

LAMENTATIONS

Issue 124

middle

November, 2008

The 2008 Annual Worldwide Candle Lighting Service is held in memory of all our children, siblings, grandchildren and friends that have passed. Communities across the globe will be joining in The Compassionate Friends 12th Annual Worldwide Candle Lighting which is the second Sunday in December. This year it is on December 14, 2008. As the candles are lit at 7:00 PM your local time, hundreds of thousands of persons commemorate and honor children in a way that transcends all ethnic, cultural, religious and political boundaries. Believed to be the largest mass candle lighting in the world, the World Wide Candle Lighting, TCF's gift to the bereavement community, creates a virtual 24-hour wave of light as it moves from time zone to time zone. Hundreds of formal candle lighting events are held and thousands of informal candle lightings are conducted in homes as families gather in quiet remembrance of children who have died, but will never be forgotten.

If you are interested in finding a candle lighting service in your area, go to The Compassionate Friends web site: www.compassionatefriends.org

This by Julie Jetta. **Eternal Flame:**

The time that we shared was so beautiful, it brightened my world like a candle in a dark room, it ended all too soon. That candle was torn out of my hands. The flame of your life was cruelly snuffed out, just as it burned the brightest.

Until my eyes adjusted to the dark, I was stunned, but then I realized I was alone in the darkness. I cried for the longest time. My heart was filled with anger, loneliness, and fear. How could I find my way without your light to guide me? So I sat alone for awhile, overwhelmed by the darkness until I looked inside me. And there, I saw your candle burning as brightly as ever. And from its flame, I lit a new candle and found my way out of the darkness. Now I know I will never be lost, for your light shines inside me forever.

Grief Grafts

Dirk & Kathy Strunk's daughter, Katie (2-5-91) was killed in a tornado, 3-1-07.

Kathy Strunk wrote this card about the conference:

Dear Dinah,

I wanted to thank you for inviting us to your conference again this year. We were unable to attend because we were moving to North Alabama that week. My husband, Dirk, is a football coach and we have moved many times over the years as he has climbed the coaching ladder. Initially, I resisted leaving Enterprise and that house where Katie last called her earthly. In the end, I was able to leave for, "we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Cor. 4:18)

I have felt a sense of peace here that can only come from above. I guess God knew better than I did about what I needed.

One of the many ways that we and the other seven families who lost their children in the tornado that destroyed Enterprise High School are memorializing our children is with a scholarship. We wanted to present our recipient with some kind of token to remind her of our children. We experimented with brief biographies, but in the end, we chose to give her a scrapbook. Incidentally, Katherine "Katie" Olafson, our recipient, lost her mother to a heart attack just a few weeks later.

Thank you so much for your interest in Katie's life. Your young Jim reminds me of her. They have much in common.

With love,

Kathy Strunk

Katie Strunk was born on February 5, 1991. Her name, Kathryn Madora, means "pure gift" and indeed that's what she was. She was always quick to laugh, ready to smile, and had a kind word for all. Often the new kid, Katie was good at meeting people and making new friends.

She showed an aptitude for drama at an early age. Once, when she was just two years old, she'd taken some medicine for an ear infection. She

put her hands to her throat, sputtered “poison” and fell to the floor! At the time of her death she was looking forward to her role as “Mrs. Salt” in the Enterprise High School’s production of Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. Prior to that, she had starred in musical productions such as the Pied Piper, The Sound of Music, and Cinderella.

Katie loved music as well. She played piano, clarinet, oboe, and tenor saxophone. She had hoped to take up the guitar as well. Katie also loved to sing. She had a beautiful lyrical soprano voice. Before moving to Enterprise, she had been a member of the Acappella Choir at Alabama Christian Academy in Montgomery and a member of the Chilton County Civic Youth Choir. Her favorite hymn was “Sing and Be Happy.”

In addition to Drama, Band and Chorus, Katie was active in the French and Anchor Clubs at Enterprise High. She also excelled academically. She particularly enjoyed her math and science classes. She was selected to be included in Who’s Who Among America’s High School Students for 2006 and 2007, and had also been inducted into the National Society of High School Scholars.

