

# The Dead Beat

## The Caregiver's Soapbox



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

Early Spring, 2008

www.thedead-beat.com

Volume 8 Issue 6

### Your Senses, Memories & Grief

By Joanne Howard

How many times have you heard someone talk about some sensory experience that triggered grief? For instance, I hear a song that my daughter performed as her last church special and I always think of her. In fact, I wonder if she's visiting me. But in the past just hearing that song brought a wave of grief that I just sat there and cried. So I thought about all the things that people have mentioned that triggered grief responses. Truly I feel that what it triggers are memories that we have associated with our lost love ones. So I tried to re-search the relationship of our senses, memories and grief.



The sensory experiences that seemed to trigger grief encompassed all the senses. First there is the **auditory** sense, for example you hear a favorite song, the voice of the lost love one on an answering machine, video, or other recording. The **visual** sensory experiences are seeing pictures, videos, favorite spots you shared (houses, vacation spots, etc.), handwriting, and other visual cues. The **olfactory** experiences include the person's smell on clothing, their favorite perfume or some food they loved. The **sense of taste** is related to foods or experiences you shared with your loved one. Finally the **tactile** sense is related to the textures of clothing, objects or just touching another person.

So what research is there on this subject? The first problem was deciding how I needed to request information on the internet. I asked about several combinations of the senses and grief, but decided what I really needed was to look at grief triggers. An actual book on this subject did not surface, but several articles related to grief gave me some things to consider.

An interesting term surfaced - "STUG- or Sudden Temporary Upsurges of Grief." It was coined by Therese Rando in her book, **Treatment of Complicated Mourning** (Research Press, 1993). I hit the jackpot with her chapter on

this term. This information would shed some light on grief triggers and their reactions. It even made mention of reactions related to stimuli. Different types of stimuli are how the sensory experiences could be described.

The actual description of STUG reaction was "brief periods of acute grief for the loss of the loved one, which are catalyzed by a precipitant that underscores the absence of the deceased and/or resurrects memories of the death, the loved one, or feelings about the loss." The majority of these reactions are considered "part of uncomplicated mourning," but sometimes they can and do indicate "unfinished or complicated mourning." In

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## When A Partner Dies

By Ken Doka

We share many intimate relationships. Marriage is, of course, the most common. Yet, there are others. We may live with another person. We may have a long dating relationship that has not led to either living together or marriage.

Some of these relationships may involve sexual intimacy; others do not. Some may be with members of the other gender while others may be same-sex partners. In the end, though, only two things really matter. We loved our companion and now they have died.

Grief ensues. Grief is not isolated to marriage and family but follows an attachment, and attachment comes in many forms.

So does grief. Each of us experiences grief in our own way. For some of us, the experience can be very physical—our bodies literally hurt. For others of us, grief may be more of an emotional experience—a roller coaster of feelings. In still other cases, grief may affect us spiritually or influence the ways we act. Grief may even have an effect on us cognitively, making it hard to focus or concentrate. Each of us will have our own unique combination of reactions as we experience loss and grief.

While the grief reactions are similar to married couples, we may not have the same support that a married partner does. We might have experienced this already. We may have found we had to explain our presence at the hospital or funeral home. We may have had to take vacation days to attend the rituals,

as unmarried relationships are oftentimes not acknowledged by our workplaces. The sympathy cards may be few and far between. Others may simply not recognized the enormity of our loss or the intensity of our grief. The grief is disenfranchised—unacknowledged by others.

While grief may not have the same social support, we still mourn when a partner dies. We need to find safe places to explore our feelings and reactions. This may be an understanding confidante, a receptive support group, or a grief counselor.

It may be that the funeral ritual was itself unsatisfying. Perhaps the relationship was overlooked or ignored. In such a case, we may need to create our own ritual. Privately or with a few trusted friends, we can mourn the person we know and the relationship we lost.

The important thing is that we do not disenfranchise ourselves. We need to acknowledge our own grief and create our own opportunities to mourn. And, we need to find others who can support us in our grief.

My support group reinforced that lesson a number of years ago. I have, for years, facilitated a support group for men in a section of New York City. Most are older, retired, blue-collar men who have been widowed. Last year, a gay man who had lost his companion asked to join the group. He wondered how accepting the group would be. I wondered too but en-

couraged him to attend.

He did. He tentatively told his story to the group. At first they were confused, then realized the nature of his loss. There was a moment of awkward silence. Then, one of the older men, a tough, retired steamfitter, put his hand on the younger man's shoulder. "But you loved him," the steamfitter asked gruffly but with compassion, "right?" The younger man tearfully nodded. "Then you belong here!" the older man continued.

He was right. Our grief, in the final analysis, is a sign of our lasting love.

Reprinted from Hospice Foundation of America **Journeys**. **Journeys** is published monthly by the Hospice Foundation of America, 1621 Connecticut Ave., NW, #300, Washington, DC 20009—www.hospicefoundation.org., 1-800-854-3402. Annual subscription-\$12.00.

Kenneth J. Doka, Ph.D., is a Professor of Gerontology at the College of New Rochelle. Dr. Doka's books include: **Disenfranchised Grief; Living with Life Threatening Illness; Living with Grief: After Sudden Loss; Death and Spirituality; Living With Grief: When Illness is Prolonged; Living with Grief: Who We Are, How We Grieve; AIDS, Fear & Society; Aging and Developmental Disabilities; and Children Mourning, Mourning Children.** In addition to these books, he has published over 60 articles and chapters. Dr. Doka is the associate editor of the journal **Omega** and editor of **Journeys**, a newsletter of the bereaved. Dr. Doka has served as a consultant to medical, nursing, hospice organizations, as well as businesses, educational and social service agencies. As Senior Consultant to the Hospice Foundation of America, he assists in planning, and participates in their annual Teleconference. In 1998, the Association for Death Education and Counseling honored him by presenting him an Award for Outstanding Contributions to the field of death education. In March 1993, he was elected President of the Association for Death Education and Counseling. Dr. Doka was elected in 1995 to the Board of the International Work Group on Dying, Death and Bereavement and elected Chair in 1997. Dr. Doka is an ordained Lutheran Clergyman.

(And a heck of a nice guy— Editor & Publisher)



## Scattering Cremains in a Natural Area

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## Mortuary Muse\*

\*to think or consider deeply; meditate  
By Lowell

I think of Laurel and Hardy and their oft quoted, "Another fine mess you've gotten us into," every time a new regulatory/preneed dilemma raises its ugly head. We don't have any investigative reporting ability and publishing bi-monthly makes follow-up difficult, but some things beg to be discussed. The former employee of a funeral home sent us a packet of information about the investigation of the firm's preneed irregularities. Names and some specifics are omitted because there may still be some judicial proceedings or it could be old news by the time we mail this issue.

A funeral home in east central Texas failed to deposit prepaid funeral contract payments in the required trust account. They were also selling insurance-funded preneed and had not submitted the payments to the insurance companies. The Texas Department of Banking seized their preneed records in September, 2007. An Agreed Order was finalized January 9,

2008. To avoid a Cease & Desist Order the firm was required to meet a number of stipulations including: restitution to preneed contract purchasers or the insurance companies to reinstate policies, \$340,522.91; compensation to an insurance company for lost interest earnings, \$72,866.22 and administrative penalties, \$37,500. It was noted that the funeral home had serviced their obligations to 20 clients that had already died.

Newspaper clippings that were sent to us omitted the figures in their story and quoted the owner as saying, "And everything goes along as usual." The former employee felt like they were getting off too easy. Still unresolved he said was the firm's obligation to fund the matching funds to his and his wife's retirement plan for the period from July 13, 2001 through April 30, 2007. The employee had a signed agreement that the former employer owes \$37,934.04 and promised to pay in full by December 31, 2007. As

of February 14, 2008, nothing had been paid.

