

The Dead Beat



The Caregiver's Soapbox

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



Volume 16

www.thedead-beat.com

Issue 5

Bienhoff Funeral Home celebrates Perry, Missouri's Sesquicentennial (150th) Celebration

The celebration for Perry, Missouri's 150th Celebration happened August 4 –7, 2016. The Bienhoff Funeral Home went all out for the parade and helped the city with the monument dedicating the event. Here are a few pictures to share in their fun..



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A Christmas Story

By Nancy Gavin, 1982, submitted by Edwin G. Whiting to Motivateus

It's just a small, white envelope stuck among the branches of our Christmas tree. No name, no identification, no inscription. It has peeked through the branches of our tree for the past 10 years or so.

It all began because my husband Mike hated Christmas---oh, not the true meaning of Christmas, but the commercial aspects of it---overspending...the frantic running around at the last minute to get a tie for Uncle Harry and the dusting powder for Grandma---the gifts given in desperation because you couldn't think of anything else.

Knowing he felt this way, I decided one year to bypass the usual shirts, sweaters, ties and so forth. I reached for something special just for Mike. The inspiration came in an unusual way.

Our son Kevin, who was 12 that year, was wrestling at the junior level at the school he attended; and shortly before Christmas, there was a non-league match against a team sponsored by an inner-city church, mostly black.

These youngsters, dressed in sneakers so ragged that shoestrings seemed to be the only thing holding them together, presented a sharp contrast to our boys in their spiffy blue and gold uniforms and sparkling new wrestling shoes. As the match began, I was alarmed to see that the other team was wrestling without headgear, a kind of light helmet designed to protect a wrestler's ears. It was a luxury the ragtag team obviously could not afford. Well, we ended up walloping them. We took every weight class. And as each of their boys got up from the mat, he swaggered around in his tatters with false bravado, a kind of street pride that couldn't acknowledge defeat.

Mike, seated beside me, shook his head sadly, "I wish just one of them could have won," he said. "They have a lot of potential, but losing like this could take the heart right out of them." Mike loved kids---all kids---and he knew them, having coached little league football, baseball and lacrosse. That's when the idea for his present came.

That afternoon, I went to a local sporting goods store and bought an assortment of wrestling headgear and shoes and sent them anonymously to the inner-city church.

On Christmas Eve, I placed the envelope on the tree, the note inside telling Mike what I had done and that this was his gift from me.

His smile was the brightest thing about Christmas that year and in succeeding years. For each Christmas, I followed the tradition---one year sending a group of mentally handicapped youngsters to a hockey game, another year a check to a pair of elderly brothers whose home had burned to the



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

ground the week before Christmas, and on and on.

The envelope became the highlight of our Christmas. It was always the last thing opened on Christmas morning and our children, ignoring their new toys, would stand with wide-eyed anticipation as their dad lifted the envelope from the tree to reveal its contents. As the children grew, the toys gave way to more practical presents, but the envelope never lost its allure. The story doesn't end there.

You see, we lost Mike last year due to dreaded cancer. When Christmas rolled around, I was still so wrapped in grief that I barely got the tree up. But Christmas Eve found me placing an envelope on the tree, and in the morning, it was joined by three more. Each of our children, unbeknownst to the others, had placed an envelope on the tree for their dad.

The tradition has grown and someday will expand even further with our grandchildren standing around the tree with wide-eyed anticipation watching as their fathers take down the envelope. Mike's spirit, like the Christmas spirit, will always be with us.

May we all remember each other, and the Real reason for the season, and His true spirit this year and always. God bless---pass this along to your friends and loved ones.

The story first appeared in Woman's Day magazine in 1982. My mom had sent the story in as a contest entry in which she subsequently won first place. Unfortunately, she passed away from cancer two years after the story was published. Our family still keeps the tradition started by her and my father and we have passed it on to our children. Feel free to use the story. It gives me and my sisters great joy to know that it lives on and has hopefully inspired others to reach out in a way that truly honors the spirit of Christmas.

--- Kevin Gavin
Read more at <http://motivateus.com/#bSfTLgd1hWYW6CuS.99>



Mortuary Muse

By Lowell

Recently I gathered some discontinued and surplus vault samples. We had not decided what to do with them so I made a display at the carport entrance. If we still had an adjacent monument display it would have made a nice addition. Joanne pictured it in the previous Dead Beat.

This brought up an interesting problem. I believe some of the fine print in the FTC rule states that a potential shopper/consumer must not see any of your merchandise until you have given them a GPL (general price list).

In our tiny establishment a consumer cannot take more than 3 steps inside without seeing a merchandise sample. By the time I could come downstairs from the office they could see everything probably EXCEPT the GPL on the table by the door. I guess monument dealers and cemeteries are excluded from that rule. Can you see the price list on a car before you see the cars on the lot?

The whole rule issue should be revisited. But with the loose cannons rolling around the deck in Washington D.C. there is no telling what we would end up with that would benefit consumers and be fair to funeral directors.

Out here in the hinterlands the whole idea of the funeral

rule seemed pointless. Granted no one actually wanted to buy a funeral, but I don't think they had any problem negotiating on any item they might not want. The whole national road show of FTC hearings were a puzzle to me.

One thing is certain when the rule was finalized it caused many of us to analyze our operating costs more precisely and subsequently raised the price of some items. In some cases there were items or services that we had never specifically charged for.

Because our family had always operated more than one type of business under the same umbrella, it had been difficult for me to sort out the shared expenses to arrive at a specific cost for portions of funeral home overhead expenses. The FTC along with the desktop computer made us better bookkeepers.

Obviously this dialog is going nowhere. If there ever are any funeral rule changes they will probably be like the current environmental rule changes which seems mostly to benefit those at the root of the problem.

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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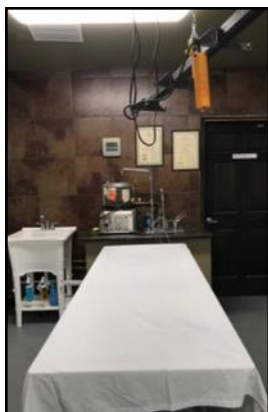
Rader Embalming Service, LLC was granted a license to operate as a mortuary service in Springfield, Missouri on October 26, 2017 by the Missouri State Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors. Rader Embalming Service provides quality embalming at a very reasonable price. Tim



and Roberta Rader are the owners of the mortuary service. Tim is a licensed embalmer and funeral director in the state of Missouri and the Commonwealth of Kentucky. He is a 1984 graduate of Eldon High School in Eldon, Missouri. Tim is a 1986 graduate of The Mid America College of Funeral Service in Louisville, Kentucky. Tim is also a 2004 graduate of The Fountain

National Academy of Professional Embalming. Roberta is a licensed funeral director in the state of Missouri.

Tim and Roberta are the former owners of American Mortuary Service in St. Louis, Missouri. The business was sold in 2013. Tim, then worked part time for the next 4 years for Cape Mortuary Service in Cape Girardeau, Missouri. Rader Embalming Service uses only premium embalming fluids along with an embalming case report to insure the measures of quality work. Each remains is tagged with an identification tag at the place of death. Rader Embalming Service is located at 821 West College in Springfield. We are a TSA Known Shipper, with American, Delta, United and Southwest Airlines.



Our charge for removal from a local hospital or nursing home and embalming is \$295.00. We answer our own phones and can be reached at 417 832-0330 Our website is www.raderembalming.com

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.

SCI Gift

In August, SCI, for the fourth year in a row, made a \$50,000 gift to the Foundation. Sumner J. "Jay" Waring III, Eric Tanzberger, Stephen Tidwell and John Faulk (l-r) presented a ceremonial check to the Foundation at the Funeral Service Foundation Golf Classic; SCI served as a \$10,000 presenting sponsor at the 17th annual event.



Memory Glass Shines Brightly at NFDA

November 10, 2017, Goleta, CA -- It's a bird! It's a plane! It's a...Memory Glass Memorial? Images of Memory Glass's popular memorials shined brightly in the sky on the 76' towering dynamic Marquee at the front of the Boston Convention Center, and on the 160' wide video wall in the entrance during the NFDA Convention in October.



