

The Dead Beat



The Caregiver's Soapbox



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

Winter, 2009

www.thedead-beat.com

Volume 9 Issue 5

Business, Institution and Government Ethics and Etiquette of Expressing Sympathy

By H. Clay Atchison III

If you are representing a business, institution, or government agency, it can be especially challenging to know how to express sympathy when an obituary reads, "in lieu of flowers contributions can be made to an organization." Most businesses and agencies have regulations prohibiting monetary donations as an expression of sympathy. University of Houston Victoria, like many institutions, has strict rules and regulations for expressing sympathy. "University funds may not be used for memorial contributions to given charities in lieu of flowers. If flowers are not appropriate, only a card will be sent," (UHV Condolences and Congratulations Policies). Institutions and businesses have these policies for understandable reasons. It may be considered unethical to support one organization and not another, or outsiders may view certain organizations as inappropriate.

When considering how to express your sympathy, its important to remember that flowers are always a kind gesture, unless the phrases, "omit flowers or no flowers," are used. Flowers brighten a somber mood and help the bereaved visually experience support from friends and family.

There are many reasons why leaders can and should send some form of sympathy to bereaved families.

- ◆ Most businesses, institutions, and agencies have money set aside for sympathy gifts and flowers to be sent to employees or their direct relatives, close associates, and even students, but this money is often not allowed to be used as monetary donations. University of Illinois has a strict policy. "Unallowable for any funds: In Lieu of Flowers-Contributions in lieu of flowers...(However) Allowable: acknowledgments may include flowers, plants, gift baskets, or similar items," (University of Illinois, Business and Financial Policies and Procedures). All institutions have a policy regarding sympathy gifts and flowers and one should be diligent in knowing their company's policy before sending an expression of sympathy.
- ◆ Employees and other continuous supporters of a business or agency put in a tremendous amount of effort into their professional life. By sending an expression of sympathy, such as flowers, employers acknowledge the dedication of the employee and their family. Making a gesture of kindness shows the relationship of mutual support between employee and employer.
- ◆ By acknowledging the difficult loss of someone who has impacted the business or institution, a leader is able to express to the employee or associate that they are valued and will be supported when they return to work.
- ◆ Supporting employees and/or their families is always good business. By showing support and care for people who have been dedicated to the company, the company builds a reputation of having strong values. People always re-

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Wenburg
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The Last Ride Motorcycle Hearse
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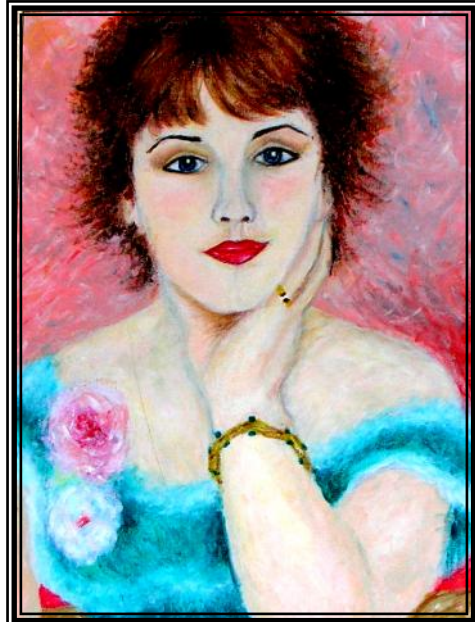
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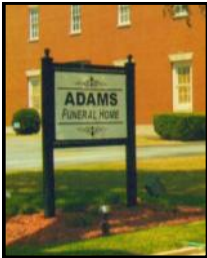
Amy Howard

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.

As We Drive By



We love to take pictures as we go by funeral homes, but we'd welcome pictures, if you send them to us. These pictures provided by Bill Murray.



Adams Funeral Home—Dublin, Georgia—Est. 1926



Scattering Cremains in a Natural Area

Native Grasses and Flowers Reaching to the Sky



For those with a love for the natural landscape, arrangements have been made with the private owners of **Golden Prairie**, a registered natural landmark, to scatter cremains on their property. In addition to the arrangements, a picture and GPS location of the actual site is included.


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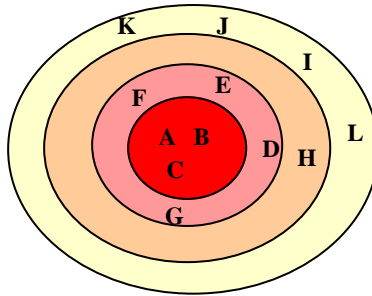
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Mortuary Muse*
 *to think or consider deeply;
 meditate
 By Lowell

A placid farm pond is smooth as glass until a fish bait drops in the middle and a bass erupts from below sending ripples across the surface. Or a bowl of alphabet soup is staring you in the face as you drop croutons in the middle creating repetitive circles to the bowl rim. A demographic region might be symbolized by the action in the pond or a soup bowl.

We sit on the edge of two demographic regions that have core metropolitan areas with smaller cities and towns in the outer rings. One metro area, think the center of the soup bowl of population, has three independent funeral service firms, A, B, and C, which has ties to a local crematory and a small independent chain of funeral homes. Everyone is civil to one another, but competition seems to be fierce, especially in the cremation segment.



Now let's talk about the outer rings of the smaller cities and towns. The next largest population ring after the core has four firms, D, E, F and G before the ripple crosses a state line. E and F have strong ties to core B so their cremation pricing stays close to B's. Firm D feels that higher charges are justified, but tries to stay in the ballpark with the neighbor's pricing.

The next population ring has funeral home H which has ties to firm C. Final ring of small towns has Firm I with no connections nor does J except for being a community competitor to firm K. Firm K has ties to B, E and F while firm L's niche is centered between rings among five firms in this alpha-

betic concoction.

Funeral home J agrees that the cremation pricing is under valued but hopes to stay competitive with K. While funeral home I takes the Rhett to Scarlett attitude (movie's last scene) and prices cremations according to their costs and value—a price closer to minimum burial.

Now enter another player or the crouton in this soup. A full service funeral director with a crematory and several other locations in another demographic region which has opened a cremation society in the midst of firms A, B and C. He may be the smartest one in the soup bowl. With profitable cremation pricing at his funeral homes he can now add some cost off-setting income from the alphabet soup bowl area. Do we have a fly in the soup or maybe a barracuda in the fish pond?

When did market share become more important than profitability? Is a below cost preneed cremation contract ever going to recoup enough funding in a good economy much less the current

(Continued on page 5)

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New Fayetteville, Arkansas Funeral Home

Epting Funeral Home has expanded into two locations. As of January 1, 2009 they are now open to serve the Fayetteville, Arkansas area. Their new location is at 28 South College, Suite 20. Their new phone number is 479-443-3443.

Epting Funeral Home opened their first location in March, 2008 in Bentonville, Arkansas and quickly saw the need for another location in the Fayetteville area. They specialize in church services, graveside services and cremations.

Epting Funeral Home is owned and operated by Ricky and Iris Epting. Their website is www.eptingfuneralhome.webs.com.

Rick Epting has been a licensed funeral director serving families for over ten years. He is a 1996 graduate of Rogers High School and a 1998 graduate of Northwest Arkansas Community College in Bentonville, Arkansas. He has a degree in Business Management. Born in West Memphis, Arkansas, Ricky moved with his family to Northwest Arkansas in 1990. He married Iris Le Epting October 14, 2006 in Rogers, Arkansas.



Ricky and Iris Epting

Ricky is a member of the Rogers Noon Lions Club, where he serves on the Board of Directors. Also he was a past-president of the Northwest Arkansas Funeral Directors Association.

Iris Epting is an accountant for Cooper Homes located in Rogers, Arkansas. She was born and raised

in Rogers, Arkansas. She was a 2000 graduate of Rogers High School, and a 2004 Ouachita Baptist University graduate where she obtained her degree in Accounting.

Ricky and Iris enjoy traveling, scuba diving, and spending time with their families. He and his wife are members of First Baptist Church in Rogers

Ricky and Iris opened Epting Funeral Home in March, 2008, and is the only locally-owned and operated funeral home in Bentonville. The importance of being family-owned is very important to their family, knowing that all decisions are made on-site and in a timely manner.

They wanted to offer Fayetteville and the surrounding area the same quality services that they have offered in Bentonville and in January, 2009, Epting Funeral Home expanded into the Fayetteville market. They are located next door to Caring Caskets. They are honored to accept all merchandise purchased from Caring Caskets at NO additional cost to their families. They are able to pass along savings to their families because they do not have expensive overhead that most funeral homes have.

Ricky says, "God has given us the strength to continue to serve many families in Northwest Arkansas Region, this is our ministry. Our family is honored to serve your family."

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.



Colleagues Lost or Found!!!

(If you would like to find someone in the funeral industry, let us know-
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Mortuary Muse (Cont.)

(Continued from page 3)

situation? Does this intense emphasis on below cost cremation increase the public perception that this should be the norm? Some serious contemplation is in order.

An interesting historical footnote from two generations back. The founder of firm B promoted complete funerals in the \$200 range. None of the competing funeral homes jumped on that train.

About the Author:

Lowell Pugh has funeral director and embalmer licenses in Missouri and Texas and continues the operation of the 105-year-old family funeral home. He is publisher of **The Dead Beat** which began in 1999. He can be contacted at **The Dead Beat** address.

