my loved ones' memorable moments like cards, correspondence, trinkets, you name it and I have dealt with it.



I feel like I am truly throwing away the lives of my loved ones. But then

I think who, but me, is really going to care. I've taken that a step further with who will really care about all of my stuff. I've looked through everything before I have thrown it away or put aside to possibly give or sell, but it has all brought back a tremendous amount of memories. Mostly it has been comforting that their lives had been good, though it did make me miss them all a lot.

The question came to mind, "Why do we keep all these things?" I truly wondered if I had a hoarding tendency, but having lost the girls so young, it was just hard to throw away anything about their lives. I had to keep telling myself, if they had been living they would have already gotten rid of many of these things and probably added a lot more. But since they weren't making the decisions and I was, it just hurt. I'm hoping that my work will produce a nice guest room/craft room.

Is it hard for you to let go of things from the past? Does this complicate our grief? What about other instances when we have to release our possessions. When you have to split things in a divorce, when natural disasters like fire, tornado, floods, etc., take

things away, how do we grieve? I'm thinking that these are the times when we need to remember that there is no u-haul behind the hearse. We just won't take any of this with us after we are gone. Though it's still comforting while we are still here though.



I'm hoping that memories will always be with us even if the stuff isn't. I am grateful that I had the things to look through and remember again, even though I know I need to part with some. House cleaning leaves a refreshed environment and hopefully will provide space for some new memories too. It's still a challenging aspect of life to part with objects of loved ones that have died.



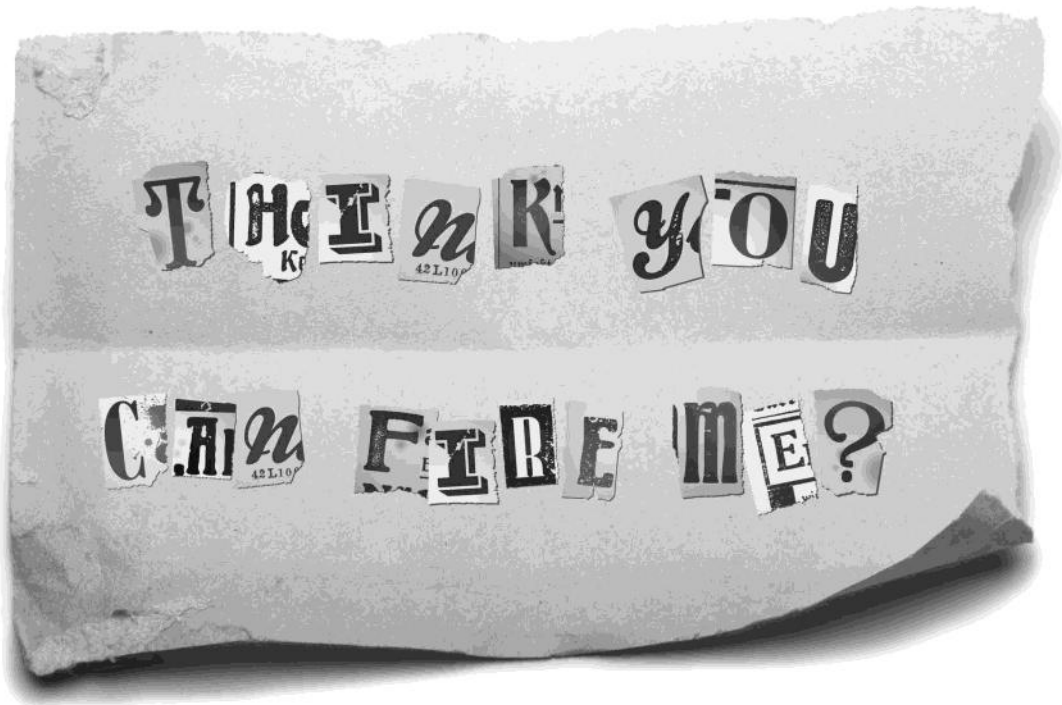
About the author: Joanne Howard is the editor of **The Dead Beat**. She has been a licensed funeral director since 1992 with Pugh Funeral Home in Golden City, MO and also the aftercare coordinator. Much of her writing in this column is influenced by her loss of her two daughters Laura at age 10 in 1997 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



Thoughts About Friends (See page 21 for more thoughts)



- ♦ "I'll lean on you and you lean on me and we'll be okay." Dave Matthews Band
- ♦ "If all my friends were to jump off a bridge, I wouldn't jump with them, I'd be at the bottom to catch them."
- ♦ "Everyone hears what you say. Friends listen to what you say. Best friends listen to what you don't say."
- ♦ We all take different paths in life, but no matter where we go, we take a little of each other everywhere." Tim McGraw
- ♦ My father always used to say that when you die, if you've got five real friends, then you've had a great life." Lee Iacocca
- ♦ "Hold a true friend with both your hands" Nigerian Proverb.
- ♦ "A friend is someone who knows the song in your heart and can sing it back to you when you have forgotten the words."
- ♦ "What would the world be without friends?????"



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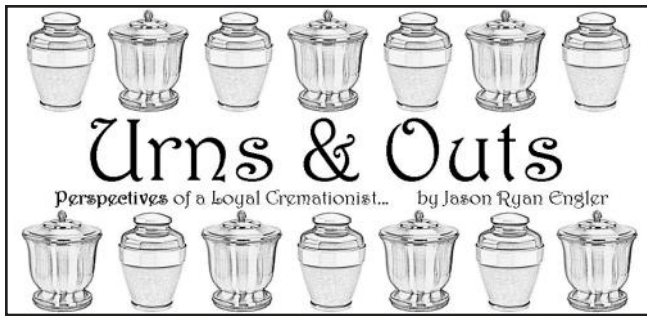
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MEMORIAL: the very word stirs within our hearts and minds the fond, yes reverent, recollections of those near and dear to us, who have passed beyond our human contact, but of whom recollection is very sacred. Beloved grandparents, parents, a spouse, child, sibling, our friends; our heroes and role models some of whom we may not have personally known, but who, through lives of generous sacrifice of self or service have endeared themselves to and inspired their fellow man.

