

The Dead Beat



The Caregiver's Soapbox



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

Volume 15

www.thedead-beat.com

Issue 6

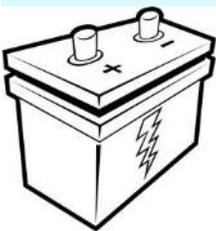
Batteries

By Phillip Pugh

Yesterday, for whatever reason, I decided to try to get my '87 Chevy started. It's been sitting in the drive for several months. Of course after sitting that long the battery was dead. I had two extra batteries to try to jump it with, but they didn't do it. I ended getting a new longer jumper cable so I could use my pickup battery. Sure enough with a fully charged battery and new heavy cables the engine would finally turn over. After a few cranks surprisingly the engine started. (not to get into politics, but it is a Chevy).



The battery in the car hadn't been used since June and two spares had only occasionally been hooked up to a trickle charger. But the battery in my truck is used and charged fully every day.



Our spiritual life is like the car batteries. Only used occasionally or sitting idle six months at a time, it will fail when you need it. Whatever else our Sunday morning service is, it is at least a chance to recharge our spiritual batteries. The song service, communion, preaching and fellowship all contribute. But like my truck, our spiritual lives thrive even better with daily spiritual nourishment.

(Editor Comment: Phillip Pugh, Lowell Pugh's (publisher) son wrote this church communion meditation, that was great in reference to our spiritual life, but the thoughts he expressed also could be applied to everything we do including our funeral business. What recharging are you giving to all aspects of your lives-spiritual, emotional and even, business?)



Other Articles in this Issue



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CFDA Executive Director John F. Cascio and
CFDA President Robert L. Muccino Jr.
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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.



Amy Howard



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Mortuary Muse By Lowell

The Departure of the Traditional Funeral!!!!.... Wait, Wait .. When did it Arrive? Or uhhh whose Traditional funeral?

Look to history? Good luck! I have several Bible translations—I've even read a couple of them.

Well, there is a lot about death but traditional funeral details are pretty sketchy. Most of the examples are the elite or the dirt poor. There is mention of a few cave burials (entombment), some embalming, storage and transportation.

On-site battlefield cremations were big as were sea burials. Probably the most common words said over the victims was Shoo! Directed at the birds and jackels.

"The History of American Funeral Directing" by Habenstein and Lamers, 1965, (Belfin Printers, Milwaukee) is about the same size as a Bible (I read it also) and is filled with about every known death care activity in recorded history until the mid-twentieth century. All of these events rolled like a river of molasses to eventually form a different traditional service unique for every time or socio-economic niche in society. Recorded but still hard to quantify. Bored and boring, but try this scenario.

The woolly mammoth hunt went badly! Flatnog looked down sadly—down at what was left of his friend Slofoot. Flatnog shook his head and with quivering voice spoke, "Alas poor Slofoot—I knew him well." Thus was born the

first spoken eulogy. The first celebration of life occurred when Slofoot's hunting mates returned to the cave dwelling and they divided up his food, tools and females. It is said there may have been a little tension during the latter.

Then Vinnie the archivist painted the whole episode on the cave walls and we had the first written obituary. Well, it could have happened that way.

Fifty plus years ago an older close friend had returned home from attending funerals in Kansas City and Tulsa. He commented that the new crop of ministers did not mention the deceased person's name. He wasn't always sure he was at the right funeral.

Thirty years later, a young minister was about to officiate at his first funeral service—a graveside committal service. He gave me his prayer/service book and pointed out three different services while asking me which he should use: I read through them and told him they were all fine. Wrong phrase! He read all three of them. And there weren't any blank spaces to insert a name.

The de-personalized services mentioned by my friend fifty plus years ago was about the time J. Mitford's book was being read for the first time. Obviously, "Traditional" change was already on the march to the past. Of course, there will likely always be a segment of society that will choose whatever a traditional casketed burial will be in the future. Personaliza-

(Continued on page 24)

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

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Connecticut Funeral Directors Association's John Cascio Honored with the 2017 Brass Apple from National Organization



PICTURED with the Council of Funeral Association Executives' 2017 Brass Apple Trophy (left to right): CFDA Executive Director John F. Cascio and CFDA President Robert L. Muccino Jr.

HARTFORD, CONN., January 26, 2017 – John F. Cascio, the Executive Director of the Connecticut Funeral Directors Association (CFDA), is the 2017 recipient of the Brass Apple Award, presented by the Council of Funeral Association Executives (CFAE). Cascio was recognized by his peers across the U.S. at the organization's annual meeting in Florida.

Cascio, a Wethersfield, Conn. resident, was honored for his presentation of the Connecticut Funeral Directors Association's ongoing public relations & communications plan, whose strategies and actions are developed and managed by Laura Soll Public Relations, LLC of Windsor.

The Connecticut Funeral Directors Association (CFDA) is comprised of funeral directors at more than 220 funeral homes. The 2017 Officers and Executive Committee elections were held during the association's 128th Annual Convention in December.

Founded in 1889, the Wethersfield-based association is committed to the promotion and advocacy of high ethical standards in funeral service. This includes the development and presentation of ongoing professional training opportunities for practitioners and educational programs for association members and the public.

For more information about the Connecticut Funeral Directors Association, call 860-721-0234 or 800-919-2332, or visit www.ctfda.org or Connecticut Funeral Directors Association.

Texas Funeral Director Wins the "Funeral Director of the Year" American Funeral Director Recognizes Velma Sue De Leon with Prestigious Award

WALL, N.J. – American Funeral Director magazine recently announced that Velma Sue De Leon has won its 2016 Funeral Director of the Year award.

De Leon and her husband Leon are founders and owners of Memorial Funeral Home, which has locations in San Juan and Edinburg, Texas. She was selected because of her efforts on behalf of the communities she serves, as well as her innovative approach to running and growing her business.

She is profiled in the December issue of the magazine and was on hand to receive her award at the Eleventh Annual Funeral Service Business Plan Conference, which was held in New Orleans in early December.

De Leon, 59, has been a licensed funeral director since 1991. She now operates two funeral homes, an event center, a flower shop, a cremation facility and a pet funeral home and crematory.

De Leon was selected from among nominations from funeral directors from throughout the country, said Allison Sullivan, publisher of Kates-Boylston Publications, the company that publishes American Funeral Director, a nationwide magazine that has been helping funeral professionals succeed and serve since 1877.

"Mrs. De Leon's commitment to the communities she serves embodies what the funeral profession is all about," Sullivan said. "The De Leon's support for education and the people of Rio Grande Valley is impressive."

Judging criteria for the award included: business successes, challenges overcome, client relations and community involvement.



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.



Behind the Back Fence

By Lowell

The avocation of death care would be much easier to write about if we would accept some contractions or acronyms or universal terms. Short ones!

Personalization and memorialization may be at the heart of what we do, but the words are awkward when used repeatedly.

Professional, professional, professional—we are all professionals. Death care professionals, professional funeral directors, funeral service professionals, pre-need professionals, insurance professionals, cremation professionals or cremationist professions—Cremationist? What happened to the Burialist? Oh right, that used to be the Terrain excavator or restoration professional—once known as grave digger.

Academics, licensing laws, CEU's and specialty certifications aside—in the end the satisfied client decides who and what is professional and what is professional conduct. After 66 years since I was an apprentice—I'm willing to settle for mortician or undertaker.

With the decline in traditional fu-

nerals—Funeral director may become obsolete.

I know the advertising people insist that the vilifying political attack ads work. But I wish that those who buy them and those who produce them would first have to sit through about a year's worth of "Mr. Rogers Neighborhood" reruns. And then pass a test. I don't believe I have ever heard of so many upset children during and after an election.

Fetal Tissue Burial or Cremation

If the Texas law requiring burial or cremation of fetal tissue stands, several other states are bound to try similar legislation. If this law is replicated in other states also without a measure to compensate the providers of the cremation or burial services, things may not go well.