At NFDA Convention in Boston, MA

The impressive LED-lit tower was difficult to miss as it featured their Touchstone keepsake and new "Stars & Stripes" Tribute Orb, visible throughout the surrounding Boston community. The base of the tower featured Memory Glass's own viral video of how a Memory Glass is made, which has received nearly 16 million views to date across the internet.

"Having a 76' tall presence at NFDA this year was so exciting!" said Kim Price, V.P. Sales and Co-Owner of Memory Glass. "2017 marks our 15th year exhibiting Memory Glass at this exceptional convention. We are proud to be a market leader in the funeral industry."

Memory Glass launched its new "Stars & Stripes" Tribute Orb design earlier in 2017, and featured the memorial at their NFDA booth, along with their complete line of products.

To get Memory Glass in your funeral home or crematorium, visit www.memoryglass.com to learn more or email info@memoryglass.com. Established in 2002, Memory Glass creates customizable solid glass memorials and keepsakes that preserve cremated remains, or earth from a special location, which are suspended within the glass. Memory Glass products are available in over 2,000 funeral homes and crematoriums in all

50 states, Canada, Australia, and the U.K.



Behind the Back Fence

By Lowell

In the last issue I commented about the response from families years ago to the question "What kind of service did you have in mind for your father?" Often the reply was "he didn't want anything special." and they may not have received anything special for the deceased but really the family got a lot for their money. The time period I examined was from the depth of the great depression through the end of World War II.

Based on what was taught at the mortuary schools, pricing was the service prices were included in the casket price. A card in the casket would say "Complete services with this casket." These prices ranged from \$100 to \$395. This price was marked up three times (*one for wholesale price of casket, one for funeral services and one for profit*) to accommodate the expenses. At the time the funeral home may have been paying \$35 for a casket.

The services included pickup, embalming, body prep, funeral directing, folders, acknowledgment cards, hearse and a rough wooden box. Infrequently a steel vault was purchased for \$125 or some cash advance items were added.

Some examples of cash advances included: clothing from \$2.00 to \$15.00, flowers \$5.00, long distance phone calls (*In those days many families had no phone or poor service and the funeral home would call their out-of-town relatives. When the funeral home reached a long distance operator, they asked the operator to keep track of the charges. When the call was completed, the operator was contacted again and they would provide the amount of the call, so it could added to the customer's bill.*); or telegrams; or funeral notices distributed by the print shop for \$1.50.



Grave opening fees were collected from the family by the cemetery sexton, who applied the fee of \$10 or \$15 to the grave digger's grocery bill at the grocery store that was owned by the cemetery sexton's family.

If a family needed transportation the funeral home operator provided his sedan at no charge. Casket bearers and flower girl cars were donated by one of the participants.

After the funeral the funeral directors handled the insurance and helped the families with probate matters and welfare agency trips or to an out-of town doctor. Perhaps the deceased didn't want anything special, but their families got a lot of value for their money.

Some other interesting facts included shipments. Many caskets came in the rough boxes by railroad. The funeral home picked up the box, had a service and burial and the cost was \$25 or \$35 for the whole process.



Something to think about how things have changed over the years...

No matter what profession or occupation is having a convention or networking seminar, the promotional buzz words or catch phrases are all the same. The following were in a brochure Joanne received about a health care and hospice summit: "effective strategies for revenue cycle", "growth opportunities", "regulatory & reimbursement challenges" "growing hospice through partnerships and outcomes selling." What's happening to the altruistic nature of caring for people for people in their last days? Obviously the more important thing is how much money are we able to make off of those last days on this earth. And they accuse the funeral directors of being money grubbing people....

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

The Ten Commandments of Christmas

- I. You shall not leave Christ out of Christmas.
- II. You shall prepare your soul for Christmas.
- III. You shall not let Santa Claus replace Christ.
- IV. You shall not burden the salesgirl, the mailman, and the merchants with complaints and demands.
- V. You shall give yourself with your gift.

- VI. You shall not value gifts received by their cost.
- VII. You shall not neglect the needy.
- VIII. You shall not neglect the church service that highlights the true meaning of the season.
- IX. You shall be as a little child.
- X. You shall give your heart to Christ.

After-Thoughts *By Joanne Howard*

The holidays are upon us, with all the joy and sadness it brings. For those who have lost loved ones this can be a very challenging time. Whether the loss was recent or long ago, the hurt is usually there just in different degrees. Traditions are still observed, but sometimes change over the years.

I seem to have a million Christmas decorations and items that had relevance when my girls were living, but now I really question why I keep them except they are a connection with the girls. We don't traditionally have many visitors during the season, and we really aren't tremendously into decorating, so why add an additional stress to the season. We don't.

In my heart, "Jesus is the reason for the season," and that really doesn't relate to a lot of things done during the Christmas season. And other religions probably don't appreciate the explanation for our celebration either. Maybe that's the attraction to Santa, elves, flying around on a sled led by reindeer, it doesn't have the religious connection.

Personally, whether it's a truthful representation of what really happened or not, give me the manger scene as one of the best decorations you can put up at Christmas. Now those three wise men showing up in

those scenes isn't really the true timeframe, but it gives a good reason for giving gifts and singing the song.

I've always wondered why that feeling of giving had to be only felt at Christmas and why that wasn't year-round, but that's a whole other subject.

Back to lost loved ones at the holiday time. Don't feel you can't remember those good times, even if they hurt. Why must we forget those memories because they are gone. Wouldn't you recall memories of past holidays if they were still with you. So enjoy the best that you can.

Speaking of losses we have a big one happening at the end of the year. We are closing our funeral home after 113 years. We are continuing the magazine, but economics have caught up with us. For whatever reasons whether decreasing populations, funeral choice changes, or numerous other reasons, it is time to make a change. I know that people will miss the home style touch, our funeral home offered, but lack of funerals and energy on our part has led to this decision.

I am looking forward to not being on call 24/7, but I will miss being able to help people at one of the hardest times in their lives. I hope

over my 25 years I have been able to help things go a little smoother. Regretfully I have been in the shoes of one who has lost a few times myself and understood only too well what they might be feeling. But as I am getting older, I'm also getting a bit more tired than I have in the past. When I assist, I want to be at my best and I guess I have to admit my age may be catching up with me.

So now I will have to add to my list of losses, retiring from being the manager of this funeral home. I'm sure new challenges will be presented to me, just not sure what they are right now.

So as we approach the new year, let's strive for greatness wherever God leads us!!



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



Keep Christmas Beautiful

By Ann Schultz

Let us keep Christmas beautiful
Without a thought of greed,
That it might live forevermore
To fill our every need,
That it shall not be just a day,
But last a lifetime through,
The miracle of Christmastime
That brings God close to you.



Connecticut Funeral Directors Association To Collect Gift Cars & Unwrapped Toys for Operation Elf

WETHERSFIELD, CONN., November 7, 2017 - For 12 years, the funeral directors and suppliers of the Connecticut Funeral Directors Association (CFDA) have made personal contributions of gift cards, unwrapped toys, and funds for the Connecticut National Guard's Operation ELF (Embracing Lonely Families) holiday effort. This year, between Monday, November 13th and Wednesday, December 6th, three dozen local funeral homes across Connecticut also will welcome donations from the public and will bring them to Operation ELF which assists military families who could use some help during the holiday season. In addition, on Thursday, December 7th from 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m., people can drop off gift cards and unwrapped toys to CFDA's Annual Convention at the Radisson Cromwell Hotel at 100 Berlin Rd. (Rt. 372) in Cromwell.

"This is the second year that Connecticut funeral homes invite the public to bring in donations for Operation ELF, and with more locations than in 2016," explains Bob Muccino, President of the Connecticut Funeral Directors Association. "By doing this, we are adding 36 convenient community sites to supplement Operation ELF's own collection efforts. We encourage state residents to take a few minutes of their time and come donate an item that will mean so much to another Connecticut family."

