

LAMENTATIONS

Issue 115

middle

November, 2007

Dear Fellow Travelers,

I'm sorry I have been so long in corresponding with you. I have had two surgeries since I talked with you last, and a 61st birthday, so I am slow in healing and getting my act together.

While I have been recuperating, I have had a lot of time to think and reflect on my "haves" and "have nots" since Young Jim's death:

My Haves:

- * A wonderful husband and family
- * The love and strength of God, on whom I rely daily
- * Fellow travelers who are as close as family who have supported me in my grief and encouraged me in keeping up the website and J.I.M.'s Conference
- * Loving friends
- * Sacred memories of Young Jim
- * Young Jim being a part of my being and encouraging me on each day
- * A great place to live and be around college students who are so special
- * The support from you in being able to have the memorials we have of our precious children, and the honor to live where I can see them each day

My Have Nots:

- * I no longer have the physical body of our son, Jim, to touch and to hold
- * No surviving children
- * No possibility of grandchildren
- * Our lineage ends when my husband and I die...it will be as if we were never here on earth

As I look at these lists, I realize that "My Haves" are a longer list, but "My Have Nots" are more knee-buckling. Even though this is true, I am now a happy person who continues to be excited about the future. I pray that you will get to this point in your life also.

Grief Grafts

**Rick and Sandy Stewart's daughter, Amanda (8/20/94),
drowned 6/27/98.**

This was written by Sandy, on Amanda's website:

Amanda Kate Stewart, Our Last Child 8/20/94 to 6/27/98. On June 27, 1998, at 8:35 p.m. I received "the phone call" that every parent dreads. I was told that Amanda fell at a party and was taken to the Emergency Room. I'll never forget the fear I felt inside, not knowing how she was coping without me. I thought she was getting stitches in her lip and angry because I wasn't there to hold her. Amanda never had a childhood illness or injury. I called my husband and he met me there. Upon arrival I was greeted and pushed back by the people she had been with. Amanda was 3 years, 10 months, and 7 days old. She drowned. I know nothing more today than I did on that horrible night. My baby girl died a wrongful, unjustifiable, untimely death and no one knows how she got 100 feet from a party to the bottom of 8 feet of water. Amanda Kate is survived by two brothers, Ricky who is now 14, and Michael-Jack age 12. Our last child, our baby girl, was our future. Amanda was such a wonderful child. She enjoyed life. Her joy of the little things was a wonderful trait she had. Ladybugs, spaghetti, Barbie dolls, dressing-up, dancing, and playing with her brothers made her so happy. Her favorite movie was The Lion King. She loved watching Barney and singing, singing loudly to any song she knew. She learned the words to Truly, Madly, Deeply, by Savage Garden and sang her little heart out to it. There was a mountain in the distance and she asked to go there to be closer to the clouds and God. She went to a Christian pre-school and enjoyed writings from the Bible and Christian songs. The morning of the day she died, she left my Bible on the living room floor. She always pretended she could read it. I miss the tug of her little hand, her sweet voice, her beautiful hair, the smell of her baby powdered-body, and her love. She was my miracle baby and now she is my memory. We didn't want a memory, we wanted her!

Sandy

Mommy of Amanda Kate

Please visit Amanda's website at:

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

Amanda's symbol is a ladybug.

Yolanda McAlister's son, Derrick (9-27-72), died from an asthma/adverse drug reaction, 9-9-06.

Yolanda tells us more about Derrick:

Dinah, I failed to mention that we drove through the College grounds in Williamsburg and it is a beautiful college. We saw some of the bricks at the entrance of the Cumberland Inn. The whole place gave me a wonderful, peaceful feeling. Also, I told you that Derrick had an associate degree in liberal arts. I think he reminded me later, it was a Bachelor of Arts Degree from the University of Michigan and his Masters was in Journalism and Communications. I know he would have wanted me to correct that. He was 28 years old when he received his Masters. He breezed through college and loved every minute of it. At the time of his death he was a professor of English Literature, but was hoping to move to Washington D.C. He fell in love with Washington about 10 years ago and was hoping to use his degree in communications to find work there. He was planning on moving there this spring. But as far as English Literature, he had a passion for it and was a wonderful teacher, the larger his lecture room was, the happier he was. He was always an avid reader and his library was mammoth. He never stopped reading from the time he was 5 and saved all of his favorite books, which switched to English Literature as he got older. He loved William B. Yeats and had every book he could get his hands on. Whenever he left home he would worry about his books and I always promised him that if he couldn't move them they would always be with me, so when I move, I have tons of books to move. He would always tell younger children he knew, read. Read. Always read.

Love, Yolanda

Derrick's symbol is a Claddagh.

Debbie Garber's son, Justin Ratliff (6-14-81), died in an auto accident, 12-13-01.

Debbie sent us this on Young Jim's birth date:

Dear Dinah,

This time of year is difficult for most of us "Fellow Travelers," however, it must be especially hard for you and your family. I think of you often and all the wonderful things you have created to honor Young Jim and all of our children. Your intentions radiate love with no bounds, passing from this realm into the eternal.

I feel that Young Jim is your compass, or your guiding star illuminating the road along this journey to healing, and your healing of others. May you be blessed as you have been a blessing to others.

*Peace and Love,
Debbie Garber
Justin's Mom
Linda's sister*

Justin's symbols are a deer and a rainbow.

**Patsy Sharp's son, Lyle (7-17-63), died from acute
Lymphosytic Leukemia, 2-29-00.**

Patsy tells how her life is now:

Dear Dinah,

Your love and remembrances of Lyle are truly appreciated. I do feel Lyle's presence every day. His children are God's blessing to me. Barry is now 16 years old and Sarah, 9 years. (Lyle's children.) Barry has his voice and many of his mannerisms, and Sarah, his eyes, energy and athletic ways.

I am truly blessed through my faith, family and friends.

Peace be with you.

*Love,
Pat*

**Lyle's symbol is a gold heart with a silver dolphin on the front
rising up out of the water.**

Donnell Scott's daughter, Kaitlyn (7-20-00), died from a brain tumor, 3-24-02.

This is Donnell's latest entry in her journal on Kaitlyn's website:
www.caringbridge.org/mo/kaitlynlouise/

Journal

Monday, May 21, 2007 3:50 PM CDT

Well, it has certainly been another large gap in time since the last update.

March 24 was 5 years since my precious angel left this world. A milestone that I wish I never had to have. However, I have come so far in the 5 years since her death. While I miss her just as much if not more, the pain is not as raw as it was then and, therefore, it is more manageable. I had lunch with a dear friend from our time in the hospital last month and we had a great time talking about our girls and how much our lives have changed since then.

Paige is nearing the end of second grade. We are all so ready for school to be out. It has been a difficult year for her- a new school, learning cursive... and as drama-filled as my daughter is, it is just so much harder than it has to be. I couldn't deny this child if I wanted to that is for sure. She is the spitting image of me, both looking at her and listening to her. The same smart mouth, no non-sense attitude, which is why we butt heads so often. She still misses Kaitlyn like crazy, but she doesn't have as many crying episodes as she used to. Our lives have calmed down and we are getting to a new sense of normalcy. It has taken 5 years, but I think things are finally coming together the way they were always meant to.

I don't visit Kaitlyn's grave very often. I don't really feel the need to. She is with me~always. We had a family picture done last month and it made me think how our family pictures will never be complete since she isn't here, but I know she would have loved to be a part of this and that she can see how happy everyone who loves her is.

To all of you- thank you for continuing to check up here. You have been a huge source of support for me in the last 6 years since Kaitlyn's surgery and throughout treatment and on. At times I consider deleting the page, but this page gives me a place to look if nothing else and remember

some good things from that time in our lives and not just that my girl was so sick. Thank you!

I received this email from Donnell:

I have had a very busy summer. We found out we are expecting a child in February, so it has been an eventful last couple weeks- very scary and exciting all at the same time!

Thank you for remembering Kaitlyn's birthday, it's nice to know after all these years there are still others that haven't forgotten her.

Donnell Scott

Kaitlyn's symbol is an angel bear.

Robert & Debi Miller's son, Keith (9-28-84), died in a motorcycle accident, 7-1-05.

Debi is another mother that wears a "mask" during the day:

Dear Dinah,

Thank you so very much for remembering Keith's angel date and for the card you sent to us. It meant a lot to us. I would love for you to add his birth and angel date to the website. I'm sorry it has taken me so long to respond to you, but by the time I get home in the evenings from work I am so weary of wearing a smile and pretending that everything is alright that I'm sometimes too exhausted to get on the computer. Not everyday is as hard, but even though it has been two years, it's a heavy load to bear. And I'm sure that there are days when you and your husband still feel that way.