Privatizing of Veterans Burial Space

It appears we are destined to have continuing wars for several more lifetimes. With a never-ending line of veterans deserving medical and burial benefits, other options may be

in order. As federal and state VA cemeteries begin to fill perhaps private cemeteries could be funded to develop veterans-only sections which in turn would prove more convenient for the veterans in the future and cost the government less than developing new cemeteries.



The Untold Story... Tell It Now

It is not possible to be in death care very long without experiencing many stories that should be told—but are kept locked up in the teller's memory. A lot of readers must be saving these stories for their book. Well, that is great if you ever get around to it. Even if you do write a book you need some practice, so share a chapter with "The Dead Beat" readers. And you Texas folks send one to Alice Adams for the "Texas Director" too.



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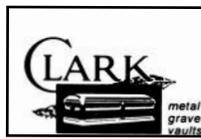
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About the Author:

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

After-Thoughts *By Joanne Howard*

Excerpt from "For Good" by Stephen Schwartz

".....I've heard it said
That people come into our lives for a reason
Bringing something we must learn
And we are led
To those who help us most to grow
If we let them
And we help them in return
Well, I don't know if I believe that's true
But I know I'm who I am today
Because I knew you....

Like a comet pulled from orbit
As it passes a sun
Like a stream that meets a boulder
Halfway through the wood
Who can say if I've been changed for the better?
But because I knew you
I have been changed for good....."

As usual, music is my connection with many things. It's just remarkable how the music seems to be able to express your thoughts so much better. I was listening to music in my car and, of course, singing along and it hit me. This is how I feel about some people.

I was listening to Kristen Chenoweth's "Coming Home" CD and the song "For Good" by Stephen Swartz. (see some lyrics above). It was talking about being around people who have changed you "For Good." Your life was better for having been with these people or at least it's been changed.

These last few months have been pretty sad after losing some people that I really cared about. One friend was such a kindred spirit that I actually knew when she died before the family had called to tell me. I assumed she was saying goodbye on her way to Heaven. Music was a great part of her life. She was a music teacher for many

years and after she retired, she directed the church adult choir and bell choir for many years until she retired again from the church musical direction. I was in the adult choir at church and learned tremendously from her. She was a very good friend and we went many places together especially out to eat. She also took care of our pets and even kept in touch with my mother when we went on trips keeping logs of the daily activities with her charges.

Besides my interactions with her, my children were also under her musical direction most of their lives. She was a great influence on them, directing musical specials and programs that they were in. She also took their deaths very hard and was a great support to me after they were gone. My husband had also been in the choir for a time and had played the organ while she was on the piano during church services for many years.

My good friend, Mary, had been a wonderful "For Good" in all of our lives. She also will be missed very much. It is sad that she's gone but we can all see her directing the heavenly choir. In truth, I was a little jealous that she got to see my girls again before me.

Now, another good friend's father and good friend of our family passed on too. I feel very sorry for their loss, but he had a connection with my youngest daughter, Laura. My husband had a computer store on Main Street and next door was a wood-working shop. Laura loved going in there to play and create.



My friend Helen's father, Charles hung out there and had many interactions with Laura. One in particular had to do with a cardboard box being a car. Laura had a great imagination. So Charles was "For Good" for Laura as he had played along with her. In fact, the family said when Charles met Laura in Heaven he'd probably ask where the cardboard box was.



So how many people have had that influence "For Good" on your lives? Isn't that the way we want to remember those in our lives by the "For Good" that they added? Don't we want to strive to be the "For Good" in people's lives that we come in contact with in our lives.

So Mary and Charles, I am sad that you are gone from our presence now. But I thank you for the "good" that you have added to mine and other lives. Thank you for the example you've given us. Until we meet again, I hope I can be "For Good" to those I touch in my life.

As the end of the song says ***"Because I knew you. I have been changed for good...."***



About the author: Joanne Howard is the editor of **The Dead Beat**. She has been a licensed funeral director since 1992 with Pugh Funeral Home in Golden City, MO and also the after-care coordinator. Much of her writing in this column is influenced by her loss of her two daughters Laura at age 10 in 1997 and Amy at age 19 in 2003. Any comments or questions can be directed to 417-537-4412, P.O. Box 145, Golden City, MO 64748 or email: jfhoward53@yahoo.com

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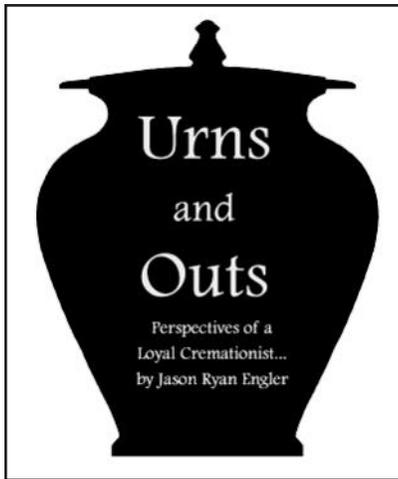
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Beginning in the 16th and 17th centuries there was a phenomenon that pervaded Europe – the understanding that, through applied science, any base metal could be turned to pure gold via the “Philosopher’s Stone.” Along this same idea was that

with the right combination of materials one could create the elixir of life – the fountain of youth that would allow the person who drinks it to live and never die. Alchemy, it was called, and was practiced by any number of alchemists in Europe, Asia, and Egypt.

Of course the fact of turning any material into something better was a highly contested practice and was often compared to witchcraft. Yet philosophically many religions taught just that very basic belief: the soul is a sort of alchemy in which, through teaching and wisdom, could become something better than it was; thus elevating the spirit toward godliness and salvation.

Renowned psychologist Carl Jung, the originator of personality typology that many therapists use even in the present, believed that life was alchemical. Jung had a recurring dream that his house contained a separate wing, one that he had not seen, and to which he could find no access. Finally gaining entry to the part of the house that had been concealed, he discovered a secret library with countless volumes, each with symbols emblazoned on their covers and containing alchemical texts and diagrams. Upon waking, he began

studying alchemy and eventually came to the conclusion that alchemy didn’t aim to make precious materials in a physical sense, but that its aims were more of a psychological parable – which he called opus magnum. “The opus magnum,” he wrote, “had two aims: the rescue of the human soul and the salvation of the cosmos.” This was achieved through an alchemical process of the psyche toward individuation, or the evolution of the maturity of the personality.

The truth is that because we are a living and evolving species, then all things are an alchemical reaction that takes us onward and upward toward the betterment of existence. At least, that’s our hope.

Death is likewise alchemy: a transition in which the body goes from innate moving parts to inanimate matter – and more importantly, the soul, as our hope goes, becomes something better than it was. As funeral practitioners we aide the body toward purification, whether by fluid or by fire; scientific processes that promote the health of the living. Additionally, we know the psychological advancement that comes with the grieving process, the healing that we are able to promote through proper services and memorialization.

We face alchemy every day – whether it is in something we do to better society or ourselves. We move forward in our careers and in our dealings with others, constantly striving to be better than we were before. We make dreaded or hopeful changes. We educate, encourage, always moving onward. Upward.

Life is alchemy. When we do our part to promote and encourage the betterment of society and mankind, we are indeed rescuing the human soul. We are aiding in the salvation of the cosmos. We are becoming better human beings.

That’s my perspective...

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Jason Ryan Engler is a licensed funeral director and serves as “The Cremation Historian” for both the Cremation Association of North America and the National Museum of Funeral History. He is a frequent contributor to deathcare publications and speaks about cremation and its history to funeral, cemetery, and cremation trade associations. He is the urn buyer for Service Corporation International, and resides in Houston, Texas, with his miniature dachshund, Otto.

All Alone

By Ken Doka

When Carla shared how alone she felt, I was puzzled. Carla had a loving husband and two young children she adored. She juggled her career as a teacher with her children's sports. She and her husband had an active social life.