Though modest, Katie had a great sense of style. While she usually opted for the “preppy” look complete with pearls, she often sported skater shoes and mismatched socks – her way of rebelling against the required uniform at Alabama Christian Academy! She also had quite a collection of purses. Always prepared, on any given day her purse contained a wallet, cell phone, camera, i-pod, brush, candy, gum, taco sauce packets, calculator, scissors, tape, glue stick, colored pencils, a Tide-To-Go Pen, sewing kit, first aid kit, a script, lint roller, floss, toothpaste, toothbrush, a multitude of chapsticks, and her collection of Chinese fortunes and movie ticket stubs. It’s no wonder her friends said she had a “Wal-mart” purse. You could find everything in it! But Katie wasn’t just prepared for this world. She was also prepared for the next. Before leaving Alabama Christian, she told one of her friends in Bible Class on a day when they were discussing death, “I’m not scared. I’m ready whenever He wants me.” And God wanted Katie on March 1, 2007. Katie’s favorite quote is from a book called A Return to Love by Marianne Williamson:

“Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightening about shrinking so that other people won’t feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory

of God that is within us. It is not just in some of us; it's in everyone. And as we let our light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others."

In the Gospel according to Matthew, Christ says, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in Heaven." Katie let her light shine. Because of that, all who knew and loved her and give thanks and rejoice that she has gone to Heaven. Katie Strunk – beloved daughter, sister, and friend.

Katie's symbol is a ladybug.

Mike & Maggie Peters' daughter, Meredith (11-19-76) died from bone cancer, 9-24-90.

Maggie wrote:

Dear Dinah,

Thank you for sending the precious card to us in honor of Meredith's death now 18 years ago. Wow. Time is weird, huh? In some ways it feels raw and like it was yesterday. In other ways, it feels like another lifetime ago. In other ways, it feels almost normal now. Funny how being an amputated family can ever feel "normal." I can imagine some feelings you have re: young Jim are similar to ours. I have treasured the e-newsletters and the mailings. Please keep us on. Thanks. Thank you. Of course this month has been tough...

Meredith's symbol is a cross with a heart on the top.

Mike & Lynette Lawson's daughter, Jessica (10-17-01) died from SIDS, 1-28-02.



ANGEL PENNIES

*Seven years ago God sent you to us, dear Angel
And then, too soon, he took you away,
We needed to know you were still with us
So for signs of your presence, we prayed.*

*On the second day after your death
The first sign you did send,
We found the Angel PENNY you sent
To help our hearts start to mend.*

*Each day we look for Angel PENNIES
That will let us know you are there,
Continually watching over each of us
Keeping us in your tender loving care.*

*Thank you for all the Angel PENNIES
We find in the most unexplainable place,
They are so important and precious to us
And always brings a smile to our face.*

Our angel PENNIES we will forever hold

*So very close to our heart,
Knowing each time we find one
You're telling us we will never be apart.*

*As we celebrate your 7th birthday
We send all our love to you,
Continue sending your Angel PENNIES
To let us know you love us, too.*

*We love you and miss you!
Mommy, Daddy, Brynna, Braden & Adam
Nana & Papa*

Written by Brenda Rogers
Jessica's Nana

Jessica's symbols are angels and pennies.

**Tom & Linda Harkness' daughter, Kristin (3-19-89) died from
accidental hanging, 2-22-08.**

The Harknesses remembered Kristin in a very special way:

Dear Family and Friends,

Welcome to the Team Kristin fundraising page!

We will be joining thousands of people nationwide this fall to walk in one of the 2008 Out of the Darkness Community Walks, which benefit the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP). The AFSP is at the forefront of research, education and prevention initiatives designed to reduce the number of lives that are lost to suicide. Every 16 minutes a person dies by suicide, ending more than 31,000 lives a year in the U.S. (over one million worldwide). Suicide is also the third leading cause of death among teens and young adults.

As many of you know, Kristin died on February 22nd 2008 after a night of binge drinking with friends during her freshman year at college. While we still don't believe she meant to take her own life that night, we have formed Team Kristin to remember Kristin and to help increase awareness about substance abuse and suicide prevention so that hopefully others will be saved from this tragic fate.

We walk so that no other parent or sibling is left to ask themselves what more they could have done to save their child, brother, or sister. We walk so that no other parent must endure the pain of losing a child in this manner. We walk to remember Kristin and to celebrate the love, laughter and fun-loving spirit she shared with family and friends during her short life. We walk so that other children will continue to live secure in knowing they don't have to die to be free.

Any help you can give to Team Kristin will be most appreciated. Just keeping Kristin and our family in your thoughts and prayers as we walk would be great; and telling others about the walk and spreading the word about the AFSP mission will help immeasurably. If you can actually join us the day of the walk at Burke Lake, it would be wonderful. And, if you care to donate to the AFSP cause by helping us reach our fundraising goal, please continue reading below.

Your contributions will help the work of AFSP, and all donations are 100% tax deductible. Donating online is safe and easy! To make a donation online, please use the Participant/Team Search Tool on the left side of this page to find Team Kristin. Then select the name of one of our team members and click the "Support Me" button on their fundraising page. Donations can only be made to individuals, but the total each participant raises is added toward our team goal.