Memories. How dear they are to us. How we cherish them, and live again a companionship we loved, a tender relationship we experienced. Surely this idea is worthy of preservation and perpetuation. As you have stood at the memorial of the victims of great tragedy, or at the resting places of the great men and women who have served our country in the armed forces, have you not considered the contributions and sacrifices, however great or small, they have made to who we are as a people? Have you not felt within your heart a flood of overwhelming emotion?

As you think of those friends, those loving companions of your former days who have crossed to the Beyond ahead of you, do you not cherish a warm affection within your soul that is very sacred? Isn't it fitting – isn't it appropriate, that such

thoughts be expressed through tangible forms?

It is our obligation, our duty, as caretakers of the dead and the living who survive them, to heed this call, to fulfill this sacred trust for the sake of humanity, as well as for the preservation of the future of our professions.

This is the "Memorial Idea!"



Jason Ryan Engler is a funeral director and "The Cremation Historian" who serves as the official historian for the Cremation Association of North America. He is Secretary/Treasurer of the Northwest Arkansas Funeral Directors Association and serves as an officer on the board of the Arkansas Funeral Directors Association. He is a frequent contributor to deathcare publications and often speaks about cremation and its history to funeral, cemetery and cremation trade associations. He resides in Northwest Arkansas with his miniature dachshund, Otto.

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

He can be reached at cremationhistorian@hotmail.com

Something to Consider....

In **Connecting Directors**, 7/17/15 an article that originally appeared in **Qeepr** about the "Top 10 New funeral Trends. " It was surprising to me what was considered "new." So this may be something to think about....

- ♦ Water Cremation (Bio Cremation)
- ♦ At Home Funerals (Death Midwifery movement)
- ♦ Interactive Headstones
- ♦ Crowdfunded Funerals (third part funeral crowdfunding websites)
- ♦ Memorial Reefs (Living Reef Memorial)
- ♦ Mesoloft (cremated remains can be launched into the sky)
- ♦ Green Funerals (Environmentally conscious)
- ♦ Participatory Funerals (Family and Friends caring for the body as much or as little as they feel comfortable)
- ♦ Themed Funerals (Example: based on deceased's favorite film)
- ♦ Webcasting Funerals

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When A Friend Dies

By Ken Doka

When I picked up my four-year-old grandson from preschool, Kenny was proud to introduce me to his new friend. Even at a young age, we begin the lifelong process of making friends. If he's lucky, he may even keep some of the friends he makes in these early years. I still have a friend that goes way back to third grade.

Friends are an important part of our life. We share so much—laughter and contemplation, people and places, active and quiet moments. Friends keep us grounded and shape our identities. They may help us find jobs, homes, or even spouses. Moreover, our friends are not thrust upon us; we choose them. Some of our favorite films, from *Thelma and Louise* to *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, or TV shows such as *Friends* or *Will and Grace*, celebrate friendship.

Despite the role of friends in our lives, they are often neglected in times of death. Rarely are friends mentioned in the eulogy or obituary. Little support is extended to them. Sympathy cards are rarely sent to friends. At best, they are expected to stifle their own grief and, as an act of sacrifice, attend to the family of the deceased. The loss of a friend then is another example of disenfranchised grief, the grief that results when others do not recognize our loss. In effect, we have no socially acknowledged "right to grieve" when we lose a friend. For example, few businesses extend time off to mourn a friend.

Yet, as friends, we too grieve. Grief is not a function of family ties or lines of descent. Rather, grief follows attachment. When we love someone—as a parent, child, spouse, or friend—and that person

dies, we grieve.

It is important, much as we strive to support family members, that we acknowledge our own loss. We need to understand as well that each loss is different. We have distinct connections and meanings attached to every friendship. We interact with our friends differently. Some friends are part of our weekly or daily routine. We regularly speak and spend time together. The death of these friends leaves an obvious void.

We have other friendships that are less intense but no less vital. While we may see them irregularly at best, they remain important in our lives. Lynn is one such friend. We talk only a few times a year, but she remains a critical connection in my life. She befriended me in high school, in what was then a large unfriendly place.

Understanding the unique quality of our friendships helps us to appreciate the inimitable loss. We can then recognize the singular nature of our grief.

We may find it essential to attend funerals and memorial services. The very best of these may be inclusive—bringing friends to the center of the circle of mourning. When my dear colleague Catherine Sanders died, I appreciated that the family chose three people to eulogize—her daughter, a colleague, and a friend. I felt very included to hear a colleague speak of the Catherine that I knew even as I was delighted that other eulogies touched on different aspects of her. I felt very included in that ceremony.

Because all rituals are not that inclusive, we may need to find our own special

ways to mourn a friend. Tom did that when his friend, Mark died. He decided to go back to the ball field in the old neighborhood—a place where he and Mark shared so many good moments. There he offered a silent prayer for his friend, and quietly grieved over the loss of his longtime buddy.

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

A guy runs into the clubhouse screaming for someone to call an ambulance. "Someone call an ambulance! I just hit my wife with a tee shot and I think she's dead." A few minutes go by. An ambulance, fire truck, and several squad cars arrive at the golf course and proceed to the fifth hole. A detective comes over to where the man is standing, near his wife, and starts to question him about what happened. "Well," says the man, shaking, "I teed up my shot and the ball hit her in the side of the head." The detective looks over the body and says, "I see an indentation in her temple that says Topflight 3, but what's this mark on her thigh that says Titlest 2?" "Oh, that was my Mulligan!"



One day three men were walking along and came upon a raging, violent river. They needed to get to the other side, but had no idea of how to do it. The first man prayed to God saying, "Please God, give me the strength to cross this river." Poof! God gave him big arms and strong legs, and he was able to swim across the river in about two hours. Seeing this, the second man prayed to God saying, "Please God, give me the strength and ability to cross this river." Poof! God gave him a rowboat and he was able to row across the river in about three hours. The third man had seen how this worked out for the other two, so he also prayed to God saying, "Please God, give me the strength, ability, and intelligence to cross this river." And Poof! God turned him into a woman. She looked at the map, then walked across the bridge.