Yet, to Carla, the loss of her mom made her feel alone. As she explained, I understood. Carla and her mom spoke daily and even worked in the same school district. Carla's mom was always there whether she needed a recipe, help with the children or advice about clothes. They were best friends. So when her mom died, Carla felt, for the first time, very alone.

As humans, we are not meant to be alone. We are social creatures. We form strong, powerful attachments. Sometimes a loss makes us feel alone, even when we are in the midst of loving others. Some losses—whether it is a parent, child, spouse or friend—make us feel particularly vulnerable and alone. Loneliness is one of the more difficult problems we face in grief.

Rhianna felt she had to learn everything anew when her husband died. Cooking for one, watching television alone, even sleeping without her spouse of 50 plus years, seemed like a new, uncomfortable experience. She too now felt very alone.

We often associate a range of emotions with grief, such as sadness, anger, guilt. Loneliness is also one of those emotions. Yet loneliness is more than a feeling, it involves a reorientation of our behavior—of how we live.

Recognizing and acknowledging that loneliness is part of the grieving

process is an important step. But it is only a first step.

It is important to validate our loneliness, to acknowledge that the changes in our life are uncomfortable and that we miss someone who was important to us. We begin by recognizing the void in our life.

We now have to find ways to fill that void. We can begin by thinking about the times that the loneliness overwhelms us. For Rhianna, it was dinner time. Once she realized that, she began to find ways to fill that time. She was receptive to the open invitations from her son and daughter. In fact, it even gave her a sense of meaning to help her daughter and daughter-in-law prepare dinner and ready the children for bed. Other nights she invited some of her friends to join her at home. Some nights she ate at a local diner, soon joining a group of "regulars" who frequented the restaurant. Soon, she said, she looked forward to the rare quiet dinners where she ate alone.

Still, there were times that she deeply missed dining with her husband—even sharing these new experiences with him.

That too is part of the grieving experience. We never get over our loss. One grieving mother once told me that the death of her daughter left an empty space in her. She said, "I have become good at finding ways to fill that space. But the space remains empty."

Grief is like that—a journey that continues. Yet there is one comforting truth. We do not need to journey

alone.

This article was originally printed in *Journeys: A Newsletter to Help in Bereavement*, published by Hospice Foundation of America. More information about *Journeys* can be found at www.hospicefoundation.org or by calling 800-854-3402 and is published monthly by the Hospice Foundation of America, 1710 Rhode Island Ave, NW Suite 400, Washington, DC 20036. Annual subscription-\$25.00.



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

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

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Chuckles

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

Joke sent by reader:

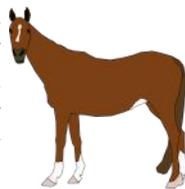
The Will

Doug Smith is on his deathbed and knows the end is near. His nurse, his wife, his daughter and two sons, are with him. He asks for two witnesses to be present and a camcorder be in a place to record his last wishes, and when all is ready he begins to speak: "My son Bernie, I want you to take the Mayfair houses." "My daughter Sybil, you take the apartments over in the east end." "My son Jamie, I want you to take the offices over in the City Center." Sarah, my dear wife, please take all the residential buildings on the banks of the river." The nurse and witnesses are blown away as they did not realize his extensive holdings, and as Doug slips away, the nurse says, "Mrs. Smith, your husband must have been such a hard-working man to have accumulated all this property." The wife replies, "The bum had a paper route."

Why Worry

In life there are two things to worry about: either you are well or you are sick. If you are well then there is nothing to worry about, but if you are sick there are only two things to worry about: either you get well or die. If you get well then there is nothing to worry about. But if you die there are only two things to worry about: either you will go to heaven or to hell. If you go to heaven there is nothing to worry about. But if you go to hell, you'll be so busy shaking hands with friends you won't have time to worry.

An out-of-towner drove his car into a ditch in a desolate area. Luckily, a local farmer came to help with his strong horse named Buddy. He hitched Buddy up to the car and yelled, "Pull, Nellie, pull!" Buddy didn't move. Then the farmer hollered, "Pull, Buster, pull!" Buddy didn't respond. Once more the farmer commanded, "Pull, Coco!" Nothing. Then the farmer nonchalantly said, "Pull, Buddy, pull!" and the horse easily dragged the car out of the ditch. The motorist was most appreciative and very curious. He asked the farmer why he called his horse by the wrong name three times. "Well,..., Buddy is blind and if he thought he was the only one pulling, he wouldn't even try!"



A husband is at home watching a football game when his wife interrupts, "Honey, could you fix the light in the hallway? Its been flickering for weeks now." He looks at her and says angrily, "Fix the light? Now? Does it look like I

Comments

From Texas Director—Dec., 2016

"TFDA Congratulates: Robert L. "Robby" Bates, CFSP,CCO, on the debut of his new column, "Ducks in a Row" in The Dead Beat magazine. Robby's first column, "Why Not Mentor and Hire Our Own" discusses and describes how to assure quality performance of future employees. If you aren't reading The Dead Beat, along with your monthly Texas Director, give yourself a holiday treat. Great job, Robby!"

We are fans at our funeral home. How do we get it delivered?

Funeraria del Angel Greer Wilson Chapel

Feel free to share comments and thoughts to the editor at editor@thedeat-beat.com or mail to The Dead Beat, PO Box 145, Golden City, MO 64748.

Chuckles (Cont.)

have a G.E. logo printed on my forehead? I don't think so."

"Well, then could you fix the fridge door? It won't close right." To which he replied, "Fix the fridge door? Does it look like I have Westinghouse written on my forehead? I don't think so." "Fine," she says, "Then could you at lease fix the steps to the front door? They're about to break." "I'm not a carpenter and I don't want to fix the steps," he



says. "Does it look like I have Ace Hardware written on my forehead? I've had enough of you, I'm going to the bar!" so he goes to the bar and drinks for a couple hours.

He starts to feel guilty about how he treated his wife, and decides to go home and as he walks into the house, he notices the steps are already fixed.

As he enters the house, he sees the hall light is working. As he goes to get a beer he notices the fridge door is fixed. "Honey, how'd this all get fixed?" She said, "Well, when you left, I sat outside and cried. Just then a nice young man asked me what was wrong, and I told him. He offered to do the repairs, and all I had to do was either sleep with him or bake him a cake." He said, "So what kind of cake did you bake him?" She replied, "Hellooooo...Do you see Betty Crocker written on my forehead?"

A little three-year-old boy is sitting on the toilet. His mother thinks he has been in there too long. So she goes in to see what's up. The little boy is sitting on the toilet reading a book. But about every 10 seconds or so he puts the book down, grips onto the toilet seat with his left hand and hits himself on top of the head with his right hand. His mother says: "Billy, are you all right? You've been in here for awhile..." Billy says, "I'm fine, Mommy... I just haven't gone 'doody' yet." Mother says, "Ok, you can stay here a few more minutes, but Billy, why are you hitting yourself on the head? Billy says, "Works for ketch-



(Continued on page 11)

Chuckles (Cont.)

up.”

A dentist noticed that his next patient, a little old lady, was nervous, so he decided to tell her a little joke as he put on his gloves... “Do you know how they make these gloves?” he asked. “No, I don’t,” she replied. “Well,” he spoofed, “there’s a building in Canada with a big tank of latex, and workers of all hand sizes walk up to the tank, dip in their hands, let them dry, then peel off the gloves and throw them into boxes of the right size.” She didn’t crack a smile. “Oh, well, I tried,” he thought. But five minutes later, during a delicate portion of the procedure, she burst out laughing. “What’s so funny?” he asked. “I was just envisioning how condoms are made!”



A pious man who had reached the age of 105 suddenly stopped going to synagogue. Alarmed by the old fellow’s absence after so many years of faithful attendance the Rabbi went to see him. He found him in excellent health, so the Rabbi asked, “How come after all these years we don’t see you at services anymore?” The old man looked around and lowered his voice. “I’ll tell you Rabbi,” he whispered. “When I got to be 90, I expected God to take me any day. But then I got to be 95, then 100, then 105. So I figured that God is very busy and must’ve forgotten about me, and I don’t want to remind Him!”



