

The Dead Beat



The Caregiver's Soapbox



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

Volume 17

www.thedead-beat.com

Issue 4



New Columnists

“Millennial Directors – Are We Worth It?”



By: Matthew Morian, CFSP & Zach Carnley, CFSP

Millennial Directors - are we worth it? We seem to think so, but overconfidence tends to be our trademark. We are perceived by other generations as being lazy and entitled. We want to rule the world before paying our dues. They may be right about some of us, however, most of what you may hear about Millennials are exaggerated stereotypes.

Unfounded labels such as cocky are often used to describe our tenacity as a generation. We believe we can change a world that doesn't want to be changed. Traditionalists and hard-headed funeral directors are frustrated by the transformation our profession is undergoing. While Millennial Directors are striving to push the boundaries of what a funeral can be. Like all things in life (and death), balance is key. Meet your families on their level and help them plan the types of services they want to have for their loved ones.

A Millennial is only as lazy as the structure of their workplace allows them to be. I don't mean you should go start yelling at all of your employees to “get back to work”. Simply engage them. Ask them questions and listen to their insights. Even if you don't want to implement their ideas, feeling heard is something we value. When we feel engaged, we feel valued; when we feel valued, we work hard!

If it sounds like I'm being defensive... well, maybe I am being a little defensive, but it's important to know that my generation has a lot to offer to the funeral profession. Our sense of entitlement comes from wanting to make an impact. If you can convince us that making a difference starts “one family at a time” instead of instantly being promoted to CEO of the company, then you are the one who will win big with your Millennial coworkers. We just need the encouragement and coaching that not every job offers.

We crave leadership. If you show us the way, we will fly the flag of your funeral home proudly. Be the one who shepherds us, guides us, protects us, and we will fully invest ourselves in your business and be what you may never have thought we could be: great funeral directors!

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In this Issue



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***Thank you for all of the new
and previous
subscriptions!!!***

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Karen Williamson's New Book



Karen Williamson has just published her book on funeral home humor. The book titled "Be Nice To Me.....I May Be Your Funeral Director One Day" is a collection of humorous stories not just from herself, but from other funeral directors, families and cemetarians. Karen states that these stories are not to mock anyone or their beliefs, but life has a way of being funny even in a sad time.

Superstitions, unusual funeral home names, funny engravings on cemetery markers and more make this book a light hearted read.

You may purchase her book
by emailing
karenwilliamson620@gmail.com
or contact author
Karen Williamson on
Facebook.

Book Signing- Aug. 12, 2018



Lowell Pugh & Karen

Quiz for Bright People

There are only nine questions. This is a quiz for people who know everything! I found out in a hurry that I didn't. These are not trick questions. They are straight questions with straight answers.

1. Name the one sport in which neither the spectators nor the participants know the score or the leader until the contests ends.
2. What famous North American landmark is constantly moving backward?
3. Of all vegetables, only two can live to produce on their own for several growing seasons. All other vegetables must be replanted every year. What are the two perennial vegetables?
4. What fruit has its seeds on the outside?
5. In many liquor stores, you can buy pear brandy, with a real pear inside the bottle. The pear is whole and ripe, and the bottle is genuine; it hasn't been cut in any way. How did the pear get inside the bottle?
6. Only three words in standard English begin with the letters "dw" and they are all common words. Name two of them.
7. There are 14 punctuation marks in English grammar. Can you name at least half of them?
8. Name the only vegetable or fruit that is never sold, frozen, canned, processed, cooked, or in any other form except fresh.
9. Name 6 or more things that you can wear on your feet beginning with the letter "S."

Answers—(Continued on page 15)

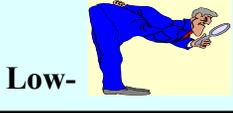
Amy Howard Art Gallery



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



Low-

Mortuary Muse By ell

A wheelbarrow load of expensive waste paper still sits on shelves above the music equipment in our former funeral arrangement room. Flower acknowledgment cards, cards for casket bearers, musicians, ministers, memorials and gifts. There are also register books, extra pages and who knows what else? Another closet upstairs has unused service folders, numerous lamination supplies, other funeral related paper products.

Declining business volume, direct cremation and less mourner participation accounted for much of this accumulation—but SO DID THE CLOUD!!!

Yes, we plunged into the NEW technology for greater service personalization. The plunge itself is expensive and sometimes very frustrating when a small staff is short on IT experience and the “cloud” expert is fast asleep somewhere.

While writing this I phone visited with colleague A.J. White in Greenfield, Missouri. He also has a closet full of material he has not been able to give away. One bright spot for us is our Lamcraft laminating materials. They will prove useful in the former funeral chapel’s makeover into an Art Gallery.

Thirty years ago we closed out a greeting card department by giving it to the local Girl Scout troop. They packaged the cards into assortments and sold them door-to-door.

Hmmmm...with every box of cookies you get 6 casket bearer cards, 2 musician cards and a celebrant thank you.

Is today’s end of life service consumer less concerned about honoring the memory of a loved one or the cost of any final services? I have seen funeral directors shake their head and grumble that the next-of-kin have no respect. In the 90’s funeral service providers were attending many seminars and reviewing studies about the grief processes that may or may not effect the survivors. Most of us at least installed a rack of appropriate pamphlets or books explaining facets of grief to give survivors and caregivers.

Holiday memorial services have become a staple with some larger firms having a therapist on staff or available. We studied the ins and outs of grief to make our services more relevant to our clients and hopefully better ourselves emotionally and financially.

A funeral director writing in one of the final issues of “Mortuary Management” magazine expressed the viewpoint that the study of grief issues at conventions and seminars was a waste of time and money. Even though we may sometimes perceive that some of our clients are only interested in the cheapest possible final disposition, we as a profession must continue a never ending study of human grief.

Enhance your listening skills!!

About the Author:

Lowell Pugh has had funeral director and embalmer licenses in Missouri and Texas. 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

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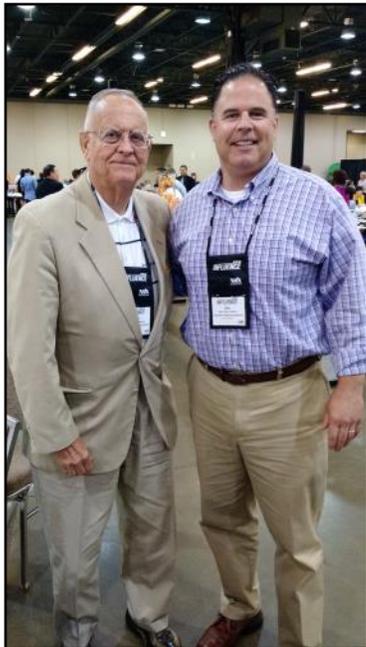
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The Frank Dawson Story

By Charlie Shipman



I met Frank C. Dawson and his son Dike at the National Speakers Association (NSA) conference in Dallas this past July. They own the Dawson Funeral Home in East Liverpool, Ohio. Frank C. took the business over from his dad, Frank A. in 1934. Frank D. (Dike) is operating the funeral home now.

During the 1960's and 70's and to a lesser degree in the 80' and 90's, Frank spoke to hundreds of state meetings of the then National Selected Morticians, which later

became the Selected Independent Funeral Homes. He also spoke to numerous state meetings of the NFDA and spoke to their Leaders Conference which is comprised of Presidents of all the state organizations. He did his professional speaking representing Clark Vault. Because of all his speaking engagements, he was encouraged to join the NSA.

Frank first got his funeral director's license in 1960 and his embalmers license two years later in 1962.

These days, Frank helps out Dike at the funeral home only when they get in an overload situation. Otherwise, he spends his time helping the Lou Holtz Upper Ohio Valley Hall of Fame Museum. Frank was one of the driving forces behind establishing the museum and scholarship fund to honor East Liverpool's most famous resident, legendary Notre Dame Football Coach Lou Holtz. The museum holds all of Lou Holtz's sports memorabilia. The museum is a must see. Each year a banquet is held to raise money for scholarships for students to attend trade school, and to honor other noteworthy persons.

