
LAMENTATIONS

Issue 104

middle

September, 2006

Dear God...

I know you're watching over me
And I'm feeling truly blest
For no matter what I pray for
You always know what's best!

I have this circle of E-mail friends,
Who mean a lot to me;
Some days I "send" and "send,"
At other times, I let them be.

I am so blessed to have these friends,
With whom I've grown so close;
So this little poem I dedicate to them,
Because to me they are the "Most!"

When I see each name download,
And view the message they've sent;
I know they've thought of me that day,
And "well wishes" were their intent.

So to you, my friends, I would like to say,
Thank you for being a part;
Of all my daily contacts,
This comes right from my heart.

God bless you all is my prayer today,
I'm honored to call you "friend;"
I pray God will keep you safe,
Until we write again.

Grief Grafts

Bob & Candy's daughter, Jessica (11-6-81), stepped in front of a train, 8-28-03.

Jessica was born to us after 3 years of infertility testing and treatments. We wanted her more than anything. She was extremely precocious. She could tie her shoes at the age of 2 1/2. She was SO determined to do it and I kept telling her she was not ready to learn so she just watched me and taught herself! There is a picture of her on her website "reading" the comics in her highchair. By the time she was 4 she was reading signs as we drove in the car. She was extremely moody, though. A Dad who used to carpool with me for nursery school once told me, "She scares me. I don't say hello until she says hello first."

I relished all the time I had with her. She went to preschool religion, Mom and Me gymnastics, play group, and a myriad of fun community activities. She started dancing at the age of 2 1/2 and this became her passion. She eventually took 5 classes a week, and competed in competitions, twice winning gold awards in national competitions in New York City. We would go there with a group of moms and their daughters from the dance school and stay for a week seeing a Broadway play, the Rockettes, sightseeing, and she would take daily dance classes.

Jessica loved books and I loved to share them with her. By the time she was in second grade I had read all the Little House on the Prairie books to her and she got interested in the Babysitters' Club series. I read them, too, so I could share them with her and we would go from library to library and book store to bookstore to find the latest books and any we had missed. She took school very seriously and would get annoyed when others were disruptive. For this reason we put her in private school when she was in 5th grade. She was always at the top of her class, always perfectionistic. She earned a scholarship to a private high school and then to the University of Buffalo in the Honors Program where she was a pre-med major, hoping to be a hematological oncologist.

Though she knew she was loved and cherished and had so much talent and intelligence there was always an underlying sadness. She could not find a reason for it and wanted to go for past life regression therapy. She first talked about suicide at the age of 10 and suffered from anorexia at the age of 11. She wrote lots of poetry usually about sadness and hopelessness. She

always said she would never have children because she felt it was unfair to bring a child into a world where there was so much pain and sorrow. She always used to tell me, "I'll never give you grandchildren, but don't worry, Dave will give you plenty. How prophetic! Dave is 21, and has 3 children, who my husband and I are raising due to Dave and his girlfriend's substance abuse issues.

Jess wanted a sibling very badly, but we were again having difficulty getting pregnant. One time in the grocery store she asked me to buy baby food. I said, "But we don't have a baby." She said, "I do want one before I'm all grown up, you know. When she was 4, we were delighted to have another child-her brother David. She was initially thrilled, but Dave turned out to have ADHD, and stretched her patience to the limit. Sometimes she was mortified by his actions, like when he would pretend to be a policeman at the mall and tell the clerks to call him if they saw a bad guy and other times, she liked to show her friends how funny he was, like when she would have him climb the walls for her friends. Basically, though, she was disgusted by him, always feeling that nothing good would come of him and that he would only hurt people. She and Dave were so different! Jess used to tell me having a child was like putting a quarter in the machines at the front of the store-they have all the cool stuff like bracelets and rings displayed, but you get a sticker or something. When Dave would misbehave, she used to shake her head and say, "You never should have put that quarter in."

She loved writing poetry. When she was in 8th grade she was assigned to write a poem for a Holocaust Arts Competition. She wrote this poem that won first place.

And Still the Candle Burns

*A world of confusion and hate;
An entire people determined to
Destroy one race;
Bewildered masses who are
scared,
angry,
searching for a scapegoat;*

And still, the candle burns.

*Children whose futures are wiped out;
Millions of innocent people
Herded like cattle to be slaughtered;
All of them branded by the Star of David to be spat upon in the streets;*

And still, the candle burns.

*A young girl and her family,
Forced to hide in an attic from
Their own people;
Hiding to save their lives,
starving,
cold,
scared-but still alive.*

And still, the candle burns.

*This young girl who knew what
Atrocities were transpiring outside her
Tiny world of an attic-
That people were
starving,
dying,
dead - never stopped believing in
The good of human kind.
While people were crying out in terror and pain, she writes, "in spite of
everything, I still believe that people are really good at heart..."*

Despite the horrible, howling winds, the candle never flickers.

*One twisted man holding the
Fate of the world in his hands,
Like a child who found his father's gun,
And no one with the willingness or ability to stop him,
One man trying to play god
And determine the future evolution of mankind,
Ending lives and burning the empty remains to ashes.*

*In February of 1945,
The persistent flame ceased
And the candle burned out.*

*Although a candle burns brightly,
it cannot last forever.*

One of her friends was having a tough time writing a poem so Jess wrote one for her. That poem won 2nd. They had a ceremony to honor the winners and their parents and the English teachers came - Jess's friend was really embarrassed.

Jess was really bothered by all the sadness and suffering of others. One time while in New York she asked me to go back to where she had seen a homeless man so she could give him money because he had a little boy. She looked so sad over it.

Jess loved cats. She had a cat here when she was growing up, and one in her apartment which we now have. They are on her website. She had cat pictures all over her room and an extensive collection of cat jewelry. One of our cats, Shadow, was dropped off at our house by someone who did not want him. We did not want him either. We already had a cat. We tried to find him a home and several people took him but then they would bring him back. We finally took him to the SPCA and they said they would euthanize him because he had an upper respiratory infection. We brought him back home but didn't know what to do because we did not want him, we did not want to pay a vet bill for him, and we were afraid our cat would get sick too. Jess went to her room and came down teary-eyed with her piggy bank, and said, "Here-take Shadow to the vet." We still have Shadow-he's 17 years old. She was also interested in paintings, sculptures, and porcelain dolls, especially from other cultures.

It does mean a lot to me when you and others remember her special dates. Thank you so much.

I haven't written anything about Jessica's death. It's been too raw, but when Dinah convinced me to include something I'd written to her in the newsletter, I felt it just didn't do Jessica justice, so I had to write this. I'm really glad now that I have started to record some of these precious memories. I can't tell you how painful it is to me to imagine how much pain Jessica must have been in to find it necessary to do what she did. My heart just aches for her. I also keep extremely busy. I teach high school Math to emotionally disturbed students, and I am raising my 3 granddaughters, aged 11 months, 2 1/2, and 4 1/2. It gives me little time to think, and it gives both of us a reason to go on. Of course, it is a stressful situation, too, because my son and his girlfriend are addicted to heroin and crack, and are angry that

we have the kids. We live with the fear of losing another child, due to my son's dangerous lifestyle, but the young ones do bring us lots of joy.

Read more about Jessica on her website:

<http://www.cathappy.com/Jessica.htm>

I emailed Candy to ask if her grandchildren were Jessica's and she replied:

Dinah, the children are my son's. He is only 21-Jade was born when he was 16. We took the mother in when she was pregnant with Jade and they all lived with us until October of 2004, when they decided to get an apartment. Within 4 months they each had a \$100/day habit. They were stealing and pawning everything they owned. They were arrested for possession while the children were with us (we took them every week-end) and they have been in our custody ever since. We brought Alana home from the hospital (she spent 5 weeks there because she was born addicted).

Jessica's symbols are a cat & tap shoes.

Scott & Alberta DeCicco's daughters, Christina (6/24/83 – 12/30/97), died from complications from Cystic Fibrosis and Mary (7/21/77 - 1/16/80, died from a congenital heart defect.

