

The Dead Beat



The Caregiver's Soapbox

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



Volume 16

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Issue 3

'Requiem For The Bike'

By Alice Adams

Remember your first bike?

In my neighborhood, two-wheeled replacements for our trikes symbolized the completion of an important rite of passage. You could ride with "the pack," the older neighbor kids, and your world suddenly expanded from a block-long sidewalk to the six blocks to school, the park, the little mom-and-pop store about a mile away...and freedom!

My inaugural bike was my cousin's, refurbished with fenders from which dents had been hammered smooth, new tires, basket, horn and a big red bow. I was ecstatic! This little blue dream would be a constant companion until I outgrew it, as my cousin had done.

As I got older (with a bigger bike), I rode with my friends to school, tried my luck at a nearby chigger-ridden, hilly bike trail, pedaled to Girl Scout meetings and music lessons. While pregnant with my second son, I rode a tandem with my husband, and still later (in my 40s) I purchased a road bike and tried my stamina at organized bike rides with the local bicycle club.

As a club member, I managed to finish rides from Houston to Galveston, night rides through downtown and longer weekend treks through the suburbs as well as a couple of grueling century rides. Finally, one April, I courageously joined our office team for the MS 150, a two-day ride that -- for the record -- actually registered 170 miles on my odometer.

Then I married a triathlete...and if you're a triathlete --or know one, you may already understand: the bike, usually the second event in this swim-bike-run triad, is as much about the equipment as it is about the athlete.



To support "my triathlete," I trained with him and became certified as a Triathlon USA official as my default (since I never would have made it through even one leg of this physically-demanding three-sport event).

But I digress.

Attending countless triathlons, officiating many races and living with a triathlete for almost three decades, I was privy to yet another little-known lesson: the bike is an all-important part of a triathlon's pre-race rituals.

Before daylight on any given Saturday, entrants began arriving at the race site, unloading and setting up their gear. As a time-honored part of this ritual, officials mark the athlete's left arm and left leg to match their race number (to be easily identified if they happen to drown, crash or collapse on the run course.)

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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

Joanne's Outside Art



Joanne's attempt at painting flowers around her mini-flower garden around the well.

Outside Vault Display



Our back entry shows vault alternatives to customers as they enter. Something to consider.



Mortuary Muse

By Lowell

On the O-T-H-E-R hand....

Readers of this column may have noticed that I have been slightly vexed at the continuing reports of Hospice workers shopping for or paying for Direct Cremations without services. On the other hand—when you are trying to stay in business in a declining demographic—why complain if some entity is willing to assume the responsibility of an unprofitable service. In your heart you may feel bad that you have not provided a family with your compassionate care, but sometimes there are no good choices. The so-called advertised price of direct cremation is less than your non-declinable charge. Your local governments, city and county may have little or no disposition funding. Crowd funding is not usually a viable option in these cases either. It is a bitter pill to swallow. If it will make you feel any better you could offer a free or modest priced reception. The recent FTC GPL download says Direct Cremation prices should include your non-declinable charge—does yours?

I have no idea of the scope of the above described

events. But when studies reported by news outlets indicate that many families earning \$50,000 –65,000 per year have trouble writing a check for \$500, you can be certain the offer of a low budget disposition will be attractive.

If misery loves company, it appears the entire rural demographic in the Great Plains must be in the same boat. Recently NPR's Market Place program was in northeast Colorado. They were interviewing a farm family and some citizens of the nearby town with a population of 982.

As the reporter rode in the cab of the huge tractor, he was fascinated by the image on the computer screen. It displayed the field they were in, how much had been sprayed and where they were now traveling. The farmer explained that he and his son were farming 7,000 acres. He wished he could make it like his father had when they farmed 80 acres.

(Continued on page 5)

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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Behind the Back Fence

By Lowell

Recently we had a pleasant phone conversation with Patty at Grimes Funeral Chapels in Bandero, TX, west of San Antonio. We discussed the occasionally still used old custom of turning on the funeral home porch light when a client was ready for public viewing. She had commented that they don't teach that at mortuary school anymore.



It will not be long before everyone can forget about the porch light. Because soon A signal from your phone app will alert you to the lifetime celebration video of some person in your memory cloud is now streaming on U-Tube. So you can then send condolences to Facebook and send memorial gifts without ever leaving your chair. All of this takes place while your deceased friend's earthly remains lie in a cooler awaiting its turn. So who needs the porch light.



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

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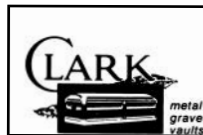
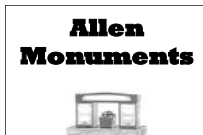
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Mortuary Muse (Cont.)

(Continued from page 3)

His father came there in the mid-1940's. He told how the Main Street was full of parked cars and the town had barbers and many stores. The superintendent of the school said that when she moved there in 1984 there were three dress shops. Now there are none. "There is a Wal-Mart 30 miles away where people can go—and they do." The report said there were a few businesses that supported the farm industry.

The description of this community was so similar to our community, probably 800 miles to the southeast, that we wondered if they still had a funeral home? A quick check in the "Nomis Yellow Book Directory" and we had a name and number. It was disappointing when a recording said the number was no longer in service. Well, I had checked the 2016 directory. The 2017 edition had a new name and slightly different number—but the results were the same.

Joanne came up with a grocery store in the town and we asked the lady what happened and where they go for funeral services. The store manager said the funeral home sold and the new owners operated a short time and then closed it. She said the locals call a funeral home in a town 17 miles away.

The firm now serving that community is in a town of 3,500. The wife/partner we spoke with said they had looked at the property, but it was not acceptable. She said that the last owner had just let the property go back to the former owner.

I am at a loss for any concluding remarks that would make any sense at all. Perhaps someone can tell us about life in the city??????? Or how are funeral homes surviving in the small rural communities?????

Things Not to Say to a Cop

1. I can't reach my license unless you hold my beer.
2. Sorry, officer, I didn't realize my radar detector wasn't plugged in.
3. Aren't you the guy from the Village People?
4. Hey, you must've been going about 125 mph to keep up with me. Good job!
5. Are you Andy or Barney?
6. I thought you had to be in relatively good physical condition to be a police officer.
7. You're not going to check the trunk, are you?
8. I pay your salary!
9. Gee, officer! That's terrific. The last officer only gave me a warning, too!
10. Do you know why you pulled me over? Okay, just so one of us does.
11. I was trying to keep up with traffic. Yes, I know there are no other cars around. That's how far ahead of me they are.
12. When the officer says, "Gee son...Your eyes look red, have you been drinking?" You probably should not respond with, "Gee officer you eyes look glazed, have you been eating donuts."

After-Thoughts *By Joanne Howard*

As usual, getting inspiration has been challenging this issue. I had many tidbits that crossed my mind to talk about, but putting in some sense of order has been the problem.