Thank you for visiting the Team Kristin fundraising page, and for keeping Kristin in your thoughts and prayers.

The Harkness Family

Eric, Jessica, 'Kristin' Linda, and Tom

This was sent by the family after the walk:

Team Kristin Members,

To all of you who joined us for the walk (there were at least 60 of you), joined us in spirit, and/or donated so generously to AFSP in support of Team Kristin -- Thank you from the bottom of our hearts!

It was a beautiful day, a wonderful spot for a walk through the woods, and a great group of friends to share the morning and Kristin's memory with. To top it all off, Team Kristin raised nearly \$6,000 to support the AFSP's cause. We are truly blessed to have such loving and supportive friends and family.



This is a picture of the team. The t-shirts had a picture of Kristin with a daisy in her hair.

Kristin's symbols are daisies and "mittins" who was Kristin's stuffed cat.

Al & Rhonda Pearce's son, Brandon (6-17-91) completed suicide, 6-6-07.

Al and Rhonda came to see the Space Between Breaths Documentary at Hilton Head Island.

Rhonda sent these pictures and wrote:

These 2 pictures were taken off the back of the Smiths' boat on the way back to Hilton Head. The 2nd was taken right after the first. Notice in



the first one the 2 circles of light following the boat...sun wasn't even out. Maybe we had visitors with us that day...Rhonda

Hi Dinah,

Sorry it has taken me so long to get back to this. I have been crazy busy at work. I am kind of having a tough time this weekend so this is probably a good time to do this.

It is hard for me to think of what to say when telling you about Brandon, how does one sum that up in an email? But I will try. I am missing him so much today so I think a good thing to do would be to tell you what I miss most.

Brandon had the most beautiful smile you ever want to see. He was an intense person and did not smile as much as some but when he did he absolutely lit up a room. He had a wicked sense of humor, at times it was of great annoyance to me but how I miss it now. He was my first born and with that we had a connection that you only get with your first born. I loved him fiercely even though at times he could bring out the worst in me. He had a temper and always knew just what button to push in me. Sometimes I think he did it for fun. He was a very intelligent boy always testing at the top of his class for IQ. He did not always apply himself at school however and his grades did not reflect his intelligence most of the time. He was ADHD so this made it difficult for him to stay organized and on task.

He had his father's talent for music. He played the bass guitar and had a wonderful ear. This was always when he was his most happy. He and his cousin were in a band together and when he played I think he was his most happy. Brandon and I had a "special" bond with music in that we both loved Aerosmith. I took him to his first rock concert, an Aerosmith concert, and it was one of the best times we ever had together. I think this is why he sends me guitar pics as his sign to me. Shortly after Brandon passed

I had to go on a business trip. It bothered me that he would not be home to send me off or greet me when I came home. Ironically I went to Boston which is Aerosmith's hometown. On the way home as I was going through security, I looked down at my feet and there lay a beautiful blue pic. It was fancier than most I have ever seen. I didn't think too much about it but did pick it up and put it in my pocket. Recently I was cleaning out the basement as we had been hit by the floods. I had an old dresser I used to store my sewing supplies. In the bottom drawer I found a pic that had the corner chipped off. Since I had been thinking of Brandon, I felt it was his way of saying hi. I put it in my pocket and moved on. The next day I was picking up the kitchen and happened to look out on our deck and there in the middle of the table was the pic with the corner chipped off. I asked my family if anyone had put it there and they said they had not. I picked it up and put it in my pocket. That night I took it out of my pocket and put in on my vanity in the bathroom. The next day I was cleaning again and walked into my bedroom and there sat the pic on my nightstand, again everyone said they had not put it there. I often find pics around the house as my husband also plays the guitar so I think this was Brandon's way of telling me that this pic finding was different!

He was intensely loyal to his friends and when he died there was an enormous turnout at the visitation. His friends to this day email me and tell me how much they miss him. It seemed he always would find the kids that had problems and he would always have a phone attached to his ear listening and trying to help them with their problems. This was not necessarily good for him as he often took their problems as his own. I know that it weighed on him.

He had a great appetite and was the best eater out of my children. I so miss cooking for him as he always appreciated everything I made for him. I miss his scent, his smile, his voice, his sense of humor and I even miss arguing with him.



Brandon's symbol is a guitar pic.

**John & Betty Cassidy's son, Paul (6-23-67) was killed in Iraq,
7-12-03.**

Betty writes about Paul:

Our son was the 23rd person killed in the war in Iraq. He was killed July 12, 2003, but the military said he had committed suicide! He was killed in Babylon where the world began.