12-Year-Old's Special Burial

It's always sad when a 12-year old dies to begin with, but when someone has always dreamed of becoming an Army chaplain, it's nice to see it acknowledged.

An Associated Press release about Dennis Channel Jr. of Millersport, Ohio was uplifting. He had earned "honorary status as a member of the U.S. Army and Chaplain for the Ohio National Guard." The problem was that he had been battling brain cancer since the age of five.

After his death the Guard decided he deserved a military burial. So Guard members carried the casket, later raised their rifles to fire three rounds and the bugler played, "Taps."



(From a mother that has lost a child, Thank you Guard for your compassion, I know the family appreciated it.)

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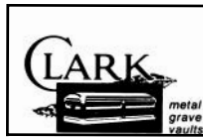
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Behind the Back Fence

By Lowell

Several years ago I said the way funeral service was changing that if we wanted to stay viable we had to provide what the customer really wanted. If the in-laws really want to spend the insurance money on a memorial Cadillac, we should make sure we were in the Cadillac business. Automobiles? That doesn't sound like such a good idea now.



For the last several years the funeral service consultant/marketing people have been telling us that baby boomers are different. They are going to seek their own creative ways to do funerals and we should be prepared to provide all of these different



services and events that they will require. Embalmers may have to prepare the deceased in a sitting position for a visitation at Cinema 33 or a golf cart at the memorial tournament. This will, of course, enhance our bottom line and increase our

market share.

Where am I going with all of this? I don't have the foggiest idea. I see this never ending progression of things and events to create meaningful funeral services to help grieving families ameliorate their sorrow while earning a living for management, staff and suppliers. But will the economy of the near future support this mode of funeral service? Will the baby boomer generation suddenly find themselves not so different from their predecessors? Perhaps they really never were that different.

I think that prudent and progressive funeral directors won't turn their backs on the so-called "event" funeral, but it sure would not hurt to sharpen up those personal skills, a warm handshake and a comforting hug for a minimum burial. Think simple, affordable and compassionate-but don't give the store away.



About the Author: Lowell Pugh has funeral director and embalmer licenses in Missouri and Texas and continues the operation of the 105-year-old family funeral home. He is publisher of **The Dead Beat** which began in 1999. He can be contacted at **The Dead Beat** address.

After-Thoughts "Contagious Death?????"

By Joanne Howard

This month seems like an effort to decide what to share with you. As I was walking the dog, my usual contemplative time, I had several thoughts. Several different illnesses are going around ranging from digestive to respiratory and I was thinking how everyone really doesn't want to be around the sick person. We all feel that just exposure to a sick person will lead us to be sick too. We forget that many factors are involved when we get sick.

First, the condition of our own bodies and being able to fight off whatever we are exposed to. Second, what the actual illness the person has and if it is even contagious. Third, sometimes it matters if we have contact or if the illness is airborne and being in the same room will give us a chance of exposure. But it really aggravates me when people act like you have the plague and make you feel bad that you are ill around them. Like you really want to be sick and your purpose in life is to get them sick too.

Now some people should stay home when they are sick because they are not useful and may spread the illness, but sometimes we don't have a choice. The penalties for not showing up for school or work may be too great to stay home and recoup. This is another problem in our culture, but that's a whole other topic.

Back to the contagiousness of illness, does this not seem familiar to your treatment after someone close to you, dies. I felt like when my girls died that at times people didn't want to be around me or my husband or their children would die too. Maybe the same thing is the case after someone has lost a spouse. Not

only do the grievors feel like a fifth wheel not being a couple among couples, but if their friends think associating with the one who lost the spouse would lose theirs' too. Your friends wonder if their spouse will die too or you will take the friend's spouse to replace yours.

Surprise, surprise, death is not contagious. But maybe it awakens everyone's worry about a loved one's mortality or even their own. Maybe it just brings out our being uncomfortable with death, period. The fear of death is very strong and to know it can happen so suddenly without any control from us, makes all of us susceptible to many dumb thoughts.

The problem is that we are not actually aware of many of these thoughts we are having. How many times do you actually consider all the things that you are worrying about? Just the major problems seem to occupy our time, but underlying fears are there whether we acknowledge them or not. We do worry about dying, we worry about our loved ones dying, we worry about getting cancer, we worry about getting in an accident, and we worry about many other things.

But life goes on and it really hurts grieving people if they think they are being avoided because of some death in their lives. Dealing with the death and what follows is hard enough without having to wonder if you're being avoided because your friends are afraid it will happen to them.

So, what do you do about this? Probably nothing, but you need to be aware of it and consider it something else to deal with. As time goes by, you

don't forget what has happened to your life, but other people do. Lowell and I wrote an article about "*It's Been Two Weeks Aren't They Over It Yet?*" People do tend to think that people get over a death, but that's not really the way it goes. Grieving people learn to adjust to the change in their lives. Their actions may seem like they have gotten over it, but really it's just a matter of adjustment. No one ever forgets the person or life they had before someone dies.

Recently my husband and I were invited to a wedding reception. We decided not to go because that particular situation still makes us uncomfortable since the loss of our girls. The person inviting was kidding about getting a better offer and my husband had to go into a bit more explanation. The person then understood but the changes in our life had been forgotten since we had "gotten on with our lives." It's been years since our lives have been changed, but the losses still impact us. Life goes on, but the impact is forever. Sometimes you are able to handle incidents better than other times. The circumstances and timing when such things happen have much to do with whether you can deal with it or not in certain situations.

Well, I've given a few things to think about in this discussion. Death is not contagious and you can be around someone who has lost someone to death and it won't happen to you. And don't think because someone doesn't express heartache about the lost loved one years later that they are not still impacted and hurt by their loss.

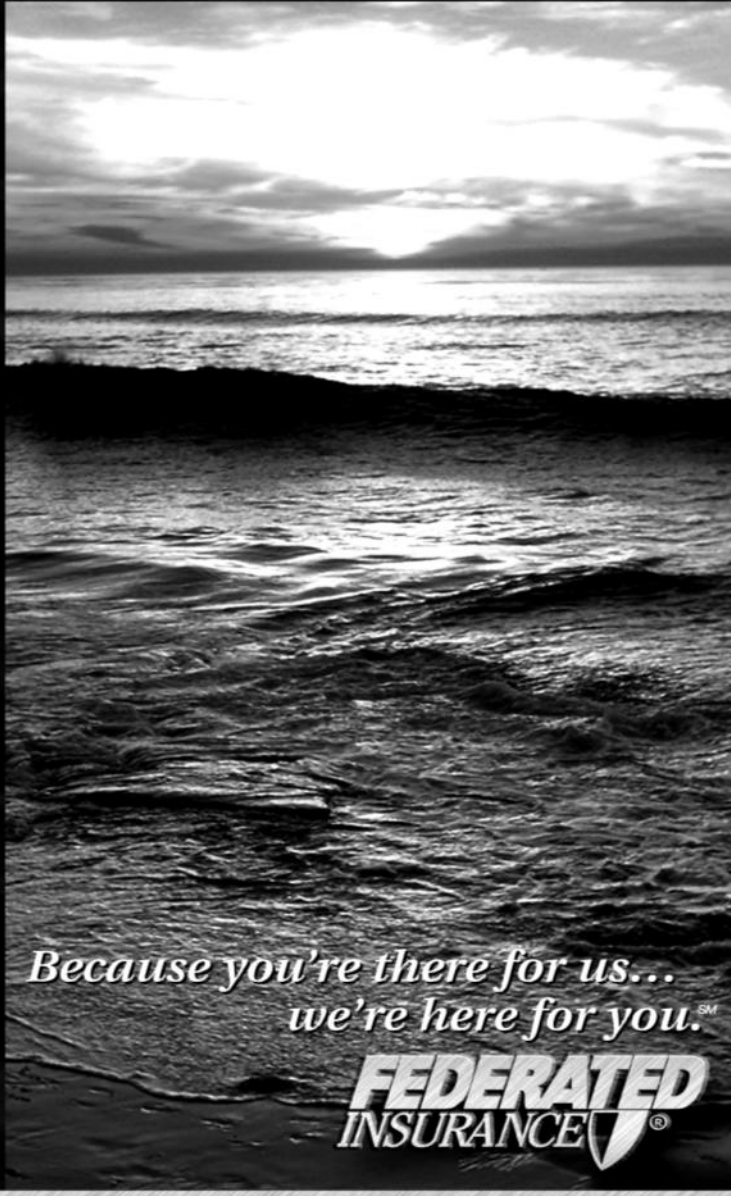


About the author: Joanne Howard is the editor of **The Dead Beat**. She has been a licensed funeral director since 1992 with Pugh Funeral Home in Golden City, MO and also the aftercare coordinator. Much of her writing in this column is influenced by her loss of her two daughters Laura at age 10 in 1997 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.

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American Mortuary Service Opens In St. Louis, Missouri

American Mortuary Service opened on December 17, 2008 in Arnold, Missouri (a suburb of St. Louis, Missouri). The owners of American Mortuary Service are Tim and Roberta Rader.

Tim is a 1984 graduate of the Eldon High School in Eldon, Missouri and a 1986 graduate of Mid-America College of Funeral Service in Jeffersonville, Indiana. Tim is an active member of the Shinakah Masonic Lodge.

