

The Dead Beat



The Caregiver's Soapbox

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



Volume 12

www.thedead-beat.com

Issue 3

Remember Martha Raye? Truth and Rumor about Her Military Experiences

Recently, I had an e-mail sent to me that I found interesting. I remember Martha Raye from her numerous early movies. I found her military experiences fascinating in addition to her burial site. So I felt the need to dig a little deeper.

The e-mail I received started like this: This is a great story about a great woman. I was unaware of her credentials or where she is buried. Somehow I just can't see Brittany Spears, Paris Hilton, or Jessica Simpson doing what this woman (and the other USO women, including Ann Margaret and Joey Heatherton) did for our troops in past wars. Most of the old time entertainers were made out of a lot sterner stuff than today's crop of activists and whiners.

This is what was sent to e-Rumor and asked truth or false?

The following is from an Army Aviator friend who takes another trip down memory lane: It was just before Thanksgiving '67 and we were ferrying dead and wounded from a large GRF west of Pleiku. We had run out of body bags by noon, so the Hook (CH-47 CHINOOK) was pretty rough in the back. All of a sudden, we heard a 'take-charge' woman's voice in the rear.

There was the singer and actress, Martha Raye, with a SF (Special Forces) beret and jungle fatigues, with subdued markings, helping the wounded into the Chinook, and carrying the dead aboard. 'Maggie' had been visiting her SF heroes' out 'west'.

We took off, short of fuel, and headed to the USAF hospital pad at Pleiku. As we all started unloading our sad pax's, a 'Smart-Ass' USAF Captain said to Martha.... "Ms Raye, with all these dead and wounded to process, there would not be time for your show!"

To all of our surprise, she pulled on her right collar and said.... "Captain, see this eagle? I am a full 'Bird' in the US Army Reserve, and on this is a 'Caduse' which means I am a Nurse, with a surgical specialty....now, take me to your wounded." He said, "Yes mam!... Follow me."

Several times at the Army Field Hospital in Pleiku, she would 'cover' a surgical shift, giving a nurse a well-deserved break.

Martha is the only woman buried in the SF (Special Forces) cemetery at Ft. Bragg.

This was the response:

THE TRUTH:

Noonie Fortin, Martha Raye's biographer told

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Priceless Observations

Last week, I stated this woman was the ugliest woman I had ever seen. I have since been visited by her sister, and now wish to withdraw that statement—Mark Twain

The secret of a good sermon is to have a good beginning and a good ending; and to have the two as close together as possible—George Burns

Santa Claus has the right idea. Visit people only once a year.—Victor Borge

Be careful about reading health books. You may die of a misprint—Mark Twain

Amy Howard Art Gallery



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



Amy Howard

I was married by a judge. I should have asked for a jury—Groucho Marx

Only Irish coffee provides in a single glass all four essential

food groups: alcohol, caffeine, sugar and fat—Alex Levine

My luck is so bad that if I bought a cemetery, people would stop dying—Rodney Dangerfield

Until I was thirteen, I thought my name was SHUT UP—Joe Namath

Money can't buy you happiness...But it does bring you a more pleasant form of misery—Spike Mulligan

I never drink water because of the disgusting things that fish do in it—W.C. Fields

We could certainly slow the aging process down if it had to work its way through Congress—Will Rogers

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Springfield Mortuary Service Expansion and ASMH Tour

Springfield Mortuary Service, Springfield, Missouri, entered its 51st year in business by expanding its facilities. A second crematory was put into service in January. The unit was purchased by Mr. Luis Del Pino of U.S. Cremations in Altamonte, Florida. The firm also expanded its storage capabilities by replacing a twenty-body walk-in cooler with a cold room with a capacity of 50 remains.



Also the firm hosted the Mortuary Science class from Arkansas State University in Mountain

Home, Arkansas. During the field trip the students were given a tour of the SI Funeral Services Wilbert Vault Plant in Springfield. Plant Manager Robert Bradford demonstrated the construction process



and features of Wilbert Vaults. The students got to see SI's line of caskets marketed throughout the plant.

Wilbert hosted a lunch for the attendees. After lunch, the students were given a tour of the chapel mausoleum at Rivermonte Memorial Gardens.



Manager Dub Townsend explained the features of the mausoleum and showed the students the new wing of crypts under construction.

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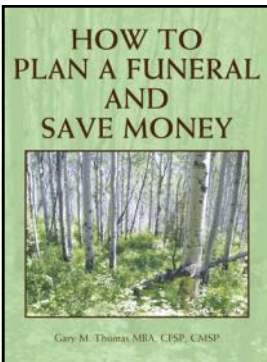
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“How to Plan a Funeral and Save Money”

By Gary M. Thomas

In the book, “**How to Plan a Funeral and Save Money.**” Gary shares the insight he has gained over the past fifteen years of the importance of pre-planning. He has been involved in all aspects of the mortuary and funeral business including funeral home ownership and management. Gary’s experience includes both family and corporate-owned funeral homes and cemeteries.



He is currently Assistant Manager for Fairmount Mortuary, Denver, CO, and the Vice President of the Colorado Funeral Directors Association, 2011-2012.

Gary’s Education and Professional License include:

- Columbia College, BA

- University of Phoenix, MBA
- Dallas Institute of Funeral Service
- Colorado Certified Mortuary Science Practitioner, CMSP
- Certified Funeral Service Practitioner, CFSP

The book can be purchased at Amazon.Com and Borders, or directly from the

Author House Publishing
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American Funeral Director Announces its “Funeral Director of the Year”

Kenneth R. Howe

WALL,NJ— The **American Funeral Director** magazine recently announced that **Kenneth R. Howe** won its 2011 Funeral Director of the Year award. Howe has been a funeral director for more than twenty five years and is chief executive officer of **Holman Howe Funeral Homes** in Missouri. Howe was a sure fit for this year’s Funeral Director of the Year award because of his tenacity, his dedication to his family and profession, his involvement within his community and his desire to educate and inspire future funeral professionals. “I am very honored to receive this prestigious award,” Howe said. “While the ultimate compliment is the reward I receive when a family selects our services, it is a wonderful addition to be recognized by my peers in funeral service. Any award of this nature is a team recognition, and on behalf of our team I say, thank you.” “We are honored to present Howe with our Funeral Director of the Year award,” said **Tanya Kenevich**, editor of **Kates-Boylston Publications**, the company that publishes **American Funeral Director**. “His passion for his profession and the families he serves is very impressive; Howe truly encompasses what this award is all about.”



Thornburg-DeVries (Wisconsin), and Grau (Iowa) Funeral Homes to Merge

On July 1, the Thornburg-DeVries Funeral Homes of Lansing, Prairie du Chien and McGregor will be merging with Grau Funeral Homes and Cremation Services of Monona, Postville, Clermont, Elgin and Ossian. Douglas DeVries, owner of the Thornburg-DeVries Funeral Homes, will continue working alongside Joshua and Annette Grau, owners of Grau Funeral Homes and Cremation Services.

Joshua grew up in Elkader and Annette up in Monona, and together they reside in Monona, along with their five children, Rose, Joseph, Clare, Julia, and Emma.

Wendy Vanderbilt, Chuck Kramer and Chad Giltzer will continue working as funeral home associates at the Thornburg-DeVries Funeral Homes.

The funeral industry is ever changing, but one thing remains the same—Douglas DeVries and Joshua and Annette Grau, along with their experienced staff, will continue working together to provide quality and caring service to the many families that they service.

From **Courier Press**, Prairie du Chien Wisconsin

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



Behind the Back Fence

By Lowell

*Question to Steve Palmer,
Westcott Funeral Home.*

From Lowell

"I was curious, a few years ago you wrote a piece about handling the remains for a rancher. The family had you prepare him and they took it from there; performing all the services. They may have even dressed him. Have you had any more similar instances since that time? And do you think there's the possibility that the time is coming when this type of service should be one of the packages offered?"

Steve's Response

"The family you mentioned has always handled their own services as much as they can, or want to. The funeral I wrote about was beautifully handled by an experienced ranch family used to seeing death. They have had two deaths in the related family and we have handled our duties in a related way.

