

LAMENTATIONS

Issue 11

S.U.C.C.E.S.S

August 1993

August -- august

August was the sixth month of the early Roman calendar year and had 30 days. When Augustus became the ruler of Rome he lengthened the month to 31 days by taking a day from February. What do you plan to do with this "extra" day? Will you plan to spend it wisely and productively, or will you "waller" in the fact that it is another day to "get through?"

August is a noun, but when it is used as an adjective, it has the meanings: monumental; magnificent (impressive to the mind or spirit); inspiring (to awaken or to cause, to put feeling or life into); dignified (to make worthy or worthwhile); eminent (standing out as to be noted); noble (exemplary, gentle, goodness); solemn. Since August 1 is on a Sunday, may you have an august day; a solemn day that will be inspiring, magnificent and possibly monumental. This could be the day that you will see a break through with your grief. What do you consider a monumental day? An eminent, monumental day for me is a day that is without tears. Let us make a solemn vow to ourselves and each other that we will make it a dignified and inspiring day.

August 2, 1790 was the beginning of the first United States census. A census is an official count of the people of a certain group and is used to obtain certain information about them. The survey I sent in the May issue of *Lamentations* was a type of census. I have only received a few, but hope you will complete and return them as soon as possible. Nancy Hannon is busy compiling those received. We all want others to remember our loved ones, and this is a wonderful way of being sure. If you need another "census" let me know.

Christopher Columbus set sail on his first voyage across the Atlantic on August 3, 1492. Our grief is like a voyage. When we are in smooth, clear water (at that point we are being S.U.C.C.E.S.S.ful), we can see where we are going and can get there smoothly. Other times, when we least expect it, a squall will form and then we feel as if we are out of control and are tossed and turned by a wave of grief. However, we feel that we are in control and are calming the storm by crying, or whatever release we use. I challenge you to "charter" this voyage of grief; become an explorer. When we reach the end of our voyage we will find a "new land" that we have discovered from traveling through our grief



The symbol for hope is a butterfly. A butterfly does not enter this world as a beautiful, graceful insect with bright colors. Rather, it begins as an ugly caterpillar spending most of its time eating and growing. Because the skin of the caterpillar does not grow, the caterpillar will shed and grow skins several times. When it reaches its full size, it forms a protective shell. Inside this shell the worm-like caterpillar becomes a beautiful butterfly. The shell then breaks and the butterfly emerges and flies away. This is just like our grief. At the beginning of our grief we are caterpillars, spending most of our time grieving--however, we are also growing. We will "shed" our "skin" (grief) several times, only to grow another. However, we must not stay in our protective shell of grief, but break through that cocoon to eventually flyaway and leave our grief behind. May we all become beautiful butterflies and flyaway in our S.U.C.C.E.S.S.



Grief Grafts

Doyt and Mary Hoffmans' 19 year old son Tyson was shot and killed August 15, 1991, two days after he graduated from high school. Ty was shot by two 20-year-olds who mistook him for someone else. Enclosed is a statement Mary Hoffman made at the sentencing hearing. I have also included letters that were sent to the local paper by friends of Ty. Mary said: "This has been the most difficult journey we have been on, but with God's help it will be a **S.U.C.C.E.S.S.**"

Curt Davis came to our picnic and introduced us to a portion of scripture of which we were not familiar. He had asked if I had named the newsletter from this scripture since Young Jim was our only son. It says:

"... make thee mourning, as for an only son, most bitter lamentation. . ."

KJV Jeremiah 6:26b

Isn't it amazing how you can find scriptures that describe how you feel? I have also found so many scriptures that have given me comfort and strength when J needed them the most.

Jason, 17 year old son of Barbara Davis and Curt Davis, wrote the following poems:

"I WILL GO ON, AT LEAST I MIGHT"

*Oh what will come of me?
I must remember to fight.
Oh what will I be?*

*Will anything be free?
I must focus on the light,
Oh what will come of me?*

*Will I always be able to see?
Everything must turn out right.
Oh what will I be?*

*Will my emotions always agree?
I must make it through the night,
Oh what will come of me?*

*Will I discover life's key?
I must keep things tight
Oh what will I be?*

*Will life charge a fee?
I will go, on, at least I might.
Oh what will come of me?
Oh what will I be?
Jason Paul Davis - 1993*