Copies of other letters to the former employee indicated that the Department of Insurance had opened a potential disciplinary case in the matter. The Department of Banking affirmed that their "....authority to regulate compliance...is limited to administrative enforcement actions and not criminal prosecution." The Banking Department had also sent copies to the Enforcement Division, Department of Insurance and Chet Robbins, Executive Director, Texas Funeral Commission.

Regulatory commissions in all states are cautious in complaint investigations. They are obligated to serve the public, but they do not want to harm a business needlessly. Consequently for victims sometimes justice comes at a snail's pace. Business operations are getting so complicated with so many different regulatory

*(Continued on page 5)*

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## Funeral Home Manager to Retire After Four Decades of Service

FORT WORTH, Texas -- February 22, 2008 -- As of February 29, 2008,



**Don Buchanan**  
Funeral Home  
Manager

Don Buchanan will retire after more than 42 years of service as a funeral director. For the last 33 years, Mr. Buchanan has served as the managing director of the Mount Olivet Funeral Home.

Jon Stephenson, President of the Mount Olivet, Greenwood, and Arlington Funeral Homes and Cemeteries stated, "In an occupation that is demanding in more ways than one, Don has been a steady rock to client families and to our employees, providing thousands of families in our community the benefits of his genuine care, compassion and service."

After attending Drury College in Springfield, Missouri and graduating from what is now the Dallas Institute of Funeral Service, the Oklahoma native began his career in Fort Worth at Mount Olivet Cemetery in 1968. In 1975, the

historic cemetery opened Mount Olivet Funeral Home and Buchanan became its first and only managing director.

Active in church and numerous civic organizations, Mr. Buchanan has held numerous leadership positions over the years. He is a past-president of the North Fort Worth Rotary Club, the North Texas Funeral Directors Association, the Texas Funeral Directors Association, and is a member of the Tarrant Masonic Lodge.

Mr. Buchanan plans to stay busy in his retirement and looks forward to spending more time with his wife and doing some projects around his home in Haslet. He enjoys tinkering with his restored 1957 Chevy and competing in local car shows. He is married to Susan and has two sons, Bryan and Jason, as well as two grandchildren.

Mount Olivet Funeral Home is part of a community-oriented organization which is comprised of three funeral homes, two cemeteries with mausoleums, two flower shops, and a crematory.



## Colleagues Lost or Found

**Virgil L. Parkhill-Texas License 8703**

Charles W. Smith wants to contact you  
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**Lou Leopker, Janet Vogel,  
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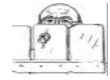
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## Behind the Back Fence

By Lowell

**Canadian Funeral News, February, 2008** has a great story about the six funeral homes in Lanark County in western Ottawa. Tired of burying indigents for the amount of money allowed by the municipality at the expense of their regular customers, they drew a line in the sand.

They asked the authorities to pay what the general public would have to pay for a 'traditional funeral that would include

two hours of visitation plus a service in the funeral home chapel or church followed by interment in a local cemetery.' A grey cloth flat-top casket was included in the price. Clergy gratuities and newspaper obituaries were not included and must be negotiated with the family.

The six funeral homes' average price for that service is \$5,169 and this is what they asked the municipality to pay. Social Services which contributes an amount to the

municipalities for indigent burial disputed the cost, but the funeral directors widened their survey area and still came within \$36 give or take of the \$5,169 average charge. An additional \$750 for cemetery charges or cremation and coroner fees is allowed.

The funeral directors, headed by Reg Gamble, C.R. Gamble Funeral Homes in Almonte, Ontario made a strong case for a fair price. The elected officials had the courage to increase their contribution to make up the short fall between what Social Services contributed to the municipality and the requested \$5,169 per case.

And how much was Social Services contributing to the county for indigent cases? —About \$2,250. When I read that, I nearly fell out of my chair. Where did we go wrong? Dead Beat Readers, please let us know what your county or city pays????

About the Author:

Lowell Pugh has funeral director and embalmer licenses in Missouri and Texas and continues the operation of the 104-year-old family funeral home. He is publisher of **The Dead Beat** which began in 1999. He can be contacted at **The Dead Beat** address.

### Mortuary Muse (Cont.)

facets that there needs to be some modification to the process in most states.

I wonder why the typical commission/board couldn't be comprised of members from each discipline that is involved in the regulated profession. A funeral commission might have banking, health, insurance and justice department members along with funeral directors and the obligatory consumer advocate. Then perhaps one entity could take care of the complete process. We could have one-stop shopping or eliminate them all. Either way the cascade of preneed abuse will probably continue until death care is taken over by something like the U.S.P.S. governing board.....



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## *After-Thoughts —My Mother, The Survivor*

*By Joanne Howard*

The other day I was thinking about all that my mom had gone through in her life up to the present with her experiences in the nursing home. I thought to myself that she had adapted to her present conditions rather well - much better than the majority of us, if presented with the same living conditions even though she has said, "I really won't recommend this place." Then I continued with that train of thought about all the things that she had survived and wondered if that was what had helped me survive the many situations in my life.

So I sat down and in essence wrote my mom's life history including all the situations that she survived. I'm sure she won't mind my sharing some aspects of her life. She's proud of what I do and I'm proud of her that she's survived.

Evelyn Julia Haeckel was born December 13, 1925 to Lydia and Edwin Haeckel in St. Louis, Missouri. Her mother was slightly older at 35 when my mom was born. She was welcomed home by two considerably older sisters. Another older sister had died at a very young age.

Her life was probably typical for the times, but those times included "The Great Depression." She has never talked in relation to that, so I really don't know what effect that had on her life. But in 1937, an event impacted her life greatly. Her parents divorced after 25 years of marriage. She was twelve at the time and throughout my lifetime has mentioned it. I feel that it influenced many things in her life especially in relation to men in her life. Her mother never remarried and lived until her 90's.

This traumatic divorce in her teens left her oldest sister the one ruling the household since she was the only one working and bringing in any money. My grandmother never worked. I'm not sure what the financial situation was after the divorce, but I got the distinct impression, that times were tough. My mom survived, even if she wonders what happened to a special doll she had when she

was a child.

Her next challenge in life was in her junior year of high school. She wanted to be a secretary and wanted to take business classes in high school. At that time they wanted her to take many other kinds of classes. This led to her quitting high school to enter the business world, so the class of 1943 or 1944 had one less graduate. Though she did not complete high school she did survive in the work atmosphere.

While she was working some friends introduced her to her future husband. She married in February, 1948 to Frank Spellazza who would eventually become my dad. During her marriage to Frank, many different trials were presented to her. First, she lost her first child to miscarriage. In those days not much was done or said about it, so I can't recall her speaking much about it except to say she lost the child. After that she had my brother and then three years later I came along. This led to challenge number two when I was born. Some medical problems after my delivery led to "a touch-and-go situation with her life. She survived, but not without some potential future problems..

Life was going pretty good for Evelyn with her husband, two children, nice house and story-book kind of existence. Then her older sister decided to get married. My grandmother had been staying with her eldest daughter, so when her new husband didn't want anyone living with them, my grandmother had no where to go. My mom and dad decided to let her stay with them. Trial number three in her marriage was having her mother live in her ideal existence. As you can imagine, things did not go very well, and marriage survival came only after my grandmother moved on. I don't know all the particulars because I was very young at

the time.

Life went back to normal and her little family moved to a new house. Then several years later tragedy struck which was the final trial in this marriage. In November, 1965 after 17 years of marriage the love of her life died of a massive heart attack. This time it took a lot of help to keep surviving.

