

The Dead Beat



The Caregiver's Soapbox



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

Summer, 2009

www.thedead-beat.com

Volume 10 Issue 2

Innovation in the Funeral Industry: Should You Avoid Start-Up Companies?

By Ryan Thogmartin

Are funeral industry start-ups beginning to scare you? Historically they have been few and far between, as our industry continues to change and progress, more start-up companies are venturing into the funeral industry. Let's face it, funeral directors proceed with caution when it comes to using a new product, technology, or company. What does it take for a company to survive in this industry? What are some key things you should look for in a start-up company before working with them?

Many companies coming into the funeral industry strive to offer that "wow" product that the funeral director can provide to his client families. Many of these companies have a product that is technology-based (online or computer-related), that the consume may want, but sometimes this is hard for the funeral director to embrace.

Technology is not something that has been heavily tied to the deathcare industry. In the past, funeral directors have not had to deal with families requesting or even open to purchasing these types of products. Those of us who know this industry understand the lag time for these products to catch on. Some funeral homes still do not have a website or email address. These new products may be made available in the funeral home, but it can be difficult for the funeral director to embrace the product and sell because of fear or reluctance on the company's part. Developing a comfort level with not only the product, but the company too, is critical for the funeral home to understand the opportunities that these products may provide the business.

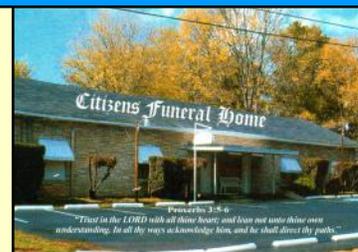
To evaluate what makes for a good start-up company or idea, and what makes for a bad one, I want to talk about two recent industry start-ups. For this case study, I will refer to these companies as *Company A* (successful start-up) and *Company B* (unsuccessful start-up). *Company A* provides a general service to funeral directors, while *Company B* provides a technology-based online product to the funeral director to sell to families. In evaluating these case studies, *Company B* failed within 30 days of their official launch at the 2009 ICCFA Convention and *Company A* continues to grow and thrive as a start-up. I want to look at both companies and compare what caused *Company A's* success and what caused *Company B* to fall so fast. I also will provide guidelines on what you should consider when thinking about working with a new industry company.

Start-up #1: *Company A*

Six years ago, the owner was tasked with forming a human remains airline-based transportation program much like Delta Airline's "Delta Cares" or American Airline's "Jim Wilson Desk." Through this experience, the owner was able to become intimately familiar with the needs of funeral homes and shipping services across the country (from the airlines perspective). It was also through this experience that he began to build a relationship with one of his current clients.

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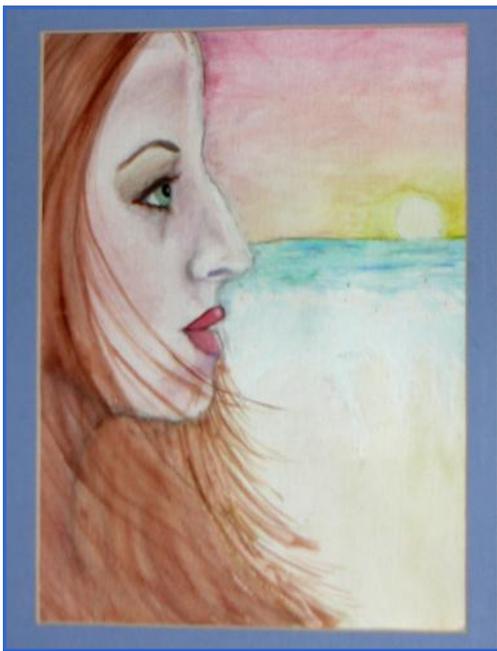
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Amy Howard Art Gallery



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. Her is a self-portrait watercolor



Amy Howard

Scattering Cremains in a Natural Area



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Mortuary Muse*

*to think or consider deeply; meditate
By Lowell

Expanding The Menu

If you are selling burgers in a fast food joint you may freshen up the menu from time to time to bolster sagging sales of the standard burger or to cater to a new niche customer.

Now it makes good business sense to keep the menu fresh with new items even if your staple fare is the tried and true regular burger. Does the same hold true for embalming fluid companies? Probably. Of course some embalmers are going to stick with their old choice as long as it is available while others may line up to try the new items. But should the fluid company promote the new item as an option for a narrow segment or try to make it the staple at the expense of the tried and true fluid.

I read through many pages of commentary from a fluid company's chief chemist and came away with the con-

clusion that he really favors his newest creation. An environmentally-favorable, ready-mixed fluid made with all natural ingredients that will sanitize, cosmetize and preserve a body for—three to five days—without refrigeration. And it has the Green Burial Council seal of approval. Three to five days! Why bother? Well, you might keep an embalmer employed if a green tide sweeps over us.

It is unclear to me whether the Green Burial Council and their fans are his primary motivator or the regulators who may ban formaldehyde products or merely another enticement on the menu.

Where does this stance leave the company's tried and true product? For years they claimed it was a formaldehyde alternative. Not too long ago another generation fluid was introduced

as having so little formaldehyde it would be the "new epoch." I couldn't find any information on its suggested body preservation time lapse. As far as the new product's, three to five day holding power that is pretty useless here. Our normal cases have to be held in house an average of three to five days and direct cremations often a week or two in a cooler. And what about good body presentation as discussed in our last issue? Can "green" fluid handle severe conditions?

Until the regulators rule formaldehyde out I'm with the embalmers that like a body embalmed for a short eternity. Granted embalming fluid is hazardous. I have not seen any definitive testing of formaldehyde embalmed bodies leeching chemicals into the ground at dangerous levels or any level. A Green Burial Council officer told me a couple of years ago they didn't really know what was happening underground. If anyone has current information please let me know.

In case you are wondering—the eco-friendly fluid's active ingredients include

(Continued on page 8)

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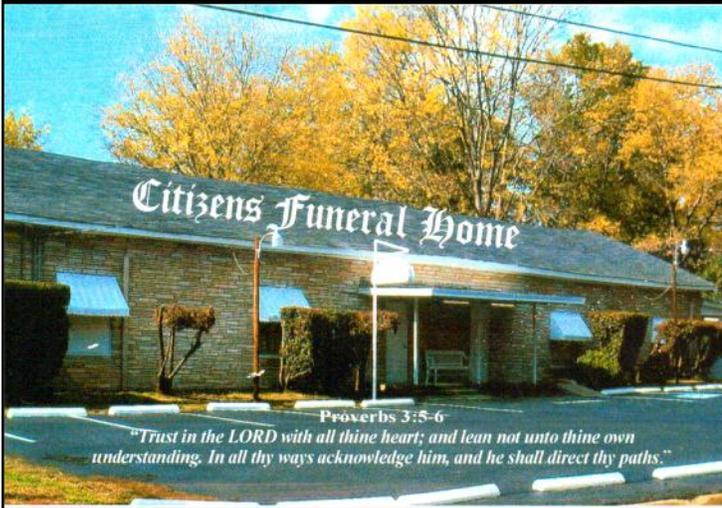
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Jacob De Leon Receives License As a Funeral Director & Embalmer



Jacob De Leon, of San Juan, Texas, received his license as a funeral director and embalmer on March 27, 2009. Jacob graduated from Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service in Houston in December, 2007 and was awarded the Embalming Excellence Award by the faculty. While at Commonwealth, Jacob was invited to become a member of the National Funeral Service Honor Society. He served his provisional licensing period at Memorial Funeral Home in San Juan and Edinburg, Texas. He is currently employed as a Funeral Director and Embalmer at Memorial Funeral Home and is the son of Leon and Velma Sue De Leon of San Juan.

Have you had an OPEN HOUSE, built a NEW ADDITION to your funeral home, developed a new PROGRAM FOR GRIEVING CLIENTS, RECEIVED AN HONOR from your community, have an interesting HOBBY or DONE SOMETHING THAT WAS JUST PLAIN FUN? If so, tell us about it. We want to tell your story (WE LOVE PICTURES, TOO) call us 800-575-2611, fax us 417-537-4797 or e-mail us: editor@thedead-beat.com.

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(If you would like to find someone in the funeral industry, let us know-
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Behind the Back Fence

By Lowell

That Bernie guy back East that ran the big Ponzi scheme is already cooling his heels in jail. Whatever happened to the principals in the NPS debacle? We hardly ever hear them mentioned by name. Is the FBI still investigating? Did states other than Missouri have orphaned contracts? Why can't the Receivership disclose who the orphaned contracts are and assure the clients who are still paying their contracts will be honored? It seems to me that when the NPS collapse first came to light that I read that the principals had agreed to a voluntary receivership in return for—what? I don't think Bernie is going to have company anytime soon.

Congratulations to our friend H.A. Roberson of Bethany, Missouri for receiving his 50-year award. I hope his wife Suzanne got an award for perseverance.



We are especially grateful for the industry comments and articles we have received and encourage continued participation by our readers who reflect the heart and soul of funeral service.

About the Author: Lowell Pugh has funeral director and embalmer licenses in Missouri and Texas and continues the operation of the 105-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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Second Session

Date: Wed., Aug 19, 2009

Time: 8:15 a.m.—3:15 p.m.

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10:15—12:15 p.m. (2 Hrs)

Lunch 12:15—1:15 p.m.