Friday Night Lights

*Preparing for war I gather my weapons.
As the inevitable battle time approaches.
I speak not even to a soul as I wait,
And upon my home the enemy encroaches.*

*As a boy I take the field.
But will return a courageous man.
Though the expectations are high,
Eternally strong is my vital stand.*

*I enter the confrontation a conditioned soldier.
While the boy inside is so scared to fail.
The sheer heart and determination is overwhelming,
As the enemy falls and my family prevails.*

*I play my final game and all seems normal,
But it is to myself that I finally fall.
All though this part of my life is gone forever.
I realize there is **life after high school football!***

Jason Davis 11-92

Jason was killed in an automobile accident May 1, 1993 and his parents have chosen a football and a gentle warrior to represent him.

Ina Grider's son Dan died January 23, 1993 of a seizure disorder. Dan was a roommate of one of our close friends at the University of Kentucky. His 16 year old sister Angela wrote to say that she and Danny Ray were very close and her most difficult time to date was when she had to go to her 16th birthday party without him. Angela felt that he was the only one she could really talk to and he the only one who really understood her. Angela wrote the following poem:

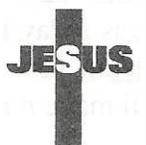
Danny Ray

*Sweet precious brother of mine
you left this world and me behind
A big part of my life was you
When you were around I was never blue*

*A short time you did spend
but that doesn't mean that this is the end.
For I know you are in God's loving care
And I shall see you soon when we reunite there.*

Angela Grider - 1993

The family has chosen this cross symbol because it both represents that Dan was such a good Christian and the last gift Angela gave Dan was a necktie pin in this shape.



Debbie, daughter of Bobby and Noboko Lemen died March 18, 1993. Noboko writes that Debbie would have been 32 on her birthday, July 26, (Same day as Young Jim's), but she still thinks of her as a little girl. Noboko spent a great deal of her time caring for Debbie, shopping and making things for her. Because Debbie loved stuffed animals so much, Noboko has chosen a bear as her symbol.

Jerry and Becky Powells' son Justin was hit while getting off a bus and died April 11, 1993. In writing to tell about Justin, Becky says that she wanted to share about their son so others might know the very special child that he was. He had a wonderful sense of humor and what she remembers most about him is his laughter. Becky said that he was extremely intelligent, but didn't always use his intelligence in school! He was also quite messy, very scatterbrained, and a real



challenge much of the time-- but a truly delightful child, nevertheless. These parents have such a healthy perspective. We must remember our loved ones faults as well as their wonderful traits. This makes them much more human, and more believable. None of our loved ones were angels- even though they are now.

Justin had just started playing the tuba this past year. Kung Fu was a sport he really enjoyed, and at the time of his death, had reached the level of green belt. His goal in life was to be a physician. He was a gifted artist and was known for his drawings and often sold them to friends. Because of his talent, the Jessamine County Middle School has established an annual *Young Artist Award* in Justin's honor, which will be given each year at the school's annual awards ceremony. Becky did not say if she had selected a symbol, but it seems that a tuba, an artist's palette or a smiling face would remind us of Justin.



I have a print in my office with an assortment of brightly colored butterflies and the caption under it reads:



Happiness is like a butterfly. . . the more you chase it . . . the more it eludes you. . . but if you turn your attention to other things. . . it comes and softly sits on your shoulder.

When several of us met in Lexington to get acquainted, Janice Penkalski (her son David was killed in an automobile accident December 8, 1990) was unable to attend but sent this letter:

Hello All,

I sorry I can't be here with you tonight but my life is full of community activities five nights a week. I'm working with Studio Playground Steering Committee, writing a woman liturgy for the Newman Center – plus writing book reviews, school work and my own creative writing.



My life is good and I have been so blessed by the people who have come into my life.

Like you, I think of my child who is at play in another realm of our Universe -- my first thought in the morning, my last before I fell asleep.

I can't tell you how to heal. It took me a solid 18 months. When I finally let him go I rediscovered myself and the preciousness of every moment. Death redeems us --just like every spring brings renewal.

Now the joy I send out comes not only from me but from his laughter that I still hear inside and the smile I still see on his face.

I have no doubt that I will hug him again someday. And by all that lives, he'll be there when I cross over, smiling, reaching out his hand, holding out his arms to me, calling "Mum."