Prescription drugs, shock treatments or whatever was needed to shake her from her depression and led to her survival. At the time her 16-year-old son and 13-year-old daughter (me) had to hang on for a bumpy ride. She moved out of the house she shared with Frank to another house in the same school district for her children. She survived again and life went on even though she had some very lonely times.

Then in 1968 she had medical problems which possibly may have been related to her last pregnancy and led to an operation. After this operation she seemed fine, but something happened and she ended up in a coma. She spent a month in intensive care where she had had at least 21 complications. One night her blood pressure dropped so low that her death was expected. A brain specialist said that if she woke up she would be a vegetable. But she did wake up and learned to walk again and eventually made it home.

Yes, she survived against the odds again. Eventually she got a government job, her children graduated from high school and her daughter even graduated from college and went on to graduate school and moved on in their lives.

Through the years she had many male companions, but no one had made Frank's status yet. One companion that she got rather close with, died in her apartment of a heart attack. Grief hits again, but she continues with life. She relocates several times and finally decides to move to Florida where her daughter and husband were living.

In Florida she lived with her daughter

*(Continued on page 8)*





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## Afterthoughts (Cont.)

(Continued from page 6)

and son-in-law until she got a job and place of her own. In one of her new jobs she met and married her second husband, Bill Sprouse in 1984. Marriage number two had as many challenges and joys too. During this time period her daughter and son provided her with grandchildren. I had my two daughters and my brother had two sons and a daughter. Her challenges were a teenage stepdaughter, a step daughter-in-law that died of cancer, other deaths related to her new family, and numerous moves from Florida to Michigan to Missouri.

After a few years in Missouri, she began her continuing Missouri tragedies. Her second granddaughter Laura died in 1997 from bacterial meningitis at 10 years old. It was hard for her to lose her granddaughter (my youngest daughter), but it was especially hard to see my pain from the loss, but she supported me and survived.

The next tragedy involved her husband Bill, he died in 1999 when his van overturned and was killed him instantly on his way home from work. This throws her life into a tailspin, but me, my husband Claude and remaining daughter Amy get her through. Yes, she survived losing another spouse after fifteen years.



After moving several times in Golden City she became friends with an elderly gentleman who eventually ended up taking care of her after helping with various projects around her house.

Four years after her second husband died, in 2003 her nineteen-year-old first granddaughter (my daughter Amy) died in an automobile accident on the same road as her husband had died. She grieves again and suffers watching me lose my second and last child. She still has grandchildren from her son, but she had spent more time with my children. Again through the pain and sorrow she did survive, but her mind showed all the wear and tear her life had had on it.

Her gentleman friend decided he couldn't help her anymore. I had to make the decision to put her in the nursing home. She lasted about eight months in the residential care part of the facility, but at the end of November she was moved to the special needs wing.

Yes, as I have said all along she survived. She has adjusted to the new location but within four months her roommate has died. She has accepted her fate with grace, which is how she has dealt with most of the challenges and tragedies of her life. But most of all she's shown me how to keep going and how to survive.

The song I was listening to when I wrote this summed it up. God has been with my mom, "through it all." The song continues, "I've learned to trust in Jesus. I've learned to depend on His word." Thanks mom for being a survivor and I'm glad God has been with you "through it all."



## Amy Howard Art Gallery



By Amy Howard

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.

## MY2008 Cadillac DTS Limousine & Funeral Coach Incentive

**Detroit, MI**— Cadillac is pleased to announce a \$1,000.00 Customer Cash Incentive on all MY2008 DTS limousines (V4U) and funeral coaches (B9Q) converted by a Cadillac Master Coachbuilder. This new incentive is valid only toward domestic deliveries made from March 14 through June 30, 2008. For program details and qualifications, please contact your local Cadillac dealer or an authorized Cadillac Master Coachbuilder. Visit [www.provehicles.cadillac.com](http://www.provehicles.cadillac.com) for a listing of coachbuilders or contact Cadillac Professional Vehicle Program Headquarters at 800-528-5515.

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## Smith Graduates from UCO



Scott "Tyler" Smith graduated from University of Central Oklahoma on December 14, 2007 with a BS in Funeral Service. He was licensed as a Funeral Director and Embalmer by the Oklahoma Funeral Board on February 14, 2008. He has been employed at his family's funeral home, Vondel Smith Mortuary since 2001.

Tyler has been married for six years to Nichole and is very proud of his three daughters—Taya, Livia and Ella. He is also a successful regional musician and has a very popular duo and band. He is a third general funeral director/embalmer. He says, "I enjoy long walks on the beach... Not really."

Tyler writes, "My grandfather Vondel L. Smith began a career in funeral service in 1947 working at a number of funeral homes in Oklahoma. In 1957 he along with his wife Jean, also a licensed funeral director, opened a family-owned and operated funeral home that also served the community with ambulance service. It was simply named Vondel L. Smith Mortuary and Ambulance service. It was located at 400 S.W. 28<sup>th</sup> and Hudson in Oklahoma City. This is where they lived and raised their children Marla, Janelle and Scott in the upstairs residence of the two-story dwelling.

In April, 1964 a new free-standing funeral service facility was constructed on a 3-acre site at 6934 South Western in Oklahoma City. In the years to follow the ambulance service was phased out so the focus could be completely on caring for the needs of those who had lost loved ones. This facility has undergone many expansions and improvements to accommodate the families of southwest Oklahoma City and surrounding areas.

In 1981 our funeral home was the **first** in Oklahoma to offer **on-site cremation** services. We now have crematories at three of our locations and our families know their loved one never leaves our care. In 1982 my family was approached by Archie and Emma Turner of Yukon, OK regarding the sale of, Turner Funeral Home, their family-owned mortuary. They wanted their legacy carried out by our family-owned firm because they had faith in the quality and care we delivered and still do to this day. In 1987 my grandfather began construction on our third location at 13125 North MacArthur Blvd. in North Oklahoma City. It was opened and operating in 1988. Sadly, in July of 1989, he died at the age of 67.

After the necessary legal and financial matters were taken care of and through many other struggles and hardships, my father took over the operations of our three locations He had a vision and determination and wanted to see that vision come to fruition. Within the last year his greatest accomplishment, other than me..., has been the completion of our newest facility and cemetery- Vondel L. Smith and Sons Mortuary and Heritage Burial Park at South Lakes located at 4000 S.W. 119<sup>th</sup> Street in OKC, OK. We have always been involved with each one of our client families from the first call to the committal. Now we are proud to have a cemetery where that committal may take place.

My younger brother, Trevor, also works with us at the Funeral Home and is pursuing his B.S. degree in Mortuary Science at UCO. He will soon join me as we carry out the third generation of our family-owned funeral home and cemetery. We are not and do not have any future plans of being allied with any funeral service corporations. I will continue to serve our client families in their time of need with dignity, compassion and the utmost respect as my father and my grandfather have."

## Vondel L. Smith & Son Mortuary

### *South Colonial Chapel*

The Vondel L. Smith & Son Mortuary South Colonial Chapel is located at 6934 S. Western Ave. in South Oklahoma City. It was established in 1957 by Vondel & Jean Smith. At that time the area was largely undeveloped, and the Smith's 3 acre site was surrounded by farmland.

Today, the South Colonial Chapel is an integral and well established part of the community, providing services to many families each year.



### *"Smith & Turner Mortuary"*

Turner Funeral Home was originally established by John Turner in 1925. After the death of John Turner, his son, Archie Turner took over the family business. One funeral home family passed on Turner Funeral Home to another funeral home family when Turner Funeral Home was purchased by the Smith Family in 1982. The name was changed to Smith & Turner Mortuary a few years later.

