
LAMENTATIONS

Issue 107

middle

December, 2006

What type of Christmas season will you have?

I know it will be hollow (a void, an emptiness) season for us all because we don't have some of our children with us physically.

Will it be a hallow (to make or set apart as holy; to respect or honor greatly) season?

Will it be horrid (extremely disagreeable; offensive)?

Will it be holy (belonging to, derived from, or associated with a divine power; sacred)?

Those of you who are blessed to have other children or have grandchildren, I hope you will remember that they deserve as happy a Christmas season as possible. Many times they feel that they aren't loved as much as the one who has passed, because they no longer have a Christmas. One sibling told me that she wanted to scream at her parents and say, "Hey, I am still alive and I hurt too. I need your love more than ever."

I have always put up a tree in Young Jim's memory because I want him to know that he is remembered not only by us, but it reminds others who come to our home that he existed.

What are you planning to do that will make you and your family as happy as is possible this holiday season? Perhaps you can work at a soup kitchen or a shelter. Even if you can't have a "merry" season, you can make it merrier for those around you, and at the end of the day you will be blessed that you have done something for someone else in your child's memory.

Grief Grafts

Yolanda Lazarini's son, Kevin (2-22-66) died from a brain tumor, 8-8-91.

Yolanda has suffered another tragedy:

Dear Dinah,

First all I would like to thank you for your many, many wonderful cards and remembrances of my son Kevin.

Knowing you go through the same feelings and all that I do makes you extra special to me. I always am ready to respond to you, but something comes up. I have saved all of your communications and read them often. I do have a symbol for Kevin, and have had for several years. Before he died, my daughter had a pet rabbit; she went away to college, and he took care of it. When he was home, he would let it out to run around the yard.

About 6 years ago, I saw a rabbit in my front yard, and then it went in the back and came around all the time. When I saw it, I immediately thought of Kevin and that has been my symbol ever since. You amaze me at how you keep up with all of this and remembered when we met, that I did not have a symbol and did not for a long time. Kevin was my oldest child and the only boy. I have two daughters also. I can, fortunately, remember only good and wonderful things about him. He was just very thoughtful and always concerned for others, he was very funny, and kept us laughing. He was a hard worker, worked his way through college and pharmacy school. He was just beginning his internship when he got sick, March 11th, 1991. He kept going to school and trying to work, even though he had a brain tumor. He passed away on August 8th 1991. Still after all these years as I write this, tears come into my eyes. He was very special.

I would like to hear about your son. We had so little time to talk when you were here. I just remember you talking about the dome at the college and the book. I know your son was very special to you. God only takes the very special ones for His Kingdom.

By the way, a year after my son died, my husband Mike had a stroke and I have been caring for him over the years. He passed away this past February. As a matter of fact, it was on Kevin's birthday, the 22nd. It has been a very hard year. I have lost both of my men. My daughters are

wonderful and I have my job. I have been blessed with my first grandchild this past December, and my daughter and her husband also took in two foster children who needed love and a home. They are sisters and hope they can be adopted. This has been a tremendous help for me.

Will close for now, sorry I am long winded, but look how many years I am behind all of your messages.

Again, thank you from the bottom of my heart for remembering and sharing. As you well know, it means a lot. Looking forward to hearing from you.

Fondly, Yolanda

Kevin's symbol is a rabbit.

Ron & Sally Vanwinkle's son, Ronnie (12-1-80) completed suicide, 11-6-00.

A friend of his wrote this poem:

A Friend Above

*This time of silence has just begun and I'll always remember our time of fun
A friend lost so far away and you left without a word to say
In my memory you shall be, while watching over us all, including me
You didn't know all of the pain that everyone would feel
Now your wound is too late to heal
Why you killed yourself, I don't understand
I didn't know or else I would have given you my hand
I wish I could bring you back and pull you through the mess
But you thought what you did was for the best.
I would have made you see, what you mean to your family and friends
I guess you weren't thinking as it ends
I don't know what to say or do
I hope you know now that a lot of people loved you
This tragedy will only make us all strong
I wish that you would have felt like you belong*

*Love always,
© Stephanie*

The family hopes you will visit his website:
<http://www.friendslove.tripod.com/ronnie.html>

Ronnie's symbol is a Pegasus.

**Terry Dixon's son, John, "Tito" (8-9-83) died from cancer,
3-14-02.**

Terry shares what her family does to remember John at Christmas:

You had asked what we travelers do in memory of our children during the holidays. Our small town (Salida, CO--population 5,000 +) has a group that puts up Christmas trees in our downtown park. Some trees are sponsored by businesses and others are what we call "Memory Trees." We can rent a tree for \$25.00 and decorate them however we wish in memory of our loved ones that have passed on. They always include pictures (laminated to keep them weather-proof) and other decorations that were special to, or remind us of, our loved ones. There is a tree lighting the day after Thanksgiving and the trees stay lit each evening until the first week in January. Our family likes to get together to decorate the tree on the Saturday before Thanksgiving and then we all go out to lunch. Also, each holiday season I have a table-wreath or centerpiece of evergreens made in memory of John. I have always had it trimmed in blue (his favorite color). Last year I added pinecones from the Ponderosa tree which John planted when he was about 7 or 8 years old. On Christmas morning each of us lights one of the candles in the centerpiece and shares a special memory of John.

Since the death of my brother, my only sibling, last year, and with another surgery this past February, I still have not managed the time to sit down and write about John, but hope to in the near future. He makes his watchful presence known to me and I still want to share the "dragonfly story" with everyone.

I hope things are going well for you. May the upcoming holiday season be filled with wonderful memories of the times shared with all our loved ones--especially those that have gone before.

Love from one of your fellow travelers,

Terry Dixon
(Mother of John "Tito" Quick)

John's symbol is a dragonfly.

Pam Taylor's daughter, Kelli Laine Lewis, (7-18-82) died in an auto accident, 1-21-01.

Pam is busy trying to make a difference:

*Hi, how nice to find your email addy!!!
I found it on a new memorial site- wounded hearts- and there was Jim's cute lil face on the site :)*

So what is new in your world?

Me? I finally got off the "med" I was taking for the past 4 years- too bad I couldn't find anything to numb the pain- darn it!

So I have been off everything for a year YaY.

I have a new website for Kelli- that honestly has saved my life!

It's this one: www.myspace.com/kelli_laine_doa

I know, big eye roll when you see it's on myspace.com- I did the same thing when my oldest son was trying to tell me about myspace- and of course I hear the bad press too- but now that I'm on it- wow- there is SO much going on!

Kelli's page is helping to save lives- so for that I just couldn't be more proud of her!

There are SO many that support her site & leave comments on there for her- including Matt Lauer from "the today show" so, it's pretty cool.

Ok girl- don't want to write a book lol

So big hugs-

I hope you are all doing as well as possible.