All gift cards, unwrapped toys and funds collected by the Connecticut Funeral Directors Association will be delivered directly to Operation ELF, which assists the families of Connecticut National Guard soldiers and airmen who are deployed during the holidays, and provides a wide range of support to military families throughout the year. Especially needed are gift cards of any dollar value to grocery, department stores, home supply stores, gas stations, and pharmacies, as well as unwrapped toys for young people of any age.

The 129-year-old <<http://www.ctfda.org/>> Connecticut Funeral Directors Association is comprised of funeral directors at more than 220 funeral homes. Based in Wethersfield, Conn., the professional organization is committed to the promotion and advocacy of high ethical standards in funeral service. This includes the development and presentation of ongoing professional training opportunities for practitioners and educational programs for association members and the public. For more information about the Connecticut Funeral Directors Association or its Operation ELF collection drive, call 860-721-0234 or 800-919-2332, or visit <<http://www.ctfda.org>> www.ctfda.org or <<https://www.facebook.com/connecticut-funeral-directors-association-cfda>>

Connecticut Funeral Directors Association.

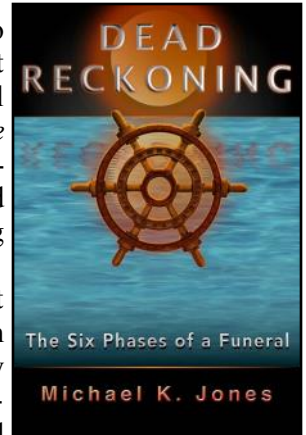
Dead Reckoning: The Six Phases of a Funeral By Michael K Jones

Vogelstein Press would like to announce the release of its first publication. Written by Michael K. Jones *Dead Reckoning: The Six Phases of a Funeral* is a critical resource for clergy faced with the challenge of preparing and delivering a funeral.

Funerals are among the most important things a minister can do when serving a community and congregation. Their effectiveness and success may depend on how they lead services celebrating and offering thanks for the life of someone who has died.

Dead Reckoning has been written to help clergy leaders, teachers and students. *Dead Reckoning* stresses the need to care for people as they face the loss of a loved one. *Dead Reckoning* also focuses on the process service leaders can take when preparing and delivering a funeral.

Vogelstein Press describes *Dead Reckoning* as a "must-have reference and "how-to" book to help clergy, theology and ministry students, laity, or any other church-professionals in planning, preparing and leading funeral services." Please let them know if you have any questions or comments about this release. They can be reached at www.vogelsteinpress.com.



About the Author

A native of Fredericton, New Brunswick, Michael K. Jones was born and raised in Atlantic Canada. A former minister in the United Church of Canada he has ministered to a variety of congregations for over twenty years. *Dead Reckoning* is his second book. His previous release is *Empty Houses: A Pastoral Response to Congregational Closure*. When Mike is not writing he is enjoying walking and reading. He resides with his wife Trish in Calgary, Alberta.

Dead Reckoning is now available online through Amazon.ca.

Order Information:

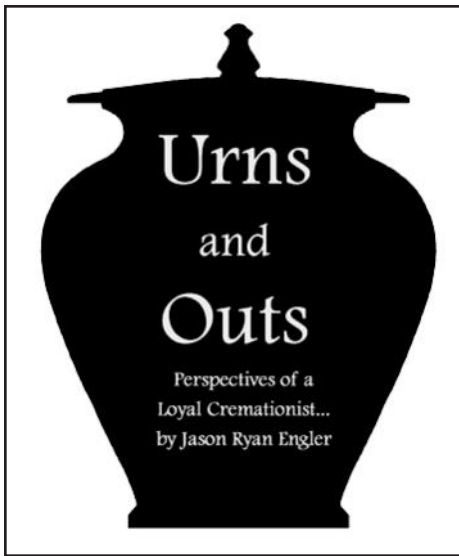
www.amazon.ca

www.vogelsteinpress.com

Author Information:

Phone: (403) 660-8292

E-Mail: tmkjones@telus.net



I enjoy and am humbled at the opportunities I get to travel and share the story of cremation's history with deathcare professionals across the country. In August, I had the privilege to attend the 99th convention of the Cremation Association of North America to promote the upcoming History of Cremation Exhibit at the National Museum of Funeral History. While in New York for the convention I took the time to visit America's oldest operating crematory just outside the city in Middle Village. Fresh Pond Crematory was built in 1885, the result of the work of the earliest cremation society in the country which was first established in 1874. The massive and beautiful facility is steeped in the history and guidance of the early cremation movement in the country. The columbarium, also one of the first in the country, with its labyrinthine alcoves and rooms contains 16,000 niches which hold more than 40,000 cremated remains.

As I walked through the building viewing the thousands of unique

urns displayed in glass-fronted niches, I imagined the story that was being told; the thousands upon thousands of lives that are now memory, manifested in the engravings on the sacred urns throughout the building. I regarded the beauty of each urn and the memorial identity it was for the person who rested within.

Then, in October I had the opportunity to visit New York for the second time in as many months where I spoke to the New York Metropolitan Cemetery Association. While I was in the vicinity, I took an Uber from Yonkers to the Metropolitan Museum of Art – if you have never been to this magnificent jewel of the City, take the time to visit – it is both breathtaking and overwhelming. For my visit, I had a mission: the Greek and Roman Antiquities that are housed in the south wing of the Met.

The Met contains one of the largest collections of Greek Vases in the world. If you have never viewed one of these wonders of the ancient world, their characteristic orange and black scenes are unmistakable. These works of art are one of the most reliable views modern historians have into the ancient Greek stories and legends, as well as the society and culture of those who shared those stories and legends at the time of their creation beginning in the 8th Century BCE. The massive collection of the Met also contains a handful of ancient Roman glass urns and cinerary chests.

When I returned to my hotel that

evening and when I headed back to Houston the following afternoon, I couldn't help but reflect on the correlation and similarity of both of my visits to New York City. Even more so, I couldn't help but notice the relationship that the subject of both of my visits exhibited: portals – stepping stones into the past. The significance of the stories that have been told on the sides of the urns, in the niches at Fresh Pond and on the ancient vases at the Met were all the same: this is history, and, as evidenced by the countless visitors in the Met's galleries, history is us.

And to think, we wouldn't have any of it if nobody cared about history...

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.

Grief in the Doldrums

By Ken Doka

When I was a young child, my Aunt Carmen was having marital problems—every time friends asked my parents how she was, they would answer “still in the doldrums.” The answer confused my seven-year-old mind. The doldrums seemed like a dreadful place. My parents would speak of it in doleful tones; listeners would shake their heads sadly and ask my parents to give her their best wishes. I wondered why she stayed down in the doldrums. After all, she had a nice home just a few miles away. I kept asking my father when she would return from the doldrums. Finally, he realized that I thought the doldrums were a real place. He explained that it was an expression that meant a person was sad, inactive and listless.

Later when I was in college, I had to read *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. I now was surprised to find that the doldrums were a real place! The doldrums were in the equatorial zones of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Here the weather can be quite variable—sudden squalls but also long periods of virtually no wind. In the latter situation, sail-powered boats could be trapped—kept immobile until the winds returned.

As a grief counselor, I also learned how real the doldrums were. Sometimes we can feel trapped in our grief. We experience those sudden squalls—times when our world is thrown into turmoil—perhaps by a special day or some smell or sight that jogs our memory and makes us very aware of our loss. Yet much of the time, we may feel that we are motionless—not making much progress, feeling directionless, and unmotivated.

How, then do we find some wind for our sails? How can we move forward?

ward?

Sometimes we can do it on our own. My aunt found her way out of doldrums. So did Diane, an older widow. Both realized that they could not stay where they were. Both began to schedule times and activities when they would be with others. For Diane, it was a Senior Center. At first, it was just somewhere to be, somewhere to go. However, over time, Diane found new friendships and activities, even volunteering for a tutoring “grandparent” program advertised at the center.

Other times we may need to seek out wind. Here self-help books and self-help groups can offer some movement. Here we may find both validations of our own experiences as well as examples of how others coped as they journeyed from the doldrums. Groups offer another advantage—the company and support of others who can understand our experiences. If these do not get us out of the doldrums, it may be helpful to speak to a grief counselor.

