

# The Dead Beat



## The Caregiver's Soapbox



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

Fall, 2008

[www.thedead-beat.com](http://www.thedead-beat.com)

Volume 9 Issue 3

### The Funeral Profession in Economic Challenging Times

By Joanne Howard

So what are economic challenging times? The stock market's great fluctuations... financial institutions and numerous other businesses collapsing or having great difficulties...people losing their jobs and houses – these are some of the signs of our current financial atmosphere. It has definitely become challenging or even “distressed.” The cyclic nature of the economy has seen many difficult times in the past. We have experienced periods ranging from depression to numerous recessions but things have eventually worked themselves out.



Are these times different than the past? Probably not, but some underlying factors need to be addressed and the government is trying to help as best as it can. While the solutions are debated and acted upon, what impact does all of this have on the funeral profession?

Trying to research the impact of the financial atmosphere on the funeral profession didn't produce an abundance of facts. This may be due to the fall-out not totally reaching the funeral profession yet or that they may have their own set of problems to deal with (e.g. preneed obligations and financial backing, etc.) But the funeral profession is a business and it will be influenced by the current fiscal conditions. So how will the business of taking care of the dead be affected?

One article mentioned that economic times won't influence the death rate, but it might affect the type of service and merchandise that is selected. As people have less income to spend they need to cut back. So exactly what do they feel they can cut back in the funeral service?

Several thoughts were given in an article from the **Deseret News**, August 31, 2008 called, “Economic Woes Spreading to Funeral Services,” by Jennifer Toomer-Cook. The suggestions ranged from families shopping around, buying less expensive caskets and even bringing their own flowers. Let's think about a few of these customer options.

#### Comparing Funeral Home Costs

Shopping around or comparing funeral home costs in relation to preneed has existed in the past, but comparing prices at-need seems like it would be a bit more difficult. Considering the deceased's body needs to be dealt with rather immediately and sometimes in the middle of the night; I'm not sure how easy it would be to call around to many funeral homes checking on their prices. But the internet's funeral home websites with their general price lists makes it easier than before.



Having dealt with many people at the time of their loved one's death, their minds do not seem together enough to be calling around or checking the internet. Now if

*(Continued on page 18)*

### Other Articles in this Issue



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### Amy Howard Art Gallery



The editor's daughter Amy, who was mentioned in our previous issues, was quite the artist and we've decided to display some of her artwork every issue in her memory. This was a watercolor she did in high school.



Amy Howard



Pictured is Urn-505 in Cherry, Urn-9000 in Cherry and Urn-9040 in Cherry and Black Onyx Marble.

See explanation of Meric Wood Products new offerings on Page 5



### Scattering Cremains in a Natural Area

#### Native Grasses and Flowers Reaching to the Sky



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## Mortuary Muse\*

\*to think or consider deeply; meditate  
By Lowell

The resolution of the sad story about the Warren Funeral Home in Columbia, Missouri, as of this writing, is yet to be concluded. If you missed it in the news —well, it wasn't pleasant. Investigators found a number of bodies, some decaying and some embalmed along with body parts that had not been buried. There were also unidentified cremains. A branch in Fulton, Missouri also had embalmed bodies apparently being stored. A civil suit had been filed by a family who couldn't determine where or if the mother was buried at the selected cemetery.

Authorities removed the bodies and have been trying to sort things out. In the meantime the funeral home has been shut down, at least for the moment, by the attorney general and the

state board. Harold Warren, Jr. was the FDIC (funeral director in charge) of the firm founded by his father Harold Warren, Sr. The senior Warren has been respected by the community and active in community affairs for many years.

I haven't seen any reports or heard any speculation about why the business deteriorated to that point. The papers reported that there had been financial problems a few years ago. Funeral homes in some markets have more than a fair share of indigent cases with little or no help from government. And still they serve because they don't want to turn a neighbor away.

The sad thing is that a specific demographic group may have lost their funeral home. Though all of us try to serve every client there are always

neighborhoods that really prefer to do business with their own people. Pride would probably have kept all of us from asking for help. In a perfect world it would be nice if sometimes we could all jump in and keep a colleague serving a specific group afloat.

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.

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## Danfelt Funeral Home Maryville, Missouri



The Danfelt Funeral Home was founded in 1900 when Lowell B. Campbell of Barnard, Missouri established the Campbell Funeral Home. L. B., as he was known, served as mayor for the City of Maryville for several years in addition to serving as Sheriff of Nodaway County, Missouri for many years. L.B. later sold the funeral home to his son Dean who

continued the business until selling to Morris Atchison. Morris continued the operation as Atchison Funeral Home,

with branches in Maitland & Burlington Junction, MO. Morris later sold the firm to his son George Atchison who remained active with the firm until it's sale on January 1, 1972

to Ross E. and Betty Stroeber Johnson. They operated the Johnson Funeral Home until it closed in August, 2003. On June 17, 2004 the Danfelt Funeral Home was established. With extensive renovations and enhanced services, they are very proud to serve the families of Maryville and surrounding communities.

One of the most important aspects of funeral services is to provide families with personal services meeting their individual needs. Danfelt Funeral Home is independently owned and an affiliate of the Dignity Memorial Network which offers services and merchandise that cannot be found elsewhere.

The staff includes the owner/funeral director/embalmer, P. Steven Danfelt, Jr; Madison A. Davis, Intern Funeral Director; funeral assistants include: Jack L. Swinford, Sr., Edward Klaas, Jr., Sherry J. Toston, Helen Weldon, Bonnie Davis, and Morgan Grudzinski, Karen Leader, Victor C. Schneider, and Adam Markt, organist Deb Henson and soloist Beverly Blackford.

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### Colleagues Lost or Found

(If you would like to find someone in the funeral industry,  
 let us know-  
[editor@the-dead-beat.com](mailto:editor@the-dead-beat.com))

## Meric Wood Products and Allegheny Urn Company Announce Joint Venture

**Andover, Ohio:** Meric Wood Products and Allegheny Urn Company are pleased to announce a joint venture that will revolutionize the urn industry. Both companies have extensive knowledge in the urn business each specializing in a different market. Meric Wood Products manufactures America-made wood urns and Allegheny Urns manufactures cultured marble and granite urns, each one using their own patent-pending designs. Together they have come up with exciting new products consisting of wood and cultured stone, creating urns in unique combinations.

Meric Wood Products has over 50 years in the woodworking industry, so with their design staff and Allegheny's engineering staff they have come up with simple, yet elegant, design combinations to complement everyone's tastes and décor. Utilizing only the choicest American hardwoods and American mined raw marble and granite the two companies have taken, "Made in the USA" to new levels.

Through the numerous finishing steps these unique urns are truly a work of master craftsmanship. The new line consists of five distinct designs with over 20 different color combinations for each design. In today's economy, these urns will allow funeral homes to improve their bottom line margins by giving them greater choices to meet all their customer's needs and wishes. These urns can be personalized with onsite state of the art laser engraving. One and two day services available.



Pictured is Urn-505 in Cherry, Urn-9000 in Cherry and Urn-9040 in Cherry and Black Onyx Marble.

For further information and samples, contact either Meric Wood Products at 440-293-6272 or Allegheny Urn at 814-437-3208.

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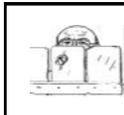
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## Behind the Back Fence

By Lowell

Each issue of the **Texas Director** has been running an interview with one of the 50-year honorees. Each has been asked about their career and changes occurring during their career span. Some thoughts common among most have been: getting out of ambulance service; the advent of funeral home/cemetery combinations; expanding preneed; FTC and itemization and the consolidators.

Roy Farrar of Royce City, Texas was honored in 2007. One of Mr. Farrar's comments was how our culture had changed from the 50's before air conditioning and television exploded on the home scene. He said, "...people got out of the houses and really knew their neighbors and visited friends. Today, you come home from work and sit in front of the TV in an air-conditioned house. This lifestyle eventually led to no family roots or close friends on the local level, not to mention the mobility of our society. Now when death occurs the body is disposed of without a lot of fanfare... Fifty years ago funeral services were well attended and usually followed by large visitations. Today you don't see this."

Other folks in our industry/profession blame the lack of personalization and the inability to provide meaningful funeral services for the rise in minimum services and declining profits. Many of them claim that their programs, training or products are what we need to sell the family to create a personalized service with profitability for the firm. Start thinking outside of the box, they say.