Four guys had been playing golf every week for five years. Three were pretty good, while one just couldn’t seem to get the hang of fairway shots. On the thirteenth hole, the three of them were on the green waiting for the bad golfer to make his way up. “Say, what’s with him, anyway?” said one golfer. “You’d think he’d have the hang of it by now. And what’s with that big plastic bag he carries around!” “Are you kidding?” said another. “He keeps the divots in there. In two more months he will have torn up enough earth to resod his backyard!”

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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 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’s 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.”



Morty and Saul, are out one afternoon on a lake when their boat starts sinking. Saul the banker says to Morty, “So listen, Morty, you know I don’t swim so well.” Morty remembered how to carry another swimmer from his lifeguard class when he was just a kid. So Morty begins tugging Saul toward shore. After twenty minutes, he begins to tire. Finally about 50 feet from shore, Morty asks Saul, “So Saul, do you suppose you could float alone?” Saul replies, “Morty, this is a hell of a time to be asking for money!”





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Death Notices of Fellow Funeral Service Colleagues

PROFESSIONAL COLLEAGUE



George B. "Mike" Dodge, Jr., 86, of Cambridge, Massachusetts and Pemaquid Beach, Maine, died January 29, 2017. He was the Vice-President and Treasurer of The Dodge Company, working with his brother, Jake (Arnold) and later both daughters. His services were being directed by Sweeney Memorial Funeral Home in Billerica,

ARIZONA

Betty Ray, 96, of Phoenix, died October 25, 2016. She was the retired co-founder of Michelson & Ray in Phoenix.

COLORADO



Theodore William Kuhns, 87, of Las Animas, died Dec. 12, 2016. He joined the U.S. Navy and was assigned to the FDR Aircraft Carrier during the Korean Conflict. He graduated from Pittsburgh Institute of Mortuary Science. He worked as a licensed funeral director in Titusville, PA and Clintonville, PA before moving to Las Animas in 1974 to work for Powell Funeral Home. He later purchased the firm and renamed it Powell-Kuhns Mortuary. His arrangements were under the direction of Johnson-Romero Funeral Home.



Louis Michael "Mike" James, 74, of Wheat Ridge, died January 21, 2017. He graduated from the Dallas Institute of Mortuary Science in 1964 and began working at Howard Mortuary in Denver, Colorado. He stayed with that establishment for 44 years through its purchase by SCI in 1971, mergers with Moore Mortuary in 1976, and eventually the Olinger Mortuaries in 1987. He was licensed as a Funeral Director/Embalmer by the State of Colorado and maintained his license as a Certified Mortuary Science Practitioner. He was honored by his peers in 1998 with the Colorado Funeral Directors Association's Mentor Award for being an outstanding embalmer and teacher-mentor to others in the field. His services were handled by Olinger Crown Hill Mortuary in Wheat Ridge.

IOWA



John H. Kerns, 75, of Oelwein, Iowa died Feb. 4, 2017. He served in the U.S. Army in Germany and Turkey during the Vietnam Era. John graduated from the Milwaukee Institute of Mortuary Science in the Class of 1965. He worked as a funeral director for the Murdoch Funeral Home in Marion and the Fawcett Funeral Home in Winthrop. John moved his family to Oelwein in 1968 and joined the Brant Funeral Home. He later purchased the Brant Funeral Home in Oelwein, the Delsing-Wright Funeral Home in Maynard and the Gleim Funeral Home in Arlington. He owned and operated the funeral homes until May 1, 1987. John later worked as the public relations and entertainment director for Omaha Wilbert Vault, and Wilbert Vault of Waterloo, Fort Dodge, Mason City and West Union. He was also part owner of Zenith Casket Company in Des Moines. His services were handled by Jamison-Schmitz Funeral Home in Oelwein.

KANSAS

Frances Leota McDonald, 96, of Beloit, passed away on Jan. 10, 2017. She was the wife of Maurice Vail McDonald. They began their married life living in the former location of the McDonald Funeral Home until 1955 when they moved into the newly constructed location. In 1965 they moved to San Diego, California and returned in July, 1968 and purchased the McDonald Funeral Home from his parents and retired in 1989. She graciously shared her piano playing talent by playing for countless funerals and church services. Her arrangements were under the direction of McDonald-Roberts Funeral Home in Beloit.

MISSOURI



James J. "Jim" Buchholz, 69, of St. Louis, died Feb. 8, 2017. He was President and CEO of Buchholz Mortuaries. He worked at Buchholz Mortuary since 1969. He attended Southeast Missouri State University and the Dallas Institute of Mortuary Science. Mr. Buchholz was a member of Missouri Funeral Directors Assn. Services were directed by Buchholz Mortuaries, Inc.



Lyle Clinkingbeard, 87, of Ava, died Dec. 15, 2016. He went to St. Louis Mortuary College to receive his Embalmers and Funeral Directors Licenses. He was an Army Veteran and served in the Korean War. He was co-owner of Clinkingbeard Funeral Homes, Inc. both in Ava and Gainesville. His services were directed by Clinkingbeard Funeral Home.



O.L. (Doc) Isbell, 87, of Springfield died on Dec. 29, 2016. He served in the U.S. Army from 1951-52. After that he graduated from the College of Mortuary Science in St. Louis and was a licensed embalmer and funeral director for 62 years. He worked at Knell Mortuary, Carthage, McDaniel Funeral Home, Kennett, Landess Funeral Home, Campbell, Simpson Funeral Home, Webb City, Cotrell Funeral Service, Poplar Bluff, and became owner of Isbell-Carothers Funeral Home in El Dorado Springs. Arrangements were under the direction Landess Funeral Home Inc., Campbell.



Herman L. Kriehauser, 84, of St. Louis, died on Dec. 31, 2016. He was the Executive Vice President of Kriehauser Mortuaries for almost 25 years. His services were under the direction of Kriehauser Brothers Funeral Service.



Deborah J. Sheldon, 64, of Osceola, died December 17, 2016. She was the wife of Randy Sheldon, they operated the Sheldon-Goodrich Funeral Home in Osceola. They purchased the Booth Funeral Home in Rich Hill in 1986 and operated it for 17 years. In 1995 they established the Sheldon Funeral Home in El Dorado Springs purchasing the Brown Funeral Home and building a new location for El Dorado Springs while continuing to operate the Sheldon-Goodrich Funeral Home in Osceola who directed the funeral services.

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

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Death Notices of Fellow Funeral Service Colleagues (Cont.)

MISSOURI-Cont.



Bertha Mae "Honey" Scrivner, 90 of Versailles, passed away on Dec. 29, 2016. She was the wife of Jim Scrivner, they in Kansas City for a year while he attended mortuary school and returned to her hometown of Versailles where in January of 1952, they established the Scrivner Funeral Home in Versailles. She obtained her funeral director's license and assisted in the day to day operations of their funeral home. In the 60's they purchased the Stevenson Funeral Home and Schubert and Stefens Funeral Homes, owning funeral homes in Versailles, Stover and Russellville. Scrivner-Morrow Funeral Home directed her funeral services.



TEXAS



Delbert Bowers, 87, of Hawker Heights, died on Dec. 26, 2016. He entered the U S Army, where he served for 27 years, until his retirement in 1974 at the rank of CW4. After retirement he had a second career as a funeral director. He and his business partner William "Bill" Crawford began Crawford-Bowers Funeral Home in Killeen in 1972 and Crawford-Bowers Funeral Home in Copperas Cove in 1988. They sold the business in 1989 to Service Corporation International and Mr. Bowers remained active as a consultant until the time of his passing. Funeral Services were directed by Crawford-Bowers Funeral Homes.