Love Thy Husband

A woman accompanied her husband to the doctor's office. After his checkup, the doctor called the wife into his office alone. He said, "Your husband is suffering from a very severe disease, combined with horrible stress. If you don't do the following, your husband will surely die." "Each morning, fix him a healthy breakfast. Be pleasant, and make sure he is in a good mood. For lunch make him a nutritious meal he can take to work. And for dinner, prepare an especially nice meal for him. Don't burden him with chores, as this could further his stress. Don't discuss your problems with him; it will only make his stress worse. Try to relax your husband in the evening by wearing lingerie and give him plenty of backrubs. Encourage him to watch some type of team sporting event on television. And most importantly, make love with your husband several times a week and satisfy his every whim. If you can do this for the next 10 months to a year, I think your husband will regain his health." On the way home, the husband asked his wife, "What did the doctor say?" "You're going to die," she replied.



Once upon a time there lived a king. The king had a beautiful daughter, the princess. But there was a problem. Everything the princess touched would melt. No matter what; metal, wood, plastic, anything she touched would melt. The king despaired. What could he do to help his daughter? He consulted his wizards and magicians. One wizard told the king, "If you daughter touches one thing that does not melt in her hands, she will be cured." The king was overjoyed. The next day, he held a competition. Any man that could bring his daughter an object that would not melt would marry her and inherit the king's wealth. Three princes took up the challenge. The first prince brought a very hard alloy of titanium. But alas, once the princess touched it, it melted. The prince went away sadly. The second prince brought a huge diamond, thinking that diamond is the hardest substance in the world and would not melt. But alas, once the princess touch it, it melted. He too was sent away disappointed. The third prince approached. He told the princess, "Put you hand in my pock and feel what is in there." The princess did as she was told, though she turned red. She felt something hard. She held it in her hand, And it did not melt!!! The king was overjoyed. Everybody in the kingdom was overjoyed. And the third prince married the princess and they both lived happily ever after. Question: What was the object in the prince's pants?.....

They were M & M's of course. They melt in your mouth, not in your hand. I know what you were thinking.....lol.



Farmer Jake had a nagging wife who made his life miserable. The only real peace that he got was when he was out in the field plowing. One day when he was out in the field, Jake's wife brought his lunch to him. Then she stayed while he quietly ate and berated him with a constant stream of nagging and complaining. Suddenly Jake's old mule kicked up his back legs, striking the wife in the head, and killing her instantly. At the wake, Jake's minister noticed that when the women offered their sympathy to Jake he would nod his head up and down, but when the men came up and spoke quietly to him, he would shake his head from side to side. When the wake was over and all the mourners had left, the minister approached Jake and asked, "Why was it that you nodded your head up and down to all the women and shook your head from side to side to all the men?" "Well," Jake replied, "the women all said how nice she looked, and her dress was so pretty, so I agreed by nodding my head up and down. The men all asked, 'Is that mule for sale?' and I shook my head, no."



Two babies were sitting in their cribs, when one baby shouted to the other, "Are you a little girl or a little boy?" "I don't know," replied the other baby giggling. "What do you mean, you don't know?" "I mean I don't know how to tell the differ-

(Continued on page 11)

Chuckles (Cont.)

ence,” “Well, I do,” said the first baby chuckling. “I’ll climb into your crib and find out.” He maneuvered himself into the other baby’s crib, then disappeared beneath the blankets. After a couple of minutes, he resurfaced with a big grin on his face. “You’re a little girl, and I’m a little boy,” he said proudly. “You’re so clever,” cooed the baby girl, “but how can you tell?” “It’s quite easy really,” replied the baby boy, “you’ve got pink booties and I’ve got blue ones.”



Paraprosdokians are figures of speech in which the latter part of a sentence or phrase is surprising or unexpected, frequently humorous. Some examples follow:

- ◆ Where there’s a will, I want to be in it.
- ◆ The last thing I want to do is hurt you, but it’s still on my list.
- ◆ Since light travels faster than sound, some people appear bright until you hear them speak.
- ◆ If I agreed with you, we’d both be wrong.
- ◆ We never really grow up, we only learn how to act in public.
- ◆ War does not determine who is right—only who is left.
- ◆ Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit. Wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad.
- ◆ To steal ideas from one person is plagiarism. To steal from many is research.
- ◆ I didn’t say it was your fault, I said I was blaming you.
- ◆ In filling out an application, where it says, ‘In case of emergency, Notify: “I put DOCTOR.”’
- ◆ Women will never be equal to men until they can walk down the street with a bald head and a beer gut, and still think they are sexy.
- ◆ You do not need a parachute to skydive. You only need a parachute to skydive twice.
- ◆ I used to be indecisive. Now I’m not so sure.
- ◆ To be sure of hitting the target, shoot first and call whatever you hit the target.
- ◆ Going to church doesn’t make you a Christian any more than standing in a garage makes you a car.

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- ◆ You’re never too old to learn something stupid.
- ◆ I’m supposed to respect my elders, but it’s getting harder and harder for me to find one now.

Farmer Joe decided his injuries from the accident were serious enough to take the trucking company (responsible for the accident) to court. In court, the trucking company’s fancy lawyer was questioning farmer Joe. “Didn’t you say, at the scene of the accident, ‘I’m fine’?” questioned the lawyer. Farmer Joe responded, “Well, I’ll tell you what happened. I had just loaded my favorite mule Bessie into the..” “I didn’t ask for any details,” the lawyer interrupted, “just answer the question. Did you not say, at the scene of the accident, ‘I’m fine’?” Farmer Joe said, “Well, I had just got Bessie into the trailer and I was driving down the road...” The lawyer interrupted again and said, “Judge, I am trying to establish the fact that, at the scene of the accident, this man told the Highway Patrolman on the scene that he was just fine. Now several weeks after the accident he is trying to sue my client. I believe he is a fraud. Please tell him to simply answer the question.” By this time the Judge was fairly interested in Farmer Joe’s answer and said to the lawyer, “I’d like to hear what he has to say about his favorite mule Bessie.” Joe thanked the Judge and proceeded, “Well as I was saying, I had just loaded Bessie, my favorite mule, into the trailer and was driving her down the highway when this huge semi-truck and trailer ran the stop sign and smacked my truck right in the side. I was thrown into one ditch and Bessie was thrown into the other. I was hurting real bad and didn’t want to move. However, I could hear ole Bessie moaning and groaning. I knew she was in terrible shape just by her groans. Shortly after the accident a Highway Patrolman came on the scene. He could hear Bessie moaning and groaning so he went over to her. After he looked at her he took out his gun and shot her between the eyes. Then the Patrolman came across the road with his gun in his hand and looked at me. He said, “Your mule was in such bad shape I had to shoot her. How are you feeling?” It was then that I said, “I’m fine.”