Expanding our services with a staff event planner—as suggested by some consultants—will help families visualize a truly meaningful service. The service might include a pre-visitiation dinner and a theatrical-style funeral service with souvenir DVDs, followed by another dinner. The next day could start with a champagne breakfast and end with a memorial golf classic. The final bill would rival a modern wedding. If a funeral event planner will work in your market—great! For some of us it might be like a John Deere tractor salesman calling on an Amish farmer.

Some of the most personalized and meaningful services we have been involved with were pretty much planned in advance by the family before we were ever called. Nevertheless we all should strive to do better even if we just go back and take another look at the basics. The basics that remain in the dark corners of the box.

Tongue-'n'-cheek says,



"So many folks are thinking outside of the box ---it's--- lonely in here."

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.

## After-Thoughts

*Do we mask our grief so well that people don't think we're hurting?*

By Joanne Howard

**Topic: Do we mask our grief so well that people don't think we're hurting?**

Our (my husband and myself) latest attempt at dealing with grief was on our oldest daughter's fifth death anniversary. We decided to show her last singing church special ("No Greater Love") from a DVD and read her journal entry from the day before she sang. Her message was strong and she was still touching lives five years after her death.

I read the journal entry prior to playing the DVD. This was the same day of the week, (Sunday) on the Labor Day weekend that she had died from an automobile accident. We had previously gone away on the actual anniversary day, but this time I didn't want to travel on the Labor Day weekend. So we actually faced her church family and reminded them that she did exist and she had a strong faith to share.

I actually read her journal entry without breaking down, but I wasn't too sure how I would do. The songs selected for the whole church service were related to her favorites or relevant to her journey that was a result of her death. My husband who plays the organ at church was playing "I'll Fly Away," during the of-

fering and it touched my heart. I could see her flying to her Lord and it brought tears emphasizing her departure. Well, I worried about my getting it back together to read.

I read the journal entry and announced the DVD and set next to my husband on the first pew. We watched our beautiful, talented daughter sing. The line that touched me the most was, "The beauty of heaven is here in my heart," since she sang this about two months before she actually might have entered heaven.

Try as I might, the tears flowed watching her sing and though I didn't look at him, I know that had also gotten to my husband. At the end I wondered what the people would do, sometimes they clap or say, "Amen." But it was completely silent. I'm sure my daughter heard the applause in their hearts.

The minister then followed with his message. Since I was the song leader that Sunday, I went up after his message to sing the final invitation song, "Amazing Grace." We had selected this song because both daughters and I had sang this as a church special in the past. Since they were both

gone now it seemed like a fitting tribute to end this church service with reference to God's Amazing Grace for us.

Now back to the initial question about hiding grief. My husband and I both expected our friends to come up after the service and offer some comfort. But only a few did and it puzzled us some.

Then I wondered, maybe they didn't know what to say or maybe they didn't think we needed anything because we did this without any major problems. I continued to question the situation that maybe it was like a continuing education course that Lowell and I had developed. The course called, "Grief Resolution in the Workplace," but had initially been called, "It's Been Two Weeks Aren't They Over It Yet?" I questioned whether the people were thinking, "It's been five years aren't they over that yet?"

To that question my answer is that my daughters will always be in my life whether here or in Heaven. I look forward to being with them again because as the song said, "There is no greater love that you gave your life for me."

On the surface I look like I am handling everything fine and most of the time I am. Don't forget that people who have lost someone at times are really hurting and missing their loved one inside and not always showing it. They might just need some acknowledgement by a hug or something that doesn't include saying anything just letting the person know you care.

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 after-care 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 Joanne@thedead-beat.com.



### My Daughter, Amy Howard's Journal Entry—July 5, 2003



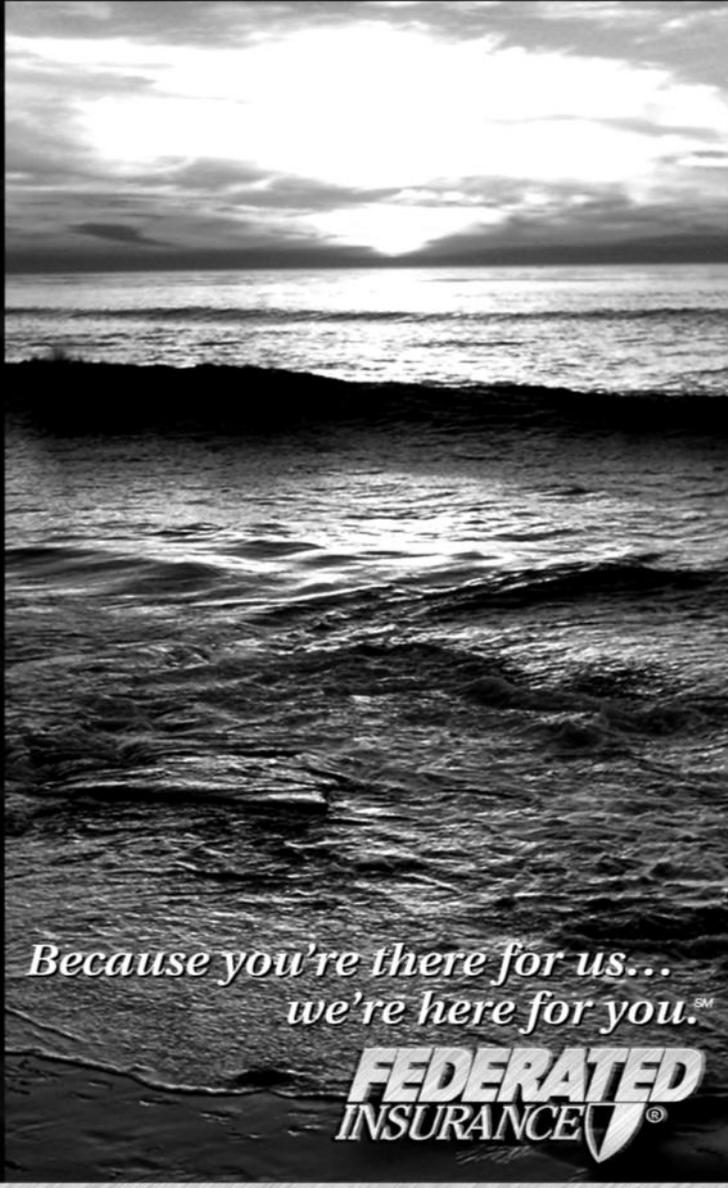
My most heavenly Father I love you so much. And your love for me is burning on my face every time I open up the Word! You show me new paths and the will You have for my life. I ask myself sometimes, "How can I live my life to Glorify You!" I have failed so much. I want Your love to fill me and show me the direction you want in my life. Help me not to be so selfish and worried. You take care of all the creatures. Why should I ever doubt You? Why do I do the things I do, that not only hurts others, but most of all hurts myself? Tomorrow in Your house help me show everyone all that you have provided Christians with. Please be there guiding me through the song, "**No Greater Love...** yes, there is none compared to your marvelous love and grace. Before I knew your name... you knew my every breathe. Before I found my way...you knew my every step. Before I knew everything that I need... you gave it all to me. No greater love than this that you should lay down your life ...For someone such as me...I'd spend a lifetime wondering why... The beauty of heaven is here in my heart... I know there can be no greater love...than this." Thank you Jesus Christ my Savior. Glory to Your name on high! Your spirit speaks through me to do Your will. Please forgive those awful sins that separate me from God. Thank you Jesus for uniting us!



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## Mardis Family Re-Open Schaeffer Mortuary, Caldwell, Kansas

Since 1885, Schaeffer Mortuary has served the Caldwell community with its funeral needs. Upon State inspection, David and Teresa Mardis will re-open the locally owned and operated mortuary. All work will be done on site at 6 North Main. This will allow more time for serving families.

According to the Mardises, owning Schaeffer Mortuary is something they have wanted to do for a very long time. They want to continue to serve the people of this community and provide quality service at a fair and reasonable price. They also want to continue to be involved in the community and help preserve and promote Caldwell's rich history.

David was born in Caldwell. He is a licensed embalmer and funeral director. He is currently the Chamber of Commerce President, is very involved in the Caldwell Recycling Center and E-Waste Recycling. David also serves on the CHS Alumni Board and is Master of the Masonic Lodge.

David and Teresa also own the Nostalgia Nook and Mardis Monument Company.

Teresa grew up in Norwich, Kansas and is a licensed funeral director.

Their children are Sarah, who graduated in 2007 and is attending Kansas City Kansas Community College studying Mortuary Science and Rebecca, who will be a senior at Caldwell High School and plans to attend Ft. Hays State University majoring in Computer Graphics.