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After-Thoughts *By Joanne Howard*

It's time to discuss the aspects of pet grief. Living in a country setting with animals outside, you get attached, but in a different sense. We have three adult outside cats at this time. One had litter of five kittens. At this point in time they have decided to make their new home in the outside parts of our car. This had led to them taking rides to their deaths. One must have jumped off on our side road and proceeded to get run over. Another decided to ride a half hour before jumping to its death. Now we pounded on the car to scare it and honked the horn to no avail. I knew when it didn't show up for food that things were not good. But I just feel so sad. I refuse to name the kittens due to their probable demise. But you still grow attached and feel a loss when something happens to them.



I buried the first one and feel bad I couldn't do the same for the other one. Is this similar to someone not being able to bury their loved ones? Unexplained disappearance, accidents at sea or in airplanes, war victims, the list is large of incidents when you wouldn't be able to

have that final goodbye at burial. Do people have these same feelings of wanting to do something and not knowing what to do?

Also I'm relating too much to the mother cat losing her little ones. She's starting to wean them, but she still just sits and stares at the road at times and I wonder if she wonders what happened. (Not that she instructed the dumb kittens to get out of the underneath of the car.) Another kitten doesn't look too good either for whatever reason, so we're liable to lose another one. Is this feeling about the animals why there are such things as pet memorials in the newspaper, brochures on pet grief, pet cemeteries and quite the market on products to memorialize your pet???

One of Lowell's daughters and son-in-law lost their dog and when they were visiting wondered where our pet loss brochures were. I really thought we had some, but maybe someone had taken them. His daughter mentioned that their vet had sent them something. So this is a definite loss that should be acknowledged even by funeral directors. Who should people turn to in relation to death issues-human or pets? I think the funeral

homes need to be able to help with all losses. Pets included.

So how can we help? Having literature available for them is one thing to do. Being knowledgeable about pet cemeteries, having something available if they need a burial container, the list goes on. This may seem like a lot of trouble, but if you help people meet all their needs when their time of need for a human loved one comes, they may be more inclined to remember you. We're the death care professionals and should know how to treat all aspects of losses.

Just like any other situation, the pain of losing a loved one is no different with losing a pet, even just an outside kitten who was not the most brilliant. It still hurts and just providing understanding goes a long way.

About the author: Joanne Howard is the editor of **The Dead Beat**. She has been a licensed funeral director since 1992 with Pugh Funeral Home in Golden City, MO and also the aftercare coordinator. Much of her writing in this column is influenced by her loss of her two daughters Laura at age 10 in 1997 and Amy at age 19 in 2003. Any comments or questions can be directed to 417-537-4412, P.O. Box 145, Golden City, MO 64748 or email Joanne@thedeat-beat.com.




Lost Stories By R. Keith Creten



Was there a thought so profound or a happy memory
I'll never know what it was you could've shared with me
Stories of your lifetime—failure and success
Cultivated wisdom—now we can only guess
Overcoming life's challenges, striving to pass the test
He never shared with me all he had been through
Now I'll never know how much he really knew
There must have been an awesome story waiting to be told
She lived a long, long time not weak but strong and bold
Adversity—a way of life just made them that much stronger
Would they have told their thoughts and dreams had I
listened longer

Even young ones have their tale
Of deep feelings not for sale
Cherish your experience—reflect on what you've learned
Understand others need your help so they don't get burned
God gives each a unique story, living page by page
Would yours be of a jester or a wise old sage
Problem is when you're gone the book comes to an end
Friends and family need to know you have two ears to lend
There could be stories how to overcome some very difficult
task
Did they choose not to tell us or did we just not ask

2005



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Mortuary Muse (Cont.)

(Continued from page 3)

vanilic aldehyde, guaiacol and eugenol with propylene glycol as an anhydrous carrier. These natural plant-based ingredients and their derivatives are used in foods such as ice cream, flavoring for chocolate, cough drops, arthritis balms, expectorants antiseptic/anesthetic, perfumes and other medical and dentistry applications to numerous to mention here.

Heck! If they added dark chocolate to the fluid it might bring me back to life.

About the Author:

Lowell Pugh has funeral director and embalmer licenses in Missouri and Texas and continues the operation of the 105-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.

FTC Extends “Red Flag” Regulation Compliance to November 1

NFDA received word that the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has extended the compliance deadline for its “Red Flag” regulations from August 1 to November 1. The extension was granted to give creditors and financial institutions more time to review the regulations and develop and implement written identity theft prevention programs.

The “Red Flag” regulations were issued as part of the Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act of 2003 and requires creditors and financial institutions to implement written identity theft prevention programs to deter, prevent and mitigate identity theft in connection with credit provided to consumers.

NFDA Policy Board Elects Ennis, Mortimore to Executive Board



Jzyk S. Ennis, MPA, CFSP, of Ridout’s Trussville Chapel in Birmingham, Ala. (right) and Mark Mortimore of Mortimore Funeral Home in Thermopolis, Wy.

Brookfield, Wis.—The National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA) Policy Board met on July 25 in Branson, Mo., and elected Jzyk S. Ennis, MPA, CFSP, of Ridout’s Trussville Chapel in Birmingham, Ala., and Mark Mortimore of Mortimore Funeral Home in Thermopolis, Wy., to serve as at-large representatives to the Executive

Board. They will begin their two year terms of service immediately following NFDA International Convention & Expo, October 25-28 in Boston, Mass.

Ennis has more than 20 years of experience in funeral service as both a licensed funeral director and embalmer, and a mortuary science educator. He has a broad range of service and leadership experience on the national, state and local levels. Ennis currently serves as Alabama’s representative on the NFDA Policy Board, has served on NFDA’s Professional Development Committee since 2007, and is a regular participant in NFDA Advocacy, Leadership and Convention activities. Ennis is past president of the Alabama Funeral Directors Association (AFDA) and served in every elected position on the AFDA board, as well as a director of District IV and on various committees.

Mortimore is a third-generation funeral director with 23 years of experience in funeral service and is actively involved in his profession on the national, state and local levels. He currently serves as Wyoming’s representative to the NFDA Policy Board, and was a past member of the NFDA Advocacy Committee and past NFDA Political Action Committee representative for Wyoming. Mortimore is a past member of the Wyoming Funeral Directors Association Board of Directors, and served as the organization’s secretary-treasurer. He has served as the deputy coroner of Hot Springs County since 1996.

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A New Life

By Ken Doka

"I never wished for a new life," Mona once commented to me, "I was very happy with the life I had." But one of the consequences of loss is that it propels us, ready or not—willing or not, into change. Whether we like it or not, our life is now different than it was before. And while we have no choice about the loss, no choice about change, we do have choices within the transition. We cannot change the fact of transition. But we do have some control over the process.

Part of the process of grief is responding and reacting to the loss. We will have to cope with the many feelings and thoughts that we struggle with in grief. But grief also involves learning to adapt and adjust to a changed life.

That life may change in so many ways. We may have to learn new skills as we adapt to the death of someone. Mona had to learn to cope with the jobs that her husband, Don, once handled like balancing a checkbook, taking care of things around the house.

There may be other changes as well. Friendship networks may change. We may need to change where we live or where we work. We may have to take on additional responsibilities within the family due to the loss. We may give up activities that we once found important but that seem less significant now.

We can manage these changes. The

first thing is to be cautious of changing too much, too quickly. In the time immediately after a major loss, we might not be thinking clearly. We may respond more out of the immediacy of emotions we experience. Many counselors advise, that when possible, try to avoid significant changes for six months to a year after a major loss. Sometimes, there are interim or partial solutions that can offer time for more serious consideration. James experienced that when his wife died. Work no longer seemed to offer the same challenge and satisfaction, so he considered retirement. Instead, he decided to take a leave. At the end of that leave, he was anxious to return to the routine, structure and stimulation of work.

Beyond that general principle, each of us will have to manage the transition to that new life in our own way. Catherine Sanders, a psychologist that studies grief, suggests three questions that can guide that journey.

1. *What do you want to take from your old life into your new life?* Perhaps there are memories we want to retain or even objects that remind us of the person. We may want to recapture the joy and confidence we had. Perhaps there are relationships that we want to preserve and carry forth.

2. *What do you want to leave behind?* As we adapt to a new life, there may be pieces we do not wish to bring. These may be feelings such as anger or

guilt that we struggle with in our journey through grief. Perhaps there are memories or images that we have to explore and release. There may be relationships that no longer seem significant, meaningful or constructive.

3. *What do we need to add?* As we move into a new life, we may need to develop different skills that we will need to survive. We may need to develop new relations, interests or support.

We do have choices. Ultimately the choice is can we, will we choose to survive? Perhaps even as difficult as it seems now, will we thrive in this new life?

This article was originally printed in *Journeys: A Newsletter to Help in Bereavement*, published by Hospice Foundation of America. More information about *Journeys* can be found at www.hospicefoundation.org or by calling 800-854-3402 and is published monthly by the Hospice Foundation of America, 1621 Connecticut Ave. , NW, #300, Washington, DC 20009. Annual subscription-\$12.00.

Kenneth J. Doka, Ph.D., is a Professor of Gerontology at the College of New Rochelle. Dr. Doka's books include:

Disenfranchised Grief; Living with Life Threatening Illness; Living with Grief: After Sudden Loss; Death and Spirituality; Living With Grief: When Illness is Prolonged; Living with Grief: Who We Are,

How We Grieve; AIDS, Fear & Society; Aging and Developmental Disabilities; and Children Mourning, Mourning Children.

