

LAMENTATIONS

Issue 12

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

September 1993

September

The month of **September** represents the end of summer and the beginning of autumn. It is a time that young people return to school and their summer is only a sweet memory. **September** is the month that represents our grief.

The first Monday in September is designated as **Labor Day** which is in honor of not only labor, but laborers. This must be our day each day. As you read the definitions of *labor*, relate them to grief. To *labor* is to do work, especially hard work; to toil; to move slowly and heavily; to be burdened, troubled, or distressed; to be long and drawn out; to exert one's powers of body or mind especially with painful or strenuous effort; to suffer from some disadvantage or distress. Would you have ever guessed that such a simple word as *labor* would define our grief so completely?

Since a *Labor Union* is defined as an organization of workers formed for the purpose of advancing its members' interests, why don't we form such a Union? We are a group of fellow travelers and we can gain strength and comfort by joining together. Yes, we will move slowly, and yes, we are burdened and distressed, but we can unite and give support to each other. Will you get off that treadmill of grief and join the **S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Union**? Our "interests" are to progress through our grief and we can help each other make this progression by sharing our thoughts and sharing the things we have done that have helped us in our progression. Please share some of these with me so that I may in turn share with each of you.



Dr. Carlyle Marner wrote a letter to John Claypool just before his young daughter died. He told Claypool that he had no words to explain the suffering of people, but stated: I fall back on the idea that God has a lot to give an account for." This was such a comfort to me when I read this, because I have often felt that I may be more accepting of Young Jim's death if I could hear a reason. I agree with Dr. Marner- God has some explaining to do. At times I feel that I may be content if I could receive an answer to even one of my "WHY?" questions.

In searching for answers to the "WHY" questions one has about death, Rabbi Harold S. Kushner, explained in his book, *"When Bad Things Happen to Good People,"* that tragedy is not God's punishment, that God is just. Tragedy is not "God's will," and that God does not sponsor "contests" to see who can withstand the most heartache. When God's son Jesus was killed, he grieved. Would any of us wish that anyone else have this same misery? No, and neither does God. He cries with us, and like our most trusted and loving friend, he wants to comfort us and let us know that we are not alone in our pain. He is part of our Labor Union.

Kathleen Jacques suggests that "the bad things that happen to us in our lives do not have a meaning when they happen. But we can redeem these tragedies from senselessness by imposing meaning on them. In the final analysis, the question is not why bad things happen to good people, but how we respond when such things happen. Are we capable of accepting a world that has disappointed us by not being perfect?" I would like to add the question: Are we capable of forgiving and loving God despite what limitations and blame we have set on him?

Grief Grafts

Cheryl Girouard sent me the wonderful poem "Please See Me Through My Tears," written by Kelly Osmont. I would like to suggest that you give it to family, friends, and anyone who needs to know how you feel and who wants to know how they can help you.

Jill, the eighteen-year-old daughter of Oscar and Leola Cole, was killed in an automobile accident June 4, 1992, two days after she graduated from high school. The family has selected a sunshine to represent Jill because she was their sunshine and her older brothers always sang "You are my Sunshine" to her. On the first observance of her death, the family had a memorial service. Leola started a support group for bereaved parents in the Prestonsburg area.



Mildred Godby has chosen butterflies and roses to symbolize her son Gerald, who died November 5, 1992. She says that Gerald loved roses.



Louise Barger made an acrostic out of her daughter's name. Rhonda died as a result of an automobile accident September 5, 1992. Her symbols are roses and balloons.

R -Roses were her favorite flower
 H -Hair, gold, long, and flowing in the wind
 O -Oneida was her home town
 N -Naughty, not really fun-loving, yes
 D -Daring, yet delicate and delightful, with a dimple on her left cheek
 A -Always offered a smile

L -Love of our lives
 O -Overflowing with energy
 U -Untimely was her death
 I -Intelligent and talented
 S -Sensitive and sensible
 E -Eyes, a beautiful blue



B -Bill was her beagle she loved
 A -Adventurous and daring
 R -Riding your Honda Fat Cat and your horse were two activities you loved
 G -Gone too soon
 E -Eventful was her childhood
 R -Recovery from damage done from the accident and neglect were not to be your victory in this life but... Remember you will never be out of our hearts and our loss is heaven's gain, for all your riches are in heaven.

Curt Davis received this poem from Bonnie Sue Hill after his son Jason was killed in an auto accident May 1, 1993.