This is Alberta's story:

My name is Alberta, I am 44 years old and live in Siler City North Carolina. I am very happily married to a wonderful man, Scott, since November 21, 1981. We have 2 beautiful angels in Heaven and a son (20) here on earth. He is currently in the Air Force Reserves and lives in Lee, Massachusetts with his wife and gorgeous little daughter Abigail Christina. His wife's name is Becky. They were married in March of 2005. Abigail was born 8 years to the day that our dear Christina entered Heaven.

Scott and I met when I was 16 years old. He had been previously married and was the proud Daddy to a 1-year-old daughter at the time. Her name was Mary Margaret. She was born on July 21, 1977. She had a very serious congenital heart defect that required her to have open-heart surgery within her first few days on this earth. She came out of it okay and would have to have more surgeries, as she got older and bigger. Scott's wife could not handle the stress of having a sick child and they parted. Custody was

given to Scott and his mother. We met on July 28, 1978, a few days after Mary's first birthday. He asked me to marry him that day! (We did not officially get engaged until after I graduated High School though).

Mary was admitted to the hospital on January 14, 1980, to have another surgery. I was in another town 50 miles away. I was studying for my mid-term exams and was not able to be with them at the hospital. I spoke to Mary Margaret the night before she died. She was a very smart child and even though she was 2, she knew what was going on. She told me that she was going to go to sleep and they were going to work on her. I promised her that I would come and see her as soon as I could. I never did get to though. Scott called me at 6:30 the next morning and I immediately knew that something was wrong. I asked him and he told me to imagine the worst thing I could think of..... My heart almost stopped beating. He told me he would call me later and let me know what was going on. They made the funeral arrangements, I went to school and finished my exams, and I saw him later that day. The funeral arrangements were in New York City and they were leaving the next morning. It was over 120 miles away and my mother would not let me go with them, but agreed that I could go to the funeral if I drove that morning and came back that night. I had never driven in NYC alone and I was terrified. I made it okay and my heart just broke when I saw her beautiful little body in that casket. I put in one of her favorite toys and touched her hands. I had never touched anyone that had died before except for my father. I could not believe that her little hands were so cold and hard. I tried to reach out to Scott and comfort him, but did not really know how. We went to the church and then to the cemetery, what a tough day it was! I do not remember the trip home, but I remember the quiet; it was "deafening." After we got married in 1981, we saved up our money to buy a home. I found out I was pregnant in August of 1982. We were thrilled! The baby was due on May 21st. I was still young and it was my first pregnancy, so I was learning a lot along the way. I was the youngest child and had never really been around babies much, except for babysitting a few times. I was really nervous, and had many episodes of Braxton-Hicks contractions (false labor). My due date came and went. I was going to the doctor every few days and they assured me that everything was fine. "First babies are never on time," they told me. Scott was missing a lot of time from work with all the doctor visits and false labor episodes, so my mother took me for the non-stress test. We had to go to the hospital across the river from where we lived because ours was on strike! Well, they did the test and decided that I had waited long enough. It was June 23, 1983, and they admitted me and broke my water. Scott and my mother never

left my side for all 22 hours of labor. I was having severe back pains with the pitocin and couldn't stand the burning pain in my back. The doctors were talking in hushed tones and the next thing I know they were placing an internal monitor inside of me to monitor the baby's heartbeat. They kept losing it on the external monitor. I was scared to death. With each contraction, her heartbeat got weaker and they decided to rush me in for an emergency C-section. It wasn't supposed to happen this way--we took all the classes!

Christina Marie DeCicco entered this world at 10:47am on June 24, 1983. She weighed 8lbs and 7ozs and was 21 inches long. When they brought her to me for the first time, I cried. She looked just like my father. She had a head full of red hair and it was in a big curl down the middle of her head. She was absolutely how I had pictured her. I counted every finger and every toe. She had a red mark from the internal heart monitor perfectly centered between her eyes. (It was supposed to go into the scalp), but she was coming face first and her neck was in a very awkward position. They said that if labor had gone on much longer, she probably would have snapped her neck and died, so you see, she was my miracle baby from the start.

Life was great, we had this new bundle of joy and we could not have been happier. She had a few problems with formulas, but no major problem until she was 6 months old. She had her first case of pneumonia and was admitted to the hospital for 10 days. They tried switching formulas and had her on almost every kind on the market. She was in an oxygen tent and we could not even take her out and hold her. They came in to do chest physical therapy to loosen the chest congestion and I wanted to hurt them! It sounded like it was hurting her as they banged away on her little chest. She got better from that and seemed to be doing well except for her formula intolerances. She was eventually placed on human breast milk that we had to purchase at \$1 an ounce! She did well on it and seemed to be thriving.

I had a miscarriage in 1984 and after a rough pregnancy, Michael Anthony DeCicco joined our family on July 22, 1985, the day after what would have been Mary Margaret's 8th birthday. He was born 1 month premature and had breathing difficulties, so he had to go by helicopter to Albany Medical Center. He weighed in at 7 lbs 1 oz, so he had his weight going for him! He was also born by emergency C-section, so I did not get to go with him. I had decided to breast feed him so we did not go through the same problems with him. I pumped my milk and cried each day. I only got to see Scott when he came to get the bottles of milk. I only got to see Michael through the isolette window before they took him away, so all I had was a

Polaroid snapshot of my new baby. Christina talked to me on the phone about her new baby brother, she was SO proud! I talked the doctors into letting me out of the hospital 3 days later by promising them that I would rest. (NOT)! The first thing we did was take Christina and head to Albany Med. I got to see and hold my baby 3 days after he was born. He was doing well, but still did not know how to suck, so he was on tube feedings. He could come home after he could take a bottle. He came home after only 8 days in the neonatal intensive care unit. Both children were doing well, and then-----

Christina had pneumonia 5 times in a 3 month period and they started noticing strange things in the X-rays. They referred us to a Pulmonologist in Albany, NY, 45 miles away. I had just started a new job and Scott was laid off, so he told me he would take her to the appointment. They said she has asthma and they wanted to do a sweat test (for Cystic Fibrosis) to rule it out. They were sure she did not have it, she was gaining weight and was too "healthy looking" to have it. They scheduled the sweat test for July, 3 months away-no need to rush after all..... Scott took her to this appointment as well. When he got home from work, the hospital had left a message on the answering machine that they were admitting Christina to the hospital the next morning! The test had come up positive. They also needed to see Michael and test him too. Scott called me at work and I remember feeling like my whole world had shattered. They admitted her and re-tested her. The test came out positive again--our little girl had an incurable disease. We had to wait until later that day for Michael's results. It was a very long day to say the least. The doctors met with us and our families and gave us some details about the disease and its history. Michael's test came back negative, a small victory.

Christina loved the hospital life, to her it was one huge party and she was the center of attention. She ran from the therapists, nurses and doctors and just squealed with delight with them having to chase her. The only part she really hated was the needles. They had such a hard time getting an IV started and then they would only last a day or two. Finally they ended up putting a port-a-cath in her chest when she was about 10. She had been in the hospital so many times that her little veins just could not hold up to being poked any more. They taught us how to care for it at home and we were able to bring her home and do her IV therapy at home. It made life a lot easier, at least she could be home with us and life could be a little more "normal." Of course, we had to do the chest therapy 3 times a day and the breathing treatments, and all the pills. Since she had such a great sense of humor, the medical staff labeled her as "immature" and they did not seem to

take a lot of what we said seriously. They did not seem to put as much effort into her care as they once had and she ended up with a collapsed lung after one rough pneumonia episode. She told them it hurt and that she had coughed up blood. They said she was just trying to get attention, until she coughed up about 2 cups of blood in front of them! We lost a lot of respect for them at that point and started checking out our options. Research led us to UNC Hospitals of Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

