

The Dead Beat



The Caregiver's Soapbox

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



Volume 14

www.thedead-beat.com

Issue 6



**Stygar Family of Funeral Service
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In An Effort to Save Lives**



Stygar Family Funeral Service in St. Charles, Missouri and Florissant, Missouri has graciously invested back into their communities in order to promote saving lives.



Owners Jeffery Stygar and his brother John "Steven" Stygar, recognized a very unique opportunity. It is to assist the local St. Charles and Florissant First Responders through a marketing initiative which could potentially save lives.

The Stygars have made available, for free, to everyone in their local community to download the Vital ICE App—the in case of emergency. The Vital ICE App allows for every individual that takes the opportunity to download it on their phone to have the peace of mind that, even in a life-threatening situations, their pertinent information is readily available to assist the paramedics and EMT's in providing the proper treatment.

The Vital ICE App allows the user to store their contact information, emergency contacts, allergies, current medications, allergies to medications, medical history, and a copy of their insurance card. The app also provides first aid scenarios, a one-touch dial of 911 with GPS location, and an emergency group that can be notified of the user's distress and location. The Vital ICE app also provides a reminders section where the user can enter in their doctors and pertinent appointments, as well as daily medications.



Stygar Funeral Home is making this potentially life-saving App available to the communities for FREE as a way of showing their gratitude for allowing them to serve the community. All that is required by the user is entering in Stygar's unique four digit code at start-up.

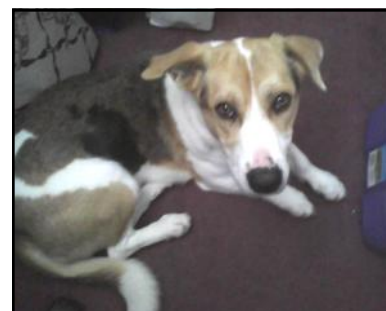
In conjunction with the Vital ICE app, there is a coinciding Vitalboards Initiative that is distributed by the

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



Amy Howard



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Mortuary Muse By Lowell

Does personalization of decedent services mean the same to family members as it does to funeral directors? I'm beginning to think that it doesn't. Some families seem to think that they should personally conceive and implement all memorial celebrations themselves without funeral director input or assistance. A few orchestrate the whole affair very well and some do not. Among the most notable problems we have observed are awkward openings or dismissals, uncoordinated commentary or music, poorly coordinated paper goods from the discount store and sometimes the service has inadequate public notification. Celebration of life services probably are never too long for family members, but often become tiresome to friends, who may have time constraints.

These comments might just be sour grapes on my part, but I think others do agree. My son who lives in Sand Springs, Oklahoma said he and his minister had mirrored my thoughts. Phillip commented that a recent memorial service conducted by a funeral director from Mobley-Groesbeck Funeral Home was flawless in execution.

Occasionally a do-it-yourself client asks how to do some aspect of a life celebration/memorial service and it has been beneficial to add a consulting fee on the our GPL when we

are not selling any other service or merchandise.

With continuing body donations, direct cremations and do-it-yourself memorial services perhaps we should start Monday and Thursday evening how-to-do-it classes in the funeral home.

The price of embalming on most GPL's is probably a fraction of the price if it were purchased as a medical outpatient procedure which would likely cost \$2,500 or \$5,000. But the way things are we going to have to give a free embalming procedure to anyone who is willing to buy a service with viewing and casket? Will there soon be a generation of funeral service professionals that will never have heard heartfelt comments from decedent's families and friends like these: "She looks 20 years younger," "He looks so peaceful—just like he's asleep," "Now she looks like she used to," and add anything you can think of that you've heard? So why are body present services becoming so few? Where did we go wrong? Economics? Changing Attitudes? What do you think?

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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Open House for Hedge-Lewis Goodwin Funeral Home Webb City, MO



Webb City: B.J. Goodwin welcomed many visitors to his open house of the recently acquired and renovated Webb-Simpson-Goodwin Funeral Home. He adds this funeral home to his other funeral homes in Anderson, Noel, Southwest City, Joplin, Goodman, Sarcoxie and Monett. Tours of the facility were given along with refreshments. Both future customers and fellow funeral professionals attended and wished him good luck in his newest facility.

Funeral Home Pictures Provided by Tom Franklin



Oldham County Funeral Home—LaGrange, KY

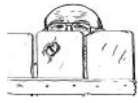


Heady-Radcliff Funeral Home—LaGrange, KY



Heady-Radcliff Funeral Home—LaGrange, KY

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@thedeat-beat.com.



Behind the Back Fence

By Lowell

One advantage to being old is that if some current problem is too perplexing to solve—you can think of something in the past that in time took care of itself.

A case in point— 50 years ago nearly all funeral flower orders were for sprays. When there was a local death the three grocery stores would put out a jar and a list for customers to donate for a spray of flowers from “Friends and Neighbors.” A list could have 30 to 50 or more names of people usually donating a quarter.

For that 25 cents donation they probably expected to receive an acknowledgment card which meant that the florist or we had to recopy the list if we couldn’t trim off the edge with the amount donated.

Eventually it was sufficient to send only one card to be displayed by the store’s cash register. And now, floral donation jars are replaced by containers for donations to help pay funeral expenses. I am not sure of the next revision in the life of the donation jar as our last village grocery store closed recently.

We won’t starve as we still have a convenience store, a couple of restaurants and a supermarket about 8 miles away in the next village. But community flower donation jars have been taken care of by time and our shrinking demographic.

We are grateful to Robert “Brad” Bradford of Wilbert/SI, Springfield, MO, for facilitating some tricky concrete repairs to the retaining wall near our entrance of the funeral home. Brad has announced that they will soon be opening a new facility on the west side of Springfield.

“#@!?!@*” A nursing home called a few days ago. I was surprised that instead of notifying us of a death or questions about a client’s irrevocable preneed, they were third party shoppers. Since I don’t usually handle these calls, I bobble the GPL disclaimer. The caller requested our price for a direct cremation with no services. I quoted our price, “Approximately \$2,500.” She said, “Direct cremation with NO services?” I answered, “Yes.” I then suggested that if cost was a serious fact they should check prices with three firms in our nearest metropolitan area. Then call them back and say the other guys will do it cheaper. The nursing home staff person said she would deliver the message.

Later while discussing this conversation with a colleague in a nearby town he reminded me that I should have told the shopper to make sure of what they were buying because necessary

add-ons were often not included in those advertised bargain cremations. “#@!?!@*”

Most families we have dealt with over the years who have been involved with a hospice organization have always had grateful and loving observations about their hospice caregivers. However I wonder about the financial structure of the hospice provider companies. I assume most are not-for-profit, but I really do not know where their funding comes from or the pay levels of administration. Whether they actually operate any more cost effectively than some other local health agency or if they may be operating within another local health provider. Is a hospice organization usually funded by Medicare or other federal grants?

I personally feel that hospice has no regard for what it costs the funeral profession to provide our services. Perhaps by design they encourage clients to be aware of rip-off services of no value from funeral homes. Otherwise why would third party shoppers (hospice or nursing home staffers) always ask for the price of a direct cremation and no services. And I wonder how often this is tied to organ donor programs.

In 2010 I wrote to eight hospice providers within a 100 mile radius asking for their protocols for allowing nurse case workers to do funeral shopping. One responded with a phone call denying funeral price shopping by caregivers is allowed. None of the others responded at all. If hospice providers and organ donation organizations are tax-supported, we in funeral service are certainly coming out on the short end with our tax dollars. Of course, it may all be part of the plan to take over our niche? Comments????