Tim is experienced in all aspects of embalming and transporting human remains, having been licensed for over 20 years in the state of Missouri.

American Mortuary Service is located at 4107 Jeffco Blvd., in Arnold, Missouri. It is located just off of I-55. The preparation room is state-of-the-art and is able to accommodate the needs of any funeral home.

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Lowell's Thoughts "Jokers That Aren't Too Funny"

News reports indicate the obnoxious Pestberg Anti-Baptist Church is still picketing military funeral services and suing entities that they claim are infringing on their right to freedom of speech and expression. *L: I suspect the lawsuits are their principle source of income. They are pretty hard to ignore. I hope someone can come up with a nonviolent answer to these jokers.*

The Josh and Lisa show was playing in an article by Carol Milano, American Funeral Director, January, 2009. Just when I think Josh is about to understand the program as in this statement, "We're not anti-funeral just anti-consumer abuse," he comes back with a comment about the non-declinable basic service fee. Says Josh, "...It's a cover charge, averaging \$1,200 to \$2,000. It buys nothing." *L: Well gee, Josh, it bought an office and a funeral director to talk to.*

Lisa also was complaining about the basic service charge. She thinks it is abused and should be itemized as well. "Arrangement conferences are a cost of doing business," she said. Considering the price of utilities nowadays she may have a point. *L: "Do you want heat in the arrangement room Widow Brown?"*



It's A Girl !!!!



Shawn Hughes (contributor to **The Dead Beat**) and Renee Rees announce the birth of their daughter, Kimberly Sarah Hughes, born on Monday, October 6, 2008 at Covenant Medical Center Lakeside, Lubbock, TX at 9:19 p.m. She was 6 1/2 lbs and 19 1/2 inches long.

Undesirable Top 10 List

The Attorney General's Office in Missouri released it's Top 10 in Received Complaints list. For the first time ever, it included preneed burial plans, funeral homes and cemeteries in this list. This is not the list to make and wonder what other states have top ten undesirable lists that funeral-related complaints got the honor!!!!!! Let's hope this is not a pattern.

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When A Friend Dies

By Ken Doka

When I picked up my four-year-old grandson from preschool, Kenny was proud to introduce me to his new friend. Even at a young age, we begin the lifelong process of making friends. If he's lucky, he may even keep some of the friends he makes in these early years. I still have a friend that goes way back to third grade.

Friends are an important part of our life. We share so much-laughter and contemplation, people and places, active and quiet moments. Friends keep us grounded and shape our identities. They may help us find jobs, homes, or even spouses. Moreover, our friends are not thrust upon us; we choose them. Some of our favorite films, from *Thelma and Louise* to *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, or TV shows such as *Friends* or *Will and Grace*, celebrate friendship.

Despite the role of friends in our lives, they are oft neglected in times of death. Rarely are friends mentioned in the eulogy or obituary. Little support is extended to them. Sympathy cards are rarely sent to friends. At best, they are expected to stifle their own grief and, as an act of sacrifice, attend to the family of the deceased. The loss of a friend then is another example of disenfranchised grief, the grief that results when others do not recognize our loss. In effect, we have no socially acknowledged "right to grieve" when we lose a friend. For example, few businesses extend time off to mourn a friend.

Yet, as friends, we too grieve. Grief is not a function of family ties or lines of descent. Rather, grief follows attachment.

When we love someone—as a parent, child, spouse, or friend—and that person dies, we grieve.

It is important, much as we strive to support family members, that we acknowledge our own loss. We need to understand as well that each loss is different. We have distinct connections and meanings attached to every friendship. We interact with our friends differently. Some friends are part of our weekly or daily routine. We regularly speak and spend time together. The death of these friends leaves an obvious void.

We have other friendships that are less intense but no less vital. While we may see them irregularly at best, they remain important in our lives. Lynn is one such friend. We talk only a few times a year, but she remains a critical connection in my life. She befriended me in high school, in what was then a large unfriendly place.

Understanding the unique quality of our friendships helps us to appreciate the inimitable loss. We can then recognize the singular nature of our grief.

We may find it essential to attend funerals and memorial services. The very best of these may be inclusive—bringing friends to the center of the circle of mourning. When my dear colleague Catherine Sanders died, I appreciated that the family chose three people to eulogize—her daughter, a colleague, and a friend. I felt very included to hear a colleague speak of the Catherine that I knew even as I was delighted that other eulogies touched on different aspects of her. I felt very included in

that ceremony.

Because all rituals are not that inclusive, we may need to find our own special ways to mourn a friend. Tom did that when his friend, Mark died. He decided to go back to the ball field in the old neighborhood—a place where he and Mark shared so many good moments. There he offered a silent prayer for his friend, and quietly grieved over the loss of his longtime buddy.

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



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

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

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Comments

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

Two keys hang in an undertaker’s office: one for the organ in the chapel; the other for one of the cars in the garage. Two small signs above the keys read: “Hymn” and “Hearse.”

Sent from Clay Atchison III

The Van Gogh Family Tree

- His dizzy aunt—Verti Gogh
- The brother who ate prunes—Gotta Gogh
- The grandfather from Yugoslavia—U Gogh
- The cousin from Illinois—Chica Gogh
- His magician uncle—Where-diddy Gogh
- His Mexican cousin—A mee Gogh
- His English cousin drummer—Ring Gogh
- The nephew who drove a stage coach—Wellsfar Gogh
- The constipated uncle—Cant Gogh
- The ballroom dancing aunt—Tang Gogh
- The bird lover uncle—Flaming Gogh
- His nephew psychoanalyst—E Gogh
- The fruit loving cousin—Man Gogh
- An aunt who taught positive thinking—Wayto Gogh
- The little bouncy nephew—Poe Gogh
- A sister who loves disco—Go Gogh
- The reluctant traveler—No Gogh
- And His niece who traveled the country in a van—Winnie Bay Gogh

A man was leaving a convenience store with his morning coffee when he noticed a most unusual funeral procession approaching the nearby cemetery. A long black hearse was followed by a second long black hearse about 50 feet behind the first one. Behind the second hearse was a solitary man walking a dog on a leash. Behind him, a short distance back, were about 200 men walking single file. The man couldn’t stand the curiosity. He respectfully approached the man walking the dog and said, “I am so sorry for your loss, and this may be a bad time to disturb you, but I’ve never seen a funeral like this. Whose funeral is it?” “My wife’s” “What happened to her?” The man replied, “My dog attacked and killed her.” He inquired further, “But who is in the second hearse?” The man answered, “My mother-in-law. She was trying to help my wife when the dog turned on her.” A poignant and thoughtful moment of silence passed between the two men. “Can I borrow the dog?” the man replied, “...get in line.”



Hi, I am a funeral director in Pinedale, Wy. I receive a copy of the dead beat and I love it. The problem is the local sexton here in Pinedale loves it too and he often ends up taking my copy before I am finished with it. Curt Covill, Covill Funeral Home

.....PS—I enjoyed seeing Amy’s painting. John Tomp, Global Mortuary Affairs.

....I wanted to make sure that I took the time to thank you for the press release on the Prinzing Carved Panel Funeral Coach—WOW!!!! Never in my wildest dreams did I expect the coverage & depth that you gave us on the introduction of the coach—it was truly impressive and most unexpected. I also wanted you to know, of the many press releases and from all the places that we submitted to, your coverage and article created and sparked the most interest. We had more responses from the Dead-Beat than from any other magazines or articles submitted—Thank you once more! Richard J. Neal, Rosewood Classic Coach, Bob Neal & Sons Funeral Homes

Submitted by: Patti Henson, secretary
Reeder-Davis-Schindler Funeral Home, Inc. Linden, TX

How do you know when you’re staying in a Redneck motel?
When you call the front desk and say, “I gotta leak in my sink,” and the clerk replies, “Go ahead.”

Did you hear about the \$3 million Redneck Lottery?
The winner gets \$3.00 a year for a million years.

Two reasons why it’s so hard to solve a Redneck murder:

- 1) *The DNA is all the same*
- 2) *There are no dental records.*

Though Valentine’s Day may be past by the time this is received, in honor of it I wanted to share something sent a few years ago. It was from a Washington Post competition asking to rhyme the first romantic line with the least romantic second line.

1. Thought that I could love no other, that was until I met your brother.
2. Roses are red, violets are blue, sugar is sweet, and so are you. But the roses are wilting, the violets are dead, the sugar bowl’s empty and so is your head.
3. Of loving beauty you float with grace. If only you could hide your face.
4. Kind, intelligent, loving and hot; This describes everything you are not.
5. I want to feel your sweet embrace. But don’t take that bag off your face.
6. I see your face when I am dreaming. That’s why I always wake up screaming.
7. My love, you take my breath away. What have you stepped in to smell this way?

(Continued on page 11)

Chuckles (Cont.)

(Continued from page 10)

Feeling very proud after having walked around with her dad on the golf course for the first time, a little girl couldn't wait to tell everyone at the clubhouse about it. "My daddy is the best golfer in the whole world. He can play for hours and still keep the ball from hardly ever going into those little holes."