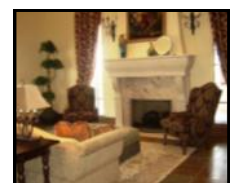


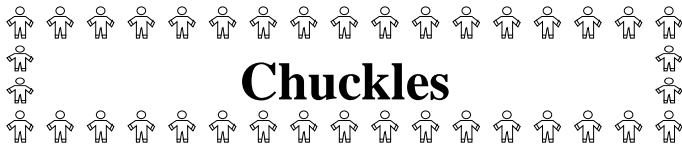
### *"North Colonial Chapel"*

The Vondel L. Smith & Son Mortuary North Colonial Chapel is located at 13125 N. MacArthur Blvd. in North Oklahoma City. The facility opened in October of 1998 and is an example of the Smith's vision and desire to grow with the community it serves.



## VONDEL L. SMITH & SON MORTUARY & CREMATORIUM AT SOUTH LAKES





## Chuckles

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

### Did it ever occur to you.....

One day my mother was out and my dad was in charge of me and my brother who is four years older than I am. I was maybe 1 and a half years old and had just recovered from an accident in which my arm had been broken among other injuries. Someone had given me a little 'tea set' as a get well gift and it was one of my favorite toys. Daddy was in the living room engrossed in the evening news and my brother was playing nearby in the living room, when I brought Daddy a little cup of 'tea,' which was just water. After several cups of 'tea' and lots of praise for such yummy 'tea,' my Mom came home. My Dad made her wait in the living room to watch me bring him a cup of 'tea,' because it was 'just the cutest thing!' My Mom waited, and sure enough, here I come down the hall with a cup of 'tea' for Daddy and she watches him drink up, and then says, "Did it ever occur to you that the only place that baby can reach to get water is the toilet?"



### A Blond from Texas

A very attractive blonde woman from Texas arrived at a casino and bet twenty-thousand dollars (\$20,000) on a single roll of the dice. She said, "Hope y'all don't mind, but I feel much luckier when I'm completely nude." With that, she stripped from the neck down, rolled the dice and yelled, "Come on, baby, Mama needs new clothes!" As the dice came to a stop she jumped up and down and squealed... "YES! YES! I WON, I WON!" She hugged each of the dealers and then picked up her winnings and her clothes and quickly departed. The dealers stared at each other dumbfounded. Finally, one of them asked, "What did she roll?" The other answered, "I don't know—I thought you were watching."

Moral: Not all Texans are stupid, not all blondes are dumb, but all men are men.

### Speaking of Blondes.....

Two blondes living in Oklahoma were sitting on a bench talking, and one blonde says to the other, "Which do you think is farther away... Florida or the moon?" The other blonde turns and says "Hellooooooooooooo, can you see Florida???"

**CAR TROUBLE:** A blonde pushes her BMW into a gas station. She tells the mechanic it died. After he works on it for a few minutes, it is idling smoothly. She says, "What's the story?" He replies, "Just crap in the carburetor." She asks, "How often do I have to do that?"

**SPEEDING TICKET:** A police officer stops a blonde for speeding and asks her very nicely if he could see her license. She replied in a huff, "I wish you guys would get your act together. Just yesterday you take away my license and then today you expect me to show it to you!"

## Comments

Crypt-ic Commentary: I saw your comment about the use of embalming fluid and the accusations of ground contamination. Just so you know I have e-mailed Matt Smith with Frigid Fluid about that subject for a class I have at Amarillo College. He did not have the answer for me, but he was going to consult several experts for me and get back to me within the week.

Richard Collins

Semper Fi

....I work for a funeral home in Arkansas, and I love reading your paper, but it doesn't always make it to me.

Toby Sutton

.....I love your magazine....

Michael Anthony Vann

## Chuckles (cont.)

### You can't read this and stay in a bad mood!!

1. How do you catch a unique rabbit? *Unique up on it.*
2. How do you catch a tame rabbit? *Tame way*
3. How do crazy people go through the forest? *They take the psycho path.*
4. How do you get holy water? *You boil the hell out of it.*
5. What do fish say when they hit a concrete wall? *Dam!*
6. What do Eskimos get from sitting on the ice too long?  
*Polaroid's*
7. What do you call a boomerang that doesn't work?  
*A stick.*
8. What do you call cheese that isn't yours? *Nacho cheese*
9. What do you call Santa's helpers? *Sub ordinate Clauses*
10. What do you call four bullfighters in quicksand? *Quattro Sinko*
11. What do you get from a pampered cow? *Spoiled milk*
12. What do you get when you cross a snowman with a vampire? *Frostbite*
13. What lies at the bottom of the ocean and twitches? *A nervous wreck.*
14. What's the difference between roast beef and pea soup?  
*Anyone can roast beef.*
15. Where do you find a dog with no legs? *Right where you left him.*
16. Why do gorillas have big nostrils? *Because they have big fingers.*
17. Why don't blind people like to sky dive? *Because it scares the dog.*
18. What kind of coffee was served on the Titanic? *Sanka*
19. What is the difference between a Harley and a Hoover?  
*The location of the dirt bag.*
20. Why did Pilgrims' pants always fall down? *Because they wore their belt buckle on their hat.*
21. What's the difference between a bad golfer and a bad skydiver? *A Bad Golfer Goes, Whack, Dang! A Bad Skydiver Goes Dang! Whack.*
22. How are a Texas tornado and a Tennessee divorce the same? *Somebody's gonna lose a trailer*

*Now, admit it. At least one of these made you smile....*



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## RUSSELL JOINS CFL PRENEED INSURANCE TEAM



CFL Preneed Insurance is pleased to announce that Darlene Russell, CPC, has joined their company as the Preneed Sales Director for Missouri.

Darlene has worked in the death care industry for most of her business life. For many years she worked for the State of Missouri in the State Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors. Subsequently she became the Executive Director of The Missouri Funeral Directors Association being responsible for all of its opera-

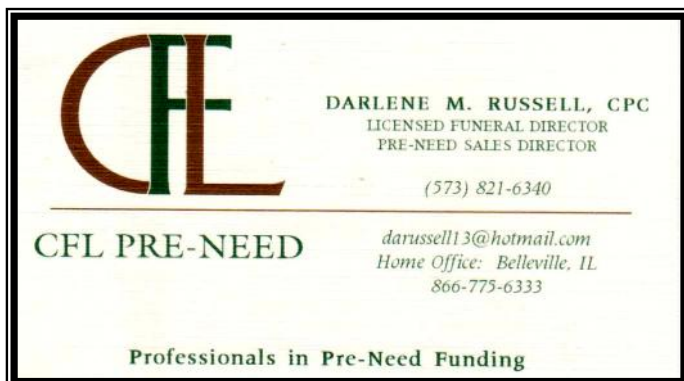
tions; lobbying, financial and member services. In addition, she managed the Missouri Funeral Trust, eventually seeing the assets of the trust increase to over \$34 million. She then went on to work in the preneed insurance industry.

She stated "I enjoy working with the funeral homes and consider many of them as my extended family. I admire the work that they do and I try to make one aspect of their job easier by assisting them with their preneed funding. I chose to work for CFL Preneed Insurance because of their reputation and dedication to the funeral industry"

Darlene is a licensed funeral director. She is also a licensed insurance producer. She is a member of various organizations including the local chapter of National Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors, (NAIFA) Jefferson City, MO and the Missouri Funeral Director Association. Darlene earned the Certified Preplanning Consultant (CPC) designation offered through the National Funeral Directors Association in 2003. Darlene and her husband, Greg reside in St. Thomas and have six children and two granddaughters.