We moved here on Memorial Day in 1996. We met the most wonderful doctor, Dr. Robert Wood. He did not expect to see what he saw the day he met Christina. He had gotten her records and expected to see a frail, blue, listless child in front of him. Instead, he saw a bundle of energy, thin, but "healthy" looking--especially from what her records indicated. They hit it off and he became her hero. I am sure we had the last year and a half with her because of the care he gave her. She did okay and made lots of friends in the hospital. She had problems with very resistant strains of pseudomonas; in fact, they thought she had TB at one point. She had to stay away from other children with CF because it was so easy for them to infect each other with all the different bacterias..... she started to get depressed because she could not "hang-out" with her new friends in the hospital. She was too sick to go to school anymore and was given home-bound schooling. One day when I went to see her, she had some videos of feeding tubes and literature. She was really excited. She wanted to get one of those feeding tubes put in so she did not have to be eating all the time. She had to have so many calories to maintain her weight that she got tired of eating. Her doctor was on vacation and the attending said it was a good idea and she wanted it, so go ahead. She had the surgery and it went downhill, quickly from there. She never fully recovered from that surgery. Her lungs got weaker, her heart raced at the stress of helping her breathe. Her skin broke down from the feeding tube and she vomited a lot. She went from being an energetic child to one that had to be on oxygen at night. It quickly led to being on oxygen full time, percentages of oxygen being needed; raising constantly. She was excited about coming home on Christmas Day, if only for a little while. She got too sick. She did not want to come home, she was afraid to die in the car on the way to or from the hospital. She asked me to donate her organs to other kids that needed them after she died. She slipped away from us a little each day. We brought Christmas to her; she was too tired to care. She opened her presents and went to sleep. She had about one hour each day when she was alert. She had so much trouble breathing; she was in pain. She could not get out of bed any more. She was put on a huge

mask in order to get enough oxygen. She died in her sleep at 4 am on December 30, 1997, with her Mommy and Daddy by her side.

Scott and Alberta DeCicco, parents to Michael and the angels named Christina and Mary. Please visit our memorial web pages at:

<http://www.geocities.com/ourangelschristinamary>

<http://www.geocities.com/angelsofhearttoheart/christinamary.html>

<http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Valley/8314/memorial278.html>

Tweety bird is our symbol for Christina, we found out her true love for Tweety just days before she died. Snow White is our symbol for Mary- we have a ceramic set of Snow White and the 7 Dwarfs that was in her bedroom at home.

Christina's symbol is Tweety Bird, and Mary's symbol is Snow White.

Joyce Allman's son, Dustin (9-27-77), died 9-30-77. Her granddaughter, Lauren Waller (12-12-90) was killed in an auto accident, 4-16-00, and her stepbrother, Charles (10-7-77) was hit while riding a bicycle, 10-14-00.

My name is Joyce, Lauren Waller is my granddaughter who died in an auto accident, April 16, 2000. This is her website: www.angelsforlauren.com

Dustin is my son who died in 1977 at 3 days old, here is his link <http://www.angelsforlauren.com/dustinallman/>.

Charles is my stepbrother who was killed at 23 years old, 6 months after Lauren. I offered to make something for him but that would be up to his mom and she has not asked me to. She is more private in her grief.

Charles and a friend were on Highway 301 in Riverview, Florida, it was about 1am, they were on bicycles. Apparently the chain came off of Charles' bike and he stopped to fix it. His friend Jamie was a few feet ahead of him, Charles must have been in the road when he was hit by a man

driving a pickup truck. He died the following day from his injuries. Jamie was not hit. There were no charges filed against the driver of the truck. He had just left work and was on his way home.

My granddaughter died in 2000 at the age of nine. Her mother wanted a memorial for her so I learned how to create webpages. Eventually I learned to do graphics too. The Memorial Wall was my daughter's idea and was included as part of Lauren's memorial site. All are welcome to make a request to have a loved one added. There are nearly 600 names on the Memorial Wall as of now. The website address is: www.angelsforlauren.com On the Site Map page is a link to the Memorial Wall where you can access the Request Form to include your child.

My email address is joyce@angelsforlauren.com



This tattoo is on my back between my shoulder blades. It's 4 inches wide and 3 inches high. The tattoo is something I've wanted to do since Lauren passed away. I finally did it on September 18, 2004.

If I was picking a symbol for Lauren it would have to be an angel since she saw them before her death. For Dustin a butterfly, because he was here such a short

time.

Lauren's symbol is an angel and Dustin's symbol is a butterfly.

Syrena Gibson's son, Nathan (8-11-94), died in a drowning accident, 7-16-03.

Here is another mother who has memorialized her child in a very unique way.

Nathan was born on August 11, 1994, along with his twin sister, Brianna. He weighed in at 7 lbs. 6 oz. and his sister was 6 lbs. 8 oz. I remember holding him and just gazing into his eyes. He would just stare back at me; I was instantly in love with the little guy.

He was always quite active and liked to explore his environments. He had many friends in our neighborhood that he enjoyed playing with. But one little boy named Brandon was his best friend, they did everything together.

They would build forts, play video games, and play baseball...just normal boy stuff. When you saw one, the other was always lagging behind.

One day on July 16, 2003, after lunch, Nathan and his twin sister Brianna went out to play. They met up with Brandon to just do their normal everyday stuff of hanging out. That day ended up being a nightmare come true. My daughter and 3 neighborhood kids came to my door. Brianna was crying and was muddy and wet. The older girl says to me "we can't find Nathan"...I was like, "what do you mean you can't find him?" She says, "he is in the water and they can't find him." I broke down right then and there. I grabbed our 2-year-old, Ryleigh, and took off running to where I saw sirens flashing.

This guy stops me and say, "what is your son's name and what is he wearing?" Of course, my mind went blank and I had no clue what I sent him outside in. So he told me they just pulled 2 boys out of the water and they were taking them to the hospital, and we needed to find our own ride there.

So I ran home and called my mom to let her know what happened. She had no clue what I was saying, but knew it was serious and took off to our house. I loaded the girls up in the car and headed to the ER. When I first got there, they wouldn't tell me anything. I just kept begging for them to tell me about my son. I had never feared the worst.

They took us in a private room with Brandon's parents. The paramedics had told us what happened and that both boys were unconscious. A social worker came in and got me and took me back to see Nathan. She said they were working on him and what all I would see. So I walk in and see my son, they had just stopped working on him. A nurse came up to me and said he didn't make it. My world crashed in right then and there. I couldn't believe it; my son couldn't really be gone. I knew they had to be able to save him, they just had to.

We lost my son and his best friend that day. Two precious little boys...my son was 8 and Brandon just turned 8. Afterwards we found out my daughter was in the pond as well and managed to pull herself out to run and get help when the boys got stuck. It was a retention pond and the mud at the bottom was very thick. I am very thankful my daughter managed to get out, but I still lost my son. Our lives have been changed forever; things will never be the same.

I feel like our family is no longer complete. Nathan was a big part of our lives. Our only son slipped through our fingers in just a matter of minutes. He left along with a huge part of my heart.

We all love and miss you so much, bubby! I can't wait until we get to meet up again someday. Until then, know that mommy is here taking good care of your sisters for you. You are forever loved and missed. I think I have two symbols for Nathan, the black cowboy hat and hot wheels. The two things he seemed to favor the most.



Please get to know Nathan better by viewing the many categories on his website: <http://www.geocities.com/momtonate03/>

Nathan's symbols are a black cowboy hat & hot wheels.

Yolanda Rogers' daughter, Anna Y. Colom-Serrano (3-1-85), died as a result of cancer, 5-30-97.

Yolanda does something each day that I would like for you to do so we know that our children are remembered:

Dinah,

Thank you so much for the invitation (to add Anna to the website). Her symbols could be sunflower, cats, fruits (the Fruit of the Spirit - hence Galatians 5) {(Donna Smith has a website about "Fruit of the Spirit Ddonnasmith1@aol.com }, and the hymn "One Day." Her website is <http://www.galatians5.com>

*Actually, I visit **Lamentations** every day - especially your birth and angel date page. I go to each website, if there is one, and leave a message of hope in our Lord, Jesus Christ's name. Thank you for providing such a page!!*

As you are well aware, it means so much when others remember. Our Lord told us to rejoice with them that do rejoice and weep with those that weep and to share each other's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ. And so, as we support one another and seek to comfort other hurting souls, our joy doubles and our grief halves and our burdens, though we may still carry them, become lighter. Praise be to God, Keeper of all His Promises!

Thank you so much for allowing our Lord to use you and your website to bring others His compassion and comfort.