Schaeffer Mortuary has been a tradition in Caldwell since 1885 and its roots run deep, as do those of the Mardis family. It is their hope to continue that commitment to service by re-opening Schaeffer Mortuary and re-establish the dedicated service to which Caldwell has become accustomed.

*Information provided by Caldwell Messenger, July 16, 2008*

## My Grandmother's Passing By Betty R. Chamberlain

It was hard and sometimes lonely  
with a hurt no one could fix.  
Down the valley, lonely valley,  
cross the river known as Styx.

Journey's over. Now comes dawning  
of the morning's brightest star.  
She has made the trip to heaven.  
We just marvel from afar.

Gone forever from the sadness  
and this world with all its pain.  
You shall miss her. Yes, you'll miss her,  
but your losing is her gain.

Joy forever and everlasting  
as she entered through the gate.  
In due season we may join her.  
All we need to do is wait.

Wait with keen anticipation  
wait with Faith, and Hope, and Love.  
Wait to join her in that Glory  
with our Father up above.

Yes, we too must cross that valley  
and the lonely river Styx.  
It's a trip we make once only  
and the time our Savior picks.

We'll be ready when He calls us  
Keep our eyes upon the prize.  
Heaven's just ahead and Glorious.  
That's a face no one denies.

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## Evaluating Advice for the Grieving

By Ken Doka

Often when we are in the midst of grief, we receive the advice of others. Sometimes it is solicited; other times it is simply offered. It may be from family, friends, or co-workers. We may even seek out the advice, eagerly reading advice columns in the paper or searching for information on the internet.

Problems can arise when the advice seems troubling to us. Or we may be torn by conflicting suggestions—one person may advise tossing out all reminders and cleaning out the closet while another recommends that we go slowly, making decisions after some time and thought.

How do we sift through all those different opinions? How do we make sense of the conflicting advice?

*Remember that grief is an individual experience.* In the past decades, our understanding of grief has changed considerably. We no longer look at grief as a predictable set of stages. Rather, we view grief as an individual process influenced by many factors, such as our relationship with the person who died, the ways we cope, the nature of the death, as well as a range of social, spiritual, and cultural factors. Some of us, for example, may respond to a death with deep, heartfelt emotion. Others may be affected in different ways. We should be suspicious of any advice that tells us how we should feel and how we should grieve.

*One size does not fit all.* Since grief is a highly individual process, we may find support and solace in different ways. In my support group, I emphasize that we

can tell what helped us rather than what would help another. Support groups are a wonderful example. They can be highly useful by validating grief and extending hope in a difficult time. Yet, support groups are not necessarily for everyone. Some may have adequate support among their circle of friends. Others may find more private ways to cope while still others may be too needy for the sharing environment of mutual support. We need to be cautious whenever someone is insistent that this is what we must do!

*There is no timetable for grief.* The unique and personal nature of grief means that no more can really say when we should or shouldn't be feeling or doing something. Grief is like a roller coaster — full of ups and downs, highs and lows. Like a roller coaster, the early part of the journey may not be the most difficult. The shock of the loss and the support of friends may cushion us. Generally, we resume our prior roles. If we are not functioning in our major roles — work, school, or home — or if we are resorting to drugs or alcohol to cope, it may be time to seek additional help. In addition, if over a period of time, maybe even a year or two, we experience the lows as often and intensely as ever, we may also want assistance in assessing what seems to be complicating our grief.

*Say goodbye to closure.* We never get over a loss; we learn to live with it. Pain usually lessens over time but, even years later, we may occasionally deeply miss the person who died. When my first grandchild was born, I missed sharing it with my par-

ents — even though they had died a decade earlier. Distrust any counsel that suggest or promises that elusive closure.

*We can trust ourselves.* Perhaps our inner voice is our best source of advice. As we hear the recommendations of others — in print or elsewhere — we can ask the questions: It may have worked for others, but does it sound right for me? We are likely to know that answer.

\*\*\*\*\*

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](http://www.hospicefoundation.org) or by calling 800-854-3402 and is published monthly by the Hospice Foundation of America, 1621 Connecticut Ave., NW, #300, Washington, DC 20009. Annual subscription-\$12.00.



Kenneth J. Doka, Ph.D., is a Professor of Gerontology at the College of New Rochelle. Dr. Doka's books include: **Disenfranchised Grief; Living with Life Threatening**

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

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

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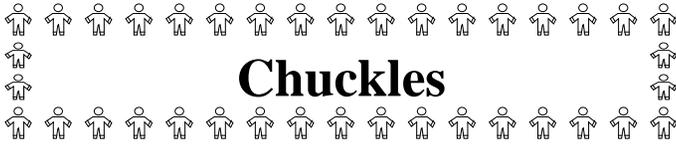
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# Comments



## Chuckles

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

Please join me in remembering a great icon of the entertainment community. The Pillsbury Doughboy died yesterday of a yeast infection and trauma complications from repeated pokes in the belly. He was 71. Doughboy was buried in a lightly greased coffin. Dozens of celebrities turned out to pay their respects, including Mrs. Butterworth, Hungry Jack, the California Raisins, Betty Crocker, the Hostess Twinkies and Captain Crunch. The grave site was piled high with flours. Aunt Jemima delivered the eulogy and lovingly described Doughboy as a man who never knew how much he was kneaded. Doughboy rose quickly in show business, but his later life was filled with turnovers. He was not considered a very smart cookie, wasting much of his dough on half-baked schemes. Despite being a little flaky at times, he still was a crusty old man and was considered a positive roll model for millions. Doughboy is survived by his wife Play Dough, three children: John Dough, Jane Dough and Dosey Dough, plus they had one in the oven. He is also survived by his elderly father, Pop Tart. The funeral was held at 3:50 for about 20 minutes.

Sent by Steve Yeazel, Frigid Fluid Co.

The local news station was interviewing an 80-year-old lady because she had just gotten married—for the fourth time. The interviewer asked her questions about her life, about what it felt like to be marrying again at 80 and then about her new husband's occupation. "He's a funeral director," she answered. "Interesting," the newsman thought. He then asked her if she wouldn't mind telling him a little about her first three husbands and what they did for a living. She paused for a few moments, needing time to reflect on all those years. After a short time, a smile came to her face and she answered proudly, explaining that she's first married a banker when she was in her early 20's, then a circus ringmaster in her 40's, later on a preacher when in her 60's, and now in her 80's, a funeral director. The interviewer looked at her, quite astonished, and asked why she had married four men with such diverse careers. She smiled and explained, "I married one for the money, two for the show, three to get ready, and four to go."

I don't care who you are....this is funny!



When the graveside service had no more than terminated. There was a tremendous burst of thunder accompanied by a distant lightning bolt and more rumbling thunder. The little old man looked at the pastor and calmly said, "Well, she's there."

### Innocence is Priceless

One Sunday morning, the pastor noticed little Alex standing in the foyer of the church staring up at a large plaque. It was covered with names and small American flags mounted on either side of it. The six-year old had been staring at the plaque for some time, so the pastor walked up, stood beside the little boy, and said quietly, "Good morning Alex," "Good morning Pastor," he replied, still focused on the plaque. "Pastor, what is this?" The pastor said, "Well, son, it's a memorial to all the young men and women who died in the service," Soberly, they just stood together, staring at the large plaque. Finally, little Alex's voice, barely audible and trembling with fear asked, "Which service, the 8:30 or the 10:45?"



A police recruit was asked during the exam, "What would you do if you had to arrest your mother?" He answered, "Call for backup."

We love the Dead Beat! .....Thanks for a great publication!

David and Teresa Mardis—Schaeffer Mortuary, Caldwell, KS

....I enjoy reading it and do it usually soon as it comes in the mail, chuckles are always a good laugh.

Madison A. Davis, Danfelt Funeral Home

.... You have a very interesting and informative website.

Melissa Johnson Williams, CFSP, Executive Director, American Society of Embalmers.

### Young Chuck's Donkey Story

Young Chuck, moved to Texas and bought a donkey from a farmer for \$100. The farmer agreed to deliver the donkey the next day. The next day he drove up and said, "Sorry son, but I have some bad news, the donkey died." Chuck replied, "Well, then, just give me my money back." The farmer said, "Can't do that. I went and spent it already." Chuck said, "Ok, then, just bring me the dead donkey." The farmer asked, "What ya gonna do with him?" Chuck said, "I'm going to raffle him off." The farmer said, "You can't raffle off a dead donkey!" Chuck said, "Sure, I can. Watch me. I just won't tell anybody he's dead." A month later, the farmer met up with Chuck and asked, "What happened with that dead donkey?" Chuck said, "I raffled him off. I sold 500 tickets at two dollars a piece and made a profit of \$898." The farmer said, "Didn't anyone complain?" Chuck said, "Just the guy who won. So I gave him his two dollars back." Chuck grew up and works for the government.