As we journey with grief, we may find ourselves at times deep in the doldrums. Yet, it is important to remember that we can make choices not to stay there.

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, 1710 Rhode Island Ave, NW Suite 400, Washington, DC 20036. Annual subscription-



\$25.00.

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*)

Chuckles

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

Snowplow

Michael and his wife live in Minnesota. One winter morning while listening to WCCO, they hear the announcer say, "We are going to have 8 to 10 inches of snow today. You must park your car on the even numbered side of the street, so the snowplow can get through." Michael's wife goes out and moves her car. A week later, while they were eating breakfast, the radio announcer says, "We are expecting 10 to 12 inches of snow today. You must park your car on the odd numbered side of the street so the snowplow can get through." Michael's wife goes out and moves her car again. The next week they are having breakfast again, when the radio announcer says, "We are expecting 12 to 14 inches of snow today. You must park....," then the electric power goes out. Michael's wife is very upset and with a worried look on her face, she says, "Honey, I don't know what to do. Which side of the street do I need to park on so the plow can get through." With the love and understanding in Michael's voice, like all the men who are married to blondes exhibit, Michael says, "Why don't you just leave it in the garage this time."

The Earring

A man is at work one day when he notices that his co-worker is wearing an earring. This man knows his co-worker to be a normally conservative fellow and is curious about his sudden change in 'fashion sense.' the man walks up to him and says, "I didn't know you were into earrings" "Don't make such a big deal, it's only an earring," he replies sheepishly. His friend falls silent for a few minutes, but then his curiosity prods him to say, "So how long have you been wearing one?" "Ever since my wife found it in my car." (I always wondered how this trend got started.)

Words for the Wise

1. I saw a woman wearing a sweat shirt with "Guess" on it. So I said "Implants?" She hit me.
2. I live in my own little world. But it's OK. They know me here.
3. I got a sweater for Christmas. I really wanted a screamer or a moaner.
4. If flying is so safe, why do they call the airport the terminal?
5. I don't approve of political jokes. I've seen too many of them get elected.

Comments

All of us here at Bienhoff Funeral Home love to read the articles in The Dead Beat. ...Thanks for a great publication.

Austin Simmons, Perry MO

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.)

6. I am a nobody, and nobody is perfect; therefore I am Perfect.
7. Everyday I beat my own previous record for number of consecutive days I've stayed alive.
8. How come we choose from just two people to run for president and 50 for Miss America?
9. Isn't having a smoking section in a restaurant like having a peeing section in a swimming pool.
10. Snowmen fall from Heaven unassembled.

Blonde Nun

One night a blonde nun was praying in her room when God appeared before her "My daughter, you have pleased me greatly. Your heart is full of love for your fellow creatures and your actions and prayers are always for the benefit of others. I have come to you, not only to thank and commend you, but to grant you anything you wish," said God. "Dear Heavenly Father, I am perfectly happy. I am a bride of Christ. I am doing what I love. I lack for nothing material since the Church supports me. I am content in all ways," said the nun. "There must be something you would have of me," said God. "Well, there is one thing," she said. "Just name it," said God. "It's those blonde jokes. They are so demeaning to blondes everywhere, not just to me. I would like for blonde jokes to stop." "Consider it done," said God. "Blonde jokes shall be stricken from the minds of humans everywhere. But surely there is something I could do just for you." "There is one thing. But it's really small, and not worth your time," said the nun. "Name it. Please." said God. "It's the M&Ms," said the nun. "They're so hard to peel."

For All You Lexophiles (Lovers of Words)

- * A bicycle can't stand alone because it is two-tired.
- * What's the definition of a will? (It's a dead giveaway)



(Continued on page 11)

Chuckles (Cont.)

- * Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like a banana.
- * A backward poet writes inverse.
- * In democracy it's your vote that counts; In feudalism it's your count that votes.
- * She had a boyfriend with a wooden leg, but broke it off.
- * A chicken crossing the road is poultry in motion.
- * If you don't pay your exorcist you get repossessed.
- * With her marriage she got a new name and a dress.
- * Show me a piano falling down a mine shaft and I'll show you A-flat minor.
- * When a clock is hungry it goes back four seconds.
- * The man who fell into an upholstery machine is fully recovered.
- * A grenade thrown into a kitchen in France would result in Linoleum Blownapart.
- * You feel stuck with your debt if you can't budge it.
- * Local Area Network in Australia; the LAN down under.
- * He often broke into song because he couldn't find the key.
- * Every calendar's days are numbered.
- * A lot of money is tainted. 'Taint yours and 'taint mine.
- * A boiled egg in the morning is hard to beat.
- * He had a photographic memory which was never developed.
- * A plateau is a high form of flattery.
- * The short fortune teller who escaped from prison was a small medium at large.
- * Those who get too big for their britches will be exposed in the end.
- * When you've seen one shopping center you've seen a mall.
- * Those who jump off a Paris bridge are in Seine.
- * When an actress saw her first strands of gray hair she thought she'd dye.

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- * Bakers trade bread recipes on a knead to know basis.
- * Santa's helpers are subordinate clauses.
- * Acupuncture is a jab well done.
- * Marathon runners with bad footwear suffer the agony of defeat.

The night before one exam, two students tied one on, (well, actually, tied two on, one each), and managed to sleep through the final. They realized they were in serious trouble, so they agreed to tell the professor that they had a flat tire on the way to the exam. "No problem," said the Professor, "Come by my office at 5 P.M. and I'll give you the exam then." Feeling pretty clever, the students spend the intervening time getting information on the exam from students who had already taken it, and making sure they knew how to do the problems. Coming to the professor's office that evening, they were told, "Leave your books in my office, and I'll put you in two separate rooms for the exam." They were both ecstatic to see that the Professor had given them the exact same exam taken by the class that morning. However, there was an additional page tacked on the end, upon which was written, "For 50% of the grade, which tire was flat?"



A lawyer was on vacation in a small farming town. While walking through the streets on a quiet Sunday morning, he came upon a large crowd gather by the side of the road. Going by instinct, the lawyer figured that there was some sort of auto collision. He was eager to get to the injured parties but couldn't get near the car. Being a clever sort, he started shouting loudly, "Let me through! Let me through! I am the son of the victim." The crowd made way for him. Lying in front of the car was a donkey.

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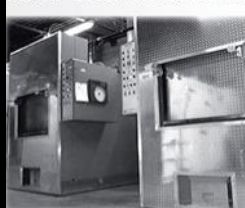


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Death Notices of Fellow Funeral Service Colleagues



ARKANSAS



Edward M. "Eddie" Hahn, 76, of Fort Smith, formerly of Charleston passed away on Oct. 14, 2017. He served in the US Air Force Reserve and was a graduate of the University of Arkansas. He owned and operated Smith Mortuary serving many families throughout the Charleston community and the surrounding areas.

He also owned and operated Arkansas Wilbert Vault for almost 35 years, serving many funeral homes throughout the Arkansas River Valley, Northwest Arkansas and parts of Oklahoma for many years. His services were under the direction of Smith Mortuary.

COLORADO



Charles W. McCulley, 78, of Pueblo, passed away Oct. 14, 2017. He was the founder of the Angelus Chapel Mortuaries in Pueblo and Colorado Springs. From the time he was 8 years old the native Idahoan traveled to Chicago in the summers to work with his

uncle who was head embalmer at a funeral home. He studied at Mortuary Science in San Francisco, California where he graduated second in his class of 1959. He then worked with funeral homes in the Bay area before going to LA and joining Angelus Funeral Home. He served in the U.S. Army for 8 years at Ft. Clayton in Panama Republica de Panama. He heard of a funeral home for sale in Pueblo while in the service and he and wife purchased the Jones Funeral Home in May of 1968 which served the Hispanic and African-American populations of Pueblo. Another innovation was the introduction of lavender-colored vehicles at the time when basic black or white vehicles was the Pueblo standard. His was the first minority-owned funeral home to secure a government contract to take care of the arrangements for military men and women of El Paso County. His services were handled by the Angelus Chapels in Colorado Springs and Pueblo.