Raymond Napoleon Bradshaw, 84, of Houston passed away Jan. 11, 2017. He was the father of Raymond Bradshaw of Bradshaw-Carter Memorial and Funeral Service in Houston. He served his country in the Korean War. Bradshaw-Carter Memorial and Funeral Service directed his services.



Harold George "Danny" Daniels, Jr., 83, of Abilene, passed away Dec. 12, 2016. He was the father of Hunter Daniels of Corpus Christi with the Batesville Casket Company. Services were under the direction of Piersall Funeral Directors of Abilene.



William R. "Bill" Hampton, 80, of Midlothian, passed away Dec. 26, 2016. He attended Dallas School of Mortuary Science before going to work at the family funeral home Hampton-Vaughn in Wichita Falls, Texas from 1960 -1962. His wife and him had another business until he moved in 2008 after retiring to help his son Randy with the family business Midlothian Funeral Home who directed his services.



Fran Moreno, 60, of Buda passed away Dec. 25, 2016. She was a 1993 graduate of Dallas Institute of Funeral Service and worked as a licensed funeral director and embalmer in Dallas, Texas for Avalon Mortuary Service, Oak Cliff Funeral Chapel and others. She apprenticed with Patrick Huey with Laird Funeral Home in Nacogdoches, she began her career in cosmetology, but ventured into being a Funeral Director and Restoration Artist. Her services were under the direction of Angel Funeral Home in Austin.



Delbert W. Robertson, 82, of Claredon, died Jan. 26, 2017. He was a 1953 graduate of Landig College of Mortuary Science in Houston and served in the US Army near the end of the Korean War. He became a funeral director for Murphy Funeral Home for almost 10 years before obtaining a job with Blackburn-

(Continued on page 17)



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Death Notices of Fellow Funeral Service Colleagues (Cont.)

(Continued from page 15)

Shaw Funeral Directors in Amarillo in the mid 1960's. He worked for Murphy Funeral Home and then opened Clarendon Funeral Home in October 1973. In December 1973, Delbert Robertson along with Maurice Schooler and Mack Gordon, funeral directors from Amarillo, purchased Murphy Funeral Home. Murphy Funeral Home and Clarendon Funeral Home ownerships combined and the name was changed to Schooler-Gordon-Robertson Funeral Directors. In 1975, Patrick Robertson, Delbert's son, graduated from mortuary school and joined the firm. In January 1977, Delbert and Patrick bought out Schooler-Gordon and the name changed to Robertson Funeral Directors. In 1998, Delbert and Patrick opened a satellite location in Claude. In October 2003, his grandson Chuck joined the firm. The Robertson's, purchased funeral homes in McLean in 2009, Shamrock in 2011, and Memphis in 2009, and bought out their competitor in Memphis in 2015. After Patrick's death in 2014, he then became partners with his grandson, Chuck. He has been a licensed funeral director & embalmer in Texas since 1957 and was awarded as a 60 year licensee at the TFDA convention this past June. He was father of former Texas Funeral Service Commissioner, Patrick Robertson and grandfather of TFDA Secretary/Treasurer, Chuck Robertson. He has been awarded funeral director of the year 3 times by the Panhandle Funeral Directors Association for the years 1979, 1985-1986, & 2004-2005. Robertson Funeral Directors conducted his services.



Joanne Elizabeth Snyder, 50, of Bryan-College Station, passed away Dec. 24, 2016. She was a devoted and treasured part of the Callaway-Jones Funeral and Cremation Centers in Bryan-College Station. Her professional career with Callaway-Jones began in 1993 when she began working at their Rest-Ever Memorial Park Cemetery in north Bryan, and later earning a position as cemetery manager. In 2001, she also became operating manager of the Callaway-Jones Crematory where she worked loyally for over 15 years. Her services were handled by Callaway-Jones Funeral Home.



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Women in the Funeral Industry: One Challenge Stands in Their Way

By Charlie Kanet

A glance inside the classrooms at any mortuary school confirms an industry trend: women are outnumbering men in choosing a career in funeral service. Yet in the job search that follows, women candidates are not always on an equal playing field with the men. Prospective employers appreciate a woman's empathy and attention to details, admire her impressive credentials and respect her educational accomplishments. But a question often lingers in an employer's mind: Can she lift?

In 2010, women comprised 57% of the mortuary student population, an increase of more than 60% since 1995, according to NFDA. Not content to be in the front office only, these women want an active role in all aspects of funeral service, including the prep room. Katie Hill, a third-generation licensed funeral director, understands firsthand the physical demands of the job. So her company, Mortuary Lift, manufactures the Ultimate 1000 Lift™, making it possible for employers to get beyond their concern of whether or not a female candidate can lift.



“Women are often drawn to the funeral industry because of their empathy,” states company president Hill. “However, once in the profession they realize it's not just about meeting with and supporting families. It's all the additional responsibilities such as dressing bodies, lifting them onto prep tables, lifting caskets in and out of shipping trays and onto casket biers.” The Ultimate 1000 Lift™ enables a woman to carry out a full range of responsibilities singlehandedly. Not only does it broaden her ca-

pabilities, but it eliminates the need for several people to be involved in the processes.

Hill spent 10 years as a licensed funeral director at her family's funeral home. Early on, her father realized the benefits a lift would offer, not just to his daughter but to the entire staff. His search brought him to a boat hoist manufacturer who had designed a version of a hoist for funeral homes and mortuaries. Unfamiliar with the death-care industry, the manufacturer was struggling to market and sell it. So Hill's father recognized the opportunity, bought the company and its inventory and made his own lift. His daughter, Katie, managed this new venture and today she owns and operates the company, Mortuary Lift.

Hill's business has experienced annual double-digit growth, in part a reflection of women choosing funeral service as a career. “I am seeing an increase in calls from funeral home owners who say they are impressed with a woman they have interviewed and think they should have a lift to accommodate her,” says Hill. But, she points out, a lift brings efficiency to funeral homes and mausoleums, whether or not women are employed there.

“Being able to do all elements of the job is very liberating for women and allows them to compete shoulder-to-shoulder with men in the job market,” says Hill. “And a lift gives a positive answer to the question 'Can she lift?’”

See a demonstration of the Ultimate 1000 Lift™ and hear what funeral home owners say about the lift. Visit www.mortuarylift.com.

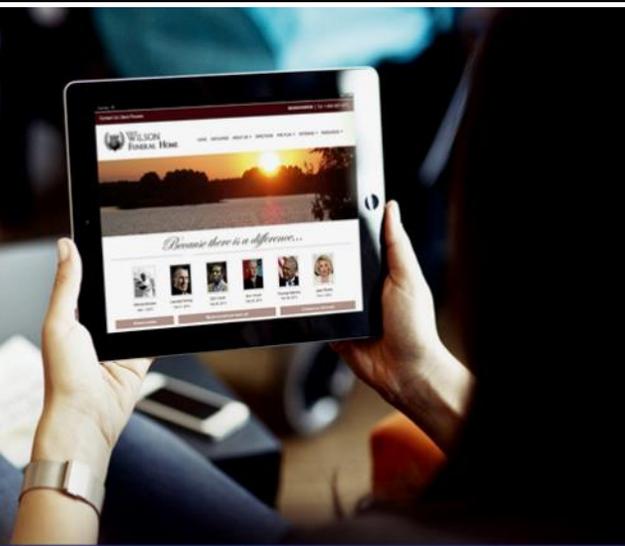


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Victoria Mortuary and Cremation Service Experienced a Fire

Victoria, TX: Adrian Fulton, owner of Victoria Mortuary and Cremations Service was asleep on his recliner Wednesday (Dec. 21, 2016) afternoon after working a 36-hour shift when he awoke to popping noises and discovered his business was on fire. He went to the north side of his business and saw fire coming from the crematorium area.

The Victoria Fire Department responded about 5:15 p.m. when heavy smoke and flames were discovered coming from the front of the structure.