Keith died in a motorcycle accident. He had only had it for about three months and had decided he was going to keep it through the summer and then sell it. He loved it and I hated it. In fact, the last thing I said to him that Friday evening was "I hate that motorcycle." I had begged him not to get one, but it was something he had wanted for several years and there was no way anyone was going to talk him out of it. His sister, Jessica, who is 4 years older than Keith, had cried to him the week before asking him to not ride it anymore, but he just couldn't believe anything would happen to him.

We miss him so very much, but we take comfort in knowing he is in heaven and that we will be reunited with him one day. I remind myself often that we are here for only a short time compared with our eternal lives, and that I will see him soon!

I want to thank you for your part in putting on the conference and in the documentary that we watched on that Thursday evening. I know I speak for all the parents who were there when I say how much it was appreciated and needed. I was overwhelmed with the number of people in attendance. Being new travelers down this road, we didn't realize how many people have lost children! We get so caught up in our own grief, we sometimes forget that we are not alone in this; and not that we want this to happen to anyone else, it was comforting to know that there are other families dealing with the same pain and loss that we are.

I have not started Keith's story yet, but I do hope to write it. Just telling you this little bit was hard to do. And I don't want his story to be just about his death, he was such joy (and a rascal at times!) that I know once I get started I will be busy writing for a long time!

*Thanks again for caring and for all you do for us fellow travelers.
Debi Miller*

Keith's symbol is an angel with a guitar.

Deanna Fernandez's son, Daniel Ramirez, (9-13-89), was murdered, 7-4-07. Her daughter, Lisa, (6-6-89), was killed by a drunk driver, 8-19-06). Her son, Jason Ramirez, 11-3-84) was killed in an auto accident, 11-28-02.

Deanna Wrote:

HERE IS A LETTER FROM MY MOM, DANIEL'S GRANDMA. SHE WROTE THIS FOR DANIEL:

DEAR DANIEL,

I CANNOT IMAGINE YOU NOT HERE. I FEEL I WILL WAKE UP AND YOU WILL BE WALKING THRU THE HOUSE WITH THAT GREAT BIG BEAUTIFUL GRIN

AND SPARKLING BIG BROWN EYES SAYING. "HI GRANDMA WHAT'S UP?" I LOVE YOU, SO AS DID EVERYONE.

FROM A GRANDMOTHER'S POINT OF VIEW, YOU WERE SPECIAL. YOU GAVE HUGS AND KISSES AND ALWAYS SAID "I LOVE YOU." YOU HAD YOUR LITTLE TEMPER THAT WOULD MAKE ME LAUGH; YOU WOULD SOON BE OVER IT. YOU NEVER ASKED FOR MUCH AND WERE ALWAYS SURPRISED WHEN YOU GOT MORE THAN YOU ASKED FOR. WHOEVER TOOK YOUR LIFE IS A COWARD AND DID NOT KNOW YOU AND WHAT YOU MEANT TO YOUR WHOLE FAMILY. YOU WERE A JEWEL THAT LEFT THIS EARTH WAY TOO SOON. NOW YOU BRIGHTEN A PLACE WE CALL HEAVEN. YOU ARE WITH YOUR LORD IN HIS LOVING CARE AND YOUR BROTHER, JASON, WHOM YOU HAVE MISSED SO MUCH, AND ALSO LISA.

IN MY HEART AND VERY DEPTH OF MY SOUL, I SHALL MISS YOU AND JAY. THIS IS NOT THE END BUT THE BEGINNING. LIFE FOR YOU IS A NEW ONE WITHOUT PAIN, JUST LOVE. I SHALL PRAY EVERY DAY FOR PEACE AND COMFORT FOR ALL OF US YOU LEFT BEHIND. A ROAD OF TEARS CANNOT BRING YOU BACK, AND WHERE YOU ARE NOW THERE ARE NO TEARS. LOVE FOREVER,
YOUR GRANDMA ROSE

Daniel's symbol is quarters, Lisa's symbol is a butterfly, and Jason's symbol is dimes.

Janyce Last's daughter, Tammy Lynn Lucas-Allen (4-30-66), was killed in an auto accident, 7-28-01.

Hello Dinah,

We all have loved horses here. My Tammy was also a rodeo Queen in Liberty, Texas. It is won with horsemanship. There were 3 different judges for 3 different nights. Each girl rode the same pattern that was given to them all and they rode in front of thousands of people with the judges watching. On the 4th night they were out loud told which place and who won from 3rd to the winner. The first time Tammy rode in this contest, which was the year before, she was second runner up. But each year there are different girls. The year Tammy won she was # 7 and there were 10 girls. It was so exciting when my Tammy won. I have Tammy's saddle in my house she won. I still have such a hard time accepting my Tammy gone. We are so close, a

true mother-daughter, as I am with the rest of my children. I have tried so hard to help with Tammy's children also.

Love Janyce

Tammy's daughter wrote this poem:

TO MOM, FROM KATI

*I KNOW YOU'RE IN HEAVEN, MOM, WHERE YOU CAN NEVER HURT OR BE HURT
AGAIN*

*AND I KNOW YOU WILL ALWAYS BE LOVED AND HAPPY IN YOUR KNEW HOME,
BUT IF YOU EVER FEEL LIKE COMING DOWN TO SAY, HI*

*I WILL BE HAPPY TO SEE YOUR BEAUTIFUL FACE,
AND I KNOW WHATEVER YOU HAVE TO SAY WILL PUT A SMILE ON MINE.*

*I JUST WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT YOU WOULD BE SO PROUD OF ME
FOR THE THINGS I HAVE DONE FOR MYSELF.*

*I HAVE FOUND SOMEONE WHO LOVES ME AND HAS GIVEN ME SOMETHING
I HAVE WANTED SINCE YOU HAVE GONE,*

*SOMETHING TO FILL THAT HOLE THAT LONGED FOR THAT ETERNAL LOVE
THAT ONLY A MOTHER COULD GIVE*

*BUT THIS TIME I AM THE MOTHER WITH A BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTER TO GIVE IT
TO.*

*SHE IS SILLY AND BEAUTIFUL,
AND WHEN SHE MAKES ME SMILE I THINK OF YOU*

*AND HOW I WISH YOU COULD SEE HER,
I JUST WANT TO BE THE MOTHER TO HER THAT YOU WERE TO ME.
I HOPE SHE LOOKS UP TO ME AND SEES ME AS A FRIEND LIKE I DID WITH
YOU.*

*I HOPE SHE COMES TO ME WITH HER SECRETS AND QUESTIONS
AND I WILL UNDERSTAND AND TELL HER THE TRUTH.*

*I WANT TO STAND BEHIND HER DREAMS AND SUPPORT HER LIKE YOU DID
FOR ME.*

*AND MOM, IF I EVER LOOK LIKE I NEED YOUR HELP OR I'M DOING WRONG,
PLEASE COME AND HOLD ME TIGHT*

TO LET ME KNOW IT WILL BE OK, THAT YOU'RE THERE FOR ME.

*I LIVE TO WALK IN YOUR FOOTSTEPS
AS A MOTHER WHO LOVED AND SUPPORTED HER KIDS,
WHO WAS THERE FOR THEM NO MATTER WHAT.*

*I LOVE YOU MOM AND I WILL MAKE SURE JESSIE KNOWS YOU THROUGH ME
AND WILL LOVE YOU AS I DID.*

*I LOVE YOU AND MISS YOU MOM,
HOPE TO HEAR FROM YOU SOON.*

A Dream That Tammy's Sister Ginger Had About Tammy

About two weeks ago I had a dream and I was struggling about things that wouldn't go away. Well, I asked God to help me, because those dreams troubled me. Well that night I had another one. I was in a room with the family, and when I turned around Tammy stood there watching. I looked at her and said, "Tammy." She said, "Hey Gin." I told her, "What are you doing? I came to tell you that I'm fine, and I know that you want me back, but please don't ask me to." I stood with tears in my eyes and said, "ok." She said, "It's so beautiful over here and you just can't imagine, you just can't imagine how beautiful it is." Then she smiled and I woke up, I felt so, so much joy and all I could do was smile and say "Thank You Jesus." I know God took care of her and I thank Him for that.

Thank You Lord

Love Ginger, November 2001

I hope you will visit Tammy's website and get to know her children.
Tammy's website is: <http://cassandra127.angelfire.com/tammyanniv.html>

Tammy's symbol is a horse.

Bill & Betty Williams' son, Bo (7-28-57), was killed in a helicopter crash, 7-2-93.

Ways the Williams celebrated Bo's birthday:

Please forgive me for being so long in answering your sweet and thoughtful message in memory of Bo's birthday.

My sister, her husband and her son were here on the 28th, so we planned a special time after our evening meal for a short memorial service. I prepared foods he loved, including rhubarb cobbler for dessert. I have saved so many of the poems and other material you have sent over the years. Many of those have found their way to our refrigerator, along with special pictures of Bo.