KANSAS



Kendall Beckwith, 56, of Larned, passed away Aug. 29, 2017. He was a licensed funeral director/embalmer. The services were under the direction of Beckwith Services & Monuments.



Bryce A. Day, 63, of Wellington, passed away on July 21, 2017. He joined the U.S. Navy and served aboard the USS Denver during the Vietnam War. He was a graduate of Kansas City School of Mortuary Science. He was a retired funeral director. He established the Bryce Day Memorial Foundation to support families in

KANSAS (Cont.)

need of financial assistance for funeral services. Cornejo/Day Funeral Home & Crematory directed his services.



Larry Duane Johnson Sr., 77, of Topeka died on Sept. 6, 2107. He served his country in the U. S. Marine Corps Reserve. He graduated from the California School of Mortuary Science in Los Angeles, CA in 1972 with a Master's degree in Mortuary Science. After graduation he traveled to University of Iowa and became certified as one of the first Eye Enucleators in Topeka. He worked for Bowser Mortuary and J.W. Jones Funeral Home in Kansas City, KS. He purchased Bowser Mortuary in 1976 and changed the name to Bowser-Johnson Funeral Chapel in 1979. He purchased the current location in 1997. He mentored many students entering the field of mortuary science. His services were handled by Bowser-Williams Mortuary.

MISSOURI



R. Stephen Butler, 70, of Bolivar, died October 14, 2017. He was an honor graduate of Dallas Institute of Funeral Service, graduating in 1969. He returned to Bolivar joining his parents Paul D. and Mary Lou Butler where they worked together for many years in the funeral home and ambulance business. He shared his responsibilities at the funeral home with his wife of 49 years Jarolyn (Stanfill) Butler and after they joined the Holman-Howe team. He was active in Missouri and National Funeral Directors Associations. His funeral arrangements were under the direction of Butler Funeral Home.



Billy (Jack) Lindley, 90, of Chillicothe, passed away Oct. 25, 2017. He served in the U.S. Navy during WWII. He graduated from St. Louis College of Mortuary Science and received his Missouri Funeral Director and Embalmers license in 1951. Jack worked for the Runninberger Funeral Home, Harrisonville, MO from 1949-51; and later Langsford Funeral Home in Lee's Summit, MO in 1951-55. While in Nevada, MO he worked at the Ferry Funeral Home. On June 1, 1959 Mrs. Earl Keeney sold her funeral business in Chillicothe to Jack and Dorothy where they lived for 17 years as they acquired Robertson Funeral Homes in Laredo and Chula in 1965 and Austin Funeral Homes at Hale and Tina in 1968. His services were directed by Lindley Funeral Home in Chillicothe.



Thomas P. Moss, 89, of Joplin, died Nov. 2, 2017. He served in the U.S. Army in the 1st Calvary division during the Occupation of Japan. He then enrolled in the St. Louis College of Mortuary Science and graduating in 1948. He began his employment with Ulmer Funeral Home



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MISSOURI (Cont.)

at age 14 and returned after mortuary school as a licensed funeral director and embalmer, remaining there until he and Helen purchased the Moss Funeral Home in Sarcovie, MO in 1960. In 1975, he sold the funeral home and purchased Baxter Vault Company in Baxter Springs, KS, retiring in 2001. His arrangements were under the direction of Thornhill-Dillon Mortuary in Joplin.

Charles R. Williams, Sr., 77, of Charleston, passed away Oct. 28, 2017. He grew up watching his father funeral direct and as a result became passionate about the profession. He graduated from Worsham College of Mortuary Science in Chicago, IL in 1962. Charles did his apprenticeship under Lawrence H. Jones, Sr. in Kansas City, MO. Upon completion, he moved to Charleston, MO in 1966 to work for L.R. Sparks Funeral Home

as a licensed Funeral Director and Embalmer. He later became part owner and operator of the funeral home. He had over 55 years of experience and owned three funeral homes in Howardville, MO, Sikeston, MO and Charleston, MO. Services directed by Williams Funeral Chapel, Charleston.



NEBRASKA



Karen M. Seger, 75, of Atkinson, Nebraska passed away on October 2nd, 2017. She was the wife of Paul F. Seger and mother of Leo P. Seger of Seger Funeral Home in Atkinson, Grandmother of Paul A. Seger of Colonial Chapel in Lincoln, NE and Joshua Gossman, all Nebraska funeral directors. Her services were directed by Seger Funeral Home.

OKLAHOMA



Sandra Kay Sanderson Jackson, 44, of Midwest City passed away on June 2, 2017. She was compassionate and dedicated, which made her a perfect fit for her profession as a funeral director. Her arrangements were under the direction of Barnes Friederich Funeral Home, Midwest City, OK.



Lucille E. Mallet, 100, of Wagoner passed away on Nov. 7, 2017. She was the wife of Floyd Raymond Mallet. In 1949 Lucille, Floyd and his parents purchased the funeral home, now Mallett Funeral Home and Crematory, and the family has been running it ever since. She dearly loved meeting with families and helping them through a difficult time. She was a woman of great kindness, generosity and compassion. Her family was gifted with a great legacy of how to live an awesome life. Her services were directed by Mallett Funeral Home in Wagoner.

TEXAS



Mary Lucas Arnold, 97, of Bryan passed away Nov. 29, 2017. She was the mother-in-law of Jodie Hoyak, former funeral director at Memorial Funeral Chapel. On September 5, 1943 Mary joined the Women's Army Corp to do her part in serving her country during World War II. Her services were under the direction of Memorial Funeral Chapel in Bryan.



(Continued on page 16)

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@thedeat-beat.com



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Death Notices of Fellow Funeral Service Colleagues (Cont.)

TEXAS (Cont.)

(Continued from page 15)



Jane Garza, 65, of Brownsville passed away Nov. 3, 2017. She was the wife of Cris Garza, a funeral director at Funeraria Del Angel Buena Vista, who handled her services.



Pedro R. Gonzales, 72, of Sinton, passed away Oct. 27, 2017. He attended and graduated from Commonwealth College of Science in August 1970. He was employed by Goodwin Funeral Home until becoming owner and operator of Ritchea-Gonzales Funeral Home in December 1977, who directed his funeral services.



Adrian Handley, 65, of Livingston, passed away on Oct. 28, 2017. He was a Funeral Director at Cochran Funeral Home for 25 years. Adrian also worked at funeral homes in Burnet, Hearne, Ft. Stockton and San Angelo. He was the past President of the South East Texas Funeral Directors Association and also served on the Board of the Texas Funeral Directors Association. In 2006, Adrian received The Funeral Director of the Year Award.



Say What? Can You identify These Song Titles from their Description...

1. Oh, member of the round table with missing areas.
2. Boulder of the tinkling metal spheres.
3. Vehicular homicide was committed on Dad's mom by a precipitous darling.
4. Wanted in December: top forward incisors.
5. The apartment of two psychiatrists.
6. The lad is a diminutive percussionist.
7. Sir Lancelot with laryngitis.
8. Decorate the entryways.
9. Cup-shaped instruments fashioned of a whitish metallic element.
10. Oh small Israeli urban center.
11. Far off in a haybin.

Answers below.....

1. Oh Holy Night
2. Jingle Bell Rock
3. Grandma Got Run Over By a Reindeer
4. All I Want for Christmas is My Two Front Teeth.
5. The Nutcracker Suite
6. Little Drummer Boy
7. Silent Night
8. Deck the Halls
9. Silver Bells
10. Oh Little Town of Bethlehem
11. Away in a Manger.

Not Afraid!!

A few minutes before the church services started, the congregation was sitting in their pews and talking. Suddenly, Satan appeared at the front of the church.

Everyone started screaming and running for the back entrance, trampling each other in a frantic effort to get away from evil incarnate. Soon the church was empty except for one elderly gentleman who sat calmly in his pew without moving, seemingly oblivious to the fact that God's ultimate enemy was in his presence.

So Satan walked up to the man and said, "Do you know who I am?"

The man replied, "Yep, sure do."