CFL Senior Vice-President, Michael C. Leary, CLU ChFC, stated that "we are pleased to have Darlene join our professional sales staff. She is an asset to our company with her experience and knowledge of the preneed insurance and funeral industry."

CFL Preneed Insurance Company is located in Belleville, Illinois with a branch office in St. Louis. They offer products especially designed for the funeral homes. The CFL advisory board is made up of funeral directors who provide valuable insights to the company for future products.



## Senses, Memories & Grief (Cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

other words, these experiences are normal in the grief process, but sometimes a person's reactions may continue too long and necessitate some counseling.

The reactions that lead to STUGs are broken down into classifications including "Cyclic, Linear and Stimulus-Cued Precipitants."

### Cyclic Precipitants

The Cyclic Precipitant classification includes reactions that "imply periodicity" (having periods or repeating cycles): Anniversary, Holiday, Seasonal and Ritual-prompted (repetitive) reactions. These reactions seem self-explanatory.

An anniversary of the death, birthday, wedding anniversary, or any type of occasion that you spent with your loved one is understandably upsetting and heightens grief. The same goes for reactions around the holidays. Those remembrances of things you shared with the love one brings sorrow.



The seasonal reactions I found interesting. The Spring and Fall were more disturbing because of the implication of new beginnings. For example, Spring had new beginning with plants and grieving people dreaded seeing the flowers come up. This was because the flowers represented new life that was no longer available for their lost loved one. Fall had the association with new beginnings related to school.



It is interesting how many different things could trigger grief reactions.

Ritual-prompted reactions were broken down as "rituals of transition" described as "one-time occurrences involving rites of passage (e.g., a funeral or wedding)" and "rituals of continuity" that occur "within a particular stage of the family's life cycle" (e.g., communal mealtime, Sunday dinner at Grandmother's, reading a story before bedtime, etc.).

### Linear Precipitants

The next classification was Linear precipitants including reactions "stimulated by experiences, phenomena and events that occur as a consequence of reaching a particular time, age or state." This group was broken down into "age-correspondence, experience-associated, transition-stimulated, developmentally determined, crisis-evoked and ritual-prompted (single event) reactions." For example, your parent died at 40 years of age and as you approach 40 you react with sorrow or worry that you might die or if they died after retirement, you wonder as you approach retirement age what will happen to you. Many events could trigger the reactions in this category besides age and experiences. Transitional times, missing developmental stages of the lost loved one, times of crisis and the one time rituals of transition (e.g. graduation) are stressful due to the additional change and heighten awareness of the missing love one.



(Continued on page 18)

# Death Notices of Fellow Funeral Service Colleagues

## INDUSTRY ASSOCIATES

**Delores Ann "Dee" Carter**, 74, of Texas died Feb. 24, 2008. Her son Mike Carter is President/CEO of Lynch Supply & Heartland Casket Company, Inc.

## IOWA



**Cornelius Edward Tuecke**, 81, died February 23, 2008 in Guttenberg, he was honored in 2004 as a 60-year member of IFDA. A graduate of Worsham Mortuary School in 1943 he apprenticed at Janeba Funeral Home in Cedar Rapids. In 1947 he opened a funeral home in Guttenberg and a second funeral home in Garnovilla in 1955. He was a WWII veteran and served with the 136th Medical Regiment. Tuecke was active in the Lutheran Church, his community, Masons and Shriners, American Legion and spearheaded projects that included the hospital, nursing home and country club. Arrangements were handled by Tuecke-Allyn Funeral Home and Cremation Service, Guttenberg.

## KANSAS

**Jack L. Alexander**, 64, died February 4, 2008 in Emporia. A 1969 graduate of the San Francisco College of Mortuary Science he had worked in funeral homes in the Kansas City area, Parsons Funeral Home in Ellsworth before acquiring Brown-Bennett Funeral Home in Cottonwood Falls in 1982.

## MISSOURI

**Jill Baue**, 72, of St. Charles died February 12, 2008. She was past co-owner of Baue Funeral Home and St. Charles Memorial Gardens in St.



Charles County, along with her late husband David C. Baue for 30 years. She was a member of the St. Charles Artist Guild, Past President of the Jaycee Wives, a Gray Lady for many years, a Girl Scout leader for 12 years and very active in many other community organizations. Arrangements were by the Baue Funeral Home with the funeral service held at the Foundry Art Center and interment in St. Charles Memorial Gardens.

**Gerald Wayne "Digger" Boggess**, 88, Eagleville, died February 20, 2008. He was a licensed funeral director and embalmer and the former owner of the Boggess Funeral Home in Eagleville. A WWII veteran of Army Air Force, he had been an Eagle Scout and a Scoutmaster of Eagleville Troop 108 for 22 years. "Digger" was one of the founders of the Midwest Field Association. Services were at Roberson Funeral Home, Eagleville.



**Dave C. Goodnight**, 53, of Gainesville, died March 27, 2008. He was the manager, embalmer and funeral director at the Clinkingbeard Funeral Home-Gainesville and coroner of Ozark County. Arrangements were under Clinkingbeard Funeral Home, Gainesville.

**J.W. "Chubb" Phillips**, 84, of Columbia died, February 24, 2008.



Chubb was a licensed Funeral Director and Embalmer at Parker Funeral Service, Columbia for over 20 years and then worked for the city of Columbia before retiring in 1981. He then returned to Parker's part-time for another 20 years. A U.S. Army veteran of WWII, he served in the South Pacific. Chubb attended the University of Missouri-Columbia and graduated from Mortuary College in Kansas City. An avid golfer, Tiger fan and member of the

First Baptist Church he supported many other civic, fraternal and veterans organizations. Services were directed by Parker Funeral Service.

## MISSOURI (CONT.)

**David C. Stark**, aka Twinkle Toes, the clown, 67, died March 3, 2008 at his home in Hillsboro. He had been with Fey Funeral home in Mehlville since 1981, first as manager and then as co-owner with his wife Deanna Fey Stark. As Twinkle Toes, the clown, he had appeared at children's hospitals and parades. He and Deanna were active in the St. Louis Twirling Teen's Baton and Drum Corps. David had also been a professional fire fighter for 23 years and active in a number of civic groups. Funeral services were directed by Fey Funeral Home.

**Kim A. Worrell**, 50, of Kahoka, died February 10, 2008. Kim was a licensed funeral director with the Vigen Memorial Home for 10 years. She was a member of the MFDEA. Services were under the direction of Vigen Memorial Home in Kahoka.

## OKLAHOMA

**Thomas Joseph Schanz**, 38, of Haileyville, died March 1, 2008. Thomas was a graduate of the Southwestern Oklahoma State University with a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology. He graduated from the Dallas Institute of Funeral Service and worked as a licensed funeral director and embalmer in Cordell, Elk City, Duncan and for Chaney's Funeral Home, McAlester. He currently worked as a Juvenile Affairs Probation Officer for the State of Oklahoma. Services were under the direction of Chaney-Harkins Funeral Home, McAlester.

## TEXAS

**Vasco J. Baucom**, 83, died February 8, 2008. Mr. Baucom was employed for many years by Houston Embalming Service and Woodlawn Funeral Home. Services were held at Brookside Funeral Home Chapel with interment at Brookside Memorial Park.

**Bill Dee Davis**, died February 17, 2008. Services were directed by Crawford-Crim-Bryan Funeral Home, Henderson.

**Kenneth Wayne Dunning**, 73, died February 24, 2008 in Lubbock. A Dallas Institute of Mortuary Science graduate, he and Blake Wood established the Wood-Dunning Funeral Home, Inc. in Plainview and then purchased the Wallace Funeral Home in Tulia. He served as president of the Panhandle Funeral Directors Association and the TFDA Board of Directors. He was active in the Optimist International, president of the Plainview Band Parents Association and the Plainview Bass Club. Services were arranged by Wood-



Dunning Funeral Home-Columbia Chapel with burial in Plainview Memorial Park.