The only way to deal with this type of family is to sit with them and "horse trade." "What are you asking me to do for you and what are you doing for yourself?" Is it

legal? If you impose the non declinable service fee they will probably do it on their own. Do you want to lose that family's trade? That type of family is almost always ultimately fair. They do not want to be ripped off, but let's talk. I honestly a la carte fees (removal \$...em-balming..., filing of permits \$....). Pushing too hard becomes a business owner's decision. Please know there are others who will do it for less. If you don't assist, they will do it themselves and teach each other how to do it."

Before you flex your muscles, know the consequences of beating someone up!"

So what do the rest of you think?



About the Author: Lowell Pugh has had funeral director and embalmer licenses in Missouri and Texas and continues the operation of the family funeral home which started in 1904. He is publisher of **The Dead Beat** which began in 1999. He can be contacted at **The Dead Beat** address.

Martha Raye (Cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

TruthOrFiction.com that Raye was lovingly called "Colonel Maggie" but the rank of Lt. Colonel and membership of the Green Beret Special Forces unit were both honorary. The entertainer was also an honorary Colonel in the United States Marine Corps.

Fortin, who wrote "Memories of Maggie," also said that it was not uncommon for Ms. Raye to jump in to assist in caring for wounded serviceman throughout her history with the USO. Fortin said "She would often pull rank, pointing out the oak leaf or bird on her collar and Green Beret as well as the nurse's emblem. Likewise she often helped out in the surgical units and wards."

The Department of Defense issues non-military identification cards to civilians who accompany armed forces to present in the event of capture. Each card contains the person's name and vital statistics such as height, weight, eye color and blood type. The cards also have what is called a "Geneva Conventions category." Category IV issued to such volunteers which is a rank equivalent to majors, lieutenant-colonels, and colonels.

Fortin told TruthOrFiction.com that "Maggie took it a step further and began wearing a uniform with the rank on it. As time progressed so did the honorary rank she held. By the time Vietnam ended she was a Lieutenant Colonel for the Army and Colonel for the Marines but wasn't really a member of either branch. Everything was honorary titles including the ribbons that she would often wear though some years later were actually awarded to her."

Raye received numerous awards and commendations from the military in appreciation for her years of service and in 1993, President Bill Clinton awarded the entertainer with the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Raye died on the 19th of October, 1994 and was buried among veterans of many wars at the Fort Bragg Cemetery in Fayetteville, NC. Special request had been made for her to be buried there since she wasn't military.

For more information on her Vietnam experience: www.vietnameexp.com/morestories/MarthaRaye.htm

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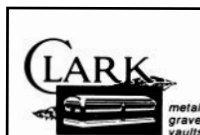
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After-Thoughts *By Joanne Howard*

Interesting reaction at a recent holiday-Valentine's Day.... Now you usually associate this with lovers or "your valentines." So why would this turn into a grief situation?



As the usual mom or dad situation with kids, you have been known to help with the class valentine box or valentines or candy or cooking. If you have kids you know what I'm talking about. I also used to get my kids special valentines and gifts, etc. In addition, I have gotten my mom valentine's presents or cards.

Well, this year it just upset me that they were all gone and I couldn't get them anything and they weren't going to send me anything physical from heaven. So I had what you would call "a bad day." Didn't help that my husband was "under the weather" and not able to do anything either.

So I thought it rather strange that I got upset, but really it's just the on-going struggles that you have with grief and it lasts and surfaces for a long time.

I was in the bank and met a lady that had lost her husband in the later part of last year. It hadn't been that long after Valentine's day and upon asking how

she was doing, she responded she was just trying to get through the holidays.

That first year after you lose someone, every holiday large or small seems to hit you in the gut. I sympathized with her and said to hang in there.

But is there more that you can do? I don't really think so. You never know how important holidays are to people. Some people may celebrate in such a unique way, that when someone is gone it's a lot harder to deal with.

Then there's the people who think you are weird if things still upset you years later. Hopefully they don't express their lack of understanding, but if they do, it just compounds the situation. You feel guilty and sad.

Well, as funeral directors we try to help at certain holidays, for example, Christmas or Memorial Day, but is there a way that we can help more? Would cards at specific holidays sent with the message, "Thinking of you." be helpful? Would having a get-together at your funeral home or other location be comforting at least during the first year of grief?



As one who has lost several loved ones, I'm not sure if those kind of actions on behalf of the funeral home

would have been appreciated. But since I am a funeral director, my orientation may be slightly different.

I know I miss my loved ones on all kinds of holidays in addition to birthdays and death anniversaries. Some days or some years may bother me more based on what's happening in my life at that time. But that people are thinking about me or praying for me or just giving me hugs with no words does help me and always will.

I was at Bible study the other night and during prayer request, I asked that they keep me in their prayers because it happened to be my oldest daughter's birthday. After the study was over, several women just gave me hugs. That really did help me and I appreciate their actions.

So maybe I'm really not so different being a funeral director and maybe I would appreciate acknowledgement from people including the funeral home on holidays.

Granted this may not increase your bottom line of profits, but caring about people can't hurt anytime.



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@thedead-beat.com.

Comment from Tracy Allman on Facebook

Something to ponder over.....

Malachi 3:3 says: 'He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver.' This verse puzzled some women in a Bible study and they wondered what this statement meant about the character and nature of God.. One of the women offered to find out the process of refining silver and get back to the group at their next Bible Study.

That week, the woman called a silversmith and made an appointment to watch him at work. She didn't mention anything about the reason for her interest beyond her curiosity about the process of refining silver.

As she watched the silversmith, he held a piece of silver over the fire and let it heat up. He explained that in refining silver, one needed to hold the silver in the middle of the fire where the flames were hottest as to burn away all the impurities. The woman thought about God holding us in such a hot spot; then she thought again about the verse that says: 'He sits as a refiner and purifier of silver.'

She asked the silversmith if it was true that he had to sit there in front of the fire the whole time. The man answered that yes, he not only had to sit there holding the silver, but he had to keep his eyes on the silver the entire time it was in the fire. If the silver was left a moment too long in the flames, it would be destroyed.

The woman was silent for a moment. Then she asked the silversmith, 'How do you know when the silver is fully refined?' He smiled at her and answered, 'Oh, that's easy -- when I see my image in it.'

If today you are feeling the heat of the fire, remember that God has his eye on you and will keep watching you until He sees His image in you. Pass this on right now.

This very moment, someone needs to know that God is watching over them. And, whatever they're going through, they'll be a better person in the end. 'Life is a coin. You can spend it anyway you wish, but you can only spend it once.'



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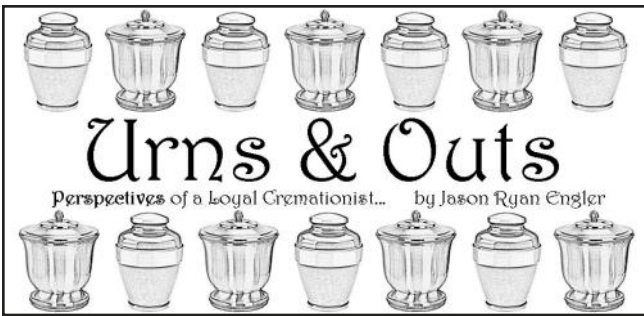
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According to the Cremation Association of North America's 2011 report on statistics, the Cremation rate in the U.S. is slated to breach 46% by the year 2015. I can imagine that legendary Cremationist Dr. Hugo Erichsen, founder of that prestigious organization, is whirling joyfully in his urn!

The modern Cremation movement in America sprang from a sanitary necessity – concerns with overcrowded cemeteries and decomposing bodies infecting the survivors and contaminating water sources; but over time, as the embalming process evolved, and with the advent of medicine into everyday practice, the need for Cremation as a means of sanitation after death dwindled. With these aspects, the sanitary necessity argument in favor of Cremation was easily defeated.