I PROMISED YOU

*I promised to be with you,
 to never leave you alone,
 I promised to always comfort you,
 when others had done you wrong,
 I promised to be there to pick you up,
 in times when you should fall,
 I promised my perfect will for your life,
 which was the greatest promise of all.*

*I promised to always hear your prayers,
 and to meet your every need.
 I promised to always bless you and
 to even bless your seed.
 I promised to work all things out,
 for from Me you didn't part,
 I promised you your household,
 and this promise will heal your heart.*

*I've a few more promises to give you,
 that concern your precious son,
 Promises that only I could make from heaven,
 that on earth could not be done.*

*I promise he'll always be with me,
 with a smile upon his face,
 All the hopes and dreams you had for him,
 won't compare to this beautiful place,
 There is one more promise that I give you
 to carry in your heart,
 It's that promising day you 'll see him again
 and you 'll never, ever part,
 TO: Curt Davis
 From: God*

Curt and Barbara shared that the students at Waggener High School have formed the **Jason P. Davis Memorial Fund- Committee for the Gentle Giant** - which is raising funds to erect a bronze statue of Jason to be placed at the entrance to the football field. They are also printing the football schedule on the back of Jason's school picture as a way of raising funds for this memorial. Curt is a lawyer in Somerset and is making plans to erect a flagpole in front of his office dedicated to Jason's memory. He felt that this idea seemed especially appropriate since Jason was extremely patriotic and was involved in several political campaigns, including the presidential campaign.

Karen Lacy's 8-year-old daughter Mary was killed in an auto accident September 25, 1991, and has selected hearts and rainbows to represent Mary. Karen writes: "We have such beautiful

memories that no one can take from us, but we'll always be willing to share them, won't we?"

Don and Nancy Lee's 12-year-old son Dusty was shot and killed March 19, 1993, by one of his peers. Nancy writes: "I just want to let you know we are finally going to make it through this. I know we have a long way to go, but with God's help, and very nice people, it's a beginning." Dusty was always joking and laughing and was very happy, and tried to live life to the fullest. A friend of his wrote the following poem:

*Let me tell you something,
About a good friend to me.
His smile lit up the room,
As an eye could see.*

*His eyes could say a thousand words,
About his curiosity.
To live life to the fullest,
Fort that was Dustin Lee.*

*Once you got to know him,
You learn so much more
About his personality,
And what he was dream'n for.*

*He was gonna be a football star,
And wrestle on the side.
And still can't understand,
Why he had to die.*

*Dear God please help his parents
To continue day to day
Without their little baby,
To send out on his way.*

*I'm going to try my very best
To be loving and kind like he.
That's why I love so much,
To remember Dustin Lee.*

Shannon Michelle Case, 20-year-old daughter of Mike and Pam Sebastian, was killed in an auto accident January 30, 1993. They have selected a basketball (#23) and a rose to represent Shannon.



Shannon was going to college and was working, Pam said that the following poem has helped her in dealing with Shannon's death:

I'm Free

*Don't grieve for me for I'm Free
I'm following the path God laid for me,
I took His hand when I heard him call
I turned my back and left it all.*

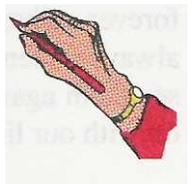
*I could not stay another day
To laugh, to love, to work or play.
Tasks left undone must stay that way.
I found that place at the close of day*

*If my parting has left a void
Then fill it with remembered joy.
A friendship shared, a laugh, a kiss.
Ah yes, these things, I too will miss.*

*Perhaps my time seemed all too brief.
Don't lengthen it now with undue grief.
Lift up your heart and share with me
God wanted me now, He Set me Free.*

Larry and Phyllis Smith's son Larry died a year ago and Phyllis wrote: "People that care about our loss don't realize that we need to talk about our son, not to hash out the awful details of his death, but to remember him for the sweet, loving, fun person he was."

Tracy Natcher's 16-year-old son Jimmy was killed in an auto accident April 9, 1993, (Good Friday.) Tracy's letter reminded me so much of myself two years ago: "This first letter is going to be the hardest one to Write. I don't feel ready, or maybe it just seems too soon to start sharing. I am still so overwhelmed and everything so hopeless - helpless." What we often feel is so "abnormal," is so "normal" in our grieving process. For several months after Young Jim's death I felt exactly this way; however, now I want to share his life with everyone, and I want them, in turn, to tell me the experiences they had with him. Tracy, you are a fellow traveler. We support you!