~Much love

~~Pam Taylor

~~~Mom of Kelli Laine Lewis

Pam sent this email out to people who live in South Carolina, encouraging them to be more pro-active:

Good day all

If you are upset that you got this mail- or don't know who I am- please just delete and block me. My aol does auto load- so I don't remember where half these email addy's came from- hopefully this is all going out under a blind copy.

Many of you know I have been working on changes in my state due to losing my daughter Kelli to a drunk-driving fatality. My state has been ignoring me and passing me on to other offices that ignore me or tell me to get in touch with the office that sent me to them- who then pass me on to another agency...and so on.

I have been at this for 5 years. The last time I wrote to all these people (July) - only ONE in the bunch mailed me back- and that was the usual- it's not my department crap.

Now I have several people that have mailed them this last week and only two have responded! And at election time- wow! Can't wait to vote!

So I need some more help- maybe if their mail box gets filled up they will do what they are paid to do!

If you think it's wrong that my daughter was killed by two underage drunk drivers- one died, the other was never charged, and neither were the 3 "adults" that provided the alcohol, then... please copy the email address below and please mail all of them in one mail- easier that way :)

You will probably only hear back from the two- and one is the standard- "I can't help you, but go to the web site and get your senators email addresses."

Umm who do you think I have been mailing- along with every one else on that web site. gRrRrrr

If you live in the state of South Carolina- and or have ANY ties to it whatsoever- (friends, family, business, vacation) please include that- as this will get their attention because of the all mighty dollar! Also, if you know me or knew Kelli, lost a loved one- please include that.

Just do some random thing in the subject line so they will actually read it.

If you're stuck on what to say- here is just an example...write whatever you want.

Thank you SO much for your support- how great will it be to know that YOU helped make Kelli's law possible!

Much love

Pam Taylor, Kelli's mom

Please pass this on to anyone that you think might want to help :)

Copy all below

ltgov@scsenate.org
NormanR@schouse.org
CROMERR@scsenate.org
laura@scvan.org
traci.thompson@madd.org
Jami.Goldman@madd.org
acherry@heraldonline.com
jmorrill@charlotteobserver.com,
SIV@scsenate.org, RA@scsenate.org, BRYANTK@scsenate.org,
CAMPSEN@scsenate.org, CLEARYR@scsenate.org, EDU@scsenate.org,
CROMERR@scsenate.org, PTE@scsenate.org, DE@scsenate.org,
CP@scsenate.org, RIF@scsenate.org, SFG@scsenate.org,
SAG@scsenate.org, DH@scsenate.org, CBH@scsenate.org,
DJI@scsenate.org, JMK@scsenate.org, JCL@scsenate.org,
SFI@scsenate.org, PL@scsenate.org, JBL@scsenate.org,
MALLOYG@scsenate.org, SRU@scsenate.org, JWM@scsenate.org,
SJU@scsenate.org, JYM@scsenate.org, SGE@scsenate.org,
TLM@scsenate.org, WHO@scsenate.org, KAY@scsenate.org,
MED@scsenate.org, CCP@scsenate.org, LR@scsenate.org,
GR@scsenate.org, SRI@scsenate.org, JHR@scsenate.org,
STR@scsenate.org, SCOTTR@scsenate.org, NGS@scsenate.org,
VS@scsenate.org, LHS@scsenate.org, SLC@scsenate.org,
SBI@scsenate.org, DBV@scsenate.org, WILLIAMSK@scsenate.org,
LPITS@scstatehouse.net, JPL@scsenate.org, Senator@DeMint.senate.gov,
Senator_LGraham@lgraham.senate.gov, rwhayes@comporium.net

To the state, press and MADD of South Carolina,

Kelli Laine Lewis was killed Jan. 21, 2001, by two underage drunk drivers racing on impulse. The other underage drunk driver that lived was "allowed to call a friend" as he was too drunk to drive his own car home!

The 3 "adults" that sold alcohol to over 60 high school students were never charged either. Even when Kelli's mom provided pictures inside that house, from that night- with underage drinkers and bottles of alcohol lined up on a table in the background! Still no charges?

Where is justice for Kelli? How could 3 different state agencies not have charged the 4 people involved with the deaths of the 3 people that died that night?

I am outraged at no charges being filed and even more so that no changes have been made to this state. Did the death of Kelli mean absolutely nothing? I am writing to make sure that it does. I ask you to pass Kelli's law in which it will be mandatory for the South Carolina Highway Patrol to carry a field breathalyzer like every other state does. You are 2nd in the nation for DUI's and yet the only one that doesn't carry this.

It also needs to be mandatory that whenever there is a death involved, the driver be tested! Please make Kelli's Law happen so lives will be saved. Kelli's death will have mattered in the state of South Carolina- because so far, it doesn't look like it did.

While you're at it- find some funding to get Kelli a marker for her grave. Kelli is the only one out there that does not have a marker- and many have been there long after Kelli and have markers. There was no victim's assistance issued because of no charges being filed- and the insurance went to pay for Kelli's funeral. Kelli deserves better from her state.

*Thank you,
Pam Taylor*

I emailed Pam to ask her if I could print her email and she responded:

I keep your card right next to my laptop and when I feel overwhelmed with the mail and heartache I see on Myspace- I just remember all you do for so many and I take another baby step :)

I LOVE Myspace.com! Kelli's page has had over 75,000 views- so not only her story- but all the other memorial pages get told as well. We search for missing children and adults and have even found some that are missing!

Kelli's page was on the news a few months ago in Charlotte, NC :)

A new film is being made about Kelli's page and the other memorial pages on Myspace. It's an amazing forum because there are over 120 million users- so many see and read about our children!

I also love it on a personal note because all her friends can leave comments with pictures and stories that I didn't even know about! It's also nice to get acknowledgment from well known people that would have never known about Kelli if it weren't for Myspace.

Now I see the bigger picture and use Myspace as my weapon of mass destruction (lol) to make changes to my state :)

Someday I am going to meet you! My mom and I talk about you all the time and how helpful you have always been in sharing your Jim with all of us!!!

Much love,
Pam Taylor
~still Kelli's mommy

I emailed Pam to see why Kelli was on the news. Her reply:

Hi Dinah,

You can always use anything I send. I'm a very open person- and I love to help others in any way I can.

Kelli's Myspace page was on the news when an underage drunk driver killed a young couple in Charlotte, NC. Sadly his profile on Myspace was all about alcohol- and how he was going to a party that weekend. Well he did- and he went the wrong way on the freeway and killed a young couple that was on their way home from college.

The news found Kelli's memorial page on Myspace and wanted to show the other side of Myspace & drinking and driving- as the boy in Charlotte that was drinking lived.

The new movie about Kelli is going to be about memorial pages that are done on Myspace- as there are now soooo many. I will let you know when it's done filming :)

Kelli's other movie "Grave Decisions" is shown right now at schools all over. Anyone can get it for their school, church or treatment center- by calling Paula Cahloon at 803- 343-0765.

I have it on DVD- and can view it on my pc- but have yet to figure out how to send it in an email. lol I'm working on it :)

I would love to share with any new members of our club- that taking "medication" to help numb the pain from losing a child.... didn't work for me- there were not enough of them and none strong enough! darn it! I sure tried hard- but all I did was prolong the pain- and then ended up adding more to it and to my family.

I have a little over one year off all the garbage- and now I'm ready to fight to make sure Kelli's life and death mattered in the world.

Much love,
Pam Taylor
~ still Kelli's mom

A banner I made up- that I'm trying to get made into a billboard



NO DRINK IS WORTH



THE MOURNING AFTER

The car Kelli was in- she was in the front passenger seat-
All 3 died on impact. All underage- all over twice the legal limit.