Yolanda

**Anna's symbols are a sunflower, cats, fruits, and the hymn,
"One Day."**

**Jim & Sharon Sims' son, Jeff (9-18-64), died from liver
disease, 10-5-01.**

I asked Jim if he and Sharon had decided on a symbol for Jeff, and this was his response:

I've never "formalized" a symbol for Jeff but, it would probably be a giraffe (when granddaughter, Taylor, was beginning to talk, it sounded like she was saying "Uncle Giraffe" instead of "Uncle Jeff," so when I see a neat giraffe I get it); a "huggy bear" because I miss his hugs, and an oak leaf. During his service at the graveyard, a very large oak leaf floated down and landed at my feet. I took that as communication and brought the leaf home with me. So, go with a giraffe, huggy bear and oak leaf.

Jeff's symbols are a a giraffe, a huggy bear and an oak leaf.

**Paul & Sharon Bowling's daughter, Megan (9-16-78), was
killed in an auto accident, 3-17-96.**

I received this note:

Dear Dinah,

Finally worked up the nerve to write you about your card. The printed thought was beautiful! Cannot believe that I look forward to your card (and have every one) each year on that day. Still find myself unable to talk about this.

You asked if we had decided on a symbol for our daughter. Believe we have. My daughter had a beautiful voice and loved to sing. She was singing the song "Tomorrow" from the musical "Annie" when she was four years old. She tried out for a musical scholarship to Murray, but never made it out of high school. She also loved the magical unicorn. So my

thought is, her symbol will be a magical winged unicorn with a musical note on its back flying toward the heavens lifting her beautiful voice to God. Haven't found a picture of some, but working on it, when I can do so without tears, which is not often. Maybe I can come up with a picture or drawing of her symbol by her birthday, September 16th.

Thank you for your continued remembrances.

Sharon

Megan's symbol is a unicorn with a musical note on its back.

Ella June Smith Robertson's son, James (6-13-69) was murdered, 10-27-94 and her other son, Joey (12-14-71), was killed in an auto accident, 8-26-94.

Good morning,

First, let me tell you that I think your ministry is really wonderful. You don't know how much your little notes to me on the boys' anniversaries mean. When somebody remembers besides the "mother," you really are blessed. I pray that God will continue to give you the insight, strength and resources to continue your compassionate feelings and respect to us parents who have lost a child.

I have written a book called Lightning Never Strikes Twice. It is on the line of an autobiography about my four children, our life together, the boys' deaths, and the trial of the young man who killed James and through it all, God's enabling power. I have found a publisher; however, it will take \$2500 to get the book published and marketed through them. But, I believe I have a story to tell and that God will bless me to find a way to get it published. I had thought of self-publishing, but I think that would cause more work and confusion than having a substantial publisher behind me.

I went to your web-site, I was very touched by what I saw and read. Blessings to you.

Again, may the Lord richly bless you and keep you.

I asked her if her name had changed and that I was interested in hearing about her sons and this was her reply:

Dinah,

Yes, that is part of the book. My first husband left us when the children were 6, 7, 8 and 9. With God's help, I was a single mother for over

20 some years. My oldest daughter experienced some problems, 1987 and I raised her three children. Then, in early 1999, the Lord brought a young man (56) a minister to our church one Sunday night after he had lost his wife of 30 years. He continued to come to our church and became a member and in June of 2000 we were married. I would love to contribute to your newsletter. Joey's school, Shawnee State also gives an award, "The Joe Smith Memorial Award" each year in Joey's honor. You would love my boys. They were good boys. James' symbol is a star. He was working on this when he died. He had appeared on the Phil Donahue show. He was with a singing group. So he will always be my shining star. Whenever he called home, he always started, "Hello beautiful." Joey's symbol is an eagle. Joey soared in everything he put his hands to. When he died, the president of his college, his college coach, his high school coach all called to "ask" if they could be on the program to speak. Whenever he called home, he would say, "I just called to say, 'I love you.'" So I have many, many good memories of my boys and I love to talk about them.

Ella June

I emailed her back to see if she had a copy of the program. This was her response:

Yes, they sent me a video of the entire program. He had joined the navy and they flew him from California to New York to be on the program in person. They showed them in the subway singing (they were an A Cappella group) and then had them perform in the studio in front of a live audience. They sang "Cupid." He was also on the end of "Ghost Busters II" in the video Bobby Brown did for the movie. I am very proud of both of the boys. When Joey died, he was the life guard at the school's (college) natatorium. There was a group called the "golden bears." They were mostly retired persons and they all adopted him as their grandson. I received hundreds of cards from the people in Portsmouth, Ohio, where the school was. One lady wrote me and said she did not know Joey, but had heard so many wonderful things about him, she just felt led to write me and convey her condolences.

James' symbol is a shining star and Joey's symbol is a soaring eagle.

Bob & Sherri Hillis' son, Josh (1-25-80) died, 7-4-05.

Dear Dinah,

I heard about your website from a friend here in Salida, whose son John died a few years ago from cancer. She had called me "fellow traveler" right after my son died (my twin sons and her daughter graduated in the same year/same high school. And in April of this year, she had emailed me the Lamentation link. I've looked at many things there, and finally felt up to asking to have Josh's info included.

Joshua went by Josh. He didn't like his name. When I found out I was having twins, we picked out girls' names really easily; but boys' names were harder. We named his brother Justin - I felt that was the stronger name, and Justin needed it because he was pretty little. Josh was little, but bigger than Justin at birth, and so he got the name Joshua. I didn't ever really look up either name to see what they meant, but now, after Josh has died, I feel I gave him the name he was supposed to have - it means "Jehovah saves."

As far as a symbol, I have thought about it. I have asked Justin what animal/bird etc. he thought Josh would like as a symbol, but haven't gotten an answer. Last summer, after he died, I spent many weekends with my husband, just camping (he is an archery hunter, so he went out in the woods and hunted while I sat in camp and did nothing - I suspect he also sat in the woods and did nothing)... Every weekend I watched a family of hawks fly and soar. I tend to think of Josh as a hawk - he is now free from the bonds of physical being. So for now, I would guess a hawk, but that is more of my choosing than it would be of Josh's.

We really don't know how Josh died. He was a seemingly healthy, strapping young man of 25. He was having some depression problems, but we all thought he had turned the corner there. He was also battling an alcohol addiction. BUT the toxicology report indicated he did not die of alcohol poisoning, and there were no drugs - prescription, over-the-counter, or illegal - in his system. The autopsy showed nothing amiss. Unfortunately, no one was with him when he died. He just lay down on the floor (did he get up too fast from the chair and faint?), and went to sleep. He never woke up.

We had just spent the long weekend at a favorite spot here in Colorado, with our family (my husband, our two sons, our daughter-in-law to be, and our granddaughter), and my siblings and various members of their families - to scatter the ashes of my parents. My Dad died in April 2005, and my mother died in 1988, and I had made a promise to them both to scatter their ashes. On July 4, our sons (and Justin's family) were the last

to leave, and my husband & I stayed. It was our 30th anniversary. We celebrated by hiking, taking pictures, and I was beginning the healing process of the loss of my Dad. The next day, we were on our way to Wyoming for the rest of our vacation, when my sister called me with the terrible news that changed our lives forever.

One of our neighbors, in an ever-vigilant neighborhood, had noticed Josh's truck had not moved from the garage, so he came in the house and found him. It was too late. The coroner said he died around 11:00 p.m. July 4. We didn't get home until late July 5, and on July 6, the coroner informed us that he did not recommend a viewing (by anyone). So my last glimpse of Josh was him in his truck, driving away from camp.

Anyway, I have written more than I intended for now. I have avoided writing, because I think once I start, I won't stop; it's like the tears - sometimes when you start, you can't stop.

I will go to "Jim's Page" and read about your son.

*Love from another fellow traveler,
Sherri Hillis*

Josh's symbol is a hawk.

Mike & Debbie Campbell's daughter, Rachel (2-13-86) died in an auto accident, 11-14-04.

Debbie is another example of parents changing their occupations after the death of a child:

Hello Dinah,

I have wanted to write for so long, but when I saw your newsletter, and the story about "life" I had to share.

My precious Rachel was 18, on her way to college, when she was hit by a truck driver on her side of her car. She suffered for over a month before God took her home on Nov. 14, 2004. I live with guilt and pain. She was a good girl and strong Christian, beautiful, funny, had strong moral ethics, went out of her way to help others, especially the new or younger kids at her high school, and was involved in many mission trips!