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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@thedead-beat.com**

After-Thoughts *By Joanne Howard*



This is Jack, our new addition to our family. It's been a little over a

year since we lost our Basset Hound, Baby. Jack came from the Vet Tech program at Crowder College. They rescue animals that they use in their program and then put them up for adoption when the semester ends and the students aren't around to take care of the animals.

My husband saw the e-mail about the animals and felt it was time for a new member to our family. It's remarkable how after a year you forget all the aspects of having a pet. Oh let's see, a very spoiled pet.

Well, I was surprised how much better I felt to be able to take care of an animal again. Granted ripping up the trash and grabbing food off the table has not been getting Jack brownie points, but it seems to be love at first sight for both me and my husband.

I am thinking that this overwhelming feeling of calm is why when owners lose their canine and feline family members there is such a booming pet grief business. They miss their animals so much that they want to acknowledge that loss the same way we

remember our human loved ones that have passed.

One of the major challenges I am having is wondering how to keep Jack happy while we are gone to work. He has a wonderful cage and bed to stay in, but I'm afraid it's a bit boring for him. His first few days with us were around Thanksgiving, so we were home much more than usual. Now comes the real world existence of people going to work and dogs having to occupy themselves.

Back to my thoughts of feeling good that he is around. I feel like I've been out of synch since we have not had a pet. I realized that we had had some type of animal for many, many years and to be without one was hard.

It is very reminiscent of losing a loved one. You have usually been with that person for a long time and then there's that void. There's no quick replacement, the loss is felt. After some time you adjust to the lack of that individual and then you yearn for others.

People do not totally realize how much an animal adds to their lives until they are gone. Not that everybody is an animal lover, but those that have voids in their lives from other losses, a pet helps a lot.

It's an honor to love Jack now after being without an animal for about a year. I hope he appreciates us as much

as we do him. Hopefully it is a win-win situation for us all.

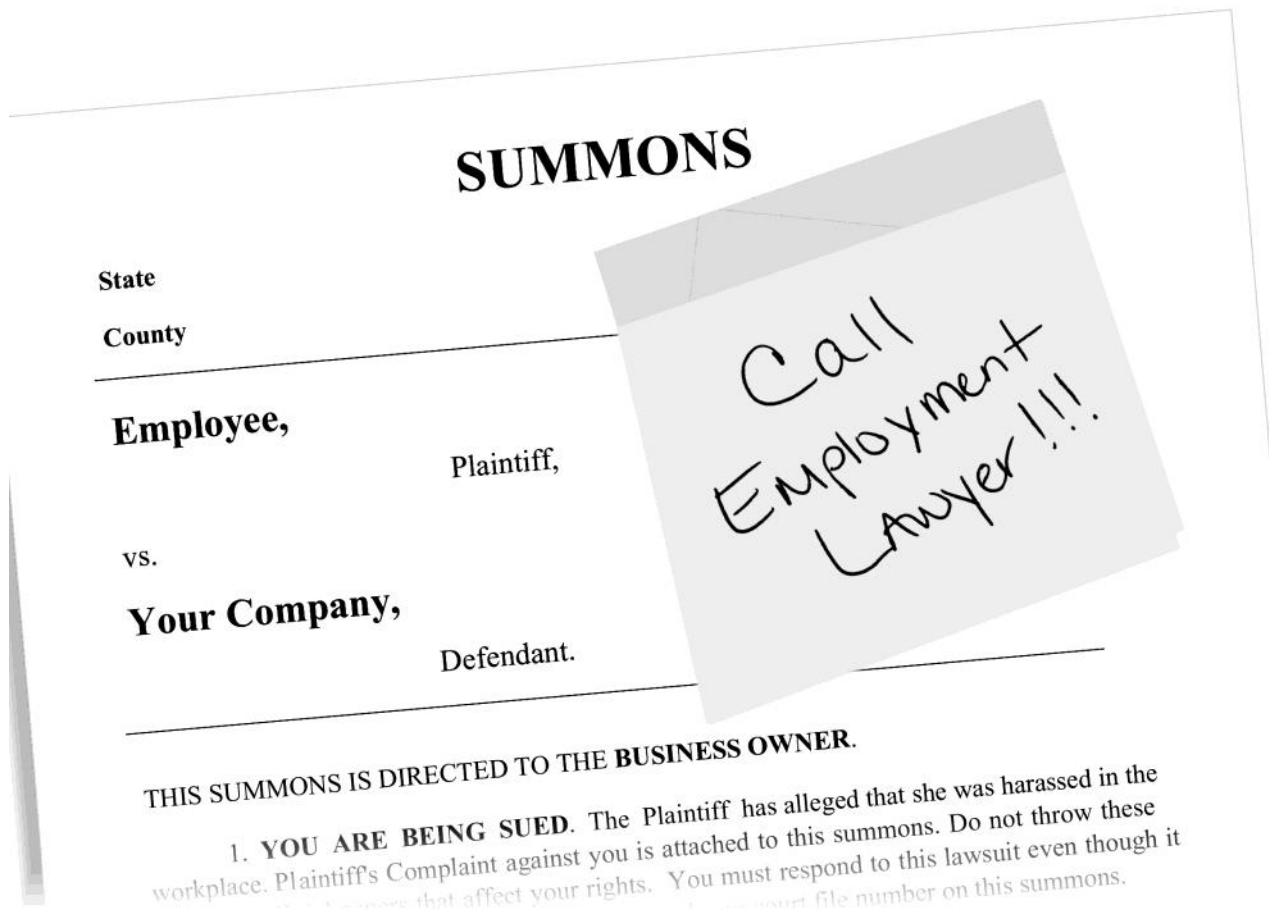
This comes at a very good time for us—the holidays. Yes for those that have lost loved ones no matter how long it has been, it's a hard time. We do things in honor of our daughters—flowers on graves, musical specials at church and giving in their memories. But it's still hard not to miss them when other families are enjoying their loved ones. Everyone wants to reach out and help us, but sometimes sharing time to ourselves is much more comforting. New traditions are started after losses and that doesn't mean participating in other people's celebrations especially with their family members. Missing alone is better than having loss thrown in your face. It's not always sad, it's a time of recollection of good times, happy thoughts still exist. Life goes on with new loved ones, even canine ones. No replacements, but additions to your



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

HAPPY HOLIDAYS !!!!!!!
INCLUDING A WONDERFUL NEW YEAR
FROM JOANNE & LOWELL



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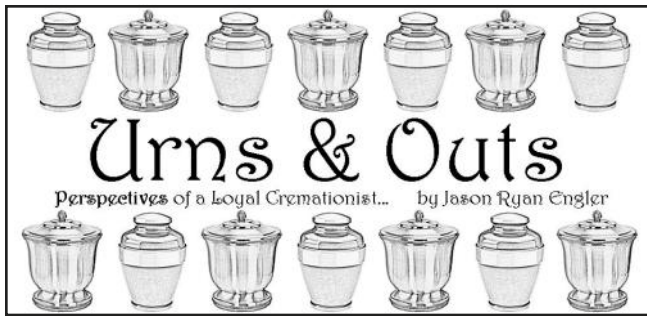
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It was a cold and rainy December day in 1876 when the Cremation movement in America made a major step forward. In the small town of Washington, Penn., Dr. Francis Julius LeMoyne, a local eccentric physician, had built small, simple two-room building with a receiving room, a furnace room which contained a crematory, designed by a local engineer. Planned exclusively for use at his own demise, the facility was constructed on his private property after the local cemetery had declined use of their grounds. The Crematory, however, could not remain idle, as it was pushed into use by Henry Steel Olcott, co-founder of the Theosophical Society of America, for the cremation of one of his followers, Bavarian immigrant Baron Joseph DePalm.