In America, Cremation began under the tutelage of reform societies, but passed into the hands of enterprising businessmen – unlike in the United Kingdom and many European countries like Germany and the Czech Republic where the Cremation movement became a concern of municipal authorities. From Cremation's modern revival in the U.S. in 1874 and into the first couple of decades of the twentieth century, Cremationists focused on the technical aspects of Cremation – and on the building and operation of Crematories. After this, however, in about the mid-1920's, Cremationists began promoting the aesthetics of Cremation over burial: the brightness of the flame versus the darkness of the grave; the purity of fire versus the pollution of dirt; the view of "self" in spiritual terms versus the vanity of "self" in

material terms; refinement versus vulgarity; science versus superstition; innovation versus tradition. Many of these ideas were clearly echoes of the sanitary debate but with a certain aesthetic charm.

Have you noticed the same sentiment among those choosing Cremation at your funeral home? A fellow funeral director told me recently that he sees people in his area choosing Cremation based on economic necessity – but I would hazard the guess that perceived economy is the lesser reason in most areas with high rates of Cremation. Simplicity, environmental concerns, and just sheer preference are other important reasons people are choosing Cremation for themselves or their loved ones. It is also important to point out that many who choose Cremation aren't doing so as a disposal – and the early partisans of the Cremation movement never intended Cremation to be disposal.

Personally, I have seen as many, if not more, beautiful expressions and meaningful tributes associated with Cremation services than with burial services. The freedom from being tied to the body tends to put the emphasis on the memory – the spiritual or ethereal part of death, rather than the material aspect. Above all, however, I have witnessed that the rites associated are no less meaningful and appropriate than the traditional funeral service followed by burial.

As we are two years into the second decade of the twenty-first century, and a good portion of the world is "virtual" and "electronic" – perhaps it is only part of the progression of life that thoughts are centered less on things seen and more on things unseen with deathcare practices as well. Beauty and light were two words frequently used by historic Cremationists to describe not just the practice of Cremation, but also their methods of memorializing those who chose Cremation. Perhaps if we continue to exude this same beauty and light to the families we serve, they can see those same qualities in the life of those they love, and thus perceive value in creating a beautiful memorial to those who have gone before.

At least, that's my perspective...

Jason Ryan Engler is a Funeral Director in Northwest 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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Life Changes

By Ken Doka

"Even watching television now is different." When we think of grief, we often reflect on the flood of emotions that follow a loss. Yet, as Marge noted a significant loss changes life.

Sometimes the changes are great. The death of a spouse, for example, may make us return to work or even change homes. While such major changes are less common, it may not be unusual for relationships with family or friends to change. Sometimes, we may find certain friends or family unsupportive. Other times, we may be pleasantly surprised that others, who perhaps we didn't know well, or didn't even like as much, are there for us in ways we would have never imagined. We may even develop new friendships. Marge, for example, bonded to a number of other women she had met in a surviving spouse support group. At the very least, we may have to take on new roles, and even learn new skills.

These changes may follow other losses as well. The death of a parent may mean that the old family home, with all its comfort and memories, is sold. The celebration of the holidays may change. Relations with siblings may now be different once a parent dies. When a child dies, we may give up activities once shared and treasured. One parent shared with me that when her son died, she "not only lost her son, but simultaneously all his friends."

Sometimes the changes are subtle. As Marge noted, the very quality of life is now changed. It all seems different now—even to watch TV or eat alone.

So how can we cope? The first thing to remember is that we should try to pace our changes. Our loss itself is a major change. Other changes simply add to the stress. If we can, we should avoid any additional major changes in our life for the first year.

We should take care not to isolate ourselves from support. If others we once looked to for support now seem unavailable, we should examine ourselves. Maybe we are less than forthcoming about our own needs. Perhaps we are hiding behind a mask of strength that friends and family seem reluctant to challenge. If they simply are not there, we may need to seek out others; perhaps in a support group or in involvement in other activities.

We need to acknowledge that things are now different, perhaps even more difficult. It may help to assess how much our life has changed. Doing so may help us realize the extent of change. It may help to assess our own coping strengths as well. What do we do well? What is really difficult? Knowing our own coping strengths and weaknesses can help us identify areas where we can use other's help.

We also can assess the times and events that seem to cause the most worry or are the most difficult. Once we do that, we can find ways around it. For Marge, Sunday afternoons were the worst. She realized that was the time that she and her husband were always together - that was their time. Once she realized that, Marge always made plans to be with others during that time. Sometimes she would visit with her children while other times she would go out with friends.

Life does change when someone we love dies. We cannot change that. But, we may be able to control the way it changes. Over time, life may be different—but it will surely be well worth living.

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

Trust, some have it...some don't

A woman comes home after a very long and exhausting business trip a day early; wanting to surprise her husband for their anniversary. She quietly unlocks and opens the front door, slipping off her shoes and tippy-toes upstairs to the bedroom, cracks the door and sees to her dismay...4 feet instead of 2 feet sticking out from under the blanket. She then goes down the hall and digs in the hall closet for a while till she finds the object she is searching for...a Louisville Slugger! She heads back to the bedroom with bat in hand, creeps into the room quietly and starts beating the sheets with all she has, drops the bat and goes back down stairs to the front door awaiting the guilty party to make their way downstairs. All of a sudden she hears a long yawn and her husband's head popping up from the couch... Her husband comes up to her for a hug and kiss. "I have a surprise for you... Your mom and dad came to help us celebrate our anniversary... Shhhh, be quiet, I hope it is OK? I did not think you would mind if they stayed in our room while they were here....."

Submitted by John Carter

Fred was in the hospital, near death, so the family sent for his pastor. As the pastor stood beside the bed, Fred's frail condition grew worse, and he motioned frantically for something to write on. The pastor lovingly handed him a pen and piece of paper, and Fred used his last ounce of strength to scribble a note. Then he died. The pastor thought it best not to look at the note just then, so he slipped it into his jacket pocket. Several days later, at the funeral, the pastor delivered the eulogy. He realized that he was wearing the same jacket that he'd worn the day Fred died. "You know," he said, "Fred handed me a note just before he died. I haven't read it, but knowing Fred, I'm sure there's a work of inspiration there for us all." He unfolded the note and read aloud, "You're standing on my oxygen tube."

While driving down the highway recently. I saw this on the T-shirt of a man on a motorcycle that pulled ahead of me: "If you can read this, my wife fell off."

A couple was driving down a country road when they came to a muddy patch in the road and got stuck. A young farmer on a tractor came by and offered to pull them out for \$50. The husband accepted and minutes later the car was free. The farmer turned to the husband and said, "You know, you're the tenth car I've helped out of the mud today." The husband looked around the nearby fields incredulously and asked the farmer, "When do you have time to work your land? At night?" "No, no," the young farmer replied seriously. "Night is when I put water in the hole."



Comments

Mrs. Joanne Howard,

I pray to God I will not suffer the loss of my daughter. I cannot even begin to feel the pain of losing both of yours. I lost my only son in July, 96 as the years go by, the pain is still there.

But God 's Grace has helped me.....

Bob Byrd, Weatherford, TX

One evening , during a violent thunderstorm, a mother was tucking her small boy into bed. She was about to turn off the light when he asked, with a tremor in his voice, "Mommy, will you sleep with me tonight?" The mother smiled and gave him a reassuring hug. "I can't dear," she said. "I have to sleep in Daddy's room." A long silence was broken at last by his shaky little voice. "The big sissy."

Why our health care costs are so high!!!

Bubba had shingles. Those of us who spend much time in a doctor's office should appreciate this. Doesn't it seem more and more that physicians are running their practices like an assembly line? Here's what happened to Bubba. Bubba walked into a doctor's office and the receptionist asked him what he had. Bubba said, "Shingles." So she wrote down his name, address, medical insurance number and told him to have a seat. Fifteen minutes later a nurse's aide came out and asked Bubba what he had. Bubba said, "Shingles." So she wrote down his height, weight, a complete medical history and told Bubba to wait in the examining room. A half hour later a nurse came in and asked Bubba what he had. Bubba said, "Shingles." So the nurse gave Bubba a blood test, a blood pressure test, an electrocardiogram and told Bubba to take off all his clothes and wait for the doctor. An hour later the doctor came in and found Bubba sitting patiently in the nude and asked Bubba what he had. Bubba said, "Shingles." The doctor asked, "Where?" Bubba said, "Outside on the truck. Where do you want me to unload 'em?"