I gathered up poems for everyone which they read when the time came. I used a little candle lighting ceremony which we had received when we attended a Hospice Christmas service after Bo's death. You are probably

familiar with the four candles you light - one for our grief, one for our courage, one in Bo's memory, and the last one is the light of love. It was a very meaningful time for all of us.

One other thing we did to mark Bo's 50th birthday anniversary was something Bill has wanted to do for years. We had many prints which we made from negatives Bo's little widow loaned us at one time. My sister is good at selecting mats and framing, and also at hanging pictures, so we framed all those prints and she helped us place them. Now we have a picture gallery of some of Bo's favorite places taken over a span of many years.

Bill and I appreciate all you have done over the years to help us work through our grief. As you know all too well, it is an ongoing process. You were correct in saying that the pain does ease somewhat, and the memories become sweeter.

*Love,
Betty (and Bill)*

Bo's symbols are a Red Tail Hawk, camera and airplane.

Vanessa Webb's son, Corey (11-26-88), was struck by lightning at a sporting event, 3-29-07.

Vanessa has found how important it is to be with fellow travelers:

Today was a day that I needed. A church member of mine told me about a grief group in the neighboring town that meets on Tuesday, and today I went to my first one. It did me good to be in room of people who were feeling the same hurt as me. While there, I felt that I was not alone in this walk of us "travelers." The meeting meets every Tuesday, and I plan on going every week. I also enrolled back in college to get my Masters because I know that I want to help other people travel this road after I have found a special place in my heart for this hurt. I know that will be some years from now, so I will spend this time back in school and then I will pledge this to be my lifelong work.

This is a beautiful poem written by a fellow classmate of Corey's:

Unanswered Questions

By: Aaunterria Bollinger

Where do you go when all not only seems lost, but also is lost?

When reason and tearless nights are a fond and distant memory and the world vanishes into an unrecognizable, sleepless, mourning filled shell of its former self.

When life surrenders to emptiness and the only thoughts that consume your waking moments are the images that promise to condemn you.

What is there to say to a person whose ears your words dare not reach, yet it was you who they chose to bless with their last breaths on Earth?

Are you truly complete when a part of your life that you never knew mattered so much is torn from the devoted arms of your heart?

How can you begin to breathe again without the tear shed that has learned to flood generously through every pore of your flesh, from your soul without warning?

What age is too young to be welcomed by heavens' gates?

Why is it that we think that we are immortal when our flesh is delicate to the touch?

What happens every time you close your eyes and see the face of a friend, no longer real, but now merely imagined?

How can a spirit so enormous be taken so suddenly?

Could the time you spent with him have been cherished more?

Was your smile radiant enough to match his?

Did you say everything you ever had to say to him before being deprived of the magnitude of his presence?

When do you know which goodbye will be the last?

If you had known, what would you have said?

Could you have done more to make a lasting impression that he can still savor when his soul and body cease to be one?

Is it always a surprise when tragedy strikes you, leaving only destruction in its wake?

Is it alright to experience nothing and everything all at the same time?

Can realism be altered and idealism take you back to a time before your heart was broken?

Can you find your way back to the place where you became lost?

Is it possible to feel a spirit in the wind?

Is it sane to think that the tree blossoms are conduits that tell the tale of his life cut short by fate?

Can it be possible that he had a special smile for each friend, one beaming more than the last?

Does he see the tears of loyalty, shed for his premature removal?

Is it immoral to think that it should not have been him who went away so soon?

Will the world stop spinning if you let yourself realize he's gone?

Is it customary to replay every conversation you've ever held with him, to know that he left this world with you in his good graces?

If there is calm before the storm, can there ever be composure after?

What if you never had the opportunity to really know the person whose face, smile, voice, and warmth continue to haunt you?

Does slumber come effortlessly after chalices of tears runneth over and cease to provide?

Will the countenance of the fallen friend fade from conscious thought, letting the sorrow, anger, and regret lift from your shoulders?

Will acceptance and understanding arrive on the doorstep of your mind hand in hand, letting you become at peace?

When will there ever be arms powerful enough to cradle you like the infant you once were and give you hope of future normality?

Can your heart ever beat the same again?

***IN LOVING MEMORY OF COREY WILLIAMS, A FRIEND
LOST BUT NOT FORGOTTEN. THANK YOU FOR TEACHING ME
THE VALUE OF LIFE.***

Corey's symbol is a track runner with wings (angel), or a dime. This may seem odd but I met with a lady who has also lost her son. She said she asked him to send her a dime to let her know he was alright. A couple of days later she was coming into her back door, which she says she almost never does, and there on the doorstep was a dime. I asked Corey to send me a dime, and although I have always found pennies, I had never found a dime, until I asked him. I have found several dimes since then. My daughter found one recently when she went to the cemetery. Both will be things I use interchangeably. Talk with you later.

Love

Vanessa

Corey's symbols are a track runner with wings and a dime.

Steve & Irene Bacher's son, Brandon (9-14-88), died from a congenital heart condition, 3-24-04.

The Bachers tell how they spent Brandon's angel date:

Dear Dinah,

Thank you so very much for the remembrance! We love and miss him very much!

Steve and I attended mass this morning with our favorite Priest, Fr. Dave Brinkmoeller, Dean of the Dayton, OH Deanery. He moved on to another parish 4 months after Brandon's passing, but I stay in touch with him constantly. Fr. Dave misses Brandon very much also, as Brandon was 3 when he became our Pastor at the Church of the Ascension, Kettering, OH.

Fr. Dave spent the day with us at Dayton Children's Hospital Medical Center as Brandon took his last breath. Fr. Dave has told me "there isn't a time that I go to Dayton Children's Hospital and don't think of Brandon. He was a beautiful part of my life."

After mass we decorated Brandon's monument at the cemetery. Brandon ate his last meal at Tumbleweed Restaurant just a few days before he passed away. Tonight we will be celebrating with him at that same restaurant.

I regret so much being ill and missing J.I.M.'s Conference this year. I hope you enjoyed seeing everyone again and celebrated our children!

I don't remember if either of us told you, but our daughter is pregnant and is expecting our 1st grandson around October 26, 2007. We are looking so forward to this blessed event! I'll send pictures when he is born.

Love, Irene & Steve

Brandon's website is:

<http://brandon-bacher.memory-of.com/about.aspx>

(This just in, Brandon has a new nephew, Kendrick Avery Teter, born 11-2-07)

Brandon's symbols are a ladybug and a rose.

Dave & Ann Lund's son, Aaron (10-27-86), died in a drowning accident, 6-16-07.

Aaron was born Oct. 27, 1986, at Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital in Norfolk, the son of Dave and Ann (Uhing) Lund. Aaron was baptized on Nov. 23, 1986, at St. Mary's Catholic Church.

Aaron attended Norfolk Catholic and it was a very special place to Aaron. He had so many friends and was always known as "Lundy." He participated for the Knights in sports, playing football, basketball, track and wrestling.

He was captain and played right tackle for the 2004 state football championship team and was voted the team's most dedicated player. Aaron was a member of the Unity Council and selected for the all-district and all-state football teams. Aaron was also an EMHC (Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist) for Sacred Heart/St. Mary's Church. He graduated from Norfolk Catholic High School in May of 2005.

Aaron was recruited by the University of Sioux Falls and played football his first year of college but due to injury transferred to Wayne State for two semesters where he really loved his drafting classes.

After visiting the Nucor Detailing Center he transferred to Northeast Community College in Norfolk where he was studying architectural drafting. For the summer he was working at the Nucor Detailing Center as an intern and knew that was the career he was looking for. Working part time at Menard's was also something he enjoyed very much. He and his brother Anthony also had a mowing business.

He is survived by parents, Dave and Ann Lund; brothers, Adam and Anthony of Norfolk; nephew, Keagan of Wayne; grandparents, Jerome and Alice Uhing of Hartington; friend, Amy Zwingman of Norfolk; many aunts, uncles, cousins and a multitude of friends.

Aaron was preceded in death by grandparents Dale and Lillian Lund of Newcastle.

Memorials were directed to Norfolk Catholic High Schools Sports Complex for the purchase of a scoreboard as a tribute to Aaron's love of sports.

I asked if they had chosen a symbol for Aaron:

Thank you Dinah and I am so sorry I have not responded sooner. At first I just was not ready and now it is still really, really hard and we have big holes in our hearts and lives but life keeps moving forward.