Bob and Jackie Geier observed their daughter Gretchen's birthday (7-16) at the beach where they had celebrated her past four birthdays. In lieu of birthday presents, they bought souvenirs for their neighbors. Jackie said: "These are difficult times for us all. I believe in my heart that our children would be very proud of our strength and courage. They were the most loved children on earth and now in heaven. We have decided Gretchen's symbol should be a heart. She drew hearts on everything she made."



Dennis and Judy Carpenter's daughter Kellie was killed in an auto accident August 14, 1992. On Young Jim's birthday Judy wrote: "God give us these wonderful children to share for awhile, but their birth certificates have no guarantees or warranties (or instructions). We are just thankful we had them the period of time we did, because in that short time they gave us so much love and happiness." Amen, Judy!!

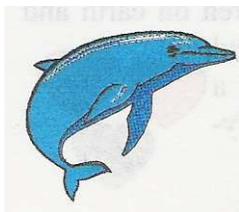


Jeff, the twenty-two-year-old son of Ray and Wanda Umbel, was killed in an auto accident August 15, 1992. They have chosen a guardian angel to represent Jeff Wanda explained that it has been a year since Jeff's death, but it seems like yesterday some days, and other days it seems like forever. She, like all of us, believes that we will always remember our loved ones until the day we see them again and that they would want us to go on with our lives.

Richard and Geri Vallotton's daughter Alicia was killed in an auto accident March 25, 1993. Alicia was a pledge in the Music Fraternity at Morehead State University and each one in this group wrote a page or more telling of their relationship with Alicia and made a scrapbook including pictures. The theme of these memories were that Alicia was always smiling and telling something funny. Alicia received the first drama scholarship from her high school, and now it has been named the **Alicia Vallotton Drama Scholarship** in her honor. At the time of her accident, Alicia and her sister, Lori, were playing sisters in the school's production of **Cinderella**. The production was dedicated to her memory on the nights of the performances, and a scholarship has been established



between the Music and Drama Fraternities in her honor at MSU. The family has selected a dolphin to represent Alicia.



Shelby and Rowena Warner's 18-year-old son Shelby lost his battle against Hodgkins Disease, October 28, 1992. His sister Teresa Noe wrote the most loving letter about her brother who was the youngest of 5 children. He was very artistic and won many awards in high school. Since his death, a **Shelby Allen Warner Scholarship** has been established at Eastern Kentucky University. The scholarship is designed to give the chosen bridge student (an Upward Bound graduate starting on a college career) some help as he or she goes to college to prepare for his or her future. The Upward Bound staff conference room has been dedicated to Shelby Warner and it is found in the Begley building at EKU.

A loving friend of ours sent this poem

If I die, survive me with such great force that you waken the furies of the pallid and the cold, from south to south lift your indelible eyes, from sun to sun dream your singing mouth.

I don't want my heritage of joy to die.

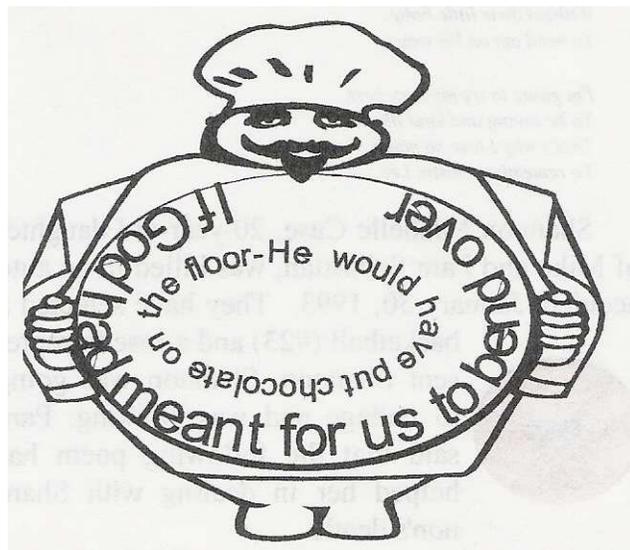
Don't call up my person, I am absent.

Live in my absence as if in a house.

Absence is a house so vast that inside you will pass through its walls and hang pictures on the air.

Absence is a house so transparent that I, lifeless, will see you, living, and if you suffer, my love, I will die again.

Pablo Neruda



Tell me- How were your lives ever complete before you received these pearls of wisdom from The Whiz? If you ever need an excuse for eating chocolate - feel free to use this one!!!!