I call Kelli my angel with the slightly tilted halo- as she also drank that night, therefore participating in her own death by not leaving with her original designated driver after she got so drunk from the 3 "adults" providing the alcohol to over 60 high school students.
grRrrRrr

Tommy Byington, Kelli Lewis & Jason Dye.

Kelli's symbols are a pixie and a fairy.

Marie White's son, Chip Whitley, (9-24-62) died from undiagnosed diabetes/pancreatitis, 3-10-97.

In Loving Memory

Chip Whitley

September 24, 1962 - March 10, 1997



Chip was my first-born child and was a delightful little boy from the very beginning. I often tell people he and I grew up together. I enjoyed watching him grow into a kind, considerate little boy and continued to watch his character traits develop into a generous and caring young man. He was unique in many ways. He never judged anyone, but set his own standards by which he chose to live his life and believed in God with all his heart. He was kind to everyone he met and spread laughter everywhere he went. One of his former co-workers told me that everyone who worked with Chip delighted in being around him.

Chip enjoyed an unusually healthy childhood. He maintained good health as the years rolled by. Then suddenly he was deathly ill: Diabetes. I don't think he ever fully realized what hit him so hard. He thought he had a stomach virus. Every doctor who worked with him after he arrived at the hospital informed me the disease had been racking his body for a long time. I will never understand how anyone could be so sick for so long and not show any evident signs of such an illness.

My son lived three weeks in the Intensive Care Unit at a Knoxville hospital where he received excellent care. His death was traumatic for his brother and me. We loved him dearly and have suffered a huge void in our daily lives since losing our precious loved one.

A mother's love never ceases. A son is a son forever . . . doesn't matter where he is. His brother and I know we will see our precious Chipper one sweet day in heaven. But for now, we are certain he is very busy taking care of us in his new role with his Father on high.

We have marked Chip's grave with a heart-shaped headstone. Chip's four year old nephew thought his Uncle Chip would know we all love him very much if we selected a heart. So we did!

Please visit Chip's Website:

http://www.geocities.com/%7Eatlantatcf/Chip_Whitley/Chip.html

James & Dawn Vinson's son, Matt (8-25-01) died from an accident at home, 9-15-03.

Dawn is a prolific poem writer and she shares this one with us:

I wrote and read this poem for the HEAL Program at Middletown Hospital for their tree-lighting last December. I think it fits for the holiday season. Just In case you don't know what the HEAL Program is, it stands for

Help Endure A Loss. It is a grief group for parents who have lost young Children, Infants, had Miscarriages and Stillborns. They have been a big help to us just as TCF has....Monthly meetings and special events like they do. Well anyway, I hope this poem touches other parents out there like us. Give them something to think about and feel during a very rough time of the year.....Thank You.....

Holiday Presence

In the hustle and bustle of holiday cheer
I feel your presence and see you so clear

It's my precious angel flying around
I hear your wings making a blissful sound

At times when I feel the season growing dimmer
Your presence gives me a smile of sweet glimmer

Amongst the tinsel and beautiful lights
You're the star that's brightest of the night

When the midnight air makes me shutter
You send the warmth from your wings' flutter

And in the morning when the snow is glistening
I talk to you quietly, 'cause I know you are listening

And on days when I hear the jingle bells ring
I know it's you helping an angel receive their wings

And even though my heart aches, I know you are here
Helping me to get through the holiday cheer

Author J.P. Vinson

Written December 5, 2005

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Read more of her poetry and get to know Matt on his website:
www.vinsons-n-angels.com

Matt's symbols are butterflies, owl, bus, bee, balloons, bubbles, fries, & anything yellow.

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

Jessica was remembered on her birthday by a fellow traveler:
Dinah,

Thank you so much for remembering Jessica.

There is a sweet lady whose son is buried near Jessica. He died at around the same age from a motorcycle accident. She often leaves gifts at Jessica's grave. Today she left a piece of birthday cake. What an angel!

We did what we always do on these days-attended a Mass that we had said in the morning, and went out to breakfast and to the cemetery.

Thank you for remembering.

Candy

Candy received this Random Act of Kindness last Christmas:

Last year when I went to the cemetery to decorate for Christmas, I found that it had already been decorated. Garland was wrapped around the stone, the tree had ornaments, and little Christmas figures were all around the stone. I could not figure out who had done this, as Jessica's grave had been moved and I did not think any of her friends even knew where it was. On subsequent visits I found flowers and other things. I left a note telling the person it had warmed my heart that someone was thinking of Jessica and to call me and tell me who they were. I left my phone number and Jessica's website link. The next day she called and told me who she is. Her son is buried down the row from Jessica. She said she was drawn to Jessica because of her eyes, and had been visiting her. Her son died at about the same age in a motorcycle accident, and her son's friend also died at around the same age in a separate motorcycle accident on THE SAME DAY AS JESSICA and is buried in the row behind her. Then I started to find decorations with cats there! I asked her how she knew Jessica loved cats and she said from the website!

"What we once enjoyed and deeply loved we can never lose, for all that we love deeply becomes part of us"-Helen Keller

May our Angels' souls rest in peace....I wouldn't mind if my soul could find solace, either....

Jessica's website is: <http://www.cathappy.com/Jessica.htm>

Jessica's symbols are a cat and tap shoes.

Mike & Elaine Tassara's daughter, Michelle (10-12-82) died in an auto accident, 11-19-99.

Elaine tells Michelle's story:

Michelle Lynn Tassara was born on October the 12th at 3:15 in the evening in 1982. She weighed 10 pounds and was a very beautiful baby with very black hair, and the most beautiful eyes you could ever imagine. Her eyelashes curled all the way up to her eyebrows. She was a very happy baby and very mischievous.

Michelle started walking at the age of 1 and once those little feet hit the floor it was all over. She got into everything. She loved to dig in the garbage. Michelle was in numerous beauty pageants and won many titles. She won her first title at the age of 6 months old. She also would always win photogenic and prettiest eyes in every pageant.

As she got older she did not want to be in them anymore; she said that was not her thing. So I did not argue with her. She was even picked to represent a commercial, but her father did not think that is was a good idea, so we did not do it.

Michelle started school at the age of 4. She was young but ready, she made very good grades in school and always tried her very best. She would always try to maintain a certain average and she would do it too. Michelle was a very loving child and would always give lots of hugs and kisses. She loved her grandma and grandpa as she was the first granddaughter out of 15 grandsons, so you know she was spoiled rotten.

She would always spend the weekend at her grandparents' house. Michelle was always very independent and wanted to do everything her way, and in most cases she would do just that. Michelle had her father wrapped

around her little finger as she would get anything she wanted and would be able to do whatever she wanted, her father could never tell her no.

When her grandmother got diagnosed with cancer, Michelle took care of her grandma and would do everything for her. Michelle was 12 when her grandmother died and it effected her very badly as they were so very close! That is when Michelle started being very rebellious and doing some things she should not have done. She was a typical teenager with lots of boyfriends, but she would not want to hurt anybody's feelings so she would not date any particular boy until she was 15.