In addition to these books, he has published over 60 articles and chapters. Dr. Doka is the associate editor of the journal *Omega* and editor of *Journeys*, a newsletter of the bereaved. Dr. Doka has served as a consultant to medical, nursing, hospice organizations, as well as businesses, educational and social service agencies. As Senior Consultant to the Hospice Foundation of America, he assists in planning, and participates in their annual Teleconference. In 1998, the Association for Death Education and Counseling honored him by presenting him an Award for Outstanding Contributions to the field of death education. In March 1993, he was elected President of the Association for Death Education and Counseling. Dr. Doka was elected in 1995 to the Board of the International Work Group on Dying, Death and Bereavement and elected Chair in 1997. Dr. Doka is an ordained Lutheran Clergyman.

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



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Chuckles

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

Older Crowd

A distraught senior citizen phoned her doctor’s office... “Is it true,” she wanted to know, “that the medication you prescribed has to be taken for the rest of my life?” “Yes, I’m afraid so,” the doctor told her. There was a moment of silence before the senior lady replied, “I’m wondering, then, just how serious is my condition because this prescription is marked, “NO REFILLS.”

An older gentleman was on the operating table awaiting surgery and he insisted that his son, a renowned surgeon, perform the operation. As he was about to get the anesthesia, he asked to speak to his son. “Yes, Dad, what is it?” “Don’t be nervous, son; do your best and just remember, if it doesn’t go well, if something happens to me, your mother is going to come and live with you and your wife.”

Aging

Eventually you will reach a point when you stop lying about your age and start bragging about it. The older we get, the fewer things seem worth waiting in line for. Some people try to turn their back their odometers. Not me! I want people to know “why” I look like this. I’ve traveled a long way and some of the roads weren’t paved. When you are dissatisfied and would like to go back to youth, think of Algebra. You know you are getting old when everything either dries up or leaks. One of the many things no one tells you about aging is that it is such a nice change from being young. Ah, being young is beautiful, but being old is comfortable. First you forget names, then you forget faces. Then you forget to pull up your zipper. It’s worse when you forget to pull it down.

Long ago when men cursed and beat the ground with sticks, it was called witchcraft.... Today, it’s called golf.

Two old guys are pushing their carts around the store when they collide. The first old guy says to the second guy, “Sorry about that. I’m looking for my wife, and I guess I wasn’t paying attention to where I was going.” The second old guy says, “That okay it’s a coincidence. I’m looking for my wife too. I can’t find her and I’m getting a little desperate.” The first old guy says, “Well, maybe I can help you find her. What does she look like?” The second old guy says, “Well, she is 27 years old, tall, with red hair, blue eyes, long legs, and is wearing short shorts. What does your wife look like?” To which the first old guy says, “Doesn’t matter, let’s look for yours.”

A little know fact.....

The first testicular guard “Cup” was used in Hockey in 1874 and the first helmet was used in 1974. It took 100 years for men to realize that the brain is also important.

Roses and Hanging Baskets

A teenage granddaughter comes downstairs for her date with this see-through blouse on and no bra. Her grandmother just pitched a fit, telling her not to dare go out like that! The teenager tells her, “Loosen up Grams. These are modern times. You gotta let your rose buds show!” And out she goes. The next day the teenager comes downstairs, and her grandmother is sitting there with no top on. The teenager wants to die. She explains to her grandmother that she has friends coming over and that it is just not appropriate.... The grandmother says, “Loosen up, sweetie. If you can show off your rose buds, then I can display my hanging baskets.”



Comments

“I look forward to reading the interesting articles and information in your magazine. Thank you for your time and research.

R. Keith Cretan, Highland Park Cemetery & Crematory, Kansas City, KS

About “Death Touches Hearts in Missouri Town:”

“Although this article was printed in 1976, it is still indicative of small towns and it’s community and care for the less fortunate. I was deeply touched by the story and hope and pray that we, as humanity, can continue to follow the examples shown by this loving community. Thanks for sharing this story in your enjoyable publication.”

Steve Carberry

“.....Mr. Ross and I enjoy reading The Dead Beat. Excellent reading material, plus it keeps us up to date and very informed about other funeral homes. Thank you.”

Shirlene Cokes

“Gary didn’t win the National Frist award, but we are still proud of his recognition locally.”

Ivy Douglas

“Thank you, Lowell for your Mortuary Muse mention. As you know this stirred up a little dust storm within Champion. Your further discussion reminds us of what we are here for. Thanks...”

Steve Palmer, Westcott Funeral Home, Cottonwood, AZ

Proof that Men Have Better Friends....

Friendship among Women:

A woman didn’t come home one night. The next morning she told her husband that she had slept over at a friend’s house. The man called his wife’s 10 best friends. None of them knew anything about it.

Friendship among Men:

A man didn’t come home one night. The next morning he told his wife that he had slept over at a friend’s house. The woman called her husband’s 10 best friends. Eight confirmed that he had slept over, and two said he was still there.

Church Announcements

- ◆ The Fasting & Prayer Conference includes meals.
- ◆ The sermon this morning: “Jesus Walks on the Water.” The sermon tonight: “Searching for Jesus.”
- ◆ Ladies, don’t forget the rummage sale. It’s a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.
- ◆ The peacemaking meeting schedule for today has been cancelled due to a conflict.
- ◆ Don’t let worry kill you off—let the Church help.
- ◆ Next Thursday there will be tryouts for the choir. They need all the help they can get.
- ◆ The Rector will preach his farewell message, after which the choir will sing: “Break Forth Into Joy.”
- ◆ At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be “What Is Hell?” Come early and listen to our choir practice.
- ◆ Please place your donation in the envelope along with the deceased person you want remembered.

(Continued on page 11)

Chuckles (Cont.)

(Continued from page 10)

- ◆ The ladies of the Church have cast off clothing of every kind. They may be seen in the basement Friday afternoon.

Marriage Counseling

This is why men do not understand women.....

A husband and wife came for counseling after 20 years of marriage. When asked what the problem was, the wife went into a passionate, painful tirade listing every problem they had ever had in the 20 years they had been married.

She went on and on: neglect, lack of intimacy, emptiness, loneliness, feeling unloved and unlovable, an entire laundry list of unmet needs she had endured over the course of their marriage. Finally, after allowing this to go on for a sufficient length of time, the therapist got up, walked around the desk and after asking the wife to stand, embraced and kissed her passionately as her husband watched with a raised eyebrow. The woman shut up and quietly sat down as though in a daze. The therapist turned to the husband and said, "This is what your wife needs at least three times a week. Can you do this?" The husband thought for a moment and replied, "Well, I can drop her off on Mondays and Wednesdays, but Fridays, I fish....."



A shrink and his patient decided to play a round of golf. The



patient said, "I'm going to use a special ball that's guaranteed to make me a winner today." He reached into his golf bag and pretended to pull out a golf ball. The psychiatrist decided to go along with it. Going to the eighteenth

hole, the patient, not surprisingly, had a one-stoke lead. The shrink, being fairly competitive, announced to his patient that he, too, would be using a special ball, and proceeded to pull out an invisible ball from his golf bag. The patient swung hard and said, "Wow, a perfect shot, 280 yards away!" The shrink teed up and swung hard. "Excellent shot, 275 yards away!" They walked up to the fairway and the shrink set up for his next shot. "Holy mackerel! It looks like it's going in the cup....and yes! I win the match!" "Hold on," said the patient. "You're disqualified." "What do you mean I'm disqualified?" said the shrink. "You hit the wrong ball!"



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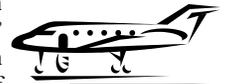
Bad Day at the Office

This little guy is sitting at the bar just staring at his drink. He's been sitting there for half an hour when this big trouble-making truck driver steps next to him, grabs his drink and gulps it down in one swig. The poor little guy starts crying. "Come on man, I was just giving you a hard time," says the truck driver. "I'll buy you another drink. I just can't stand to see a man crying." "This is the worst day of my life," says the little guy between sobs. "I can't do anything right. I overslept and was late to an important meeting, so my boss fired me. When I went to the parking lot, I found my car was stolen and I have no insurance. I grabbed a cab home but, after the cab left, I discovered I had forgotten my wallet in it. At home I found my wife in bed with the gardener. So I came to this bar and was thinking about putting an end to my life, and you show up and drink the d.... Poison."



Airplanes

The photographer for a national magazine was assigned to get photos of a great forest fire. Smoke at the scene was too thick to get any good shots, so he frantically called his home office to hire a plane. "It will be waiting for you at the airport!" he was assured by his editor. As soon as he got to the small, rural airport, sure enough, a plane was warming up near the runway. He jumped in with his equipment and yelled, "Let's go! Let's go!" The pilot swung the plane into the wind and soon they were in the air. "Fly over the north side of the fire," said the photographer, "and make three or four low level passes." "Why?" asked the pilot. "Because I'm going to take pictures! I'm a photographer, and photographers take pictures!" said the photographer with great exasperation and impatience. After a long pause the pilot said, "You mean you're not the instructor?"



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The Dead Beat's Coverage



Directory of Funeral Homes, Funeral Directors and Embalmers and Crematories

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Velma Sue De Leon Elected Secretary-Treasurer of Texas Funeral Directors Association



Velma Sue De Leon, CFSP, of Memorial Funeral Home is San Juan and Edinburg, was elected Secretary-Treasurer of the Texas Funeral Directors (TFDA) for 2009-2010. She was sworn in to the TFDA Board of Directors during the 123rd Annual Convention which was held in Austin, Texas.