I struggle so much, but I know God is with me as I have felt His presence at some of my most painful times. His spirit opens my eyes to Bible passages, which I thought I knew. I KNOW that He is in control and will get me through this life until we all can be reunited in Heaven. The second year has been so hard and this is a hard time of year for me. Yes, I know I have to go on, but I'm not very happy about it and wait for God to call me home.

I think what I'm getting at is: you have to push yourself to go on and try to live and focus on God. I was an RN for 15 yrs before Rachel was called home and do not want to be a nurse anymore. I am returning to college this fall, and start on Sept. 7. I was accepted in a graduate school and will major in mental health-counseling. You were so right about helping others, and keeping busy. My turning point (or side road) was when I gave up trying to control my life, feelings, etc...and gave it back to God.

I will always struggle with "life," and feel I am only on the "L" part. I don't see me ever enjoying life as I once did or loving my life. It's one second at a time with my hand in the Lord's and letting Him have control. Just thought I would share. You are a blessing to many and probably don't even realize it. May God bless you and keep you safe.

Debbie Campbell

I emailed Debbie to see if I could use her comments in the last email and she replied:

Dinah,

How good to hear from you so quickly. I just admire your wisdom and energy! You really do help so very many people (like myself) that do not reach out to anyone for the first year or so and hear of your webpage.

Of course you may use the email - anywhere you feel necessary. I really don't feel I inspire anyone. I find you to be the inspirational one. I just try to glorify God and follow His lead.

My Rachel's birth date is Feb. 13, 1986. She went home to be with the Lord on Oct. 14, 2004. Oh, how I love her. Thank you for asking. Could you please let me know what your Jim's dates are? Cards are a blessing, especially when you feel no one remembered.

Thanks for all your work on the wonderful web. One day I will write in and tell you all about the Comfort Quilt Ministry God led me to start, in memory of Rachel. God Bless you and keep you safe.

Debbie Campbell

Rachel's symbol is a ladybug.

Greg & Debbie Nichols' daughter, Angie Carter (8-10-77) died in an auto accident, 8-19-00.

Debbie sent me a picture of Angie and described their relationship:

Dear Dinah,

Thank you so much for remembering Angie on her birthday and angel day. That means so much to me.

I love her and miss her so much. She was my daughter and my best friend.

*Thank you and God Bless,
Debbie & Greg*

Angie's symbol is a star.

Phillip & Hilda Howard's daughter, Rebecca All (9-29-56) died from complications from transplants, 4-26-06.

Hilda wrote this tribute the morning Becky's funeral:

Becky was a faithful member of Hopewell Baptist Church, Corbin, KY. She was a member of Westwood Chapter Order of the Eastern Star, Ashland, KY.

Becky was brought up in a loving, Christian home and her life was a reflection of her up-bringing. She was a working mother who always found time to be involved in the activities of her son during his school years.

In her 30s, she was diagnosed with a devastating disease. She gracefully accepted this challenge and lived life to the fullest. All who knew her were astonished with her determination to overcome and overcome she has. She now lives in the presence of her Heavenly Father and is being tended by the Angels.

Even though her life was short, she had a great impact on many people. All who knew her have been blessed from knowing and loving her. Heaven is a sweeter place today because she is there.

Hilda later wrote:

Becky had worked for 17 years in the office of Johnson's Dairy in Ashland, KY. After moving to Corbin, she went to work for Christian Health Center. She worked there until she had to take medical leave 3+ years ago. She was a very dependable employee. She did the Medicare billing for the Nursing Home, plus many other things. The residents and their families loved her.

Becky's symbol is a sunflower.

Inge Knowles son, David (7-15-68) completed suicide, 7-6-00.

Inge counts her blessings:

Dear Dinah,

Thank you so much for always remembering David. I do appreciate your cards and notes.

The Compassionate Friends have been a very kind and helpful group for me. And I have made wonderful friends.

I don't miss a day of thinking of David. His little girl, Katie who is 7, is so special for me and she looks like David. Her mother has remarried and her husband is good to Katie.

My symbol for David is the butterfly and I do volunteer work in our local native butterfly house.

Would enjoy meeting you sometime...I hope our paths will cross.

*Lots of love,
Inge Knowles*

David's symbol is a butterfly.

Teresa Cossey's son, Curren (12-6-81) died in his sleep and was probably given drugs, 8-29-04.

Teresa shares a revelation:

Dinah,

Thank you so very much for the card - it meant so much for me to see that you remembered. I wanted you to know that this is the first time that I have seen some lightness in all of this darkness. I consider what you are doing a wonderful ministry. I would like to help in this some way (I encouraged her to contact other parents who have lost children and be their mentor). This was such a blessing to me that I would love to participate in anyway that I can. Again, as all of us, we never wanted to walk down this path, but if we must, at least God has given us shoulders to lean on and help us through it.

Thanks for all of your kindness,

Teresa Curren's website is:

<http://www.mem.com/display/Tributes.asp?ID=556175>

Curren's symbol is a purple bear.

Tim & Jeanne Brown's daughter, Allie (8-30-99) died from Leukemia, 9-19-01.

I had sent them an email note on Allie's birthday. Jeanne replied:

Thank you! I never thought I'd believe this but, it does get easier with the passing years.

I then emailed her to get permission to use her email and asked if she would like to expand on her comments:

Yes!! Of Course you can!!! Maybe I had a little help because of Cassie (who was born last year). But, all I can really say is, that you have to trust God and believe He is in charge. It helps to have family and friends around too. I still have moments when I have grief, but I have to get on with my life.

There are other people in this world that are counting on me, so, I have to be strong.

Thank you,

Jeanne

Allie's symbol is a dime.

Paul & Nancy Hudak's daughter, Mary Beth Connor (4-10-58) died from Melanoma, 9-24-01.

I had sent Paul and Nancy the poem about **2001, 9-11** and this was Nancy's response:

Thank you, dear Dinah, for continuing to inspire us, to remember those good people who live in our hearts. We watched the horror of 9/11 in Pittsburgh with our dear Mary Beth, undergoing treatment for melanoma. After that, as we prayed together each night, she suggested we stop praying for her and devote our evening prayers to the victims of 9/11 and their families.

Mary Beth died on the 24th of September and we know she eagerly went to meet those people for whom she had prayed so earnestly.

*Much love,
Nancy Hudak*

Mary Beth's symbol is a star.

Chris & Connie Weddle's son, Bradley (7-29-82) died in an auto accident, 6-2-01 (2 days after his high school graduation).

Connie describes her family:

Dear Dinah,

Thank you so much for remembering my Bradley on his angel day. Yes, it does seem we have quite a bit in common with our sons!

My Bradley was born July 29, 1982. So we are approaching his "Happy Day!" We always referred to our children's birthdays as their "Happy Days" when they were growing up! All four of my children were born in the morning, so we always had morning or breakfast parties for them, with just the six of us usually. I would wait until the birthday person had gone to bed the night before and then I would decorate the breakfast table and put out small gifts for morning! We have a lot of happy memories from our morning birthday parties! Since Bradley's death, we haven't been

able to do quite the same things or do them the same way; I'm sure you understand this.

Bradley is the third of my four children. Aimee is the oldest; she was born March 29, 1978. Joshua was born August 25, 1979; just seventeen months after Aimee. Then we had Bradley Lewis and when he was six, Kristin was born on December 7, 1988.

My children were extremely close to each other and still are to this day. While my three living children have each experienced much pain and heartbreak at Bradley's leaving, Joshua pretty much left us that day as well. He was driving the car when the accident happened. The car hydroplaned on a bad spot on the highway. The state trooper told us there was nothing he (Joshua) could have done. Our car hit another car on the side where Bradley was riding.

My boys were so close to each other, but so different in personality. Bradley was so out-going, friendly, talkative, funny, witty, in-your-face, here-I-am kind of guy; while Joshua is quiet, shy, reserved, a slow-to-anger, keeps things to himself kind of guy. Joshua cannot talk about the accident. We have tried and tried to get him help, but he is not ready to accept the help or to forgive himself for whatever he blames himself for.