This might be kind of dumb, but the symbol Aaron is known by around here is #75. Aaron was an offensive lineman for Norfolk Catholic and he played as a senior with the current seniors and many of the other kids knew who he was. This football season the boys all have 75 on their football helmets and write it on their tape they have on their hands and arms like Aaron always did. The coaches had new shirts made with 75 on the sleeve. We are quite proud of the thoughtfulness of the coaches and the football boys. We had many fun and proud years of Aaron playing football and they ended it with a State Championship their Senior year; they worked hard and never gave up.

Thank you for all you are doing for Aaron and our family, we very much appreciate it!

Keeping you in our prayers

Aaron's symbol is #75.

Dennis & Cathy Damron's daughter, Lauren (11-4-82), died from a heart condition, 10-25-06.

Dear Dinah,

I am so sorry that I haven't written to you sooner. This summer has been so difficult. Lauren always came home to be with us during the summer months. We miss her so.

Grief is so strange...there are so many different stages. It seems I go from one stage to another and I think I'm beginning to come through the darkness, only to return again. I see, feel or think of Lauren in all things. It's painful, but it's one way of keeping her with me. One day, perhaps, whenever I think of her I won't cry as often, but only laugh and smile. We were so blessed to have had her for the short time we got to keep her. I do

want to share her with you, but I find it difficult to sum her up in just a few words.

She was very petite, but had a huge personality! And, oh what a beautiful spirit she had! Your description of Jim was so wonderful...I could tell he was a special son.

Dennis and I grieve very differently...but we are very loving and supportive of each other. I get concerned for him...he is quite reserved and holds so much in...partly because that's his personality and partly (I think) to protect me.

Our precious Lauren was born on November 4, 1982, and her angel date was October 25, 2006.

Rosemary Smith sent that wonderful grief packet and I have found it helpful. It's comforting to know there are those who have come through the darkness, and can help those of us that aren't there yet.

Thank you so much for reaching out to me...I need wonderful people like you to help me along this difficult journey.

*Love back to you from a fellow traveler,
Cathy*

Lauren's symbol is a.

Tim & Connie Dehner's son, Rob (9-15-79), died in an auto accident, 5-19-99.

Tim is quite a poet and wrote this poem recently:

Who Am I

You are never alone, I am always there.

Never despair for I am a breath away.

When your heart is breaking,

And the tears fall as rain.

I am here to carry you

Till the night is past.

I will be with you always,

I will never fail you.

*To you I am but a shadow,
but I am always there.
I may pass by as a breeze,
gently rustling the leaves.
I am the snow that falls
gently on a winter's morn...
Who am I? I am the stars,
You gaze at in the night.
I am every child, every candle,
that lights the twilight.
My voice like thunder rings,
My laughter as bellows roll.
My kisses fall soft upon you,
As dew kisses the morning dawn.
Feel the beating of my heart,
Within the memories I shall n'er depart.
I am here when you close your eyes,
Through the garden we stroll hand-n-hand.
Yesterday and tomorrow wilt find me there,
linger near just out of sight.
Your precious, precious
Child is who I am...*

Tim and Connie Dehner

Rob's symbol is a rose.

Jim & Elaine Madden's son, Andrew (9-26-78), died from a drug overdose, 3-6-95.

Dear Dinah,

Thank you so much for your lovely poem and remembering Andrew's birthday. It does give our family some peace in the thought that Andrew, Jim and all of our children we miss so much are together in a safe place.

Love, Elaine and Jim Madden

Elaine wrote this poem to Andrew:

My Luck Angel Son
Andrew Michael Madden
September 26, 1978-March 6, 1995

*You are with me often, my Luck Angel son.
I meet you in my dreams, so quickly you pass by
Sometimes like a camera moved, your image blurs
But I know it is you.
Are we playing hide and seek?*

*When I awake, my Luck Angel son, my eyes are misty.
We must be on vacation, a summer at the shore.
Have we been near the sea? Did the spray from a wave touch us?
And then I realize it is a tear, because the dream is fading.*

*There are still days, my Luck Angel son
When I pull the walls of our home around me.
Curling up as in a memory quilt.
As if waiting for you to come, to smile and say,
I'm sorry, Mom, that I've been gone so long.*

*But most days, you give me strength, my Luck Angel son.
Making me grateful for what I have and those I love.
And for the hope that we will meet again
In love's eternity, my Luck Angel son.*

**Andrew's symbol is a ladybug angel (luck angel that he drew
& used as his signature).**

**Virginia Brenton's son, Chris Morrison (1-23-87), died in a
motorcycle accident, 9-23-06.**

Virginia wrote about Chris:

As I told you, Chris, was riding his motorcycle when he was killed. The accident happened on Saturday afternoon about 3:45 p.m. or so. I didn't see him until Wednesday when we went to the funeral home for the family viewing.

The funeral home director asked me if I wanted the backpack he was wearing? "Of course," so he put it in the back of my blazer in a black plastic bag.

When I got home my sister had arrived for the funeral the following day. She was being a bit difficult (even longer story for another day) so I tossed the bag at her (she didn't know what it was at the time) I hadn't seen it to that point she went through it to see what was in there really not much, but every pocket was gone through and the items were returned to the backpack.

A couple of weeks later, one of Chris' friends was there at the house and I'm not sure now why, but he also went through the backpack maybe just to feel the last thing Chris touched aliveagain all items were returned to the pack. There really wasn't much in there, a new pair of riding gloves that he had purchased that day that I sent to my dad, the clear shield for his helmet that was mangled, and a mostly eaten bag of bib chips I had also gone through that backpack myself one evening.

Jan 23rd we all went to the accident site and lit candles to remember his birthday his cousins showed me the tattoos that they had gotten, they both had the Chevy emblem (for his truck) with red flames surrounding it (for the flames on his motorcycle) with his name through the middle and forever, forever family and things like that I decided on the spot that as soon as I have \$200 I'm getting one too I took photos of them.

In mid march I was packing up stuff in the garage and was preparing to move in with my boyfriend I picked up a black plastic bag, not realizing what it was and inside was his backpack I don't know what moved me to reach inside the large area but I came across an 8 1/2 x 11 piece of paper that was folded in quarters Now that paper was NOT THERE at any point in time. At least 3 other times, that backpack had been gone through I opened it up and there was a drawing of the Chevy emblem with flames on it just like the tattoos the girls had gotten. Chris had signed it at the bottom does that give you chills or what I called one the girls and asked if they had designed their tattoos or if they had known that Chris wanted one and what he was planning they had done it all on their own. I told Sabrina what I had found and told her to stop by my office the following day to look at it she was just as blown

away as I was. I believe that Chris was letting us know that he really liked the tattoos and that he had planned on getting one just like it

I had that design done and it is on the back window of my Blazer with his name, dates and R.I.P etc I decided right at that moment that this was to be HIS LOGO. When we get his truck painted one will go on the hood and one on the tailgate. The one on the tailgate will have his name and dates as well

I have had a few other things happen like a note saying I love you mom in a place that it SHOULD not have been (with my rental contract !!!!) But the signs are so few and far between I often wonder if I'm so tense and stressed that he can't get to me because I can't see through all the pain and worry complete lack of sleep..... I hear of other parents getting signs from their children all the time and I wonder why I don't. Any how that's my story and I'm sticking to it :-)

We have lost a lot of young ones (mostly Chris' age) but some younger and some older very recently Maybe we need something like that here, but we are a town of 30,000 or so and I may not be ready for such an undertaking right now But would be nice to have info for the future

Again, thank you're my new friend What a lucky/blessed lady I am to have found you

Virginia

Mom to Chris

1-23-87 - 9-23-06

Gifted to us but sent home too soon

Under construction

<http://vbrenton1.angelfire.com/Chris.html>

Chris, symbols are a motorcycle & truck.

**Marge Nunn's son, Kenny Lutz (2-1-80), completed suicide,
8-19-04.**

Marge tells about her son, Drew:

Dear Dinah,

Thank you very much for the card in remembrance of Kenny. The Native American Prayer in the card sure rings true. Simple things that I know I probably once took for granted are now gentle and wonderful reminders of Kenny. I know he is still and always will be with me, each and every day. I always feel his presence which seems to get stronger as time goes on. Though I'll never understand why he's gone, I've learned to accept it. Drew keeps me very busy and another blessing I have been fortunate to have. He, like Kenny, is very involved in baseball. This year he has been playing since the end of March. He will be playing well into October, being invited to play on the Campbellsville AAU 11 year old team. Every time he puts on his uniform, he tucks a \$1 bill deep into one of his baseball socks. That \$1 bill was given to him by Kenny shortly before we lost him, to keep with him when he plays baseball, for good luck. What is so great is when Drew is on the field, I see he has some of the same characteristics and little quirks that Kenny had when he played. It makes me smile, very proud and very happy. I know Kenny is with his little brother too. How fortunate and blessed we are.

Again, thank you for remembering Ken on his Birthdays and Angel dates, as you always do. Your support for all of us who have lost a child(ren), is truly a God-send.