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ARKANSAS

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Death Notices of Fellow Funeral Service Colleagues



ARIZONA

Bill Rourke, of Mesa passed away June 19, 2015. He was a staff member of Lakeshore Mortuary.



Ken Williams, 72, of Litchfield Park, passed away on May 27, 2015. He served in the U.S. Air force from 1962-65. He was a funeral director at Hansens Mortuaries, general manager at Greenwood Memorial Lawn and funeral director at Thompson's Funeral Chapel who handled his services.

KANSAS

Jason C. Bateman, 71, of Edson and Goodland died June 21, 2015. He started in the funeral business on Dec. 1, 1996 with Sage and Smith Funeral Home where he was employed until 1984 and with Koons Funeral Chapel in 1996. On Feb. 1, 1996 he started Bateman Funeral Home. His services were directed by Bateman Funeral Home in Goodland.



James Frederick Snyder, 82, of Topeka, passed away Aug. 18, 2015. He served in the U.S. Army from 1953-1955. He had been Executive Director of the Kansas State Funeral Directors Association. Funeral arrangements were under the direction of Penwell-Gabel Funeral Home, Crematory and Cemetery.

MISSOURI



Donald Ray Bellmer, 83, of Sedalia, passed away July 9, 2015. He graduated from mortuary school in St. Louis. He served in U.S. Army in Korea. He was a licensed funeral director and embalmer at Ewing Funeral Home in Sedalia, Norman-Wagy Funeral Home in Chillicothe and later served as manager of the Hedges Funeral Home in Camdenton. He spent his retirement working at Allee-Holman-Howe Funeral Home in Columbia that handled his funeral arrangements.



Raymond Clinton Garber, 94, of Versailles, passed away Aug. 8, 2015. He served in the United States Air Force and retired as a First Lieutenant and was a flight engineer for various aircraft. He was employed by and/or owned and operated Kidwell-Garber Funeral Homes, Kidwell Granite Works and Garber Memorial Estates to serve the Versailles, Gravois Mills, Laurie and Sunrise Beach communities for a total of seventy years. After purchasing Kidwell Funeral Home in the 1970's, Ray built upon the legacy of his mentor, Bill Kidwell, by developing the Kidwell-Garber Laurie/Sunrise Beach Chapel and Garber memorial Estates to provide a high level of service to a larger part of the Lake area. In addition to the present Kidwell-Garber, Inc., Ray was previously the owner of an ambulance service, Wilbert Vault and Sedalia Monument Company. His services were directed by the Kidwell-Garber Funeral Home in Versailles.



Adam James Lambert, 24, of Adel, Iowa passed away July 5, 2015. He is the son of Jill Lambert, Sr. Account Executive at Homesteaders Life Insurance Company. He served in the Marine Corps. His services were directed by Iles Funeral Home-Dunn's Chapel, Des Moines, IA.

MISSOURI (Cont.)



DA Myers, 90, of Carrollton, passed away Aug. 2, 2015. He is the father of Marty Meyers, President of Meyers Funeral Home and Dennis Meyers, Vice President of the funeral home who handled his services.

Joyce A. Weiker, 77, of Blue Springs, formerly Fayette, passed away Aug. 26, 2015. She is the mother of Jason and Bethany Slater, owners of Weiker Funeral Home in Slater, MO who handled her services.

NEBRASKA



Lawrence Kenneth Myers, Sr., 92, of Omaha, passed away July 2, 2015. He worked alongside his brother Robert as a licensed funeral director at Myers Funeral Home which was established by his father William "W.L." Myers. He served in U.S. Air Force during World War II. His son Larry Myers assumed ownership of the firm after he retired in 1985 and continued to operate it as the oldest black-owned business until its closing in 2011.

OKLAHOMA



Arle Ellis Bunch, 92, of Guymon, passed away on May 16, 2015. He served in the U.S. Navy during World War II. He attended Mortuary College in St. Louis. He began working for R.B. Teeple Funeral Home in Richland, MO. He began working with Dawson funeral Home in Texhoma, OK and then later, to Hill Funeral Home in Alva before returning to Guymon to establish the Bunch Funeral Home in 1959. His services were under the direction of Bunch-Roberts Funeral Home of Guymon.



Alfred Stanley "Al" Dodson, Jr., 77, of Sand Springs, passed away July 23, 2015. He was a licensed funeral director, embalmer and former owner of Mobley-Dodson Funeral Service, which was established in 1915. He retired from the funeral home in 2009 after about 27 years with his family's company who directed his services.



Joy C. Shaw, 76, of Vici, passed away March 4, 2015. She was funeral director and former owner of Shaw Funeral Home in Vici. In 1960 her and her husband (Charles) departed for Gupton-Jones College of Mortuary Science in Dallas, TX. They joined the family firm in 1961; they operated and managed the funeral home from 1969- 2002. In 2011 at the Oklahoma Funeral directors Association awards ceremony, the couple were recognized as the only husband-wife 50-year funeral directing team. Services were directed by Shaw a& Redinger Funeral Home.



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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

OKLAHOMA (Cont.)



William Paul Thomas, 91, of Miami, passed away July 11, 2015. He started working for Durnil Funeral Home in Picher at age 13. He served in the U.S. Navy during World War II as a pharmacist's mate in Guam. After returning, he attended St. Louis College of Mortuary Science and graduated in 1947. He and his wife established Paul Thomas Funeral Home in Picher in 1948. In 1991, the Thomas family opened Paul Thomas Funeral Home in Miami and later in Commerce in 2005. He was a member of the Oklahoma Funeral Directors Association and NFDA for more than 60 years. His services were under the direction of Paul Thomas Funeral Home and Cremation Service (Miami).