Mr. Fulton was the only one inside the building at the time of the fire. He thought the fire originated in the crematorium area. There were 11 bodies inside the building, but they were accounted for and safe.

The business opened in August, 1998 and provides the funeral business community with pickup and delivery of deceased individuals as well as mortuary and cremation services.

Two vehicles inside the business were lost in the flames. The fire caused significant damage to the building. Mr. Fulton had notified all the families of the deceased and none had issues with the situation.

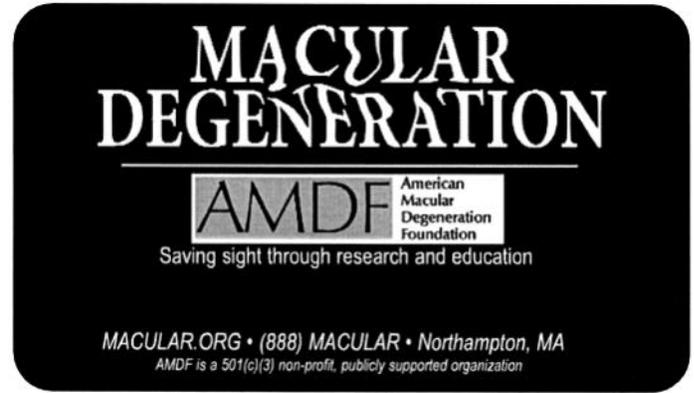
Information provided by the Victoria Advocate.

2016 NFDA Pursuit of Excellence Awards

The National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA) is pleased to announce that more than 160 funeral homes have earned the 2016 Pursuit of Excellence Award. This award is presented by NFDA annually to firms that have demonstrated a commitment to raising the bar on funeral service excellence by adhering to strict ethical and professional standards and providing outstanding service to families and communities.

“We offer our congratulations to all NFDA members that earned the 2016 Pursuit of Excellence Award,” said NFDA President Bob Arrington, CCO. “The staff of these funeral homes demonstrate their commitment to the highest professional and ethical standards every day. They have truly earned this award and we are proud to count them as member of NFDA”

“To earn an NFDA Pursuit of Excellence Award, a funeral home must demonstrate proficiency in key areas of funeral service, such as compliance with state and federal regulations; providing ongoing education and professional development opportunities for staff; offering outstanding programs and resources to bereaved families; maintaining an active level of involvement in the community; participating and actively serving in the funeral service profession; and promoting funeral home services through a variety of marketing, advertising and public relations program. Participants are also required to adhere to a Pledge of Ethical Practices.



Learn, Connect, Grow: Register Now for the 2017 NFDA Professional Women's Conference

The conference begins on Friday, April 7 with a complimentary welcome reception. Immediately following the reception is a very special event, Funeral Service Foundation: Uncorked at Arrington Vineyards, which is owned, in part, by Kix Brooks of the legendary country music group Brooks and Dunn. After learning about the vineyards, attendees will indulge in a variety of award-winning wines and delicious cheeses and desserts while enjoying live bluegrass music with friends and colleagues. A ticket is required for this event.

Attendees can look forward to engaging conference sessions led by experts covering a wide range of topics:

- ◆ General Session: Serving a Perpetrator's Family Following a Mass Shooting Event presented by Martha Thayer, program director at Arapahoe Community College
- ◆ General Session: Secret Tech Tools for Funeral Directors! presented by Beth Ziesenis, technology expert and author
- ◆ Attendees will exchange great ideas on a variety of topics with like-minded funeral professionals during the popular Powerhouse Panel Discussions

Attendees can save up to \$50 when they register on or before March 13. Attendees can register online at www.nfda.org/pwc <<http://www.nfda.org/pwc>>. On or before March 13.

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From My Purview
“Turn Your Cup Upside Down”
By Rev. Janice Hoffman

Tradition tells us that each Buddhist monk turns his water cup by his bedside upside down every night to signify that he may not wake up in the morning. What if we all lived our lives from this perspective? The truth is there is no guarantee any of us will wake up tomorrow morning. As we know, not every person will live to see tomorrow.

As a funeral minister, the most common statement I hear from families, regardless of their circumstances, is they didn't think the death of their loved one would happen so soon. Why? The obvious answer is a fear of death but is it the fear of dying or is it the fear of the unknown after death?

Common religions profess a heaven or hell experience at the time of death. Non-religious people have told me they think it is 'lights out' when they die. In recent years a growing popular belief is that we return to God, to our Creator, the Designer of all living things. I have seen first hand as a Hospice volunteer specially for veterans, there is a fair amount of fear when they are facing their last days and hours on earth.

We know that when we work with a family, they are grieving, possibly in shock. There's a

good chance they haven't slept or eaten much recently. Their state of mind is compromised at best with the plethora of decisions they need to make in a short amount of time.

Yet at an emotional level, the family may wonder, where did their loved one's spirit go? Are they happy? Relieved of their pain, and most of all, are they at peace? How can we comfort a family member who is experiencing these emotions?

Many times words are not what will make someone feel better. They just want their loved one back. What we can do is hold the space for them to feel what they are feeling, without judgment, or offering unsolicited advice. What we can do is ask the questions, "How can I best help you right now? What can I do to bring you a little comfort? I know what you are going through is hard and uncharted territory but know you are not alone. I hold the space for you now to have your sadness, your tears, maybe even your anger for what will never be. I care about you enough to just be with you, without words, so you will know you are not alone. Others have walked this path before you and will surely walk this path after you."

What if we knew whenever we lost someone that we would have this kind of support? How different would our experience of each other be if we reached out in this way when someone has lost their family member or beloved? Surely the world would be a better place. We would experience a respect for every life that includes respect for others. We'd acknowledge every breath we breathe comes from the design that God has created for our unique self, keeping His eye on our own individual time clock.



About the Author:

Ordained in 1999 as a non-denominational Christian Minister, **Reverend Janice Hoffman's** ministry

has included facilitating a Course In Miracles, leading an Attitudinal Healing support group, and hosting a guided meditation for a group that met weekly for over 13 years. Rev. Hoffman's work with mortuaries and families began in 2008. After the first funeral service Rev. Janice officiated, she had a deep awareness that honoring the life of a family's loved one was where she wanted to focus her ministry. Beginning with meeting with the family for an intake, Janice writes a custom service bringing comfort to families in shock and grief. None of us are promised tomorrow and bringing that awareness to others, fosters appreciation for those in our lives and the time we spend with them. Contact her at Janice@janicehoffman.com

Issues and Answers

By Richard S. Lee

Let's face it, the funeral business is changing on a daily basis and operating a small to medium size funeral home is becoming increasingly more challenging every year.

Over the past 25 years, I have represented over 170 owners in the sale or transfer of their funeral businesses and have also performed business valuations on another 150 or so. The vast majority of these businesses were smaller to medium size firms that performed somewhere between 40 – 125 calls annually. As any owner of a firm this size knows, they are a "challenge to operate" for many

reasons - ranging from how to staff it the most efficiently to buying versus consigning your casket inventory.

Since I do have vast experience with the smaller to medium sized firms (which represent the majority of firms in existence today), I would like to change the focus of my columns for 2017. Beginning with the next issue, I would like to start having owners and directors call, write or email me with specific questions they have or issues that they are experiencing – good or bad. The purpose will be to have a forum and the sharing of multiple owner's experiences and challenges and how they resolved

them or asking for the best way to handle a particular issue.

If owners will share their concerns and successes, then this can be a tool to help establish proper and efficient operating procedures - which are the key to having a profitable and sustainable small funeral business. The life span of the small funeral home is being challenged every year, so let's try and help each other out to remain successful.

All correspondence to me can be anonymous and will be completely confidential and no names will be used.

You may email me at Leebros@aol.com or call me at 407-257-5024.