I was going through my address list on my phone because I think the phone is on it's last legs and wanted to make sure I didn't lose any contacts. While going through the list I was deleting those the I didn't need anymore. Some of these deletions were sort of sad to delete. I was needing them no longer because the person had died.

It reminded me of another thing that you have to remove after someone dies. I tried to remember what I did with my daughter's phone number and then I remembered I used her phone until I got another one.

Soon after I had deleted a particular phone number, I saw on Facebook people wishing that same person "Happy Birthday!" He had just recently passed, but people were still remembering him and it was another sad moment. I was glad people were remembering him, but really wished he had still been around to receive those wishes.

In our technological world, what other things are we dealing with when a person passes? You hear about people dying and those remaining not having passwords to get into online accounts. Exactly how do you easily find a way around that.

Just as things still show up in the mail after a person has passed away, so do the e-mails. I remember after my oldest daughter died, people still wrote to her on her e-mail account. I was lucky because I actually knew her password, but after time and all the changes that happen in the electronic world, I don't know how to get

to it now. Just as well, since she doesn't need it anymore. But do people actually close accounts down after a person dies? I truly don't know.

Now I'm sure if some hacker could figure out how to use some information in dead people's e-mails, they would try to use it. My understanding of the cloud is limited, but I'm sure things are hanging out there that you can't remove. I guess I'm getting old and things are getting a bit too complicated for me.

I think after I'm gone, I'd prefer that all my personal things online be gone too. But considering how things seem to never be deleted, who really knows where your past actions are on the worldwide net.

I wonder if this is something else to warn people about when you are doing arrangements. Maybe we need to make sure what happens to our loved ones online life.

I love to watch Hallmark movies mostly for the happy endings. I just get a good feeling and a smile on my face.

Today at the end I looked up and saw my girls' pictures on the wall and thought they probably never experienced that special love between a guy and girl that is called romance.

Sometimes the happy ending goes on for many years. Yes, there's many ups and downs, but also a lot of happiness.

With the girls' early departures from this life, I hope the afterlife has wonderful moments too. In the relation to religion; I'm thinking romance isn't high on the list of things that will make you happy. I'm not sure where in the Bible, but Jesus talks about the wife of many husbands and asked which will be her husband in Heaven. I'm paraphrasing but the essence was you

won't need a mate in Heaven or marriage. So I'm assuming from that, there is no need for romance. Truly that makes me sad. But who knows what other wonderful things are there.

In my meager human mind and heart I still feel sad that my girls never met that man who would fulfill their dreams in some way. But I have to remind myself of the essence of love, God, who is who they are with and that's probably more satisfying than any romance here.

So why do I feel like they missed something I have experienced when they've had something more wonderful/

Conclusion is I need to forget the wonderful earthly pleasures and keep my hope centered on future heavenly pleasures, romance (love) with the ultimate love, God.

LOVE



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

“Why Didn’t Anyone Cry at Grandma’s Memorial Service?”

Blog on

Joseph J. Earthman Generations Houston, TX
Website

I recently chatted with a friend who’d just returned from her grandmother’s memorial service in California. My friend’s “Grandma” sounded as if she was straight out of a Norman Rockwell painting: a sweet old lady, kind-hearted, always ready with a hug or a wise piece of advice. Grandma had been in great health at Christmas a few months back, but took a fall about two weeks after, and died not too long after that. It was that quick. Her two children (one of them being my friend’s mom), figuring it would be inconvenient for the extended family to gather immediately, decided to cremate Grandma as soon as possible and hold a memorial service a few weeks later.

This is not an uncommon set of circumstances. Grandma was quite elderly, and although they all knew her time was coming, the sudden end was still unexpected. No one, other than the very few family members still living in California, had a chance to say goodbye. My friend flew back home for the memorial service hoping for that opportunity—to share one final goodbye with her grandmother whom she loved dearly. But, that hope went unfulfilled. While she couldn’t quite put her finger on it, being at the memorial service, staring at an eight-by-ten photo and a small box, her Grandma’s death just didn’t feel real to her. Something was amiss. Then it hit her. Grandma wasn’t there.

People don’t always understand it until they’ve experience it for themselves, but there is a tangible difference between a funeral and a memorial service, other than the fact that the deceased is physically at one and not the other. Between the two services, the tone is different. The conversations are different. The way people behave is different. When the deceased is physically there, people tend to speak more quietly, there is a feeling of respect and reverence, and frequently, a profound sadness. There are always, always, more tears at a funeral. At the same time, there is always a heightened sense of community and togetherness. Saying goodbye is sad, and difficult, but it truly is the first step in the healing process



NFDA Cremation and Burial Report Shows Rate of Cremation at All-time High (Increase in Cremation Impacts the Way Families Honor the Lives of Their Loved Ones)

Brookfield, Wis. (July 18, 2017) - The rate of cremation in the United States is at an all-time high and surpassed the rate of burial for the second year in a row according to the National Funeral Directors Association's (NFDA) 2017 Cremation and Burial Report. The annual report found that 50.2 percent of Americans chose cremation in 2016, up from 48.5 percent in 2015, while 43.5 percent of Americans opted for burial, down from 45.4 percent in 2015.

NFDA expects the trend shifting from burial toward cremation to continue over the next 20 years, with the projected rate of cremation reaching 78.8 percent of deaths by 2035. Over the next eight years, cremation rates will likely exceed 50 percent in 44 states, up from just 16 states in 2010. Simultaneously, the rate of burial is expected to decline from 45.2 percent in 2015 to 30.3 percent over the next eight years.

In response to this changing consumer preference, many funeral homes have opened crematories to meet the demands of Americans. Today, almost 30 percent of funeral homes in the U.S. operate their own crematories and another 9.4 percent intend to open a crematory within the next five years.

"The rate of cremation is projected to continue to rise as more Americans choose cremation," says NFDA President W. Ashley Cozine, MBA, CFSP, CPC, CCO. "This shift has prompted many funeral homes to expand their service offerings to meet the emerging needs of consumers who prefer cremation."

Many consumers are still unaware of the full spectrum of choices available for end-of-life services. In 2015, 32 percent of people who were cremated had no funeral or memorial service; 37 percent had a memorial service; and 31 percent had a full funeral including viewing.

However, many consumers are not aware that cremation can be accompanied by a memorial service or viewing. Less than half of Americans associate cremation with a memorial service, and just 11.8 percent associate cremation with a funeral that includes a viewing. Over half of Americans (52.2 percent) are not aware that, as part of a funeral with cremation, they can view a body that has been prepared but is not embalmed.