TEXAS



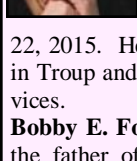
Perry Gates Brockmeyer, 77, of Fort Worth, passed away May 19, 2015. He attended Dallas Institute of Mortuary Science, where he graduated with licensing as a funeral director and embalmer in 1958. He worked for several funeral homes across Texas. He received his 50-year recognition pin from TFDA in 2008. His services were directed by Brown, Owens & Brumley Family Funeral Home and Crematory.



Joe E. Brooks, 83, of Midland, passed away July 22, 2015. He served in the U.S. Navy during the Korean War. He was a retired licensed funeral director for over 50 years. He had worked for Davis-Morris Funeral Home in Brownwood, Johnson's Funeral Home in San Angelo, Wilson-Miller Funeral Home in Monahans, Ellis Funeral Home in Midland and for 10 years Hubbard-Kelly Funeral Home in Odessa who handled his funeral arrangements.



Nita DeBerry, 79, of Denton, passed away July 11, 2015. She was the mother of Bill DeBerry, Jr. of Bill DeBerry Funeral Directors who directed her funeral services.



James M. Evans, 93, of San Augustine passed away July 22, 2015. He is the father of Calvin Evans with Cottle Funeral Homes in Troup and Overton. Wyman Roberts Funeral Home directed his services.



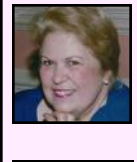
Bobby E. Fox, 86, of Amarillo, passed away on July 21, 2015. He was the father of David Fox with Capps Memorial Chapel in Fairfield, Texas. Services were directed by Boxwell Brothers in Amarillo.



Charles v. "Jr." Hanson, III, 80 of Groves passed away Aug. 2, 2015. He served in U. S. Armed Forces in Korea. He was owner of Clayton Thompson Funeral Directors who directed the services.



Edward Joe Kabela, 77, of Victoria, passed away on Sept. 6, 2015. He had a distinguished military career in Korea, Vietnam and in various units in Europe and United States. He was a partner with Grace Funeral Home who handled his services.



Barbara Sue Kubena, 78, of Hallettsville, passed away on Sept. 21, 2015. She was Valedictorian of funeral class of 1956 at the Dallas Institute of Mortuary Science. She was co-owner of Kubena Funeral Home and 50-year licensee and wife of Daniel Kubena. Her services were directed by Kubena Funeral Home.



Richard M. "Dick" Lawrence, 91, of Teague, passed away on Aug. 26, 2015. Dick graduated from the Dallas School of Embalming in 1942 and later received his Morticians License. In 1943, he entered the United States Army and served as a surgical technician with the 342nd Medical Detachment of the 86th Infantry Division. He served in Europe and on Corregidor in the Philippines during World War II. When he was discharged in 1946, he was 1st Sergeant of the Medical Detachment. He returned to Teague and his job at Ham Brothers Funeral Home. On January 1, 1955, he purchased the

(Continued on page 17)



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Death Notices of Fellow Funeral Service Colleagues (Cont.)

TEXAS (Cont.)

(Continued from page 15)

funeral home from E. B. Ham. He later remodeled their family home on Cedar Street and changed the name to Lawrence Funeral Home. He owned and operated the business until he sold it in 1983. Bowers Funeral Home conducted his funeral services.



Dorothy Ellen Shotwell Martin, 92, of Humble, passed away July 30, 2015. She is the mother of Ray Shotwell, owner of Southeast Texas Crematory. Sam Houston Memorial Funeral Home in Huntsville handled her arrangements.



Mary Belle Pearson, 94, of Ericksdahl (Jones County), passed away Sept. 20, 2015. She is the mother of Tena Tankersley with Tankersley Funeral Home who directed her funeral services.

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On right side of this page are pictures from a horse-drawn cremation memorial service for Ronald P. Leaming at the Dudenville Cemetery, south of Golden City, MO. The widow and family were with the cremains in the carriage. After a short service burial was completed..

Ronald P. Leaming

SARCOXIE, Mo.
Ronald Perry Leaming, 71, an over-the-road truck driver, passed away Monday, Jan. 19, 2015.

Services will be at 2 p.m. Thursday at Restoration Church, Carthage, Mo. Visitation will be from 1 to 2 p.m. Thursday at the church. Arrangements are under the direction of Walnut Lawn Funeral Home, Springfield, Mo.



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The Best of the Best Award Recipients recognizes the development and execution of an innovative program or service that had a positive impact on the families and communities they serve.

- ◆ Anderson-Burris Funeral Home & Crematory, Enid, OK
 - ◆ Holman-Howe Funeral Home, Lebanon, MO
- NFDA Hall of Excellence Inductees are receiving their 10th Pursuit of Excellence Award
- ◆ Roller-Crouch Funeral Home, Batesville, AR
 - ◆ Roller-Daniel Funeral Home, Searcy, AR

The 2015 NFDA Pursuit of Excellence Award winners in our circulation states include:

- ◆ Abels & French-Hand Funeral Homes, Grundy Center, IA
- ◆ Adair Funeral Homes, Inc., Tucson, AZ
- ◆ Anderson-Burris Funeral Home & Crematory, Enid, OK
- ◆ Bates Family Funeral Home, DeKalb, TX
- ◆ Butler Funeral Home, Bolivar, MO
- ◆ Cozean Memorial Chapel & Crematory, Farmington, MO
- ◆ Cozine Memorial Group, Wichita, KS
- ◆ Holman-Howe Funeral Home, Lebanon, MO
- ◆ Hughes Family Tribute Center, Dallas, TX
- ◆ Kerrville Funeral Home, Kerrville, TX
- ◆ Kimble Funeral Home, Junction, TX
- ◆ Lentz Funeral Home, Algona, IA
- ◆ Memorial Funeral Home—Edinburg, Edinburg, TX
- ◆ Memorial Funeral Home—San Juan, San Juan, TX
- ◆ Mercer-Adams Funeral Service, Bethany, OK
- ◆ O'Brien Straatmann Redinger Funeral and Cremation Services, Kearney, NE
- ◆ Reichmuth Funeral Home, Elkhorn, NE
- ◆ Roller Funeral Home, Mountain Home, AR
- ◆ Roller Funeral Home, North Little Rock, AR
- ◆ Roller-Chenal Funeral Home, Little Rock, AR
- ◆ Roller-Cox Funeral Home, Clarksville, AR
- ◆ Roller-Crouch Funeral Home, Batesville, AR
- ◆ Roller-Daniel Funeral Home, Searcy, AR