December 5, 1876, in Washington, Penn., the body of the Baron de Palm arrived at the train station there to be the first to be cremated in a modern cremation chamber. Among the party that met the train included Dr. Francis Julius LeMoyne, whose crematory was to be used, and Col. Henry Steel Olcott, founder of the Theosophical Society and executor of the Baron's estate. The cremation was a newsworthy event that was covered in almost every major newspaper in the country. On their way to the crematory, they were met by doctors of the boards of health from Brooklyn, Pittsburgh, Wheeling, W.Va., and Boston – along with about 30 reporters from various news outlets.

The following morning, about 8 a.m., the furnace was declared ready after having been preheated for 6 hours. The body had been wrapped in a sheet saturated with alum to keep the body from igniting until the door was sealed. Various spices and evergreens were sprinkled over the body by Olcott and at 8:27 a.m., the iron cradle containing the body was placed in the retort.

By 10:45 the cremation had been pronounced completed, but the engineer in charge suggested that the fires burn a few hours longer to make sure the cremation was thoroughly complete.

That afternoon, public meetings and speeches were held in the town square. Various individuals spoke about cremation.

When the cremated remains were finally removed from the cremation chamber, they were sprinkled with perfume and were placed in an inscribed antique vase with brass handles which was delivered to the offices of the Theosophical society.

This first cremation in a modern cremation chamber took more than 36 hours to complete. Coke was used as fuel and 50 bushels were consumed. The total process cost \$7.04.

The LeMoyne Crematory held the distinction of being the only Crematory in the country from its inception until 1884 when the Lancaster Crematory was completed in Lancaster, Penn. At that time, after twenty-five Cremations had been performed in the facility – one of which was that of Dr. LeMoyne himself, the crematory was closed to the public with the exception of residents of Washington County. In 1901, with the cremation movement in full-swing, the trustees of the crematory closed its doors for good after 42 cremations. It was later deeded to the Washington County Historical Society, in whose care it remains to this day.

In early November, 2015, I had the opportunity to travel to Washington, Penn., for research regarding the upcoming Cremation exhibit at the National Museum of Funeral History. I spent a day at the crematory, and although it is quite a small building, the feeling of the facility is teeming with history. The original wooden bier that held the body of Baron De Palm is still intact and display in the service room. The iron crib upon which the body rested, though in the basement of the Historical Society, is also intact, and a newer one (circa 1879) is on display in the crematory. The retort, still fully present, though later updated with gas piping for fuel, is all original.

I spent another day in the Archives of the Washington County Historical Society and had the privilege to peruse their early cremation collection – including a letter from Benn Pitman, stenographer, alerting Dr. LeMoyne to the fact that his wife was approaching the end of her life and would be sent to Washington for cremation per her request and with the Doctor's permission of using the crematory. In 1878, she became the second person cremated in the LeMoyne Crematory and the first woman cremated in America. I also had the opportunity to view a detailed description of Mrs. Pitman's cremation taken by Frank LeMoyne looking through the portal in the door of the cremation chamber, and to look through the notebook of John Dye, engineer who built the crematory, which showed a detailed listing of the cremations performed in the historic facility.

After more than 130 years, it is interesting to note that while cremation began with these meager beginnings, the Cremation Association of North America released the latest statistics at our convention this summer. In just three short years, cremation will be the preferred method of disposition by Americans and will take place in almost 3000 crematories across the country.

Cremation is no longer a trend, it is a tradition!

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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

A Parent Dies

By Ken Doka

"I suppose there will be a lot of widows in the group," Gail speculated. "I know everyone loses parents. I know she was just a mother," she contritely stated.

As I was interviewing potential clients for a grief support group, Gail's comment struck me as strange. *Just a mother?* This was the woman who brought her into the world, raised her, and even as an adult was her best friend, companion, frequent babysitter, and an always available source of support.

I understood her confusion. We expect to outlive our parents. The death of a parent is a normal event in adult life. It is something most of us experience.

Yet, all those truths do not make it any easier. The death of a parent is difficult for so many reasons.

The loss of a parent often is our first, significant experience of death—and our first encounter with grief. We may be stunned by the intensity of our reactions, by the roller-coaster nature of the grief process, and by the very many ways that grief affects us. Even though we may have expected to experience these emotions, we may be shocked at their intensity. Also, we may not have fully realized all the other reactions of grief: the difficulty concentrating, the physical experiences, the spiritual questions, and even the ways that grief changes our behaviors. We may even be surprised by how long these reactions seem to last.

The loss of a parent may affect us in other ways as well. When one parent dies we may be thrust into new responsibilities—caring for the surviving parent, for example. The death of a parent creates a "developmental push," as we may have to

learn new skills where, even as an adult, we depended upon a parent.

The loss of a parent or parents can lead to other changes as well, compounding feelings of loss. We may have to close our childhood home. Without the centering role of a parent, holidays and family gatherings may be held in new places with varying family members. It may seem like the larger family just doesn't get together like it once did.

There may be psychological changes as well. As long as our parents are alive, we feel protected. Now we may feel more alone. One of my clients, an older, very successful woman, once shared that as long as her parents were alive she felt that even if everything went sour, she could always go home. Now she confessed, she felt strangely vulnerable. We may even become more aware of our own mortality, adding to that sense of vulnerability.

It is difficult when a parent dies. We need not be ashamed of our grief. We readily would acknowledge the effect of a parent's death on a twelve-year-old child. Why do we somehow think it would be easier if that child were now fifty-two years old?

We need to develop our strengths—to learn how to cope with loss. What has helped us in the past? How does our faith speak to us? What support is available—from friends or family, within our faith community, hospice service, or community? What rituals can we develop that can help us remember and honor our parents at appropriate times? What skills do we need to learn? What memories will

we hold and share? What are the legacies that our parents have imparted to us that are now part of our lives?

If this is our first loss, we can hone our ability to live with loss. That can be a final gift from our parents.


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

*"Okay since nobody sends me jokes, I'm going to punish you with things I found from a **Prairie Home Companion Show.**"*

- ♦ My pig learned karate. Now he's doing pork chops.
- ♦ What did the bee say to the flower? Hey, Bud, when do you open.
- ♦ Why was the math book sad? Because it had so many problems.
- ♦ Who yelled, "Coming are the British?" Paul Reverse.
- ♦ Why do golfers wear two pairs of pants? In case they get a hole in one.
- ♦ What did the tie say to the hat? You go on a head, I'll just hang around.
- ♦ Why did the boy blush when he opened the fridge? Because he saw the salad dressing.
- ♦ Why did the scientist install a knocker on his door? To win the no bell prize.
- ♦ How much do pirates pay for their earrings? A buccaneer.
- ♦ If Mr. and Mrs. Bigger had a baby, who would be the biggest of the three? The baby, because he's a little Bigger!
- ♦ What do you call a dog that is left handed? A south-paw
- ♦ Knock, Knock, Who's there? Bisquick!!! Bisquick who? Bisquick!! Your pants are on fire.
- ♦ How did the mouse feel after the cat chased it through a screen door? Screened.
- ♦ Did you hear about the two antennas that got married? The wedding was terrible, but the reception was great!
- ♦ Did you hear about the dyslexic devil worshipper? He sold his sold his soul to Santa.
- ♦ What did the fish say when he hit a concrete wall? Dam.
- ♦ What do Eskimos get from sitting on the ice too long? Polaroids.
- ♦ What do prisoners use to call each other? Cell phones.
- ♦ What do the letters D.N.A. stand for? National Dyslexic's Association.
- ♦ What do you call cheese that doesn't belong to you? Nacho cheese.
- ♦ What did one hot dog say to another? Hi, Frank.
- ♦ What do you get when you pour boiling water down a rabbit hole? Hot cross bunnies.