Comprehending Engineers:

Three engineering students were gathered together discussing the possible designers of the human body. One said, "It was a mechanical engineer. Just look at all the joints." Another said, "No, it was an electrical engineer. The nervous system has many thousands of electrical connections." The last said, "Actually it was a civil engineer. Who else would run a toxic waste pipeline through a recreational area?"

A very sexually promiscuous man who does not take precautions awoke a week after returning back in the States to find his sex organ covered with bright green and purple spots. Horrified, he immediately goes to see his doctor. The doctor, never having seen anything like this before, orders some tests and tells the man to return in two days for the results. The man returned a couple of days later and the doctor says, "I've got bad news for you. You've contracted Mongolian VD. It's very rare and almost unheard of here. We know very little about it." "Well, give me a shot or something and fix me up, doc." The doctor answers, "I'm sorry, there's no known cure. We're going to have to amputate your penis." The man screams in horror, "Oh no, I want a second opinion!" The doctor replies, "Go ahead, but surgery is your only choice." The next day the man seeks out a Chinese doctor, figuring that he'll know more about the disease. The Chinese doctor examined his member and proclaims, "Ah yes, Mongolian VD. Velly lare disease." The guy says to the doctor, "Yeah, yeah, I already know that, but what can you do? My American doctor wants to operate and amputate my penis!" The Chinese doctor shakes his head and laughs, "Stupid Amellican doctor! Amellican doctor, always want to opulate. Make more money, that way. No need to opulate!" "Oh, thank God!" the man replies. "Yes!" says the Chinese doctor, "You no worry! Wait two weeky. It gonna fall off by itself!"

An elderly gentleman had serious hearing problems for a number of years. He went to the doctor and the doctor was able to have him fitted for a set of hearing aids that allowed the gentleman to hear 100%. The elderly gentleman went back in a month to the doctor and the doctor said, "Your hearing is perfect. Your family must be really pleased that you can hear again." The gentleman replied, "Oh, I haven't told my family yet. I just sit around and listen to the conversations. I've changed my will three times!!!"

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A man is lying on the operating table, about to be operated on by his son, the surgeon. The father says, "Son, think of it this way....if anything happens to me, your mother is coming to live with you."

Mooney-Keehley Rochester, New York



Ken Hampson, President of Mooney-Keehley, quality engravers, printers and publishers of Rochester, **New York**, was praised in our last issue for his stand on prices, but three people who proof this magazine missed that he was located in New York not New Your. Sorry!! I hope everyone understood his location especially since his ad was right below this article, but just in case, you know now. Be sure and give Ken a call if he can help with your printing needs. You can view Mooney-Keehley products on their website at www.mooneykeehley.com.

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Crematory Explodes!!

This is from the **London Telegraph** by Richard Spencer in Beijing on December 16, 2008.

The story was about Wang Diange, from the Chinese province of Inner Mongolia. His body was found in the "wreckage of a house where he had been overseeing the wake of a previous family funeral. He was found after the mourners felt a loud explosion which took off half the roof.

Due to the weather of rain and thunder they decided that the house and Mr. Wang had been struck by lightning. Though the police had come to the same conclusion, further inquiries were made a few days later after Mr. Wang's own funeral. "As the body was being put into the cremation chamber, it blew up spectacularly, bursting the doors off the oven."

"When the fire had been put out, the only clue as to what had happened was a small twisted piece of metal, which seemed to be the glowing remnants of a screw."

Though at first the local metallurgists were unable to determine what it was, they noted it bore a military serial number. After much investigation they suggested it might be part of a shell casing.

It was revealed that the rainfall on the day of the original disaster was triggered by the local weather bureau which had been firing shells into the atmosphere to break up hail "in order to protect the local tobacco crop." The shells' inside were silver iodide, a chemical that helps break up hail into rain.

The investigators concluded, "that one shell must have failed to explode, hit the house, and lodged in Mr. Wang's body." Local newspapers said that the shell may have gone unnoticed due to Mr. Wang's extensive injuries.

As a result of the investigation, three years after his death the family received compensation from the weather bureau.

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Celebrity Casket To Be Auctioned on E-Bay??

The **Houston Chronicle** picked up an article by Ron Francell of the **Beaumont Enterprise** called "Family of 'The Big Bopper' plans to auction his casket." This brings a new light to selling rock 'n' roll memorabilia.

It seems that the family plans to relocate the grave to a "more visible location with a life-sized statue and historic marker." The movement of the grave was understandable and even the donation of the empty casket to a rock 'n' roll museum, but to auction it on e-bay to raise money for a tribute act seems to be a bit much.

The son of J.P. "The Big Bopper" Richardson is the one that came up with this plan. It was remarkable how they described how the son had never seen his father until the casket had been opened. He had been born three months after the plane crash which claimed the lives of his father along with Buddy Holly and Ritchie Valens. They spoke of "the day the music died." Coincidentally the plane crash happened February 3, 1959. Interesting way of drawing attention to the 50th Anniversary. The casket has been at the Texas Musicians Museum in Hillsboro, Texas. It had been buried at the Forest Lawn Cemetery in Beaumont, Texas.

Back to the casket details it was a 16-gauge Batesville of which Batesville donated a sleek new one. After the 48 years they commented "the exhumed casket was in surprisingly good condition after being in the muddy gumbo of Southeast Texas with only some minor rust spots and a white lime stain showing where several inches of water once leaked into the surrounding vault, but there was no evidence water had ever seeped into the casket itself." Also how his corpse was "still well-preserved." and "most remarkably, his thick brown hair was still perfectly coiffed in his familiar, 1950s flat-top."

The museum and rock historian Tom Kreason commented, "Certainly there'll be some distaste, but I think this is a piece of history that is very special. Even if it doesn't sell, we've made a point about the historical value of J.P. Richardson."



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Death Notices of Fellow Funeral Service Colleagues

ARIZONA

Dominic Aira, 78, of Douglas, died November 4, 2008 from injuries he received in an automobile accident. In 1957 he entered the funeral home business working under Curtis Page and Gordon Brown of Brown-Page Mortuary and he eventually purchased the business with Robert (Bobby) Benson. He later became sole owner. Dominic ran his business the same way he ran his life-with an unrivaled compassion for others and a generous and giving spirit. He served in the Arizona National Guard for 15 years. His services were handled by the Brown-Page Mortuary 

ARKANSAS


Coy C. "Buddy" Cole, 61, of Harrison passed away December 29, 2008. He was the husband of Dee Ann (Harris) Cole, funeral director and embalmer for Coffman Funeral Home in Harrison. Buddy also was employed by Coffman Funeral Home where he was serving his funeral director apprenticeship. Services were held in Harrison and burial followed in Springfield, MO.


KANSAS

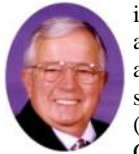
Bernardine Leiker, 80, of Great Bend, died Oct. 21, 2008. Her services were handled by Bryant Funeral Home of Great Bend.


Dorothy Louise Rawie, 83, of Shawnee passed away Sept. 25, 2008. She was wife of SW Professional Vehicle's car salesman.


MISSOURI

John Examilitis, 79, of Kansas City died Sept. 6, 2008. He entered the funeral industry in 1978 and joined the Charter Funerals in 1987 where he had been serving them as General Manager. 

William E. "Bill" Huddleston, 84, of Joplin died January 5, 2009. He was a licensed funeral director and embalmer working at Thornhill-Dillion Mortuary from 1944-1964 after serving in WWII. He purchased Parker Mortuary until semi-retiring in August, 2002. He served six years as a Missouri Funeral Director Association (MFDA) board member and four years for the Allied Council. He was recognized for outstanding service by the MFDA Education Foundation. The services were done by Parker Mortuary. 



Don Edward Phillips, 74 of Eldon passed away December 27, 2008. After serving in United States Air Force he graduated from Central Missouri State College at Warrensburg in 1958 and Cincinnati College of Embalming in 1959. He owned and operated Phillips Funeral Home until retirement. Services were handled by Phillips Funeral Home, Eldon. 

Paul Jones Triplett, 96, of Seymour departed this life Dec. 11, 2008. In 1954, he went to work for Bergman-Miller Funeral Home. He was a licensed funeral director and embalmer for over 50 years working for Bergman-Miller FH, Bogart-Bergman-Miller FH, and Holman-Howe Funeral Homes, retiring in 2006. He also served as a licensed Sterile Eye Eunclator. Holman-Howe Chapel in Seymour conducted the 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 Joanne@thedead-beat.com

MISSOURI (Cont.)

Billie Scott Vaughn, 91, of Weston passed away January 18, 2009. She was a graduate of Dodge Institute for Advanced Mortuary Studies and National Foundation of Funeral Service School of Management. She was the wife of Walter R. Vaughn for 73 years. She was co-owner of Vaughn-Walker Funeral Home, Lexington, Vaughn Funeral Home, Weston, Vaughn-Aufranc Funeral Home, Dearborn and Rollins Funeral Home, Platte City. Services were handled by Vaughn Funeral Home-Weston.



Walter R. Vaughn, 94 of Weston passed away December 14, 2008. He graduated from the Williams Institute of Embalming in Kansas City, KS in 1936, received his embalmer's license on Nov. 10, 1937, serving his apprenticeship with the Sheil FH in Kansas City, MO and in 1938 began his first business, Vaughn Funeral Home in Weston. As the years progressed he was co-owner of Vaughn-Aufranc FH, Dearborn, Vaughn-Walker FH, Lexington and Rollins FH, Platte City. He was a past president of MFDA. Arrangements were by Vaughn Funeral Home-Weston.