I enjoy your magazine and especially the Chuckles. I thought I'd pass a good one on to you. I heard it from a missionary a number of years ago. Dennis Jeter, Jeter & Son Funeral Home, Dallas, TX

We all know the Egyptians perfected the embalming process that sometimes took up to three months. Well, Alexander the Great found out about their chemicals and through trial and error found that a particular chemical would turn a certain color in a predictable time frame. He experimented and found that if his Generals used a cloth around their wrist and put the chemical on the cloth within a given time frame, he could coordinate his attack strategy in a more efficient manner. This became a very successful tool for him and actually became the forerunner of the wrist watch. At the time it became know as Alexander's Rag Time Band.

### Sisters of St. Francis

A man is driving down a deserted stretch of highway when he notices a sign out of the corner of his eye... It reads: SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS HOUSE OF PROSTITUTION- 10 MILES. He thinks this is a figment of his imagination and drives on a without second thought.... Soon he sees another sign which reads: SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS HOUSE OF PROSTITUTION- 5 MILES. Suddenly he begins to realize that these signs are for real and drives past a third sign saying: SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS HOUSE OF PROSTITUTION—NEXT RIGHT. His curiosity gets the best of him and he pulls into the drive. On the far side of the parking lot is a stone building with a small sign next to the door reading: SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS. He climbs the steps and rings the bell. The door is answered by a nun in a long black habit who asks, "What may we do for you my son?" He answers, "I saw your signs along the highway and was interested in possibly doing

(Continued on page 11)



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**Chuckles (Cont.)**

*(Continued from page 10)*

business..." "Very well, my son. Please follow me." He is led through many winding passages and is soon quite disoriented. The nun stops at a closed door and tells the man, "Please knock on this door." He does so and another nun in a long habit, holding a tin cup answers the door... This nun instructs, "Please place \$100 in the cup then go through the large wooden door at the end of the hallway." He puts \$100 in the cup, eagerly trots down the hall and slips through the door pulling it shut behind him. The door locks, and he finds himself back in the parking lot facing another sign: "GO IN PEACE. YOU HAVE JUST BEEN SCR..... BY THE SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS. SERVES YOU RIGHT YOU SINNER."



\*\*\*\*\*

**Flying Goat**

Two men while walking through the woods, came upon a large hole in the ground. Curious just how deep this hole is, they toss a small rock in and listen for it to hit bottom. After hearing nothing, they decide to throw a large rock in. Still nothing is heard. Now they are really curious as to the depth of the hole. One of the men spot an old transmission under a tree, they figure this should be large enough to make a sound they could hear when it hits bottom, so in it goes. They are listening for the transmission to hit bottom when all of a sudden they hear a tremendous rustling in the bushes behind them. They turn around just in time to see a goat go charging by. The goat jumps straight up and goes head first in the hole. The two men are dumbfounded. They stare at the hole trying to figure out what just happened. A few minutes later a farmer happens by and asked the two men if they had seen a goat. The men told the farmer that in fact they had, and described the scene about the goat charging by, jumping straight up and going in the hole. The farmer said that goat couldn't be his because he had his goat tied to a transmission!

\*\*\*\*\*

Two golfers in the course of the game came up behind two women. Since the women were playing much slower than the men, the men decided to ask the ladies if it was okay to play through. One of the men decides he would walk ahead and if it was okay, they would then play through. He gets about halfway down to the women and turns around and comes back. He explains to the other man that he can't go down there, one of the women is his wife and the other is his girlfriend. The other man said he would go. He gets about halfway and he too comes back. When he gets back, he tells the other man, "Small world, isn't it?"



*(Last two chuckles provided by Chuck)*

A funeral service is being held for a woman who has just passed away. At the end of the service the pallbearers are carrying the casket out when they accidentally bump into a wall, jarring the casket. They hear a faint moan. They open the casket and find that the woman is actually alive! She lives for ten more years, and then dies. Once again a ceremony is held, and at the end of it the pallbearers are again carrying out the casket. As they carry the casket towards the door, the husband cries out, "Watch the wall!"



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## Organ Donation Groups and Hospitals May Have Skipped Communication 101

by Lowell Pugh

“Why did they make him shorter?” This lament by a family member expressed her surprise as she looked at the now dressed body of a skin and long bone donor. The family members, who for religious reasons, had dressed the deceased were also surprised. Even with the help of two embalmers they had difficulty handling the large body and the necessary complete wrap in plastic which interfered with the ceremonial clothing. Organ donation was important to some of the family members, but even they were not prepared for the reality of an extensive harvest. Sadly this happens much too often leaving funeral directors to recover the fumble.

The last few months several funeral directors have expressed frustration with donor organization and hospital communications between family members and funeral directors. An all too frequent scenario plays out with delays of several hours to days and repeated calls trying to find out when a body will be released. Release times are revised as harvest teams are delayed or have to come from afar.

Hundreds of skilled embalmers were trained in eye enucleation, yet donor organizations and hospitals now prefer to call in other technicians. They are often from another location and this results in additional delay. Further complications arise when some of these technicians seem to be uninformed or unsympathetic to the embalmer’s requirements.

No one can deny the urgent need for organ donors. We abhor the under-the-table procurement

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antics that a few medical and funeral service people stooped to for profit the last few years. And we certainly don’t want the clandestine organ dealing that is prevalent in the third world countries. Where desperate people are making deals with that guy over at the corner table trading a kidney or a piece of their liver for money. Money will be used to buy food or medical care for their family, maybe an apartment, car or wife.

Thousands of donor organs are needed. Many families are willing to share this last gift from a loved one and funeral service people want to help. To smooth the way the donor organizations and cooperating hospitals have to do more than show up at our meetings and conventions with brochures and PowerPoint programs. They have to be more forthcoming with the families we both serve and improve communications between the medical facilities and funeral service.

Oh— one more item. If the donor family has been assured that they can still have a funeral service with viewing—please have the technicians leave enough body for the embalmer to embalm properly. Then we can all be more enthusiastic about organ donor programs.

## Interesting to Think About!!

- ◆ If money doesn’t grow on trees, then why do banks have branches.
- ◆ Why do you have to “put your two cents in”...but it’s only a “penny for your thoughts?” Where’s the extra penny going to?
- ◆ Why does a round pizza come in a square box?
- ◆ Once you’re in heaven, do you get stuck wearing the clothes that you were buried in for eternity?



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# Death Notices of Fellow Funeral Service Colleagues

## COLORADO



**Rick A. Adels**, 53, died April 7, 2008. He was co-owner of the Northern Colorado Crematory in Greeley, Colorado and served as Minister of Music at Trinity Episcopal Church in Greeley.

## KANSAS

**Vernon Dick Elliot**, 84, died August 20, 2008. He was a graduate of the Dallas Institute of Mortuary Science and president of his class. Vernon was a retired owner of Elliott Funeral Homes in Anthony, Harper, Caldwell and Attica, Kansas. Services were directed by Prairie Rose Funeral Home of Anthony.

**Velda M. Fischer**, 89, of Republic, died August 22, 2008. She was married to Walter F. Fischer who died in 1984. Services were directed by Tibbetts-Fischer Funeral Home, Belleville.

**Wanda L. Graves**, 85, of Sedan, died July 27, 2008. She was a retired owner of Graves-Baird Funeral Home who handled her service at the First United Methodist Church in Barnes.

**Esther Irene Smith-Rittgers**, 88, a retired licensed funeral director who had worked in her family's business, Smith Family Mortuaries in the Wichita area. Services were July 14 in Derby.

## MISSOURI

**Glenn H. Hill**, 86, died Sept. 5, 2008. He served in WWII with the 170th Combat Engineers in the Pacific Theater. A graduate of the St. Louis College of Mortuary Science he worked in the profession for others before he bought Eckhoff Funeral Home in Appleton City in 1976. He was honored as a 50-year licensee in 1998. Services were directed by the Hill & Son Funeral Home in Appleton City.

**Rockford "Rocky" Humphrey, Jr.**, died August 22, 2008. His family moved from St. Louis to Pineville in 1937 and purchased the Carnell Funeral Homes in Pineville, Noel and Southwest City. A graduate of St. Louis College of Mortuary Science he practiced in Missouri until moving to Longmont, Colorado where he was employed by and later purchased the Lewellen Funeral Home. Services were directed by the Ozark Funeral Home in Anderson.