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Richard S. Lee is the President of Lee & Associates, a firm that represents funeral home owners in the sale and transfer of their funeral businesses. Since 1987, they have been involved in over 170 transactions all over the United States. The scope of their work also includes business valuations, accounting solutions and general consulting services. **Richard is always available for questions and may be reached at 407-257-5024 or email him at Leebros@aol.com**

Creating a Newsletter Families Read

By Joe Weigel

A growing number of funeral homes are using newsletters as part of their communication arsenal. Searching for information on the Internet can be time-consuming, but e-newsletters deliver relevant information directly to the inboxes of your families. In addition, they help boost awareness, deepen engagement and offer the benefit of a guaranteed reach, unlike social media.

Here are some tips to help your newsletter stand out in a busy inbox:

1. **Make it mobile-friendly.** With more than half of email campaigns being opened on mobile devices, it is essential for your email to be mobile-friendly. In addition to a simple design, keep subject lines and content concise to increase readership and engagement.
2. **Avoid self-serving content.** Your families are interested in receiving educational, relevant and timely information. A content balance that includes 90 percent education and 10 percent self-promotion is recommended.
3. **Stick to a schedule.** When you deliver your newsletter consistently, you create an expectation of value—something your families look forward to receiving. And if your content is meaningful, they will set aside time to read it when each issue arrives.
4. **Don't spam.** This seems like a basic rule of thumb, but a high number of spam reports can land you in big trouble. To avoid penalties, send newsletters only to those people who have requested information from

you and be sure to include an opt-out button in each message.

5. **Measure your newsletter's impact.** Fortunately, it's relatively easy to measure the success of your e-newsletter. Companies like Constant Contact, Emma and Mail Chimp provide statistics following each campaign. I personally use Mail Chimp, in part because it is free.

Email newsletters are one of the easiest ways to communicate with families. However, they are one of the most difficult types of communication to get right. When successful, e-newsletters can increase engagement, boost brand awareness and drive new leads to the funeral home.



Joe Weigel is the owner of Weigel Strategic Marketing, a communications firm focused on the funeral profession that delivers expertise and results across three interrelated marketing disciplines: strategy, branding and communications.

For more information, you can visit his website at weigelstrategicmarketing.webs.com.

He also can be reached at 317-608-8914 or joseph.weigel@gmail.com

Mortuary Muse (Cont.)

(Continued from page 3)

tion, however seems to have recovered considerably through efforts of the digital world—which has brought us to the video presentation.

While digital technology enables us to enhance personalization and memorialization, it also facilitates some unintended consequences. What was once parts of a funeral service—eulogy, obituary and life celebration—can now be the complete service when presented on Facebook and wrapped around a DIRECT CREMATION.

A few issues back I suggested that with the licensing of

images: locations, celebrity speakers, sports heroes, music stars, equipment and merchandise would be possible to construct your fantasy digital funeral. Say you wanted your funeral in Yankee Stadium with a President or Mega-church TV minister, ball players for casket bearers with your body photographed in a fine casket placed at home plate, no problem. Your family could be in the dugout and the outfield would be filled with flowers, ordered online from friends. Selfies of friends would appear in the bleachers. Family and friends could view this whole extravaganza at their home, their favorite bistro or the cemetery.

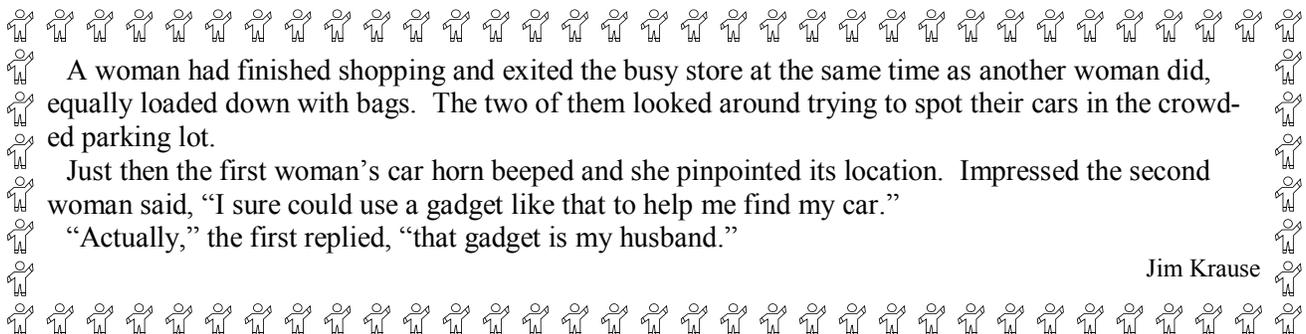
I spoke recently with the CEO of a major video tribute company, AFTER telling him about this imaginary scenario—his comment was—“In about 5 years.”

Best Excuses for Not Going to Work

- ◆ If it is all the same to you I won't be coming in to work. The voices told me to clean all the guns today.
- ◆ When I got up this morning I took two Ex-Lax in addition to my Prozac. I can't get off the john, but I feel good about it.
- ◆ I set half the clocks in my house ahead an hour and the other half back an hour Saturday and spent 18 hours in some kind of space-time continuum loop, reliving Sunday (right up until the explosion). I was able to exit the loop only by reversing the polarity of the power source exactly $e \cdot \log(\pi)$ for the clocks in the house while simultaneously rapping my dog on the snout with a rolled up New York Times. Accordingly, I will now be in late, or early.
- ◆ I have to go in for a blood transfusion...My stigmata's acting up again.
- ◆ I can't come in to work today because I'll be stalking my previous boss, who fired me for not showing up for work. OK?
- ◆ I have a rare case of 48-projectile leprosy, but I know we have that deadline to meet, so if you really want me to come in...
- ◆ I am stuck in the blood pressure machine down at the Food Giant.
- ◆ Yes, I seem to have contracted some attention-deficit disorder and, hey, how about them Skins, huh? So, I won't be able to, yes, could I help you? No, no, I'll be sticking with Sprint, but thank you for calling.
- ◆ I accidentally converted my calendar from Julian to Gregorian and lost today.
- ◆ I just found out that I was switched at birth. Legally, I shouldn't come to work knowing my employee records may now contain false information.
- ◆ The psychiatrist said it was an excellent session. He even gave me this jaw restraint so I won't bite things when I am startled.
- ◆ The dog ate my car keys and we have to hitchhike to the vet.
- ◆ Today I am compelled to remain an enigma.
- ◆ My mother-in-law has come back as one of the Undead and we must track her to her coffin to drive a stake through her heart and give her eternal peace. One day should do it.
- ◆ I can't come to work today because the EPA has determined that my house is completely surrounded by wetlands and I have to arrange for helicopter transportation.
- ◆ Constipation has made me a walking time bomb and I have to keep my back to an open window.

Anagrams

- ◆ **Presbyterian**—When you rearrange the letters:
Best in Prayer
- ◆ **Astronomer**—When you rearrange the letters:
Moon Starer
- ◆ **Desperation**—When you rearrange the letters:
A Rope Ends It
- ◆ **The Eyes**—When you rearrange the letters:
They See
- ◆ **The Morse Code**—When you rearrange the letters:
Here Come Dots
- ◆ **Slot Machines**—When you rearrange the letters:
Cash Lost in Me
- ◆ **Election Results**—When you rearrange the letters:
Lies— Let's Recount
- ◆ **Snooze Alarms**—When you rearrange the letters:
Alas! No More Z's
- ◆ **A Decimal Point**—When you rearrange the letters:
I'm a Dot in Place
- ◆ **The Earthquakes**—When you rearrange the letters:
That Queer Shake
- ◆ **Eleven Plus Two**—When you rearrange the letters:
Twelve Plus One



A woman had finished shopping and exited the busy store at the same time as another woman did, equally loaded down with bags. The two of them looked around trying to spot their cars in the crowded parking lot.

Just then the first woman's car horn beeped and she pinpointed its location. Impressed the second woman said, "I sure could use a gadget like that to help me find my car."