Comments

Our staff at Hutchens Mortuary enjoy reading the articles in The Dead Beat magazine.

I enjoy reading the Dead Beat. Keep up the good work!
Don Buchanan, Haslet, TX

Thank you for sending us your Dead Beat Magazine we all enjoy reading it. I was wondering if you know of any Oklahoma Licensed Funeral Director who does vacation relief. This seems like it could be very lucrative to a semi-retired person, I would like to take a vacation. Thanks

Carter N. Davis, Davis Funeral Home, Dewey, OK

- ♦ Did you hear Willie Nelson got hit by a car? He was playing on the road again.
- ♦ Why do bicycles fall over? Because they are two-tired.
- ♦ Why did the Amish couple get divorced? He was driving her buggy.
- ♦ If H2O is on the inside of a fire hydrant, what is on the outside? K9P.



Church Ladies With Typewriters- (Actual Sentences in Bulletins)

- ♦ The Fasting & Prayer Conference includes meals.
- ♦ The sermon this morning: "Jesus Walks on the Water" The sermon tonight "Searching for Jesus."
- ♦ Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.
- ♦ Don't let worry kill you off—let the Church help.
- ♦ At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be "What Is Hell?" Come early and listen to our choir practice.

A group of guys were at a sports bar one night discussing which sport was the best. Hockey and football seemed to be the two most talked about when one guy spoke up, "You're all wrong. Golf is definitely the best sport in the world," "You're crazy," said one of the guys. "Golf is the most unnatural sport ever invented." "What do you mean unnatural?" asked the second guy. "There's something just not right about a game where the person with the most hits loses!"



Phyllis Dillerisms:

- ♦ "Whatever you may look like, marry a man your own age. As your beauty fades, so will his eyesight."
- ♦ "Housework can't kill you, but why take a chance?"

(Continued on page 11)

Chuckles (Cont.)

- ♦ "Cleaning your house while your kids are still growing up is like shoveling the sidewalk before it stops snowing."
- ♦ "The reason women don't play football is because 11 of them would never wear the same outfit in public."
- ♦ "Best way to get rid of kitchen odors: Eat out."
- ♦ "A bachelor is a guy who never made the same mistake once."
- ♦ "I want my children to have all the things I couldn't afford. Then I want to move in with them."
- ♦ "Most children threaten at times to run away from home. This is the only thing that keeps some parents going."
- ♦ "Any time three New Yorkers get into a cab without argument, a bank has just been robbed."
- ♦ "We spend the first twelve months of our children's lives teaching them to walk and talk and the next twelve years telling them to sit down and shut up."
- ♦ "Burt Reynolds once asked me out. I was in his room."
- ♦ "What I don't like about office Christmas parties is looking for a job the next day."
- ♦ "The only time I ever enjoyed ironing was the day I accidentally got gin in the steam iron."
- ♦ "His finest hour lasted a minute and a half."
- ♦ "Old age is when the liver spots show through your gloves."
- ♦ "My photographs don't do me justice-they just look like me."
- ♦ "I admit, I have a tremendous sex drive. My boyfriend lives forty miles away."
- ♦ "Tranquilizers work only if you follow the advice on the bottle-keep away from children."
- ♦ "I asked the waiter, 'Is this milk fresh?' He said, 'Lady, three hours ago it was grass.'"
- ♦ "The reason the golf pro tells you to keep your head down is so you can't see his laughing."
- ♦ "You know you're old if they have discontinued your blood type."



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Edna Patterson and her husband came into sudden wealth as the result of Mr. Patterson's investments in Internet stocks. Edna loved surprises, and her husband was rich enough to indulge her every whim. For a birthday present he found her a parrot that spoke eleven languages and that cost him exactly one thousand dollars for each language. When he got home, he asked, "What d'ya think of that wonderful bird I sent you?" "It was elegant," she answered. "It's in the oven right now." The husband's face turned purple. "In the oven?" he shouted. "Why, that bird could speak eleven languages!" The wife asked, "Then why didn't it say something?"

When the farmer arrived at the obedience school to pick up his newly trained bird dog, he asked the instructor for a demonstration. The two men and the dog went to a nearby field, where the dog immediately pointed to a clump of brush, then rolled over twice. "There are two birds in there," the instructor said, and sure enough, two birds were flushed. A minute later the dog pointed to another bunch of bushes, and then rolled over five times. "There are five birds in there," the instructor noted, and indeed five birds were driven from the brush. Then the dog pointed to a third clump. He began to whine and run in circles until he found a stick, which he shook mightily and dropped at the men's feet. "And in that clump of brush there," the proud instructor concluded, "there are more birds than you can shake a stick at!"

-Country

I'm not afraid of death. It's the make-over at the undertaker's that scares me. . . . They try to make you look as lifelike as possible, which defeats the whole purpose. It's hard to feel bad for somebody who looks better than you do.

-Anita Wise

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Death Notices of Fellow Funeral Service Colleagues



ARKANSAS



David W. Caldwell, 64, of Greenwood passed away August 3, 2015. He was a funeral director at Hot Springs Funeral Home and later at the McConnell Funeral Home. He retired in 2012. His services were directed by McConnell Funeral Home in Greenwood.

ARIZONA



Jorge Brito, 58, of Phoenix died Oct. 4, 2015. He was a funeral director for Michelson & Ray. His service arrangements were handled by Whitney and Murphy Funeral Home in Phoenix.

KANSAS



Francis Hugh Campbell, 90, of Eureka, passed away Sept. 5, 2015. He enlisted in 1943 in the U.S. Navy serving on a liberty ship until 1946. He graduated from Worsham School of Mortuary Science in Chicago. He worked with his father and brother at the Campbell Furniture Store and Funeral Home until 1949 when they moved to Toronto, Kansas and opened Campbell Furniture Store and Funeral Home until 1962. He then purchased the Funeral Home in Eureka and owned and operated it until retiring in 1990. His services were directed by Campbell Funeral Home in Yates Center.



Kathleen Marie Kramer, 94, previously of Mankato, KS, passed away October 16, 2015. Her husband was Tobe Kramer and she supported him in the Kramer Funeral Home and Kramer Furniture. Her services were directed by Melby Mortuary in Mankato, KS.



Gary R. McDaniel, 58, of Linwood, passed away Nov. 23, 2015. He was a funeral director for over 40 years licensed in both Kansas and Missouri. His services were under the direction of Porter Funeral Homes and Crematory in Lenexa.



Richard Odom "R.O." Penick Jr., 95, of Topeka, passed away Nov. 21, 2015. He was a U.S. Army veteran of World War II and served as Adjutant of the 123rd General Hospital in England. He retired in 1985 from Penwell-Gabel Funeral Home, but continued to assist on services as needed. Services were directed by Penwell-Gable Funeral Homes.