As TFDA Secretary-Treasurer Velma shall give timely notice of regular meetings and annual meeting of the Association and the Board of Directors in the name of the Texas Funeral Directors Association, Inc.; have custody of all funds and securities of the Association; make all disbursements of the Association funds upon receipt of warrants signed by the President; and keep or cause to be kept proper, accurate and classified records of all receipts and disbursements.

Velma has been a licensed funeral director since 1992. In 1994 she, along with her husband and parents, established Memorial Funeral Home in San Juan; in 2003 they established their second location, Memorial Funeral Home in Edinburg.

She has been actively involved in the community where she has served as Secretary-Treasurer of the San Juan Chamber of Commerce, Secretary-Treasurer, Chair-Elect and Chairman of the Board of the Pharr Chamber of Commerce, Secretary-Treasurer of the Tri City Business Education Coalition, a graduate of Leadership Pharr Class VIII and Leadership Edinburg Class XV. Currently she is serving as Treasurer of the McAllen Sunset Lions Club and Vice President of Make-A-Wish Foundation of the Rio Grande Valley.

Velma has served as Board Member, Secretary-Treasurer, President-Elect and President of the South Texas Funeral Directors Association, Board Member of TFDA, and member of the TFDA Bylaws Committee, Convention Committee, and Ethics Committee and is a current member of the TFDA Legislative Committee where she has served for eight consecutive years.

On a national level Velma has served on several committees of the National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA) including the NFDA Advocacy Committee for seven consecutive years, Membership Recruitment and Retention Committee, Multicultural Membership Advisory Group, Member Resources Advisory Group, and Professional Conduct Committee.

She also participated in the 2008 NFDA Asia Funeral Expo and Conference which took place in Hong Kong and Macau. During the event she attended workshops, toured Chinese funeral homes and cemeteries and other social events, where she learned about the funeral customs of China and other Asian countries. The conference was also an opportunity for Asian funeral directors to learn about western funeral customs.

The Texas Funeral Directors Association was established in 1886 and today represents approximately 800 members. The association protects and promotes professionalism in the funeral industry, offering continuing education to its members and initiates positions on legislative issues affecting funeral service

Cherokee Child Caskets Announces New Website

June 7, 2009, Griffin, GA: Cherokee Casket Company, Inc. Announced the release of their new website:

www.cherokeechildcaskets.com

The newly designed site allows users to choose to enter the site as "Family and Friends," "Funeral Directors" or "Distributors." The "Family and Friends" section offers grief resources, details on Cherokee's line of products and suggests that the family contact their local funeral professional in their time of need. In the "Funeral Director" and "Distributor" sections you will find FAQ, Distributor Search and details on Cherokee's complete product line. Visit Cherokee Casket Company's website and sign up for the Newsletter which automatically enters you in a drawing to win a size 2/6 20 gauge white steel protective child's casket. For more information call 800-535-8667 or visit www.cherokeechildcaskets.com.



The Last Quilt Company Introduces The Service Flag



Derry, NH— The Last Quilt has just been licensed by the Institute of Heraldry within the U.S. Department of Defense to manufacture "The Service Flag."

Making its introduction during World War I and becoming famous during WWII, the flag was hung in a front window with the number of stars signifying the number of sons and daughters in that home serving in the armed forces. The flag has a red border, white center and the centered star is navy blue.

"The Service Flag" is made of 100% polyester for easy cleaning and the colors will not bleed or run. It is machine washable and tumble dry, and as always, proudly manufactured in the U.S.A.

For more information please contact Marty Kovacs, CFSP by phone 603-887-5411, email Marty@lastquilt.com or visit www.lastquilt.com for the latest information or to get a free catalog.

Death Notices of Fellow Funeral Service Colleagues

IOWA



Cecil L. Goettsch, 93, of Monticello, died June 3, 2009. He was owned and operated Goettsch Funeral Homes in Monticello, Anamosa and Hopkinton with his brother Bud. He was a member of the Iowa Funeral Directors Association for more than 70 years, serving in numerous leadership roles including president of the association in 1956-57. In addition, he was an active member of the National

Funeral Directors Association and served as its president in 1978-79. During his career, he was a member of the Iowa State Funeral Director and Embalmer Examining Board, the Conference of Funeral Service Examining Board and an officer in the American Board of Funeral Service Education.



John G. Peine, Sr., 86, of Davenport, Iowa, was a longtime salesman for the Batesville Casket Company and will be remembered by Eastern Iowa Funeral Homes.



Duane Thornburg, 82, Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, died June 13, 2009. He served in WWII in the Pacific. He worked in the funeral business in Charleston, W.V., and Des Moines, before moving to McGregor, where he owned and operated funeral homes in McGregor and Lansing, Iowa, and Prairie du Chien.

Arthur J. Wallace, 91 of Newton, died June 13, 2009. He was the father of IFDA member Gary Wallace and the grandfather of IFDA member Chantelle Beiner. He graduated from the St. Louis Mortuary College in 1951. With his twin brother Albert, he owned Wallace Funeral Home in Wyoming, Iowa from 1953 –1963. They owned Wallace Funeral Home in Newton from 1963 to 1984 when it was sold, but he continued to work until last year.

KANSAS

Eugene P. "Gene" Amos, of Shawnee passed away July 24, 2009. He was Chairman of the Board of Amos Funeral home. Services were under the direction of Amos Family Funeral Home.



Pauline Ruth Erdman, 94, of Arkansas City died February 26, 2009. She owned and operated Erdman-Olroyd Funeral Home with her husband Marvin. She was one of the first women licensed Funeral Directors in Kansas.

Raymond C. "Ray" Gardner, 86, of Atchison, died June 19, 2009. He served in the U.S. Navy during World War II and attended Kansas State University and Kansas City College of Mortuary Science and became a licensed funeral director and embalmer in both Kansas and Missouri. He was former owner of Stanton Mortuary in Atchison, KS.



Rex S. Hacker, 58, of Washington died March 16, 2009. He graduated from San Francisco Mortuary School in 1971. He owned funeral homes in Hebron, Deshler and Bruning, NE. In 2001 he moved to Washington, KS and worked at Ward Funeral Home.



Raymond Earl Rawie, 82, of Shawnee passed away May 7, 2009. He was a funeral coach salesman for over 50 years working for Southwest Professional Vehicles. He was a U.S. Navy veteran.

MISSOURI



LTC Ronald Lynn Hurtt, 70, of Mountain Grove passed away June 16, 2009. Lynn was the co-founder of Craig-Hurtt Home in Mtn Grove which opened in 1962. He was a funeral director and embalmer for 49 years. He also served as Wright County, Missouri Coroner for 32 years. Lynn retired in 1998 and his son and daughter-in-law now own and operate the funeral home.



David R. Sassman, 66 of Belle, died peacefully on January 18, 2009. He completed his education at Commonwealth College of Mortuary Science in Houston, Texas. He worked in the family funeral home, Sassmann Funeral Service with his father and later, his brother, for almost 50 years.

Mildred Schlanker, 93, of Montgomery City died July 25, 2009. For many years she and her husband Edgar provided ambulance service to Montgomery County and the surrounding area, in addition to being involved in funeral service. She was a licensed funeral director and was active in business until her husband's death in 2003. Services were directed by Schlanker Funeral Home.

TEXAS

Harry E. Corl, Jr., of Pearland died June 17, 2009. He is father of Christian C. Corl and former owner of Corl's Family Funeral Home. His services were under the direction of Crowder Funeral Home.

Rod Fisher, of Haslet died July 13, 2009. The 2003 TFDA Supplier of the Year and former employee of National Prearranged Services, Public Relations Department. Services were under the direction of Lucas Funeral Home, Fort Worth, TX.

J. Russell Gill, of Duncanville, died June 15, 2009. He was former owners of Rogers/Gill Funeral Home and former employee of Hughes Funeral Home and American Mortuary Service. His services were handled by West/Hurtt Funeral Home, DeSoto, TX.

Bill N. Howard, of Houston passed away June 19, 2009. The former owner of Howard Funeral Home, former manager of Howard-Glendale Funeral Home and former co-owner of San Jacinto Funeral Home and Memorial Park had his service directed by Carter Funeral Home of Houston.

Donald H. Limbaugh, of Portland, TX, died August 2, 2009. He was the father of Ron Limbaugh. Arrangements were under the direction of Ric Brown Family Funeral Home of Mission, TX.



Johnnie Elizabeth "J.B." Pitts, 83, of Brownwood passed away on June 9, 2009. She is the owner of the Eastlawn Memorial Park in Early and the widow of Groner Pitts, former partner in Davis-Morris Funeral Home. Services were under direction of Davis-Morris Funeral Home of Brownwood, TX.

Dorothy Jay Porter, of Mexia, died June 2, 2009. She was the wife of Jimmie Porter, owner of Porter Funeral Home in Mexia, TX.

James C. "Jim" Zimmerman, of Rosenberg, died June 15, 2009. He was the son of Craig Zimmerman, a funeral director at Davis-Greenlawn Funeral Home. Charlie Marshall Funeral Home of Aransas Pass handled the arrangements.