The Dawson Funeral Home is most famous for conducting the funeral of Oklahoma native "Pretty Boy" Floyd. Out of all the funeral services he has conducted in his career, he was always struck by bereaved family and friends saying something to a dead corpse that they couldn't say to them when they were alive.

Velma and Leon De Leon at Rio Grande Valley Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

Velma and Leon De Leon, both members of Texas Funeral Directors Association's legislative committee and owners of Memorial Funeral Home in San Juan, TX and Edinburg, TX attended the Rio Grande Valley Hispanic Chamber of Commerce's Legislative Luncheon. The luncheon was held on Thursday, August 16, 2018, at Cimarron Country Club.



Velma and Leon with State Senator Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa, Rep. Terry Canales, and Rep. Bobby Guerra



Interesting Use of Old Cot



A cot came to the rescue! Due to the lack of and/or injured students the marching band drums were not able to get out to the field for performances. With a little ingenuity the drums are now able to be rolled onto the field. Lowell's son-in-law Marshall is the band director and a used cot with blankets, tie-downs, bungee cords, and wood transformed the cot to accomplish transportation for the drums. Great job!!

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

If in a very idle moment you wondered how THE DEAD BEAT was begun, it was like this.....

Joanne and I were killing time one day when we had three services scheduled and she says to me "Let's start an undertaker's newsletter." "Fine." I say, "Get started."

Well, maybe, perhaps that is not even close.....

In the 1980's while we were still operating the family retail business which was older than the funeral business, I wrote several management oriented articles for two different hardware trade journals.

Many of the ideas I was writing about were common in most businesses. So I reworked my copy for funeral services and it was well received by publishers.

Joanne joined our firm in 1992. Her educational and prior work experience was ideal for research and publishing. During the mid to late '90's we researched and wrote a dozen articles on grief issues and they were usually reprinted in five funeral service magazines.

Our most noteworthy project during this period was a study on grief in the workplace. This study morphed into several professional essays and a continuing education course that was approved by 21 funeral service boards. Before we published, "Grief Resolution for Co-Workers," Dr. Kenneth Doka graciously reviewed the manuscript. I had met Dr. Doka in 1996 at the National foundation of Funeral Service's "Counseling Seminar" in Chicago.

Though we no longer market this book for CE credit, it is excellent material for after loss care and service club presentations. (There is an order blank on page 31 if you'd like to get copies at \$12.99/copy including shipping and handling.)

Dates are fuzzy in my mind, but colleague Bob Knell, Knell Mortuary, Carthage, Missouri became ill. For about 30 years Bob had been publishing "The Missouri Bulletin"

which he started when he was MFDEA executive director. Joanne offered to help Bob get his next issue to press but Bob bounced back and got the "Bulletin" in the mail. But it was his last issue because he died. We thought perhaps, Rob Knell, Bob's son would continue the paper, but he chose not to continue. After checking with Rob we decided to start our own publication. We were a little slow getting out of the gate and could not decide on a name. We experimented with about 30 different mastheads when Claude, Joanne's husband suggested —The Dead Beat.

Though we initially started for Missouri funeral directors like Bob had done, we added more states due to requests from our advertisers. We have grown to over 3900 funeral homes and subscribers in 11 states in addition to providing current and past editions on our website. Funeral homes have received our bi-monthly magazine for over 18 years at no cost from the gracious advertisers that have supported our publication over the years.

During the years we have evolved into a publication for the funeral consumer as well as the funeral provider. Judging from the number of obituaries we run and the comments we receive we appear to have more readers than most national membership or association magazines. In the largest state we bulk mail to more than 1,000 more firms than the state association.

The Dead Beat comes ready to read and share. No envelope to open— black type on flat white paper or online without having a membership or wading through a mission statement.

About the Author:

Lowell Pugh has had funeral director and embalmer licenses in Missouri and Texas. 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

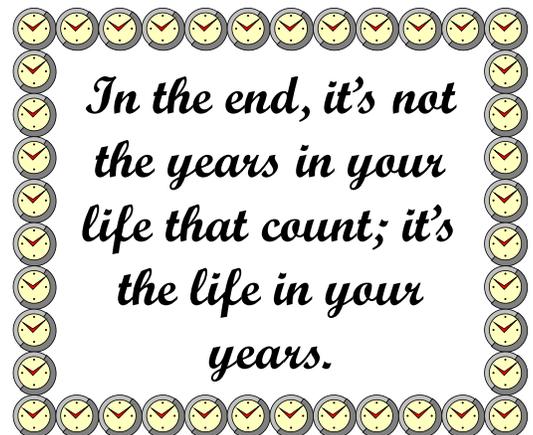
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*In the end, it's not
the years in your
life that count; it's
the life in your
years.*

After-Thoughts *By Joanne Howard*

The other day my husband and I were shopping and the dreaded experience of our battery in the car wouldn't work, so we had to call AAA. Luckily they responded quickly, but as we were sitting in the parking lot we had our hood up so the help could see us. A remarkable and inspiring thing happened. Four different individuals came up to the car and offered to give us a jump to the battery or help in some way and one was even a policeman

Why is this inspiring? Mostly, all we hear is how people are so terrible and here were four individuals willing to come to our rescue within 30 minutes. One lady was paying it forward since someone had helped her about a week before. Isn't it nice to hear and experience people being willing to help? People willing to be nice? I must say it gave me hope about the world which the news never does.

It goes along with what happens when you smile at people in stores. How many times do they smile back and it just makes it a nicer day?

This experience as I said was a few weeks ago and this week in my Bible Study group, helping others came up. Many of the ladies had helped people out in the past and wondered if they should have. But the positive results made them feel pretty confident they were doing the right thing.

In fact, the exercise for that lesson was to take any spare money you had in your wallet and put it in an envelop. Then when someone needed it you could give it to them. We are encouraged to give when someone needs it without judging.

One lady was in a store and dropped her coin purse and money went everywhere, many people

helped her pick it up as she was quite flustered. Then a lady in the store came up to her and gave my friend some money. She really didn't know what to do, since that woman must of thought she needed some money. Truthfully she didn't and when she looked at the amount given, it was \$60.00.

My friend was flabbergasted and didn't really know what to do. As she was checking out there was a lady that looked like she could use some help, so she gave the check-out clerk \$20 to put toward that ladies' bill. Then outside a young woman helped her and she gave her some money because my friend felt she needed assistance too. Then as my friend was getting into her car, the lady she had helped in the check-out line came up and hugged her.

My friend through the generosity of another person ended up helping several people. It was just another experience of when our willingness to help is shown, we usually get much more in return. This is definitely something to keep in mind the next time you have an opportunity to share what you have to help others. And it really does make you feel good.

Talking about something that makes me feel good, is when people remember our daughters and even when they died.

Our oldest daughter just celebrated her 15th Heaven birthday. Sometimes I've wished her Happy Heaven Birthday on Facebook, but I didn't this year. Yet a classmate, who also had lost a daughter the same age as ours in the same year, remembered us on Facebook. To me this is a bit remarkable since it has been 15

years. Also a friend that I had met at a funeral convention when our daughter had been in the memorial service in the same year that her husband was running for a NFDA office and they were attending our convention, actually remembers us and sends a card. It makes me feel so good when someone remembers.

I've talked about and many have mentioned how when you lose someone you don't forget them, you just adjust to the change. Now just because you adjust doesn't mean you don't still miss them and what could have been.

This was just emphasized at my husband's 50th Class Reunion. He had a very small graduating class (22) in a small town. There were 17 graduates most with their spouses attending the reunion. They went around the tables giving an update on the length of their marriages, what they were doing now, how many children and grandchildren and just a little about their lives.

As you can imagine many had children and grandchildren, when it came time for my husband to speak he got choked up when he had to say his two girls had passed. He didn't go into details, but, trust me, this is a hard thing to do. Not that you begrudge the other people's blessings, but after 20 years for one daughter and 15 years for the other one, it's still and always will be hard on us.