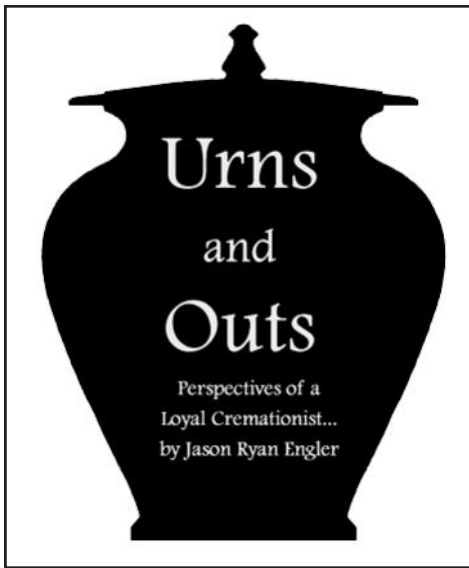
"Our role as a funeral director is to help make sure families understand all of the available options and commemorate the life of their loved one in a meaningful way regardless of whether they choose burial or cremation," said Cozine.

Trends Impacting Rate of Cremation Vs. Burial

Several factors contribute to the changing rate of cremation and burial in the U.S., including:

- * Religion: Non-religious Americans are the most likely to consider cremation for family and friends (23 percent in 2015). In fact, since 2012, the percent of Americans who feel it is very important to have religion as part of a funeral has

(Continued on page 21)



I recently had the privilege to speak at a Funeral Directors Association convention in Maryland. Typically when I make presentations to various cremation, funeral, and cemetery associations, I have a cordial response. An hour of facts regarding the history of cremation can perhaps come across as a bit dull even though I find the story of cremation and its history and growth in the US quite fascinating.

Following this particular presentation, I received some of the sweetest compliments from a few of the attendees. They explained the fact that they have heard the instructional presentations from some of the greatest minds in the industry; they've received training on presenting cremation and it's options to the families they serve; they have been warned repeatedly about the despair of the litigious aspects of being sued as a

result of cremation; but they told me something about my presentation that they said they had never experienced before. They said that after my presentation they didn't feel the despair of fearing cremation; rather, they felt inspired.

If you have read my column then you know of my penchant for regularly quoting the *Lord of the Rings*. In a particular part of the story when the fate of the One Ring is being discussed, the plan to overcome the power of the ring comes to light and others rebuke Gandalf calling the idea despair and folly. Gandalf, in his wisdom, replies, "It is not despair, for despair is only for those who see the end beyond all doubt. We do not. It is wisdom to recognize necessity, when all other courses have been weighed..."

Have you seen the latest reports from the Cremation Association of North America? The preliminary numbers for 2016 show a rate of 50.6% of Americans choosing cremation. Wisdom shows us that cremation is not a fad, in fact it is now the predominant method of disposition in our country. "It is wisdom to recognize necessity, when all other courses have been weighed."

Think back to the reason you entered the deathcare profession. There must have been something along the way that inspired you to pursue funeral service. Shouldn't there be something that can inspire

you about cremation? I am easily inspired by cremation (no surprise there); whether it be the strength and encouragement of the early cremationists, the beauty and form of the cremation urn, the magnificence of the urn memorials in beautiful columbaria across the country, the purifying power of the flame, the multitudinous options we are able to present to families choosing cremation, the freedom of families to elaborate and expand their celebration ceremonies. These are all causes of inspiration for me.

Cremation is not a cause for despair. It is cause for inspiration. Cremation is on a course to your firm. But it isn't a crash course – it is an opportunity for you to be inspired again and again to care for your families. Be inspired!

That's my perspective...



Jason Ryan Engler is a licensed funeral director and certified celebrant. He is The Cremation Historian for the Cremation Association of North America and the National Museum of Funeral History and a frequent speaker and writer on the subject of cremation in the US, urns, and their history. He is the cremation products buyer for Service Corporation International and lives in Houston, Texas, with his miniature dachshund, Otto.

Take Time—Unknown Author

Take time to work -
It is the price of success.

Take time to think -
It is the source of power.

Take time to play -
It is the secret of perpetual youth.

Take time to read -
It is the foundation of wisdom.

Take time to be friendly -
It is the road to happiness.

Take time to dream -
It is hitching your wagon to a star.

Take time to love and be loved -
It is a God-given privilege.

Take time to look around -
The day is too short to be selfish.

Take time to laugh -
It is the music of the soul.

Growing in Grief

By Ken Doka

When we are in midst of grief, the very idea that we can grow through this experience seems so objectionable. After all, who would want to grow at such a cost? It almost seems like someone is insensitively telling us to look for the silver lining.

Yet the truth is we can grow. We have no choice about loss. We have no choice about the grief that ensues. However, we do have one choice *within* our grief. Things will never be the same. We will never be the same. The choice we have is not whether we will change—but how we change. We can choose to grow up or grow down.

Two psychologists, Richard Tedeschi and Larry Calhoun, have written about what they call “posttraumatic growth.” They recognize that loss challenges our assumptions about the world. If we are to reconstruct our world, or survive, we need to re-examine both how we look at the world and how we function within that new world. From that reassessment comes growth.

This growth can be experienced in a number of ways. We can emerge with a greater appreciation of life. Realizing how fleeting life can be, we can have an increased appreciation for the relationships we have. Our priorities may change. We realize that no one dying ever thought that they should have spent more time at work or on the internet.

Our spirituality may deepen as we struggle with our faith. We many emerge with a spirituality more complex than we once had. We may recognize that we are stronger than we thought—after all, we survived this loss. We may find

we have new skills, talents that have to be honed as we struggled to survive in a new reality.

We begin by acknowledging that we need to change—to grow—as we cope with this loss. It sometimes helps to reflect on these changes—to recognize and even appreciate the growths we have experienced. I begin each new grief group by asking individuals how they have changed since we last met.

We may need to empower ourselves. Our very language can help here. We can reflect that we have choices even as we cope with loss. We can look at our issues as challenges we have to surmount rather than problems that perplex us.

We can build on our strengths and reflect on our previous losses and prior life crises. What helped us get through those crises? Whatever helped us before, we can now use. Sometimes though, we have to re-frame those strengths. For example, Karen, a surviving spouse, told me that her husband’s support helped her deal with the loss of her parents but now he had died. As we spoke she recognized the value of support as a way that she coped with loss. Since she could not find it from her husband, she could receive it with a support group.

Growth may be a poor compensation for loss—yet it is the only way we can survive.

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



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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*)

Chuckles

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

A couple had been married for a few years when the husband started abusing his wife. The wife was nervous and felt vulnerable whenever her husband was around, so she decided to buy herself a guard dog to protect her from her husband. When she arrived at the pet store she said, "Hello, my husband and I are having a rough time in our marriage and I would like a guard dog to protect me." The clerk said, "I think I know just what you need, this is a Chomp-Bird; he is better than a dog." The clerk indicated a gray parrot over his shoulder. "What does it do?" asked the woman. "Let me show you," said the clerk opening the cage. "Chomp-Bird, my desk." There was a flutter of wings, the sound of chainsaws and then the desk was nothing but a pile of saw dust. "Can I try?" asked the woman. "Sure." said the clerk, "just remember to speak clearly." "Chomp-Bird, that chair," said the woman pointing. There was a flutter of wings, the sound of chainsaws and then the chair was nothing but a pile of saw dust. "I'll take it," said the woman. She took the Chomp-Bird home and when her husband came home later that evening, the wife showed him the Chomp-Bird. "Now don't you start abusing me again or I'll set my Chomp-Bird on you." said the wife. "Chomp-Bird?" The husband replied. "My a##!"