Marge Nunn

Kenny's, symbols are a rainbow, baseball glove, fishing pole & golf club.

Cori Hoffman's son, Michael (1-30-75), was killed in an auto accident, 7-22-07.

Michael's sister, Kari, wrote this letter to Michael:

One Day

One day, I sat on Mommy's lap in the car "helping" her breathe in and out. They were going to the hospital. You were coming. This is the first day I can remember.

One day, Mom said “the house is too quiet, go see what he’s doing,” and there you were sitting on the bedroom floor in your diaper playing with the telephone, probably calling Australia. This is the first time I remember knowing I should watch out for you too.

One day, I waited with someone else, while you were whisked off to the emergency room to have your fingers x-rayed. Another day, your chin stitched. Another day, your leg stitched. Another day, your chin stitched again and again and again. I remember loving that chin, the visible reminder of a life lived to the full.

One day, I cheered with the crowd, as you fired off the winning three-point shot with confidence beyond your years. It felt good to be in the glow of your pure love of the game.

One day, you told me about the girl you were going to get. She was it, you said, and you weren’t going to let anyone stand in the way. I remember knowing I would have to step aside and give up being the girl you counted on.

One day, I remember you telling the crowd at my wedding, “That I couldn’t have done much better.” We all laughed, but I remember realizing, “He’s going to miss me, too.”

One day, you called me, voice shaking, and whispered, “She’s here.” You were a daddy. I cried with you for the blessing of that gift. One day, we cried again for the gift of her sister.

One day, you called me at work and we shot the breeze for at least a half-an-hour. I said “I’ve got to go” and you laughed and replied “Yeah, this is 30 minutes of my life I’ll never get back.” You were right, I’ll never get it back, but I’ll always have it.

Countless days, I scratched your back and sang you to sleep. I confirmed that, yes, your outfit did match. I tried to shield you from things that hurt. I encouraged you to be the man you were deep in your soul. I loved every curly hair on your head all your days.

One day, I’ll hear the trumpet, see my Lord face to face, and wrap my arms around you once again. Until then, sweet brother

Michael’s symbol is a shooting star that's going up to the heavens.

Verna Bowman’s daughter, Danielle (11-1-80), was killed in an auto accident, 11-30-05.

Verna wants you to view Danielle's website:

I want to use a rose just not sure what color? I want the color that symbolizes life, she was full of life. I guess a pink rose, she wore rose color a lot. I am not sure what the, color means but she certainly was a rose. She brought such joy in whatever situation she was in. The site is ---
www.myspace.com/daniellebowmanmemorial.
www.myspace.com/daniellebowmanmemorial

Danielle's symbol is a rose.

Linda Grizzel's son, David (9-10-70), completed suicide, 5-5-00.

Linda struggles with the same way to answer that we all have:

I still have trouble telling people about David. When someone asks me how many children I have I cannot say two because that would exclude David. So I usually say three. On occasion that leads to questions about age, where they live, what they do, etc. I am not comfortable telling people I do not really know that I have lost a son. Sometimes I say two living. Even then some people ask questions.

I now have two grandchildren. Cailan, who is six, and a new little one just one month old. His name is Alex. I went to stay with my daughter for a week after he was born. He is so beautiful and precious. My last evening there Cailan sat beside me on the couch & put her arm around my neck and said, "Grandma, I am going to miss you tomorrow." I replied to her, "Cailan, I am going to miss you, too. What am I going to do?" She just looked at me & said "Live your life." Wisdom from a six-year-old.

That is what I do. Live my life. But I still miss David. I still think about him every day. I loved him so much. We never stop loving, missing or thinking about our children who have passed on. And that is the way it should be & is.

Linda Grizzel

David has felt so close the last few days; more so than usual. I went with a friend to a Folk Festival in Richmond Saturday. A bluegrass band played a song called "There is more Behind his Picture than the Wall." At

least I think that was the name of it. Brought back too many memories at once for me. I usually try to stay away from that sort of music. The day was a good one though.

On David's birthday I always go out & buy myself a piece of chocolate pie. When David was probably 12 or 14 I started baking a birthday cake for him. Then it occurred to me that he did not really like cake that much. What he really liked was chocolate pie. So I put away the dry ingredients I had started mixing up and made a couple chocolate pies. One just for him alone. After that he always got a birthday pie. So that is how I commemorate his birthday. I eat Chocolate pie and think about his smile & the way he liked to tease. Of my 3 children he was the only one who could make me angry. He was a great little actor & knew just which buttons to push. If one didn't do it, he would wait a bit and try another one. I would finally get angry, but when I would look at him he would be laughing. He loved that. One of his favorite things to do.

It was good to hear from you.

*Love,
Linda*

David's symbol is a cat.

Ron & Debbie Baker's daughter, Tammy Smith (3-29-81), was murdered, 1-30-03.

Debbie is very active in homicide victims:

The Court TV (they are Story House Productions from Washington D.C. they do several shows for Court TV) filming crew was in Belmont (they stayed at the Hampton Inn in Olean) from Sunday evening of September 30th thru Friday evening of October 5th.

They were wonderful people, easy to talk to and just all around great! They did shots of the area, interviews at the State Troopers' barracks, on the hill all day Tuesday, more area and interviews Wednesday and my interview was on Thursday afternoon. It went well - it was so different..... more than you can even imagine, not at all what you would think being filmed would be like..... all the cameras, equipment, funny silver foam things, etc..... I also

want to say thank you Shannon O. for being there for me that day and to Carina for the wonderful job she did on my hair that morning.

At this time they believe that Tammy's case will air sometime in January 2008 - it will be on *Body of Evidence*. They even filmed the alpacas and me with the alpacas. They will stay in touch with me and I have just about all of their office and cell phone numbers, emails, etc. to be able to contact them at anytime I want or need to.

I will know well in advance of the actual day and time it will air and will let all of you know..... take care,

Mom/Debbie

This was received later:

I received an email yesterday morning from Katie..... Associate Producer, Body of Evidence, Story House Productions - Court TV

She gave me the exact day and time that Tammy's case will appear on Body of Evidence - as long as everything goes along well it should air on:

Saturday, January 26, 2008 on the Court TV Channel at 9:00 p.m. - here is the link to the Court TV website and an other link to the Story House Productions website/

Court TV: http://www.courttv.com/home_primetime/index.html

Story House Productions: <http://www.storyhousepro.com/index.htm> on their website you will click on the tab at the top that says - Projects. Then on the left hand column the link that says True Crime

This is on Senator Cathy Young's website

(http://www.senatorcathyyoung.com/photo_gallery.asp)



Senator Young and Dorie Robie whose four-year-old son (Derrick) was murdered by 13-year old Eric Smith in Savona, watch the balloon release in honor of murder victims. The Robie family was instrumental in working to pass Penny's law. The balloon release was organized by Deb Baker whose daughter (Tammy Renee Smith) also was a victim.

Tammy's, symbols are a rose & a dolphin.

Don & Vickie Garner's son, Aaron (4-30-77), died in an auto accident, 7-30-99.

This is such a wonderful idea for high school reunions:

Hi Dinah,

For some reason today, I felt that I should write to you. Though we have never met, you have ministered to me over the last eight years through your notes of encouragement. Our twenty year old son, Aaron, was killed in a single car crash eight years ago on July 30. We have been blessed with a wonderful support group of family and friends and God has given us peace beyond understanding. Of course, that does not keep us from remembering him fondly and wishing we still had him with us. As his two brothers grow to adulthood, we wonder how he might have matured and if and who he might have married. I am sure you have similar thoughts and feelings about your son. Aaron's ten year high school reunion was a few weeks ago and we were asked by the class president to provide something for the memory table they prepared for Aaron and another boy who also passed away. That was so thoughtful of them to take the time to do that. Gestures such as this one are appreciated far more than those who make them will ever know. I just wanted to take this time to thank you for all of the gestures you have made in your ministry and let you know that you are remembered and prayed for every time I receive your notes.

*Another mom,
Vickie Garner*

One of my first thoughts when Aaron died was wishing his brothers did not have to go through the trauma of losing their brother. As you know, life is never the same after a child dies. I did not tell you that we made copies of the newspaper article that ran the story in West Tennessee. I also ran off some pictures of Aaron to be left on that table at the reunion. I put our email and the boys email addresses on the back. I thought a few people might pick them up, but that many would be returned to us. To our

amazement, every picture and article was picked up. We hope that we will eventually get some "Aaron Stories" from some of those who attended. Those are our favorite. When we hear a story about Aaron that we have never heard before, it just pleases our soul. Not only the hearing of it and learning something we didn't know, but the fact that folks still remember him. How long has your Jim been gone? We had dear friends that had a party the first year after Aaron's death. It was on his birthday, April 30th. They invited several of his and our friends and it was a wonderful way to show friendship and caring and celebrate Aaron's life. Both my husband's and my family made picture boards as a way of working through their grief, so we had those on display. His college friends also made a display board after seeing the family ones. We kept the boards in tact for years and just recently took them apart so a college student could snap individual pictures and use them in a project.