## OKLAHOMA

**Doris Pariseau Hughes**, 86, died July 26. She was co-owner of Green Hill Memorial Gardens in Tulsa. Services were directed by Green Hill Funeral Home.

**Jodie W. Sevier**, 91, of Chickasha, died August 16, 2008. He received his embalmer's license in 1938 and later his funeral director's license. He moved to Chickasha nearly 70 years ago and became associated with the Chickasha Funeral Home which he owned and operated as the Sevier Funeral Home until 1975. He served on the state board for 20 years and served as OFDA president in 1954 and president of the Conference of Funeral Service Examining Board in 1963. He was honored with several professional and civic awards. Services were directed by the Sevier Funeral Home.

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

## TEXAS

**Cordelia Adams**, died August 25, 2008. Mrs. Adams was the mother of Larry Adams, owner/operator of Adams Funeral Home in Hamlin and grandmother of Tracy Graham, co-owner/operator of Lawrence Adams Funeral Home, Anson. Services were directed by Adams Funeral Home of Ralls.

**Roy F. Beckmann**, 75, a 50-year licensee, of Fredericksburg, died July 28, 2008. He was owner of the Beckmann Funeral Home of Fredericksburg who handled the service.

**Ella Mae Bledsoe**, died Sept. 18, 2008. She was the mother of Debora Rowan, a funeral director at Hampton Vaughan Funeral Home, Wichita Falls. Her services were handled by McNeil's Mustang Funeral Services, Mustang, OK.

**Gary L. Burgess**, died Sept. 18, 2008. He was a funeral director at the Arlington National Funeral Home in Houston. Services were handled by Arlington National Funeral Home.

**Lee Andrew Denton, Jr.**, died July 28, 2008. A 50-year licensee in 1998, he had been Assistant Manager at the former Gene Rodens Son's, now Starrett Funeral Home. Services were directed by Starrett Funeral Home, Paris.

**Beverly Ann Hawkins Goodspeed**, 61, of Fort Worth, died June 13, 2008. She was a longtime employee of Gregory W. Spencer Funeral Directors, Inc. She spent the past two years compiling a history of black-owned funeral homes in Ft. Worth.

**W.P. "Bud" Guinn, Sr.**, died Sept. 19, 2008. He was the husband of Jeannine Guinn and father of Paul & Frances Guinn and Russell & Dolores Guinn of Hondo. Services were directed by Tondre-Guinn Funeral Home, Castrolville and Guinn-Horger Funeral Home, Hondo.

**Hoyt Hefner, Jr.** of Broussard's Mortuary, Inc., died August 27, 2008. Services were directed by Broussard's Mortuary, Winnie.

**Mary Gerke Pahlmyer**, died Aug. 31, 2008. She was the mother of Clarence Gerke, Memorial Oaks Chapel of Brenham who directed the service.

**Albert I. Pearson**, died July 25, 2008. He was father of Tena Tankersley of Tankersley Funeral Home in Stamford. Burial was in Bethel Lutheran Cemetery, Ericksdahl community. Services were directed by Tankersley Funeral Home.

**Sue T. Victory**, 74, died August, 2008. Mrs. Victory was active in many activities of St. Paul's Episcopal Church and civic organizations in Lubbock. She was the widow of Whit Rix Victory. Services Funeral Directors, Lubbock.





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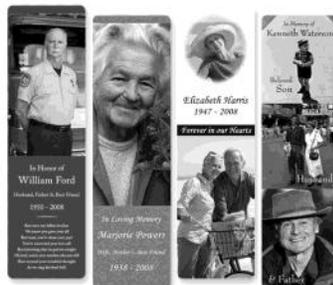
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## Amarillo College 2008 Graduates

Amarillo College's graduation ceremony was held at 7:00 p.m. Friday, May 9, 2008 at the Amarillo Civic Center's Cal Farley Coliseum. 1,145 students completed graduation requirements, including the following students who graduated from the Mortuary Science Program during the 2007-2008 school year.



Those who earned their  
Funeral Director Certificate:

Nita Johnson, Childress, TX  
Beverly Lawson, Meridian, TX  
Charles Robinius, Arlington, TX  
Michael Thomas, Missouri City, TX  
Douglas McBrayer, Dickinson, TX  
Charles Batty, Alvin, TX  
Adam Cordova Anton, Chico, NM  
Woodrow Dorman, Orange, TX  
Adam Dunlap, Big Spring, TX  
Priscilla Hawkins, Houston, TX  
Robert Heidecker, Hereford, TX  
Penny Jessup, Canyon, TX  
Lorene Jones, Bryan, TX  
Juliette Loer, Georgetown, TX  
Jefferson Massey, Whitney, TX  
Don Robey, Houston, TX  
Laurie Walther, Fort Worth, TX  
Debra Williams, West Columbia, TX  
Tammy Wilson, North Richland Hills, TX  
Virginia Bess, West Columbia, TX  
Howard Holderfield, El Paso, TX  
Steven Mansen, Waco, TX  
Laurie Minchew, Red Oak, TX  
Diana Smith, McKinney, TX  
Dianze Thompson, Houston, TX  
Rochie Underwood, Stamford, TX  
Usevio Martinex, Amarillo, TX  
Tracy Lemons, Amarillo, TX



Laurie Walther, Fort Worth, TX  
Debra Williams, West Columbia, TX  
Tammy Wilson, North Richland Hills, TX  
Virginia Bess, West Columbia, TX  
Howard Holderfield, El Paso, TX  
Steven Mansen, Waco, TX  
Laurie Minchew, Red Oak, TX  
Diana Smith, McKinney, TX  
Dianze Thompson, Houston, TX  
Rochie Underwood, Stamford, TX  
Usevio Martinex, Amarillo, TX  
Tracy Lemons, Amarillo, TX



Those receiving their AAS degree:

April Adams, Amarillo, TX  
Tyler Carver, Amarillo, TX  
Jarrod Crowell, Amarillo, TX  
Hazel Heidecker, Hereford, TX  
Katie Hulsey, Amarillo, TX  
Garre LaGrone, Amarillo, TX  
Gabriela Mireles, Amarillo, TX  
Richard Resch, Hereford, TX  
Christina Salcido, Amarillo, TX  
Kathryn Smith, Amarillo, TX  
Alana Winegeart, Borger, TX  
Rowdy Wright, Amarillo, TX  
Diana Galbaldon, Albuquerque, NM  
Jose Martinez, Amarillo, TX  
Elizabeth Nance, Lubbock, TX  
Mallory Naples, Fritch, TX  
James Rankin, Pampa, TX  
Bruce Fields, Canyon, TX  
Kenneth Hardin, Amarillo, TX  
Joe Tucker, Odessa, TX



## ELITE MARKETING PARTNERS DEMONSTRATES COMMITMENT TO PRE- NEED FUNERAL INDUSTRY WITH ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEW FIRM

(July 2008, Jefferson City, Missouri). Roxanne Schnieders and Marty



Sargent have announced the formation of Elite Marketing Partners, focused on serving the large network of funeral homes throughout the Midwest states. With over seven decades of combined funeral profession experience, they bring innovative marketing support and business planning expertise to help enhance both Pre-



need and At-need business for their funeral home partners.

Elite Marketing Partners provides a hands-on approach with its solid distribution of Marketing Specialists that bring value and real results through onsite support, education and continual industry-related training. "We are committed to exemplary customer service and look forward to providing continued support to the funeral homes we have helped to grow their businesses over the past 10-15 years" said Roxanne Schnieders.

Demonstrating their commitment to the growth and needs of the funeral profession, Elite Marketing Partners is available to assist with community preplanning seminars, aftercare program development and public relations plans that will help funeral homes reach their business objectives. "I am excited to share my many years of experience in business planning, sales development and training with our funeral home partners to help them solidify and increase their market share and provide a benefit to the communities they serve" said Marty Sargent.

Elite Marketing Partners offers Preneed insurance products from National Guardian Life Insurance Company, one of America's most successful and highly regarded independent mutual insurance companies established in 1910. Elite Marketing Partners is located in Jefferson City, Missouri and can be reached at 573-638-0333 or [info@elitemarketingpartners.net](mailto:info@elitemarketingpartners.net).

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## Tips from the Back Room

### “Dry Ice”

By Brian Simmons

The use of dry ice in shipping unembalmed bodies has always been a gray area. While some airlines have permitted a limited amount of dry ice, others have refused to accept any amount.

The accepted amount of dry ice in a combo unit is five pounds total. Some airlines will allow a little more than this, but will charge extra.