Milford H. H. Winter, 96 of Owensville died Jan. 26, 2009. He owned Gottenstroeter Funeral Home with his wife until 1983.

TEXAS




Thomas John (Tom) Darst, Sr., 91 of Houston, died Dec. 27, 2008. He is the father of John F. Darst, manager of Kingwood Funeral Home in Kingwood. Tom Darst, Sr. was founder and owner of the Forest Lawn Funeral Home and Cemetery in Houston which Tom Darst, Jr. now manages. Services were at Kingwood Funeral Home and Forest Lawn. (See info on pg.25)


George Charles Ebensberger, of Boerne, died Dec. 29, 2008. He was former owner of Ebensberger Funeral Home. Ebensberger-Fisher Funeral Home, Boerne handled services.

Billy Wayne Freeman, 78, of Hale Center passed away Dec. 31, 2008. He served in U.S. Navy from 1950 -1954. He attended Gupton-Jones Mortuary College and graduated in 1957. He owned and operated Freeman Funeral Home until retiring 1997. He was a past president of the West Texas Funeral Directors Association. Services were directed by Abell Funeral Home, Hale Center. 

Mary Therese Jackson, of Laredo, died Dec. 13, 2008. She was the mother of Joseph M. Jackson, Jr. who is the owner/manager of Joe Jackson Funeral Chapels in Laredo who handled the services.

Seth W. Lawrence, Jr., 84, of Anson, died Dec. 29, 2008. He served in the U. S. Navy until 1946. He studied Mortuary Science in Houston and joined his father in 1947 in the operation of Lawrence Funeral Home in Anson and retired in 1991. Services were directed by Lawrence-Adams Funeral Home. 



Weldon L. "Sonny" Mason, 74, of Bryan passed away on Jan.6, 2009. He served in U. S. Navy in 1952. In 1953 he worked for McDonald Funeral Home in Bryan until 1954 when he attended Austin Barber School and received his license in 1955. He worked at the Hillier Funeral Home and then was a barber for 10 years before returning in 1967 to Hillier Funeral 

(Continued on page 17)



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Aaron, Chris and Justin Wenburg

Justin J. Wenburg, M.D., is Doctor of Internal Medicine in Hastings, Nebraska. He and wife, Kili (Rikli) also of Beaver City, Nebraska have a son Carter, age 6 and daughter Selah, age 3. Justin graduated from Beaver City high School with the class of 1994, attended three years at Chadron State College, 4 years in Omaha at University of Nebraska Medical School and 3-year residence program at LaCrosse, Wisconsin for Internal Medicine. He has been practicing Internal Medicine four years in Hastings.

Aaron C. Wenburg, D.P.T, SCS, CSCS, has a Doctor of Physical Therapy Degree and is also a Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist. He recently became a board certified, Sports Specialist, and is one of only nine in Nebraska with this certification, with only 708 in the United States. His wife Andrea (Moomey) is from Holdrege, Nebraska. They have one daughter Amelia, who will be two in March. Aaron graduated from Southern Valley High School with the first graduating class from the new school in 1996. Aaron attended 3 years at Fort Hays State College at Hays, Kansas before being accepted at University of Nebraska Medical School at Omaha, graduating in 2002. He practiced Physical Therapy for 4 years in Lexington, Nebraska until July, 2006, when he was accepted for a Post-Graduate Sports Physical Therapy Residency through Gundersen Lutheran Hospital & the University of Wisconsin in LaCrosse, Wisconsin. He studied Sport injury therapy and also did some teaching at the University during this one year program. In June of 2007 Aaron and his family returned to Nebraska and Aaron began practicing at Hastings Physical Therapy Clinic in Hastings, Ne-

braska.

Chris E. Wenburg, D.D.S. is Doctor of Dental Surgery. Chris graduated from Southern Valley High School in 1999. He attended Chadron State College for three years before being accepted at University of Nebraska Medical School, Dental division in Lincoln, Nebraska. He received his degree in 2006. following graduation he completed a one year program of Advanced Education in General Dentistry at University of Missouri in Kansas City. In July of 2007 he married Jillian (Tangeman) and following a honeymoon began practicing at Ord Family Dentistry in Ord, Nebraska.

The parents, Jim and Rogene Wenburg of Beaver City own and operate funeral homes in Beaver City, Arapahoe and Elwood, Nebraska. They are thankful for the opportunity they have had to raise their family in a small community and for the opportunities their sons have had as a result of growing up in that small community. Jim was raised in Cozad, Nebraska and Rogene (Hansen) in North Platte, Nebraska. They have been married since 1973. They purchased the funeral home in Beaver City on January 1, 1980.



Aaron, Chris, Rogene, Jim and Justin Wenburg



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Death Notices of Fellow Funeral Service Colleagues (Cont.)

(Continued from page 14)

Home and was employed for more than 50 years. He also worked for A & M's College of Medicine in the anatomy department since they opened their doors in 1977 and he retired in 1994. Services were conducted by Hillier Funeral Home.

Joseph W. Merchant, Sr., of Arlington, died Dec. 27, 2008. He is the father of Joseph W. Merchant, Jr., funeral director at Davis Greenlawn Funeral Home. Joseph was a former employee of Moore Funeral Home, Arlington. Davis Greenlawn Funeral Home in Rosenberg conducted the services.

Jon E. Payne, of Oro Valley, AZ died Jan. 18, 2009. He was the brother of Eugenia (Jean) Robbins and brother-in-law of O.C. "Chet" Robbins of the Texas Funeral Service Commission.

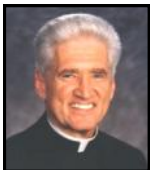


Elizabeth Oats Franklin Purdy, died October 16, 2008. She was a founding partner of the Franklin- Bartley Funeral Home until her retirement in 1980. A visitation was held at the Putman Funeral Home in Kingsland and a visitation and services were conducted at the Franklin-Bartley Chapel in Lubbock under the direction of Bartley Funeral Home (Thad Bartley) of Plainview, TX.

Margarita Rojas, of Houston died Jan. 21, 2009. She is the mother of Yolanda Nieto and wife of Andrew Nieto from Funeraria Del Angel. Her services were handled by Funeraria Del Angel Chapel.

Glenna Fay Trent of Sweetwater died Dec. 22, 2008. She was the mother of Jackie Trent of Cate-Spencer & Trent Funeral Home-Sweetwater. Her services were under the direction of Seydler-Hill Funeral Home.

Rev. John T. Weyer, Jr. of Houston died Dec. 4, 2008. He was the uncle of Shawn Hughes, a contributor to **The Dead Beat**. See poem next to this that he wrote for his uncle. Rev. Weyer had been a priest for the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston for 35 years.



To Those I Love

By Shawn Hughes for his Uncle—
Rev. John T. Weyer, Jr.
(See Obituaries on this Page)

Blessed Jesus take my hand
and lead me to the promised land.
Take to your kingdom so great.
I know my family and friends
are waiting at heaven's gate.

You have filled my life with love.
Now it is time for me to come to heaven
above.

I fought the fight and kept the faith.
For as long as I could, I ran this race.
Today, I saw my maker face to face.

At the beginning of the day,
with the rising of the morning sun.
My race was finally done.

I was welcomed in heaven where I Will rest
forever more.

Those I love were waiting for me to welcome
me home.

I leave you with love which

I now send from heaven above.

Peace became mine and I suffer no more.

When I went to heaven I did not go alone.

A special angel came to carry me home.

The Dead Beat -The Caregivers Soapbox

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**Ethics and Etiquette of Expressing Sympathy
 (Cont.)**

(Continued from page 1)


member the support they are given and will meet that support when they are called upon in the future.

If you have decided to send some form of sympathy other than a monetary donation to a bereaved associate and/or their family who has used the words "in lieu of flowers...." its important to remember that there is the option to send flowers. A family who has used that phrase may be disappointed to find that there are no flowers at the services. Your colorful addition, however extravagant or modest, may be the only arrangement there. Your supportive effort will be very appreciated.

When representing a business, institution, or government agency, is very important to know sympathy etiquette and how to express sympathy to your employee and their family.

- ◆ Flowers and sympathy plants are usually sent to the funeral home or site of services once the news of the loss is announced. They should arrive prior to viewing and visitation or services. When sending flowers to a church or denominational affiliate, its important to remember you are not supporting the denomination, but the individual you know. If this is still of question, sending sympathy gifts, flowers and cards directly to the bereaved's home is acceptable. Also, if for some reason the flowers will be late arriving to the services, always send them directly to the bereaved's home so as not to disrupt services.
- ◆ If you wish to include the company logo with the gift or flowers be very discreet. The logo, if included at all, should only be small on the card. If individuals or leaders from the company or agency wish to send their own sympathy expression they are free to do so, but one expression, such as flowers should be made from the company as a whole.
- ◆ In today's world we are privileged to live in a diverse society, however this can make it difficult to know what is an appropriate form of sympathy. For example some religions and cultures only accept certain colors of flowers, while

(Continued on page 28)



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We love to take pictures as we go by funeral homes, but we'd welcome pictures, if you send them to us. These pictures were provided by Bill Murray.