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 or jfhoward53@yahoo.com

The Accidental Celebrant

A Tale of Two Songs – Part Two

The Worst of Songs

By Michael K. Jones

In my previous article I talked about the time I suggested including Kenny Loggins' "I'm Alright" in a service for a passionate golfer. While I was really pleased with how that worked out I also remembered that not every musical recommendation or choice goes this well.

A number of years ago I led a service for a woman who had a close relationship with her grandchildren. At least that's what her kids thought. They were telling me wonderful stories about the bond that had grown between their mother and her grandchildren. I had no reason to doubt how true these stories were. I don't think they knew what was really going on either. Reality turned out to be quite different from what I was being told and the funeral and those gathered for it really suffered the consequences.

When we gathered to plan the funeral, one of her granddaughters insisted on choosing one of the songs for her service. The song she wanted? Concrete Blonde's "Tomorrow Wendy". I vaguely remember the song but couldn't recall the exact lyrics. That's one of the reasons why I didn't resist the suggestion. Another reason is that this service happened before smart phones were really a thing.

So when the service reached the point in the service where the song played we heard lyrics such as: "Hey Hey goodbye – tomorrow Wendy is going to die". That was one of the better lines. It was one of the most vicious and angry songs I've ever heard at a service. And the deceased's name wasn't even Wendy. I can't recall anybody connected with the service being named Wendy.

How can service leaders pull a service out of

a deep dive like this? At the time I had no idea. All I could think of was a quick mention of the intensity of emotion we can feel when we lose someone close. Sometimes we need to hear intense songs as a way of tapping these emotions. This was probably one of the lamest things I've ever said in a funeral but I was desperate. We did eventually bring the service to a close but I can't recall what was said or done after that song was played. It all seems to be a real blur.

Looking back I should have done two things: I should have asked why the song was being suggested. To this day I wonder why an idea like that blew to the surface the way it did. I should have also broken away from the meeting and looked up the song on my computer.

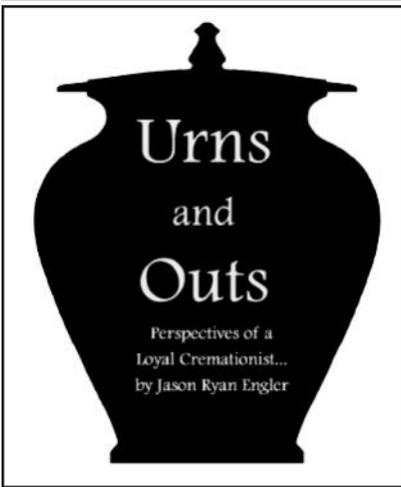
Some hard lessons were learned at that funeral.



About the Author:

A native of Fredericton, New Brunswick, **Michael K. Jones** was born and raised in Atlantic Canada. A former minister in the United Church of Canada he has ministered to a variety of congregations for over twenty years. *Dead Reckoning* is his second book. His previous release is *Empty Houses: A Pastoral Response to Congregational Closure*. When Mike is not writing he is enjoying walking and reading. He resides with his wife Trish in Calgary, Alberta.

Dead Reckoning is now available online through Amazon.ca.



I am so excited to announce the opening of The History of Cremation Exhibit at the National Museum of Funeral History. Here are some images of the first interior room of the exhibit, which is a scale reproduction of the LeMoyne Crematory, America's first Crematory, in Washington, Pennsylvania. This first room contains artifacts from the LeMoyne Crematory, including the notebook kept by builder/operator John Dye; the name plate from the coffin of Baron de Palm, the first person cremated in the US; the casket lid of Jane Pittman, first woman cremated in the US; an original door from the LeMoyne Crematory retort;



exactly-replicated tools, crib, and catafalque; and an apothecary vial that contains a small portion of the remains of the Baron de Palm. This permanent exhibit opened September 17, 2018, in the National Museum of Funeral History, Houston, Texas.

This is my perspective!

Senior Version of "Jesus Loves Me"

A pastor once stated, "I always noticed that it was the adults who chose the children's hymn, "Jesus Loves Me" (for the children, of course) during a hymn sing, and it was the adults who sang the loudest because I could see they knew it the best." Here is a new version just for us who have white hair or no hair at all. For us over middle age (of even those almost there) and all you others check out this newest version of "Jesus Loves Me."

Jesus Loves Me

Jesus loves me, this I know,
Though my hair is white as snow
Though my sight is growing dim,
Still He bids me trust in Him.

(Chorus) Yes, Jesus Loves Me,
Yes, Jesus Loves Me,
Yes, Jesus Loves Me
For the Bible tells Me So.

Though my steps are oh, so slow,
With my hand in His I'll go
On through life, let come what may.
He'll be there to lead the way.
(Chorus)

When the nights are dark and long,
In my heart He puts a song.
Telling me in words so clear,
"Have no fear, for I am
near." (Chorus)

When my work on earth is done,
And life's victories have been won.
He will take me home above.
Then I'll understand His love.
(Chorus)

I love Jesus, does He know?
Have I ever told Him so?
Jesus loves to hear me say.
That I love Him every day.
(Chorus)



**A scale reproduction of the
LeMoyne Crematory,
America's first Crematory, in
Washington, Pennsylvania.**

“Re-learning” to Live Without a Soul Mate.”

By Ken Doka

There is a strange paradox to grief. Often grief is complicated when relationships are strained and full of conflict — the kind of relationships my aunt used to describe as “can’t live with him; can’t live without him.” Yet conversely, grief can be complicated when relationships are extremely close and very dependent—when you feel you just cannot live without the person.

LuAnn had that sort of relationship with her husband, James. James was a minister and LuAnn liked to say that it was shared ministry. They did everything together—much of it revolving around the church or around their young sons. Even their social life focused on church dinners and events, or get-togethers with clergy couples. When James had a heart attack and passed away in his fifties, LuAnn was at a loss. She had to move from the parsonage, and a new clergy wife assumed many of the roles she had called her own. Her sons now lived away—in clergy and one in a faraway mission field. Her whole identity as a pastor’s wife died with her husband.

Patty had a similar reaction to the death of her mother. She and her mother were very close. As a child, Patty suffered from rheumatic fever. Her mother watched over her and Patty became very dependent on her. Even as she got older and married, her mom was a regular companion and a constant source of advice, they spoke at least once a day. Her mother died as Patty neared 60; yet Patty, even as a wife and a mother of now adult children, felt very alone.

You can become close to many people—parents, spouses, children, special relatives, even friends. When these relationships are so close, and you are so dependent on the person for so long, death can hit very hard. Such deaths leave a tremendous hole in our hearts; even time seems so hard to fill without the person.

Thomas Attig, a philosopher who studied grief, likes to say that when

such deaths occur, you have to “re-learn” life. What he means by that is that now you have to learn how to do the very basic aspects of life without the presence of that now-lost companion. For LuAnn, even going to church, a part of her life since childhood, seemed difficult. Patty would often find herself thinking of calling her mom to ask if she wanted to go shopping with her or to check on a recipe.

It is difficult—yet you can do it. Think of the legacies that person left you, the strengths that you learned from your loved one.

Review the ways that you have faced crises in the past; they can help as you face this crisis. Think of the advice your loved one would give you if she were here. LuAnn always remembered that when she was struggling, her husband would remind her of her strong faith. For Patty, she kept hearing her mother remind her how strong she was as a child to deal with her illness, operations, and hospitalizations.

Since these situations are difficult, reach out for help.

The author and playwright Thornton Wilde provides solid counsel, especially in these close relationships. *“The highest tribute to the dead is not grief but gratitude.”*

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)*

Chuckles

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

Priorities, priorities..

A 82-year old retired engineer from Oklahoma City is having a drink in a bar when a gorgeous girl enters and sits down just a few seats away. The girl is so attractive that he just can't take his eyes off her. After a short while, the girl notices him staring, and approaches him. Before the man has time to apologize, the girl looks him deep in the eyes and says to him in a sultry tone, "I'll do anything you'd like. Anything you can imagine in your wildest dreams, it doesn't matter how extreme or unusual it is, I'm game. I want \$100, and there's one other condition." Completely stunned by the sudden turn of events, the man asks her what her condition is. She said, "You have to tell me what you want me to do in just three words." The man takes a moment to consider the offer from the beautiful woman. He whips out his wallet and puts \$100 dollars in her hand —He then looks her square in the eyes, and says slowly and clearly, "Paint my house."