Rev. Jack Wilkinson, 58, of Chetopa, passed away on Aug. 29, 2015. In 1981 he began working as a Funeral Director at the Bath Funeral Home in Chetopa, now the Bath-Forbes-Hoffman Funeral Home, who handled his funeral services.

MISSOURI

William G. Alexander "PaPa Bill", 88, of St. Ann, passed away Nov. 2, 2015. He was the former owner of Alexander & Sons Funeral Home and Mt. Lebanon Cemetery. He and his brother Jim were innovative leaders and pioneers in the funeral service profession in St. Louis. He is a veteran of the US Navy. His services were handled by Alexander-White-Mullen Funeral Home.

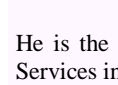
MISSOURI (Cont.)



Jack Beck, 76, of Bella Vista, AR, passed away on Nov. 10, 2015. He was involved in his parents' business, Beck Casket Co.. His arrangements were handled by Knell Mortuary, Carthage, MO.



Ronald R. Durbin, 68, of Fenton, MO died Aug. 26, 2015. He served as an embalmer and funeral director for 25 years. His services were directed by Jay B. Smith Funeral Home-Fenton Chapel.



Jimmy Jones of Conway passed away Sept. 24, 2015. He is the husband of Joyce Moore Jones with Goldfinch Funeral Services in Conway.



Sue Simmons, 70, of Springfield passed away Oct. 24, 2015. She was the wife of Brian Simmons, owner of Springfield Mortuary Services. She had been a licensed funeral director for 40 years. Along with her husband Brian they had operated funeral homes in Ava and Forsyth. Since 1987 they have operated Springfield Mortuary Service. She remained active in the business until ill health forced her retirement four years ago. Her funeral services were handled by Gorman Scharpf Funeral Home and Springfield Mortuary Services.

OKLAHOMA

Dorsey M. "Sonny" McCartney, 86, of Pawhuska, passed away on May 2, 2015. At age 14, he began working at Johnson Funeral Home doing odd jobs after school. He attended Dallas Institute of Mortuary Science, returning to Pawhuska on weekends to work at the funeral home. He completed his degree in 1951. He received his embalmer and funeral director license and returned to Johnson Funeral Home. After Ruth and Walter Johnson's death he purchased the remaining interest in the funeral home. In June 2000, he changed the name to McCartney's Johnson Funeral Home. In 2002 he was honored by OFDA for 50 years in the industry.



Bonnie Mitchell, 73, of Edmond, passed away Oct. 30, 2015. She was the wife of Marcial Mitchell, a retired Oklahoma funeral director and previously licensed and worked in Texas. Her services were directed by Smith & Kernke N May Chapel.



Dala Ruth Whinery, 81, of Elk City, passed away Oct. 21, 2015. Dala and her husband Alvin Lavern (A.L.) Whinery purchased Scroggins Funeral Home in Sayre, OK in 1961. Working alongside her husband in the funeral business, she obtained her funeral director's license and became the first female licensed funeral director in western Oklahoma. During the next 27 years they owned and operated funeral homes in Sayre, Sentinel, Manum, Reydon and Cheyenne. In August, 1988, they sold the funeral homes to their youngest son Brad. Funeral arrangements were under the direction of Rose Chapel Funeral Service of Sayre.



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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

TEXAS



Maria Luisa Agüero, 73, of Laredo, passed away October 29, 2015. She was mother of Mario A. Agüero who is the funeral director and owner of Peter's Funeral Home & South Texas Mortuary and Creations Services in Cotulla and Laredo. Her services were directed by Joe Jackson North Funeral Chapels in Laredo.



Allan B. Akens, 53, of Waxahachie, passed away on October 4, 2015. He graduated from Dallas Institute of Mortuary Science in 1984. He started at Bluebonnet Hills Funeral Home and served homes in Waco and Temple. He was a funeral director at Boze-Mitchell-McKibben Funeral Home in Waxahachie.



Robert Scott Allen, passed away on Dec. 19, 2015. He was a Dallas Institute Instructor and TFDA member. His services were under the direction of Hughes Crown Hill Funeral Home in Dallas.



Betty Aleene Cox Borchardt, 81, of Harlingen, passed away on Oct. 29, 2015. She attended the Commonwealth Mortuary School in Houston. She earned her funeral director and embalming degree in 1989. She owned and operated Cox Funeral Home in Harlingen & LaFeria until 1994. Trinity Funeral Home directed her funeral services.



Amy Earthman Cardwell, 47, of Austin, passed away on Oct. 16, 2015. She was the daughter of Bob Earthman, TFDA Services, Inc. and past TFDA president. Her services were handled by Weed-Corley-Fish Funeral Home in Austin and Earthman Funeral Directors in Houston.



Nell Dooley, 89, of Goliad, passed away Oct. 27, 2015. She was the mother of Linda Dooley, a funeral director with Goliad Funeral Home and Victoria Mortuary Services in Goliad and Victoria. Her arrangements were directed by Goliad Funeral Home.

Roy Farrar, 80, of Royse City, passed away Nov. 21, 2015. He was previous owner of Royse City Funeral Home. He also was a 50-year licensee recipient. His services were directed by New Hope Funeral Home in Sunnyvale.

Robert Howard Holt, 76, of Houston, passed away Oct. 10, 2015. He was a funeral director and former owner of the Robert H. Holt Funeral Chapel in Cypress-Fairbanks. His company was one of the first to provide mortuary service for funeral homes. He was a skilled embalmer and reconstructive artist. His services were directed by Cypress Fairbanks Funeral Home in Houston.

Irma Allen Jones, 65, of Houston, passed away Oct. 28, 2015. She was founder and co-owner of the Christo Rey Funeral Home and Medical Center Cremation Services in Houston. She attended the Commonwealth College of Funeral Service. Her arrangements were directed by Saxet Funeral Home in Corpus Christi.



Richard Lewis Jones, 80, of Abilene, passed away Dec. 6, 2015. He served his country in the U.S. Army. He attended the Dallas Institute-Gupton Jones College of Mortuary Science, and earned his funeral directors and embalmers license. He had a long career as a Funeral Director and was affiliated with a number of funeral homes in West Texas throughout his career, including Harrell Funeral Home in Dublin, Elliott's and later Elliott-Hamil Funeral Home in Abilene, Cate-Spencer Funeral Home in Sweetwater and Hubbard-Kelly Funeral Home in Odessa. However in later years he established Avalon Mortuary Service in Abilene of which he owned and operated for many years prior to his retirement. He was recognized by the Texas Funeral Directors Association as a 50-year Licensee. His services were directed by Hamil Family Funeral Home in Abilene.

Betty Louise Miller, 78, of Midland, passed away Oct. 6, 2015. She was the wife of Jim Miller of Ellis Funeral Home who handled her services.



James Howard Snyder, 74, of Taylor, passed away Oct. 31, 2015. He was the former Manager of Condra Funeral Home. He was a U.S. Air Force Veteran with the air frame mechanics from 1959-1963. He graduated from Dallas Institute of Mortuary Science in 1979. His services were directed by Condra Funeral Home in Taylor.



(Continued on page 17)



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Death Notices of Fellow Funeral Service Colleagues (Cont.)

TEXAS (Cont.)

(Continued from page 15)



Ernest J. Stuart, 88, of Inez, passed away on Dec. 7, 2015. He was father and father-in-law to Nancy and Robert Hairell and grandfather to Ryan and Reed Hairell. He served in the U.S. Army in WWII and Korea. His service arrangements were handled by Rosewood Funeral Chapel in Victoria.