A well-known country club in the Carolinas was hosting a celebrity golf tournament. A famous golfer named Arnold invited an equally famous evangelist named Billy to play along with him. The minister, who seldom played, had no regular caddy and so asked an elderly colored man, one of the groundskeepers at the course, to pull the cart for him. After the match, the old gentleman was approached by a television newsman. "Sir, I understand you caddied for Rev. Billy today. Could you tell us about how he played?" The answer was, "He is a fair putter, but goes in the rough sometimes." The newsman said, "Does he get mad and cuss if he misses a shot?" The old fellow thought a moment, then said, "No, sir, I ain't heard no profanity out of him at all." Then he added, "But where he spits, the grass don't grown no more."

The Angry Nurse

A big shot business man had to spend a couple of days in the hospital. He was a royal pain to the nurses because he bossed them around just like he did his employees. None of the hospital staff wanted to have anything to do with him. The head nurse was the only one who could stand



(Continued on page 11)

Chuckles (Cont.)

up to him. She came into his room and announced, "I have to take your temperature." After complaining for several minutes, he finally settled down, crossed his arms and opened his mouth. "No, I'm sorry," the nurse stated, "but for this reading, I cannot use an oral thermometer." This started another round of complaining, but eventually he rolled over and bared his rear end. After feeling the nurse insert the thermometer, he heard her announce, "I have to get something. Now you stay, JUST LIKE THAT, until I get back!" She leaves the door to his room open on her way out. He curses under his breath as he hears people walking past his door laughing. After almost an hour, the man's doctor comes into the room. "What's going on here?" asked the doctor. Angrily, the man answers, "What the matter, Doc? Haven't you ever seen someone having their temperature taken?" After a pause, the doctor confesses, "Well, no, I guess I haven't. Not with a carnation anyway."



This incident happened in the 60's. I was in the army and had a weekend pass. I went to Washington, D.C., the army base was 125 miles from D.C. There were several people already on the bus when I boarded. A young woman was sitting middle-ways on the bus and cooing to her baby. A drunk staggered aboard, stopping in front of the young woman.



The drunk looked down and spoke in a loud voice, "Lady, that is the ugliest baby I have ever seen." She burst into tears. There was an outcry of sympathy among the passengers which led to them kicking the drunk off the bus. The woman kept on sobbing and wailing so very loudly that the bus driver walked back to where she was sitting. The driver said, "Look, I have no idea what that bum said to you...but try to calm down. I will go into the station and get you a cup of hot tea. Please calm down." The driver got off and returned with the tea and replied to the woman, "Everything is going to be all right. Here's your cup of hot tea and I even got a banana for your pet monkey!"

Immuned

Through some strange coincidence or other, all the girls in the office, all happily married, found themselves in various stages of pregnancy. All except Lillian, a middle-aged spinster. Their employer, feeling a little sorry for the one left out, decided to tease her a bit. "Tell me, Lillian," he said brightly, "why aren't you getting

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fat like the other girls?" "Why, I don't know," the woman blurted out. "Maybe I'm not getting the right kind of exercise."

A Southern lawyer was working up a sweat in front of his red brick mansion, spreading fertilizer and pruning the hedge, while swearing silently because his regular yard man had failed to show up for the second time. He spoke aloud, saying, "No one wants to work these days." About then, he noticed a man walking up his quarter-mile driveway, carrying a back pack.

The middle-aged hiker, cleanly dressed and sporting a small beard, addressed the property owner. "Hi, mister. Do you have any work I can do to earn a few bucks?" The lawyer, sensing an answer to his need, responded. "Yes, I do. I have no help to depend on and need someone to paint the porch behind the house before the spring rains begin. I'll pay you \$50 if you can get it done before noon." The hiker said, "I'm your man."

"Great!" said the lawyer. "Good to see someone who wants to work these days. There are 2 gallons of green paint in the driveway, with brushes. Don't worry if you get a little splashed on the windows, I can scrape it off later. The main thing is speed." The hiker tipped his cap, nodded, and hiked up the hill to the house. The attorney returned to his tasks, silently congratulating himself on a good bargain at minimum cost.

About 11:30, the hiker came back down the drive, wiping his hands on a rag. "I'm done, mister. I did spatter the windows a little, but not much." The attorney paid the amount agreed in cash and thanked the man. "Good luck to you, wherever you go." The hiker, heading for the bus stop at the corner, replied. "I appreciate your help, mister. But I want to tell you one thing. What you got behind the house is not a Porsche-it's a Mercedes."



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“Dear Counselor....” By Bill Stalter

Dear Counselor,

Several years ago, we began to recommend that preneed consumers include funds in the cash advance selections for cemetery charges. However, the cemetery charges have risen faster than we expected, and consumers are scaling back on their funeral selections to pay the cemetery charges. What can we do about the cemetery charges?

Cremations and the economy may be hitting cemeteries even harder than funeral homes. Many of our cemetery clients are evaluating their charges, and how to improve revenues. With so many changes going on, we're also advising them to establish general price lists that both funeral homes and consumers can rely upon. This is a foreign concept for some cemeteries because they are not subject to the FTC's Funeral Rule, and have never established a General Price List. Consumers often don't appreciate the competition that exists between a funeral home and a cemetery, or the competition that exists between the cemetery and a monument dealer. Some cemeteries have responded to that competition by maintaining some secrecy about their charges or restrictions. Such a business practice will only hurt the cemetery in the long run.

The funeral director often has the initial contact with the family, and it is natural that he will attempt to provide as much of the final arrangement as possible. But if the costs of both the funeral and burial are more than what the family can afford, price concessions may have to be made. The funeral director has no duty to ensure that the family understands all of the cemetery's services and charges, but he does a disservice to the family if he omits that information from the arrangement meeting. Accordingly, the funeral home will want to meet with the cemetery to explain the need for their “general price list.” If the cemetery declines, then the best you can do is to explain the situation to your families.

You will want to explain to the family that the cemetery will have charges for opening and closing the burial space, and that there may also be charges for weekend interments, the rental of a tent, vault installation charges, second interment rights and memorial installation charges. If the cemetery will not provide these disclosures, you have little choice but to send the family to the cemetery for that information.



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.

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Messages on Various Church Signs

- ♦ “You may party in hell, but you will be the barbeque”
- ♦ “Keep using my name in vain. I'll make rush hour longer”
God
- ♦ “There are some questions that can't be answered by Google”
- ♦ “Honk if you love Jesus, text while driving if you want to meet Him.”
- ♦ “Thou shall not steal the copper from the AC unit. Please call 227-4110”
- ♦ “Read the Bible, it's user-friendly. Plus we offer tech support here on Sunday at 10:30”
- ♦ “Church parking trespassers will be baptized”
- ♦ “How do we make holy water? We boil the hell out of it.”
- ♦ “Adam blamed Eve. Eve blamed the snake and the snake didn't have a leg to stand on”
- ♦ “Where will you be sitting in eternity. Smoking or Non-Smoking.”

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

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Or Fax: 1-417-537-4797



Death Notices of Fellow Funeral Service Colleagues



KANSAS



Hope Margaret Moulden Hundley, 42, of Leavenworth, passed away January 16, 2012. She graduated from Kansas City Kansas Community College cum laude with an associates degree in Mortuary Science. She was a sixth generation of the Davis family to join the tradition of service to others at the Davis Funeral Chapel. Her arrangements were under the direction of Davis Funeral Chapel.

Robert "Bob" W. Garnand, 82, formerly of Garden City passed away on January 14, 2012. He served in the 43rd DA and E Maintenance Squadron and 43rd D Bob Wing (SAC). He attended mortuary school in Dallas, TX in preparation of taking over the day to day operations of Garnand Funeral Home in 1957. Arrangements were handled by the Garnand Funeral Home.