"Aren't you afraid of me?" Satan asked.

"Nope, sure ain't," said the man.

"Don't you realize I can kill you with one word?" asked Satan.

"Don't doubt it for a minute," returned the old man, in an even tone.

"Did you know that I can cause you profound, horrifying agony for all eternity?" persisted Satan.

"Yep," was the calm reply.

"And you're still not afraid?" asked Satan.



"Nope," said the old man.

More than a little perturbed, Satan asked, "Why aren't you afraid of me?"

The man calmly replied, "Been married to your sister for 48 years."



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Henryetta, OK**

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**Brown Funeral Directors
Borger, TX**

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**Robertson Funeral Home
Memphis, TX**

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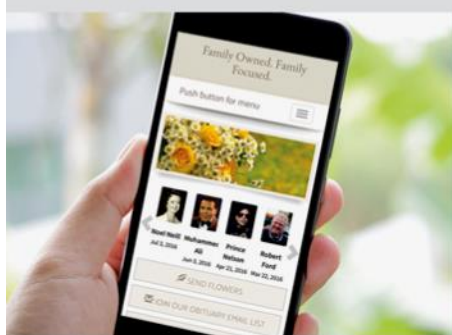
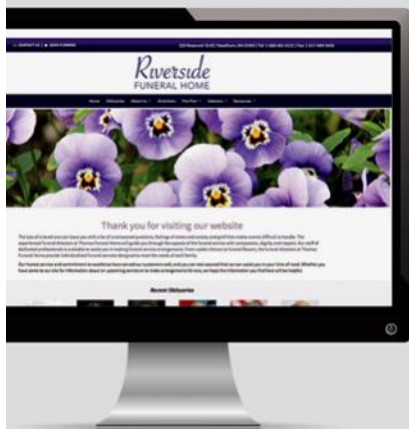
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Boston, MA—On Monday, October 29, **ASD – Answering Service for Directors** was named the winner of the **National Funeral Directors Association's 2017 Innovation Award**. The company was recognized for its **Suicide Telephone Operator Patch (S.T.O.P) System**, a feature that was created by ASD solely to help those in crisis.

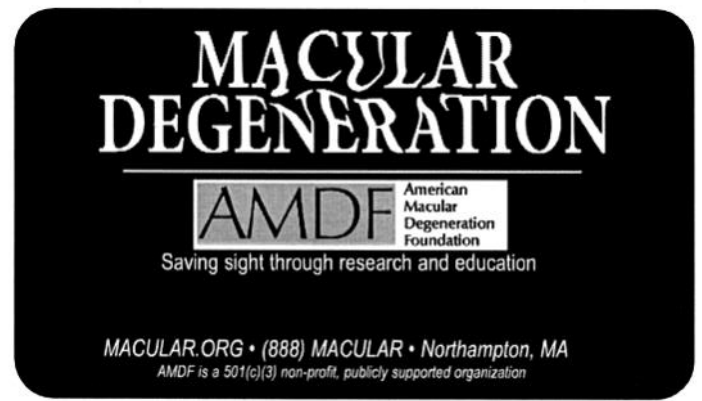
When someone is feeling hopeless or alone, there is no telling who they might reach out to and, in some cases, they contact a funeral home. ASD created the STOP System to give our staff a way to seamlessly connect a caller with a suicide prevention hotline, ensuring these individuals receive the immediate counseling and guidance they need. In the past 11 months, this solution has helped to save six lives.

According to funeral director, **James Delaney** of **Delaney Funeral Home** in Walpole, MA: "ASD handled a call for our funeral home from a gentleman who would have potentially taken his own life. They re-routed him over to the Suicide hotline and I couldn't have been happier with the way the call was handled. It was absolutely spot-on perfect. The gentleman got the help he needed and he got to talk to someone who was a knowledgeable resource that helped him through the crisis."

The S.T.O.P System was designed by ASD's technical team 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.

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 is pleased the funeral service community recognizes the S.T.O.P System as a life-saving solution that



can help them to better support their communities. The company was honored to receive their third Innovation Award during this year's convention. 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.

While no other company has received the NFDA Innovation award more than once, ASD has now won three out of the past six years. In 2012, ASD received the award after introducing the powerful **ASD Mobile** app, which has revolutionized how funeral directors handle their on-call communications. ASD was recognized again in 2015 for its **MobileFH™** feature, a patented feature that allows directors to call any number from their cell phone and display their funeral home's number as the outgoing Caller ID.

ASD Family-Member Owner, **Kevin Czachor**, was on stage to accept the prestigious award from NFDA Past President, **Ashley Cozine**, at the Opening General Session of the NFDA's International Convention & Expo.

"We are humbled to be recognized by the NFDA with our third Innovation Award and for an opportunity to raise awareness about suicide prevention," Czachor said. "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 support."

About ASD

ASD – Answering Service for Directors has created a new class of answering service for the funeral profession. Family owned and operated since 1972, ASD blends state-of-the-art technology with an extensive, 6-month training program focusing on compassionate care. The company's custom-built communication systems and sophisticated mobile tools were designed solely to meet the needs of funeral professionals. By offering funeral directors unmatched protection for their calls, ASD has redefined the role of an answering service for funeral homes. For more information, visit www.myASD.com or call 1-800-868-9950.

What You Cannot See From My Purview

By Reverend Janice Hoffman

2,000 years ago, the people of Corinth asked St. Paul a question: "What is the most important thing about life?" St. Paul gave them an answer that was hard for them to understand, "The things you cannot see", was his response.

What is most important in your life? Of course, family, faith, and health top most people's list but beyond the obvious what are the most important things in your life? As a minister who has officiated many memorial services, I've witnessed first-hand how irrelevant one's career is to those who are grieving their loved one's death. I rarely know the financial status of the deceased and his or her family. These two things somehow aren't so important when someone transitions from this world.

What I hear is important, meaning what is shared by family and friends, is who their loved one was as a person. Often I hear, "She was a role model for me and so many others as well." Or, "He would've given the shirt off his back to anyone who needed it." It isn't uncommon to hear a family member or friend tell a story that makes everyone in the room chuckle as they reflect back on their memory as well.

Once during a service in the time set aside for sharing, the grandson of the deceased decided to come up front and speak, which is pretty impressive just by itself. You could hear a pin drop as he spoke these words, "Whenever I saw my grandfather, he always asked me to come visit him. He told me he gets lonely but whenever I come to visit, it really made his day and put a smile on his face. I wished I had done what he asked. If I could change one thing, it would be that I had taken time out of my so called busy life to visit my grandfather. I now realize how happy it would have made him but now I don't have the opportunity and for that I feel regret." Profound words coming out of an eighteen year old's mouth.

It may seem too simple to mention the importance of the words we speak as well as the words we think inside our thoughts? Even the words we text back and forth, what five to ten words do you choose to enter before you hit the word "Send"?

Another invisible yet important thing is the time we spend with others. We aren't just 'having lunch', 'going shopping' or 'catching up'. Rather we are creating a memory. Someday one of us will make our transition and the other will reflect back on that 'lunch' or the 'day we went shopping' or 'chatted'. Quite possibly it may cause your eyes to well up. As the years go by, that memory could well be the memory that puts a smile on your face when you are missing your person.

I relate the concept of creating memories to as many people as I can because I want them to realize how precious time spent with those we love is and how unknown the future will be. In other words, treasure those moments together because we never know how many moments we will have with that person.

Knowing when to speak and when it is best to save your thoughts for the audience in your head is learned, yet invisible. Having the self-discipline to keep that thought from passing through your lips into the land of "You can't take it back". Not pointing out another's mistake even if you knew ahead of time what would happen has tremendous value to the relationship of two people. I often say, there is much wrong with being right. It is a party for one that only lasts a few minutes.

Offering help to someone who cannot help themselves may not be rewarded or acknowledged, yet it is very important to the person on the receiving end. Listening, free of judgment and giving advice feels supportive and comforting.

Letting someone off the hook for making a mistake is one of the greatest gifts you can offer yet it has no monetary value. It is completely intangible, and yet, it is priceless. Forgiveness isn't for the other person, it is for us. We are free when we forgive someone for not being able to do better at the time we wanted them to.