A.A. "Dixie" Walker, Jr., 83, of Texas City, passed away November 24, 2015. He is father of Scott Walker, the manager of Emken-Linton Funeral Home in Texas City which directed the services.

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Georgia Funeral Director Wins the "Funeral Director of the Year" American Funeral Director Recognizes Gregory B. Levett Sr. with Prestigious Award

WALL, N.J. – American Funeral Director magazine recently announced that Gregory B. Levett Sr. has won its 2015 Funeral Director of the Year award.

Levett, founder and CEO of Gregory B. Levett & Sons Funeral Homes Inc. in Decatur, Georgia, was selected because of his efforts on behalf of others, as well as his success at turning his business into one of the largest independent funeral homes in his region. He's profiled in the December issue of the magazine and was on hand to receive his award at the Tenth Annual Funeral Service Business Plan Conference, which was held in Glendale, Arizona.

"I am very humbled to be recognized for the work I have done throughout my life," said Levett, who earned his funeral director's license in 1973 and opened his first funeral home in 1980 in Scottsdale, Georgia. "I am hoping with this I will inspire some young person to this career or whatever career they would choose."

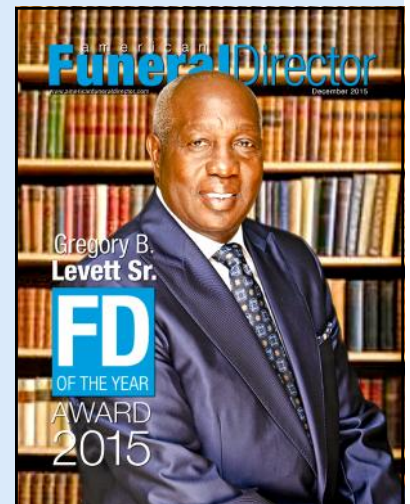
"None of this would be possible without the great staff we have," said Levett, who operates four funeral homes and a crematory and has seen three of his children follow him into funeral service.

Levett was selected from among a record-number of

nominations for this year's award, said Allison Sullivan, publisher of Kates-Boylston Publications, the company that publishes American Funeral Director, a nationwide magazine that has been helping funeral professionals succeed and serve since 1877.

"While we had many impressive entries, Mr. Levett stood out as a man who is having a positive impact on his community and his profession," Sullivan said. "His generosity, caring and commitment embody what the funeral profession is all about. We were honored to present him with this award."

Judging criteria for the award included: business successes; challenges overcome; client relations and community involvement





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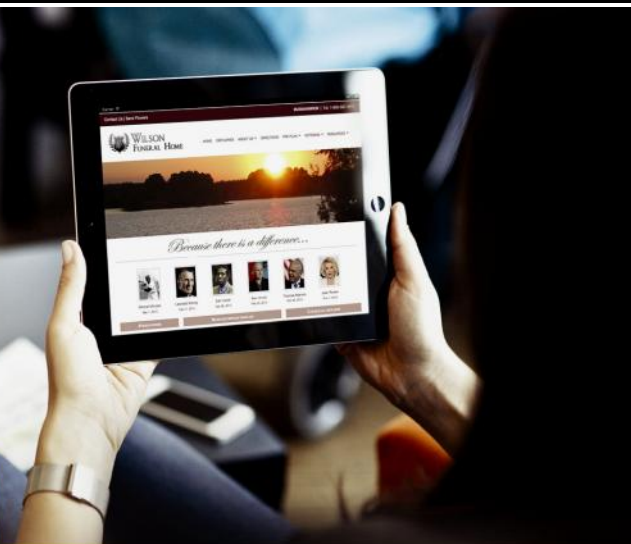
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ASD's MobileFH™ Feature Wins 2015 NFDA Innovation Award



Indianapolis, IN— On Monday, October 19, **ASD – Answering Service for Directors** was named the winner of the **National Funeral Directors Association's 2015 Innovation Award**. The company was recognized for **MobileFH™**, a patent-pending mobile app feature that allows directors to call any number from their cell phone and display their funeral home's number as the outgoing Caller ID.

Established in 2009, the NFDA Innovation Award is given annually to a funeral service vendor whose product or service was introduced during the previous year and exemplifies creativity, innovation and excellence. The award represents the pinnacle of achievement for a funeral service vendor. In fact, this is the second time ASD has received this coveted award. In 2012, ASD received the Innovation Award for their game-changing smart-phone app, **ASD Mobile**.

ASD Family-Member Owner, **Kevin Czachor**, was on stage to accept the prestigious award from NFDA Past President, **Robert Moore**, at the Opening General Session of the NFDA's International Convention & Expo. Within minutes of the announcement, ASD's social sites began to fill up with comments from funeral professionals showing their support and appreciation for this mobile tool.

"We are honored and humbled by this recognition from the NFDA and by the many funeral professionals who took the time to vote for our MobileFH™ feature," said ASD Family-Member Owner, Kevin Czachor. "It truly is an incredible honor and we would like to dedicate it to all of the hardworking funeral directors who spend so much time on-call. Knowing that we have built a solution that makes life easier for our clients is the greatest award we could receive."

MobileFH™ was developed by ASD after hearing directors describe a common problem they experienced when using their cell phones for funeral home business. Caller ID, as helpful as it is, can also cause a lot of headaches. From the risk of a missed call to the frustration of being contacted while off duty, these problems can make it difficult for funeral professionals to separate their personal and professional lives. MobileFH™ provides a new solution to this problem by allowing funeral professionals to call any number from their cell phone and display their funeral home's number as the outgoing Caller ID. The feature was

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first introduced at the 2014 NFDA Convention and in one year it has been used by funeral directors more than 75,000 times.

"Before this capability, I always knew that returning calls to customers with my cell meant I increased the likelihood of receiving business calls on my cell phone when I was off-duty or on vacation or in church. Patching the funeral home's main line into my return Caller ID means the family will continue to deal with the funeral home contact information rather than my personal contact information," said **Scott Macy**, a director at **Hultgren Funeral Home** in Wheaton, IL.

ASD is pleased that the NFDA judging panel and funeral service community recognized the value and efficiency this mobile tool delivers. The company will continue to seek innovative solutions for the profession and has several new features currently in development.

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Family

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I ran into a stranger as he passed by,
 "Oh excuse me please" was my reply.
 He said, "Please excuse me too;
 I wasn't watching for you."
 We were very polite, this stranger and I.
 We went on our way and we said good-bye.

But at home a different story is told,
 How we treat our loved ones, young and old.
 Later that day, cooking the evening meal,
 My son stood beside me very still.
 When I turned, I nearly knocked him down.

"Move out of the way," I said with a frown.
 He walked away, his little heart broken.
 I didn't realize how harshly I'd spoken.
 While I lay awake that night in my bed,
 God's still small voice came to me and said,
 "While dealing with a stranger, common courtesy you
 use, but the children you love, you seem to abuse.

Go and look on the kitchen floor,
 You'll find some flowers there by the door.
 Those are the flowers he brought for you.
 He picked them himself: pink, yellow and blue.
 He stood very quietly not to spoil the surprise.
 You never saw the tears that filled his little eyes."

By this time, I felt very small,
 And now my tears began to fall.
 I quietly went and knelt by his bed;
 "Please wake up, little one," I said.
 "Are these the flowers you picked for me?"
 He smiled, "I found 'em out by the tree.
 I picked 'em because they're pretty like you.
 I knew you'd like 'em, especially the blue."