Denotes Veteran of Military Service

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



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**Interesting Tidbit:
 Austrian Makes World Record for
 Coffin Production**



Salzburg, Austria—An Austrian carpenter has found a macabre way of getting into the Guinness Book of Records: During his 30-year career, he's built 707,335 coffins.

Officials in Austria's Salzburg province say Herbert Weber has been honored for constructing more caskets than any other known carpenter. Weber says he started making coffins in May, 1978 at Moser Holzindustrie, a woodworking company in Bischofshofen.

Officials said Tuesday they plan to present the 50-year-old carpenter with a certificate from the London-based Guinness World Records, Ltd. They've chosen a fitting backdrop: Weber will be feted at the International Funeral Home and Cemetery Trade Fair which opened in Salzburg.

**Interesting Memorial Gift Option
 for Veterans**

Families often look to honor the deceased in a special way and in the past decade we have observed the passing of many World War II veterans, as well as those who served in Korea and Vietnam. The Hospitalized Veterans Writing Project, a 501 © (3) organization provides a therapeutic writing program to veterans and publishes their work in the magazine, *Veterans' Voices*. It is another options for memorial gifts.

If you would like to receive more information about HVWP and *Veterans' Voices*, please contact Priscilla Chansky at 913-432-1214, or email veteransvoices@sbcglobal.net. Or visit www.veteransvoices.org.

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family member. Made of a weatherproof poly resin, these markers will age gracefully in your yard or garden. These sets come complete with a brass plate that can be engraved. Drill bit and screws, and urn capsule hold the remains of pets up to 74 pounds. They are offered in three designs and three colors. For more information check out their website: www.antalproducts.com

Trauma Grief

An 8-session Group

A weekly group for men and women whose loved one was killed or took their own life.



**A Grief and Counseling
 Program for Dallas/**

Trauma Support Services of North Texas, a 501 © 3 non-profit organization is offering free, one on one and group counseling to those who have lost a loved one due to traumatic events such as DUI, a homicide or suicide.

The group facilitator is Janice Harris Lord, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and Licensed Professional Counselor. She

is holding sessions on "Trauma Grief" from Sept. 10—Oct. 29, 2009 in Ft. Worth, Texas.

For more information visit their website: www.tssnt.org or contact Heather Mackenzie at her e-mail alvid5@sbcglobal.net.



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A Dog Named Lucky

Anyone who has pets will really like this. You'll like it even if you don't and you may even decide you need one!

Mary and her husband Jim had a dog named "Lucky."

Lucky was a real character. Whenever Mary and Jim had company come for a weekend visit they would warn their friends to not leave their luggage open because Lucky would help himself to whatever struck his fancy. Inevitably, someone would forget and something would come up missing.

Mary or Jim would go to Lucky's toy box in the basement and there the treasure would be, amid all of Lucky's other favorite toys. Lucky always stashed his finds in his toy box and he was very particular that his toys stay in the box.

It happened that Mary found out she had breast cancer. Something told her she was going to die of this disease...in fact, she was just sure it was fatal.

She scheduled the double mastectomy, fear riding on her shoulders. The night before she was to go to the hospital she cuddled with Lucky. A though struck her...what would happen to Lucky? Although the three-year-old dog like Jim, he was Mary's dog through and through. If I die, Lucky will be abandoned, Mary thought...He won't understand that I didn't want to leave him! The thought made her sadder than thinking of her own death.

The double mastectomy was harder on Mary than her doctors had anticipated and Mary was hospitalized for over two weeks. Jim took Lucky for his evening walk faithfully, but the little dog just drooped, whining and miserable.

Finally the day came for Mary to leave the hospital. When she arrived home, Mary was so exhausted she couldn't even make it up the steps to her bedroom. Jim made his wife comfortable on the couch and left her to nap.

Lucky stood watching Mary but he didn't come to her when she called. It made Mary sad but sleep soon overcame her and she dozed.

When Mary woke for a second she couldn't understand what was wrong. She couldn't move her head and her body felt heavy and hot. But panic soon gave way to laughter when Mary realized the problem. She was covered, literally blanketed, with every treasure Lucky owned! While she had slept, the sorrowing dog had made trip after trip to the basement bringing his beloved mistress all his favorite things in life. **He had covered her with his love.**

Mary forgot about dying. Instead she and Lucky began living again, walking further and further together every day. It's been 12 years now and Mary is still cancer-free. Lucky, he still steals treasures and stashes them in his toy box, but Mary remains his greatest treasure.

Remember... live every day to the fullest. Each minute is a blessing from God. And never forget...the people who make a difference in our lives are not the ones with the most credentials, the most money, or the most awards. They are the ones that care for us.

The Other Side

This really is the most beautiful explanation of death I've ever heard.

Death

What A Wonderful Way to Explain It.

A sick man turned to his doctor as he was preparing to leave the examination room and said, "Doctor, I am afraid to die. Tell me what lies on the other side."

Very quietly, the doctor said, "I don't know."

"You don't know? You're a Christian man, and don't know what's on the other side?"



The doctor was holding the handle of the door; on the other side came a sound of scratching and whining, and as he opened the door, a dog sprang into the room and leaped on him with an eager show of gladness.

Turning to the patient, the doctor said, "Did you notice my dog? He's never been in this room before. He didn't know what was inside. He knew nothing except that his master was here, and when the door opened, he sprang in without fear. I know little of what is on the other side of death, but I do know one thing... I know my Master is there and that is enough."

May today there be peace with you. May you trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be. I believe that friends are quiet angels who lift us to our feet when our wings have trouble remembering how to fly.



Sent by a reader.

The Dead Beat -The Caregivers Soapbox

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**Innovation in the Funeral Industry:
 Should You Avoid Start-Up Companies?**

(Continued from page 1)

This client-customer interaction resulted in a business and personal relationship that exists today. Both he and his client saw a desperate need and seized the opportunity to introduce innovation to the shipping segment. It will forever change the way funeral directors and the death care community interact with the airline industry. They worked diligently on the business planning process for fourteen months before ever handling their first client transaction. Their separate areas of expertise and industry contacts played vital roles in the development of the *Company A* service model.

Operational in March, 2008, *Company A* introduced its complimentary service model in a strategic and targeted fashion. Leveraging his client's deathcare industry contacts across the country, he convinced leaders of independent funeral homes to join the launch and help refine the service model. Regional shipping services also slowly began to support the launch, especially a Florida-based business and leader in Florida shipping since 1967, who was an early adopter and innovator in this portion of the business.

The 2008 NFDA Convention was *Company A's* official launch after seven months of operational experience. At the convention *Company A* also announced a strategic partnership with Wilbert Funeral Service, the foremost leader in burial vaults. The response from funeral directors was phenomenal and, since their launch, *Company A* has expanded their operation and staff to meet the needs of their clients. They now embrace a rapidly expanding nationwide customer base of funeral homes and shipping services.

As *Company A* continues to grow and evolve they have introduced a new service model within the shipping segment and have a number of strategic initiatives underway. The owner has been traveling the country forming genuine personal relationships that serve as the foundation for a successful and growing business.

Start-up #2: *Company B*

Another start-up company, *Company B*, made its debut at the 2008 NFDA Convention. Their product was offered as the most innovative online memorial solution our industry has ex-

(Continued on page 19)

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**Innovation in the Funeral Industry:
Should You Avoid Start-Up
Companies?**

(Continued from page 18)

perienced to date. With panoramic scrolling landscapes and graphics that seemed as though they were plucked directly from a Hollywood production set, *Company B* created a tremendous amount of buzz.....enough buzz that they even won best of show. Their booth alone was unbelievable: flat screen TV's, white carpet, retro couches, and even a gentleman pouring champagne to attendees during the opening reception. It was easy to see that money was flowing into this company from somewhere. Problem?

Company B didn't have a working product when they started in 2008, but only a breath-taking demo that got everyone talking and anticipating what would come next. What came next was six months of creating and refining a (what appeared to be high-dollar) online memorial site that encompassed videos, pictures, social networking features, and even an ongoing

revenue stream for funeral professionals through tribute gifts, an industry first.

Leading up to the ICCFA Convention in April, 2009, *Company B* had tested their almost-finished product with a few funeral homes in preparation to their official launch at ICCFA. When the convention arrived in April, the buzz created around their launch was huge. Every newspaper covering the ICCFA convention did an article about them; they even landed a "featured article" on the CNN.com homepage. The chatter from funeral directors was noteworthy as well, but more funeral directors were concerned with the complexity of the product.

Following the ICCFA Convention, *Company B* and its investors expected the product to take off like wildfire, but as those of us "in" the industry know, it takes time for funeral directors to embrace a new product. So, like most new technologies in the funeral industry, the product did not take off as fast as expected. Families and funeral directors

who did sign up experienced numerous bugs on the site and they were spending an excessive amount of money to deal with the problems. Thirty days after the official launch *Company B* was forced to shut down by the investors. The investors (who were also entrepreneurs themselves) expected to see immediate returns on their investments. When that did not happen they did what good entrepreneurs do...they cut their losses and consequently all funding as well.

Company B had an amazing product that pioneered a new road in the funeral industry. They brought new technology and a new business model, through tribute gifts, not seen before in the industry. They also had leaders and funding sources who were not "industry insiders" or familiar with the progression speed of the industry. In the end this seems to be the deciding factor that shut down the company.

Company A and *Company B* are two industry start-ups that took two

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Innovation in the Funeral Industry: Should You Avoid Start-Up Companies?