I think my symbol for Aaron is a snowflake. I found myself purchasing some type of snowflake ornament every year in memory of him.

Your fellow journeyman,

Aaron's, symbol is a snowflake.

Pat & Colette Coyne's daughter, Colette (10-10-68), died from melanoma, 10-27-98.

Colette wrote this poem for her daughter, Colette's birthday:

*Years have passed, yet it seems to be, not so long ago.
Our Memories bring you through the door, your countenance aglow.
Dressed to perfection, a stunner are you, classic is your style.
Hair flowing softly, swishing; once every little while*

*Often you had a story, exciting was the day
Sometimes the tale amused you so, peals of laughter were in your way
Recalling such happy moments, can even bring a smile
Whenever the mind does wander, if only for awhile!*

*Frequently and unexpected, without warning or alert
Comes the maze of darkness shouting loudly, feel the hurt*

*Sounds of Silence piercing deep, yet alone I still can hear
Emptiness within our hearts, alas reality too near*

*Familiar surroundings yet alone are we, present where we're called
Those about will never know, what they cannot see
Fortunate are they who never feel the poison of despair
Wells of Tears buried deep, burst to fill the air*

*Free of Pain our challenge daily, a puzzle that has no key –
A goal of all who have been told, "It's Life," "It's Meant to Be"
There are choices we would never make, if destiny be controlled
Instead we learn to treasure those, who heal our very soul*

*See the gifts, feel the love, that's ours to validate
Waste not a moment with frivolous fare, step forward and believe,
Faith brings hope and knowledge as little signs we see
They bring us closer for just a moment and help me to be me.*

Thank you My Colette!

*We are busy with a dinner dance coming up. The foundation is
growing; amazing what our angels do.
Colette*

This was the invitation:

CCMAC
Colette Coyne Melanoma Awareness Campaign
8th Annual Dinner Dance & Auction

**Co-Hosted by Williston Park Rotary
Sun Wise Committee**

2007 HONOREE

Hon. Rocco Iannarelli

Support Us In Our Mission To Prevent
MELANOMA - SKIN CANCER

“The Silent Epidemic”

Tickets \$100 per person, TEN@TABLE

Cocktails, Dinner, Dancing & Silent Auction

Date: Friday, November 2nd, 2007
Pm

Time: 07:30 – 11:30

LOCATION

The Inn at New Hyde Park
214 Jericho Tpke.
New Hyde Park, NY 11040
Ph: 516 354 7797

RSVP by 10/ 27/ 2007

Checks and Donations Made Out to CCMAC
P.O Box 1179
New Hyde Park, N.Y. 11040

I emailed Colette to say that they had a true calling to help others.
Her response:

Dinah:

I guess I never really think of it as in memory of her as much as a "must do" I don't want others to suffer through what we have seen - such pain - I also have come to believe - not that I like it, or would choose it, but believe we were gifted with Colette for just so short a time and while it may have been her time to "move on" as she said in a reading "it was my time to continue in my spiritual odyssey" - so too somehow this is our calling at this moment in time. So many incredible things have happened and here we are "just an average family" - but following an extraordinary calling. It makes our faith, our belief in our call, all of us, to care, as part of a spiritual family. The faith we have been taught, each of us, no matter what church or temple, is our particular road map - our path to the next life. "He who has been given much, much will be expected" some haven't had the gift of hearing and so we who have ----- must respond. (end of sermon) How fortunate are we to have met people such as yourself and your buddy Ms. Smith (Rosemary)!!!!

Colette

Collette's symbol is a sunflower.

Robert & Jackie Searl's sons, Woody (4-6-61), died from an inoperable tumor brain, 4-30-00. Their son, Alex (10-13-65) died from a heart arrhythmia, 6-7-96.

Jackie sent this email:

Robert and I are so glad to have you as our fellow journey friend and one who will always remember our children.

Yesterday God sent such a beautiful blue sky...Alex (Alex's birthday) had sky blue eyes and so does his precious, soon to be, growing up daughter, Skylar, who will be 16 next month. She was four when Alex passed.

I will be spending about twelve days with her shortly and just finished composing the attached for her...she has and is dealing with many issues concerning his death and her loss and I needed to reach out to this precious child of God...she lives in Allen, TX with her mom and step-dad. Her mom and step-dad are taking a cruise to Italy and I was asked to come out to be with her as I did last year. I believe this is God's way of keeping me in her life and I just wanted to let her know she is not, nor will she ever be, alone on this life journey.

*Bless you in all you do Dinah,
Much love,
Jackie*

This is what Jackie wrote to her granddaughter:

To: Skylar, my precious one and only grandchild

From: Your equally precious yet not one and only Grandmother Jackie (or Poppie)

AKA Granny is A Blogger short version GAB...and I do know how to do that.

RE: Things About Me That You May or May Not Want To Know...but I am telling you anyway...your day as a Grandmother will come perhaps (it is all about the choices YOU choose to make, remember that) and then you will understand this...I hope!

Granny Is A Blogger

Written on: October 13, 2007...the 42nd birthday of your dad...

Claude Alexander Harbison 1965-1996

I was born on December 26, 1942

*I was a Saturday child...**Monday's child is fair of face,
Tuesday's child is full of grace,
Wednesday's child is full of woe,
Thursday's child has far to go,
Friday's child is loving and giving,
Saturday's child works hard for his living,
And the child that is born on the Sabbath day
Is bonny and blithe, and good and gay.***

You, too, are a Saturday child!

November 1991

Your Dad was born at 8:07 AM on Wednesday, October 13th 1965, Georgia Baptist Hospital, Atlanta, GA

October 1965

I was a late in life child so to speak compared with today's much teenage pregnancy. My mother was 27 years old and my dad (Newton Alexander Henderson) he was known as "Jack" in the business world and by the way your Dad was named after my dad who is your Great-grandfather.

There will be injections of much "family trivia" seasoned in this epistle to you...just remember, you too will be one, one day (someone's grandmother) if you choose to be.

I came into this world feet first, ready for "life"...most arrive head first, but I wanted to get a running start and so I did.

Went home with my parents and had it all to myself until about four years later my sister Sue arrived. Our family always lived close to my

grandmothers...Mary Baker who I called Mama Baker and Alma Henderson who I called Mama Hennie...she is the one that would send me cards signed, Oceans of Love...I always thought that was so neat. She was a school teacher and I have the bell she rang while standing outside the one room school house in Oxford, GA to call the children to school...this bell will be given to you whenever you would like to have it. Mama Hennie taught me to make vegetable soup and how to fry oysters one of my favorite seafood things. Her favorite candy was candy corn which she kept in a glass covered candy dish all the time. Your dad and his brother would make a "B" line for that each time they would visit her as little boys.

My Mama Baker was a business owner along with her husband owned a ruling and binding business. I would spend many Friday evenings with them for my house was just around the corner from where they lived. She taught me how to make yeast rolls...that is why the Dead Bread that "You" and I made last year 2006 November for your Spanish class got best in show/taste. I also learned how to fry chicken from her as well. She would always let me do things that I could not do at home and we would giggle ourselves to sleep. She always slept with a thing on her head called "hair net." Boy, did she ever look funny in that. Perhaps that is what caused us to giggle ourselves to sleep.

Both Mamas were such a blessing in my life and I miss them a lot, but have such wonderful memories of being with them and learning about life from them.

School: I always looked at it as a temporary road that would get me to where I needed or wanted to be... I just did not know at that time exactly what that was. One day I would be a doctor, lawyer...(my dad wanted me to be a doctor) the next day my desire was to as fast as possible have a home and family and to do things the way "I" wanted to do things.

When I was about 12 not quite 13 you see, I was always the youngest in my class. I started school at four and all my friends were already five. I guess that is why I came out feet first...I already knew I would need to do a lot of running to stay caught up.

Well our seventh grade teacher, Mrs. Quarles (who was married without kids) told the boys in our class to go on the school yard for a "free recess" she was having a "girl talk" with the girls.