A ten-year old, under the tutelage of her grandmother, was becoming quite knowledgeable about the Bible. Then, one day, she floored her grandmother by asking, "Which Virgin was the mother of Jesus? The virgin Mary or the King James Virgin?"



I once heard the story of a pastor who was preaching the truth that no one is perfect. To prove his point he asked for anyone who was perfect to stand up. One man stood up in the middle of the congregation. The pastor asked, "Do you really think you are perfect?" The man replied, "Oh no, I'm not perfect. I'm standing up on behalf of my wife's first husband."

A Jewish rabbi and a Catholic priest were good friends. At a picnic one day, the priest was eating a ham sandwich. "You know," he said to his friend, "this ham sandwich is delicious. I know you're not supposed to eat ham, but I don't understand why such a good thing would be forbidden. When will you break down and try it?" To which the rabbi replied, "At your wedding."



No Warning

Comments

Dear Editor,

I think the fine line was crossed on the Retiree Mail Man Chuckle in your latest issue. I look forward to your issue every month and even contributed a Chuckle you used some years ago.

Respectfully submitted

Dennis Jeter, Jeter & Son Funeral Home, Dallas, TX

....he (late Tommy Jo Cunningham) really loved reading the dead-beat.

Renee Cunningham (wife of Tommy Jo)

Feel free to share comments and thoughts to the editor at editor@thedead-beat.com or mail to The Dead Beat, PO Box 145, Golden City, MO 64748.

Chuckles (Cont.)

With no warning and clear out of the blue, a husband said to his wife, "Honey, I have invited a friend home for supper tonight." His wife replied, "What? Are you crazy? The house is a mess, I didn't have time to go shopping, all the dishes are dirty, and I don't feel like cooking a fancy meal tonight!" The husband said, "I know all that." "Then why in the world did you invite your friend for supper tonight?" asked the wife. The guy answered, "Because the poor fool is thinking about getting married."

The Lumberyard

Jon's working at the lumberyard, pushing a tree through the buzz saw, and accidentally shears off all ten of his fingers. He goes to the emergency room. The doctor says, "Yuck! Well, give me the fingers, and I'll see what I can do." Jon says, "I haven't got the fingers." The doctor says, "What do you mean, you haven't got the fingers? It's 2015. We've got microsurgery and all kinds of incredible techniques. I could have put them back on and made you like new. Why didn't you bring the fingers?" Jon says, "Well, doc, I couldn't pick 'em up."

The Sign

A boss was complaining in a staff meeting the other day that he wasn't getting any respect. Later that morning he went to a local sign shop and bought a small sign that read, "I'm the Boss." He then taped it to his office door. Later that day when he returned from lunch, he found that someone had taped a note to the sign that said, "Your wife called, she wants her sign back!"



(Continued on page 11)

Chuckles (Cont.)

Adam was hanging around the Garden of Eden feeling very lonely. So, God asked him, "What's wrong with you?" Adam said he didn't have anyone to talk to. God said that He was going to make Adam a companion and that it would be a woman. He said, "This pretty lady will gather food for you, she will cook for you, and when you discover clothing, she will wash it for you. She will always agree with every decision you make and she will not nag you. And will always be the first to admit she was wrong when you've had a disagreement. She will praise you! She will bear your children. And never ask you to get up in the middle of the night to take care of them. She will NEVER have a headache and will freely give you love whenever you need it." Adam asked God, "What will a woman like this cost?" God replied, "An arm and a leg." Then Adam asked, "What can I get for a rib?"

Squirrels vs. Places of Worship

(sent by reader)

The Presbyterian church called a meeting to decide what to do about their squirrels. After much prayer and consideration, they concluded the squirrels were predestined to be there and they shouldn't interfere with God's divine will.

At the Baptist church the squirrels had taken an interest in the baptistery. The deacons met and decided to put a water slide on the baptistery and let the squirrels drown themselves. The squirrels liked the slide and, unfortunately, knew instinctively how to swim so twice as many squirrels showed up the following week.

The Methodist church decided that they were not in a position to harm any of God's creatures. So, they humanely trapped their squirrels and set them free near the Baptist Church. Two weeks later the squirrels were back when the Baptists took down the water slide.

But the Catholic Church came up with a very creative strategy. They baptized all the squirrels and consecrated them as members of the church. Now they only see them on Christmas and Easter.

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Not much was heard from the Jewish synagogue; they took the first squirrel and circumcised him. They haven't seen a squirrel since.

Presidential Quotes

- * "My fellow Americans, I've signed legislation that will outlaw Russia forever. We begin bombing in five minutes." - Ronald Reagan, about to go on the air for a radio broadcast, unaware that the microphone was already on.
- * "I want to make sure everybody who has a job wants a job" - George Bush, during his first Presidential campaign.
- * "This is a great day for France!" - Richard Nixon, while attending Charles DeGaulle's funeral.
- * "Now, like, I'm President. It would be pretty hard for some drug guy to come into the White House and start offering it up, you know? ...I bet if they did, I hope I would say, 'Hey, get lost. We don't want any of that.'" - George Bush, talking about drug abuse to a group of students.
- * "For seven and a half years I've worked alongside President Reagan. We've had triumphs. Made some mistakes. We've had some sex...uh..setbacks." George Bush.
- * "The caribou love it. They rub against it and they have babies. There are more caribou in Alaska than you can shake a stick at." ... George Bush, on the Alaska pipeline.
- * "If I listened to Michael Dukakis long enough I would be convinced that we're in an economic downturn and people are homeless and going without food and medical attention and that we've got to do something about the unemployed." - Ronald Reagan.
- * "I believe we are on an irreversible trend toward more freedom and democracy. But that could change." - Dan Quayle
- * "What a waste it is to lose one's mind—or not to have a mind. How true that is." - Dan Quayle, addressing the United Negro College Fund.

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Death Notices of Fellow Funeral Service Colleagues



KANSAS



Richard Shove, 93, of Holton died on July 18, 2017. He served for a few months in the United States Navy during World War II. He later graduated with honors from College of Mortuary Science at St. Louis in 1946. After he was licensed as a funeral director and embalmer, he started his career at Tessendorf Funeral Home in Onaga, Steward Funeral Home in Wamego and worked for over 60 years with Mercer Funeral Home in Holton. He served as President of Kansas State Board of Mortuary Arts in 1971. Mercer Funeral Home handled his services.