Michelle loved to have lots of fun and be with her friends all the time. She was always smiling that great smile of hers. And she had a laugh that was very unique in its own way; you could surely pick her out in a crowd if she was laughing. Her best friends were Angela and Anna and they were always together, but when she turned 15, she fell madly in love with Michael Lachney, they dated for almost 2 years. They did everything together and Michael was always at the house. But it turned bad and they broke up. When Michelle became a senior in high school she was very excited about it. She could not wait for the year 2000, as that is the year she was to graduate.

Michelle started working at the age of 15 at Sicilly's Pizza and saved enough money for her down payment on her car. She worked really hard and she was a great waitress. The customers loved her and would ask for her when they came in to eat. Finally we took Michelle to get her car. She got a Mustang, in the color that she wanted which was hunter green. Michelle had many, many friends and she was a very popular girl. She had a little bit of too many friends. She would love to go riding around and loved keeping her car spotless. She was a neat freak- everything had to be very neat. She has 1 sister and 2 brothers and they would fight all the time as siblings did. But she would always make up for her wrong doing. She would always say she was sorry, and would always apologize for her wrong. Michelle's favorite color was hunter green and dark navy blue, her favorite song was rap music and her favorite movie was the Titanic. She loved to dress up in good clothes and always be neat and presentable. Her hair always had to smell good, she would always say, "Smell my hair mommy."

On the night of Nov. 19, 1999, at around 5:00 Michelle came in my room where I was laying down resting and she laid with me for about 40 minutes telling me how much she loved me how special I was to her and she would never ever be able to be without me. Little did I know Michelle was saying goodbye.

She left the house around 5:40. She asked me for some money for gas so I gave her some money and she said she was going to go and eat and

come right back. I told her I loved her and then she left. And then we got a call at 10:00 saying Michelle was involved in a car accident and it looked really bad, so off we went rushing to the scene of the accident.

The car was upside down in a field, and we did not know what to expect. We stayed on the side of the road for the longest! It seemed like eternity and they would not let us go to the car. They just kept telling us they were trying to get her out. Then finally a state trouper told us that our precious daughter did not make it, she died instantly and felt no pain. Mike and I were crushed and could not accept that our baby girl was no longer here with us.

We miss Michelle very much and long for the day to hold her and touch her once again. This is in honor of you my most precious, loving and missing you always.

Written by one broken hearted mommy forever...

Elaine Tassara

The family would love for you to view Michelle's website:
<http://michelletassara.com/>

Michelle's symbol is a yellow rose.

Betsey Libby's daughter, Roselee Belyea (8-17-82) died in an auto accident, 4-11-04. Her son, Dale Belyea (7-17-84) died in an auto accident, 8-7-95.

Betsey shares the many tragedies in her life, but how she is overcoming so many losses:

Dear Dinah,

Thank you for the card and remembering Dale and Roselee's days. It's hard when friends and family forget or just won't say anything because they are afraid that you'll be upset. And it's totally the opposite.

Dale's birthday, as you know, was 7-17-84. I'm not sure if you know Roselee's or not, but hers would have been today, August 17th. She was born in 1982. She would have been 24 years old. Dale would have been 21. It seems like it happened yesterday. The pain is still so fresh. I've had a very rough time after losing Roselee. My second loss; it was like going through Dale's all over again.

It was Easter morning in 2004. And at the time I turned to alcohol to numb the pain and just wanted to die. I became a severe alcoholic. I was drinking from the time I would get up until the time I'd go to bed. This went on until I got into trouble with the law and was sent to prison for 1 year. I lost my home, custody of my other 3 children and my husband left me for another woman, when he started drinking and drugging daily. He'd always run around on me our entire marriage of 20 years. But, when he left me with nothing, just one week after Roselee passing, it was awful. I allowed him to get away with it, until he left me after Roselee passed. He left me just one week after, with no money, no electricity or water in the house at the time. I'd had a settlement and he convinced me he was going to stay with me. He had done over \$50,000 in damage, not including what he and my in-laws had stolen from me from the house; all my stuff and my children.

I had been a collector since I was 15 and was hoping to own my own antique shop one day. But, when I left him the first time because of the abuse, this is when he destroyed our home and took everything, including all the furniture, etc. So, by the time insurance had done their adjustments, the amount of damage and the items stolen, it was estimated at \$125,000.

Anyway, since I have gotten out of prison, I have been in counseling 3 times a week. I have relocated back to Rockland where my children are. I have not touched a drink since 2004. I have regained custody of my younger daughter, Felicia; she's 14 years old. I also have my 2 boys that are 18 and 19 years old; Kevin and Philip.

Today is a hard day for me, being Roselee's birthday. My oldest son, Philip, is doing the same thing Roselee used to do with the drugs. He called me yesterday to wish me happy birthday. It was my 39th birthday, but he was so drugged up at 10:00 am, I couldn't even understand him. I am so scared for him, and as far as my home goes, I was too scared to prosecute him because I'd been threatened if I did. I left the home that had nothing left because everything had been stolen from me, right down to my clothes.

But, as bad as it was at the time, I have done well. I even just got my driver's license back yesterday.

I have a lot going through my mind. I started writing this letter around 1:00 am last night. The only thing now is my son that is following in Roselee's footsteps and I'm so scared I'm going to get a knock on the door like with Roselee, and will be told that he has over-dosed. The worst part of it is that his own grandfather and my other in-laws just don't know what to do either.

I just don't know what to do. I'm sorry to put this on you, but I didn't have anyone else to talk to. All my family members; mom, grandmothers, aunts, uncles, have all passed away in the past 10 years.

I have chosen symbols for Dale and Roselee. With Dale's, if possible, I'd like to have a boy angel fishing. If that's not possible, I'd like a star. And with Roselee, if at all possible, I'd like a snowman angel. If that's not too much, I'd like a rainbow for her, also.

Thank you and sorry it's taken me so long getting back to you. I want to thank you so very much. You are the only one that has remembered me in my time of need and it's a great feeling to know that there is at least someone out there that knows what you're going through and to remember means a lot to me. It's a joy to have your cards that help me through my hard days.

Thank you for caring. God bless you.

With love,

Betsey

P.S. You're an angel in disguise.

Roselee's symbols are a snowman angel and a rainbow. Dale's symbols are a boy angel fishing and a star.

Ricky & Karen Squires' daughter, Natalie (4-17-82) was killed in an auto-motorcycle accident, 10-23-94.

Karen shares:

Dear Dinah,

I received your letter and I cried. But, I also felt good and comforted. For 12 years you have sent me things in the mail and I never responded.

But, make no mistake, it was truly a beautiful and loving thing that you do. Thank you for your kindness and a tender heart of showing me you care.

Natalie's birthday is April 17, 1982.

I now have two little granddaughters and they have given me my life back. I will send you more, later. I do want to tell you about her.

Thank you again. I know God sent you to me for a reason.

Love you,

Karen

P.S. One little thing about Natalie was that she loved old people. She also loved to clog. "Big Hugs!"