(Continued from page 19)

totally different approaches to introducing their products and services to the funeral industry:

- ◆ *Company A* started with partners who each knew a specific side of the business. The owner is experienced in the airline sector and the relationship with his clients brings experience, knowledge and expertise.
- ◆ *Company A* was patient and tested their service for seven months before official launching it to funeral directors
- ◆ *Company A* formed genuine personal relationships with funeral directors serving as a foundation for a strong business.

On the contrary:

- ◆ *Company B* was built around great business leaders, but not around leaders who knew the funeral industry.
- ◆ *Company B* quickly created a lot of hype and buzz without having a working product.
- ◆ *Company B* had a niche product that required technical skill, and they didn't have the time necessary to help funeral directors embrace the new technology.

With the speedy rise and fall of *Company B*, some funeral directors have become apprehensive about working with start-up companies. To help ease your fears and rebuild your confidence in industry start-ups, I would like to provide you with a set of guidelines to evaluate when considering whether to work with a new start-up company:

- ◆ Are the leaders of the company "industry insiders," and do they have a good sense of where the funeral industry is and where it is heading?
- ◆ Will the leaders of the company and their sales people take the time to help you embrace their product and fully understand it?

- ◆ Is the product something that fills a niche or void?
- ◆ Is the product innovative, but not too advanced for your client families?
- ◆ Is the product relative to your market place? (What sells in Los Angeles, California might not sell in Small Town, Indiana)
- ◆ Will the company provide you with the necessary tools to effectively market their product?
- ◆ How will working with this company benefit you, your firm and your client families?

Start-up companies are good for our industry. Their existence shows that funeral directors and the funeral industry are progressing and evolving. By using the guidelines above you will be able to choose a company and product that is right for your market and will help you better serve your client families.

As the funeral industry continues to progress, more start-up companies debut at industry trade shows. Some will succeed and other may not, but funeral directors should not be afraid to work with start-up companies. After all, at one time Batesville Casket and Wilbert Burial Vaults were small start-up companies!

About the Author:



Ryan Thogmartin is the Founder and CEO of ConnectingDirectors.com. ConnectingDirectors.com provides the only online gathering space where funeral professionals can visit to read daily articles, funeral industry news and ideas shared through a funeral industry discussion board. In addition, Mr. Thogmartin works in sales for his family's burial vault company, Hupp Stiverson Wilbert Vault, Inc.

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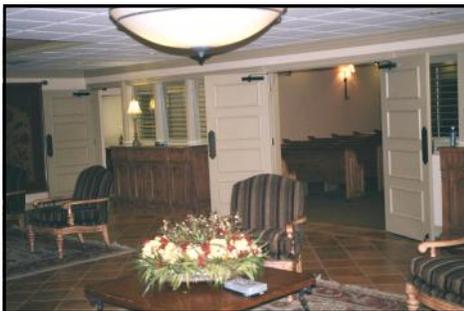
Chapel



(L to R) Tommy Eubank, Steve Glosup and Brian Bass

Eubanks Chapel’s distinctive slat wall features an unique support system for displaying sprays, wreaths or shelves for potted plants and vases. A decorative molding that is part of the slat wall has a groove in the top of it that accommodates a variety of spray or plant hangers.

They also designed their own wooden plant shelf that can be hung anywhere on the wall using the wire floral hook. The long end of the hook slips into a hole drilled in the bottom of the shelf supports and the short end hooks neatly into the molding groove. Shelves for plants, pictures or other objects can be placed anywhere on the wall.



Foyer



Close-up of Slat Wall



Slat Wall with flowers displayed

“Dear Counselor....” By Bill Stalter

Dear Counselor,

Now that Missouri’s Governor has signed Senate Bill No.1, what happens next with the reform of Chapter 436?

The new law goes into effect on August 28th, and the Missouri State Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors will have the responsibility of implementing the new changes. However, the State Board is caught in a Catch 22 situation. Many of the changes will have to be made through regulations, but the Board’s rule-making authority does not become effective until August 28th. For example, preneed sellers and providers will have to be licensed on August 28th. Since this is a new requirement, every preneed seller in the state will have to file an application and fee to be licensed. There are hundreds of funeral homes that will seek a seller’s license, and not a one can sell a preneed contract until the license is in hand. To avoid a shutdown of the preneed industry, the State Board will have to improvise through the use of emergency regulations and temporary licenses.

Accordingly, the State Board will be meeting every week during the month of August to establish its priorities for Chapter 436 regulations. The Board’s agenda for those meetings are set out on its website. The State Board is also asking funeral directors to submit written questions or comments regarding the agenda issues. By seeking comments in advance of publishing proposed rules, the State Board is hoping to expedite the approval process. Historically, Chapter 333 rules have taken up a year or more to pass. The rulemaking process requires a meeting to discuss the issue and direct the legal staff to draft a proposal. Then a few months later at the next meeting, the Board will consider the proposal, and if acceptable, submit the proposal to the Secretary of State’s office for the publication process. With the publication, there is a comment period. Then, the comments are discussed at the next scheduled Board meeting. Depending upon the comments, the proposal may be revised, and if so, there will be another publication and comment period. All in all, the rulemaking process can be lengthy. In the meantime, the Missouri preneed industry is waiting on the Board for directions on such issues as contract disclosures and trust administration requirements.

Missouri is in for a long, painstaking period of change.



Bill Stalter answers our questions for educational purposes only. It is *The Dead Beat’s* intent to give the reader general information about legal issues, not to provide legal advice. If a reader needs legal advice, he or she should hire an attorney. Reading *The Dead Beat* should not be used as a substitute for legal advice from an attorney. When Bill provides legal advice he does so for Stalter Legal Services in Overland Park, Kansas. Bill also provides consulting services through Preneed Resource Consultants, which can be found at www.prenneedresource.com.

We need some questions for the “Dear Counselor....” column. Please send your questions to Bill’s e-mail or The Dead Beat’s and we will get some answers in future issues. email: wastal@swbell.net or bill@stalterlegal.com or editor@thedead-beat.com Or Fax: 1-417-537-4797



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.



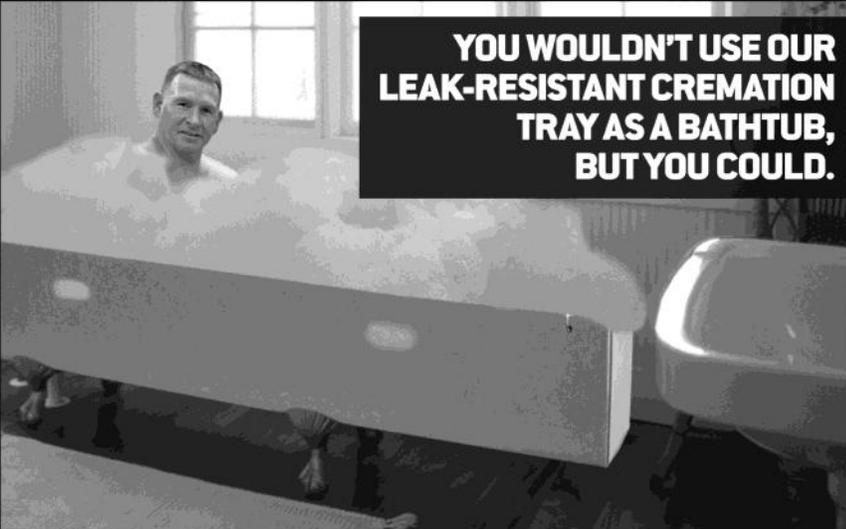
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Very Interesting Stuff.....

- ◆ In the 1400's a law was set forth in England that a man was allowed to beat his wife with a stick no thicker than his thumb. Hence we have 'the rule of thumb.'
- ◆ Many years ago in Scotland, a new game was invented. It was ruled 'Gentlemen Only... Ladies Forbidden'.. Thus the world GOLF entered the English language. 
- ◆ The first couple to be shown in bed together on prime time TV were Fred and Wilma Flintstone.
- ◆ Every day more money is printed for Monopoly than the U.S. Treasury.
- ◆ Men can read smaller print better than women can; but women can hear better.
- ◆ Coca-Cola was originally green.
- ◆ It's impossible to lick your elbow.
- ◆ The State with the highest percentage of people who walk to work: Alaska
- ◆ The percentage of Africa that is wilderness: 28%
- ◆ The percentage of North America that is wilderness: 38%
- ◆ The cost of raising a medium-size dog to the age of eleven is: \$16,400.
- ◆ The average number of people airborne over the U.S. in any given hour: 61,000.
- ◆ Intelligent people have more zinc and copper in their hair.
- ◆ The first novel ever written on a typewriter: Tom Sawyer
- ◆ The San Francisco Cable cars are the only mobile National Monuments.
- ◆ Each King in a deck of playing cards represents a great king from history:

Spades—King David
Hearts—Charlemagne
Clubs—Alexander, the Great
Diamonds—Julius Caesar

- ◆ $111,111,111 \times 111,111,111 = 12,345,678,987,654,321$
- ◆ If a statue in the park of a person on a horse has both front legs in the air, the person died in battle. If the horse has one front leg in the air the person died as a result of wounds received in battle. If the horse has all four legs on the ground, the person died of natural causes.
- ◆ Only two people signed the Declaration of Independence on July 4th, John Hancock and Charles Thomson. Most of the rest signed on August 2, but the last signature wasn't added until 5 years later.
- ◆ Half of all Americans live within 50 miles of what? Their Birthplace.
- ◆ What do bulletproof vests, fire escapes, windshield wipers, and laser printers all

have in common? All were invented by women.