- ◆ Place the remains in a lightweight pouch, lay a second pouch in the combo unit.
- ◆ Place the dry ice along the bottom, beneath the head, chest, abdomen and feet.
- ◆ Place the pouched remains on top of the dry ice and zip up the outside bag. Wrap the bag in the plastic furnished with the combo unit and ship as you ordinarily would.

If shipping a remains with dry ice, be sure to let the airlines know when making your reservations. Also make sure that the outside of the combo unit is visibly marked “Dry Ice.”

Some of the medical research companies who we ship to regularly prefer that we use the chemical gel packs. These can be purchased at any drug store. We use approximately 15 of these distributed along the body with special attention paid to the abdominal area. If the body has been refrigerated twenty-four hours before shipment, there should be no problems.

Also remember to book your flight so the connections are within four hours of each other and the remains will arrive at its destination within twenty-four hours.

Another use for dry ice is to remedy maggot infestation. Our local pathologist taught us to place an aluminum pan inside the body bag (usually between the feet). Place about four pounds of dry ice in the pan and pour in about two inches of hot water. Close the bag and seal the zipper to keep vapors in. (We cover it tightly with a casket plastic.) After a few hours, the dry ice has filled the body bag with carbon dioxide and asphyxiates the maggots and other parasites inside the bag. The dry ice dissipates on its own and is no problem.



About the author:  
Brian Simmons owns and operates Springfield Mortuary Service in Springfield. He currently serves as President of the Ninth District of the Missouri Funeral Directors and Embalmers Association.

## Brian Simmons Of Springfield Mortuary Services Addresses Clinical Pastoral Education Class at St. John’s Health Center Springfield, Missouri

On August 8, Brian Simmons addressed the Clinical Pastoral Education class at St. John’s Regional Health Center in Springfield, Missouri. The group of clergymen were entering into hospitals chaplain positions or related fields.

Simmons discussed Chaplain-funeral home relations as well as removal and preparation procedures following a death. Other subjects were organ and tissue donation, medical research and anatomical donations as well as domestic and international shipment of human remains.

Communications between the chaplains, the funeral director and the families of the deceased was also discussed. Of interest to the chaplains was the handling of indigent cases, infants, and various options regarding cremation.

Brian Simmons owns and operates Springfield Mortuary Service in Springfield. He currently serves as President of the Ninth District of the Missouri Funeral Directors and Embalmers Association.

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**The Funeral Profession in Economic Challenging Times (Cont.)**

*(Continued from page 1)*

the death is expected and there is enough time to compare prices, this happens whether the economy is having problems or not. So whether this will be factor in fiscally stressed times is questionable.

**Merchandise**

As far as the merchandise is concerned and people being more conservative in their selections, this seems very possible. The casket and outer container are major parts of the funeral bill and there is a great range in prices. So the more cost-effective options or overall less expensive ones will probably be more desired.



In the past, funeral homes have made their profits in the merchandise and not charged as much for their services. This made the merchandise a more crucial factor in the funeral home's profit. Some funeral homes have adjusted their price lists to make sure their services are compensated not being dependent on which or if any merchandise is selected. When funds are limited the consumer will adjust to the less expensive products. Usually the less expensive merchandise will have a lower profit for the funeral homes, so they may make less money overall. Obviously stressed conditions will affect these selections.

The merchandise profitability issue has been discussed before in relation to customers bringing their own funeral products, i.e. casket stores, caskets at Costco, etc. When the customer brings in their own merchandise for the funeral then the funeral operation will make nothing at all.



This article implied that customers may be able to find less expensive items than the funeral homes could offer. So people may start bringing more flowers, books and even getting their own cards, but this already happens in good or bad times. With computer technology, sometimes they can make more meaningful things for themselves.

Are we taking advantage of the situation or providing unique

*(Continued on page 21)*

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## Some History on the Custom of a Wake

*Facts provided by article in Telegraph Herald  
By Liz Lynch*

An interesting article was found by a 100-year old woman living at the Stonehill Care Center in Dubuque, Iowa. She writes the nostalgia page for the **Telegraph Herald** newspaper and a current (Sept 23, 2008) issue featured, "Wakes traditionally used to take place in home-Families became intimately involved in all aspects." Considering Ms. Lynch is probably talking from experience, many interesting facts were provided.

It starts with a definition of the wake, "a custom of watching over a dead person before burial." The custom began centuries ago due to- "because of a concern over occasional errors made in the determination of death." That's a little scary that they were worried if the person was dead or not. But the people would watch over the sick with hopes of "restoring the ailing person to health."

If death occurred "watchful prayers and consolation were ever present." The body was taken care of by neighbors and "made ready for the undertaker, who proceeded to embalm the deceased at the home." In the "early wakes" the body was laid on a stretcher until the morning of the funeral."

While all of this was going on, "a white sheet was hung on the wall behind the corpse to be plastered with religious sayings to console the family." Sounds like the caskets and panels that people can write on now.

All household activities were taken care by neighbors, friends and relatives because, "a 24-hour watch was kept during the entire wake." There was a room with complimentary tobacco for the men who wished to smoke. All rooms but the designated wake room had conversation going on. The mourners that were relatives dressed in black with "long black veils worn on the women's hats and gently pulled down over their face during the funeral procession."

The morning of the funeral service, "the undertaker brought a coffin to the house. Everyone left the wake room while the corpse was raised into the coffin. A black hearse was drawn by four black horses. Many teams and carriages followed the hearse, full of neighbors and friends, as well as all relatives, all showing the deepest respect for the deceased." This sounds very familiar to how the funeral procession takes place today.

There was a set mourning period of four to six months and was "rigidly enforced by the family's elders."

Ms. Lynch's final statement sums up her feelings about today's customs. "The trend today is focused on the undertaking parlor, or funeral home. Many times, a one-night wake takes place. And, employees are rarely released by

their employer to go to a funeral, with the exception of close relatives. Customs have changed."

Things have changed but what happened in the past explains how things have developed today.



## Cherokee Indian Legend

Do you know the legend of the Cherokee Indian youth's rite of passage?

His father takes him into the forest, blindfolds him and leaves him alone. He is required to sit on a stump the whole night and not remove the blindfold until the rays of the morning sun shine through it. He cannot cry out for help to anyone. Once he survived the night, he is a MAN.



He cannot tell the other boys of this experience because each lad must come into manhood on his own.

The boy is naturally terrified. He can hear all kinds of noises. Wild beasts must surely be all around him. Maybe even some human might do him harm. The wind blows the grass and earth, and shakes his stump, but he sits stoically, never removing the blindfold. It is the only way he can become a man!



Finally, after a horrific night the sun rays warm him and he removes his blindfold. It is then that he discovers his father sitting on the stump next to him. He has been at watch the entire night, protecting his son from harm.

We, too, are never alone. Even when we don't know it, our Heavenly Father is watching over us, sitting on the stump beside us. When trouble comes, all we have to do is reach out to Him.

True or not it's a great lesson.

**The Funeral Profession in Economic Challenging Times (Cont.)**

*(Continued from page 18)*

products that only funeral homes can provide? If the perception is that we are taking advantage of our customers and they feel the need to bring their own products from other sources, how far is it from them not feeling the need for us at all? Hopefully, those in need will continue to appreciate the service that we provide and continue to want services versus the direct burial or cremation that would require a lot less merchandise overall.

**Cremation vs. Earth Burial**

The next main issue as a result of economic woes was centered on the cremation versus earth burial issue. The price comparison between the two services dwelled on buying a casket, outer container and burial plot as compared to using a rental casket with the cremation. We know that there are some monetary differences in the services and products needed. But do the customers comprehend the underlying funeral directing demands in addition to the merchandise that is needed in the different types of services.

In both selections the body is removed from the place of death and taken to a facility to either embalm or cremate. Some people select services to view the body and have a funeral service whether they plan the disposition to be burial or cremation. These services require many of the same things until the end of the service.

The main economic concern would center on the casket selection and need of the outer container and burial plot. There are rental caskets available for cremation services and the lack an outer container and burial plot with grave opening cost



makes the cremation service usually less than the burial one. As far as the funeral home is concerned the financial loss would be related to the merchandise.

The customers who select the direct cremation with no services as a more economical option make it very important that the funeral homes receive compensation for the extra work that is required. Funeral homes need to have their basic service charge or cremation charge set to accommodate the extra service sometimes involved with cremation activities.

In the burial the funeral directing stops upon the covering of the grave except possibly monument coordinating, but a cremation necessitates a few more steps. The body needs to be cremated, whether in house or at another facility and more legal documentation is needed for the cremation than burial. The cremains need to be retrieved or sent to the funeral home. The family then needs to receive the cremains. The funeral home will need to arrange burial or scattering or getting the ashes into the family's possession.