Bradley lived for a couple of hours after the accident. Joshua was with him in the ambulance while they waited on a helicopter to try and land at the accident site. They wouldn't let Joshua go on the helicopter, so the last thing he remembers seeing, is Bradley's big beautiful smile and hearing him say, "I love you, Josh!" We (my husband, Chris; Kristin, and I) were waiting patiently at the local hospital after having been told that one of our sons was coming there in an ambulance and the other one was being flown out; but they were both going to be all right! My heart breaks all over again every time I think how we sat and waited and waited with no one to help us, thinking that one of our sons was on his way there and the other one on his way in a helicopter somewhere else! But finally we found out when it was too late, to go to Bradley; that Joshua was o.k. and not coming to the hospital in an ambulance, but had, in fact, already gotten another ride to Lexington to the hospital where they had flown Bradley. Bradley was gone when we arrived at the hospital and Joshua was in complete despair. I think the sounds I heard coming from the chapel that Joshua was making, made me realize I had no choice but to be brave, go in there and try to save this son, as there was nothing I could do anymore for my Bradley.

I have a lot of unanswered questions as I'm sure you do! But one thing I do know, my Bradley is in Heaven and I will see him again! He loved people and being with people and talking to people. He was an

awesome guy with so-o-o many friends and family who still talk about him and miss him so! We always put his picture and some small saying or poem in our local paper for his birthday and for his angel day as well. His friends always let me know that they have seen it and they still think of him and visit his grave! It makes me feel good to know he is not forgotten!

I'm sorry if I have rambled on, but I guess I needed to talk or write about him today. Thank you again for your card. I have read about your son and my heart breaks for you and your husband as well.

*In Christian Love,
Connie*

**Louis McIntyre & Lizanne O'Toole's daughter, Fallon (3-3-02)
died from brain & spinal cancer, 6-21-04.**

I received this note from Lizanne:

Dear Dinah,

Thank you so very much for your lovely card and for remembering our Fallon. I can't tell you how very much it means to me to know that she is thought of and remembered still—but I think you do know.

In my life, I have come across a few "earth angels." Thanks for continuing to be one and for helping so many parents such as myself.

Your thoughtfulness has not fallen on deaf ears—Thanks for reaching out and just "being there."

Fallon was/is one of my greatest gifts and I know she is with us all.

*Much love,
Lizanne*

Being a bereaved parent is an isolating affair.

Fallon's symbols are bubbles and the sun.

**Lee and Becky Coon's son, Michael (7-15-89) was accidentally
fatally wounded, 11-6-03.**

After reading through Michael's website, I asked for permission to include him on our website. Becky answered:

I would be honored for you to include Michael in your website & newsletter! Anyway he can be remembered makes me feel good. Michael left this world through a tragic accident of young men playing with a gun. He knew better. The young man who shot him had never been taught anything about guns. I'm going to update his website by putting his story down in his legacy. Thank you for visiting his site. He is a wonderful young man who touched the lives of many. Sounds like he & your young Jim had something in common, a compassionate heart. Michael couldn't bear to see someone unhappy. He would do anything he could to help others.

Have a blessed day!

Becky

This is just the first page of Michael's website:

This memorial website was created in the memory of our beloved son, Michael Anthony Coon who was born in Pine Bluff, Arkansas on July 15, 1989 and went to Heaven on November 06, 2003 at the age of 14. He will always be here in our hearts!

Michael was an easy going fun loving guy. He never met a stranger and could always bring a smile to your face. His friends all relate stories of how Michael loved to try to make them laugh. If you were in a bad mood or sad, he would do whatever it took to make you smile. He loved being with his friends. He was always having friends over to spend the night or going over to their houses. The more the merrier was how he saw it!

Michael was a devoted Christian and faithful member of Family Church. He was a small group leader who excelled. He loved Jesus and one of his greatest desires was to see His friends and family come to know Jesus. He won awards in church for the most members & the fastest growth in a small group. That award has now been named "The Michael Coon Excellence Award" and is awarded every quarter.

Michael was also a Black Belt in Tae Kwon Do. He had a lot of natural physical ability as well as the ability to learn quickly. Our family will always remember the testings he went through to move through each belt level as well as the tournaments that were so much fun. Michael loved competition and always set out to win in everything he did. He was also awarded a Leadership Award through Little Rock Tae Kwon Do.

He lives with Jesus and we look forward to the day when we will see him again!

Michael's website is <http://www.michael-coon.memory-of.com> The family would love for you to get to know Michael.

Michael's symbol is a lady bug.

Shannon Campbell's daughter, Alize (5-2-00) died from asphyxiation, 11-1-00.

Shannon shared her tragedy:

Dinah,

Let me start by apologizing. There have been so many times that I have sat down to write this letter. I then realize how it is that we have come to know of each other and I just can't finish it.

Now I do want to thank you, though. You have helped me in so many ways come to terms with the loss of my daughter. Everyone keeps telling me that it will get easier in time. Well, for me, time made it harder for a long while.

Alize was such a beautiful baby. She could light up any room with just her glorious smile. A smile that is burned into my memory.

On October 29, 2000, Ally fell between the mattress and the wall. She had already stopped breathing when my mom found her. Thirty-four minutes after my mom found her, the doctors finally got her heart started back. Alize was then flown to UK Children's Hospital. There the wonderful doctors and nurses did everything in their power to help my daughter. But she had been gone too long. The next few days were pure hell. Ally was hooked up to a respirator, had seven IVs. There were more tubes hooked up to my little Turtle than I care to remember.

The doctors told me that her potassium level was 9, 10 will kill you. Her liver was failing, and so were her kidneys. On October 31st the doctors told me about her potassium level and asked me if I wanted them to give her a medicine to bring her potassium back down. The fallback was that it

would make her kidneys and liver worse. I told them not to stop doing what they were doing, but not to do anything more. I had put it in God's hands.

Later that night, they asked me about donating her organs. The only thing that could be donated was her heart valves and her corneas. Without a second thought, I told them that they could donate anything that they could use. At 8:30 the next morning, the doctor told me that, by the grace of God, her potassium level went back down to 4; her kidneys started back, and her life was working again. That day she was pronounced 100% brain dead.

A little baby girl got her heart, a baby boy got her liver, a 33-year-old man got her right kidney, and both of her corneas were donated. Talk about a miracle baby! I'm so proud of my girl; she did so much more in her short six months than most people do in their entire lives.

For several years after her death, the only things that I could remember about my daughter were those last few days. That's why it took me so long to write this letter. I'm just now getting to the point that the horrible memories of the last few days of her life aren't pushing away the wonderful memories. The memories that I didn't want to lose.

I now have a beautiful 3-year-old daughter, Cicely. She tells me all the time that she talks to her big sister Alize. Cicely and my fiancé have helped me overcome the bad memories and push those back instead of the good ones.

Most days are still a struggle to cope with Turtle's death (she got that nickname the day she was born), but finally, FINALLY, it's getting easier.

My love and pride for Ally still grows every day. She touched so many people in so many different ways. She will always live on because there are so many people that could never forget her.

You asked me in a recent letter if you could share my story. Please do. I want the world to know how wonderful she was and still is.

The bed that Ally fell between was a bed that was pushed up against the wall; a bed that we slept in all the time. I thought that she would be safe. Please, anyone that may read this, don't make the same mistake that I made. Make sure that your child can't fall off. Alize had a circle of pillows around her and she still got in the 3 inch space between the bed and the wall. Losing my little girl was the hardest thing I have ever done. I don't want anyone to make the innocent mistake that I did. Well, I thought that it would be innocent, but it turned out to be the worst mistake of my life. A mistake that I hear all the time that other parents make. That mistake changed my life forever; I don't wait it to change yours too.

Dinah, again I want to let you know how sorry I am that it took me this long to respond to the many letters that you have written. Also, I want

to thank you for giving me the chance to get Alize's story out. Maybe this will help to save some other child whose parents never thought that this could happen. I have heard so many people tell me that they used to do the same thing. If possible, I don't want anyone else to have to go through the horror and pain that I had to endure. Please don't let her death be in vain.