MISSOURI



Charles Lawrence Arnold, Jr., 74, of Lewistown passed away June 20, 2017. He graduated from Commonwealth College of Funeral Services in Houston, Texas in 1963. He has been a licensed funeral director and embalmer in Missouri since 1965 and Illinois since 1985. He owned and operated Arnold's Funeral Homes in Canton and Lewistown, Missouri. He also owned and operated Arnold's Paint and Glass for many years. He was past president and director of the Northeast Missouri Funeral Directors Association and a past board member of the Missouri Funeral Directors Association. His services were under the direction of Arnolds Funeral Homes.



Kathleen Stapleton-Gorman, 88, of Holt's Summit, MO, died July 25, 2017. She was the mother-in-law to MFDEA's office manager Cindy Gorman. Her services were handled by Saul Colonial Funeral Home, Hamilton Square, NJ.



Gene Ward, 90, of Marble Hill, passed away July 27, 2017. He served in the U.S. Army during WWII where he served in Germany. He was a retired funeral director who founded and operated Ward Funeral Home and Bollinger County Memorial Park from 1953 to 1979 until he sold it to the Liley Family. He served several terms as Bollinger County Coroner. His services were directed by Liley Funeral Homes



OKLAHOMA



James Hardy "Jim" Epperson, 76, of Coalgate, died July 19, 2017. He graduated from the Dallas Institute of Funeral Service. In 1972, he purchased the Slater Funeral Home which became Jim Epperson Funeral Service. He owned and operated the funeral home for over 25 years before retiring and was a 50+ year licensed embalmer and funeral director. He is the father of James "Bob" Epperson, a funeral director at Add'Vantage Funeral Service in Tulsa. His services were under the joint direction of Gary Kelley's Add'Vantage Funeral Service of Tulsa and Holmes-Coffee-Murray Home of Durant, Oklahoma.

TEXAS



Thomas Joseph "Tommy Jo" Cunningham, 64 of Kilgore passed away June 7, 2017. He attended Dallas Institute of Funeral Services where he received his Mortician and Funeral Director's License. He owned and operated Cunningham Funeral Home for 32 years. He was Past President of IFDA, associate member of NFDMA, and a member of the NFDA. He services were directed by Cunningham Funeral Directors, Kilgore, TX.



Sue Williford Evans, 61, of Lighthouse, passed away June 26, 2017. She is the wife of Funeral Director Calvin Evans with Cottle Funeral Home which along with Wyman Roberts Funeral Home in San Augustine handled her services.



Rufus Frederick Adolph Gerner, 88, of Tahoka, died July 30, 2017. Rufus graduated from Dallas Institute of Mortuary Science and began his lifelong career as a mortician and funeral director of more than 50 years. As his career advanced he not only worked at Mason Funeral Home in Post but also Campbell Funeral Home in Spur and later moved to Tahoka to work for his friend Billie White, at White Funeral Home. Eventually, White Funeral Home became Combest Family Funeral Homes, where he worked until he retired in January 2014. His services were under the direction of Combest Family Funeral Homes.



Melvin F. Henkes, 82, of Hamilton, passed away on June 6, 2017. He graduated from Dallas Institute of Mortuary Science and became a part of Riley Funeral Home, in Hamilton after graduation. He purchased Riley Funeral Home later, and eventually bought Evant Funeral Home. Riley Funeral Home was a part of his life for 45 years. He retired in 1996, remaining as a consultant to SCI. Riley Funeral Home directed his services.

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TEXAS (Cont.)



John Charles Nance, 64, of Corsicana passed away on June 6, 2017. He worked at Rushing-Estes Funeral Home while in college. While living in Carrizo Springs he worked at Leonard Funeral Home until he enrolled in the Dallas Institute of Mortuary Science. He graduated from mortuary school in 1974. He then went to work at Fry-Gibbs Funeral Home in Paris where he served many families until his retirement in 1999. John then worked part-time at Bright-Holland Funeral Home in Paris who directed his funeral services.



Martha Velasquez, 61, of Lubbock, died June 22, 2017. She is the wife of the Late Fred Velasquez. Her services were under the direction of Combest Family Funeral Homes in Lubbock.



ABC'S of Happiness—by R. Valett

Aspire to reach your potential.
 Believe in yourself and your abilities.
 Create a good life.
 Dream about what you might become.
 Exercise frequently.
 Forgive honest mistakes.
 Generate a responsible, trustworthy reputation.
 Humor yourself and others.
 Identify your goals and purpose for living.
 Joyfully live each day.
 Kindly help others.
 Love one another.
 Meditate daily.
 Nurture positive, wholesome habits.
 Organize for variety, harmony and balance.
 Praise performance well done.
 Question most things cautiously.
 Regulate your own behavior.
 Smile often.
 Think intelligently.
 Understand your different life stages.
 Value all life.
 Warmly stay interested and interesting.
 X-ray and carefully examine your problems.
 Yearn to improve.
 Zestfully pursue happiness!



Richard A. "Dick" Walker, 72, of Commerce, died June 22, 2017. Dick attended East Texas State University, the University of Minnesota Department of Mortuary Science and Dallas Funeral Institute. He served in the U. S. Army. Prior to coming to Commerce, Dick learned the funeral business at Rhoton Funeral Home in Carrollton. He was owner of Jones-Walker and Son Funeral Home. His arrangements were under the direction of Jones-Walker and Son Funeral Home.



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 Editor@thedead-beat.com

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Quotes Taken from Actual Performance Evaluations

- * Since my last report, this employee has reached rock bottom and has started to dig.
- * His men would follow him anywhere, but only out of morbid curiosity.
- * I would not allow this employee to breed.
- * This employee is really not so much of a has-been, but more of a definite won't be.
- * Works well when under constant supervision and when cornered like a rat in a trap.
- * When she opens her mouth, it seems that it is only to change feet.
- * He would be out of his depth in a parking lot puddle.
- * This young lady has delusions of adequacy.
- * He sets low personal standards and then consistently fails to achieve them.
- * This employee is depriving a village somewhere of an idiot.
- * This employee should go far, and the sooner he starts the better.
- * Got a full 6-pack, but lacks the plastic thing to hold it all together.
- * A gross ignoramus—144 times worse than an ordinary ignoramus.
- * He certainly takes a long time to make his pointless.
- * He doesn't have ulcers, but he's a carrier.



- * I would like to go hunting with him sometime.
- * He's been working with glue too much.
- * He would argue with a signpost.
- * He has a knack for making strangers immediately.
- * He brings joy whenever he leaves the room.
- * When his IQ reaches 50, he should sell.
- * If you see two people talking and one looks bored, he's the other.
- * A photographic memory but with the lens cover glued on.
- * A prime selection for natural de-selection.
- * Donated his brain to science before he was done using it.
- * Gates are down, the lights are flashing, but the train isn't coming.
- * Has two brains, one is lost and the other is out looking for it.
- * If you give him a penny for his thoughts, you'd get change.
- * It's hard to believe that he/she beat out 1,000,000 other sperm.
- * Some drink from the fountain of knowledge; he only gargled.
- * If you stand close enough to him, you can hear the ocean.