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- ◆ “True friendship is like sound health; the value of it is seldom known until it is lost” Charles Caleb Colton
- ◆ “A real friend is one who walks in when the rest of the world walks out.”
- ◆ “Don’t walk in front of me, I may not follow. Don’t walk behind me, I may not lead. Walk beside me and be my friend.” Albert Camus
- ◆ “Strangers are just friends waiting to happen.”
- ◆ “Friends are the Bacon Bits in the Salad Bowl of Life.”
- ◆ “Friendship is one mind in two bodies.” Mencius
- ◆ “Friends are God’s way of taking care of us.”

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Dr. Alan Wolfelt Fall Speaking Schedule

Fort Collins, CO: The Center for Loss and Life Transition has announced the locations of Dr. Alan Wolfelt's educational workshops that explore various topics related to grief, mourning and the importance of meaningful funeral ceremonies.

Appleton, WI—Oct. 27-28
Palm Harbor, FL—Oct. 29-30
Cedar Rapids, IA—Nov. 3-4
Las Vegas, NV—Nov. 5
Fort Collins, CO—Nov. 10
Colorado Springs, CO—Dec. 1-2

Groundbreaking Book Offers New Solution to PTSD

Fort Collins, CO: Companion Press announces the forthcoming publication of a new book entitled, **The PTSD Solution: The Truth About Your Symptoms and How to Heal** by renowned grief educator Dr. Alan Wolfelt.

PTSD is thought to affect an estimated eight percent of Americans at any given time—more than 25 million people. It is one of the most debilitating mental health issues of our time. This compassionate and eye-opening guide for post-traumatic stress sufferers offers the missing piece to the PTSD puzzle.

In **The PTSD Solution**, Dr. Wolfelt explores the similarities between the clinical condition called PTSD and normal grief, revealing that PTSD is a kind of grief called traumatic grief. What's more, while the condition can partially be understood medically as an emotional-spiritual journey, the only way to heal is to fully explore, embrace and express its many thoughts and feelings. Mourning is the missing piece for anyone who has struggled with healing PTSD.

The PTSD Solution, ISBN 978-1617222269, is priced at \$19.95 U.S. and will be available October, 2015. To order visit www.centerforloss.com or call (970) 226-6050.

A Wise Decision Unknown Author

A woman came out of her house and saw three old men with long white beards sitting in her front yard. She did not recognize them.

She said, "I don't think I know you, but you must be hungry. Please come in and have something to eat."

"Is the man of the house home?" they asked.

"No," she said. "He's out."

"Then we cannot come in," they replied.

In the evening when her husband came home, she told him what had happened. "Go tell them I am home and invite them in!"

The woman went out and invited the men in. "We do not go into a house together," they replied.

"Why is that?" she wanted to know.

One of the old men explained: "His name is Wealth," he said pointing to one of his friends, and said pointing to another one, "He is Success, and I am Love." Then he added,

"Now go in and discuss with your husband which one of us you want in your home."

The woman went in and told her husband what was said. Her husband was overjoyed. "How nice!!!," he said. "Since that is the case, let us invite Wealth. Let him come and fill our home with wealth!"

His wife disagreed. "My dear, why don't we invite Success?"

Their daughter-in-law was listening from the other corner of the house. She jumped in with her own suggestion: "Would it not be better to invite Love? Our home will then be filled with love!"

"Let us heed our daughter-in-law's advice," said the husband to the wife. "Go out and invite Love to be our guest."

The woman went out and asked the three old men, "Which one of you is Love? Please come in and be our guest."

Love got up and started walking toward the house. The other two also got up and followed him. Surprised, the lady asked Wealth and Success: "I only invited Love, why are you coming in?"

The old men replied together: "If you had invited Wealth or Success the other two of us would've stayed out, but since you invited Love, wherever He goes, we go with him. Wherever there is Love, there is also Wealth and Success!!!!!"

(Do you agree?)

You know you are too old to Trick or Treat when.....

10. You keep knocking on your own front door.
9. You remove your false teeth to change your appearance,
8. You ask for soft high fiber candy only.
7. When someone drops a candy bar in your bag, you lose your balance and fall over.
6. People say: "Great Boris Karloff Mask," and you're not wearing a mask.

5. When the door opens you yell, "Trick or....." and you can't remember the rest.
4. By the end of the night, you have a bag full of restraining orders
3. You have to carefully choose a costume that doesn't dislodge your hairpiece,
2. You're the only Power Ranger in the neighborhood with a walker
1. You keep having to go home to go to the bathroom..

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Operating your business more efficiently... and profitably By Richard Lee

It is time for funeral home owners to get serious and take control of their businesses – from more efficient operation to productive (and inexpensive) marketing solutions. Unfortunately, the goodwill of families continuing to use a certain funeral home has been dwindling and is being replaced by telephone and internet price shopping. The generation that is making the buying decision seems to be more concerned on price and convenience and less on continued goodwill and supporting “the funeral home that they have used for years”.

There have been big changes occurring in the funeral industry over the last 5 years such as the

rise of cremation and its effect on the revenue and cash flow of a business to the trend of families downgrading from full traditional funerals to same day services.

The days of being able to run your business without a plan are over. Every owner today has to be aware of what their current mix of business will be and what the projected revenue stream will be and then operate in a much leaner capacity in order that a reasonable profit can be achieved. The attention should be placed on what the profit margin will be on that particular service - what enhancements can be made and/or if a change in the

merchandise being offered could result in a better margin.