In the past the funeral homes have not charged extra for these activities and may have created the problem of getting paid less for a cremation now. The public needs to be educated that having a cremation is not easier than a burial. Funeral establishments have presented the cremation as less expensive previously and now they are paying the price.

**Mobility**

A final factor making cremation more desirable in economic stressful times is the increased mobility of the population cited in a **Newsweek** article, "Weep for the Grim Reaper," 11/8/2007 by Daniel Gross. He mentioned the aspect of Americans retiring far from their original homes with



"their children dispersed throughout the country."

This gave an advantage to the cremation option in ease and finances of completing the service arrangements. Families do not have a specific home cemetery to take the body back to. Therefore the transporting back to the home territory would not be needed. The article didn't mention the expense of the individuals traveling to the services.

Maybe this travel expense has led to the desire for having the funeral shown on the internet and not requiring the personal attendance at the service. In economic stressful times having the funeral home

coordinate everything to be shown on the internet instead of people having to show up may seem more cost-effective. The cost of this unique service may not be



coordinate everything to be shown on the internet instead of people having to show up may seem more cost-effective. The cost of this unique service may not be

*(Continued on page 28)*



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# “Dear Counselor....”

By Bill Stalter

**Dear Counselor,**  
**With regard Missouri's new next of kin designation law (R.S.Mo. §194.119), how does the paragraph allowing designation by a durable power of attorney work? I thought that the durable power of attorney terminated upon death. Yet, this person, the attorney-in-fact, will have to make the arrangements after death has occurred. That person will be asked to sign the statement of goods and services, making him financially responsible. Wouldn't this require the person to use his own funds, or can he get money from the estate? Or, is this only a preneed situation where they only confirm what has already been selected through a preneed contract? We're fuzzy on the actual execution of this law.**

\*\*\*\*\*  
Generally speaking, the authority granted to an individual (the attorney-in-fact) by a durable power of attorney to handle the principal's assets terminates upon death. However, some states' DPOA laws authorize the attorney-in-fact to take actions with regard to the principal's body, such as allowing an autopsy, or donating the body to a medical school. Missouri's right of sepulcher law has extended that approach to allow the attorney-in-fact to also control the final disposition of the principal's body when the document provides for such. In a sense, the attorney-in-fact has the power to dictate the elements of the funeral, but cannot use the principal's purse to pay for the funeral.

If the principal vests the right of sepulcher in someone other than a spouse or a parent, the principal may need to set aside funding that the attorney-in-fact can control without reliance upon the durable power of attorney. The purchase of a preneed contract would be one alternative. The use of a POD bank account could be another choice.

\*\*\*\*\*

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).



## Keep the Fork

There was a young woman who had been diagnosed with a terminal illness and had been given three months to live. So as she was getting her things “in order,” she contacted her pastor and had him come to her house to discuss certain aspects of her final wishes. She told him which songs she wanted sung at the service, what scriptures she would like read, and what outfit she wanted to be buried in.

Everything was in order and the pastor was preparing to leave when the young woman suddenly remembered something very important to her. “There’s one more thing,” she said excitedly.

“What’s that?” came the pastor’s reply. “This is very important,” the young woman continued. “I want to be buried with a fork in my right hand.”

The pastor stood looking at the young woman, not knowing quite what to say.

“That surprises you, doesn’t it?” the young woman asked.

“Well, to be honest, I’m puzzled by the request,” said the pastor.

The young woman explained. “My grandmother once told me this story, and from there on out, I have always done so. I have also, always tried to pass along its message to those I love and those who are in need of encouragement.

My grandmother said, ‘In all my years of attending church socials and potluck dinners, I always remember that when

the dishes of the main course were being cleared, someone would inevitably lean over and say, ‘Keep your fork.’ It was my favorite part because I know that something better was coming...like velvety chocolate cake or deep-dish apple pie. Something wonderful, and with substance!”

The young woman continued, “So I just want people to see me there in that casket with a fork in my hand and I want them to wonder, ‘What’s with the fork?’ Then I want you to tell them: “keep your fork...the best is yet to come.”

The pastor’s eyes welled up with tears of joy as he hugged the young woman goodbye. He knew this would be one of the last times he would see her before her death. But he also knew that the young woman had a better grasp of heaven than he did.

She had a better grasp of what heaven would be like than many people twice her age, with twice as much experience and knowledge. She KNEW that something better was coming.

At the funeral people were walking by the young woman’s casket and they saw the pretty dress she was wearing and the fork placed in her right hand. Over and over, the pastor heard the question, “What’s with the fork?” And over and over he smiled.

During his message, the pastor told the

*(Continued on page 23)*

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)  
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**Keep the Fork (Cont.)**

*(Continued from page 22)*

people of the conversation he had with the young woman shortly before she died. He also told them about the fork and about what it symbolized to her. The pastor told the people how he could not stop thinking about the fork and told them that they probably would not be able to stop thinking about it either. He was right.

So the next time you reach down for your fork, let it remind you ever so gently, that the best is yet to come. Friends are a very rare jewel, indeed. They make you

smile and encourage you to succeed. They lend an ear, they share a word of praise, and they always want to open their hearts to us.

Show your friends how much you care. Remember to always be there for them, even when you need them more. For you never know when it may be their time to "Keep your fork." Cherish the time you have, and the memories you share. Being friends with someone is not an opportunity but a sweet responsibility.

And keep your fork.



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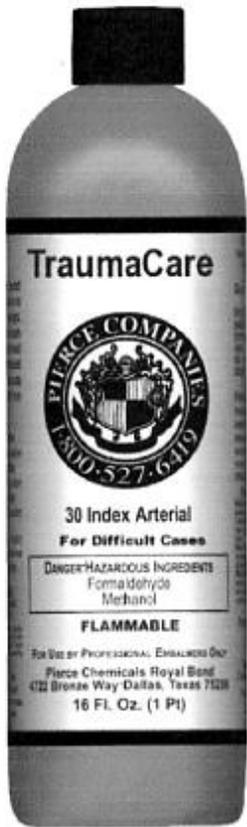
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**Judas Asparagus**  
**Children's Bible in a Nutshell**

We heard this on a local radio show this morning in Dallas. A child was told to write a book report on the entire Bible. This is amazing and brought tears to my eyes. I wonder how often we take for granted that children understand what we are teaching????

**Through the eyes of a child.**  
**Children's Bible in a Nutshell**



In the beginning, which occurred near the start, there was nothing but God, darkness, and some gas. The Bible says, "the Lord thy God is one, but I think He must be a lot older than that. Anyway, God said, "Give me a light!" and someone did. Then God made the world.

He split the Adam and made Eve. Adam and Eve were naked, but they weren't embarrassed because mirrors hadn't been invented yet. Adam and Eve disobeyed God by eating one bad apple, so they were driven from the Garden of Eden. Not sure what they were driven in though, because they didn't have cars.

Adam and Eve had a son, Cain, who hated his brother as long as he was Abel. Pretty soon all the early people died off, except for Methuselah, who lived to be like a million or something.

One of the next important people was Noah, who was a good guy, but one of his kids was kind of a Ham. Noah built a large boat and put his family and some animals on it. He asked some other people to join him, but they said they would have to take a rain check.

After Noah came Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Jacob was more famous than his brother, Esau, because Esau sold Jacob his birthmark in ex-



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change for some pot roast. Jacob had a son named Joseph who wore a really loud sports coat.

Another important Bible guy was Moses, whose real name was Charlton Heston. Moses led the Israel Lights out of Egypt and away from the evil Pharaoh after God sent ten plagues on Pharaoh's people. These plagues included frogs, mice, lice, bowels, and no cable. God fed the Israel Lights every day with manicotti. Then he gave them His top Ten Commandments. These include don't lie, cheat, smoke, dance, or covet your neighbor's stuff. Oh, yeah, I just thought of one more: Humor thy father and thy mother.

One of Moses' best helpers was Joshua who was the first Bible guy to use spies. Joshua fought the battle of Geritol and the fence fell over on the town.

After Joshua came David. He got to be king by killing a giant with a sling-shot. He had a son named Solomon who had about 300 wives and 500 porcupines. My teacher says he was wise, but that doesn't sound very wise to me.

After Solomon there were a bunch of major league prophets. One of these was Jonah, who was swallowed by a big whale and then barfed upon the

shore. There were also some minor league prophets, but I guess we don't have to worry about them.

After the Old Testament came the New Testament. Jesus is the star of the New Testament. He was born in Bethlehem in a barn. (I wish I had been born in a barn, too, because my mom is always saying to me, "Close the door! Were you born in a barn? It would be nice to say, "As a matter of fact, I was.")