*Sincerely,
Shannon*

Alize's symbol is a turtle.

Sandy Mettling's daughter, Amanda (12-17-82) was hit and killed by an off-duty policeman, 8-14-99.

Dinah,

Thanks so much for your notes/cards. I have appreciated your kindness/words very much. I married a few years ago so my name has changed from Kullman to Mettling.

My daughter was in a car accident with Brianna Morris on August 14, 1999 (both were 16 yrs old). My daughter told me a month before her accident that God told her she was going to die soon and she said she only asked Him for 1 month for her driver's license (she got a month). During that month she told me songs to play at her funeral and not to play what Brianna wanted, she also picked her plot out. I have a lot of stories and unanswered questions, but my faith in God has kept me alive along with my family/friends/community. I argued with God that at least Mary knew where Jesus was going and I felt like He told me "That is why I (God) had her (Amanda) tell you."

One counselor told me that when Amanda told me that, that I was supposed to have protected and I failed. This Christian man was supposed to be the best, but has made me question myself. I just want to thank you very much for your thoughtfulness and time, it has made a difference.

I emailed Sandy to see if she would permit me to use her email about the "counselor" and this was her reply:

Dinah,

He (counselor) said that when God told Amanda, that was my sign to protect her. I listened to this preacher every day on the radio; he is a great messenger. However, when I got an appt. with him, I think the "grief" thing scared him, and he brought someone else in. Until you've walked in our shoes, you're clueless. Do you feel like you have a handicap now? I feel like I am permanently handicapped in grief/pain.

Amanda Belle was my only child. A police officer hit the girls (Brianna Morris was in the car with Amanda) through an intersection going at a very high rate of speed, no lights, sirens and no emergency.

Amanda loved butterflies, which are still on her bedroom window. I often see yellow butterflies around me, so I just wonder..... I have had many dreams about her and heard her talking to me in some of them. I always woke up at 3am and sometimes, uncontrollable nightmares since the accident. One time I asked her, how did she get to keep coming back and she said, "God lets her some, but He was calling for her to come back. I asked her if she saw her funeral, and she said "No, because she was in purgatory for 3 days" and we were laughing. Only 1 time did I have a visit face to face and I was never so frightened in my life. I was sound asleep and I felt two people at the end of my bed and when I opened my eyes, she was in my face (3 days after the funeral) crying and she said 3 times "I'm so sorry," I couldn't speak a word, I just trembled. That has been my only visit. Some strange things go on at the house at times too.

Dinah, again, Thank You So Much!

Amanda's symbol is a butterfly.

Linda Scarpa's son, Joey (9-13-71) was murdered, 3-20-95.

My Joey would have been 30, this September. I'm crying right now, so forgive me if I don't type right. Joey was shot twice in the back of the head.

Murdered.....

My son Joey is 23 forever.....I always wanted a son, and God gave me my Joey. Oh how I cried when I held him in my arms. Joey was born Sept 13, 1971. I held his tiny hand, and looked at his brown eyes, and just kissed him and told him "I will love you forever my son, and take care of you." I did my best. He went to nursery school, never forget how I cried, and just went

there to see him. I was so on top of him all the time. He'd say "Ma, I'm 13 now, can I cross the street?" "Oh no! Not without me." I sent him to camp. He loved it in Vermont. I called at least twice a day. He was in gymnastics, and karate. He loved everyone. He had a heart of gold. Joey was my life. When he was shot in the head, twice.....I too died. I remember that day, second to second. His smile, his laugh, his getting dressed and asking, "Ma do I look ok?" My handsome son. "Yes my love, you are perfect."

*"I love you Ma, we will have dinner today Ma.... I'll pick you up at 5."
"Ok, my son."*

He was killed at 5. Shot twice in the back of the head. Where was I? I was supposed to take care of my baby boy. I never got to hold his hand again, or see him smile, and oh how I miss those words....."MA."

But I live, one day at a time. I know the day will come and I will see the light shining and see my Joey, holding out his hand to me, and saying "MA, lets go home." This time I will never let my son go. For eternity I will see his smile, hear his laughter and hear those words.... "MA."

I died that day too. I waited for my son to take me for dinner at 5. Joey was killed at 5. I just want to do a special birthday card for my son Joey. His 30th. I will send him balloons, have a mass said, and keep a candle burning for my son so he can feel the warmth from my heart.

Happy 30th Birthday to My Son, My Life, My World, and My Best Friend. Joey

You can get to know Joey better by reading these different websites:

<http://hometown.aol.com/lindajoeysmom/myhomepage/memorial.html>

<http://www.angelabode.com/NewYearTribute.html>

<http://www.susan-poetry-in-motion.com/joey.html>

<http://iam.homewithgod.com/angeljeh/JoeyS.html>

<http://iam.homewithgod.com/angeljeh/JoeyScarpa.html>

<http://www.heavenschildren.com/Joey.htm>

I asked Linda why she chose "friends" as Joey's symbol:

I chose friends because Joey was such a kind and generous boy. He always took his friends out to eat. If they had no money Joey was right there to help. He is an angel. You have made me cry; knowing how loved and thought of my son is. And I thank you so much. I keep Joey alive all the time. This Sunday we have a Walk to Remember for our angels from Compassionate Friends. We do a two mile walk wearing our child's picture

on a tee shirt around the lake. Then we throw a rose in the lake for our angel. Sad.

*Thank You,
lindajoeysmom*

Joey is symbolized by friends.

Kimmi Hargrove's son, Chris Pereida (8-31-80) completed suicide, 8-31-00.

Kimmi wrote this email:

Hi Dinah....thank you SO much for remembering my precious son! I received the card & meant to write you ASAP, but have been in a complete fog of depression. Just gets worse with each passing year for me, and I cannot believe it has been 6 years either! Breaks my heart.

You also asked if I had symbol for Chris....and yes, he made that very known right away. He always sends me Monarch butterflies when I ask for a sign. I even have a monarch w/a red rose tattoo on my left shoulder blade which I had done the day I picked out his monument.

Any time you have a chance, you can visit my website for Chris....I will put the link to it below here. I am up to 15 pages now, as it is a "work in progress." Sadly enough, there are no new memories & pictures to add. I do plan on one more new page some time in the future; a page with all his friends on it. Just haven't gotten around to it YET.

<http://hometown.aol.com/kbceplina/myhomepage/fan.html>

Again thanks for remembering us on Chris's date.

*Luv,
Kimmi Mom of Christopher FOREVER!!!*

Kim wrote this poem to Chris:

My KingWs6 FOREVER

In Memory of my son Christopher Joel Pereida

08-31-1980 to 08-31-2000

*My KingWs6
Who art now in Heaven,
Forever in my heart
Lives your name!*

*Your life was much too short
My precious son &
My heart was broken & shattered
When the Angels came.*

*Memories flood my heart & soul
And for you I constantly long,
Not only for my sweet angelic baby boy
But for the handsome young man you had become!*

*When my Lord & Savior comes
To take me back to my Heavenly home,
It is your precious face
That I will once again see!*

*I miss you so much Christopher Joel
The river of tears continually flow,
But when I enter those pearly gates
It is you who will be there to meet me!*

*Every day I light a candle & say a prayer for you
Though you're gone from me, my love for you will eternally grow!
From the very depth of my soul
This I know!!!*

*I love and miss you my baby boy...
My KingWs6 FOREVER!!!*

*Love, Mom
Written by Kimberly
02-22-2001*

I asked Kimmi the symbolism of "My KingWs?"

(((Dinah))) thanks for visiting my son. Christopher had a black Trans Am (on the website) that had a high performance RamAir motor in it...a Ws6 package. He also was a computer guru & maintained 27 of his own websites. He was known amongst the computer world as "elite." His screen name was KingWs6. So the morning of his funeral (09-01-00) I created my KingWs6MOM screen name & my daughter created KingWs6sis (neither of us knew the other was doing that at just about the same time). I also have KingWs6 on the back on my new car I got just after Chris passed. He helped me find that car, no doubt about it. I HAD to sell my little Honda CRX because (due to a car wreck which broke my back & major surgery just 3 weeks before he passed) I couldn't drive a standard anymore. So my Mom bought me a brand new car. I looked at a few, then had to go potty so the salesman took us inside. There on the showroom floor was a solid black (his color car) Pontiac GrandAm. On the side it has "Ws6" and with the hood up, first thing I saw was "RamAir Motor." So KingWs6 HAD to go on my car.