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Something to Think About

A holy man was having a conversation with the Lord one day and said, "Lord, I would like to know what Heaven and Hell are like." The Lord led the holy man to two doors. He opened one of the doors and the holy man looked in. In the middle of the room was a large round table. In the middle of the table was a large pot of stew which smelled delicious and made the holy man's mouth water. The people sitting around the table were thin and sickly. They appeared to be famished. They were holding spoons with very long handles that were strapped to their arms and each found it possible to reach into the pot of stew and take a spoonful, but because the handle was longer than their arms, they could not get the spoons back into their mouths.



The holy man shuddered at the sight of their misery and suffering.

The Lord said, "You have seen Hell."

They went to the next room and opened the door. It was exactly the same as the first one. There was the large round table with the large pot of stew which made the holy man's mouth water. The people were equipped with the same long-handled spoons, but here the people were well nourished and plump, laughing and talking. The holy man said, "I don't understand."

"It is simple," said the Lord, "it requires but one skill. You see, they have learned to feed each other, while the greedy think only of themselves."



40 Tips for a Better Life in 2009

1. Take a 10-30 minute walk every day. And while you walk smile. It is the ultimate anti-depressant.
2. Sit in silence for at least 10 minutes each day.
3. Buy a DVR and tape your late night shows and get more sleep.
4. When you wake up in the morning complete the following statement, "My purpose is to _____ today!"
5. Live with the 3 E's—Energy, Enthusiasm, and Empathy.
6. Play more games and read more books than you did in 2008.
7. Make time to practice meditation and prayer. They provide us with daily fuel for our busy lives.

(Continued on page 28)

What Will Archaeologists of the Future Find? By Lowell

Archaeologists of the future may be perplexed by the lack of artifacts, marked graves and mummified remains as the cremation with scattering and green burial trends grow. Scattered cremains and unmarked graves with all biodegradable contents should have the GPS location archived on the assumption that the retrieval software will still be upgraded 4,000 years from now.

Consultants and convention programs are featuring green burial practices. It may not become a widespread movement, but funeral directors need to be informed about the various aspects. Rural-oriented funeral homes have probably done some shade of green burial without having to have paid a fee to a self-appointed council to certify them as a green provider.

It seems to me there may be more green sections added to existing cemeteries than new green ones established. Using the green theme of protecting natural areas by raising money from plot sales in a portion of the tract may be feasible for the resurrection of abandoned cemeteries. Entrepreneurial funeral directors or local groups might want to consider this possibility.

Green cemetery proponents cite the benefits of burying our dead the way they used to instead of in a formal manicured memorial park. They seem to forget that people organized modern cemeteries because they did not like the old way.



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Who is “The Last Ride Motorcycle Hearse Co.?”

The Last Ride Motorcycle Hearse Co. was started in May of 2008 in Springfield, Missouri. The idea came to Ty Conklin while he and his friends followed a hearse from a funeral home in Springfield to a rural cemetery north of Brighton. Inside the hearse was a good friend and fellow motorcycle enthusiast who had died from cancer. The funeral consisted of the usual biker add-on's that make a funeral less traditional and more personal. A Harley-Davidson decal was placed on the casket, motorcycle memorabilia was scattered around, and pictures of past motorcycle rides were viewed by the guests as they entered the funeral home. The family and guests wore biker T-shirts, jeans and bandanas, many of the guests rode motorcycles to the funeral home, and after the service the bikers followed the hearse to the cemetery. This is how motorcycle enthusiasts show how much they care for a fallen friend, and celebrate the lifestyle they choose to live.



The idea Ty had was to offer a more non-traditional service for the motorcycle community. A 2002 Harley-Davidson Softail trike is used to pull a custom made hearse carriage from the funeral home to the cemetery. The trailer Ty and his friends' built is styled after the horse drawn carriages used in the old west, complete with gas lamps, leather carriage top and six foot windows on each side.

The Last ride Motorcycle Hearse Co. had its first funeral service in July of 2008. Skip White, of White Funeral Home in Cassville, Missouri was asked to direct the funeral service for Curtis Ayers, a member of (B.A.C.A.) “Bikers Against Child Abuse” who had died

in a motorcycle accident. The Ayers family wanted a more non-traditional service and Mr. White had heard about a new Motorcycle Hearse service in the Springfield area. The Last Ride Motorcycle Hearse Co. was hired. Hundreds of friends attended the funeral service, after-



ward the motorcycle hearse was followed by 154 motorcycles in a three-mile long procession to Shell Knob, 50 miles away. The Ayers family said the funeral was the most personal service they could have asked for and could not have been more pleased with both White Funeral Home for being open-minded about non-traditional services, and the Last Ride Motorcycle Hearse Co. for providing such a unique tribute to bikers.

Since July, the Last Ride Motorcycle Hearse Co. has been hired for several funeral services in Southwest Missouri, and two in the Kansas City area. Ty hopes to spread the word about this unique service to the funeral directors in Oklahoma, Kansas and Northern Arkansas as well.

For information about the Last Ride Motorcycle Hearse Co. and the services offered, contact Ty @ 417-865-8885 or check out the website at www.lastridemotorcyclehearse.com



See Ad on Page 23

“Dear Counselor....”
By Bill Stalter

Dear Counselor,
With the NPS failure, and preneed sellers and insurance companies cutting their growth payments to funeral homes, hasn't the guaranteed preneed contract become a Ponzi scheme that requires new sales to fund the older contracts?

Commentators refer to NPS' business practices as a Ponzi scheme not because of the guaranteed preneed contract, but rather, because of the high commissions paid at the front end, and the promises to pay the provider's at need prices. NPS burned the candle at both ends, and attempted to exploit reinsurance arrangements when the wax began to run out. As to the industry's other preneed sellers and insurance companies, the current financial crisis is impacting everyone. Insurers will always play a major role in preneed funding. Third party sellers also serve an important function for the funeral homes that want a preneed sales force but do not have the time or resources. This isn't to say there aren't problems with the guaranteed preneed contract.

Insurance and trusts have not been able to keep pace with the funeral home's costs, and specifically, merchandise costs. The smaller operator is most vulnerable to this situation. However, I question whether an operator can pull the plug on the guaranteed contract if the competition continues to offer it. Operators may have to become more selective in how they offer the guaranteed contract, and whether it will cover the more expensive types of merchandise.

The US death care industry is somewhat unique in how it has defined preneed exclusively in terms of the guaranteed contract. The death care industries of England, Canada, Australia and New Zealand rely on preneed that is defined more in terms of a financial product offered by banks. These programs are similar to the final expense products offered by insurance companies, except they are trust based.

The preneed transaction needs to evolve to provide the industry and consumers more flexibility and safety.



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.prenedresource.com.

Cemeteries & Grave Diggers
By Joanne Howard

On my last funeral I had quite the challenge finding out who was in charge of the cemetery, if their grave marking fee had gone up and who was allowed to open and close the grave. Now you would not think that this would be a problem and in a big city, it probably isn't, but in rural America things are changing. Maybe it's the shrinking population base around us or just the changing of the guard to younger people, but it took about seven or more calls to get everything set up for a burial.



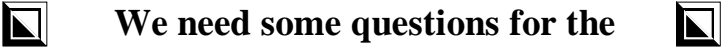
First, I had to find out who was in charge of the cemetery to get the grave marked. This shouldn't have been a problem because a stone was already there, but there was a fee for marking the grave. In rural cemeteries there is usually a board with the leader of the board the one that we contact when we have a burial.


I hadn't had a burial in the cemetery for quite awhile, so I thought things might have changed. The last contact person was the logical place to start. I called him and he gave me two phone numbers of people that could help me. The previous contact said I would probably have to wait until evening because the new individual would not be home until then. The other person had a cell phone, so I tried him. Of course, he said for me to call the other individual later.

I asked the old contact and new contact if they knew if the marking fee had gone up. None of them knew. I had a treasurer contact that I sent the payment to in the past, so I called her and she wasn't home and left a message. I was trying to get this all taken care of before I met with the family to finalize at-need arrangements on a preneed contract, so I could apprise them of the any additional costs. During the arrangement con-


(Continued on page 23)






We need some questions for the


“Dear Counselor....” column.



Please send your questions to Bill's e-mail


or The Dead Beat's and we will get some



answers in future issues.


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Cemeteries & Grave Diggers (Cont.)

(Continued from page 22)

ference, the woman called back to say she had retired from the position and gave information about her successor. I didn't take the call, but she didn't know if the fee had increased either.

Finally in the evening I contacted the cemetery marking person and he agreed to mark the grave, but didn't know if the fee had increased. (I gave up and decided to just pay the last cost I had been given.) Then I asked him about the grave opener we had last used, he said that person was unacceptable due to how he had left previous graves. He told me about another person, but didn't have his phone number.

The new grave digger was from a town that wasn't in our phone book, so I had to call another funeral home to get his phone number. Then I called the grave digger to set everything up. After asking about his availability and costs I finally achieved the opening of the grave. Only problem is I would now have to let the family know that the price was going to be higher.