Having an industry expert analyze your business and make recommendations as to changes or procedures that could be implemented is important. It's easy for an owner to get complacent and continue operating as they have for the last twenty to thirty years, but with the consumer attitude changing quickly, you definitely want to be proactive rather than being forced into a reactive position because once that occurs, it may be too late and your business has already suffered.

A simple, well-prepared and professional plan could be the best investment you make in your future.



Richard S. Lee is the President of Lee & Associates, a firm that represents funeral home owners in the sale and transfer of their businesses. Since

1987, they have been involved in over 160 transactions all over the United States. The scope of their work also includes business valuations, accounting solutions and general consulting services. He also is President of Lee Funeral Funding, a company that provides financing to families for at-need funeral costs. (See directory for contact information.)

Sometime's It's Best To Be On The Outside Looking In

By Joe Wiegel

Many times, funeral directors or cemetarians try to do their marketing using people at the funeral home or cemetery. There are a lot of reasons why they take this approach. Sometimes, budget is the primary driver, but more often, there is a belief that nobody in the outside world could ever understand funeral service as well as someone who work in the profession day in and day out.

Actually, that's exactly why an outsider offers you a significant advantage. You see, families in your community don't look at you through your eyes. The families don't see your company, your services, or your people from your viewpoint. They don't envision the intention behind what you're doing or recognize the superiority of your current efforts over previous ones. Fact is, they're pretty ignorant when it comes to what they know about you and funeral service.

That can present a real danger. By assuming that your families think the same way you do, you miss what those folks are really thinking and what they need. They probably don't realize that you've been short staffed for a month and everyone has worked hard to do their part to get the firm through the "crisis". Actually, it means nothing to them. You're so proud that everyone internally pitched in, but it matters not a bit to the families who call on you in their time of need. Your view of everything, including your firm's marketing, is shaped by internal attitudes and concerns.

Outsiders lack that baggage. They bring more objectivity to the process. For example, an outsider will be better able to point out how your families might not come away with the same impression of what you plan to say in your marketing message. An outsider will have the

ability to ask tough questions that your staff may be uncomfortable voicing. At the very least, outsiders will bring a different perspective to the table that just might keep you from inadvertently embarrassing yourself in the marketplace.

By now, you may be saying that all I am suggesting is to hire an outside marketing firm to handle your marketing. Well, not exactly. What I am suggesting is the next time you're ready to pull the trigger on your next marketing campaign, ask someone outside the funeral home or cemetery for their opinion. It can be someone from your church or rotary club . . . just be sure it's someone who doesn't know about funeral service.

Ask them to analyze your marketing message and design. I think you may be surprised at what they say about your marketing. And – after that – if you want a second opinion or help with your marketing – an outside marketing resource may be in order.



Joe Wiegel is the owner of Weigel Strategic Marketing, a communications firm focused on the funeral profession that delivers expertise and results across three interrelated marketing disciplines: strategy, branding and communications. For

more information, you can visit his website at weigelstrategicmarketing.webs.com.

He also can be reached at 317-608-8914 or weigelstrategicmarketing@gmail.com.



It's All In the Box

“This may be just what we’ve all been looking for to increase family satisfaction and make more people involved with the services we care for.” -

Thomas M. Belford, Owner John A. Gentleman Mortuaries, Omaha N.E.

John A Gentleman Mortuaries announced that they are now offering- The “In Loving Memory Box” to their families. They join a prestigious list of firms, who are serving their families more deeply by offering this memorial gift and service tool.

“The families we’re serving are looking for “more” in their funeral experience.’ ‘This has been a common theme in funeral service for several years now.’ ‘We pride ourselves on listening and reacting to the needs and wants of the families we serve.’ Tom Belford shared, ‘Once we heard about It’s All In The Box, we decided to test it.’ ‘Well, it not only fills the need, it frames and adds meaning to the services, creates more public interaction and gives families incredible value.”

“At first, we thought, this is something we’re already doing. We already offer cards to share memories. This is actually much more than that. It is a place for the history of the deceased to continue to live in the family memories. Families can also place personal items in the box like the person’s jewelry, military honors, favorite music, etc. along with the tributes and memories collected during and after services.”

What is it

The In Loving Memory Box is essentially a memorial service “kit” consisting of a beautiful wood box with photo frame, archival quality stationery, candle, and organza pouches to leave items with your loved one in their final resting place and bring jewelry and other mementos home when services are complete. It is all beautifully

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packaged and designed. The company has invested heavily in the “how” of this idea. We offer; scripts, training and program support materials. We know the challenges funeral directors face and we supply them with what they need to make this a seamless integration in their service process. Everything is well thought out and buttoned up.

About It's All In The Box- “Once Loved - Never Forgotten”

It's All In The Box is a company that has been around for several years, but we have remained under the radar to much of the funeral industry. We have only partnered with firms referred by current clients and all of our marketing has been word of mouth. Our current clients include service leaders like; Horan & McConaty, Larkin Mortuaries, Allnutt Funeral Service, O'Connor Mortuaries and many more.

Cost and Contact

The In Loving Memory Box wholesales to qualified funeral homes & Hospice Centers for \$65.00. Learn more at itsallinthebox.com.



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The Dead Beat -The Caregivers Soapbox

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Observations on Japanese Funeral Customs (Cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

an expert and a book. I'm not an expert and I'm not going to write a book.

For those of you who have not been to Japan, there are LOTS of people jammed into a tiny little area. It is extremely densely populated. With that in mind, most people are cremated and cemetery space comes at an tremendously expensive premium. In fact, most families can't afford cemetery burials. They simply keep their loved ones' cremains with them in their homes. I was told the cost of burial equals or exceeds the cost of the funeral and most families can't afford both.

Virtually no embalming occurs. Bodies are kept refrigerated until they can be prepared for public viewing. At the funeral home I visited, I was told a large number of families themselves still actually prepare the body for the funeral. There is a prep room like funeral homes in the US, but it is the family members who prepare the body with assistance from funeral home staff. The body is washed and the orifices are stuffed with



Refrigeration Room

gauze and cotton. There is a prep table positioned inside a big basin type sink with a drain to carry away the soapy refuse. Everything is provided by the funeral home—towels, make-up, etc.