Kimmi is another mother who has memorialized her child by getting tattoos.

Chris' symbol is a Monarch butterfly.



Jeff & Paula Snyder's son, Johnathon (5-2-91) died when a rod fell on him, 9-26-98.

Paula has a wonderful ministry through her Halo Garden website:

Dinah!

What a sweet and wonderful Earth Angel you are! It just never occurred to me to send actual "snail mail" cards to parents. I just always try to send emails and sign guest books on our Angels dates. I just know that God has reserved a "special place" in Heaven for you!

A symbol for Johnathon would be a butterfly.....I just love the quote "What A Caterpillar Calls The End Of The World, God Calls a Butterfly" Author unknown to me.....

I don't think I've been given the honors of adding your Young Jim to The Halo Garden. Have you had the opportunity to visit the site yet? If not, it is located at <http://halogarden.com>

I would be honored if you would submit, and allow us to include Jim in this.

My heart and prayers are eternally with you.....

Love and Hugs,

Paula ~ [Johnathon's Mommy 4-EVER!](#)

Johnathon's symbol is a butterfly.

Diane Craddock's son, JJ Wade (9-22-72), died from carbon monoxide, 1-26-05, and her daughter, Michele Wade (12-31-76), died in an auto accident, 5-20-04 (the same angel date as Young Jim).

Diane wants to share her website with you and your child:

Dear Dinah,

It has been two years, seven months, and ten days (figured thru September 5th 2006) since JJ died...time seems to quickly pass on some days and yet seems to stand still on other days. September 22nd is JJ's birthday, he will turn 34. There isn't a day that goes by that I don't think about him. I continue to raise his two sons (Jamie, 13 and Brandon, 14) in a loving Christian home. Brandon will be a freshman in high school this year and Jamie will be in the seventh grade.

It has been two years, three months, and sixteen days (figured thru September 5th 2006) since Michele was killed. Michele's birthday is December 31st and she will turn 30. I continue to get her four children (Jeremy-13, Trent-11, Morgan-9, and Michael-5) together on a minimum of one weekend a month. I have custody of Michael (he was severely injured in the crash that killed her but doing well now considering what he went through) and he'll be in kindergarten this year.

I try to help the grandchildren (all six) enjoy their childhood....I take them on mini vacations (as this old gray mare "Grandma" ain't what she used to be....LOL). This summer they have been swimming, on several days, at our local YMCA; day trips to Ocean Breeze (a water park in Va. Beach...about an hour from me); weekend trip to Delaware; and a four day visit to the Great Wolf Lodge (an indoor water park in Williamsburg...about an hour from me). Some of these things may wear me out but I enjoy seeing them frolic and have fun together.

I'm starting to get things together for the 2006 Celebration of Life Memorial Ceremony. This event is for families that have lost loved ones. Everyone is invited to attend in person or send a picture (either email or snail mail) and write a tribute about their angel (it can be as long or short as you would like). I add their name to the website...include full name, birthday and angel day. Also I need to know which state your angel is from. I try to keep everyone's information categorized by state. The loved ones can be a child, spouse, parent, sibling, friend, etc.

A brief outline of the memorial ceremony.....

A yearly gathering held in Franklin Virginia on New Year's Eve. The event consists of family and friends getting together to celebrate the lives our loved ones lived. Each December 31st (in the afternoon...at 3pm this year) we have guest speakers, continuous overhead slide presentation with pictures and dates of the loved ones, the pictures and tributes are placed on tables where candles are lit in their honor and memory, release balloons, and have fellowship over refreshments.

For families that live too far away to attend the event in person....their loved one's picture and tribute (written by the person wanting their loved one included) is given the same loving care and presentation as the attending families. To see a little of last year's event go to the website listed below my name, this is also where I post the names and the pictures of our loved ones before and after the ceremony.

If anyone needs more information, you can call me at any of the numbers below or send your phone number, a good time to contact you and I will call you.

Diane, Mom of Angels JJ and Michele

Angelsarms2004@verizon.net

<http://www.angels-arms.celebration-of.com>

757-562-7727 & 757-562-1476 home 757-438-7812 cell

"Live to Remember and Remember to Live"

JJ's symbols are a Harley and a boy angel. Michele's symbols are a Harley and a girl angel.

Jessica Jones' son, Cameron Fate (12-4-02), died from complications related to Holt-Oram Syndrome, 1-20-03.

Dear Dinah,

I appreciate your note. It is so wonderful to know that there are caring people out there who still wish to keep the memories of our children alive.

I do have a symbol for my son - a spider web. This may sound a bit odd, but his middle name is Fate and that is what we called him. The spider web is a symbol of Fate and how all of our lives are interconnected. When I think of this symbol, I can't help but think of how even the most seemingly insignificant strands of the web are necessary for the symmetry of the entire web. Even though the span of my son's life was a very short amount of time, the strand that represents him in the web of my life is integral in maintaining the shape and purpose of my life from this point on.

Thank you so much for your compassion and concern for your fellow travelers. You are genuinely a diamond in this rough, rocky life-course which we all now follow.

*Love,
Jessica*

She closed with this saying:

Don't worry about the world coming to an end today. It's already tomorrow in Australia. - Charles Schultz

Fate's symbol is a spider web.

Alice Owens Gatlin's son, PJ (9-2-98), died from Meningitis, 4-25-99.

I had sent her an email note on PJ's birthday and asked if she had chosen a symbol for PJ:

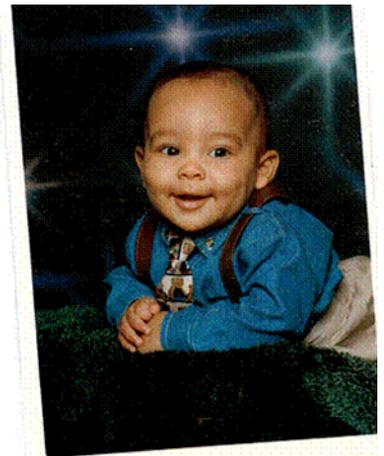
I have - It is an "Angel Boy." I asked my sister to draw an angel boy for his headstone so I guess I choose his symbol at his homecoming and didn't realize it at the time. Also, she (my sister) named her card business Angel Bboy Co. in memory of (Patrick Jr.)"PJ". She is a gifted artist and has drawn several pictures of angels of all ethnic backgrounds to depict on greeting cards.

Alice



PJ's symbol is an angel boy.

*This is a copy of one of my sister's angels as well as a copy of an actual Christmas card showing the "AngelBoy & Co." Most importantly, here is my precious boy "PJ." Thank you for your interest in my sister's small endeavor to pay tribute to my Angel Boy, PJ.
Love, Alice*



Skip & Jerry Mudge, have lost a total of three children. Jerry's two children, Wayne (8-19-62) and Leon Jonas, Jr. (2-17-61), were killed in an auto-truck accident, 10-26-90. Skip's son, Jeff (1-14-61), completed suicide, 10-24-87.

Jerry emailed to say the Children's Memorial Walkway in Charlotte, NC has a new website:

Dinah,

Besides yours and Rosemary's (bricks) we have about 10 more from other states who have an engraved brick in our garden. We had Marilyn Heavilin and she was wonderful and as you can see, she wrote a poem for our garden which is on the opening page. Our new webmaster is one of the

ladies our newspaper wrote about last April. She and her husband lost an infant to stillborn. Now we have a local person handling our website.

*Blessings,
Jerry and Skip*

www.ocmw.org (The pictures are beautiful!)

Leon Jr. and Wayne's symbol is a rose. Jeff's symbol is a car.

Have you ever thought what this word stands for? Read on....

Do you know that a simple "hello" can be a sweet one?

The word *H E L L O* means:

H=How are you?

E= Everything all right?

L= Like to hear from you .

L= Love to see you soon!

O=Obviously, You are my friend..so, HELLO!

My email address is: dinah@ucumberland.edu

The website's address is <http://www.ucumberland.edu/lamentations/>