Andrew & Elaine Starinchak's son, Andrew (2-12-67) was killed in a truck-bicycle accident, 8-1-98.

Elaine has been through so much:

Dear Dinah,

This note is months and months belated. You can't know how much I appreciate ("appreciate" is not a strong enough word) your card on Andrew's birthday as well as your thoughtful words.

You asked for a photo and I will send you one. I don't have a lot of photos myself and I have to keep getting copies made of the ones I give to others and so thankful that they ask. I would dearly love a photo of Jim as, Jim's mother has become a very special person to me.

In April, I was hit head-on in an auto accident when a guy lost control of his car, came into the lane going the opposite direction, side-swiped the car in front of me, and then made a direct full head-on hit at me. After 8 hours of surgery by the trauma team, my husband was told that I could die. My ankles were crushed and my feet hung off them back-wards and I had multiple leg breaks from the knees on down. The man was in a heavy-duty pick-up and I was in a Honda Civic. If I had not been wearing a seatbelt, I would not be writing you today.

For 3 months I lay in bed with external fixtures projecting from both legs, then at the end of July, those were removed and I was put in soft casts. Today, I'm wearing shoes and am walking- although painfully, and physical therapy has been a God-send.

On the day I was hit, I had just emailed the Justice League here in Ohio and was working with them on Andrew's case. Through the efforts of smart, professional people and our own perseverance, we were able to find the vehicle that hit Andrew (the van hit him while he was riding an 18-speed bicycle on a country road not too far from here) and left the scene, leaving Andrew to die. There was enough evidence at the crash to easily track down the driver, but either the sheriff's investigator was too lazy or didn't know what to do. The case was given very little attention.

But this was our son, our heart, our soul, our lives. We could not turn our backs on the irresponsibility of some impaired, hit & run driver. We know today who killed our son and the sheriff's office, for some reason we can only speculate about, refuses to do anything. More to this story. Your cards are important to me. You are an amazing person.

*Love,
Elaine*

Andrew's symbols are a butterfly and a turtle.

Bob & Laura Greenwood's daughter, Melissa (10-13-70) died from an aneurysm, 10-7-98.

Laura writes:

Dear Dinah,

I just wanted to express my thanks to you for always remembering our daughter, Melissa Beth. The card you sent us last week about the clouds and living off her love, to make it through each day, was a source of comfort to me.

She is gone 8 years now, but it seems like 8 seconds to me.

Hang in there – what else can you do?

Sincerely yours,

Laura

Melissa's symbol is a cat.

Kathy Power's daughter, Janet Power Fox (8-7-67) died from breast cancer, 8-4-01.

Dear Dinah,

I am sending you a picture of my daughter Janet Power Fox. It shows the four different stages of her life. She died on August 4th 2001 of breast cancer which she fought for four years. She is a wonderful daughter whom I miss very much. I have chosen a symbol for her and it is a penny. After she

died I would find pennies at places she liked to go. I have kept all of those pennies that I find.

I donated a rocker in her memory to Children's Hospital here in Columbus, Oh. My granddaughter became a nurse and works on the Oncology-Hematology floor. A couple of months ago she discovered the rocking chair on her floor at the hospital. I told her that her Aunt Janet was with her. How appropriate that this chair should be on this floor since Janet died of cancer. She also loved children, but did not have any of her own. She loved all of her nieces and nephews. Hope this gives you some insight of my daughter.

Janet's symbol is a penny.

Keith and Janie Wilson's son, Keith (2-28-78) died from Acute Myeloid Leukemia, 5-19-98.

Janie shares Keith's story:

Keith made his entrance assisted by his daddy on Feb. 22, 1978, healthy and robust, weighing in at 11 lb. 12 oz. and raring to go. As he grew he was mostly content playing alone being the baby, as his brothers were older than him. Chad was 5 yrs older and Jeff was 8 yrs older.

Keith was an active child and kept busy most of the time. He started to bowl at age 6 and continued to bowl throughout his Jr. and Sr. High School years. He was also in the Jr. High band where he played the tuba. Keith had many friends, but was really more of a homebody. He was just as happy listening to the "moldy oldies" with us as he was listening to his "grunge" music. He loved hunting, fishing, camping, going to the beach. He was also an outdoors type person.

Keith graduated in 1996 and wanted to work for a year before going to college. He wanted to get a BS in either CAD (computer aided drafting) or Robotics. He was the computer buff in our family. He was planning on going to ITT in the spring of 1998, but that of course was not to be. Life as we knew it was about to undergo a drastic change and our family would never be the same.

Keith developed flu type symptoms on Sept. 21, 1997, and became steadily worse. We took him to the Emergency Room on Sept.23, where he was diagnosed with bi-lateral ear infections and pharyngitis... he was

started on antibiotics immediately. I never questioned why lab work was not being done as the drainage from his ears was obvious.

Keith was a certified fork lift operator for Pen-Tab Industries. He continued to work for the next 4 nights. We thought the antibiotics had taken effect, but just 6 days after initial visit to the ER, Keith called me at work very upset. He was experiencing severe pain all over his body, couldn't get out of bed by himself, and was extremely photophobic.

We rushed him to the hospital where this time they did do lab work and the lab values came back very abnormal. His WBC's were 437,000. A normal WBC is 5,000-10,000. He was transferred to City of Hope in Duarte, California the next morning and was diagnosed with AML (acute myeloid leukemia), and our nightmare began. He was in ICU for the first 2 weeks of his hospital stay, in and out of consciousness, chemotherapy was started, and the doctors were hopeful. We were all hoping to get him in remission, but that never happened. He received three more different types of chemo with no better prognosis.

We were told that a bone marrow transplant was the next step, the next hope....so we all underwent blood tests, but no match was to be found. So then we had a donor drive and most of Keith's bowling buddies along with friends from High School; even his teachers stepped forward and were tested in hopes of finding a match, but to no avail.

Through it all, Keith never gave up and we kept his morale as high as possible all the time. Keith's girlfriend, Rody was wonderful through the whole ordeal. She was there almost every day, reading to him, watching TV with him, or just sitting in the dark by his side when he couldn't stand the lights, TV, or anybody. And when he would get anxious she'd get in the bed and just hold and comfort him.

He was able to be home for the month of February where we celebrated his birthday and we are very thankful for that special time. Many trips were made back and forth to the hospital for transfusions, platelets, blood work, etc. But every trip was worth it just to have him home for awhile.

Finally, a bone marrow match was found through the National Registry, from an unrelated, out of the country donor. More chemo and total body radiation was given before he was allowed to receive his transplant on Mar. 25, 1998.

At first he seemed to show improvement, but he then developed a fungal infection in one lung and a viral infection in the other. Finally he could fight no more. Keith left us to go to his heavenly home May 19, 1998, with us and Rody by his side. I held him and sang "You are my Sunshine."

Keith never gave up and never once did we actually believe that he would not overcome this and be well again.... "Our Slugger" was no longer in any pain. His suffering was over. Keith had an endearing and lovable personality and the nurses on Wing V dubbed him "the young prince."

So please tell your loved ones often that you love them, that they are dear to you, because you never know when that chance may be taken away from you. Lives can change in the blink of an eye... this family is proof of that.