Gordon R. Brantley, 69, of Scott City, passed away on December 26, 2011. He graduated from the Kansas City Community College with a degree in Mortuary Science. He owned and operated three funeral homes in Atwood, Great Bend and Dodge City during his career. His services were directed by Price and Sons Funeral Home in Scott City.

MISSOURI



Edwin Glenn Biesemeyer, 50, of Overland, Missouri area, passed away on February 21, 2012. He was a licensed funeral director with Baumann Colonial Chapel. Services were handled by Baumann Colonial Chapel.



Gale Lee Duncan, 70, of Bella Vista, AR, formerly of Anderson, MO passed away on March 20, 2012 from injuries sustained in a two-vehicle accident near Jane, MO. He graduated from Worsham College of Mortuary Science in Chicago, IL. In 1977 he became owner of Ozark Funeral Homes, Inc. retiring in 2004. He served as coroner of McDonald County for 28 years. He was president of the Missouri Funeral Directors Association during their 100 year anniversary. Services were under the direction of Ozark Funeral Home.



Glen Fieser, of Fenton passed away February 7, 2012. He was owner of Fieser Funeral Home and Fieser Nursing Home. His arrangements were under the direction of Fieser Funeral Home.



Donald Ward Hanks, 90 of Smithville passed away February 6, 2012. He served in the Army's 9th Air Force, in the 409th Bomb Group, 641st Bomber Squadron in World War II. He flew 65 bombing missions over France and Germany including two on D-Day. He graduated from St. Louis School of Mortuary

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

MISSOURI (Cont.)

Science in 1946 and did his apprenticeship with George Carson Funeral Home in Independence. In 1948 he joined S.A. McComas as a partner in the McComas Funeral Home in Smithville. Ward renamed the business D.W. Hanks & Sons in 1960 and operated the business until he retired in 1984. His arrangements were under the direction of Hixson-Klein Funeral Home in Smithville.

Richard Kelley Hixon, 80, of Belton passed away December 9, 2011. He was a Navy Korean veteran. He was a funeral director for D.W. Newcomer's Sons. Arrangements were handled by Newcomer's Longview Funeral Home.

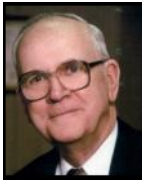


Angelina "Angie" (Leggio) Passantino, 87, of Kansas City, MO passed away on March 6, 2012. She was the mother of Charlie Passantino (owner of Passantino Bros. Funeral Home in Kansas City.) Services were handled by Passantino Bros. Funeral Home in Kansas City.



Patricia D. Wieggers, 77, of Higginsville, passed away on March 3, 2012. She and husband Donald operated the Wieggers Funeral Home in Higginsville from 1963-2002. Her arrangements were directed by the Kaiser-Wieggers Funeral Home.

OKLAHOMA



Joe M. Moore, 92, of Tulsa died December 12, 2011. He was owner of seven funeral homes in the Tulsa area as well as recently acquired Fitzgerald Funeral Homes. He was 1999 Oklahoma Funeral Director of the Year. His father owned a funeral home in Claremore before moving the family to Tulsa where the first Moore Funeral home opened in 1932. Joe was a longtime member of the Order of Golden Rule and the National Selected Morticians Association. His service was directed by Moore's Southlawn Funeral Home.

TEXAS



Norene D. Bates, 94, of DeKalb, passed away February 28, 2012. She is the mother of Robby Bates and grandmother of Robb Bates, Bates Family Funeral Home in DeKalb. Robby is a TFDA past president and currently serves as NFDA Treasurer. Services were under the direction of Bates Family Funeral Home.



John R. (Bob) Clayton, 81, of Terrell died February 29, 2012. He is the son of John T. and Margaret Clayton, who are owners of Anderson-Clayton Bros. Funeral Homes in Terrell. He was a veteran of the National Guard. He worked many years as VP of Sales for Miller-Meteor and S & S Coach Co. He was the brother of David Clayton, a TFDA past president. The services were directed by Anderson-Clayton Bros. Funeral Home. "His ability to always be able to provide the best limousine, funeral coach, or sedan in each funeral home's livery and fleet enabled him



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Springfield Mortuary Service Expansion and ASMH Tour (cont)

tion.

Following these tours, the group returned to Springfield Mortuary Service where they observed two embalmings and a cremation. They were also given lessons on how to load and unload a cot in a removal vehicle.

Springfield Mortuary Service would like to thank SI Funeral Services and Rivermonte Memorial Gardens for their participation in the field trip. Also a thank you to Mr. Matt Buell of Arkansas State University for making the students available.



Springfield Mortuary Service was founded in 1961. The current owners, Brian and Sue Simmons and their daughter, Jennifer Simmons Bodenhamer, have owned the firm since 1987.

Death Notices of Fellow Funeral Service Colleagues (Cont.)

TEXAS

to have a reputation as an icon and premier provider to every funeral professional in the country. " said his obituary.



Doyle Hodges, 65, of Marlin, died February 15, 2012. He was location manager since 1999 at the Adams Funeral Home in Marlin. He funeral arrangements were under the direction of Adams Funeral Home Chapel.

Harold L. Jackson, 86, of Tyler passed away February 11, 2012. He was president and owner of Jackson's Burks Walker Tippet Funeral Directors. He served families in East Texas for 53 years. Services were handled by Burks-Walker-Tippit Funeral Directors.



Marjorie "Margie" Keeter, 71, passed away on March 1, 2012. She was the wife of the late John Ed Keeter, a funeral director at the Shannon North Funeral Chapel in Fort Worth. Arrangements were directed by Shannon Rufe Snow Drive Funeral Home.



Tamika & Derrick Patterson, passed away on February 15, 2012. They were the daughter and son-in-law of Rev. Michael Bill from the Bill Clair Family mortuary in Houston, who handled the service arrangements.



Rachel McDowell Schmidt, 92, of Brookshire, passed away on February 8, 2012. She was the co-founder of Schmidt Funeral Home in Brookshire and Katy with her husband Milton. She ran the business when Milton passed away in 1975. She is the mother of TFDA Past President M.H. "Hank" Schmidt, Jr. and the late Steve Schmidt. Her services were directed by the Schmidt Funeral Homes.



Jim C. Wright, 75, of Wheeler, died on January 21, 2012. He graduated from the Gupton-Jones School of Mortuary Service in 1962. He became partners in the Wright-Denison Funeral Home in 1965 and it became the Wright Funeral Home in 1970. He also served a a commissioner on the Texas Funeral Service Commission from 1999-2009. He was awarded the Pioneer Funeral Director of the Year in 2010 by the Panhandle

Funeral Directors Association. Arrangements were under the direction of Peppers Family Funeral Home in Wheeler.

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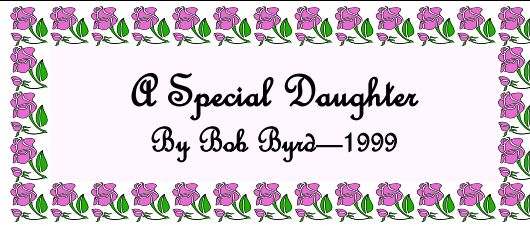
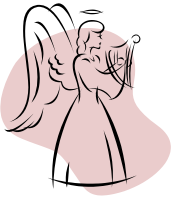
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By Bob Byrd—1999



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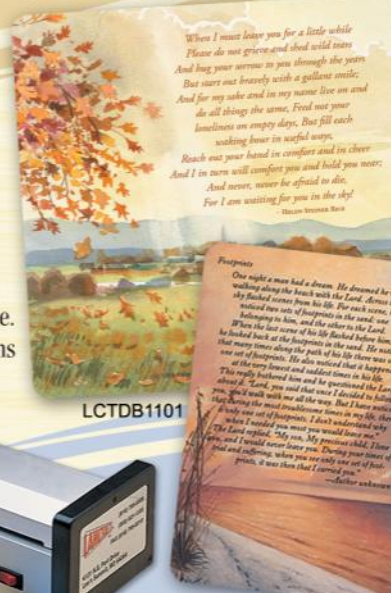
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ASD – Answering Service for Directors is pleased to welcome 10 Call Specialists to their team of highly trained professionals. Every month, hundreds of applicants apply for positions at ASD, but only a select few make it through the company's rigorous, 6 month training program. Employees are carefully selected and must exhibit compassionate communication skills and be qualified to handle some of life's most difficult situations.