**William Ramsey Harris**, 92, and his wife **Mildred Horn Harris**, 93, both died January 31, 2008. Ramsey was the owner of the Harris Funeral Home in McKinney. Services were held at Turrentine-Jackson-Morrow Funeral Home in McKinney with interment at Ridgeview Memorial Park.

(Continued on page 15)

**If you know of a fellow funeral service colleague that has died that we have not included, please send the information and picture if available (The Dead Beat, P.O. Box 145, Golden City, MO 64748) or fax it to us (417-537-4797) or E-Mail to Joanne@thedead-beat.com**



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### Death Notices of Fellow Funeral Service Colleagues

#### TEXAS (CONT.)

**Ann Custer Larkin**, died March 9, 2008. Mrs. Larkin was the mother of Pam Larkin Moore, funeral director and co-owner of Win-scott Road Funeral Home, Benbrook. Services were directed by Cooper Funeral Home of Athens and Kimbrough Funeral Home in Cisco. Burial was in Mitchell Cemetery in Cisco.

**Abel L. Sanchez**, owner of Sanchez Funeral Home, Rio Grande City, died March 2, 2008. Services were directed by the Sanchez Funeral Home with burial in the Rio Grande City Cemetery.



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## Worst Job Experience Contest Winner

If you don't laugh out loud after you read this you are in a coma! This is even funnier when you realize it's real! Next time you have a bad day at work think of this guy.

Rob is a commercial saturation diver for Global Divers in Louisiana. He performs underwater repairs on offshore drilling rigs. Below is an E-mail he sent to his sister. She then sent it to radio station 103.2 on FM dial in Ft. Wayne Indiana, who was sponsoring the contests.

Hi Sue,

Just another note from your bottom-dwelling brother. Last week I had a bad day at the office. I know you've been feeling down lately at work, so I thought I would share my dilemma with you to make you realize it's not so bad after all.

Before I can tell you what happened to me, I first must bore you with a few technicalities of my job.

As you know my office lies at the bottom of the sea. I wear a suit to the office. It's a wet suit. This time of year the water is quite cool.



So what we do to keep warm is this: We have a diesel-powered industrial water heater. This \$20,000 piece of equipment sucks the water out of the sea. It heats it to a delightful temperature. It then pumps it down to the diver through a garden hose, which is taped to the air hose. Now this sounds like a darn good plan, and I've used it several times with no complaints.

What I do, when I get to the bottom and start working, is take the hose and stuff it down the back of my wet suit. This floods my whole suit with warm water. It's like working in a Jacuzzi.

Everything was going well until all of a sudden, my butt started to itch. So, of course, I scratched it. This only made things worse. Within a few seconds my butt started to burn. I pulled the hose out from my back, but the damage was done. In agony I realized what had happened.

The hot water machine had sucked up a jellyfish and pumped it into my suit. Now, since I don't have any hair on my back, the jellyfish couldn't stick to it. However, the crack of my butt was not as fortunate. When I scratch what I thought was an itch, I was actually grinding the jellyfish into the crack of my butt.

I informed the dive supervisor of my dilemma over the communicator. His instructions were unclear due to the fact that he, along with five other divers, were all laughing hysterically. Needless to say I aborted the dive. I was instructed to make three agonizing in-water decompression stops totaling thirty-five minutes before I could reach the surface to begin my chamber dry compression.

When I arrived at the surface, I was wearing nothing but my brass helmet. As I climbed out of the water, the medic, with tears of laughter running down his face, handed me a



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tub of cream and told me to rub it on my butt as soon as I got in the chamber. The cream put the fire out, but I couldn't poop for two days because my butt was swollen shut.

So, next time you're having a bad day at work, think about how much worse it would be if you had a jellyfish shoved up your butt..

Now repeat to yourself, "I love my job, I love my job, I love my job...." Now whenever you have a bad day, ask yourself, is this a jellyfish bad day?

May you NEVER have a jellyfish bad day!!!!!!!!!!!!

(\* Funeral directors remember this when you are having a challenging day in the funeral home or at a cemetery.)

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## Senses, Memories & Grief (Cont.)

(Continued from page 13)

### Stimulus-cued Precipitants

Finally we get to the area that was posed at the beginning of this discussion. The "Stimulus-cued precipitants" classification is the area that explains the sensory stimuli reactions. This classification is broken down into "memory-based, reminder-inspired, loss and/or reunion theme-aroused" and finally "music-elicited" reactions. This category is unrelated to time and can be broken down into four groups: "actual reminders of the deceased, symbolical reminders of deceased, reminders that contain themes of loss and/or reunion and finally musical reminders eliciting emotion."

The memory-based stimuli included those that you actually shared with the deceased. (Remember all those sensory associations that were mentioned in relation to the lost love one.) The reminder-inspired stimuli were those that reminded you of the lost loved one.

Loss and/or reunion theme aroused reactions "can bring to the forefront the lack of the loved one which can catalyze strong wishes and fantasies for reunion of the deceased." Finally the music reactions are related to the fact that music is "well know to reach profound depths in human beings."



In conclusion, our senses and memories are connected and have many ways to trigger our grief. The range of precipitants and reactions is vast dealing with cyclical reminders like anniversaries, one-time situations related to age and to experience and finally stimulus cues like our sensory experiences. The sudden temporary upsurges of grief (STUGs) are influenced by many associations with events, experiences and stimuli. Yes, our memory has made connections from many things including various sensory stimuli.

A statement from another article from MayoClinic.com gives a less technical explanation saying, "you often don't experience the grief of loss just once.... You're likely to relive your grief." The statement continues, "the return of these feelings of grief are not necessarily a setback in the grieving process. It's a reflection that the lives of others were important to you."

Now the next question is - does the strength of the reactions change over the passage of time? That's for another discussion.

## Tribute to Mickey

He's gone—our Mascot of the Mortuary is gone. He went by the way of all mortals—he's gone. Our Mickey is gone. He just couldn't face another piece of cheese—he's gone. Faithful was he in his daily journey to the banana bread, crackers and whatever condiments were left—but now he's gone to occupy his place and run the floors, climb the water pipes and whisk across the cabinet tops of that great mouse mortuary; yes, Mickey's gone.

Though his journey was not unexpected, it was sudden. He did live a rather daring and mysterious life by his sudden, un-announced appearances, but now he's gone. Yet his memory will linger long in the lounge and offices of Greenlawn South. In the annals of our memory we will see his little beady eyes, that round "stuffed" gray body and the disappearance of the that slender little tail as he would disappear in a crack behind the kitchen sink.

So take your rest, Mickey, with the assurance that you have provided this establishment with numerous screams—mounting desks tops and a bushel of laughter. We hail you, Mickey—Mascot of the Mortuary. Sent by Mike Ward



### As We Drive By

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



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## Thoughts from Iraq

(A Soldier Shares Some of His Thoughts)

“The Wise EAGLE

...or, I'll find Lydia in late September”

By Luke Baldwin

The apex of autumn is my favorite time of year. Those last few days of September—when the world is cold enough to turn orange yet still shine the sun warm on your face—those are the times when my heart flutters. I'm fairly certain that if I were to ever love her, I'd fall in the fall. There's a security in the season when the world surrounds you in the burning colors. Your worries are the clarity of a stained glass. Somewhere between the summertime blues and 'no one wants to be alone at Christmas time' lies an autumn promise that everything changes eventually. Happy days fall into your arms like the fourth quarter touchdown pass.