The Best Way to Pray

A priest, a minister and a guru sat discussing the best positions for prayer, while a telephone repairman worked nearby. "Kneeling is definitely the best way to pray," the priest said. "No," said the minister. "I get the best results standing with my hands outstretched to Heaven." "You're both wrong," the guru said. "The most effective prayer position is lying down on the floor." The repairman could contain himself no longer. "Hey, fellas," he interrupted. "The best prayin' I ever did was when I was hangin' upside down from a telephone pole."



Questions that haunt me

- * How important does a person have to be before they are considered assassinated instead of just murdered?
- * Once you're in heaven, do you get stuck wearing the clothes you were buried in for eternity?
- * Why does a round pizza come in a square box?
- * What disease did cured ham actually have?
- * How is it that we put man on the moon before we figured out it would be a good idea to put wheels on luggage?
- * Why is it that people say they "slept like a baby" when babies wake up like every two hours?
- * Why are you IN a movie, but you're ON TV?
- * Why do people pay to go up tall buildings and then put money in binoculars to look at things on the ground?
- * Why do doctors leave the room while you change? They're going to see you naked anyway.....
- * Why is "bra" singular and "panties" plural?
- * Why do toasters always have a setting that burns the toast to a horrible crisp, which no decent human being would eat?

Comments

Keep up the good work!!

Al Walden, Springfield, MO

We look forward to receiving "The Dead Beat". Keep On Keeping On!

Larry and Jon Ludvigsen,
Hooper, Fremont, and Scribner, Nebraska
Ludvigsen Mortuaries

Have enjoyed your magazine very much through the years. Your magazine is very good. Keep up the good work!

Nancy Stroud, Monett, MO

Thank you so much for including John David Griffin's Laurel Funeral Home picture in the current issue. He worked for us in Dallas then decided to re-open facility in Healdton, OK. I went to his "opening" in June. He is a good guy— well deserving and serves the industry well!. You published one of my jokes a while back. Always enjoy "Dead Beat." God Bless

Dennis Jeter, Jeter & Son Funeral Home, Dallas, TX

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

Chuckles (Cont.)

- * If Jimmy cracks corn and no one cares, why is there a stupid song about him?
- * Why does Goofy stand erect while Pluto remains on all fours? They're both dogs.
- * If corn oil is made from corn, and vegetable oil is made from vegetables, what is baby oil made from?
- * Why do the Alphabet song and Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star have the same tune?
- * Why did you just try singing the two songs above?
- * Did you ever notice that you blow in a dog's face, he gets mad at you, but when you take him for a car ride, he sticks his head out the window?

Car Accident

Jim was annoyed when his blonde wife told him that a car had backed into her, damaging a fender, and that she hadn't gotten the license number. "What kind of car was he driving?" he asked. "I don't know," she said. "I never can tell one car from another." At that, Jim decided the time had come for a learning course, and for the next few days, whenever they were driving, he made her name each car they passed until he was satisfied that she could recognize every make. It worked. About a week later she bounded in with a pleased expression on her face. "Darling," she said. "I hit a Buick!"

(Continued on page 11)

Chuckles (Cont.)

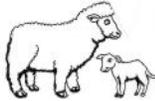
Birthday Present

One day a fella was driving home when he suddenly realized that it was his daughter's birthday and "shocked" he hadn't bought her anything. Out of the corner of his eye he notices a shopping mall. Knowing that it was "now or never," he pulls his car through three lanes of traffic, finds a parking bay and runs into the mall. After a frantic search he finds a toy store, goes inside and attracts the attention of the shop assistant. When asked what he'd like, he simply says, "a Barbie doll." The shop assistant looks at him in a condescending manner and asks, "So Sir, which Barbie would that be?" The man looks surprised so the assistance continues, "We have Barbie Goes to the Ball at \$19.99, Barbie goes Shopping at \$19.99, Barbie Goes to the Gym at \$19.99, Cyber Barbie at \$19.99 and Divorced Barbie at \$249.99." The man can't help himself and asks, "Why is Divorced Barbie \$249.99 when all those other Barbies are selling for \$19.99?????" "Well, Sir, that's quite obvious!" says the assistant. "Divorced Barbie comes with Ken's house, Ken's car, Ken's furniture....."



Counting Sheep

There was a typical blonde. She had long, blonde hair, blue eyes and she was sick of all the blonde jokes. One day she decided to get a makeover. She cut and dyed her hair brunette and went driving down a country road, searching for someone who would appreciate her for her intelligence. When she came across a herd of sheep, she stopped and called the shepherd over. "That's a nice flock of sheep," she said. "Well, thank you," said the herder. "Tell you what, I have a proposition for you," said the woman. "If I can guess the exact number of sheep in your flock, can I take one home?" "Sure," agreed the shepherd. So the girl sat up and looked at the herd for a second and then replied, "382." "Wow," said the shepherd. "That is exactly right. Go ahead and pick out the sheep you want to take home." So the woman went and picked one out and put it in her car. Then the herder said,



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"Okay, now I have a proposition for you. If I can guess the real color of your hair, can I have my dog back?"

Puns for the Educated Mind

- * The roundest knight at King Arthur's round table was Sir Cumference. He acquired his size from too much pi.
- * I thought I saw an eye doctor on an Alaskan island, but it turned out to be an optical Aleutian.
- * She was only a whisky maker, but he loved her still.
- * A rubber band pistol was confiscated from an algebra class because it was a weapon of math disruption.
- * The butcher backed into the meat grinder and got a little behind in his work.
- * No matter how much you push the envelope, it'll still be stationery.
- * A dog gave birth to puppies near the road and was cited for littering.
- * A grenade thrown into a kitchen in France would result in Linoleum Blownapart.
- * Two silk worms had a race. They ended up in a tie.
- * Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like a banana.
- * A hole has been found in the nudist camp wall. The police are looking into it.
- * Atheism is a non-prophet organization.
- * Two hats were hanging on a hat rack in the hallway. One hat said to the other, "You stay here, I'll go on a head."
- * I wondered why the baseball kept getting bigger. Then it hit me.
- * A sign on the lawn at a drug rehab center said, "Keep off the Grass."
- * A small boy swallowed some coins and was taken to a hospital. When his grandmother telephoned to ask how he was, a nurse said, "No change yet."
- * A chicken crossing the road is poultry in motion.
- * It's not that the man did not know how to juggle, he just didn't have the balls to do it.
- * The short fortune teller who escaped from prison was a small medium at large.
- * The man who survived mustard gas and pepper spray is now a seasoned veteran.
- * A backward poet writes inverse.

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MISSOURI (Cont.)

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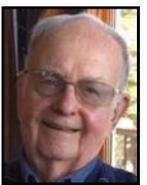
ILLINOIS



Loren Davis, 84, of Granite City, died July 20, 2018. He graduated from the St. Louis College of Mortuary Science in 1952. He served in the [United States Navy](#) as a personnel man aboard the U.S.S. Maury AGS-16 from 1956 to 1958 and was honorably discharged from the Navy Reserves in 1962. A licensed funeral director, he managed Davis Funeral Home from 1958 to 1964 and from 1985 to its closing earlier this year. John L. Ziegenhein & Sons Funeral Home handled his services.



Timothy Michael Holden, 63, of Godfrey, died August 9, 2018. Tim had been a funeral director and trade embalmer for many local funeral homes, including Marks Mortuary, Crawford Funeral Home, Mercer Funeral Home, Burke Funeral Home, Staten Funeral Home, Jacoby Funeral Home, Quinn Funeral Home. Tim was considered to be one of the best embalmers in the area and was a mentor and tutor for many funeral directors and embalmers during their apprenticeships as a member of the Illinois Funeral Directors Association. Marks Mortuary directed his services.