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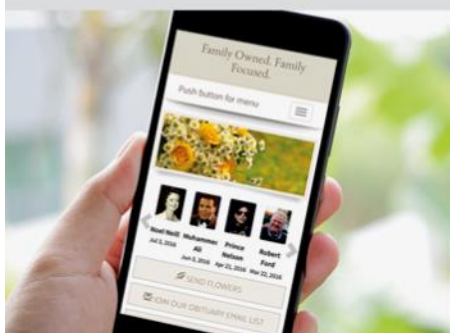
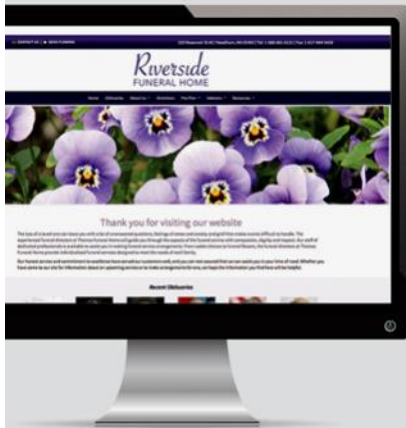
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About ASD's Suicide Operator Telephone Patch (STOP) System



When someone is feeling hopeless or alone, there is no telling who they might reach out to and, in some cases, they will contact a funeral home. ASD created the STOP System to give our staff a way to seamlessly connect a caller with a suicide prevention hotline, ensuring these individuals receive the immediate counseling, guidance and support they need. While ASD Call Specialists are trained extensively on how to handle difficult calls, in the past operators have been deeply affected and troubled by conversations they have had with those who stated they were contemplating suicide. This led ASD's Tech Team to invent a telecommunication tool that would support its staff, give directors added peace of mind and, most importantly, help those in distress receive the help they need.

ASD's STOP System was designed to ensure callers never have to wait to receive support. Call Specialists can press an emergency button on their keyboard to immediately alert a Suicide Hotline when they are speaking to someone in crisis. The call can be made without the ASD Call Specialist interrupting the caller or placing them on hold. The hotline operator will hear a recording alerting them that a distressed and possibly suicidal person is on the line speaking to ASD. This alert will instruct the hotline operator to press any key to be 3-way connected into the call. ASD clients are not charged any fee for this extra layer of support because the system was designed solely to help those who are suffering. It is a rarity for a company to invest a great deal of time and resources into a new technology without any plans to make it profitable. However, we feel that if this feature saves even one life, it will be worth all efforts it took to create it.

We are humbled to be recognized by the NFDA with our third Innovation Award nomination and for an opportunity to raise awareness about suicide prevention. It is an unfortunate fact that more than 100 suicides occur every day in the United States, and between 50 and 75 percent of people who attempt suicide talk about their thoughts and feelings before the act," says ASD Vice President, Kevin Czachor. The STOP System was created by ASD with a specific purpose of helping those who are at risk of taking their own life. By linking ASD staff to qualified, suicide prevention operators, we can help ensure that those who are suffering receive immediate counseling, guidance and support.

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NFDA Cremation and Burial Report Shows Rate of Cremation at All-time High Increase in Cremation Impacts the Way Families Honor the Lives of Their Loved Ones

(Continued from page 7)

decreased from 49.5 percent to 39.5 percent.

* Age: The aging of the American population has a direct impact on the funeral profession. In 2011, the Baby Boomer generation began turning 65, and by 2030, all Boomers will be age 65 and older. Individuals between the ages of 65 and 79 account for 27.7 percent of funeral service marketplace, and individuals 80 and older account for 46.1 percent of the marketplace. Individuals 80 years old and older are less likely to be cremated and more likely to opt for burial.

About the NFDA 2017 Cremation and Burial Report

The statistical projections contained in the 2017 NFDA Cremation and Burial Report were compiled by the University of Wisconsin-Madison Applied Population Laboratory Department of Community and Environmental Sociology. State-level deaths by method of disposition data were collected from state vital statistics departments or similar state regulatory agencies for the years 2002-15. Other findings presented in the report are from proprietary NFDA research studies, such as the 2017 Annual NFDA Consumer Awareness & Preferences Study.

About the National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA)

NFDA is the world's leading and largest funeral service association, serving 19,700 individual members who represent more than 10,000 funeral homes in the United States and 49 countries around the world. NFDA is the trusted leader, beacon for ethics and the strongest advocate for the profession. NFDA is the association of choice because it offers funeral professionals comprehensive educational resources, tools to manage successful businesses, guidance to become pillars in their communities and the expertise to foster future generations of funeral professionals. NFDA is headquartered in Brookfield, Wis., and has an office in Washington, D.C. For more information, please contact 800-228-6332 or visit www.nfda.org.

What Happens To Love When We Die?

From My Purview

By Reverend Janice Hoffman

What happens to love once someone has made their transition? I have pondered this question ever since I heard the lyrics to the song, "Where Do Broken Hearts Go". The lyrics touched



my heart in a way I couldn't shake off. "Can you please tell me, where do broken hearts go? Can they find their way home? Back to the open arms of a love that's waiting there? If somebody loves you, won't they always love you?"

What happens to love when a relationship ends? Whether the relationship is over due to a break up or the death of someone we love, what happens to the love we felt for that person? Does it slowly die? Does it go away? Perhaps it lives on. I believe the love we feel for another never dies. I believe after much thought, it only changes form.

When we marry, we are so in love we want to spend the rest of our lives with this person. Our love is vibrant, new, exciting, and there are hopes and dreams for the future with this new love. When someone experiences the loss of a soul mate, there is so much love that was poured in the relationship, what is the surviving partner supposed to do with all that love now?

It has been said, "He's my brother from another mother". Regardless of the gender, we can feel closer to a friend than a relative. This is why the

loss of a close friend can be such a devastating loss. Friends live through years of struggles along with shared laughs, creating years of rich memories and a history not even a relative can replace.

There is nothing more heart breaking than the loss of one's child. There is no greater love than that of a parent for their child. While a parent is processing their emotions and grieving the loss of their child, what happens to the parent's love for their child or children?

After the loss of a loved one, we must not only learn to live without them in our lives, but also we must learn to live with the love they have left behind.

After listening to the words of that song so beautifully sung by the late Whitney Houston, I needed to know, where does love go? Could it be love doesn't go anywhere? Is it possible that love doesn't die or go away? Maybe love only changes form? Is it somehow transformed into something we aren't aware of?

Apparently, I am not alone in this quest to know what happens to love. A quote from J. W. says, "Love, where it ever existed before, does not cease to exist. To speak of love in the past tense is not to know love's purpose at all. Love goes on, being always a continuation and an extension of love."