There is a final day of autumn that almost touches a summertime feel. It is a quick, ten-hour spike in temperature that is preceded by weeks of colder weather and followed immediately by months of even cooler temperatures. It is the last warm day of the year. I can't remember a time when this day didn't occur on a Friday. At dusk, the sun will sit on the horizon just a little longer. Like



a lover at an airport, it puts off the final goodbye for the last desperate minute. 'See you in May,' it says as it dips into the first weekend of holiday shopping.

One of the most vivid memories of my childhood happened on one of these 'last warm days of the year.' It was a Friday. My father was coaching a big football game later in the evening. He sent me home from school to retrieve his black windbreaker—the one that read TIGERS on the back of it. This particular autumn day had been unexpectedly warm and the coat my father had packed in his duffle bag would be too heavy to wear in the orange of late September. And so I was walking home down the shady way beyond Highway Y. I had run across the thistle field beyond the elementary school, but mother told me to always walk across Highway Y. So I walked. The oak and walnut trees were dropping leaves on my head making me laugh. Brown leaves crunched under my feet. In the distance I could see my house. The cherry tree between our house and the Minner's house was turning a fiery red. My brother was riding on his bike. He was dressed as Batman—last year's Halloween costume. The leaves that the wind pushed up into the air were catching like briars on my brother's flowing cape. He spread a trail of dust around the circle road of our neighborhood. Beyond my house was the first hole of the Stockton Country Club. The trees of the golf course were a golden hue I'd never see again until next autumn. The sun was setting and the horizon was



(Continued on page 21)

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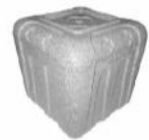
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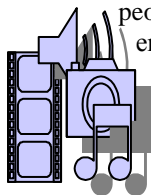


## Thoughts from Iraq (cont.)

(Continued from page 20)

warm. At that moment, I felt as if the sun would shine on my face for a thousand days. Every now and again, the sun does shine in that same way. I've cherished each of those moments, keeping them in the 'essentials' compartment of my memory.

As we go through life, I think that most of the sentiments that define our character seem to creep up on us. Unaware of the evolution as it unfolds before us, we become the



people we are with a haphazard pile of experiences. For example, I can't recall the movie I was seeing when I started to pay as much attention to the music as I did the images on the screen. I can't remember exactly what restaurant I was at when I acquired a taste for Hawaiian pizza. Nor do I remember exactly

when I started to prefer brunettes over blondes. I do, however, know by heart the exact moment when I decided that I preferred the colors brown, orange and red over the colors blue, green and violet. I can remember vividly the first time I appreciated the quiet crunch of the oak leaf beneath my footsteps. And I'll never forget the moment I was aware of the difference between the heat of a summer sunrise and the warmth of an autumn sunset. I became aware of all these things that same day that I realized my brother, in his Batman outfit, would be the funniest person I'd ever know.

The last warm day of the year was a bit tardy in 2007. It was the middle of October when the temperature dropped



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for a week, spiked for a day and then plummeted into early winter-time. That last day, true to form, landed on a Friday. I drove up Chastain Park, my favorite place in Atlanta. As I drove through the Atlanta traffic I felt the glow of the sun as it loitered on the horizon. That shade of orange flooded the earth. As I get older, those days become bittersweet as I realize more and more that I will never be where I am again. Don Henley was playing on my stereo as I drove. I reminisced about all the autumn moments that are lost from thought to memory. I thought of my Jurassic Park backpack. I thought of the horrible day when I broke my cousin's nose with a ThighMaster. I thought of the burgers grilled by the VFW at the Lamar fair. I thought of Zane Cagle and his black TransAm. He blared Tom Petty's "Full Moon Fever" on the stereo and I thought he was the coolest kid in school. I thought of the day when my mother told me she had cancer again. I thought of

Adam's smile at the end of football practice. I thought of the blues and the bikes and the BBQ of Dickson Street. I thought of Dewey and Jeff eating pizza at Guidos. All these moments have slipped from the day to live somewhere in the special moments of reflection. Some of them I will relive. Most of them are lost for I will never be a child again. With the second track of the disc, I thought of my high school sweetheart and a fear rose up in me that I was just one of the boys of summer to her. Six tracks later, Henley reminded me that, in a New York minute, everything can change. Memories are born of change over time. If I were ever a boy of summer, I've become a man of autumn. The good life is on the way. Change is pulling it down with the leaves.

About the author:

Luke is a SGT in the U.S. Army and is currently serving his 2nd tour of duty in Camp Victory, Baghdad, Iraq. Luke's mother lost her battle with cancer when he was 14 years old.



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## "Dear Counselor...."

By Bill Stalter

**When funeral homes close and give their funeral records to historical societies, is there a privacy infringement issue?**

Same goes for **roots searchers** that call up to **ask for information**. Because the death certificates are public information, is there a problem with giving information to people who call up?

**Why do the health departments ask why you are getting the death certificate? Is there a restriction of who can get a death certificate?**

\*\*\*\*\*

Actually, death certificates are confidential documents. Generally, state laws treat death certificates as confidential until several years after the death, often 50 years or more. During the period of confidentiality, access to the death records is restricted to certain individuals. Consequently, this is why vital statistic departments ask for the purpose of the request. Funeral directors must take measures to ensure the confidentiality of death certificates. Identity theft can be a problem even for the dead. There is also the expectation of privacy with regard to the cause of death. Consequently, funeral directors should decline records requests made by historical societies or genealogists.

\*\*\*\*\*



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](http://www.prenneedresource.com).

## Mahn FH, Desoto, MO-Wall Exhibit Event

An event is being presented and organized by Mahn Funeral Homes, Todd Mahn and The Wall Chairman and Secretary, Pat Robart. On May 8 – May 11, 2008 plans are set for Walther Park, DeSoto, Missouri to display many things including The Traveling Wall. It will be an experience that will touch your heart and life forever.

\*Things will start off with a 3- Man Golf Scramble being planned for Tuesday, May 6, at Cottonwood Golf Course in DeSoto. Golfers interested should contact the VFW Post 1831, 636-586-9271, Earl, Gerald or Sock Boyer for additional information. An Award Dinner and Silent Auction will be held at the DeSoto Elks Lodge 689 after the tournament. Proceeds will go toward the expenses of The Wall exhibit.

\*The American Veterans Traveling Tribute is coming to Jefferson County on May 7, 2008. The Wall will be on display May 8 through May 11, 2008 at Walther Park in DeSoto, Missouri. The Traveling Wall foundation has expanded their own exhibit to include a 911 Tribute with names of victims, Gold Dog Tags tribute for all who died as a result of hostile action between Vietnam and 911, Gold Dog Tags tribute for all who died in Operations Iraq and Enduring Freedom (Gold Dog tags have name, rank, branch of service, date of casualty and location of casualty).

\*Additional exhibits are being planned for



**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](mailto:wastal@swbell.net)

[bill@stalterlegal.com](mailto:bill@stalterlegal.com)

Or

[Editor@thedeat-beat.com](mailto:Editor@thedeat-beat.com)

Or

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Walther Park during the 4 days of the Wall display. A few are: The Agent Orange, "Quilts of Tears", provided by Henry and Sheila Snyder of Florida; Anyone who knows of a Vietnam veteran or a family member of a Vietnam veteran who has passed away because of an illness from Agent Orange may make their own 12 x 12 quilt block, bring to the park and present it to the Snyder's for adding to their quilts, visit their website: [agentorangequilts.com](http://agentorangequilts.com).

\*A team from the Freedom Flight POW-MIA Hot Air Balloon, St. Cloud, Minnesota, will meet and talk with the public about their organization's mission. Keeping the public aware of all the MIA's still missing, remembering them in our hearts and lives.