Patrick R. Jones, Sr., 83, of Dixon died July 18, 2018. He was a licensed funeral director and embalmer over 50 years, he was a third generation owner and operator of the Jones Funeral Home in Dixon and Amboy. A graduate of the Worsham College of Mortuary Science, he was a life member of the NFDA and the Illinois Funeral Directors Association and past member of the Northern Illinois Funeral Directors Association. His services were under the direction of Jones Funeral Home.

IOWA



Charles J. Missel, 81, of Davenport passed away June 25, 2018. He served in the U.S. Army Reserves for 30 years and retired as a Lt. Colonel. He graduated from Worsham College of Mortuary Science. He worked with Esterdahl Mortuary and Runge Mortuary for many years. His funeral services were under the direction of Runge Mortuary.

MISSOURI



Rebecca "Becky" S. Broach, 60, of Imperial, passed away on Sept. 15, 2018. She was the daughter of the late James R. Whitaker, Sr. and sister to late James Whitaker Jr. Her arrangements were under the direction of Kutis Funeral Home, Mehlville, Missouri.

MISSOURI (Cont.)



F.R. "Frosty" Hoefler, 89, of Higginsville, passed away July 17, 2018. He was a graduate of Williams Institute of Mortuary Science in Kansas City, KS, class of 1947. He served in the U.S. Army and was a Veteran of the Korean Conflict. He served funeral home owners with the sale of their funeral homes. He took over Hoefler Funeral Home, Inc. as owner in 1975 until his retirement in 1989. Hoefler Funeral Home handled his funeral services. *(He was a faithful supporter of The Dead Beat and we thank him for that).*



Mike Szafranski, 65, of Schaumburg, Illinois, passed away Sept. 5, 2018. He served his country with the U.S. Army. He is the father-in-law of Brian Boyer, one of the owners of C. Z. Boyer & Son Funeral Home in Bonne Terre who handled Mike's services.

OKLAHOMA



Gil W. Morris, 68, of Ponca City passed away Aug. 12, 2018. He joined the U.S. Air Force in May, 1969 and was honorably discharged in 1972 at the rank of SGT. He found his calling to Grace Memorial Chapel Funeral Home in Ponca City for over 30 years retiring December, 2015. His services were conducted by Grace Memorial Chapel Funeral Home.

TEXAS



Jack Truman Fuqua, 73, of Abilene, passed away on Sept. 7, 2018. Jack began to pursue his passion and dream of becoming a Funeral Director when he received his Associate Degree in Science from South Plains College in Levelland, Texas in 1989. He then attended the Dallas Institute of Funeral Service School. He received his Funeral Director and Embalmer License in 1991. He then opened The Abilene Funeral Home Inc. along with his son Richard in 1998. Jack received numerous awards and was recognized for his dedication in the Funeral Service Industry. His services were conducted by Abilene Funeral Home.

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

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Quiz for Bright People (Cont.)

(Continued from page 2)

Answers to Quiz:

1. The one sport in which neither the spectators nor the participants know the score of the leader until the contest ends—
“*Boxing.*”
2. North American landmark constantly moving backwards—
“*Niagara Falls.*” The rim is worn down about two and a half feet each year because of the millions of gallons of water that rush over it every minute.
3. Only two vegetables that can live to produce on their own for several growing seasons—
“*Asparagus and rhubarb.*”
4. The fruit with its seeds on the outside—
“*strawberry.*”
5. How did the pear get inside the brandy bottle? - “*It grew inside the bottle.*” The bottles are placed over pear buds when they are small, and are wired in place on the tree. The bottle is left in place for the entire growing season. When the pears are ripe, they are snipped off at the stems.
6. Three English words beginning with “dw”: “*Dwarf, dwell, and dwindle.*”
7. Fourteen punctuation marks in English grammar—
“*Period, comma, colon, semicolon, dash, hyphen, apostrophe, question mark, exclamation point, quotation mark, brackets, parentheses, braces and ellipses.*”
8. The only vegetable or fruit never sold frozen, canned, processed, cooked, or in any other form but fresh: “*Lettuce.*”
9. Six or more things you can wear on your feet beginning with “S” - *Socks, sandals, sneakers, skis, skates, snowshoes, stockings, stilts.*

TEXAS (Cont.)



Elizabeth Marie Hendrix, 90, of North Richland Hills passed away Sept. 15, 2018. She was the mother of Marsha Feely and mother-in-law to Dan Feely, co-owners of Winscott Road Funeral Home in Benbrook, who handled her services.



William Major Greene, 80, of Lufkin, died Sept. 9, 2018. He was the father of Taylor Greene, Owner of Sierra Funeral Service & Partner of CMG funeral Partners. He served two terms in the U.S. Army. First when he enlisted and was honorably discharged. Later, as a member of the National Guard, he was called to active duty during the Bay of Pigs crisis in the early 1960's

when he again honorably served his country. His services were directed by Carroway Funeral Home.



Kenneth Norman Linden, 80, of Greenville, passed away Aug. 5, 2018. He was a proud veteran of the United States Marine Corp. He was a licensed funeral director for over 50 years. He was a past instructor with the Dallas Institute of Funeral Science. Coker-Mathews Funeral Home handled his services.



Maria Jesus Aguilar Ramires, 81, of Sulphur Springs, passed away August 6, 2018. She was mother of Oscar Aguilar, funeral director at West Oaks Funeral Home in Sulphur Springs and Tony Aguilar, general manager of Cammach Welch Funeral Home in Longview and Chris Aguilar, a sales representative of Dodge. West Oaks Funeral Home handled her services.



Robert M. “Bob” Scott, II, 90, of Corsicana died Aug. 1, 2018. Scott was drafted into the United States Army in 1950. He went on to graduate from U.S. Army Chemical, Biological and Radiology School at Fort Devens, Massachusetts. Scott, a 1st Lieutenant with the Army Medical Corps, did 14 months of service in Korea, earning a Korean service medal with three bronze stars, a presidential commendation, a combat medical badge, National Defense service medal, and a United Nations service medal. He was a licensed funeral director and embalmer, he was raised at the People's Funeral Home, which was owned by his great aunt, J.S. “Bennie” Adair. He acquired ownership of the firm upon Adair's death in 1960 and operated the Scott Funeral Home alongside his wife Mabel. He graduated from the Gupton-Jones College of Mortuary Science.



Prairie Post

The following article does not reflect the much improved condition of Golden Prairie today. MPF was just starting the restoration of a few distressed areas of the prairie in 1991.

“Christopher Columbus, Eat Your Heart Out!”

By Lowell Pugh in the **Missouri Prairie Journal**, Vol. 12 Number 4, Dec., 1991

The best way to celebrate Columbus day, albeit a day late, was to visit Golden Prairie. The fall colors were near their peak and the late summer flowers still vibrant. My perception of Columbus has certainly changed since the second grade, but not of the prairie.

When parking at the northwest corn of Golden Prairie, it was only about 100 yards up the hay crew lane to the marker from the Department of Interior designating Golden as a national Natural Landmark. From this vantage point you can see the entire north side of Golden. The golds and greens of



the grasses are complimented by a dash of red here and there from the sumac growing in rocky outcropping and the drainage areas.

I continued south down the hill and flushed about a half dozen quail as I reached the drainage area that flows across the northwest quarter of Golden. From this point I angled to the south-southeast, aiming for the top of the central hill. Three prairie-chickens came from the east and settled in just beyond the crest of the broad hill, apparently settling in for the night. How-

ever, no chickens remained on the booming ground.

Standing on this high ground with the setting sun to my back, a large doe about a quarter mile away strolled south from the old pond. She was in the middle of the 20-acre field that had been converted to cropland many years ago. The doe was in no hurry, but frequently looked back toward the pond and brush area. With my battered binoculars, I followed her gaze. There was movement in the edge grass between the prairie and the bush. Out popped Mr. Coyote. Working the edge back and forth, he was soon joined by a second coyote. The two seemed to be working independently. The first coyote worked back east along the south side of the pond/brush area while the second worked the west side.