These 'invisible things' *are* what is important in life: being of service to another, having compassion for others, offering kind words, listening with empathy rather than giving advice, remaining humble when being praised. Quality time with someone we love will turn into a cherished memory. What is most important? While none of these things can be seen with your eyes, it will become clearer as time passes, they *are* what is most important in life.



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.

New Year Financial Checklist

By Richard S. Lee

As the new year approaches, it is always a good idea for an owner to go over a checklist of their business and look at certain items that may need to be addressed.

Debt Review - As a business owner, it is always important to periodically review your debt situation to see if it may be advantageous to refinance your existing debt in order to take advantage of lower interest rates. The questions to find out are what are the current interest rates compared to what my current rate is and would it make sense, financially to refinance after factoring in all closing costs, etc.?

Accounts Receivable issues - What are my current and long term receivables (90+ days old) and do I need to adopt a better collections policy? Am I having to wait 60-90+ days for reimbursement from insur-

ance companies? If your answer is yes, then you may want to consider using an Insurance Assignment Funding Company. This allows the owner to get paid quickly on a pre-need policy that becomes at-need. There are several companies that offer this service and the charge is minimal - usually 3.5% - 4% of the policy amount.

Current FMV of my business - Having a business valuation performed on by an industry expert would be a great idea in order to see if there are any operating concerns or issues that may be affecting the value of your business. Knowledge of these issues gives you time to make any necessary changes so that your business value will be at its highest at the time of a sale.

Review your current pricing - Review your current GPL and casket/vault pricing and make any necessary

adjustments in order to account for any higher operating costs and any increases in merchandise costs from your suppliers.



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**



Christmas Spirit—Joanne's Thoughts



A person on Facebook asked people to send their most heart-warming holiday memories. He showed 17 of them. Guess what was the major theme throughout the stories—that people cared. They mentioned things that brought joy. Whether receiving something or something happened that showed how much people wanted to share—whether time, money or gifts.

So why only at Christmas time? Well, it may be that we have more opportunities. Or maybe because our society has certain expectations of what should happen at the holidays. Our actions may be related and influenced by family traditions or just things that constantly show up in books, TV or movies during the holidays.

For whatever reason, it makes the giver and the person receiving the gift feel good doesn't it? Isn't that worth the effort? Shouldn't we go that extra mile to bring joy into people's lives.

Many of the stories had people on bad times. Finances—health—something that was missing and someone met the needs. If we helped year round wouldn't it make a better world. How many times do you know of someone that you could help and yet don't? Maybe this is why all of the "Go Fund Me" accounts do so well.

At the end of many news programs they show a positive story. Lately I keep thinking why is there not more positive stories throughout the broadcast. Recently with the many natural disasters many people have come forward to help based on news stories. Isn't this an example of Christmas Spirit throughout the year? Maybe we should try to do more!!

Hope is what we need to get through life. If you happen to be suffering from some issue, your hope is what helps you as you struggle.

At the holidays we have the opportunity to give joy and hopefully that will help us through the year. But just think if we gave that same joy and it wasn't the holidays? Isn't it remarkable how the smallest things make such great memories that carry on for years?

The people in the stories shared many instances of gift giving from strangers, to people traveling to helping someone or just to be with family and truly showing that someone went out of their way. PEOPLE mattered. PEOPLE reached out to ONE ANOTHER!

Thank you for all of those that remember how to make the world a much better place— if we care and love one another and give hope to those who need it. Merry Christmas!!

Funeral Service Foundation Welcomes Six New Trustees and Elects Its 2016-2017 Executive Committee

Brookfield, Wis. - The Funeral Service Foundation's Board of Trustees voted in six new trustees and elected its 2017-2018 executive committee at its annual fall meeting held during the NFDA International Convention & Expo last month in Boston.

Noteworthy additions to the board include Stephanie Kann, the first woman elected to serve on the Foundation's executive committee, and Allan Cole, the first-ever trustee from outside the United States.

Representatives from across the funeral service spectrum serve on the Foundation's board. And in accordance with its bylaws, the board consists of 60 percent NFDA-member funeral directors. Trustees volunteer their time and talents to advance the Foundation's mission to support funeral service in building meaningful relationships with the families and the communities it serves.

"Our board holds a deep respect for the funeral service profession, and takes its role very seriously," said Foundation Executive Director Danelle O'Neill. "Each of our new trustees will add great expertise to the board, as well as a demonstrated commitment to the Foundation's mission."

The newest trustees are Bob Arrington, owner, Arrington Funeral Directors, Jackson, Tennessee (Arrington has served as the NFDA liaison since 2013); J. Mark Busch, vice president and funeral director, Busch Funeral and Crematory Services, Cleveland, Ohio; Allan Cole, president and owner, MacKinnon

and Bowes, Toronto, Ontario, Canada; R. Bryant Hightower, owner and funeral director, Hightower Family Funeral Homes, Carrollton, Georgia (NFDA liaison); Brad Speaks, president and CEO, Speaks Family Legacy Chapels, Independence, Missouri; and Eric Tanzberger, senior vice president and CFO, Service Corporation International, Houston, Texas.

The Board of Trustees also elected Arrington as Foundation chair; Stephanie Kann, program director, Worsham Community College, Wheeling, Illinois as chair-elect; and Steven Gackenbach, group president of memorialization at Matthews Memorialization, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, as secretary/treasurer. Bill Wappner, president, Wappner Funeral Directors and Crematory, Mansfield, Ohio will serve as immediate past chair.

Justin Baxley, board of directors, Foundation Partners Group, Orlando, Florida; James Busch, president and funeral director, Busch Funeral and Crematory Services, Cleveland, Ohio; Randy Schoedinger, CEO, Schoedinger Funeral and Cremation Services, Columbus, Ohio; Gerard "Jerry" Schoen III, management/community outreach director, Lake Lawn Metairie Funeral Home, New Orleans, Louisiana; and Sheri Richardson Stahl, vice president and business manager, The Island Funeral Home and Crematory, Hilton Head, South Carolina transitioned off the board after dedicated service to the Foundation.

Senior Thoughts

- * My memory's not as sharp as it used to be. Also, my memory's not as sharp as it used to be.
- * Know how to prevent sagging? Just eat till the wrinkles fill out.
- * I've still got it, but nobody wants to see it.
- * I'm getting into swing dancing. Not on purpose. Some parts of my body are just prone to swinging.
- * It's scary when you start making the same noises as your coffeemaker

- * These days about half the stuff in my shopping cart says, "For Fast Relief."
- * Don't think of it as getting hot flashes. Think of it as your inner child playing with matches.
- * Don't let aging get you down. It's too hard to get back up!
- * Remember: You don't stop laughing because you grow old. You grow old because you stop laughing.

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Grave..... I Became an Undertaker

****Part 1****

By Lowell Pugh

EVIL !! - I didn't understand the word as a toddler. I didn't know what the thing on the wall was...but often when my Daddy spoke to it something BAD happened to MY plans.

It was kind of like a box with two silver eyes and a long nose that was black on the wand with one ear and a little tail my parents sometimes twisted to get its attention. Mommy called it a "telly fone," but to me it was EVIL.

Sometimes I would be in the car waiting to go to Grandpa Bill's farm or the picture show and that thing would ring for Daddy to talk to it. Then he would say... "I got a death call or something like a "amblets call"—my trip was off. Bleh!!!!

I kind of knew something about death after my first dog didn't come out from under the back porch one morning, but that "amblets" thing was still a puzzle.

By the time I was 4 I had figured out that Dad did this death thing over at Uncle Enoch's big

house about 300 feet from our house. People called uncle's house "a funeral home."

Daddy put those dead people in a nice box called a casket and lots of people came and looked at them. Some people cried and someone would put their arms around them and hug them and say "He's in a better place." Well, I thought that uncle Enoch's house was pretty nice too.

My mother Hazel made dresses for some of the dead people that didn't have any new clothes. One morning she went over to the funeral home to help Dad dress a lady.