- ◆ It was the accepted practice in Babylon 4,000 years ago that for a month after the wedding, the bride's father would supply his son-in-law with all the mead he could drink. Mead is a honey beer and because their calendar was lunar-based this period was called the honey month, which we know today as the honeymoon.
- ◆ In English pubs, ale is ordered by pints and quarts... So in old England, when customers got unruly, the bartender would yell at them "mind your pints and quarts and settle down." It's where we get the phrase "mind your P's and Q's"
- ◆ At least 75% of people who read this will try to lick their elbow. 



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The Missouri Crematory & Columbarium by Jason Ryan Engler

THE MISSOURI CREMATORY & COLUMBARIUM

One of the first cities in the U. S. to consider cremation as a means of disposing of the dead was St. Louis, Missouri. The Missouri Crematory, built in St. Louis in 1888, holds the distinction of being the tenth crematory of modern design built in the United States. Here is a bit of its history:

Shortly after the erection of the LeMoyne Crematory, America's First Modern Cremation Apparatus, at Washington, Pennsylvania, the sentiment of cremation caught the attention of the Honorable Albert Todd, Dr. E. C. Chase, and other gentlemen then prominent in St. Louis. They soon began advocating this method of disposing of the dead and an informal association was formed. For several months, meetings were held and the idea of building a facility for performing cremations in St. Louis was discussed. Action followed and, in July, 1887, the Missouri Crematory Association was organized and incorporated under the laws of the state of Missouri.

The Crematory, whose construction began in August 1887, was completed in May of 1888. The rectangular Doric building which measures approximately forty feet deep, thirty-six wide, and twenty-six high, was designed by

Otto Wilhelmi, a prominent Architect in St. Louis who also served as the secretary of the Missouri Crematory Association from its inception

until his death in 1925.

Prior to the completion of the Missouri Crematory, those desiring cremation had to be transported as far as Lancaster, Pennsylvania, for the carrying out of this process.

In January 1889, the crematory, through some fault in the cremation apparatus, caught fire and the building was almost totally destroyed. Work began immediately to recon-

(Continued on page 25)



The Missouri Crematory

The Missouri Crematory & Columbarium (Cont.)

(Continued from page 24)

struct the facility, and a new, fireproof edifice was completed in a matter of months.

THE CHAPEL OF THE MISSOURI CREMATORY

A Chapel composes the entire upper level of the Crematory building. Fourteen stained glass windows provide the space with natural lighting, and later, a drop-ceiling was added and fluorescent lights installed to light the area.

At the far end of the Chapel, opposite the entry doors, is a small platform, two steps above the floor level. In the center of the platform is a catafalque, raised about three feet above the floor – which serves as a lowering device. Upon arrival of the remains at the Crematory Chapel, the casket or coffin was placed on the catafalque and covered with a black drape which reached to the floor. The casket or coffin was thence concealed from the view of those in attendance while it was quietly and discreetly lowered by hand-pulley to the crematory room below.

THE INAUGURATION OF THE MISSOURI CREMATORY

On May 6, 1888, the remains of Elizabeth Todd Terry were cremated in the new facility at 3211 Sublette Avenue. The Undertaker arrived in his carriage at the Missouri Crematory at approximately 9:00 a.m. with Mrs. Todd's casketed body. The family was assembled in the Chapel on the upper level of the building, and the casket was lowered to the cremation room below.

Following the cremation, Mrs. Todd's ashes were placed in a lead casket provided by the Undertaker, and were subsequently buried in the family plot at Bellefontaine Cemetery.

THE CREMATION APPARATUS & THE PROCESS OF CREMATION

Originally, two retorts were in use by the Missouri Crematory. They were invented by Giuseppe Venini, who personally came from Italy to the Crematory to oversee their construction and installation.

After the casketed body had been lowered to the crematory room, it was removed from the casket or coffin and wrapped in an alum-saturated sheet. The alum-treated sheet prevented the clothing and the body itself from immediately igniting when placed in the furnace. Thus, it allowed proper placement of the remains in the cremation chamber, and allowed the retort to be sealed properly for maximum combustion.

Then, the wrapped body was placed in an iron cradle-like device and conveyed by hoist into the cremation vault or retort. By a process of slow combustion and distillation, a

gas was generated from ignited wood and this, with an admixture of air, was conducted into the retort in the form of a clear, bright flame at an extremely high temperature.

There were later, more modern designs in use by the Crematory, but it is unknown how often the retorts' methods of operation changed or the number of which were employed over time.



The Columbarium

THE COLUMBARIUM

In the mid 1890's, the Crematory Association decided to build a Columbarium. Construction commenced in July, 1895 of a design drawn up by Mr. Wilhelmi and was completed in December of that same year.

The original structure was a simple, rectangular building with a deep, half-circle alcove at the back. Ornate bronze doors adorn most of the niches in this area, with the remainder of the niches being equipped with painted glass or marble fronts. In the center of the alcove of this original building, an ornate, semi-spiral walnut staircase descends to the basement. Originally, the entire lower level was equipped with japanned metal shelves and is now equipped with marble-fronted niches. A continuation of the half-circle alcove on the upper level is behind the staircase.

Later an addition was added on to the west end of the original building. It is a large, rectangular space that is fitted wall-to-wall with marble-fronted niches. A center "island" was added in this west end addition and is equipped with clear glass- and bronze-fronted niches.

The Missouri Crematory and Columbarium, now called "Valhalla's Hillcrest Abbey" is currently owned by the Zell family, owners of Valhalla Cemetery in St. Louis. The Crematory is no longer active, but niches are still available in the historic Columbarium.

Jason Ryan Engler is a Funeral Director in Rogers, Arkansas. He has studied cremation and its history throughout most of his life. He can be reached at arcremationist@hotmail.com.

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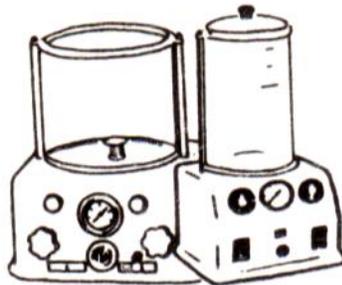


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Everything You Need to Know About Funeral Etiquette

(On Connectiondirectors.com—July 8, 2009)

An article had been emailed and some information was shared to Ryan Thogmartin on Connection Directors Blog and some of it may be of interest to our readers.

Funerals serve two main purposes: to commemorate the life of the deceased, and to offer mourners a chance to gather together and say their final goodbyes.

While there are general guidelines regarding funeral behavior, as a rule they are specific to the event itself, taking religious, ethnic and persona considerations into account. While almost all funerals require that guests are polite, discreet and respectful, there is often more you can do—both to help the families of the deceased feel better, and leave them with additional happy memories of their loved ones....

Funeral DOs

- ◆ Do offer up an expression of sympathy. Often we are at a loss for words when encountering something as final as death.
- ◆ Do find out what the dress code is.
- ◆ Do offer some type of gift, be it flowers, donation to charity or a hot casserole.
- ◆ Do sign the register book with your name and affiliation.
- ◆ Do keep in touch with family members and friends later on.

Funeral DON'Ts

- ◆ Don't feel that you have to stay at the funeral forever.
- ◆ Don't be afraid of having a laugh.
- ◆ Don't feel you have to pray next to the deceased—or even touch them—if there is an open casket.
- ◆ Don't allow small children to run wild.
- ◆ Don't try to network at the funeral.
- ◆ Don't try to pick up the hot chick next to you either.
- ◆ Don't take advantage of all the food and drink offered
- ◆ Don't leave your cell phone on.
- ◆ Don't shy away from the receiving line.

Expression of Sympathy

- ◆ Card or letter, phone calls or email.
- ◆ Flowers.
- ◆ Donations to charity.
- ◆ Food.
- ◆ Memorial Gifts.
- ◆ Offers of help.

This is information we should all know, but it was nice to have it organized to help up remember everything.

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For more information contact, L J Enterprises, 1793 Pine Circle, Lawrenceville, GA 30044, phone: 678-778-6018, email-sales @cremationurnsdirect.com.

The Master Care Society

We have received several queries about The Master Care Society grass sculptured lawn logo on our grounds. The logo is a large triangle of taller grass with an even taller grass forming a circle within the triangle. The circle represents a continuum of care including community service, education, preplanning, at need and aftercare. The triangle symbolizes the pyramids of ancient Egypt where in lie the roots of master embalmers. Membership in the MCS is very uncomplicated and inexpensive.