"Actually," the first replied, "that gadget is my husband."

Jim Krause

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The Dead Beat -The Caregivers Soapbox

Volume: **Fifteen** Issue : **Six**

Editor: *Joanne Howard*

Publisher: *Lowell Pugh and Joanne Howard*

The Dead Beat is published bi-monthly. Editorial and business offices are located at 400 Chestnut, Golden City, MO 64748. Phone (800) 575-2611

Subscriptions:

Additional copies for U.S.A. are \$24.00/ 1 year (6 issues).

For subscription, address changes, circulation, advertising assistance, write, phone or fax

The Dead Beat

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“Dear Counselor....”

By Bill Stalter

Dear Counselor,

Over the past several years, we backed away from preneed marketing because of low investment returns. With the surge in investment markets after the Presidential election, we are thinking about ramping up our preneed sales. How soon will this investment market trickle down to our preneed program?

The answer to your question depends on the funding used for your preneed. If you use depository accounts for preneed funding, it will be several years before you see interest rates that match your internal cost increases. Your preneed program investment returns are dependent upon the Federal Reserve’s interest rate hikes. The Fed has been very slow to increase interest rates. Fed watchers expect small, incremental increases when the Fed feels the economy can support higher interest rates.

If you use insurance for preneed funding, it will still likely be years before policy rates increase. Regulators set guidelines for the insurance reserves, and those guidelines favor fixed income investments. Like the banks, insurance companies will need the Fed to increase interest rates.

If you use a trust for your preneed program, the trickle down to your program could be immediate, or not at all. A preneed trust must be able to diversify into equities to benefit from the stock market climb. If you have instructed your trustee to avoid market risks, the chances are your trust will not benefit from this market. But even if you are willing to accept market risks, the ability of your trustee to diversify depends on the size of the trust. Another hurdle is whether you, or your

trustee, can provide the accounting required for a total return trust.

Most preneed trustees that provide account administration rely upon programs that use tax cost basis accounting. Tax cost accounting programs require the trust to realize income and capital gains before preneed contracts can reap any investment return.

Prior to the 2008 mortgage crisis, most preneed trusts were invested primarily in long term bonds, and thus, were income return trusts. In contrast, a total return method of accounting allocates market value changes on a periodic basis. You should ask your trustee what type of individual accounting they provide, and whether your trust can be adequately diversified to benefit from the stock market.

In conclusion, a diversified trust is the best approach to a volatile stock market and low interest



Bill Stalter answers our questions for educational purposes only. It is *The Dead Beat*’s intent to give the reader general information about legal issues, not to provide legal advice. If a reader needs legal advice, he or she should hire an attorney. Reading *The Dead Beat* should not be used as a substitute for legal advice from an attorney. When Bill provides

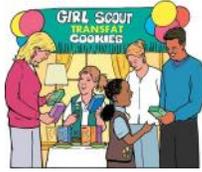
legal advice he does so for Stalter Legal Services in Overland Park, Kansas. Bill also provides consulting services through Preneed Resource Consultants, which can be found at www.prenneedresource.com.

We need some questions for the “Dear Counselor....” column. Please send your questions to Bill’s e-mail or The Dead Beat’s and we will get some answers in future issues. Email: wastal@swbell.net

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Ask, Ask, Ask

The greatest saleswoman in the world today doesn't mind if you call her a girl. That's because Markita Andrews has generated more than eighty thousand dollars selling Girl Scout cookies since she was seven years old.



Going door-to-door after school, the painfully shy Markita transformed herself into a cookie-selling dynamo when she discovered, at age 13, the secret to selling.

It starts with desire. Burning, white-hot desire.

For Markita and her mother, who worked as a waitress in New York after her husband left them when Markita was eight years old, their dream was to travel the globe. "I'll work hard to make enough money to send you to college," her mother said one day. "You'll go to college and when you graduate, you'll make enough money to take you and me around the world. Okay?"

So at age 13 when Markita read in her Girl Scout magazine that the Scout who sold the most cookies would win an all-expenses-paid trip for two around the world, she decided to sell all the Girl Scout cookies she could—more Girl Scout cookies than anyone in the world, ever.

But desire alone is not enough. To make her dream come true, Markita knew she needed a plan.

"Always wear your right outfit, your professional garb," her aunt advised. "When you are doing business, dress like you are doing business. Wear your Girl Scout uniform. When you go up to people in their tenement building at 4:30 or 6:30 and especially on Friday night, ask for a big order. Always smile, whether they buy or not, always be nice. And don't ask them to buy your cookies; ask them to invest."



Lots of other Scouts may have wanted that trip around the world. Lots of other Scouts may have had a plan. But only Markita went off in her uniform each day after school, ready to ask—and keep asking—folks to invest in her dream. "Hi, I have a dream. I'm earning a trip around the world for me and my mom by merchandising Girl Scout cookies," she'd say at the door. "Would you like to invest in one dozen or two dozen boxes of cookies?"

Markita sold 3,526 boxes of Girl Scout cookies that year and won her trip around the world. Since then, she has sold more than 42,000 boxes of Girl Scout cookies, spoken at sales conventions across the country, starred in a Disney movie about her adventure and has co-authored the best seller, "How to Sell More Cookies, Condos, Cadillacs,



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Markita is no smarter and no more extroverted than thousands of other people, young and old, with dreams of their own. The difference is Markita had discovered the secret of selling: Ask, Ask, Ask! Many people fail before they even begin because they fail to ask for what they want. The fear of rejection leads many of us to reject ourselves and our dreams long before anyone else ever has the chance—no matter what we're selling.

And everyone is selling something. "You're selling yourself everyday—in school. To your boss, to new people you meet," said Markita at 14. "My mother is a waitress; she sells the daily special. Mayors and presidents trying to get votes are selling... I see selling everywhere I look. Selling is part of the whole world."



It takes courage to ask for what you want. Courage is not the absence of fear. It's doing what it takes despite one's fear. And, as Markita has discovered, the more you ask, the easier (and more fun) it gets.

Once, on live TV, the producer decided to give Markita her toughest selling challenge. Markita was asked to sell Girl Scout cookies to another guest on the show. "Would you like to invest in one dozen or two dozen

(Continued on page 29)

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Ask, Ask, Ask (Cont.)

(Continued from page 28)

boxes of Girl Scout cookies?" she asked.

"Girl Scout cookies? I don't buy any Girl Scout cookies!" he replied. I'm a Federal Penitentiary warden. I put 2,000 rapists, robbers, criminals, muggers and child abusers to bed every night"



Unruffled, Markita, quickly countered, "Mister, if you take some of these cookies, maybe you won't be so mean and angry and evil. And, Mister, I think it would be a good idea for you to take some of these cookies back for every one of your 2,000 prisoners, too."

Markita asked.

The Warden wrote a check.

(Editor Note: Article sent to me in 2000 and took place in 1980's)

Why Worry????

In life there are two things to worry about; either you are well or you are sick. If you are well then there is nothing to worry about, but if you are sick there are only two things to worry about; either you get well or you die.



If you get well then there is nothing to worry about. But if you die there are only two things to worry about; either you get to heaven or to hell.



If you go to heaven then there is nothing to worry about. But if you go to hell, you'll be so busy shaking hands with friends you won't have time to worry.



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Watch the Wilbert ESP video: wilbert.hmsbox.com/esp



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The Dead Beat -The Caregivers Soapbox
 Volume: **Fifteen** Issue: **Six**
 Editor: *Joanne Howard*
 Publisher: *Lowell Pugh and Joanne Howard*

The Dead Beat is published bi-monthly. Editorial and business offices are located at 400 Chestnut, Golden City, MO 64748. Phone (800) 575-2611

Subscriptions:
 Additional copies for U.S.A. are \$24.00/ 1 year (6 issues).

For subscription, address changes, circulation, advertising assistance, write, phone or fax

The Dead Beat
 P.O. 145, Golden City, MO 64748
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