To work at ASD, Call Specialists must possess an understanding of the enormous responsibility entrusted to them. With the reputation of their funeral professional clients on the line, ASD designed its sophisticated training program to emphasize the importance of empathy and patience. New employees must be able to speak gently and professionally on the phone with the understanding that it may be the worst day of the caller's life. Additionally, trainees must demonstrate full comprehension of ASD's proprietary systems, developed exclusively for funeral professionals by the company's technical team.

Here are some of the required traits that new employees must exhibit within six months to continue working at ASD:

Excellent listening skills with the ability to assist even the most irrational caller with absolute professionalism.

Empathetic, patient phone demeanor

Strong attention to detail with essential English and grammar skills

Excellent composure with the ability to calmly defuse emotionally unstable callers

Commitment to excellent attendance and proven reliability

Exceptional short term memory with an ability to take accurate, thorough messages

Extensive familiarity of funeral customs, terms and procedures

Dependable team player attitude with an understanding that calls cannot be put off and must be handled immediately, including weekends, holidays, and days with extreme weather conditions

Perceptive and conscientious with intuition to recognize a First Call early into a conversation.

"ASD's training program is intense! I have never worked for a company with such a great training program," says Advanced Call Specialist Eboni, a recent graduate of ASD's orientation program. "The trainers, supervisors, and managers all work very closely to ensure you understand every aspect of the system, the clients' needs, the callers' needs and the sensitive nature of the funeral home business."

ASD's policy of promoting from within has created a team of extremely knowledgeable Training Specialists. These veteran employees mentor new Call Specialists before they can take calls independently. Training Specialists monitor and evaluate the performance of new trainees, with Supervisors signing off on every step of the process. Once Call Specialists are able to take calls on their own, ASD's Managers and Supervisors listen to and critique their calls to ensure trainees are utilizing all the skills learned during orientation. Furthermore, ASD's culture of absolute transparency allows funeral directors to listen to and evaluate every Call Specialist that answers their calls. At ASD, nothing is ever hidden from the company's clients.

The average ASD employee has been with the company for over six years, demonstrating how ASD has managed to avoid the high turnover plaguing the industry. A comprehensive recruitment process helps to determine whether applicants are truly a good fit for the company and ensures that new Call Specialists are committed to learning every aspect of the job.

"I feel like I have grown as a person from working at ASD," says Advanced Call Specialist Tiffany. "No matter where my life leads me I'll always use what I have learned from ASD to help me along the way."

ABOUT ASD

ASD is the leader in answering services and call support for funeral professionals. Family owned and operated, ASD blends state-of-the-art technology with an experienced team of knowledgeable call specialists that possess a high level of understanding of the funeral process. The company's intensive training programs ensure that the potential value of every call is recognized and communicated to directors in the most cost efficient way. ASD's innovative technology, custom-built systems and call support expertise have made it a national leader in the death care profession. Headquartered in Media, Pennsylvania, ASD offers comprehensive answering services for funeral homes and funeral related businesses of all sizes. For more information, visit myASD.com or call 1-800-868-9950

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Options by Batesville Offers Customizable Consumer Catalog for Funeral Homes

New AC²T System tool offers simple approach to educating families on cremation choices, while building funeral home's brand

Batesville, IN – March 6, 2012 – Options® by Batesville, the leading provider of cremations solutions and products to licensed funeral homes in North America, announces the availability of three consumer catalogs, part of a comprehensive suite of AC²T™ System tools that funeral homes can personalize to educate families on the important decisions they will make and products that can help create a meaningful funeral experience.

Cremation is one of the most significant economic challenges faced by funeral homes today. The rising rate of cremation, coupled with the revenue gap between cremation and burial, make it more important than ever for funeral directors to take a different approach with cremation families.

"There's been a broad generalization that families who choose cremation don't want to spend money," said Jason Burlage, Vice President and General Manager of Strategic Business Units at Batesville. "However, our research shows that a large percentage of people are simply not aware of the different offerings available for creating a meaningful cremation service for a loved one."

Burlage explains this communication gap, and the lack of understanding about cremation options, are key factors inhibiting revenue growth in this segment. But they are also obstacles that can be overcome with the Options AC²T System. Introduced in 2010, AC²T, which stands for "Acting on Cremations Challenges Together," is an industry leading approach that provides funeral homes with a proven method to deliver critical information to the cremation consumer that results in an increased level of services and products selected. The new consumer catalogs are one of several tools available to ensure that arrangers are presenting information to families in a consistent manner.

"Funeral homes that approach every cremation arrangement with a comprehensive offering have made a sizable impact on closing their revenue gap, while providing families with the high quality service and attention they deserve," said Burlage. When the AC²T System is fully implemented, funeral homes

report an average increase of \$500 in revenue per cremation call.

The new Options consumer catalogs, which can be personalized with a funeral home's logo and other information, are a convenient alternative to the company's traditional cremation catalog. Each catalog features select groupings of products at different levels of value, providing choices for all families. The size and format is suitable for the arrangement conference and as a take-home piece for aftermarket purchases. The three versions feature these product groupings:

- an urn version includes urns, keepsakes and jewelry
- a complete version includes caskets, urns, keepsakes and jewelry
- a rental version adds a rental casket to the products listed in the complete version

Catalogs are available to all Batesville customers through an easy-to-use online interface that provides step-by-step directions to guide funeral home staff in the placement of funeral home logos and other business information such as a mission statement, branch locations and other custom messages. Funeral homes have the option to include their own custom pricing in the catalog if desired. A sample of the customized Options Consumer Catalog can be reviewed and approved online by funeral home management to ensure accuracy prior to ordering.

Funeral Professionals can view samples of the new consumer catalogs by visiting Batesville.com and clicking the Online Options Catalogs button. For more information on how to begin seeing financial benefits using the AC²T System, funeral homes can contact their local Batesville representative.

About Options by Batesville

Options® by Batesville is the leading provider of cremation solutions and products to licensed funeral homes in North America. Backed by the world leader in funeral service, Options is *the* solution for funeral homes to fulfill the needs of families by assisting them in honoring and memorializing meaningful relationships. Founded in 1993, Options' commitment to providing comprehensive products and services allows funeral homes to enhance their relationship with the families they serve by providing meaningful funerals and personalized products.

For additional information contact:

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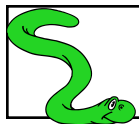
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Interesting Story from Bob Byrd

This happened during a time when Bob Byrd worked for the Ambulance Service. The City of Plainview decided to let a private agency handle all calls for ambulance service instead of the two local funeral homes that had provided that service for 35 years. I had helped both funeral homes with their ambulance services, so I used them for a reference and acquired a job with the new service.

I remember one call very clearly. The housewife was bringing her plants in the house to protect them from a freeze. Hid-



den in one of the pots was a green garden snake. The snake quickly warmed up and crawled out of the pot. She saw the snake as it crawled under the couch and let out a loud scream. Her husband, who had been in the shower, rushed into the room naked and asked what was wrong. She managed to tell him about the snake.

The husband got on his hands and knees and peered under the couch. About this time, the family dog entered the room and placed



his cold nose on his master's thigh. The man thought the snake had bitten him and fainted on the floor. His wife, believing that her husband had suffered a heart attack, called us for help. My partner and I rushed in and loaded him on our stretcher. As we were taking him out, the snake crawled out from under the sofa near my feet. I was hopping to try and keep from stepping on the snake and I dropped my end of the stretcher. The man fell to the floor, breaking his leg in the process. This kept him in the hospital for a few days.