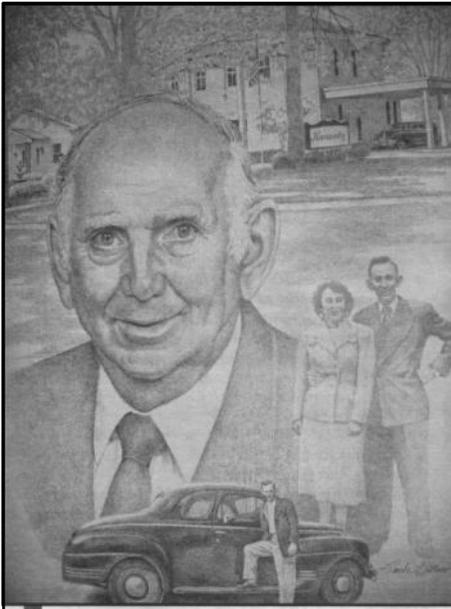




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Norman Thompson



Norman Leo Thompson

**April 20, 1928 ~
February 11, 2009**

Published in the local paper, **Lamar Democrat** by the funeral home that he worked for:

“We would like to report on the progress of Norman Thompson. In February Norman completed his course in preparation for his life in the Eternal Kingdom of Heaven. He has been given a new and glorified body and has been restored to his youth and innocence. He received his inheritance which was secured by the work of Jesus Christ, the King, on his behalf, just as Norman believed and told us that it would be. We are very happy for his promotion and his success.

On balance, however, we are still feeling the effects of his departure. Norman was a vital part of our organization. Through six different owners and for over 55 years he remained a faithful servant to his friends and to his community as he provided his ministry of professional care. He was also faithful and active in the First Christian Church, V.F.W., the Masonic

Lodge, the Chat an Chew bunch and volunteered for the senior citizens meals on wheels.

In light of his leadership and example to us it is now incumbent on us to establish a permanent memorial that reflects his life and accomplishments. For this reason we have dedicated our newly remodeled chapel to his memory. It was originally built during his early years with the funeral home. From now on we will fondly refer to it as the Thompson Memorial Chapel.

Loeta (his wife) is still active here at the funeral home and in the community. We are grateful for her continued faithfulness to us as she helps us serve our client families. Norman will be greatly missed and often remembered.

“Well done, good and faithful servant thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make you master over many things. Enter thou in the Joy of the Lord.” Matt. 25:23.

C.K. Warden, Funeral Director/Owner
Konantz-Warden Funeral Home
Lamar, Missouri

Tombstone Touch-Ups

(Condensed from article in Rural Missouri, July, 2009)
By Bob McEowen



Clarksburg, MO: York Cemetery Services, a preservation and restoration service that restores dignity to damaged and neglected memorials started up about four years ago.

Wayne York and Clancy Boots want to help with preserving the markers that families have erected to memorialize their loved ones. So they use stout bars, limestone chat and get the stones “right back where they belong.”

In addition to normal maintenance to the stones they also offer dowsing to find lost gravesites. While holding two brass rods, they walk where suspected gravesites are and wait for rods to cross.

They do not have any shortage of work, in fact they have a backlog. But Wayne states, “These are people that were here before us, and they deserve a certain amount of honor and respect. Most of us would like to be remembered a little bit.”

For more info, call 573-291-0245 or log on to www.yorkcemeteryservices.com.

Cemetery Foreclosure in Oklahoma City

(Condensed from article) By John Estus, Published July 31, 2009

So what will happen to the bodies buried in a foreclosed cemetery? In Riverside Gardens Cemetery people are wondering.

You know it’s bad if the attorneys and cemetery owners don’t know what could happen if it is sold to a new owner.

This particular cemetery owner has had some other properties related to foreclosures and a few other problems.

The foreclosure situation was not shared to people burying their loved ones in the recent past.

With the cemetery on the auction block, the previous owners plan to buy it back.

In the economic climate of today, do we have to worry about foreclosure, maintenance or other challenges where we bury our loved ones?





Thorns



Sandra felt as low as the heels of her shoes when she pulled open the florist shop door, against a November gust of wind. Her life had been as sweet as a spring breeze and she, in the fourth month of her second pregnancy, a “minor” automobile accident stole her joy. This was Thanksgiving week and the time she should have delivered their infant son. She grieved over their loss.

Troubles had multiplied.

Her husband’s company “threatened” to transfer his job to a new location. Her sister had called to say that she could not come for her long awaited holiday visit. What’s worse, Sandra’s friend suggested that Sandra’s grief was a God-given path to maturity that would allow her to empathize with others who suffer. “She has no idea what I’m feeling,” thought Sandra with a shudder. “Thanksgiving? Thankful for what?” she wondered. “For a careless driver whose truck was hardly scratched when he rear-ended me? For an airbag that save my life, but took my child’s?”

“Good afternoon, can I help you?”

Sandra was startled by the approach of the shop clerk. “I . . . I need an arrangement,” stammered Sandra.

“For Thanksgiving? I’m convinced that flowers tell stories,” she continued. “Are you looking for something that conveys ‘gratitude’ this Thanksgiving?”

“Not Exactly!” Sandra blurted out. “In the last five months, everything that could go wrong has gone wrong.”

Sandra regretted her outburst, and was surprised when the clerk said, “I have the perfect arrangement for you.”

Then the bell on the door rang, and the clerk greeted the new customer....

“Hi, Barbara, let me get your order.” She excused herself and walked back to a small workroom, then quickly reappeared, carrying an arrangement of greenery, bows, and what appeared to be long-stemmed thorny roses. Except the ends of the rose stems were neatly snipped: there were no flowers.

“Do you want these in a box?” asked the clerk. Sandra watched— was this a joke? Who would want rose stems with no flowers! She waited for laughter, but neither woman laughed.

“Yes, please,” Barbara replied with an appreciative smile. “You’d think after three years of getting the special, I wouldn’t be so moved by its significance, but I can feel it right here, all over again.” she said, as she gently tapped her chest.

Sandra stammered, “Ah, that lady just left with....Uh...She left with no flowers!”

“That’s right,” said the clerk. “I cut off the flowers. That’s the ‘Special.’ I call it the Thanksgiving Thorns Bouquet. Barbara came into the shop three years ago, feeling much as you do today,” explained the clerk, “She thought she had very little to be thankful for. She had just lost her father to cancer; the family business was failing; her son had gotten into drugs; and she was facing major surgery. That same year I had lost my husband,” continued the clerk. “For the first time in my life, I had to spend the holidays alone. I had no children, no husband, no family nearby, and too much debt to allow any travel.”

“So what did you do?” asked Sandra.

“I learned to be thankful for thorns,” answered the clerk qui-

etly. “I’ve always thank God for the good things in my life and I never questioned Him why those good things happened to me, but when the bad stuff hit, I cried out, “Why, Why me?!” It took time for me to learn that the dark times are important to our faith! I have always enjoyed the ‘flowers’ of my life, but it took the thorns to show me the beauty of God’s comfort! You know, the Bible says that God comforts us when we’re afflicted, and from His consolation we learn to comfort others.”

Sandra sucked in her breath, as she thought about what her friend had tried to tell her. “I guess the truth is I don’t want comfort. I’ve lost a baby and I’m angry with God.”

Just then someone else walked in the shop.

“Hey, Phil!” the clerk greeted the balding, rotund man.

“My wife sent me in to get our usual Thanksgiving arrangement. Twelve thorn, long-stemmed stems!” laughed Phil as the clerk handed him a tissue wrapped arrangement from the refrigerator.

“Those are for your wife?” asked Sandra incredulously. “Do you mind telling me why she wants a bouquet that looks like that?”

“Four years ago, my wife and I nearly divorced,” Phil replied. “After forty years, we were in a real mess, but with the Lord’s grace and guidance, we trudged through problem after problem, the Lord rescued our marriage. Jenny her (the clerk) told me she kept a vase of rose stems to remind her of what she had learned from thorny times. That was good enough for me. I took home some of those stems. My wife and I decided to label each one for a specific “problem” and give thanks for what that problem taught us.”

As Phil paid the clerk, he said to Sandra, “I highly recommend the Special!”

“I don’t know if I can be thankful for the thorns in my life.” Sandra said to the clerk. “It’s all too...fresh.”

“Well,” the clerk replied carefully, “my experience has shown me that the thorns make the roses more precious. We treasure God’s providential care more during trouble than at any other time. Remember that it was a crown of thorns that Jesus wore so we might know His love....Don’t resent the thorns.

Tears rolled down Sandra’s cheeks. For the first time since the accident, she loosened her grip on her resentment. “I’ll take those twelve long-stemmed thorns, please,” she managed to choke out.

“I hoped you would,” said the clerk gently. “I’ll have them ready in a minute.”

“Thank you. What do I owe you?”

“Nothing. Nothing but a promise to allow God to heal your heart...The first year’s arrangement is always on me.”

The clerk smiled and handed a card to Sandra. “I’ll attach this card to your arrangement, but maybe you would like to read it first.”

It read: “My God, I have never thanked You for my thorns. I have thanked You a thousand times for my roses, but never once for my thorns. Teach me the glory of the cross I bear; teach me the value of my thorns. Show me that I have climbed closer to You along the path of pain. Show me that, through my tears, the colors of Your rainbow look much more brilliant.”



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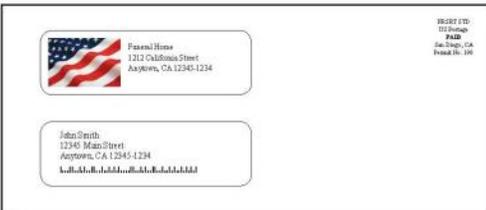
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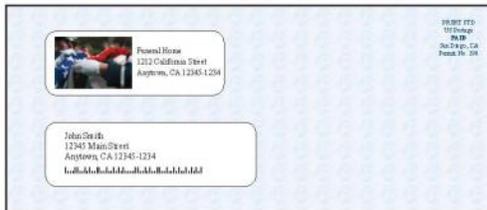
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