The doe finally disappeared, and when I looked back for coyotes, they were not in sight either. After I gave my version of a coyote’s howl, both popped out of the brush and stared in my direction. At this moment my old, grossly overweight, mixed breed hound crossed 20 yards in front of me and stood still. The two coyotes started moving slightly toward us and to the right. They were perhaps a quarter mile away as they left the brushy area. A third coyote emerged from the brush and followed



a few yards behind the first two.

The three coyotes moved leisurely to the southwest, still watching in my direction. With the sun squarely behind my back, I don’t think they had precisely identified me. As the group passed behind the fence row on the west side of the 20-acre field, I dropped flat and called a couple more times. I waited, a few minutes to see if curiosity would draw them through the line of sumac and west toward me. I raised to my knees, using old “Red” to screen my movement. At that moment it dawned on me that they were probably circling. I looked to my right. About 400



yards south of me, number one was staring straight at me. The look said— “gotcha!”

One and two loped off south, Number three continued his southwesterly trot, his head held high, looking over his shoulder. The gold of the setting sun shone on his calico-cat colored hind quarters and tail, as he finally disappeared over the hill.

Retracing our steps in the twilight, I saw another doe grazing north of the old pond. As we crossed the bank again, the rest of the covey of quail flushed—about 25, I would guess. A great horned owl called from the brushy meadow to the west.

Golden Prairie is an oasis among the over-grazed pastures and presently dusty cropland of the neighboring farms. I feel a little remorse that most of the 1,200 members of MPF, like old Chris Columbus, have never experienced Golden Prairie at sunset.



The Whitman Sampler

By Mary Hollingsworth
In "You've Gotta Be Kidding!"

Chocolate! If you don't mind my saying so, the Lord "done good" when he made chocolate. Of course, I contend that if he'd made chocolate taste like celery and celery taste like chocolate we'd all be a lot thinner.

Instead, he made life a Whitman Sampler. It's a whole box crammed full of goodies, sweet and gooey with surprise centers. When you're born, God opens up the box of life and says, "Here, have some." And the wonderful thing about it is, life's not even fattening. Eureka!



God's not finicky about the particular flavor of life you choose either. That's why there are different kinds of occupations, hobbies and ministries from which to choose. He doesn't care if you take your finger and punch a hole in the bottom of a piece of life to see if you like it and then, if you don't, just put it back in the box and try something else more



to your liking. He knows that some of us prefer caramel filling to coconut. And it's okay.

Now, I'm a caramel-and-peanuts fan myself, and that's the kind of life I choose too. Sometimes it's sweet, sometimes it's chewy, sometimes it's crunchy and salty. Variety is what I like. Sometimes I just like to hold a bite of life in my mouth and let the chocolate melt off until I get to the gooey center. Sometimes I can't wait that long, so I just chew it up and let it stick to my teeth.

You can choose your own flavor of life. All you have to do is remove the cellophane wrapper, open life's lid, take out the little paper liner and dig in! And I'll bet God will be grinning from ear to ear because he wanted life to be a delicious experience.



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Kim Price Elected To CA-NA Board

**Memory Glass V.P. Joins
As New Supplier Relations Liaison**



Kim Price, V.P. of Sales for Memory Glass, is the new Supplier Relations Liaison on the Board of the Cremation Association of North America.

August 24, 2018, Goleta, CA --*Industry supplier companies have a new liaison with the Cremation Association of North America (CANA). Kim Price, V.P. of Sales for Memory Glass, has been elected to the CA-NA Board by the organization's members and will serve as their Supplier Relations Board Representative for the next three years.

Price is Co-Owner of Memory Glass, an industry leader in cremation memorialization, and has led their sales department as Vice President for eight years. She has been instrumental to the company's growth, which now encompasses over 2,000 funeral homes and crematoriums.

Price has been entrenched in the funeral industry for over 20 years, including positions at Forethought and Prime Succession. She is also the long-term coordinator of the Memorial Classic Golf Tournament, a long-standing funeral industry event.

"Supplier relations is a critical area of focus for the funeral industry right now," said Price. "The companies supplying our industry continue to grow in new and innovative ways. I'm honored to participate with CANA on the Board level, and to represent these suppliers in such an essential role."

CANA has over 3,300 cremation industry leader members. The association supports their members' efforts to learn more about all aspects of cremation, maximize opportunities to better serve their communities, and achieve success for their businesses.

Helene Schultheis (Cont.)

(Continued from page 20)

ASD's clients and to learn more about their lives. At conventions, her name comes up more than any other. Some can remember her answering their calls over a decade ago with the same warm and compassionate tone of voice. For ASD staff, Helene's kindness and sincerity is truly a gift. Most ASD employees would be able to tell you without hesitation about their first interaction with her. Whether it is in the office or over the phone, Helene left a memorable and lasting impression on just about every person she encountered.

"Helene was a valuable asset to our company and a role model employee, dedicated to her position with a friendly presence in the office," says ASD Operations Director, Ric Cusumano, who has worked with Helene for more than 20 years. "She achieved perfect attendance for years traveling in inclement weather and staying overnight when needed. Helene enjoyed helping others, interacting with our clients and co-workers. She was always pleasant, caring and compassionate towards everyone. Helene was not only an employee and co-worker, but she was part of our ASD family."

About ASD

ASD – Answering Service for Directors has created a new class of answering service for the funeral profession. Family owned and operated since 1972, ASD blends state-of-the-art technology with an extensive, 6-month training program focusing on compassionate care. The company's custom-built communication systems and sophisticated mobile tools were designed solely to meet the needs of funeral professionals. By offering funeral directors unmatched protection for their calls, ASD has redefined the role of an answering service for funeral homes. For more information, visit www.myASD.com or call 1-800-868-9950.

Try To See Things My Way

By Joe Weigel

With apologies to The Beatles, my purpose today is to talk about Baby Boomers and marketing materials. As the Baby Boomers move along on their life journey, companies are making all sorts of changes to accommodate the needs of their changing bodies. From lumbar supports in car seats to cushioned handles on kitchen utensils, manufacturers and service providers recognize the need to cater to the comfort of an increasingly older population.

Beyond products and services, there's another element that's been slow to catch up – the design of marketing materials. I believe a big reason is that the nation's population of graphic designers skews toward folks in their 20s and early 30s. Their designs reflect the tastes and influences of the world they see. And while they are creating beautiful work, a growing percentage of your families may find it difficult to appreciate.

As your funeral home creates materials aimed at mature audiences, it's important to make sure that your graphic designers follow some very basic advice will make your materials far more effective at creating connections with families.

Type choices - Every year brings dozens of new typefaces (fonts), and many designers jump at the opportunity to use the latest. But the most readable typefaces tend to be some of the most familiar, particularly when used in body

copy. Serif typefaces (those with small lines at the end of each letter) like Times, Palatino, and Century may seem ho-hum to young designers, but they're much easier on the eye, compared to sans-serif typefaces (those without the small lines). And when you want emphasis, boldface and underlining tend to be easier on the eyes than italics.

Type size and leading

One recent trend has been to shrink the size of body copy, but that makes it uninviting for older readers. There's usually no need to go with something as large as 14-point text, but think twice before going with anything smaller than 10-point. In most typefaces, 11-point body text works just fine. Another way to enhance readability is to increase the leading (spacing) between lines of copy.

Visual cues

Indenting paragraphs may seem boringly old-fashioned to some young designers, but older readers have read that way since childhood. Use subheads, bold lead-ins, bullet points, and similar devices to guide the reader's eyes and make the information clearer.

Reverse type

Reversing type (i.e., light type on a dark background) can be visually striking, but it's effective only when it's readable. Generally, it's a good idea to increase the type size a bit when reversing type. And while serif type is normally more readable, sans serif typefaces

tend to provide better results when reversed.

White space

Most designers love to leave lots of white space in their work, and that's a good thing when designing for older readers. Not only does healthy use of white space keep information organized and presentable, it can reduce visual fatigue. Trust your designer and resist the urge to fill that white space with more text, logos, or other images.