Of course, his wife still had to deal with the snake. She called the man next door and she asked if he would help. He volunteered. He armed himself with a flashlight and a rolled up newspaper and began poking under the sofa. After several minutes he decided it had left and told the woman that. The lady was relieved and sat down on the couch. Her hand went between the cushions and she felt the snake down there. She screamed, passed gas from the beans she had fixed the night before and fainted. The snake slithered back under the sofa. The man began CPR, hoping to revive her.

The neighbor's wife was walking by at this time. She had just returned from the grocery store. She heard the neighbor scream and she ran to see what was wrong. She was carrying a sack of canned goods. When she saw her husband with his mouth pressed against hers, she slammed the bag into his head, cutting his scalp, which would require stitches. We were then called again for assistance.

All the noise awoke the first woman. She saw her neighbor lying on the floor. She assumed the snake had bitten him. She went to the kitchen and got a small bottle of whiskey. She began pouring the whiskey down the man's throat. When we arrived, the neighbor was still unconscious and bleeding. He reeked of whiskey and we assumed that a drunken fight had occurred.

The police were about to arrest them when the women were able to convince them that the entire ordeal had begun because of the green snake. We loaded the neighbor into the ambulance and his wife came with us.

As soon as we left, the snake crawled out from under the sofa. One of the policemen drew his pistol and fired at the snake. The round missed and shattered a leg on the end table that was sitting by the couch. The table over turned, spilling an oil-burning lamp on it. The oil lamp broke and when the electric lamp from the table fell, it's bulb broke and the sparks ignited the oil, catching the drapes on fire. The second police officer removed his jacket and began trying to extinguish the flames. He tripped and fell through the picture window.



(Continued on page 25)

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FUNERAL SERVICE FOUNDATION WELCOMES NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Brookfield, Wis.—The Funeral Service Foundation welcomes Kathy Wisnefski as its new executive director, replacing Celi Clark Haga. Wisnefski has a background in fund development and nonprofit organization management as a consultant with McDonald Schaefer Group. She acted as interim executive director since August 2011, and began her new position on February 1.



The Foundation's executive search committee – which was chaired by the Foundation's Immediate Past Chair Alan Creedy, and included Foundation Chair Shaun Myers, Chair-elect Jerry Reichert, Past Chair Scott Anthony; Trustee Steve Lang; and National Funeral Directors Association CEO Christine Pepper, CAE – sifted through several dozen qualified candidates.

“We were looking for someone who could be the ‘face’ of the foundation; someone who would challenge the organization and its trustee board to more than double its endowment and fulfill

its mission of being a catalyst for positive change in the death care profession,” said Creedy.

“Kathy has the strong leadership skills, excellent interpersonal and communication skills, exceptional experience in fund raising and a wonderful passion for our cause to be a key element in the future growth and development of the Funeral Service Foundation,” Myers added.

The decision was unanimous to recommend Wisnefski as the new executive director. “Personally, I am excited and energized by this choice,” Creedy offered. “I believe more than ever, with Kathy at the helm, that the Foundation will achieve its true potential as a positive force in the death care profession.”

About the Funeral Service Foundation
The Funeral Service Foundation, through grants, scholarships and research initiatives, supports career and professional development in funeral service, the advancement of funeral service and allied professions, public awareness and education, and the improvement of children's lives. For more information, visit www.funeralservicefoundation.org.

ASD Promotes Training Specialist Juan Silva As New Graphic Designer

Media, PA—**ASD – Answering Service for Directors** is excited to welcome Juan Silva to their talented marketing team. Juan has been with ASD since September 2009 and was recently promoted from his position as a Training Call Specialist to a Graphic Designer position. Juan received his graphic design education from The University of the Arts in Philadelphia, PA while working part time at ASD.



Juan was a natural choice for the position because of his exemplary performance as an ASD Call Specialist. Over the past three years, his compassionate phone demeanor, strong attention to detail and proven reliability did not go unnoticed by ASD's Operations team, who promoted Juan to Training Specialist position last year. Juan trained many of ASD's Call Specialists, which requires excellent communication skills, patience and dedication. Juan is also one of ASD's bilingual staff members and has assisted countless Spanish-speaking callers.

"Coming to ASD's sales department as a graphic designer is great," Juan says. "It allows me to contribute to ASD's already existing success by doing something that I love, and I will still be available to assist callers, which is something I also love doing."

Juan's years of experience taking calls gives him a depth of understanding that will translate well in ASD's marketing. For many business, filling an open position is as simple as putting out a Wanted Ad, but for ASD it is essential that all employees are familiar with the company's core base. Juan's background in the ASD call center will help shape his graphic design work. This type of cross training is common throughout every department at ASD. During busier times, management, sales and finance employees assist callers to provide an extra layer of support.

More than 100 people work for ASD, and every employee with the right skill set is trained to answer calls. This "all-hands-on-deck" approach creates a strong, team environment and ensures that the office works as a collective whole to provide highest quality of service. This is possible because employees who were hired from within make up a large number of advanced positions. ASD believes in rewarding proven talent, so it's no surprise that many of their long-standing employees began working for the company as a part-time job and have since made ASD their career. Juan will be an asset to both ASD's sales and operations teams for his ability to shift gears between graphic design work and professionally handling calls.

"Whether you tour our facility in person or speak with our staff over the phone, you will immediately feel a sense of my family's dedication to both funeral clients and ASD staff. Juan has proven himself as compassionate, professional and reliable team member, time and time again for the last three years of call handling," says ASD Family Member Owner Kevin Czachor. "He now will

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showcase his talents for graphic design, while allowing for even more impressive call handling depth. You will see Juan's ideas and images come to fruition in the near future."

ABOUT ASD

ASD is the leader in answering services and call support for funeral professionals. Family owned and operated, ASD blends state-of-the-art technology with an experienced team of knowledgeable call specialists that possess a high level of understanding of the funeral process. The company's intensive training programs ensures that the potential value of every call is recognized and communicated to directors in the most cost efficient way. ASD's innovative technology, custom-built systems and call support expertise have made it a national leader in the death care profession. Headquartered in Media, Pennsylvania, ASD offers comprehensive answering services for funeral homes and funeral related businesses of all sizes. For more information, visit myASD.com or call 1-800-868-9950.

Bob Byrd's Interesting Story (Cont.)

(Continued from page 23)

Unfortunately, he landed on the family dog, which ran into the street. A car swerved to miss the dog and smashed the police cruiser. Meanwhile, the fire spread from the drapes and was engulfing the wall. Neighbors had called the fire department. As the fire department approached, an overzealous fireman began raising the ladder. The ladder snagged the power and phone lines. This interrupted both services for ten blocks.

Time passed. The men came home from the hospital. The house was rebuilt. The police got a new car.

One year later, the couple were watching TV when the weather man predicted a freeze overnight. The man asked his wife if she wanted him to bring the plants in the house for the night. Her mind snapped and she shot her husband.



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Mortuary Muse -By Lowell

In the last issue of **The Dead Beat** I commented about the fact that some people simply do not want to attend social functions where they are uncomfortable. Perhaps that realization has something to do with the increase of "no service" dispositions rather than the idea of services not being necessary, meaningful or personalized.

Yet on the other hand people who seem to avoid face-to-face social contact may bear their soul on Facebook or other social media. Relating things about themselves or others that they simply would not say face-to-face. Is it because they are more comfortable with this virtual relationship?

Perhaps in order to sell funeral service we may need to have a virtual service. It is not new to have funerals streaming online for people who can't attend. Maybe there is another opportunity to provide service if we come up with a virtual service similar to a video/computer game technology.

For the purpose of this exercise, we will have to pretend that virtually every location, event or personality is eligible for licensure by funeral home or a supplier.