Marrianne Williamson says, "Love knows how to form itself. God will do his work if we do ours. Our job is to prepare ourselves for love. When we do, love finds us every time."

An author I have admired for years, Leo Buscaglia wrote many books on love, especially loving

someone in the moment. Regarding transition Leo says, "I know for certain that we never lose the people we love, even to death. They continue to participate in every act, thought, and decision we make. Their love leaves an indelible imprint in our memories. We find comfort in knowing that our lives have been enriched by having shared their love. What love we've given, we'll have forever."

Is there a storehouse of love inside of you? I feel comforted in knowing all the love I have ever felt for someone, even a pet, is real. Not only is it real, it never went anywhere. In fact, I can close my eyes, and in my mind's eye, I can recall and replay memories that put a smile on my face and a warm fuzzy in my heart. Yes, I believe love is real, it never dies or goes away. Pure love is real and forever.



About the Author:

Ordained in 1999 as a non-denominational Christian Minister, Reverend Janice Hoffman's ministry

has included facilitating a Course In Miracles, leading an Attitudinal Healing support group, and hosting a guided meditation for a group that met weekly for over 13 years. Rev. Hoffman's work with mortuaries and families began in 2008. After the first funeral service Rev. Janice officiated, she had a deep awareness that honoring the life of a family's loved one was where she wanted to focus her ministry. Beginning with meeting with the family for an intake, Janice writes a custom service bringing comfort to families in shock and grief. None of us are promised tomorrow and bringing that awareness to others, fosters appreciation for those in our lives and the time we spend with them. Contact her at Janice@janicehoffman.com or 303-604-2222.

Operating Your Business More Efficiently... and Profitably

By Richard S. Lee

It's time for funeral home owners to start taking better control of their businesses – from more efficient operating procedures 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 needs to be aware of what their mix of business will be going forward 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 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.

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Richard S. Lee is the President of Lee & Associates, a firm that represents funeral home owners in the sale and transfer of their funeral businesses. Since 1987, they have been involved in over 170 transactions

all over the United States. The scope of their work also includes business valuations, accounting solutions and general consulting services. **Richard is always available for questions and may be reached at 407-257-5024 or email him at Leebros@aol.com**

How to Write a Great Value Proposition that Sells

By Joe Weigel

To distinguish themselves from the competition, funeral homes and cemeteries need a value proposition. This is a short statement that clearly articulates why families should select you and not your competitors. In challenging economic times, your value proposition is your best weapon against price sensitivity.

What is a value proposition?

A value proposition is a promise of the value you deliver to your families. It is a critical part of your marketing program and provides a starting point for every message. Your value proposition should explain:

- How your services benefit families
- What specific advantages you deliver

Why you are different from and better than the competition.

A value proposition isn't a vision or mission statement. Rather, it should be brief and create a clear mental picture. Your families should be able to read and understand your value proposition in five seconds or less.

Three steps to creating a value proposition

Developing a value proposition will require some soul searching and brainstorming. To be effective, it's essential to put yourself in your families' shoes and consider your products and services from their

perspectives. The process consists of three steps:

1. **Identify your customer.** Who do you serve? What problems and pain points do they face?
2. **List the benefits and value you provide.** Make a list of the benefits and solutions you.
3. **Differentiate yourself from the competitor.** If you had just 10 words to communicate why someone should select you, what would you say?

A great value proposition can be the difference between getting or losing a sale. After all, how can you market and sell a product or service if you can't articulate its value? But like with all marketing messages, crafting a clear, compelling value proposition is not easy. It takes trial and error. Create a couple of options and share them internally. Test them out in your email campaigns. Once you nail your message, you will enjoy the benefits of a clear, concise, value proposition that sells.



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

Newspaper Headlines

The following headlines were actually printed in newspapers. The irony in some of these are absolutely astonishing, hilariously funny (though sometimes awkward).

- * Miners Refuse to Work after Death
- * Typhoon Rips Through Cemetery; Hundreds Dead.
- * Prostitutes Appeal to Pope
- * Panda Mating Fails; Veterinarian Takes Over
- * Enraged Cow Insures Farmer With Axe
- * Cold Wave Linked to Temperatures

- * Deer Kill 17,000
- * Ban On Soliciting Dead in Trotwood
- * New Vaccine May Contain Rabies
- * Hospitals are Sued by 7 Foot Doctors
- * Killer Sentenced to Die for Second Time in 10 Years
- * Man Struck By Lightning Faces Battery Charge
- * Eye Drops Off Shelf
- * Teachers Strike Idle Kids
- * Iraqi Head Seeks Arms

'Requiem For The Bike' (Cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

Then, as inconspicuously as possible, participants survey their competition, taking note of racing shoes, aerodynamic helmets and, in particular, their bikes. A technologically-advanced bike, you see, serves not only to impress, but also to intimidate the competition.

To increase his own competitiveness, my triathlete spent more than a year, researching the various components on the bike. These components were engineered to shave minutes or seconds from one's racing time.

After several long-distance (pre-internet, pre-cell phone) calls, we traveled to a bike store in Louisiana to finalize the order -- all the components judged to be the absolute best -- and for the store's expert to take measurements. Yes, serious bikes are customized to the user's height, trunk, leg and arm length.

Several months later, the bike was ready.

As no aficionado of anything bicycle, I can truthfully say this bike was beautiful, a technological work of art...and as I often joked, My triathlete paid more for the bike than he had for me.

Once, during a triathlon in Temple, I was among spectators when I heard someone call my name. "Mrs. Adams?" the policeman asked, my heart attempting to pound through my clothing. "Your husband has been in a crash...but the bike is okay," he reassured me. "I have it safe in my truck...oh, and an ambulance is on its way for your husband."

Over the years, the bike and my triathlete competed in many triathlons as well local and statewide Senior Games' and in National Senior Games in Syracuse, Tempe and Baton Rouge. Together, this dynamic man-and-machine duo filled our shelves and display cases with ribbons, medals and trophies.

During each week of the year, unless we were traveling, many miles were logged during training rides and races, racking up more miles than medals, but my triathlete enjoyed challenging training sessions as much as he did the adrenaline pump of racing competitions.

For more than two years now, the bike has hung motionless in our garage, waiting patiently for the next training ride, the next competition that will never come. With a quiet dignity, it endures the loss of air from its tires. It's handlebars are still sticky with sweat, it's pedals, corroded by time and remnants of its last race.

To close my triathlete's portion of our estate, I must eventually sell our home, marking -- with bittersweet finality - the end to our adventures together...and at some point, I will have to find the bike a new home.

On the day the bike rides away for the last time, I will celebrate the memories of the many finish lines it crossed and the satisfaction my triathlete enjoyed, successfully competing in yet another race.