This was my first encounter about what in the near future my female body was about to experience...something called "red bugs," which had me scared nearly to death. I thought this was part of what I would need to know about having that home and family and I would be all ears for this message. Well, I am not quite sure what I understood from Mrs. Quarles "talk,"

however, Linda Skinkle a rather large athletic girl that could play awesome basketball held her own group interruption in the girl's bathroom shortly afterwards for questions/answers... I came away even more confused. My mother was not one that you could ask questions and get "tough answers or any answer." You see kids being reared at this time when I came along were "to be seen and not heard"much less ask "life questions and expect to get answers," Today I see kids on TV telling their parents to talk to them about sex, drinking and other topics that if I had approached my parents about, well, I would already be living on Mars forget the space shuttles, they would have sent me there "their way." Years later and I mean later, was when I realized that was perhaps one of the main reasons I married at such a knowledgeable age (17) right out of high school. I wanted to be the mother that could answer questions, be a friend, pal, companion and all of those things that were missing in my life with my mother. First I needed to know how one becomes a parent. Something to do with birds and bees I think? My father, your great grandfather very unexpectedly one Sunday evening was going to take me to the drug store to buy my favorite, chocolate fudge ice-cream cake roll and when we walked out of our den/TV room my precious father that I had only known for such a short, brief period of time fell to the floor and within thirty minutes was dead...how could that be...we were just talking, making plans and there my dad was, dead and gone. I was left scared to death. My mother along with various people came and went from our home. Some spoke to me others had such a look of sorrow on their face...no one ever asked me "how do you feel, think or need." I knew it then and more so now...thus I guess why I am always reaching out to others that find themselves on their life journey when losses happen...death, job, health, faith whatever...God put me here I now know to do just that and I am passionate about that.

My father died on July 8th 1956 / Sunday evening.

Your dad passed on June 7th 1996

We were all with him as we were with his brother Dan (Daniel Gregory "Woody" Harbison) who passed on April 30th 2000 a Sunday.

I was between my 8th grade year on my way into 9th grade. Boy did I feel scared, wounded, different...all the kids I knew and were my friends had both parents at home with the exception of Hal Holdbrook...he and his mother lived together and no one even explained where his dad was. I heard perhaps in the service, however, he never came home or perhaps dead...we kids during this period of time really had it hard...adults did not recognize

even though we were not “adults” yet, we still had feelings, questions, concerns and at times so afraid of this thing called life and all that surrounds it. We just remained in the background observed and I thought, when I am grown things will be different with me and my kids. (Little did I know my journey would be nothing like I had imagined).

My grandparents, the Bakers, moved in with us, mother went to work part-time then full time and I was so missing my dad. I did ask God why would he take him from me...it was not fair. I felt so strange and different. As I grew and became older and wiser in the ways of the world and especially life, thank goodness God saw fit to remain in my heart and love me for there were times I thought I had done something so bad, that must be the reason he took my sweet daddy from me. Trust me, in no way was that of his doing. It was just life and I had similar other “life lessons” to learn on down my journey road.

When I look back I see that when I did not think I would be able to take another step much less a sprint, God had lifted me up into his powerful and strong arms, surrounded me with his “fatherly love” and carried me onward. I would always have my heavenly father with me.

In the 9th and 10th grade I guess I just floated along trying to adjust to all the changes taking place within our family and my life. I worked as stage hand in our school play in the 10th grade...enjoyed doing skits, was a member of the FTA, FHA, Staff Member for Yearbook and then in 11th tried out for Varsity Cheerleader and was selected. Also was selected to represent my high school on a teen board for a major department store in Atlanta. Boy was I feeling like I was on top of the world again. I should have remained focused on planning for my college years, however, I was still wanting and needing the family thing. I did not date too much for my mother ruled with iron fist...could not be out late and had to go in groups. She was always telling me that the only thing that little boys wanted to do was to get into (ask me later about what she said). I wanted to prove her wrong regarding her take on boys and girls. I realized much later in life, she did not have a good grounded foundation on the understanding of how to talk to her kids because her mother never did with her and thus the beat goes on and on. When I have my family I will talk and talk...see what I mean? Doing that now. Patience dear girl...one day if you choose to be a GM and you may have a need to talk with your kids and grand kids I pray.

It is through sharing our experiences, the good, bad and yes even ugly and girl I do mean ugly that we “grow”...sometimes I wish I had not had to grow so fast.

In my senior year of high school I met your father's dad to be. He was about two years older than me and knew much more about life than I. We dated several times and then he asked me to marry him when I graduated from high school. You know what I said?

YES! Now do you honestly believe I knew what this entailed? Yep, that's right, not a single idea popped into my head other than find the dress, plan the event and the rest will fall into place. Remember, I did not have a clue as to what being married was all about. Once you said I do, then you would just know? Perhaps there would be a book I would be given. The only ones that I had read to that point were on planning a wedding.

Here again, my sweet mother, did nothing in the way of trying to convenience me that I should give some thought to taking this step and that I DID HAVE other options to consider...nope, that never happened. I think if someone had just walked up to me and said ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR MIND...17, what in the @#% do you know about anything especially getting married at 17...for if they had I truly believe something else could have, would have, should have, taken place...perhaps I could have had a V-8 and gone on about my schooling for life experiences such as college or accepting the scholarship I had if I wanted it to a school of nursing. No way would I act so intelligently. No way, for I knew what I wanted and I wanted it my way...so I thought. It would be different...I would show who ever needed showing, least of all me for I had all the answers at the knowledgeable and experienced age of 17.*

I do remember telling one of my classmates, Jerry Cox, during a rehearsal for graduating out into the world from school...we were exchanging questions such as, what do you plan on doing when we graduate? And then we both told each other how scary all this seemed. We were no longer little kids in grade/high school. We were soon to be "adults." This was the only time I guess the left side of my brain attempted to kick in and alert me to the decision I had made, unfortunately the "right side" won out. I have since learned and it has taken me almost 50 years to realize I am mostly wired right brained.

This will be another story to share as to how I learned this one...trust me, it has helped to explain a lot of why I have done, and continue doing the things I do and the way I do them. Robert is wired left brained...FYI

The wedding took place at 6PM on a Friday evening and there were a number of friends, family and walk-in's attending I guess to observe the ceremony...so they could tell others about the "kids" and the wedding...can you imagine at 17 getting married? I knew nothing and I mean nothing, yet at the time, I knew everything and no one would tell me otherwise.

We went away for two days for what is typically referred to as a “Honey Moon”...I am here to tell you, during those two days I looked and looked for the moon and the honey. It was not to be found that time around. However, about 23 years later it did appear, well that is another story for later.

I returned home from the HM, and began to live in the same house as my in-laws. I am here to tell you, they were nice people, but it very quickly became a little cramped, strained and uncomfortable if you know what I mean. The picture I had processed in my mind was not exactly what I was seeing, living and experiencing for real.

I soon found that I was with boy child...your uncle Dan. Yep, the bird and those bees did their thing about 10.5 months after I said I do and in the spring of 1960, April 6th your dad’s brother entered into my heart, soul and life. I became a mother at 18.

Well, do you have any idea how much I had prepared for this event, neither did I. It became learn and grow as you go. We both grew together...mother and child...more like two children taking care of each other. He was a quick one for his age and so smart...just like his right brained wired mother. He was more LBW much like my dad.

We continued to grow and learn from each other and about 4.5 years later the birds and bees did it again...your precious dad arrived into my life...I was pushing almost 23 years old. Can you imagine having a kid at such an old age as 23!! ??

I was able to locate a book or two about rearing children...I think it was a Dr. Spock or Dr. Spook because some of what I read did seem so spooky to me. I don’t think he was of the Star Trek family, he could have been now that I really think about it. Anyway, I was equipped and nothing would stop me now. I was the mother I had always wanted to be and I had the kids to prove it and that was about all I had. My ideas were not exactly the same as their father’s unfortunately. As I reflect back over these years, it would perhaps be most beneficial to both parties that would be me and him, had we had a discussion of our ideas way back before we bought into the wedding event, so we could know more about each other. Well, that never took place so instead of growing together into the “family” I had always thought would just exist because I thought so, we grew and went in separate directions. This was not a good thing as I reflect back...it is important to first know yourself, the good, the bad and the ugly before you invite someone into your life and it is as important to at least make the attempt to do the same regarding that person. You see, if you think you can change them and

re-work them, well, you my sweet are barking, buzzing, and chirping up the wrong tree. It will not ever, ever, ever, ever, happen...not EVER!

Heck, it is hard enough to change some things that I do not like in myself.

They say, (do you have any idea who they are??) anyway, they say, if you do something for 21 days then it becomes a pattern, routine, discipline and habit.

I am here to tell you, this is not necessarily true. After almost 18 years and much pretending things were really good and as I had dreamed as a young child while playing with my dolls, I even had a bride doll...she had a beautiful gown and other clothes that I would dress her in and dream about "when I get married" and what will the dress look like and what will I look like and notice that it was all about me? My dream had become much more like a harrow movie...and it was not a good thing. I never wanted to hear from anyone I told you so. However, I was now telling myself, they were right and I was not so right. I did not do my homework for sure. I never liked to do that anyway, being the RBW individual that I have come to know and accept. I was like the little bird sitting on the end of the branch speaking to her mother bird that was hovering around when she asked the mother bird...any special instructions or do I just wing it?