It might seem strange that a writer is concerned about what designers do, but those of us who write copy want to be sure that families can read what we work so hard to create. Skilled designers can make your marketing materials far more effective and communicative by following these suggestions.



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. You can visit his website at weigelstrategicmarketing.webs.com. He also can be reached at 317-608-8914 or joseph.weigel@gmail.com.

Operating your business more efficiently... and profitably By Richard Lee

It's time for funeral home owners to start taking better control of their businesses – from more efficient operating procedures to productive (and inexpensive) marketing solutions. Unfortunately, the goodwill of families continuing to use a certain funeral home has been dwindling and is being replaced by telephone and internet price shopping. The generation that is making the buying decision seems to be more concerned on price and convenience and less on continued goodwill and supporting “the funeral home that they have used for years”.

There have been big changes occurring in the funeral industry over the last 5 years - such as the rise of cremation and its effect on the revenue and cash flow of a business to the trend of families downgrading from full traditional funerals to

same day services.

The days of being able to run your business without a plan are over. Every owner today needs to be aware of what their mix of business will be going forward and what the projected revenue stream will be and then operate in a much leaner capacity in order that a reasonable profit can be achieved. The attention should be placed on what the profit margin will be on that particular service - what enhancements can be made and/or if a change in the merchandise being offered could result in a better margin.

Having an industry expert analyze your business and make recommendations as to changes or procedures that could be implemented is important. It's easy for an owner to get complacent and con-

tinue operating as they have for the last twenty years, but with the consumer attitude changing quickly, you definitely want to be proactive rather than being forced into a reactive position because once that occurs, it may be too late and your business has already suffered.

A simple, well-prepared and professional plan could be the best investment you make in your future.



Richard S. Lee is the President of Lee & Associates, a firm that represents funeral home owners in the sale and transfer of their funeral business. Since 1987, they have been involved in over

160 transactions all over the United States. The scope of their work also includes business valuations, accounting solutions and general consulting services. He is also President of Capstone Services Group LLC, an owner and operator of funeral homes. Richard is always available for questions and may be reached at 407-257-5024 or email him at Leebros@aol.com.



Even if you are on the right track, you will get run over if you just sit there.

“Dear Counselor....”

By Bill Stalter

Dear Counselor:

My mother gave me her power of attorney, but the cemetery where she is buried will not honor my instructions for transferring ownership of the remaining family graves without the consent of my brother and sister. How do I get the cemetery to follow my instructions?

Almost all financial powers of attorney terminate on the principal’s death. The lone exception would be when a durable power of attorney includes language giving a right of sepulcher to the agent. If your mother’s power of attorney was durable, and included right of sepulcher language, it would have given you powers to control the disposition of her body (ie, to carry out her funeral and burial preferences). But, no power of attorney would give you rights to make financial transactions with her assets after her death. Most cemeteries give lot owners the option to designate who has the right of interment to vacant spaces they own. If your parents did not designate who was to receive the interment rights to unused graves they owned, the cemetery is within their rights to seek the consent of

your brother and sister before following your instructions. If there is a dispute with your siblings, the cemetery may require a court order before making any transfers. Accordingly, you would be best advised to work out an agreement with your brother and sister.



Dear Counselor:

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.
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A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Grave..... I Became an Undertaker

****Part 6 ****

By Lowell Pugh

The transition from rural Golden City and my own bed to the BIG city, St. Louis Mortuary College “trade school” and a boarding house waswell, sort of like the “Beverly Hillbillies” moves to L.A. EXCEPT—they had a car!!!

Classrooms and administration were located in a former mansion with additional space built on one side. The carriage house was converted into a four-station embalming lab with space for anatomical dissection. There was parking space for staff and a shuffleboard court between classrooms and the embalming lab. I think the entire area now is either a hospital or a parking garage.

In the school’s flush time there were around 400 students, mostly going to school on the G.I. Bill. Extra classroom space was rented from a Jewish facility next door. I can remember only 18 to 20 in my class with at least two older students. We had one female classmate, I think she was attending with her husband. The number of students in the classes ahead and after mine were not much larger. The nine month-three trimester curriculum consisted of: anatomy, lecture and lab (dissection); chemistry; microbiology; pathology; embalming lecture and lab; funeral directing; mortuary law and a specialized restorative art class presented by a professional sculptor. Parties were optional, but well attended.

The school’s mission was to educate students so they could pass the various state boards and/or the National Board. One classmate in his 40’s had been operating a funeral home in

Illinois for a year without a license and had just purchased another funeral home. Most of us were in a family operation or already working for a firm.

Living in a boarding house was an adventure for me. If I had paid more attention to detail I could now be writing a script for a situation comedy. Located in a former mansion on West Pine, the area was home to hundreds of University students. Our mansion was home to pharmacy students on the 2nd floor, mortuary students, one dental student, a night-watchman and a cab driver. The owner and her grown son also lived there. The owners and the two men lived on the first floor near the living, dining and kitchen areas. A mortuary student lived in the entryway cloak room. The pay phone was near his door. Evenings and nights, shouts could be heard throughout the house—“John answer the phone!”

Students on the second floor had the use of ornate bath facilities. The marble-walled room featured a number of elegant fixtures. One in particular, few had ever seen back home—not even in the movies.

Most of the mortuary students were on the third floor servant quarters. You ascended it by a narrow back stairway from the second floor. The bathroom was ordinary.

The morning drill was to go by the serving window of the kitchen and pick up your plate of breakfast. At this point you announced whether or not you would be there for supper. There was always some food items served family-style, but

pieces of meat were always by the numbers.

I lucked out on weekend trips back home during the first and third trimesters. During my first trimester Jack Parker, Parker Mortuary, Joplin would give me a ride to the intersection of US 66 and US 71 south of Carthage. My mother would meet us in a business parking lot.

The third trimester was with Ingles Ferry, Ferry Funeral Home of Nevada. If a trip home was necessary and there was no ride, it was The Texas Special, Track 37, to Springfield, MO. The train was an enjoyable trip, but I was a few months short of being able to have a beer in the observation car. All return trips were a 6 1/2 hour bus ride from Springfield. (Stay tuned next time for the rest of the story.)

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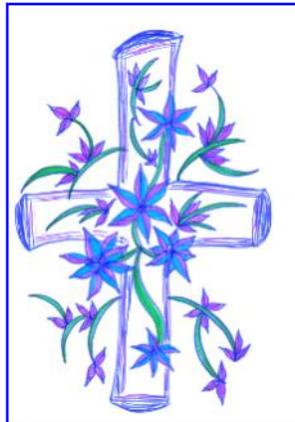
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*Dylan's Directives***Train up an apprentice...***By Dylan Stopher*

You know what's crazy? If I were to ask 100 funeral directors from different firms how to train a student or apprentice, they would give me 100 different answers. Those answers would vary greatly in scope and level of intensity, some focused on arrangements and some focused on embalming, some looking into paperwork and some looking at professional demeanor.

The best part is, none of these are wrong. The worst part is, all of them are not given equal focus. So I'd like to propose a set of specific steps for standardized training within any facility for students, apprentices, or new funeral directors in your organization. And please know, these are only suggestions.

Let's begin with the obvious "Rule Number One" for all funeral professionals: the family is in charge. Every new member to your team should know this, but one thing we need to do as leaders is never assume that someone knows something. Yes, their mortuary college should've taught them this truism, and yes, they should have an innate understanding of it even without that instruction. But the simple rule to apply to everything that ever happens is (in my words when I teach it) as follows... if you had someone die in your family this week, then you get to be in charge; if you did not have someone die in your family this week, then you do not get to be in charge.

I'm here to tell you, I've been around directors in more than one state who have said to me, "I'm the funeral director... I'll TELL the family what to do." I've also heard them instruct students and apprentices in these same attitudes, because, "I'm the funeral director." This is bad. We certainly have inside knowledge, and we absolutely have the information the family needs, but if we don't come into every day with an awareness that the family is in charge of what will happen... then our days will be numbered. Never forget, the family is in charge.