For example, the deceased is a ball fan, you want to have it at Ranger Stadium. The service would take place in the virtual stadium. Family data would enable them to be placed at the funeral in whatever location they prefer, i.e. dugout, cen-

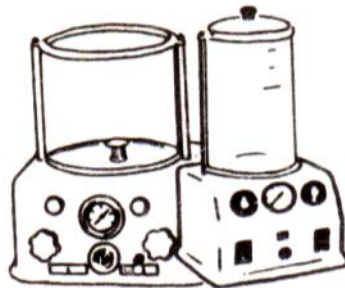
ter field, certain seating section. The deceased would be placed in the casket of choice and selected flower arrangements would be displayed around the casket. The casket location may be home base. As far as the service itself is concerned, they could have any minister, famous or not, any musicians, any casket bearers, any kind of hearse. The possibilities are endless.

The time frame would be based on the collection of data and implementation of the putting all the parts together like any virtual environment. After it is completed, then they could decide when they would like to view it, possibly meet at a location or view it alone on their computer. It would be the funeral of theirs or the deceased's dreams and the social contact would be minimal if that is a problem.

Is this virtual funeral, the funeral of the future and the actual disposition of the body inconsequential? Whether it is cremation, burial or whatever, the body would not be required? Is that what people really want?

Or do we really need that body present and the social gathering and support of friends and loved ones? Why have funerals existed as long as they have? What happens when computers, internet, electricity are missing, if funerals were all electronic?

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Portability, the Great Equalizer

By Jim Ashley, CPA

Funeral Directors can often receive questions from families outside of their comfort level. One such question might be, *"Do we need to worry about filing and paying estate or death taxes?"* The amount of regulations the funeral industry must adhere to is demanding enough to be able to answer a question like this. Your duty is to recommend qualified tax professionals to the families. Much like the funeral industry, the income and estate tax realms are constantly under revision. There have been many updates and changes over the previous two years, and there will continue to be changes in this arena. One of the most significant updates has been the addition of "portability" within estate planning.

After ten years of speculation as to whether estate taxes would actually be repealed in 2010, on December 17, 2010, Congress finally acted. The resulting legislation gave an unprecedented choice for executors of the estates for decedents passing in 2010. It preserved estate tax repeal with modified carryover basis for those who so elected or, by default, an individual's estate would be subject to estate tax, but was allowed a \$5 million exemption, a top rate of 35% and a basis adjustment to fair market value (FMV) at date of death.

This legislation, entitled "The Tax Relief, Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization, and Job Creation Act of 2010" also established estate tax law effective for 2011 and 2012. However in addition to the \$5 million exemption, the 35% top rate and the basis adjustment, the surviving spouse of a person who dies after 2010 may be eligible for an even greater exclusion amount. To paraphrase the Committee Report: For the first time...the surviving spouse's exclusion amount may be increased by the portion of the predeceased spouse's exclusion that remained unused upon the first spouse's death. With this "portability," the surviving spouse may, during his life or at death, use his or her exclusion, augmented by such predeceased spouse's unused exclusion.

Conceivably, a married couple could then transfer, by gift or bequest, up to \$10 million (\$5 million each) free of gift or estate tax. This is great news for farmers, business owners and heirs in waiting.

The Committee Report goes on to cite the reasons for change: "Without this portability provision, spouses are often required to re-title assets into each spouse's separate name and create complex trusts in order to allow the first spouse to die to take full advantage of his or her exclusion."

From the practitioner's point of view, this allows equitable treatment for those who failed to plan or did not recognize the need to plan. Business owners, too busy to develop an estate plan or farm fami-



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lies whose land has appreciated beyond their wildest expectations often struggled to pay estate taxes. Portability affords these families a second chance to salvage the business.

Portability, however, is not a license to procrastinate. It applies to calendar years 2011 and 2012, and may or may not be extended beyond those years. Furthermore, an election must be made by the executor of the estate of the first spouse to die. The election is made on a timely filed estate tax return (including extension) for the estate of the predeceased spouse. An estate tax return is due nine months after the date of death and can be extended for an additional six months.

For example: If the first spouse died on July 1, 2011, with a \$3 million dollar estate, under current law, his or her executor would not have been required to file an estate tax return since the estate is less than \$5 million. To keep the family's options open, though, the executor could extend the estate tax return until Oct 1, 2012. As October approaches, the executor could decide whether the election to preserve the "unused" exclusion amount (\$2 million) for the second spouse is worthwhile. Also, by that point in time, if Congress acts, one would hope to know if this strategy is viable past the current 2 year window.

In summary:

1. Don't procrastinate. Engage a knowledgeable accountant or attorney to as-

(Continued on page 29)

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SIX SUHOR LOCATIONS HONORED WITH 110% CLUB AWARDS FROM WILBERT FUNERAL SERVICES, INC.

Overland Park, KS, 2/13/12 – Six manufacturing locations in the Suhor Industries, Inc. network were recently honored at the Wilbert Funeral Services, Inc. (WFSI) National Sales Meeting as recipients of the Wilbert 110% Club Award, given to licensees who achieve a year-over-year growth of at least 10%.

“When one applies extraordinary effort, it’s often said that he or she gave 110%,” said Mark Klingenberger, Vice-President Sales & Marketing, WFSI. “This award recognizes those efforts.”

Award recipients were: Commerce City, Colorado, Plant Manager Shawn Thompson; Rolla, Missouri, Regional Marketing Manager DJ Roshan, Plant Manager Pat Perry; Shreveport, Louisiana, Plant Manager Steve Alexander, Regional Marketing Manager Brian Lambert; San Antonio, Texas, Plant Manager Wayne San-



DJ Roshan



Debbie Fleming

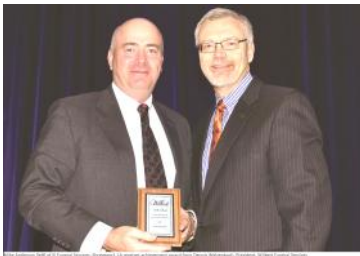
our people and our company.”

Suhor Industries, Inc. has been in the funeral industry business since 1933 starting in Kansas City, Missouri. Suhor operates manufacturing and warehouse locations in Arkansas, Colorado, Kansas, Louisiana,



Sly Jackson

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Michael Anderson

honored to have received these awards from Wilbert Funeral Services, Inc.,” said Joe Suhor, Chairman/CEO, Suhor Industries. “The 110% Club Award recognizes the fine efforts of the SI team. This achievement also demonstrates the confidence our customers have in

nipoli, Regional Marketing Manager Eddie Bierschwald; Girard, Pennsylvania, Plant Manager Sharon Olesnanik, Regional Marketing Manager Debbie Fleming; and Tulsa, Oklahoma, Plant Manager Matt Beal, Regional Marketing Manager Matt Stewart.

“We are extremely pleased and



Roy Lance

Portability, the Great Equalizer (Cont.)

(Continued from page 28)

sess the family’s options with respect to estates of decedents passing in 2011 or 2012.

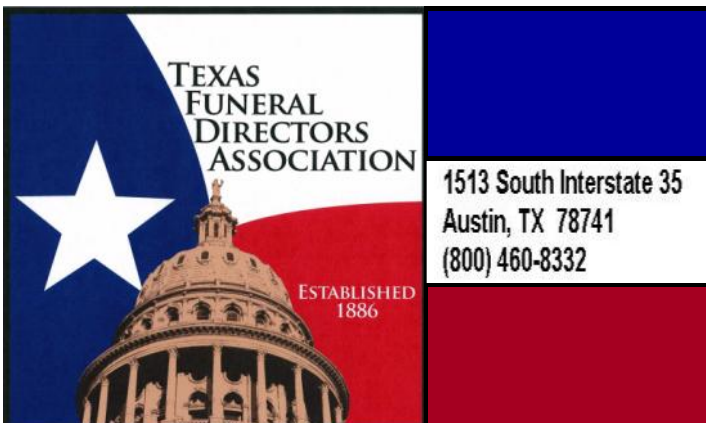
2. With any sizable estate, keep all options open for as long as possible. Request an extension to file an estate tax return, even if one is not required.

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About the Author: Jim Ashley provides tax, accounting and consulting services for individuals and closely held businesses with a special emphasis on funeral homes. His experience includes eight years of finding tax solutions for small businesses in the service and retail industries. Jim is a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, Missouri Society of Certified Public Accountants and Missouri Funeral Directors and Embalmers Association.





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