Well you know by now I had been winging it for a very, very, very long time. My wings had grown tired and we all needed a change of scenery...unfortunately, it was not a vacation it was a divorce from each other and that would impact my boys in ways I am still learning about. I have a lot of if only's that play games with my mind, however, I gained two precious productions from that early on event called marriage and they were your dad and uncle. God had given me my desire and I had my family.

However, I was incomplete once again until one day around the corner comes this person called Robert into my life. He was sharp, confident, trusting, well liked, was not married, had no kids and I was smitten for sure. At least I knew something about him, had somewhat of an idea as to how he ticked regarding business and personal matters.

Well to make a long story even longer, (patience my sweet, you will one day be a GM perhaps)

I called him up one morning and asked him to marry me and could we get a dog?

You see, I always collected stray dogs, would take them home as a child much to the dismay of my parents...I just wanted to care for them. Well Robert said yes and it only took us twenty years to get the dog. You see, Robert is LBW and he must rationalize, consider and then ponder the pros

and cons before making a rush decision, that is about most things except for answering yes to will you marry me question...I often wonder if he perhaps a tenny, weenie bit of being RBW going on ?? Must do more research on that one.

Anyway, and thus far, we have experienced twenty-five years of togetherness, accepting the good, the bad and the ugly in us both. We have pulled together most of the time and waddled through some downright tough and unpleasant situations. During these good and bad times we lean a lot into each other...I often have referred to Robert as the male part in me....my soul mate...what this really means and what I am trying to say is, it has taken me the better part of my nearly 65 years of breathing in and out on life to catch a glimmer like you see when you look up in the night's sky at the stars that God so casually threw about his universe, what love is about. It is about first knowing and loving yourself, with all the flaws and I do mean all the flaws and knowing you have been forgiven even before you do whatever you do that needs to be forgiven...did you get that one? You must first love yourself before anyone can love you with one exception that would be "Your Heavenly Father"...for you see, he knows everything and I do mean everything. Nothing can be hidden from him...he is the writer of your life. It is written in his book on life he knows every hair on your head...Robert would perhaps choose to take him to task on that one, being LBW, but he still knows all about you and me and loves us unconditionally nevertheless...I think that is awesome and then some.

I remember telling your dad one time when he thought I had no clue that he was sneaking smokes with his friends at the informative age of somewhere around 11-12 that he is not as unique as he thought. We are all in this thing called life together. We all have choices presented to us almost every second of each and every minute...choices to make or not make.

I like the following and try to apply it in my life today...WWJD? A bit corny, perhaps, but bottom line, it is not in my mind about what is left or right but what is right from wrong as how I choose to continue my life journey.

I have been the recipient of many blessings...you were given to my by your mother and father they received you from their heavenly father that gave us all to each other.

What we choose to do with each other during our life journey, well, that will be left to you and the choices you first make about accepting yourself with all the baggage that comes with the equipment.

One day last week while driving myself to my counselor, who I choose to bless each and every day for she is one of the gifts that God has given to

me, her name is Lenore, I was thinking of some of this that I have attempted to put into words for you...it is something I choose to call "Granny A Blogging"...ok, I know you don't call me Granny, you can if you like but wishing to stay with the flow, with the current trend, I thought this would be rather catchy, and perhaps allow me to put into word form to you what is sometimes difficult for me to express out loud...I think it has something to do with me being the RBW thing (right brained wired).

If I had only had a Lenore way back when...I ponder that often...what if I had known then to first ask WWJD or at least had someone that I could trust with my deepest thoughts and desires. All I know is that I am in the here and now and I am thankful for all that I have been able to do and understand and that someday, when I am privileged to sit at my heavenly father's feet he will have time for me and I can ask all the questions I can possibly think of and then some...for you see, I have come to recognize that we all are all so much alike with the good, the bad and the ugly in our lives...but he, thank goodness, loves us no matter our baggage.

I needed to share this with you with the hope you will come to know me better even though we are many miles only away from each other...you live in my heart and soul forever.

I never had anyone reach out to me with unconditional love, accept me, understand me as I am...I reach out to you Skylar to let you know I will always, as long as I am given time on this earth, to be there for you, to listen, to provide answers back to you that perhaps worked for me and some that did not, but only if you ask me to do so. I have learned to listen well if nothing else. For in listening to others we learn a lot about ourselves.

I know that family and friends think and believe they know what we are feeling and how we hurt, but you know what, I know they cannot possibly know. We can only know about each other's hurts, joys, and concerns when we reach out to others with no agenda, just unconditional love and friendship.

So my precious one, this is your ole Poopie, Granny or just someone you know as Jackie who once was a little one, a mid-size one, one similar to you soon to be 16 and now I am in what they call the best is yet to come years of my life sharing a brief blog of herself for you to read while perhaps having a V-8.

To be continued...

Woody's, symbol is a dog named Buddy. Alex's symbols are a deer and a fish.

Joni Greever's son, Preston Marquard (5-6-76), completed suicide, 6-6-07.

Joni wrote this poem:

I was feeling extra crummy lately. Then, yesterday, got this inspiration and had to write it down. This is pretty much how I heard it in my mind--I'm NOT a poet and don't remember Preston being into it.

I forwarded Preston's photo album link to you, too. I chose a dragon because I think that's what he would've chosen. He also reminded me of one when the depression would really take hold...lol! Here is the link to an article I wrote for a blog:

[Fatal Depression - The Smirking Chimp](#)

Here's the poem:

Why I Died, Mom

Utterly hopeless You're nothing! screamed my mind

I sought escape I couldn't run

No place to hide

From demons in my head!

My life before this moment

Had been nothing but a waste

They'll be better off without me

Another moment I can't face.

I hesitated briefly

As my brain screamed on and on

To end the torture that was my life

I'm at the end. It hurts. I'm gone.

Eyes wide open to the wonder

*Of the Love that wrapped me close
And gently held me Loving, Loving
I'd found my way back Home.*

*Only after healing
Did I finally realize
How much my passing caused in you
Pain I thought was only mine.*

*Let go, forgive, and from the Light
With just a thought I'll be
Instantly beside you
I Love you, trust in me.*

*As you continue on Life's path,
At times you'll still despair,
And miss me, crying out my name,
Wishing I was there.*

*Reach out to all the others
Entrapped by their own minds
Help them to remember
Their God-Self deep inside.*

*Declare for all the world to hear:
"I Am!"
Remind them God, Himself, cannot be whole
Without your missing piece!*

*Banish the fear that fuels the dark
Light sparklers in your mind
Send them out to cover Earth
The dark fear cannot hide.*

*When a dragonfly seems to linger
Just a second long;
Or the osprey gazes down on you
And seems to say, "Look what I can do!"
That's me; I'm having fun.*

*Smile through your tears and please forgive
I never meant to hurt
When this chapter of your journey ends
And you find yourself back Home,
I'll once again walk through the door
"Hey, Mom!" you'll hear me say.
Time is now forgotten
Like I never went away.*

Preston's symbol is a dragon.

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

I received this note from Nancy and request that you keep this family in your prayers:

Dear Dinah,

I am so over-whelmed by your constant care and concern for families in pain. You are helping more people than I can ever imagine to keep their children alive in their hearts. What a noble, noble gift of yourself.

Your card on Mary Beth's anniversary meant even more than usual. Just a week before, her oldest son, Patrick-17, president of his class, captain of his hockey team, a good young man-was discovered to have irreversible kidney disease. He will have to have a transplant to survive (and probably several more because we are told that a kidney transplant lasts about 12 years. Needless to say, we are devastated for him and without his mom; it's going to be a long and lonely journey.

Once again, another huge "Why?" It is the good people like you who get us through that question which has no answer.

So again, dear Dinah, thank you, thank you for all you do.

With love and admiration

Nancy Hudak

Mary Beth's symbol is a star.

"Four Worms "

A minister decided that a visual demonstration would add emphasis to his Sunday sermon.

Four worms were placed into four separate jars.

The first worm was put into a container of alcohol.

The second worm was put into a container of cigarette smoke.

The third worm was put into a container of chocolate syrup.

The fourth worm was put into a container of good clean soil.

At the conclusion of the sermon, the Minister reported the following results:

The first worm in alcohol –

Dead.

The second worm in cigarette smoke –

Dead.

Third worm in chocolate syrup –

Dead.

Fourth worm in good clean soil –

Alive.

So the Minister asked the congregation –

*What can you learn from this demonstration?
Maxine, who was sitting in the back, quickly
raised her hand and said,*

*"As long as you drink, smoke and eat chocolate,
You won't have worms!"*

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