I said, "Son, I'm very sorry for the way I acted today;
 I shouldn't have yelled at you that way."
 He said, "Oh, Mom, that's okay. I love you anyway,"
 I said, "Son, I love you too,
 and I do like the flowers, especially the blue."

Material found at jm@thinkingagain.com

How They All Began (Maybe?)

Over a Barrel

In the days before CPR a drowning victim would be placed face down over a barrel and the barrel would be rolled back and forth in an effort to empty the lungs of water. It was rarely effective. If you are over a barrel you are in deep trouble.



Barge In

Heavy freight was moved along the Mississippi in large barges pushed by steamboats. These were hard to control and would sometimes swing into piers or other boats. People would say they "barged in."

Hogwash

Steamboats carried both people and animals. Since pigs smelled so bad they would be washed before being put on board. The mud and other filth was washed off was considered useless "hog wash."

Curfew

The word "curfew" comes from the French phrase "couvre-feu," which means "cover the fire." It was used to describe the time of blowing out all lamps and candles. It was later adopted into Middle English as "curfeu," which later became the modern "curfew." In the early American colonies homes had no real fireplaces so a fire was built in the center of the room. In order to make sure a fire did not get out of control during the night it was required that, by an agreed upon time, all fires would be covered with a clay pot called a "curfew."

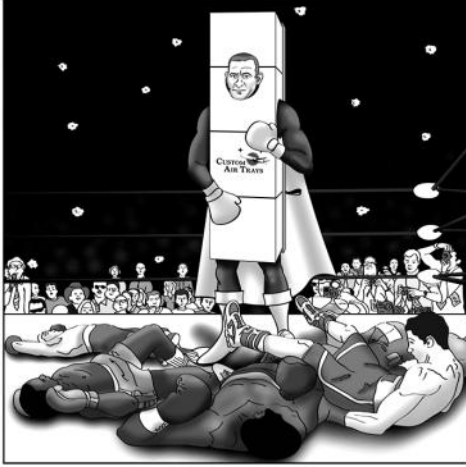


Hot off the Presses



As the paper goes through the rotary printing press friction causes it to heat up. Therefore, if you grab the paper right off the press it is hot. The expression means to get immediate information.

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The Fate of the 50-Call Funeral Home

By Richard Lee

If you are an owner of a small (100 calls or less) funeral home these days, you need to ask yourself the question – **What is the fate of my business?** The reason I pose this question is because a lot of small funeral businesses might not be viable 5, 7 or 10 years from now.

With revenues expected to decrease over time, families spending less on funerals and most operating expenses rising year over year, the profitability and viability of a small, single location funeral home could be less and less.

As an owner of a small funeral home, what should you do?

Well if you are still relatively

young and truly enjoy the business, then reaching out and buying another funeral home or two in your immediate area would be a good move for the future. By doing this and being able to utilize the same personnel spread over multiple locations, this strategy would be perfect for businesses with multiple family members who are actively involved in the day to day operations. This also allows everyone to be able to make a great income.

If you are close to retirement within the next 5 years, then seriously considering a sale soon would be your best option in order to realize the most

value. If there is a neighboring funeral home or even a competitor that would be interested in purchasing your business, this could be a great option as this should yield the best price to you as a Seller. Also, the structuring of the sale and possible tax implications should be addressed early on.

Just in the last few years, I have handled several of these types of transactions involving small funeral homes and having a business valuation performed early on by an industry expert will allow you to determine which direction may be the best for you.

I am always available for any questions and may be reached at 407-257-5024 or you may email me at Leebros@aol.com.



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.)

How To Be Creatively Inspired

By Joe Wiegel

Some Things to Ponder

Sent by Reader

Years ago, while working with the writers and designers at the ad agencies where I was employed, I learned the value of a good “swipe” file. A swipe file is simply a file folder where you put ads, articles, brochures – any marketing communication you like or think is particularly effective – and keep for use at a later time.

What would happen is that every time the agency’s creative team received a challenging assignment and become stumped, they’d sift through the swipe file to get ideas. In fact, they would even subscribe to publications that would compile and display award-winning ads – just to help build their swipe files. And they would joke that advertising is the only profession where stealing is a virtue.

Now some of you may be saying that it’s not acceptable to copy someone else’s work. However, according to Google, more than 25% of the content on the internet is duplicate content. Therefore, I prefer to think that the file merely serves as “creative inspiration”. (In fact, a recent article I read inspired the topic of this article!)

To this day, I continue to use a couple of swipe files. One is for advertising concepts and the second is for articles. If your funeral home publishes a newsletter or has a website with a blog, a swipe file of article ideas can help you make sure that you have a steady stream of content.

Anytime you read something that might interest your families, cut it out and toss it in your swipe file. Perhaps it’s a magazine article from The Dead Beat, maybe a story from a newspaper, maybe just an interesting fact – it doesn’t really matter. You can even put sticky notes with article ideas to remind you why you decided to keep it.

Once you’re ready to work on the next issue or blog post, scan through your swipe file, and you may be surprised how many good story ideas come to mind. A swipe file is also handy when you have a gap to fill and aren’t sure what to use. If you get good enough at it, you’ll never want for a story idea again!



Joe Weigel 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 weigel-strategicmarketing.webs.com.

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

- ♦ How important does a person have to be before they are considered assassinated instead of just murdered?
- ♦ Once you’re in heaven, do you get stuck wearing the clothes you were buried in for eternity?
- ♦ Why does a round pizza come in a square box?
- ♦ What disease did cured ham actually have?
- ♦ How is it that we put man on the moon before we figured out it would be a good idea to put wheels on luggage?
- ♦ Why is it that people say the ‘slept like a baby’ when babies wake up every two hours?
- ♦ Why are you IN a movie, but you’re ON TV?
- ♦ Why do people pay to go up tall buildings and then put money in binoculars to look at things on the ground?
- ♦ Why is ‘bra’ singular and ‘panties’ plural?
- ♦ Why do doctors leave the room while you change?
- ♦ Why do toasters always have a setting that burns the toast to a horrible crisp, which no decent human being would eat?
- ♦ If Jimmy cracks corn and no one cares, why is there a stupid song about him?
- ♦ Why does Goofy stand erect while Pluto remains on all fours? They’re both dogs!
- ♦ If corn oil is made from corn, and vegetable oil is made from vegetables, what is baby oil made from?
- ♦ Do the Alphabet song and Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star have the same tune?
- ♦ Why did you just try singing the two songs above?
- ♦ Did you ever notice that when you blow in a dog’s face, he gets made at you, but when you take him for a car ride, he sticks his head out the window?
- ♦ Why, why, why do we press harder on a remote control when we know the batteries are going dead?
- ♦ Why do banks charge a fee on “insufficient funds” when they know there is not enough money?
- ♦ Why does someone believe you when you say there are four billion stars, but check when you say the paint is wet?
- ♦ Why do they use sterilized needles for death by lethal injection?
- ♦ Why doesn’t Tarzan have a beard?
- ♦ Why does Superman stop bullets with his chest, but ducks when you throw a revolver at him?
- ♦ If people evolved from apes why are there still apes?