So at this time after the numerous phone calls I was glad that I had finally accomplished getting most things done in relation to the burial. Next I had to tackle the vault company and the weather (which happened to turn into several inches of snow) before I would finally get the burial done.

As you can see it was quite a challenge to line up all of this and get the appropriate people and find out the correct costs. And families wonder what we do to charge what we do!!!!



Our Cell Phone and Our Bible



Ever wonder what would happen if we treated our Bible like we treat our cell phone?

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What if we flipped through it several times a day?

What if we turned back to go get it if we forgot it?

What if we used it to receive messages from the text?

What if we treated it like we couldn't live without it?

What if we gave it to kids as gifts?

What if we used it when we traveled?

What if we used it in case of emergency?

This is something to make you go...Hmm... where is my Bible?

Oh, and one more thing.

Unlike our cell phones, we don't have to worry about our Bible being disconnected, because Jesus already paid the bill! And no dropped calls!

Tidbits:

Acronym for BIBLE: Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth.

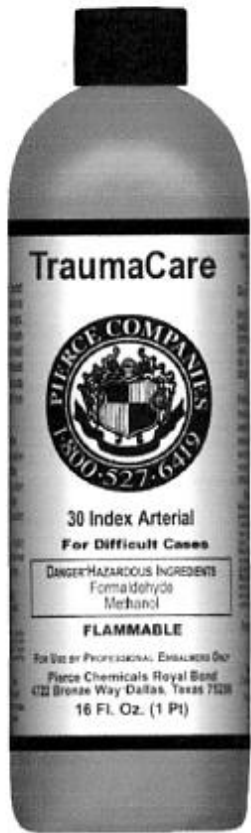
Be kinder than necessary, for everyone you meet is fighting some kind of battle.

Sorry looks back, worry looks around, faith looks up.

Have a blessed and wonderful day, and don't forget your cell phone AND your Bible!

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Life in the 1500's

The next time you are washing your hands and complain because the water temperature isn't just how you like it, think about how things used to be.

Here are some facts about the 1500s:

Most people got married in June because they took their yearly bath in May, and still smelled pretty good by June. However, they were starting to smell, so brides carried a bouquet of flowers to hide the body odor. Hence the custom today of carrying a bouquet when getting married.



Baths consisted of a big tub filled with hot water. The man of the house had the privilege of the nice clean water, then all the other sons and men, then the women and finally the children, last of all the babies. By then the water was so dirty you could actually lose someone in it.



Hence the saying, "Don't throw the baby out with the Bath water."

Houses had thatched roofs -thick straw-piled high, with no wood underneath. It was the only place for animals to get warm, so all the cats and other small animals (mice, bugs) lived in the roof. When it rained it became slippery and sometimes the animals would slip and fall off the roof. Hence the saying, "It's raining cats and dogs."



There was nothing to stop things from falling into the house. This posed a real problem in the bedroom where bugs and other droppings could mess up your nice clean bed. Hence, a bed with big posts and a sheet hung over the top afforded some protection. That's how canopy beds came into existence.



The floor was dirt. Only the wealthy had something other than dirt. Hence, the saying, "Dirt poor."

The wealthy had slate floors that would get slippery in the winter when wet, so they spread thresh (straw) on the floor to help keep their footing. As the winter wore on, they added more thresh until, when you opened the door, it would all start slipping outside. A piece of wood was placed in the entranceway. Hence, the saying thresh hold.

(Getting quite an education aren't you?)

In those old days, they cooked in the kitchen with a big kettle that always hung over the fire. Every day they lit the fire and added things to the pot. They ate mostly vegetables and did not get much meat. They would eat the stew for dinner, leaving leftovers in the pot to get cold overnight and then start over the next day. Sometimes stew had food in it that had been there for quite



awhile. Hence the rhyme, Peas porridge hot, peas porridge cold, peas porridge in

(Continued on page 25)

Thomas Darst Sr.- “He transformed a cemetery into a memorial park”

“Thomas Darst Sr.—outdoorsman, orchardist, raconteur and founder of Houston’s Forest Lawn Cemetery and Funeral Home...” is how the article started in the **Houston Chronicle** by Allan Turner.

After his death an article recalled his “love of nature was reflected in flowers and orchards of FOREST LAWN.”

He was born on the family farm in North Texas but Darst came to the Houston area after WWII. He first worked at a cemetery in Dickinson but bought the old Genoa Cemetery when it came up for sale and planned to turn it into a “memorial park.”

He son recalled about picking up acorns and shrubbery that were planted in the cemetery. His son Paul said, “Almost everything out there came as a result of him wanting to make it look like a park.”

Darst’s cemetery, “with grave-stones flush to the ground, had little in common with the old burial ground that preceded it,” his son said. Darst is “credited with bringing the concept of companion burials– the practice of interring more than one individual in a grave-to Houston. His glass-roofed, multisided mausoleum also was thought a first for the city.”

Later in life he purchased a small house next to the graveyard and opened a funeral home.

His interests were broad ranging from a bluebonnet hill, orchard and large garden, stocking his lake with fish and inviting people to partake of the bounty.

His daughter, Elsie Biron, “...He’d tell people to come by for oranges and grapefruit. He’d give away the produce, but he always limited how much you could take. He wanted to be sure there would be some left for other people.”

Darst had pride, having had an ancestor among the Alamo’s defenders. and seemed blessed with “unflagging energy.”

(See Pg. 15 for Thomas Darst, Sr.’s obituary)



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Life in the 1500’s (Cont.)

(Continued from page 24)
the pot nine days old...

Sometimes they could obtain pork, which made them feel quite special. When visitors came over, they would hang up their bacon to show off. It was a sign of



wealth that a man could bring home the bacon. They would cut off a little to share with guests and would all sit around and chew the fat.

Those with money had plates made of pewter. Food with high acid content caused some of the lead to leach onto the food, causing lead poisoning death. This happened most often with tomatoes, so for the next 400 years or so, tomatoes were considered poisonous.



Bread was divided according to status. Workers got the burnt bottom of the loaf, the family got the middle and guests got the top, or the upper crust.

Lead cups were used to drink ale or whiskey. The combination would sometimes knock the imbibers out for a couple of days. Someone walking along the road would take them for dead and prepare

them for burial. They were laid out on the kitchen table for a couple of days and the family would gather around and eat and drink and wait and see if they would wake up. Hence the custom of hold a wake.

England is old and small and the local folks started running out of places to bury people. So they would dig up coffins and would take the bones to a bone-house, and reuse the grave. When reopening these coffins, 1 out of 25 coffins were found to have scratch marks on the inside and they realized they had been burying people alive. So they would tie a string on the wrist of the corpse, lead it through the coffin and up through the ground and tie it to a bell. Someone would have to sit out in the graveyard all night (the graveyard shift) to listen for the bell; thus, someone could be, saved by the bell or was considered a dead ringer...



And that’s the truth. Now, whoever said History was boring!!!

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2000 Cadillac Superior Coach	Blk/Blk Ext/Blue Int	51,000 mi
1998 Cadillac M & M Coach	Blk/Blk Ext/Blue Int	48,000 mi
1992 Cadillac Federal Coach	Wht/Wht Ext/Blue Int	24,000 mi
1992 Cadillac Federal Coach	Silv/Blk Top/Blue Int	62,000 mi
1990 Cadillac S & S Victoria	Blk/Blk Ext/Burg Int	72,700 mi

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2003 Cadillac S & S 47" 6-Dr	Wht/Wht Ext/Blue Int	13,000 mi
2003 Cadillac S & S 47" 6-Dr	Wht/Wht Ext/Blue Int	9,200 mi
2003 Cadillac Eureka 6-Dr	Gray/Gray Ext/Gray Int	29,000 mi
1999 Cadillac Eureka 6-Dr	Wht/Wht Ext/Blue Int	39,000 mi
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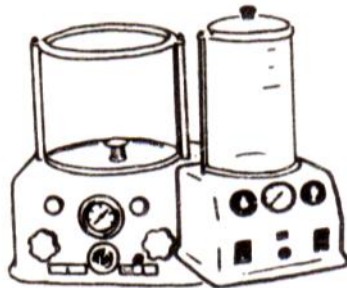


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Maintenance Forgets To Turn Off The Lights

“It is Hard to Get Good Help Now Days”

The Higginbotham Funeral Home, Walnut Ridge, Arkansas is across the street from the Lawrence County Sheriff's office. On the night of December 3, the funeral home's maintenance man, Robert Lee Lewis, left a light on in the basement when he stepped out briefly. Walnut Ridge police officer James Price noticed the light on and finding an unlocked door proceeded to investigate the basement area. In a room not far from the embalming room he found the ingredients and equipment for cooking “meth.” Lewis returned while the officer was still checking out the place and admitted that the items belonged to him and was arrested.

Higginbotham's manager, Betty Lawrence, indicated that Lewis had initially “...been doing his job real well, ...but he started getting slack the last month.” Lewis was fired that night after his arrest.

The manager at the funeral home had not noticed the smell of ether which often accompanies “meth” cooking. Walnut Ridge Police Chief Leslie Gates suggested, “They might not have smelled it because of all the flowers in the funeral home.” After several calls manager Lawrence assured the public, “Things are going on as usual here.”