My faith has always sustained me, I can't control another's leave-taking. My Child Game through me to the Earth. He is not mine but we are part of each other. What he and the Universe have decided I must honor. And I will be living a full, real and authentic life.

We are people who know who we are, what's important and what's real. That's quite a lot going for us. Imparting that, sharing this by living in our everyday lives can shed much light and good spirit.

You know we're really all children of a Mother/Father Universe – a Spirit of Growth. If we love our Child as much as we do, and we begin to imagine the love of our Source for us and our loved ones.

This is my prayer everyday. I'll share it with you: Oh Mother of Light, give Brian a hug and kiss for me today and let him know how much I love him. Be generous with your mercy. Teach him wisdom. I pray for his enlightenment.

I've also done something in a concrete way to honor him. My fondest moments of raising my sons were when my sons were in various parks swinging on swings or sliding down

slides. We spent hours every week in the park when they were growing up.

Last year I wanted to get involved in the Shillito Park Creative Playground -- but just wasn't ready. However, about a month ago when I heard that a steering committee was being formed to build a playground designed once again by kids but this time at Jacobsen park I was ready to give of myself So I made a contribution in behalf of Brian I'll know that every time I hear a bit of laughter and see a dimple in a cheek that Brian's eyes will light up.

I am giving my love for Brian back a thousand fold I hope before I close my eyes -- to the community -- for everyone to enjoy -- for all to be nurtured.

So my dear sisters mothers I am with you tonight in heart and soul. Only you, however, can push yourself off your back side and re-root your souls back into the earth, your radiance connecting with all that is.

Later. . .
Janice

Luther and Rosemary Smith wrote to say that they were blessed by reading about all the other children. Rosemary said, "What a wonderful group of kids they are. None of them will be forgotten because we will always share with each other their sweet memories." The Smiths' two sons, Jeremiah and Drew were killed in an auto accident July 23, 1992.

Please continue to write, to talk about your loved ones, to share your poems and writings; to share your grief and S.U.C.C.E.S.S.es. We get our strength from each other.

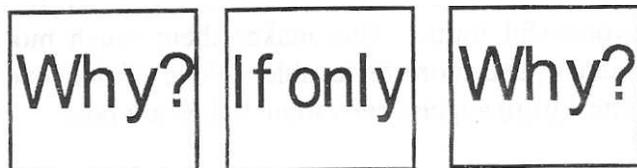
In John Claypool's book *How to Handle Grief- Tracks of a Fellow Struggler*, he quotes Harry Emerson Fosdick who once wrote that "a man can put off making up his mind, but he can't put off making up his life." Claypool also quotes Descartes who made the statement " **I think, therefore I am.**" Claypool feels that it should be the reverse, "**I am, therefore I think.**" He believes that we don't have the answers first and then "live in light of our understanding," rather, we struggle through life, and if insight comes to us, it is not before our struggles, rather it is during and after those struggles.



John Claypool's 10 year old daughter died of cancer, and he found that the only way he could

come down from the "Mountain of Loss" was to remember that his daughter was a gift, something that he neither earned nor deserved nor had a right to. He said "When I remember that the appropriate response to a gift, even when it is taken away, is gratitude, then I am better able to try and thank God that I was ever given her in the first place." He believes that you have two alternatives: dwelling on the fact that your loved one is gone; or focusing on the wonder that they were given to you at all. "The way of remorse does not alter the stark reality one whit and only makes matters worse. The way of gratitude does not alleviate the pain, but it somehow puts some light around the darkness and builds strength to begin to move on."

Claypool, a Baptist minister, cautioned his congregation: "Do not counsel me not to question, and do not attempt to give me any total answer. Neither one of those ways works for me. The greatest thing you can do is to remind me that life is a gift- every last particle of it, and that the way to handle a gift is to be grateful."



Wouldn't it be nice if our lives were like the game show Jeopardy, where we would have the answers before us and all we had to provide were the questions. However, life is just the opposite, and if you are like I am, you continue to ask the question "why?" and how many times do you say "if only?" In the game of life we don't have the answers to "why?", and we cannot change anything by saying "if only."

My suggestion is to go to your favorite ice-cream parlor; order the most fattening, and expensive ice cream cone they have; sit down; think about your future, and set a goal that you can attain. One big goal is to "lick" that monster called **grief**. (Did you think I would actually end this newsletter without the mention of food? **NOT!!!**)