The family hopes you will visit Keith's website. Please read the letter to their son: <http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Village/9151/>

Marge Semons's son, Robert, (2-9-67) was murdered, 7-29-00.

Dear Dinah,

Some people drink to help their pain---I dug holes for vines and bushes --like 350 around my chain-link fence and I still planted vines over the weekend. I planted 3 more for the winter--this helps me to deal with my holiday pain. I call them my screaming vines, but in the spring when they bloom, it is a gift from Robert from God to me --it's a piece of Heaven. So we must think of good ways to help us with this terrible pain.

It has been 6 yrs and it seems like yesterday. I had to get into our family pictures over the holidays and it was screaming pain, but I only cried--and when I drive his truck I get upset--plus, I went into the building where his things are and cleaned up a lot of things. I am doing much better, but it still blows me away--each year I make a Christmas wreath and send it to the caretaker at the cemetery. I buried Robert in Ohio, where his father and grandparents are buried. The caretaker there takes it to his grave and places it on his grave and tells him I love him. Oh, I put so many things on it. He loved plastic fruit and flowers. This helps me to deal with the pain. Then I send a small check to this little caretaker to thank him for taking such good care of Robert's grave because I can't go there. It is so far away and I have almost no money. But God has blessed me. This caretaker wrote me a note the first year I did this, and he said, "I personally take care of his grave for you--since you can't come to the grave." Now this is how God works and helps us if we will listen to His voice--it is still painful but He is so good to help us.

Love you,
Marge

I asked Marge for permission to use her email:

Dinah,

Oh, please do--He is such a special person and the name of the cemetery is St Margaret---my real name is Margaret Ann---He and his wife take care of this cemetery, which is a small one outside of Columbus, Ohio, where we are from--My husband was an engineer and was transferred to Texas in 1979 and he died in 1989. I stayed and raised the two younger sons alone--without money--he had no medical insurance since he quit his job and went into business for himself a few months before his cancer returned for the second time. But again God sent me lots of jobs; never money; and He did take good care of me and those boys. It is called blind faith--He can do for us what we can't do for ourselves and if something terrible happens to you, look at it and pull something good out of it--and we must give thanks in all things even in our children's deaths. This is what I had to do after I got that terrible phone call telling me Robert was dead. I ran down the road screaming for 3 miles and then something said to me --Give thanks to the Lord in all things and I stopped screaming and sang "Thank You Lord" and I was crying and crying, but I was able to sing. I came home and went to my neighbor's house and told them what had happened; but I did feel a peace that came over me that God was holding me in His arms and He would and He could help me if I trusted Him with all this pain.

Love
Marge

If you would like to contact Marge, her email is: Tulip89898@aol.com

Robert's symbols are butterflies and crosses.

Marilyn Barto's sons, Matthew and Michael, were stillborn 10-26-74. Her son, Kevin, (4-9-76) died from Cystic Fibrosis, 6-8-97.

Marilyn shared her Christmas idea:

At Christmas, we put up a tree in our living room that is Kevin's tree. On it are all the ornaments that we gave him, one each year, representing something he liked or somewhere we visited. He had 20 ornaments. Since that doesn't fill his tree, each year we add another ornament that reminds us of him or a sport he liked.

We put some of his favorite possessions under the tree- his Nascar hat, his Dale Earnhart model car, his Dale gold sunglasses (just like Dale's) and an NBC Sports hat someone gave him. Those are the ones I can remember right now. Our other tree with our family ornaments is in our family room. Some visitors see Kevin's tree and ask questions and see his picture on the tree. Some family members ignore the tree because it is too painful for them to talk about him. We still talk about him, though. We can't stop. He still exists--he's just not here on earth, but in Heaven. We wish these family members could open up and talk with us and remember the funny times or the good times we all had. There were many bad times, but they helped us grow and mature. We are thankful for them, too.

*Thanks for all your hard work on this website.
Blessings,
Marilyn Barto*

Matthew, Michael's and Kevin's symbols are Teddy bears.

Gregg & Paula Roche's son, Matt, (6-26-80) died from an accidental fall, 10-17-05.

The Roches remembered Matt on the first anniversary of his death:

Hi Dinah-I am so very sorry for not keeping in touch. You are so kind and dedicated to us fellow travelers. Thanks also for your note. Reaching the one year anniversary of losing our son, as you know, is very difficult. We had a memorial service for Matt at Brooksvale Park in Hamden (Matt worked there as a seasonal employee while attending college). An area was dedicated in his name "Picnic in the Pines." It is quite a pretty and peaceful place to visit. Thanks again for your thoughtfulness.

Sincerely--Paula Roche

Debbie Staggs' son, Michael, (2-4-79) was killed in an auto accident, 3-23-99.

Debbie has a very heart-wrenching prayer request. I have received several emails:

Dinah,

My 21-year-old son, Nathan, was just diagnosed with leukemia. Please, please put him on everyone's prayer circle. I lost Michael 7 years ago and I don't think I could bear to lose another child. Please PRAY!

The more people praying, the better his chances of recovery. He starts on a new chemo today. We should have him home by December 15 (if his counts are good). Thanks for your prayers and please continuing praying.

The hospital will be testing Justin on Friday of this week to see if his bone marrow is a match with Nate's. Please, pray about this. We really need for Justin to be a match.

Michael's symbol is doves.

Louise Wallace's daughter, Kim, (3-24-83) was killed in a head-on collision with a delivery truck, 11-26-02.

Dear Dinah,

Once again another year has come and gone and right on time your card arrived. Has it really been four years since Kim became an angel? Your card was a welcome reminder that she is not forgotten (as if I could forget). This holiday season is especially hard as my husband, Keith, passed away in January. The holidays don't have much meaning anymore. You try to put on a happy face for the rest of your family, but only you know how your heart is broken. I do want to thank you for remembering Kim. I did get a chuckle from the Scooby-Doo sticker and butterflies. These were two

things she loved. Please keep up your wonderful work. There is a special place in my heart for you. You are an angel on earth.

*Love to you and your family,
Louise Wallace*

I asked Louise if I could use her email and also how she spent Thanksgiving:

I spent Thanksgiving with my family (the first time in 33 years). It was bittersweet. We did acknowledge Kim and Keith in our prayers so they were there with me.

Of course, you can use any of my emails in the newsletter. Perhaps someone will read it and receive comfort knowing they are not alone in this journey. As to Christmas, I haven't thought that far ahead. I'm just trying to get through this week. I expect to spend the day with my parents. Hope you have a good holiday. Our children (and Keith) are having Christmas in the best place possible, heaven.

*Love to you,
Louise*

Kim's symbols are Scooby-Doo, sunflowers and butterflies.

Al & Sandy Hickey's son, Paul, (1-1-73) was killed in an auto accident, 11-21-99.

I challenge each of us to put the work "simplify" in our holiday plans:

Thank you for my card. This year was the easiest so far (#7). In past years, I have tried to be "overly" busy in hopes that I wouldn't have time to grieve. But then you crash and burn so to speak. This year, I simply "simplified" my life. Gave myself permission to say 'no' to requests, and for Thanksgiving, I refused to do a lot of cooking, etc. My sister and I delegated to others and it all came together rather smoothly.