Info from Arkansas Democrat Gazette, Kenneth Heard 1/22/09

40 Tips for a Better Life in 2009 (Cont.)

(Continued from page 20)

8. Spend time with people over the age of 70 and under the age of six.
9. Dream more while you are awake.
10. Eat more foods that grow on trees and plants. Eat less food that is manufactured in plants.
11. Drink green tea and plenty of water. Eat blueberries, wild Alaskan salmon, broccoli, almonds & walnuts.
12. Try to make at least three people smile each day.
13. Clear clutter from your house, your car, your desk, and let new and flowing energy into your life.
14. Don't waste your precious energy on gossip or issues of the past, negative thoughts or things you cannot control. Instead invest in the positive present moment.
15. Realize that life is a school and you are here to learn. Problems are simply part of the curriculum that appear and fade away like algebra class but the lessons you learn will last a lifetime.
16. Eat breakfast like a king, lunch like a prince and dinner like a college kid with a maxed out charge card.
17. Smile and laugh more. It will keep the NEGATIVE BLUES away.
18. Life isn't fair, but it's still good.
19. Life is too short to waste time hating anyone.
20. Don't take yourself so seriously. No one else does.
21. You don't have to win every argument. Agree to disagree.
22. Make peace with your past so it won't spoil the present.
23. Don't compare your life to others'. You have no idea what their journey is all about.

(Continued on page 30)

Ethics and Etiquette of Expressing Sympathy (Cont.)

(Continued from page 18)

other accept only food. Know the individual you are sending sympathy to. When there is still a question of what to send, check with the funeral home or local florist as they usually have a list of what the family is accepting.

Hard times come upon all of us. It is the support and care while we endure that we remember. While it may be a challenge to know what to say or do for a bereaved family, it is important to remember that all gestures of kindness help to ease mourning and increase feelings of security. As a leader or representative of a business, institution or government agency, you know there is a mutual respect and support between an employee and their family and the institution. It is your responsibility to show that they'll be supported while they mourn and when they return to work.

Resources.

How to Express Sympathy

[Http://www.ehow.com/how_2239763_express-sympathy.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_2239763_express-sympathy.html)

[Http://www.isnare.com/?aid=80336&ca=Death](http://www.isnare.com/?aid=80336&ca=Death)

The Importance of Flowers in Mourning

[Http://www.inlieuoffloers.info/index.php?s=2](http://www.inlieuoffloers.info/index.php?s=2)

[Http://exinearticles.com/?The-Importance-Of-Sympathy-Flowers&id=786702](http://exinearticles.com/?The-Importance-Of-Sympathy-Flowers&id=786702)

Different Religious Traditions

[Http://entertaining.about.com/cs/etiquette/a/funeraletiquett.htm](http://entertaining.about.com/cs/etiquette/a/funeraletiquett.htm)

[Http://www.ifishouldie.co.uk/religious-traditions-and-beliefs-c37.html](http://www.ifishouldie.co.uk/religious-traditions-and-beliefs-c37.html)

University Policies

University of Houston Victoria—Condolences and Congratulations Policies.

[Http://www.uhv.edu/fin/policy/a/a-28.htm](http://www.uhv.edu/fin/policy/a/a-28.htm)

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[Http://www.obfs.uillinois.edu/maual/central_p/sec8-13.html](http://www.obfs.uillinois.edu/maual/central_p/sec8-13.html)

About the Author:

Clay Atchison III is a 2nd generation owner of www.McAdamsFuneralFlorist.com As a floral tribute specialist, Clay shares the benefits of flowers in bereavement on www.InLieuOfFlowers.info.



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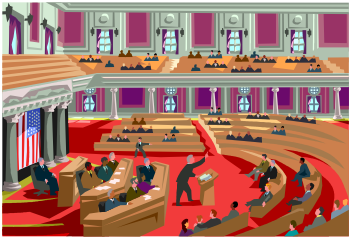
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They Ought To Pass a Law

By Lowell



At some point in time everyone thinks they ought to pass a law. And sometimes everyone concerned about an issue jumps into the fray to support or oppose a law being considered by legislators. Voters may simply write, e-mail, call or fax their local politician with thoughtful comments or incomprehensible gibberish.

Sometimes they arrive at the Capitol by the bus load trying to make a point with the legislators. They may participate in petition signing, mass letter mailings or legislative conferences and receptions. Organizations maintain their PAC's and hire their lobbyists—all trying to get a law passed for the public good and coincidentally their own interests. Sometimes there is such a clamor the legislators hardly have time to debate the issue.

A friend was a fundraiser for one of the political parties in a congressional district for a number of years. I asked him of all the various methods of contacting lawmakers which were the most effective methods to get an issue passed? His reply, "Deep Pockets." He felt the mass mailing of form letters, e-mails and mob scenes were counterproductive.

I asked about the effectiveness of industry or profession-sponsored legislative days or receptions. His reply, "Make sure the members with the deep pockets attend."

Another friend in Oklahoma has managed district, county and municipal campaigns for candidates in Kansas and Missouri. He had pretty much the same replies.

So what to do when the deep pockets have a hole in the bottom or you come up with lint?

Make sure your position on the issue is fair to the concerned publics even if it involves some compromise from what your group thinks is ideal. A public relations practitioner should be consulted at this stage of the game. (Unfortunately PR specialists are seldom brought in at this time.) Once your message is crafted every member of your group needs to make sure the message is presented to their personal legislator in a rational manner. And yes, legislators can always use a little campaign money or help with a fundraiser.

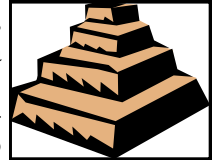
Get your group's position out to the general public as best as you can. If you can't afford a seasoned public relations counselor to help polish the message and move it into the mainstream of public discourse, find a partner. It is better to strike a deal with another player, AARP, for instance, and hope for the best.

After the dust settles and if you got at least part of your legislative package signed into law, sit back and watch how the bureaucrats interpret the new law. Finally get out your checkbook to cover the new licenses and increased fees that got included in the bill. Democracy is best, but it definitely is not free.



World's Biggest Sandbox Keeps Archaeologists Busy

Recent news items reported on new discoveries in the vast sand-covered burial grounds of the Pharaohs. Egyptian archaeologists were elated to report the discovery of two new tombs in the sprawling Saqqara necropolis south of Cairo. The newly found tombs lie southwest of the Step Pyramid in a largely uncharted area of the necropolis. Archaeologist Saleh Suleiman who is responsible for the excavation of the two tombs is convinced that the tombs are indicative that the cemetery is much larger. Most excavating of the cemetery has only been done on one side of the Step Pyramid of King Djoser and the nearby pyramid of Unas, the last king of the 5th dynasty. Additional finds should bring more information about the 5th and 6th dynasties of the Old Kingdom which ruled over 4,000 years ago.



The tombs, for two officials, were hewn out of rock. One of the tombs excavated was about one yard wide by 2.75 yards long. The inscription over the door told that the occupant was Yaamat who was the official in charge of the quarries for the adjacent pyramids. The other tomb was about twice the size of the quarry official's tomb and the inscription depicted a sitting woman. She was said to be the official in charge of procuring entertainers for the Pharaohs. (*L: I guess Pharaohs like some of their modern day counterparts were not entirely consumed by thoughts of the afterlife.*)

40 Tips for a Better Life in 2009 (Cont.)

(Continued from page 28)

24. No one is in charge of your happiness except you.
25. Frame every so-called disaster with these five words: "In five years, will this matter?"
26. Forgive everyone for everything.
27. What other people think of you is none of your business.
28. REMEMBER GOD heals everything.
29. However good or bad a situation is, it will change.
30. Your job won't take care of you when you are sick. Your friends will. Stay in touch.
31. Get rid of anything that isn't useful, beautiful or joyful.
32. Envy is a waste of time. You already have all you need.
33. The best is yet to come.
34. No matter how you feel, get up, dress up and show up.
35. Do the right thing!
36. Call your family often. (Or email them to death!!!)
37. Each night before you go to bed complete the following statements: (I am thankful for _____. Today I accomplished _____.)
38. Remember that you are too blessed to be stressed.
39. Enjoy the ride. Remember this is not Disney World and you certainly don't want a fast pass. You only have one ride through life so make the most of it and enjoy the ride.
40. May your troubles be less. May your blessings be more and may nothing but happiness come through your door!



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Black with Black Leatherette**



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— 47,000 miles —
(UC08-059)**



**2007 Lincoln Superior Hearse
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— Low Miles —**



**2001 Cadillac Krystal Six-Door
Black with Black Leatherette
— 31,350 miles —
(UC08-044)**



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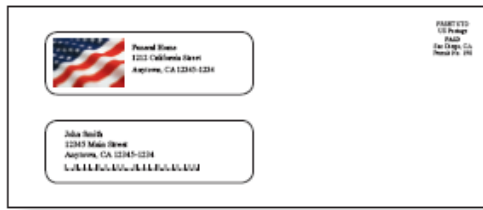
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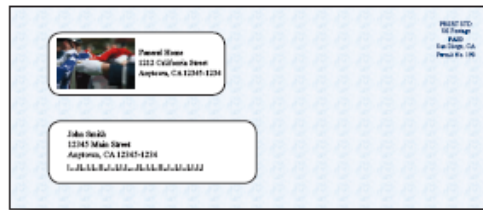
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