Then the body is placed on dry ice, literally, for public display. At this funeral home, about 50 % of the families opt for a private family memorial service (or wake) either the evening before the funeral, or the day of the funeral. The funeral home provides the family a room, much like a motel room, where family members may spend the night. This is for family members who traveled from far away, and for family members to stay

(Continued on page 28)

“Dear Counselor....” By Bill Stalter

Dear Counselor,

A family seeking to qualify their mother for public assistance asked that my funeral home to accept the assignment of a final expense insurance policy. The policy proceeds will exceed the funeral arrangement by several thousands of dollars. Can I apply the excess insurance proceeds towards a funeral arrangement for another member of that family?

We are aware that the NFDA's general counsel sponsors a seminar on spend down issues such as this. It has been suggested that the Social Security Administration has issued authority that would allow excess insurance proceeds to be transferred to a new preneed arrangement for immediate family members. We have not found that authority. Materials provided in conjunction with the seminar indicate the opportunity to apply excess insurance proceeds in such a manner is dependent upon applicable state law. To determine if your state's laws would allow this, we would suggest that you contact the NFDA if you are a member of that organization. If not, you may want to contact insurance company that issued the policy and your state funeral directors association. If your state law imposes a claim on excess insurance proceeds, you will expose your funeral home to a liability if you refund the excess proceeds to the family or apply it to a new preneed arrangement. Missouri is one of those states that assert a claim to excess insurance proceeds.

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



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.

Observations on Japanese Funeral Customs (Cont.)

(Continued from page 27)

close to their deceased ones.

Generally speaking, the deceased men are dressed in business suits and the women are dressed in kimonos.

Speaking of attire, the funeral home staff members were all dressed in black suits, white shirt and black ties. Women employees wear black dresses with black jackets, or pant suits with white blouses and black ties. Their clothes were clean and neatly ironed, very meticulous, and every hair in place. Their demeanor was very professional.

Virtually all Japanese are Buddhist. Obviously there are exceptions. Because of this, there are certain unlucky days of the year when conducting a funeral ceremony is simply not done. I couldn't begin to tell you those days, but the Japanese could!

After the body is placed in the casket, family members place burnable items such as gum or cigarettes or anything the deceased enjoyed in life. The casket is positioned in front of the altar in preparation of the funeral service. Incense is burned. Mourners arrive, the ceremony begins, a Buddhist monk reads a sutra. Family members in order of seniority rise and bow individually to the casket.

After the service, family members give small presents to the funeral attendees. I'm told most funeral homes provide a reception room to entertain the mourners with food and beverage when the service concludes. This includes everything from beer and wine to hard liquor, actually served in the funeral home. It's kind of like going to a church pot-luck dinner here in the US, but with alcohol.

There is more to the funeral service, but I'm only mentioning the highlights.

What I found interesting is that a family member nearly always stays with the deceased body 24/7 especially during the night. They keep watch or "Tsuya" which means relatives are watching for the deceased to perform an incantation during the night.

Nearly everyone is cremated in Japan.



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When it's time to cremate the body, the family actually places the body into the crematory at the funeral home. They close the door, and lock it. The funeral home gives the family the keys to the crematory door so there can be absolutely no question the family will receive their loved ones remains back.

After the body is cremated, family members return to the funeral home, unlock the crematory and take chopsticks to pick up the bones of their loved one to place in an urn. Two family members grasp the same bone at the same time. I'm told this Japanese custom relates to dining. When two people grab for the same piece of food at the dinner table and they pull back. This is the only time two people hold the same item with two sets of chop sticks.

After everything has concluded at the funeral home, most families wait for a period of 49 days to conduct yet another memorial service for the dead. But they may postpone it if the 49th day falls on one of the many unlucky days.

The funeral home I visited is a full service funeral home and fami-

(Continued on page 29)





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Observations on Japanese Funeral Customs (Cont.)

(Continued from page 28)

lies can choose from an array of services just like in the US. Families can choose to have a very simple low cost service, or have the funeral home take care of everything! Flowers, food, and photographic collage of the deceased to be displayed, body preparation, private family memorial service or wake, and the memorial service for the public.

The funeral home will record the entire service and provide you a CD, SD card or USB zip drive of the service. The complete full service funeral service costs 537,820 yen. At today's currency rate, that amounts to approximately \$4,400.00 US.

The complete service includes: The room for the funeral, decorations for the coffin, fabric and blankets for the coffin, pillow decoration, a plain wood spirit table (as in ghost), picture, container for the ashes, dry ice for two days, a purifying set (body prep), other small things, a sign for the funeral, a paper box for storing the articles necessary for the funeral, then it is used to store ashes direct from the crematory before placing in a more permanent urn, master of ceremonies for funeral, cremation fee, attendant to direct the cremation, hearses, meals for the wake and the funeral for up to 10 people, drinks for up to ten, and filing appropriate paperwork with the government.

Items not included in this package: bus transportation if necessary, drinks during the cremation, flowers, gifts given to funeral attendees, the fee for temple use, and thank you cards.



Inside Chapel

I would like to again thank the staff and management of the Kuratoma Funeral home near Zama City for taking



Staff Member with Charle holding The Dead Beat

the time to show me around.

One last thought, many funeral homes have private membership clubs that provide eventual customers discounts on funeral services, similar to our preplanning here in the US. So they encourage people to join for a fee, (not sure how that works) and when a family death occurs they are not hit with a big bill for services rendered at time of need.

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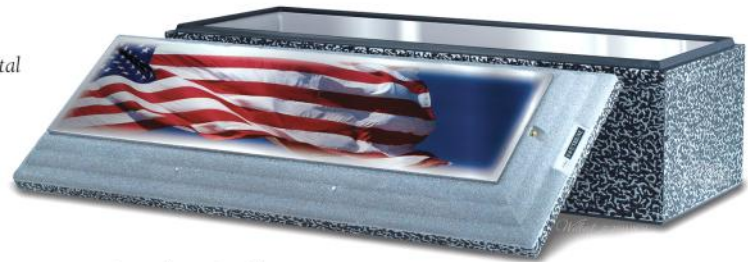
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