So for Christmas, I plan to continue to "simplify." The adult children get money and a personal card. The grand-girls get one toy and one outfit.

I'll bake a few Pillsbury cookies and they'll think I did it all myself. Everyone meets at our house on Christmas Eve and I think we'll order pizza and maybe start a new tradition. Then we'll read the real Christmas Story from the Bible and thank God for memories of yesteryear; and thank Him for what we have left..... WE ALWAYS END THE EVENING BY SING HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO JESUS.

We keep a small Christmas candle holder that holds 5 small candles and light them to remember Paul each year. I got the idea out of a book and each candle represents a part of Paul's life. I made up small cards for each of us to read in his memory as each candle is lit. I'll email it to you tomorrow.

We've even added to it each year. When each one reads his/her candle card - he/she tells about a particular memory about Paul that correlates to that candle.

P – precious son

A – awesome brother

U – unbelievable friend

L – loving grandson

The pain from losing him will never go away... “To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord...”

Al & Sandy Hickey

(Marie, Ryan, Rae)

Holiday Memorial

A wreath is a traditional part of the holiday in most homes. For this ceremony, place five candles around a simple wreath. The wreath may be placed on any table or fireplace mantel. As you light each candle this year, you may create a new ritual which will become a lasting tradition. We hope this memorial will help you honor your loved one.

(I purchased a candleholder that holds 5 candles)

*"As we light these five candles in honor of you, we light one for our **grief**, one for our **courage**, one for our **memories** and one for our **love** and one for our **hope**. (I actually printed a card for each one of us to read from).*

*This candle represents our **grief**. The pain of losing you is intense. It reminds us of the depth of our love for you.*

*This candle represents our **courage** - to confront our sorrow, to comfort each other, and to change our lives.*

*This candle is in your **memory** - the times we laughed, the times we cried, the times we were angry with each other, the silly things you did, and the caring and joy you gave us.*

*This candle is the light of **love**. As we enter this holiday season, day by day, we cherish the special place in our hearts that will always be reserved for you. We thank you for the gift your living brought to each of us.*

*And this candle is the light of **hope**. It reminds us of love and memories of you that are ours forever. May the glow of the flame be our source of hopefulness now and forever. We love you."*

Dinah, this came from a booklet called: Holiday Help (A guide for hope and healing) by Darcey Sims and Sherry Williams.

*Accord, Inc.; Louisville, KY
800-346-3087*

(I used this at the Christmas Box Angel Remembrance Service)

Paul's symbol is a white butterfly.

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

Linda has a wonderful ministry:

I send out a daily mailing called "Bunny's Words." These mailings mainly consist of Christian stories, and other items of interest, with a bit of humor once in awhile. This is material that I receive from others, or find along the way, and feel I want to pass on. Sometimes I will include graphics & lovely links, but basically, what you get is the Word!

If you are interested in a spiritual uplift, please join us. Click here to join or cancel [Bunny's Words](#) .

Please specify if you are joining or canceling.

Linda wrote this for MOMs (MothersofMurderedsonsanddaughters):

Every moment I cherished with my Joey. No matter what he was doing I cherished my son. I cherished the way he took care of a friend of his who was a hemophiliac. He went and bought his friend's mom a microwave so she can always heat up food for Billy, took him to restaurants to make sure he ate. And the day my son's little girl Linda Maria was born, how he held me and cried. He named her Linda after me. My Joey. Everything ended though on March 20, 1995, by the hands of a killer who shot my son twice in the head. When he killed my Joey he killed me at the same time. Only this time I wasn't there to hold my son up when he fell from the shots. I wasn't there to kiss my baby and hold him in my arms just one more time. I know God was there and gave his hand to my son to hold when he was taken over to heaven. I know God did not let my Joey feel the pain or see the sight of a gun that was about to end his life. Now I live one day at a time. And I wait. I wait for the light to shine and see my Joey standing there with his hand held out to me and saying those words I have missed so much, Ma Ma let's go home. I will grab on to my son and this time I will never let him go. We will be together forever in heaven.

Cope, I just take the days and the minutes of the day waiting and hoping well maybe today my Joey will come for me. He knows how I miss him. He knows I'm in pain. And he knows I cry. I wait for Joey to come and wipe my tears. And say "Ma don't cry, I'm o.k. it is beautiful here Ma, I have everything I need. And Ma God holds me and hugs me. So don't worry I am not alone." And knowing this is how I cope.

I hope you will visit Joey's websites:

<http://our.homewithgod.com/bunny/joey.html>

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

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

Joey is symbolized by friends.

Michelle Young's son, Joshua, (10-31-87) died in an auto/tractor trailer accident, 1-2-99.

Michelle keeps a very interesting journal:

Hi Dinah,

My Joshua loved heavy equipment. We have a Construction business, and there is no doubt that Joshua today would be right there with us running the business. Joshua spent countless hours by himself and with his only brother in the sandbox that we built for them. Joshua loved animals. At the time of his death, we had 3 dogs and a hedge hog. Joshua's brother (my oldest son) James, is 21 and attends college at MTSU, in Murfreesboro, TN. Joshua was the most easy going and happy child. I miss him more and more each day, and each day that passes means that is one day closer to me seeing him again. :-D

Joshua has come to me since his death, to tell me that he is still with me. I have a journal that I keep each time I have a visit from him. It has been awhile since the last visit, but I now know his purpose was to give me peace in knowing he is still with us today. One of my favorite words of wisdom that Joshua gave to me in one of my dream visits: "Mom, I have not left you, I have only left your sight." WOW!!! Goose bumps each time I think of those words! Shortly after Joshua died, I was cleaning out my refrigerator. I removed the crisper drawer and there was a 1999 quarter under the crisper drawer. I am sure you have heard the story pennies from heaven, I get quarters! Of all places, how did a quarter get under my crisper drawer in the REFRIGERATOR??? I know how..... My Joshua. This is just one of the many, many contacts I have gratefully received from my son.

Joshua died from internal injuries sustained in an Auto/tractor trailer accident. We were traveling home from Michigan on Jan. 2, 1999, from my Mother's funeral, and a tractor trailer ran off the embankment of an on ramp to interstate 80 in Davenport Iowa, and into on-coming traffic. As we emerged from under the underpass, the tractor trailer broadsided our vehicle. We were all in that Suburban that day. (sigh) Joshua died about 2 hours after the accident.

If you use a symbol near his name, please do not use a truck. (You now know why).

He loved Dogs. So you may use a Dog as his symbol.

Thank you,
Michelle

Joshua's symbol is a dog.

Keith & Becky Lavey's son, Jay Crim, (5-23-75) died in his sleep, 1-17-99; their daughter, Cyndy, (6-12-80) died from "TTP," a rare blood disorder, 8-15-06.

I had emailed everyone when Cyndy died, and many of you have asked how the family is doing. Becky wrote:

Hi Dinah,

The good news is I do have a lot of support. I know so many more people now (than when Jay died), and as you know, so many of them are bereaved parents I have met through your network or TCF. I have a lot of church friends as well, and so many from Fayette County Public Schools.