Instructions for Life

1. Take into account that great love and great achievements involve risk.
2. When you lose, don't lose the lesson.
3. Follow the three R's:
 Respect for self
 Respect for others
 Responsibility for all your actions.
4. Remember that not getting what you want is sometimes a wonderful stroke of luck.
5. Learn the rules so you know how to break them properly.
6. Don't let a little dispute injure a great friendship.
7. When you realize you've made a mistake, take immediate steps to correct it.
8. Spend some time alone every day.
9. Open your arms to change, but don't let go of your values.
10. Remember that silence is sometimes the best answer.
11. Live a good, honorable life. Then when you get older and think back, you'll be able to enjoy it a second time.
12. A loving atmosphere in your home is the foundation for your life.
13. In disagreements with loved ones, deal only with the current situation. Don't bring up the past.
14. Share your knowledge. It's a way to achieve immortality.
15. Be gentle with the earth.
16. Once a year, go someplace you've never been before.
17. Remember that the best relationship is one in which your love for each other exceeds your need for each other.
18. Judge your success by what you had to give up, in order to get it.
19. Approach love and cooking with reckless abandon.

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Handbook Delivers Proven Tips to Manage, Develop Staff Just Released: "The Funeral Director's Guide to Human Resources"

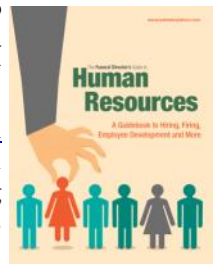
The single largest cost of operating a funeral home is almost always how you manage your work force.

But many funeral home owners and managers continue to make the same mistakes when it comes to hiring, firing and developing employees. As a result, costs are usually higher than they should be, and turnover can be rampant.

"[The Funeral Director's Guide to Human Resources](#)" — the latest in Kates-Boylston Publications' series of business-boosting guidebooks — helps you solve those problems and many more. Learn how to:

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The Dead Beat -The Caregivers Soapbox

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(Cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

funeral home locations and partnering fire departments/EMS. It is comprised of a write-on /wipe-off magnetic memo board that can be affixed to all refrigerator surfaces. The useful boards have a Monday through Sunday planner, shopping list, note area, and an important phone numbers section. A wet erase marker with mounting clip accompanies the board, which should be placed on the front of the refrigerator door. What makes the Vitalboards Initiative unique is that, on the reverse side of each board, there is room for each resident to record critical health information.

This Vital Information includes questions taken from surveyed EMS, fire, police and ER staff which represent a portion of the required documentation needed in the event of a medical emergency. This "Need to Know" information could help save a life if the resident is unable to speak or is otherwise incapacitated. Home owners are instructed to fill out this information as accurately and legibly as possible. A small weatherproof EMS Sticker is also included, which should be affixed on or near the front door of each residence,

In the event of an emergency at a residence, first responders can identify the location of the Vitalboard on display, to retrieve the homeowner's vital information. These board could easily be taken in the ambulance to the hospital, where ER Staff can further access this critical information. Remember, time is of the essence to assist saving lives.

Mr. Jeff Stygar first learned about the Vital ICE app and Vitalboards through an EMS National publication called "EMS World" Magazine. The International Association hosts an annual EMS World Expo. A thousand suppliers annually converge on the trade show, to be considered for the highly sought after EMS World EXPO Innovation Award. Vitalboards grabbed Jeff's attention since they won the 2014/2015 esteemed honor. Mr. Stygar made the appropriate calls to Vitalboards and his area's first responders, to get the program implemented.

To learn more how your (MFDA) (OGR) (NFDA) Funeral Home can exclusively partner with your local first responders in saving lives, contact Vitalboards/Memorial Service Mktg at 1-573-483-3109 or by e-mailing them through www.vitalboards.com

"Dear Counselor...." By Bill Stalter

Dear Counselor,

While at the NFDA National Convention, I heard discussions about guaranteed contracts and price protection programs. What are price protection programs?

For several years now, some preneed insurance companies have been recommending that their client funeral homes discontinue offering guaranteed price contracts. And if the funeral home felt they could not discontinue guaranteed prices, then the insurance companies recommended they charge extra for 'price protection'. Within the past few years, at least two insurance companies developed a program for those funeral homes that would charge a price protection fee. Some of these issues were addressed in the January 2014 edition of the American Funeral Director ("All About the Value"). Essentially, the insurance companies add a percentage to the price of the funeral arrangement. That percentage typically runs between 8% and 18%. The amount charged for the price protection fee was intended to offset any disparity between the investment return from the insurance policy (typically around 2%) and the performance cost increases to the funeral home. If the preneed consumer declined the price protection fee, then the funeral home would sell the consumer a non-guaranteed contract. With the non-guaranteed contract, the price of the arrangement would be determined at the time of the beneficiary's death. While NFDA studies suggest that performance cost increases have been more than 4%, that number can vary substantially from funeral home to 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



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.

A Great Little Story

A story sent September, 2000,
yet relevant today.

As we know we see discrimination in some form or another almost everyday, and often times it leaves a bad taste in our mouths. The following story shows us the side of diversity that we are all working for. It is a pleasant twist to see that there are companies and individuals who face discrimination head on, if only one small step at a time. Enjoy reading the positive side of diversity — applaud British Airways for their action in this situation.

On a British Airways flight from Johannesburg, a middle-aged, well-off, white South African lady has found herself sitting next to a black man. She called the cabin crew attendant over to complain about her seating. "What seems to be the problem, Madam?" asked the attendant.

"Can't you see?" she said. "You seated me next to a Kaffir. I can't possibly sit next to this disgusting human. Find me another seat!"

"Please calm down, Madam," the stewardess replied. "The flight is very full today, but I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll go check to see if we have any seats available in club or first class."

The woman cocks a snooty look at the outraged black man beside her (not to mention many of the surrounding passengers).

A few minutes later the stewardess returns with the good news, which she delivers to the lady, who cannot help but look at the people around her with a smug and self-satisfied grin.

"Madam, unfortunately, as I suspected, economy is full. I've spoken to the cabin services director, and club is also full. However, we do have one seat in first class." Before the lady had a chance to answer, the stewardess continued, "It is most extraordinary to make this kind of upgrade, however, and I have had to get special permission from the captain. But, given the circumstances, the captain felt that it was outrageous that someone be forced to sit next to such an obnoxious person. With which, she turned to the black man sitting next to the woman, and said, "If you'd like to get your things, sir, I have your seat ready for you."

At which point, apparently the surrounding passengers stood and gave a standing ovation while the black man walked up to the front of the plane.

People will forget what you said. People will forget what you did. But people will never forget how you made them feel.



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Another Chuckle

Mildred was a 93-year-old woman who was particularly despondent over the recent death of her husband, Earl. She decided to kill herself and join him in death. Thinking that it would be best to get it over with quickly, she took out Earl's old army pistol and made the decision to shoot herself in the heart, since it was so badly broken in the first place. Not wanting to miss this vital organ and become a vegetable and a burden to someone, she called her doctor's office to inquire just exactly where the heart would be. "On a woman," the doctor said, "your heart would be just below your left breast." Later that night, Mildred was admitted to the hospital with a bullet wound to her left knee.



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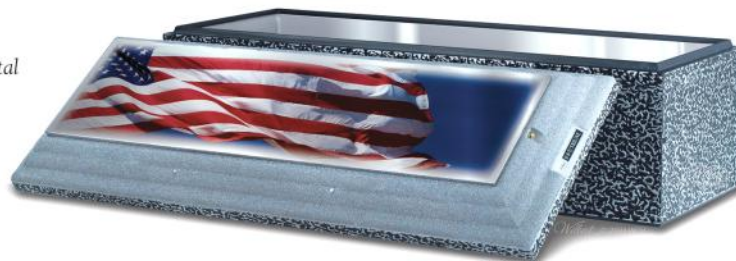
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