I woke up early and was hungry. There was a whole chocolate pie in the old ICE box. Why wait for oatmeal? Funeral priorities or not—that was the last time I got 1/2 of a chocolate pie for breakfast.

By the time I was 10 years old, I knew everything to know about a funeral home. It just didn't happen to involve me. I was playing in our



yard one day and saw my Dad backing the 1936 Miller Packard Combination (hearse/ambulance) up to the

elevator door to unload Mrs. Snell who had died in another town. I ran over to greet Dad just as he opened the hearse door. As he reached in to pull the cot out, I realized that even though Mrs. Snell was covered with a sheet—she was the DEAD-EST person I had ever encountered!! My Dad said, "Sonny, take hold of the cot and help me." I grabbed a hold of the removal cot automatically but my brain though "hhhhelp?? ME?!?!?!"

To be continued sometime if Joanne needs more filler. For heaven's sake send in your cards and letters.....

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Toll Free (800) 575-2611 Fax (417) 537-4797

Email-editor@thedead-beat.com

Website: www.thedead-beat.com

“Dear Counselor....”

By Bill Stalter

Dear Counselor,

Our funeral home has made a commitment to families that purchased NPS contracts sold for another funeral home. How will we be impacted by the NPS Receiver’s transfer of the preneed contracts to a Texas insurance company?

While the assumption agreement governing the transfer provides for the successor insurance company to follow the Receiver’s claim procedures, funeral homes with questions should contact Texas Service Life with any questions. We were not always in agreement with the Receiver’s interpretation of the obligations of Missouri funeral homes. Texas preneed laws influenced some of the Receiver’s announcements. A frequent question concerns the forms and procedures to follow regarding consumers that want to transfer their NPS contract to a funeral home other than the original provider. The alternate provider should not be obligated to honor the contract, but funeral homes will want to confirm that fact with Texas Service Life before making any assurances to families.

With regard to questions, the NPS receiver provided the following notice on its website:

Effective November 1, 2017, please direct any questions related to Lincoln Memorial insurance policies and associated preneed funeral contracts for the assumed Covered Obligations to:

Texas Service Life

Email LBLClaims@tslic.com or
LBLSERVICE@tslic.com.

Toll Free (877) 248-1111

Main Fax (512) 263-6981

Claims Fax (512) 637-4989

Mail address: 2121 Lohmans Crossing Rd,
Ste 504-577, Lakeway, TX 78734

The SDR can no longer take any action in connection with an assumed Lincoln policy and its related NPS preneed contract.

We would recommend putting your questions in writing and emailing them to Texas Service Life.



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.
Email: wastal@swbell.net

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Dylan's Directives

Stress... our very best friend.

By Dylan Stopher

"That which does not kill us, makes us stronger."

~ Friedrich Nietzsche

I know, I know... you're thinking to yourself that I must be crazy to propose that stress could be our "very best friend" in our chosen profession. But give me a few moments, and I'll explain why I see it that way. I promise, I'm only a little crazy.

For starters, let's clear the air and establish that I am not speaking about chronic stress; that would be unrelenting demands and pressures that never seem to have an end. These stressors are constant, and awful, and painful. These are not your best friend. Further, we have chosen a profession where we, as licensed funeral professionals, will be the face of either the good or the bad. And it doesn't matter if it's actually "our fault," because the family will always come back to the funeral director. That's the choice we've made.

What I want to talk about is acute stress. This is momentary, and comes from any number of sources, and I promise you it is definitely your best friend. You know why? Because when you are under stress due to the pressures of the family you are currently serving, you rise to the occasion and exceed expectations. That's our wonderful pressure-cooker of a profession of choice, and it's not for the faint of heart.

So let's examine the first thing about serving families that we all know is a stressful subject... deadlines! We all have them, we all know them, and the families we serve are not aware that there sometimes really is a time past which the obituary will not run in tomorrow's edition. There is also a time frame in which a DVD can be produced, and the family may not know or understand that. Nor should they, unless their funeral professional educates them clearly on that topic. (Remember, we do between one and four funerals and/or arrangements each day, and the families we serve may make arrangements three times in their entire life.) It is in this way that we must learn the finesse of explaining an absolute time to a family in a state that is somewhat void of time as they struggle to understand their loss. Granted, not all families have the same level of struggle. But grief is real for every one of them, and in almost 20 years I've never met a family who makes every single deadline with every single item... something always comes up.

Second, how about we look at the other major stressor in the case of the families we serve, which would be our own mistakes. Don't shake your head like that, you defi-

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nately have made at least one of every possible mistakes if you've been in our profession for longer than a year. Personally, I could tell you stories about people who absolutely have cut clothing up the front (a \$500 ladies sweater), buried jewelry, shaved facial hair that shouldn't have been removed, placed people in incorrect caskets (corrected before visitation, before anyone ever saw them, but still), cremated before getting fingerprints or hair samples, etc. Trust me, we've been there in almost any scenario you can imagine. However, there's a truth about moments like this with regards to the people who make these mistakes... you either learn from them or you leave. Some people cannot handle the stress, and they bail in the face of huge mistakes and embarrassment. The rest of us (I'm including you, because since you're reading this I assume you stuck it out) take that situation and learn from it. I tell people all the time that I have made every mistake you can imagine, but I only made them once. If you learn from these stressful moments, you will be the better professional.

And last, let's also look at a truth that we need to understand about ourselves. There are two types of people when it comes to stress in general... those who suffer under it and those who thrive. I know both types of people, and I have served with both types of people. I cannot speak to the suffering under the stress side, because I am not that person. For me, the stress in acute situations brings a laser-focus on the right steps to accomplish the same goal that existed before, but now with a course correction. This is how we're trained to think. One of my former professors used to tell us all the time that when a mistake happens, you need to slow down and breathe. Don't rush. Think for a moment. And he would reiterate this in every class, all the time. Consequently, everyone who is still in the business from my graduating class will always apply this method when an error arises. Therefore, I would encourage you to remember that you need to know yourself. If you're not sharpened by stress, then you need someone to lean on so that mistakes won't be compiled upon other mistakes.

And to touch on one small thing, the finesse I mentioned earlier is a necessary skill to develop. You see, in the face

Dylan's Directives Stress... our very best friend. (Cont.)

of giant mistakes or tiny and almost unnoticeable error, someone has to go and explain to the family what is happening and why... and what will be done about it. That someone, funeral professional, is you. It's me. It's all of us at one time or another, and it is imperative that we remain the picture of absolute calm confidence as we explain what has happened and what will happen going forward. The family will lean on that confidence, and that is what will get them through in most situations. In others, prepare to be dressed down in full view of multiple people. And you stand there and take it, because you are the big shoulders... the face of the firm... the one responsible for the successes and the failures, whether you earned them or not.

So here's the thing... people always talk about stress, and every one of us understands what that means in our daily lives. We all know why we're a little crazy, and we all know why we sometimes just need to cry for a second. Stress is real. Stress is common. And in the case of acute

stress, I will advocate that it is the best friend and companion of the licensed funeral professional. Would you like to know why I believe this?

Because it makes you better for the next family... every single time.



About the author:

Dylan Stopher is a licensed funeral director and embalmer in the states of Texas and Louisiana, and currently serves with Wilbert Vaults of Houston, LLC. He is an active member of the SETFDA and the TFDA, and a regular contributor to both the Texas Director Magazine and the Millennial Director blog.



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MISSOURI
Michael Nash
Regional Marketing Manager
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NEW MEXICO
Amber Lee
Regional Marketing Manager
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ALee@Wilbert.com

OKLAHOMA
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KKirkland@Wilbert.com

SOUTH TEXAS
Jennifer DiCamillo
Regional Marketing Manager
210-612-9369
JDicamillo@wilbert.com

WEST TEXAS
Amber Lee
Regional Marketing Manager
806-390-1390
ALee@Wilbert.com

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The Dead Beat
P.O. 145, Golden City, MO 64748
Toll Free (800) 575-2611 Fax (417) 537-4797
Email-editor@thedead-beat.com
Website: www.thedead-beat.com

THE DEAD BEAT
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