I'm still getting cards, phone calls and e-mails. I resigned as the leader of our TCF in Lexington, I think you already knew that; Jim Sims and Connie Katzbaaur took over the leadership. Of course, I still am planning on attending, knowing I need that group more than ever! Of course, even with this tremendous support, I still feel the deep awful pain of missing her and grieving deeply. As you know, we all have to do this to get better. One thing that has helped me this time is when I am doing okay, I don't bring myself back down on purpose. When Jay died I did that a lot, especially the first year. I know that Cyndy (and Jay) want me to be as okay as I can be!

Thanksgiving wasn't too bad. Since most of my days are still awful, I couldn't tell a lot of difference with Thanksgiving. Andrew (7 years) and Mindy (she just turned 6), (Cyndy's 2 older kids are living with me). They are having a hard time because they understand that mommy is not coming back. They are both in school and I do think that helps them during the day, like working helps me. But they have periods during each day where they are playing and having fun. The 2 younger children, Trey (3 ½) and baby Jay (1 ½) are doing okay. They live with their dad, but I get them every weekend. Their dad is being very generous with letting me have them so much. I really appreciate him letting me and Andrew and Mindy be with them so often. They are both so cute and busy little boys. When I have them it is hard to be down very long.

Keith and I are still singing in our church choir and I have had so many people tell me that seeing us singing and praising the Lord has helped them! When I am doing this, is when I have the most peace! Blessed assurance, we will be with our children again some day forever and ever! Jesus is mine!

Andrew and Mindy are seeing a counselor at their school. I asked both of them if they would like to participate in the grief group for their age, which Hospice of the Bluegrass provides in Lexington. Mindy said yes, and I believe Andrew will agree to go too. I'm keeping a close assessment on their grieving and will obtain individual grief counseling at Hospice if I think it is necessary (Hospice has a great partnership with our TCF here, and they have provided grief counseling (group and individual) at many of our Fayette County Public Schools).

It is interesting how God sets up my life. Soon after I returned to work (I work in 3 different schools as a school social worker) after Cyndy's death, I met a student whose mother had just been hospitalized. The very next day she died. This boy has 5 other siblings, one of which goes to the same school. So I have been providing support to him and his brother, as well as grief counseling. Needless to say I am crazy about both of these boys and hope I am comforting them. They are both great kids and appreciate everything I do for them. As you know, when you are able to help someone else, then you start to have some peace. I also see kids at my other 2 schools who have had a parent or sibling die. Besides having the privilege of helping these kids, I am so grateful that my fellow co-workers and principals still have enough faith in me to refer these students to me! I am blessed that I have a job I love, and I believe I can STILL make a difference in these kids' lives. I worried about that before I came back to work. But God has provided me with the words, the skills, the love and the strength to keep helping the wonderful people he has placed in my life. Jesus is mine!

I haven't chosen a symbol for Cyndy yet, except the standards: angels and butterflies.

*Love and peace, Becky
Mother of Jay and Cyndy in Heaven
And Nathan still with me.*

Jay's symbols are a fish and a rose. Cyndy's symbols are angels and butterflies.

Brenda Light's son, Scottie Taylor, (6-2-65) died in an accidental drowning, 11-7-87.

Dear Dinah,

You are a marvel! Scottie continues to be remembered 20 years later, and you still send cards. Amazing! Thank you so much!

I have not written his story, where would it go or just for me? (I told her we could all get to know Scottie by putting his story in the newsletter.)

The last 2 years I have been going through a divorce and bad health, however, I am on my way up!

How are you? How is life?

*Love,
Brenda*

Scottie's symbol is a butterfly.

Don & Sandy Drake's son, Eric, (1-22-81) completed suicide, 2-3-05.

Sandy sent us this card on Young Jim's angel date (5-20):

Dear Dinah and Jim,

I, too, want you to know I'm thinking about your "angel" today. I'm thankful that his life inspired you to reach out to so many hurting people.

Two verses of scripture that I've been able to relate to in all Don's and my tragedy is Isaiah 55:8-9.

While my college roommate from 30 years ago was visiting at our house, she noticed the drawing on Eric's bedroom wall. I guess he was bored with how his walls looked one weekend when he was home from college, so he took some chalk and started drawing. At her suggestion, I took a picture of his wall and made it into note cards. This has made sending special cards to friends and family much easier as I still cannot go to a card shop and select a card of any kind-a pass time I used to enjoy. I keep a list of all the special people I share Eric's cards with. I chose #34 for you because I know Young Jim will be 34 on his birthday, July 26th.

Once again, thank you for reaching out and sharing the inspiration of your "Angel Jim." Love,
Sandy Drake



Eric's symbols are a smile and a piano.

(The drawing on his wall is about 5 feet by 4 feet)

(Isn't this a great idea for a Christmas Card?)

Buford & Carol Lyons' daughter, Ashley (7-21-85) and Ashley's unborn child, Landon, were murdered, 1-7-04.

Carol sent an email:

[Kentucky: Parole Board - Board Members](#) Please, everyone that I e-mailed. Thomas Williams is up for parole on Friday, Dec. 1st!! He helped plan and furnished the gun used to murder Ashley Lyons and her unborn son, Landon. Please help us in protecting against his parole. Thomas was sentenced to 7 years, and has only been in jail since Oct. 2004, 2 yrs, and 2 months. Please let the parole board know that it is not enough time for someone that conspired to kill two people. Ask that they make him pull his full sentence (We were told he would be out in Nov. 2009) that's just three more years, so you do the math !!!!! If you e-mail, contact these 2 people (Williams I. Abbey and Verman Ray Winburn) But you may also contact these other three if you have the time (M. Douglas Gibson, James Province, and Patricia Turpin) or you can call this victims Toll Free Line Between 8 and 4:30 PM, 1-800-221-5991. We need all the support we can get so if you know of anyone that will take the time to help, please e-mail them or call them. I'm pretty sure you just leave a message on the 800 line, so please help us in being Ashley and Landon's voice. Don't let him out; make him serve out his full sentence. Thank you all and love to you one and all;

*without all of you, we would not have made it this far! GOD BLESS!!!
Sincerely,
Buford and Carol Lyons*

I e-mailed their request to all our fellow travelers and there was a great response... I thank you all, as a group we can do great things.

I received this e-mail for Carol after the parole board met:

WE DID IT! PRAISE THE LORD!!! He has to stay in jail till Nov. 2009 which is still an outrage but at least he's not out right now as if nothing happened. Thank you so much and if I am not there tomorrow at the Angel ceremony I will be thinking of you and everyone. I will light a candle here! It has been a very big week for us, and on top of everything my husband had to work today (Saturday) and also has to go in this morning. Please tell everyone there that we thank them from the bottom of our hearts for their help and courage to help. Some people are afraid to speak up out of fear; well I guess you have to have no fear to stand in our shoes! They were all cowards that killed Ashley and Landon; to walk up and shoot someone as they are sitting in their car showing, them an ultrasound picture of their own baby, you are a sick-o and a coward!!!

Well, hugs to you all love you and thanks so much! Someday I hope to have it more together so that I can help more, I am still so rattle-brained right now, and so unorganized that I feel like I will never get it back together, well one day at a time, will write Bless!!! Ashley's Mom and Landon's proud Mimi...Carol Lyons

Ashley and Landon's symbols are a mare and a foal.

I'm a woman of many moods...



and they all require chocolate.

My email address is: dinah@ucumberland.edu

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