Now that our first rule is established, we need to move on to practical things. And since most of us started in the prep room, we need to talk about the big deal in the embalming area... keeping it clean!

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Cleanliness matters, and all you need is an annual inspection to remind yourself of that. Especially if it fails. But see, if you take the time as a seasoned director to walk your new teammate through the proper steps more than once, they might actually retain it. Further, if they see you **DOING** what you're always **SAYING**, then the chances that it will become habit increase exponentially.

This leads me to another solid truism, and we'll call it "Rule Number Two" for all funeral professionals: more is caught than taught. Basically, people are going to do what they see you do, regardless of what you tell them to do. If they see you cut corners, they will grow up in the business to cut corners. If they see you clean meticulously during and after every embalming, they will pick up those patterns of behavior. It will be seen as the expectation, the standard, the guide post, and it will be the norm. But if you don't walk the walk, there's a massive chance the person(s) you're teaching will never adopt positive habits. Nope, they'll do what you do.

For our next practical thing, we'll look into the arrangement conference. There needs to be a process, a flow, a pattern that begins with the first call and how to properly gather initial information. That process needs to move into how to dispatch your removal team, how to speak to the family to set an appointment, how to prepare the file and/or electronic systems for the family's arrival, and how to move through the conference itself. I'm not going to dig too deeply into those, because we all have our own tried and true methods. However, I will say that if you aren't seeking out your best arranging director and modeling your conferences after him/her, you're missing the boat in a huge way.

This brings me to "Rule Number Three" for everyone in our profession: practice, practice, practice. It sounds

(Continued on page 29)

*Dylan's Directives— (Cont.)**(Continued from page 28)*

silly, but simply sitting and role playing the scenario with a student or apprentice will ease the difficulty of facing a family for the first time. I am one of countless directors who watched the arrangement conference from a corner, and then one day had to conduct one under the scrutiny of a licensed director. It's not the best system to throw someone to the wolves, as it were, when our profession deals with extremely sensitive material and emotional states. So practice! Role play with your team. Serve in the capacity of the family that is easy to serve, and then serve in the role of a family that is challenging. Throw the curve balls, prepare your up and coming directors for the worst, and then hope for the very best. As a dear friend of mine says all the time, proper preparation prohibits poor performance. So prepare and practice. Practice a lot. And then practice some more.

Now on to another wonderful thing that I was once taught, something that I wish I had been taught sooner. It revolves around how to serve all of the families in the building, all at the same time. I'll never forget that night that we had a rosary in both chapels, another rosary in our largest state room, and the other three state rooms all had visitations... all in one night. I was a fresh-faced apprentice, straight out of the restaurant business, wearing a suit for the first time, and the coffee pot wouldn't stay full. Trash needed to be taken out, people needed temperatures adjusted, flowers were still arriving, and three different deacons needed to start their rosary services.

Then my apprenticeship supervisor walked slowly to me as I blazed through the corridors, and he delivered to me our "Rule Number Four": never let them see you sweat. My head was in serve mode, move fast and get things done to stay ahead of the curve. And don't misunderstand, I wasn't being told to stop that. What I was being told revolved more around the poise and finesse that are necessary for the professionals who serve families in their darkest hour. We need to be calm. We need to be collected. And we need to never appear flustered in front of the families we serve. Our calm will translate (in most situations) over to them, and the confidence they have in us will grow as they see us handle obstacles and keep moving forward. That's what professionals do. That's what funeral professionals do. We keep going, we tackle each task as it comes,

and we never stop striving to exceed the expectations of every family we are privileged to serve. And we never let people see us sweat.

Finally, I'd like to point out the one thing that must exist in any training and development program at any level. It's one of those things that people cannot underestimate, and they cannot leave out or play down to a lower level. This is likely the most important part of the entire idea, over and above the practical stuff and the theory stuff.

Our "Rule Number Five" for this set of thoughts is fairly simple: accountability matters. You see, as the licensee in the room with an apprentice, whether we are embalming or arranging or serving in a chapel or church, I am accountable. The mistakes are mine, even if they're not. That's the purpose of an apprenticeship... to learn, to make mistakes with a safety net, to grow out of the simple errors and become competent to serve families as a licensed director. So yes, the accountability is real, and it will hit the licensed person first.

The key there is to take the time to explain to the apprentice what happened, why, how it was wrong, and what steps could've been taken to avoid the error. If your students and apprentices don't learn from every possible scenario, they'll never be ready to face the challenges of carrying all the weight on their shoulders. You're there to protect them, yes, but you need to educate them in the entire spectrum of occurrences. Otherwise, we are the ones who fail.

Never misunderstand the importance of training. It is at the core of the competent funeral professional, and it is vital for the growth of any apprentice. If we don't teach them, and if they fail, it is actually not them that fail... it's us.



About the author: - Dylan Stopher is a licensed funeral director and embalmer in the states of Texas and Louisiana, and currently serves with Wilbert Vaults of Houston, LLC. He is an active member of the SETFDA and the TFDA, and a regular contributor to both the Texas Director Magazine and the Millennial Director blog.



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Making Customer Service an Art Form at the Funeral Home



August 2018-The newly renamed Holt & Holt Funeral Home, formerly Vaughan's Funeral Home, was purchased by Mary and William Holt in 2017. Holt & Holt can be found at the same great location with new and improved facilities and owners that focus on unparalleled caring and compassionate customer service catering to families in the Boerne area. Holt & Holt is a husband and wife team, passionate about helping families achieve peace following the loss of a loved one. Their core values focus on maturity, compassion, dignity, respect and exemplary personalized service. The Holts' aim is to be of genuine and empathetic assistance to every bereaved family they help.

William Holt, the new Funeral Director, has finally found his true calling. His passion for customer service and his need to contribute to the community brought him to open Holt & Holt Funeral Home, along with his wife Mary and their son Jason. It is a real family affair offering compassion and caring to all the families seeking to lay their loved ones to rest. With the new and improved facilities and relationships, Mr. and Mrs. Holt felt a new name would reflect their vision and goals for this long-time Boerne business.

William started his funeral home management career in Yoakum and was managing five homes in that area before being transferred to manage funeral homes in the Taylor, Texas area. Finding that he preferred smaller funeral homes, he began working in Hamburg, Arkansas, and then moved to Nalley-Pickle & Welch Funeral Home in Midland, Texas, before taking over in Boerne and establishing Holt & Holt. Finding Boerne settled his restless heart; he found the right fit between his management skills, his commitment to excellent customer service and his compassion to help people with the loss of their loved ones.

Mary, the second part of the dynamic funeral home customer service duo, is

the heart of Holt & Holt and a technical support expert. She will be utilizing her skills in computer programming, project management and accounting to make Holt & Holt a stable, organized family oriented funeral home. Mary was raised in Louisiana, but her Texas roots trace back to the 1840's when her mother's family emigrated from Germany to the Hill Country. Her forebears established themselves as store owners and land owners in the Hill Country and Gonzales county. As a child, she spent most summers in the Hill Country, and is glad to be back; it's one of her favorite places to be.

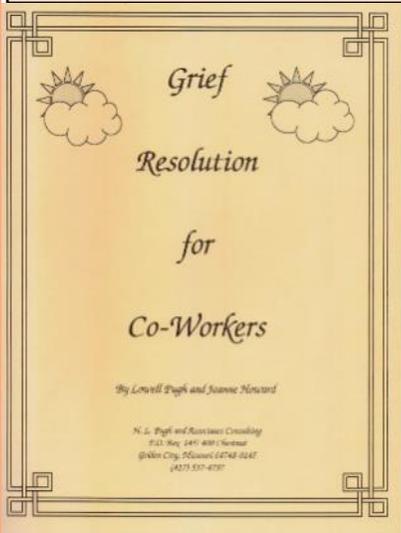
The combination of William's extensive management experience and Mary's technical expertise make them well-suited to running a funeral home and modernizing its operations. Applying their project management principles to every service, will allow for the newly improved Holt & Holt Funeral Home to focus their attentions on the families and their needs.

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