Juliann Najar, President of "The Soldiers Wish List", along with Jon Jerome, President of "Operation Home Front" will be available to speak with the public on Adopting Soldiers and military personnel serving in foreign countries and how we can make their wishes for their loved ones at home come true. School students can do group projects of care packages, or individuals can write Thank You letters or cards and present them to Juliann at Walther Park for sending to our soldiers.

\*They are hoping to have the "Through the Eyes" exhibit available. John Hosier, a Vietnam veteran of 2 tours, recipient of the Purple Heart and other valor medals was a photographer for the US Army prior to being released from service. His display invites you to participate in an experience that allows you to view, hear, and feel the Vietnam War through photographs, memorabilia and stories of those individuals who served and sacrificed for this great nation. Mr. Hosier loves to speak with school children, Boy and Girl Scout Troops about his life as a soldier. He displays his own memorabilia from his military life. Visit his website: [eravietnam@cs.com](http://eravietnam@cs.com).

\*The Missouri National Guard is planning an exhibit of military equipment. The VFW Post 1831 will be hosting a Veterans Service Officer to answer questions or assist in filing for VA benefits. Veterans should bring their DD214s with them.

\*The Veterans Commission Officer, Ralph Pismany, will be on site at Walther Park to meet and talk with the public and veterans regarding VA benefits.

We are scheduling individuals, groups and small bands to perform Patriotic and Christian entertainment.

For additional information, please contact us at 636-586-2288 or visit the website: [www.thewalldesoto.com](http://www.thewalldesoto.com).



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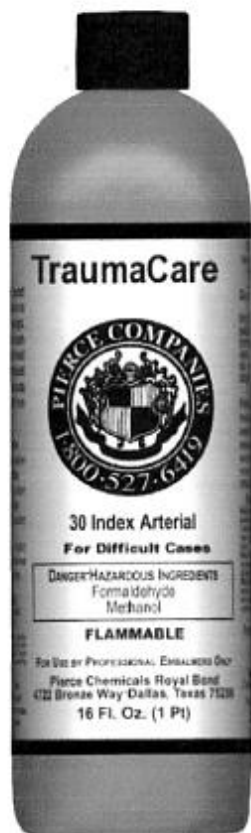
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### McNeese Tidbits

Charles McNeese mails a monthly newsletter. Looking through past issues, several interesting thoughts were presented that need to be mentioned:

#### Communication Skills (Oct. '05)

I just recently heard two true stores of "arrangement conferences gone bad" and thought they were worth passing on:

- ♦ An incompetent funeral director was meeting with a family and there was apparently some bickering back and forth between family members. After the disagreement had gone on for several minutes, the funeral director turned to one of the members of the family and said, "You're not the one paying for this funeral so just shut up." *Wrong Remark to Make.* As we all know, you can say what you will about your own family, but won't stand for a non-family member getting into the argument. This led to a six-page written complaint to the funeral home owner about the director's remarks.
- ♦ Believe it or not, this same funeral director was meeting with another family several weeks ago and

the family was discussing having the funeral service later in the week. The inept director told the family, "this is the first body I have ever embalmed by myself and I am not sure how well it will last." Then suggested a mid-week service. *Take heart, folks. This fellow works for your competitor. Doesn't he????*

This emphasizes the need to sit in on arrangement conferences from time to time to know what is being said, and shows the benefit of continuing education classes for staff members to improve communication skills. It also makes you wonder, *"Who hired this guy?"*

It is often better to remain silent and be thought a fool, than to speak and remove all doubt. *Author unknown.*



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## Bad Weather and Funerals

By Joanne Howard

An article was sent to us, authored by Trish Wallace in the **Suburban Journals of St. Louis Today** called "Funerals not affected by winter storms usually." The article discussed how scheduled funerals are really not changed due to weather because of the numerous notifications that are rather complex and hard to do, let alone the increase in the expenses of the funeral.

One point that made by Todd Mahn, owner of Mahn Funeral Home in DeSoto, MO, "Our number one concern is making sure that the family is taken care of," is very true. As the article mentioned weather is definitely discussed as arrangements are made and after the decisions are made they are usually maintained. You make your facilities as weather functional as possible and encourage alternatives when road conditions influenced by weather make the regular procedures dangerous.

I remember sitting in the hearse as the snow storm raged until the time of the graveside service began and the lack of electricity during a visitation leading to the lighting of many candles around the funeral home. Just to recall a few instances.

The relevant comment by Brian May, owner of the Chapel Hill Mortuary in Cedar Hill, stated that most families are "pretty resilient" But not only are the families resilient, so are the funeral home personnel.

As the article said, "When the event is a funeral, weather rarely deters loved ones from paying their respects." And rarely does weather keep the funeral home from keeping that from happening. It makes us proud to be part of this profession.



## Perhaps Funeral Service Should Drink From the Same Cup

By Lowell Pugh

Seldom, if ever, has a national company or a local one for that matter received so much media notice by closing their locations for three hours for training as Starbucks did. I'm not saying that we should disconnect the phone for three hours for *training*. On the other hand, think how you might inspire the whole staff if you had their undivided attention for three hours.

Funeral service like other professions and industries spend many dollars and hours sending top management to meetings. Unlike other industries it would be rare to hear of a funeral service firm conducting regular staff training sessions. For example, you can take a look at what has made you a great funeral service provider in the first place and a little reinforcement never hurt any staff member.

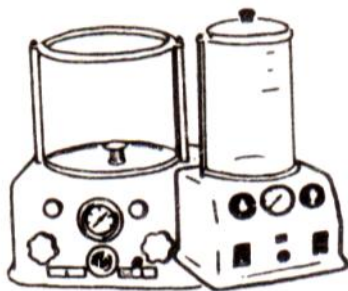
Organized formal training sessions build employee confidence. There are always basics that we need to remind ourselves from time to time. Every day brings something new that might not get passed down or up. Trained staff members connect with the clients whether it is in a coffee house or a funeral home.

(Ed. Note: If you have an in-house training program, please share it with The Dead Beat Readers.)

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## Small Stuff

Don't let the small stuff get to you and it's all small stuff. After Sept. 11th, one company invited the remaining members of other companies who had been decimated by the attack on the Twin Towers to share their available office space. At a morning meeting, the head of security told stories of why these people were alive... and all the stories were just:

### The 'LITTLE' Things

As you might know, the head of the company survived

That day because his son started kindergarten.

Another fellow was alive because it was  
His turn to bring donuts.

One woman was late because her  
Alarm clock didn't go off in time.

One was late because of being stuck on the NJ Turnpike  
Because of an auto accident.

One of them  
Missed his bus

One spilled food on her clothes and had to take

Time to change.

One's

Car wouldn't start.

One went back to  
Answer the telephone.

One had a

Child that dawdled and didn't get ready as soon as he should have.

One couldn't

Get a taxi.

The one that struck me was the man who put on a new pair of shoes that morning, took the various means to get to work but before he got there, he developed a blister on his foot.

He stopped at a drugstore to buy a Band-Aid.

That is why he is alive today.

Now when I am stuck in traffic,  
miss an elevator,  
turn back to answer a ringing telephone...  
all the little things that annoy me.

I think to myself,  
this is exactly where God wants me to be  
at this very moment.

Next time your morning seems to be going wrong,

the children are slow getting dressed,  
you can't seem to find the car keys,  
you hit every traffic light,

don't get mad or frustrated;

God is at work watching over you.

May God continue to bless you

With all those annoying little things

And may you remember their possible purpose.



## National Prearranged Services

offers funeral directors options  
backed by strength  
and security.



# STRONG AND STEADY



Roxanne  
Schnieders



Andrea  
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Lea  
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