During His life, Jesus had many arguments with sinners like the Pharisees and the Republicans. Jesus also had twelve opossums. The worst one was Judas Asparagus. Judas was so evil that they named a terrible vegetable after him.

Jesus was a great man. He healed many leopards and even preached to some Germans on the Mount. But the Republicans and all those guys put Jesus on trial before Pontius the Pilot. Pilot didn't stick up for Jesus. He just washed his hands instead.

Any way's, Jesus died for our sins, then came back to life again. He went up to Heaven but will be back at the end of the Aluminum. His return is foretold in the book of Revolution.

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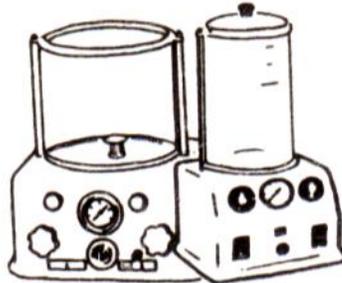


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## Cancel Your Credit Card Before You Die (What Might Happen If You Don't)

Now some people are really stupid!!! Be sure and cancel your credit cards before you die. This is so priceless, and so, so easy to see happening, customer service being what it is today.

A lady died this past January, and her credit card company billed her for February and March for their annual service charges on her credit card, and added late fees and interest on the monthly charge. The balance had been \$0.00 when she died, but now somewhere around \$60.00. A family member placed a call to her credit card company.

*Here is the exchange:*

**Family Member:** I am calling to tell you she died back in January.

**Credit Card:** The account was never closed and the late fees and charges still apply.

**Family Member:** Maybe, you should turn it over to collections.

**Credit Card:** Since it is two months past due, it already has been.

**Family Member:** So, what will they do when they find out she is dead?

**Credit Card:** Either report her account to frauds division or report her to the credit bureau, maybe both!

**Family Member:** Do you think God will be mad at her?

**Credit Card:** Excuse me?

**Family Member:** Did you just get what I was telling you—the part about her being dead?

**Credit Card:** Sir, you'll have to speak to my supervisor.

*Supervisor gets on the phone:*

**Family Member:** I'm calling to tell you, she died back in January with a \$0 balance.

**Credit Card:** The account was never closed and late fees and charges till apply.

**Family Member:** You mean you want to collect from her estate?

**Credit Card (stammer):** Are you her lawyer?

**Family Member:** No, I'm her great nephew. (Lawyer info was given)

**Credit Card:** Could you fax us a certificate of death?

**Family Member:** Sure. (Fax number was given)

*After they get the fax:*

**Credit Card:** Our system just isn't setup for death. I don't know what more I can do to help.

**Family Member:** Well, if you figure it out great! If not, you could just keep billing her. She won't care.

**Credit Card:** Well, the late fees and charges do still apply. (What is wrong with these people?!?)

**Family Member:** Would you like her new billing address?

**Credit Card:** That might help.

**Family Member:** Odessa Memorial Cemetery, Highway 129, Plot Number 69.

**Credit Card:** Sir, that's a cemetery!

**Family Member:** And what do you do with dead people on your planet???

## The Funeral Profession in Economic Challenging Times (Cont.)

(Continued from page 21)

perceived as financially viable as they think. This is something to consider in another discussion.

### Conclusions???

Many of the different aspects of the funeral service are definitely under the microscope when finances become strained. When people are deciding on less merchandise, type of service, whether to have a service or not, this does affect the funeral establishment.



We are a business that provides services and products. If customers use less of our services and select fewer or bring their own merchandise for the funeral, we make less money. If we make fewer dollars, the impact on our facilities, staffing and any other expenses is great. Sometimes whether the funeral home continues to exist is a result of all the fiscal distress.

We all know that deaths will happen and we will service them, but what our customers decide about type of service, merchandise and other needs will dictate how we survive these economic difficult times.

\*\*\*\*\*

An additional point I'd like to comment on, was a blog of comments on the article in the **Deseret News**. The negativity against funeral homes was unbelievable. Many of the comments felt that we had been ripping people off for a long time being a monopoly and they had no sympathy if we were losing money. How did we get such a negative opinion on the internet? Was it just the specific people who like to give their comments or is this more prevalent than we think? Another article could be:



*What influences how people approach the funeral profession in good or bad economic times?*

## Some of Rodney Dangerfield's Best

"I was such an ugly kid... When I played in the sandbox, the cat kept covering me up."

"I could tell my parents hated me. My bath toys were a toaster and radio."

"I'm so ugly...My father carries around a picture of the kid who came with his wallet."

"My wife made me join a bridge club. I jump off next Tuesday."

"Some dog I got. We call him Egypt because in every room he leaves a pyramid. His favorite bone is my arm. Last night he went on the paper four times—three of those times I was reading it."

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## They Walk Among Us

### *They Walk Among Us and Many Work Retail.....*

I was at the checkout of a K-Mart. The clerk rang up \$46.64. I gave her a fifty dollar bill. She gave me back \$46.64. I gave the money back to her and told her that she had made a mistake in MY favor. She became indignant and informed me she was Educated and knew what she was doing, and returned the money again. I gave her the Money back ..... same scenario! I departed the store with the \$46.64.

### *They Walk Among Us and Many Work Retail.....*

I walked into a Starbucks with a buy-on-get-one-free coupon for a Grande Latte. I handed it to the girl and she looked over at a little chalkboard that said: "buy one-get one free." "They're already buy-one-get-one-free," she said, "I guess they're both free." She handed me my free Lattes and I walked out the door.

### *They Walk Among Us!*

One day I was walking down the beach with some friends when one of them shouted, "Look at that dead bird!" Someone looked up at the sky and said, "Where?"

### *They Walk Among Us!*

While looking at a house, my brother asked the real estate agent which direction was north because he explained that he didn't want the sun waking him up every morning. She asked, "Does the sun rise in the north?" When my brother explained that the sun rises in the East; and has for sometime, she shook her head and said, "Oh, I don't keep up with all that stuff."

### *They Walk Among Us!*

I used to work in technical support for a 24/7 call center. One day I got a call from an individual who asked what hours the call center was open. I told him, "The number you dialed is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week." He responded, "Is that Easter or Pacific time?" Wanting to end the call quickly, I said, "Uh Pacific."

### *They Walk Among Us!*

My sister has a lifesaving tool in her car designed to cut through a seat belt if she gets trapped. She keeps it in her trunk.

### *They Walk Among Us!*

My friends and I were on a beer run and noticed the cases were discounted 10%. Since it was a big party, we bought two cases. The cashier multiplied two times 10% and gave us a 20% discount.

### *The Walk Among Us!*

I couldn't find my luggage at the airport baggage area, so I went to the lost luggage office and told the woman there that my bags never showed up. She smiled and told me not to worry because she was a trained professional and I was in good hands, "Now," she asked, "has your plane arrived yet?"

They Walk Among Us and they Reproduce and Worst of all....  
THEY VOTE!!!!!!

## Coming Soon— Wally World Wine

Wine lovers, take note.....

Wally World announced that, sometime in 2008, it will begin offering customers a new discount item — Wally World's own brand of wine. The world's largest retail chain is teaming up with Ernest & Julio Gallo Winery of California to produce the spirits at an affordable price, in the \$2 - \$5 range. Wine connoisseurs may not be inclined to put a bottle of Wally World brand in their shopping carts, but "there is a market for inexpensive wine," said a professor of marketing at the University of Arkansas, Bentonville. "But the right name is important." Consumer surveys were conducted to determine the most attractive name for the wine brand. The top surveyed name in order of popularity from with 1 being the best:

10. Chateau Traileur Parc
9. White Trashfindel
8. Big Red Gulp
7. World Championship Riesling
6. NASCARbernet
5. Chef Boyardeaux
4. Peanut Noir
3. I Can't Believe it's not Vinegar
2. Grape Expectations
1. Nasti Spumante.

The beauty of Wally World wine is that it can be served with either white meat (Possum) or red meat (Squirrel).

*P.S. Don't bother writing me back that this is a hoax. I know possum is not a white meat.*

## Return of Vietnam Veterans' Traveling Wall in Desoto, Missouri

Mr. Daniel T. Mahn, Mahn Funeral Homes is presenting and organizing the return of the Vietnam Veterans' Traveling Wall, Oct. 9-12, 2008 for Walther Park, Desoto, MO. Pictured is the permanent marker dedicated to the Wall when it was on display in May



of this year. Several events are scheduled for the four days it will be on display. The event is free to the public with special welcome to veterans and emergency personnel.





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