About the author: A native West Texan, Alice Adams has been a newspaper feature writer, arts editor/critic and columnist and has written more than 30 books on management and business, numerous magazine articles and several dramatic works.

After earning a bachelor's degree in Creative Writing

from the Texas Center for Writers - The University of Texas, she then added a master's in mass communications/education and doctorate in educational leadership with an emphasis on adult education to her name, teaching marketing and public relations at Odessa College and business communications at the Cameron School of Business at The University of St. Thomas - Houston..

Since 1994, she has been president of Adams Communications and continues to work as a writer and columnist for The Houston Chronicle, The Jewish Herald-Voice, The Minority Business Journal and other regional and national publications. She is a founding co-editor of *Southern Calls Magazine*, has served as editor for The Texas Director Magazine for close to two decades and has been honored by Texas Funeral Directors Association for her service. Alice has earned awards from the Texas Press Association and Texas Newspaper Association and has been recognized for her contributions to the Texas educational and business communities.

She now reside in Austin with her children and four amazing grandchildren.

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“Dear Counselor....”

By Bill Stalter

Dear Counselor,

Our county’s Public Administrator recently sought to purchase a second preneed contract for a ward who already has a preneed cremation contract. We originally discounted the price of the preneed cremation services, thinking that was all we would receive for the service. Now, the Public Administrator expects to purchase a guaranteed preneed contract for additional services. How should we handle the PA’s request for an additional preneed contract?

We frequently receive inquiries from funeral homes that are contacted by public administrators with additional funds for a ward. Funeral homes frequently attempt to sell some item or service with a purchase price that approximates the available funds. We’ve seen funeral homes sell a casket or a service without addressing the funeral home’s non-declinable charge. If the public administrator lacks sufficient funds to at least pay for a direct cremation, we recommend that the funeral home issue a non-guaranteed preneed contract with a purchase price high enough to accommodate additional funds. The public administrator may prefer to receive a guaranteed preneed contract, but a non-guaranteed contract is more practical, and less problematic for audits. If the public administrator has sufficient funds to pay for a direct cremation, then a guaranteed preneed contract is an option. But if the public administrator subsequently receives additional

funds for that ward, the guaranteed contract would need to be amended without penalizing the funeral home. In a situation like the one you currently face, the contract could be amended to cover a cremation package (at today’s prices). But as you are experiencing, the non-guaranteed contract is more flexible for a younger ward that is likely to receive future benefits or funds. The non-guaranteed contract will allow the funeral home to contribute additional funds in future years without amending the contract or writing an additional contract.



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.

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.
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Your Hands

Author Unknown

Have you ever just looked at your hands? Grandma, some ninety plus years, sat feebly on the patio bench. She didn't move, just sat with her head down staring at her hands.

When I sat down beside her she didn't acknowledge my presence and the longer I sat I wondered if she was okay. Finally, not really wanting to disturb her but wanting to check on her at the same time, I asked her if she was okay. She raised her head and looked at me and smiled, "Yes, I'm fine, thank you for asking," she said in a clear, strong voice.

"I didn't mean to disturb you, grandma, but you were just sitting here staring at your hands and I wanted to make sure you were okay," I explained to her.

"Have you ever looked at your hands?" she asked. "I mean really looked at your hands?"

I slowly opened my hands and stared down at them. I turned them over, palms up and then palms down. No, I guess I never really looked at my hands as I tried to figure out the point she was making.

Grandma smiled and related this story. "Stop and think for a moment about the hands you have, how they served you well throughout your years. These hands, though wrinkled, shriveled and weak have been the tools I have used all my life to reach out and grab and embrace life.

They braced and caught my fall when as a toddler I crashed upon the floor. They put food in my mouth and clothes on my back. As a child, my mother taught me to fold them in prayer. They tied my shoes and pulled on my boots. They held my husband and wiped my tears when he went off to war.

They have been dirty, scraped and raw, swollen and bent. They were uneasy and clumsy when I tried to hold my newborn son. Decorated with my wedding band, they showed the world that I was married and loved someone special.

They wrote my letters to him and trembled and shook when I buried my parents and spouse. They have held my children and grandchildren, consoled neighbors, and shook in fists of anger when I didn't understand. They have



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covered my face, combed my hair, and washed and cleansed the rest of my body. They have been sticky and wet, bent and broken, dried and raw. And to this day when not much of anything else of me works real well these hands hold me up, lay me down, and again continue to fold in prayer.

These hands are the mark of where I've been and the ruggedness of life. But, more importantly, it will be these hands that God will reach out and take when he leads me home. And with my hands He will lift me to His side and there I will use these hands to touch the face of God."

I will never look at my hands the same again. But I remember God reached out and took my grandma's hands and led her home. When my hands are hurt or sore or when I stoke the face of my children and husband, I think of grandma. I know she has been stroked and caressed by the hands of God. I, too, want to touch the face of God and feel His hands upon my face.





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Funeral Service Foundation Awards \$75,000 Grant to Alliance of Hope

Brookfield, Wis. - The Funeral Service Foundation announced today that it has awarded a \$75,000 grant to Alliance of Hope, the leading online source of support for people grieving the death of a loved one by suicide. The grant will allow the organization to better serve and help more suicide loss survivors through the development of a state-of-the-art website.

Since its 2008 founding, hundreds of thousands of people have accessed the Alliance of Hope website and its forums to understand and cope with the complex emotional aftermath of suicide. "Our website is our core infrastructure. It goes far beyond being a repository of information. It is where we meet and greet people, and gently guide them through the survivor journey," said Alliance of Hope Founder Ronnie Susan Walker. "For the first time ever suicide loss survivors will have a comprehensive resource unparalleled to what we could provide previously. We are thrilled to be able to do this thanks to the Funeral Service Foundation and its generous donors."

Funeral service professionals serve nearly 44,000 families a year affected by suicide, and approximately 6 million people in the U.S. are coping with the aftermath of suicide. "We are

on the front lines when it comes to providing grief support," said Randy Schoedinger, co-chair of the Foundation's grants committee, and CEO of Schoedinger Funeral & Cremation Service in Columbus, Ohio. "The service that Alliance of Hope provides is vital to the families we serve and our communities."

The Funeral Service Foundation awards grants annually to organizations and initiatives that underscore its mission to support funeral service in building meaningful relationships with the families and the communities it serves. The Alliance of Hope and the Funeral Service Foundation will also collaborate on series of webinars and seminars designed to connect funeral service professionals to Alliance of Hope's resources. "We are honored to support the Alliance of Hope's mission and share the organization's essential work with the profession," said Foundation Executive Director Danelle O'Neill.

Hosted by the National Funeral Directors Association, the webinars and seminars will be held in conjunction with the anticipated 2018 launch of the Alliance of Hope's new website. Further information will announced early next year.

About the Alliance of Hope for Suicide Loss Survivors - [allianceofhope.org](http://www.allianceofhope.org)<<http://www.allianceofhope.org>



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