We knew that was a lie because he had been married for ten years and they had finally had a baby who was only six months old when he left for Iraq. That's the last thing he would have done!

He was hailed by all of his co-workers who didn't know how they would get along without Paul.

His name is Major Paul Justin Cassidy.

This was his fourth tour of duty out of the country. He was in Civil Affairs in the Army Reserves and was one of only three Civil Affairs groups that was qualified in the U.S. The others didn't have their knowledge.

He was in Desert Storm and helped to erect tents on the Turkey-Iraqi border for the Kurds when they were being persecuted. Our oldest daughter was with him there. Her name is Patricia Jane Cassidy, and when she was in Kuwait they cleaned a hospital that was filthy. After they washed everything down they took the water out and gave it to the cows that were emaciated. She was on ABC and I called them to get a tape of her but it cost \$84.00 at that time so I couldn't buy it.

After Desert Storm he went to Bosnia and Kosovo. He was 36 when he was killed.

They sent home a clipping from a newspaper that said when soldiers were stranded in the desert and without water a wind came along and uncovered a brand new water well with red and green pipes! Only God could have done that!

It is pretty hard to look at TV and see the sacrifice our son gave be belittled by the so-called Americans in Congress and on the news.

We live in Arizona but have two children still living in Michigan.

Betty Cassidy

Marty & Datha Whitely's son, Dylan (4-24-87) died, 11-15-07.

I lost my son, Dylan Thomas Whitely November 15, 2007 at the age of 21. I miss him with my entire body, heart and soul. There is not a day that goes by that I don't think and cry over the worst loss any parent can endure.

My son Dylan Thomas Whitely was born April 24, 1987, he was 2 weeks past due and was stubborn ever since. He had the most beautiful blue eyes that always seemed to smile when he looked at me. Dylan loved penguins, not sure why, but he collected them and made sure to always visit the penguin exhibit at every zoo he went to. During his high school years his friends nicknamed him penguin.

*God Bless,
Datha*



I asked Datha if I could use her email in the newsletter and also Dylan's cause of death:

I would be honored if you used what I wrote about Dylan in the newsletter. The final death certificate said accidental overdose. Dylan was a good son, he never raised his voice to me or spoke any foul language in front of me. Dylan had surgery on his groin area at the end of September to remove some dead tissue the doctors believe was caused by an ingrown hair. Then in early October Dylan was diagnosed with severe sleep apnea. I believe the sleep apnea was the actual cause of death because the coroner said there wasn't enough drugs in his system that would have caused death and his heart gave out.

Love and Hugs to you also.

Datha

Dylan's symbol is a penguin.

Hamp & Saralyn Smith's son, Robbie (9-8-83) died from a brain tumor, 3-15-00.

Saralyn is an accomplished poetry writer:

I have created a new page which will serve as the "Home Page" for my poetry pages, and I will list and link each new page here as I create them.

<http://www.angelrob.com/saralyn/saralyn.html>

The page I did for my unicorn poem is listed there, as is a new page I just completed, with "Three Songs for October"---

<http://www.angelrob.com/October/October.html>

<http://www.angelrob.com/November/November.html>

I hope you will enjoy the poems I am sharing. Some of them were written quite a few years ago!

Love and hugs to all,

Saralyn

Robbie's web site is <http://robbiesmith.com>

Robbie's symbol is a train.

Cecil & Jolene Hutchinson's daughter, Anne Haake (10-10-67) and their grandson, Paxston (5-24-96) were killed in an auto accident, 6-27-96.

Jolene received a sign from Anne on her birthday:

Dear Dinah,

As you know, yesterday was Anne's birthday and I received a sign from her late yesterday afternoon.

Friends had asked me to meet them at Cracker Barrel for dinner. As I was driving west toward Cracker Barrel, there was about 1/3 of a rainbow—we had had no rain. I called our friends immediately to tell them to look at the sky, and were both glad I received a sign from Anne. (Cecil is in Hershey, PA at an A-model meet.) This is just cool! Don't you love it?

Hugs,

Jolene

Anne's symbols are a collie dog and mother & child. Paxston's symbol is a teddy bear.

Huw & Jean Powell's son, Ian (5-27-98) died, 10-1-02.

Jean wrote about the memorial for Ian:

Dear Dinah,

Thank you so much for the card every year. It is a nice blessing on a very hard day and week, month, for that matter.

I don't know how you do it—a card to everyone—to take the time means so much, because you truly understand the pain that goes with the words, thoughts, person.

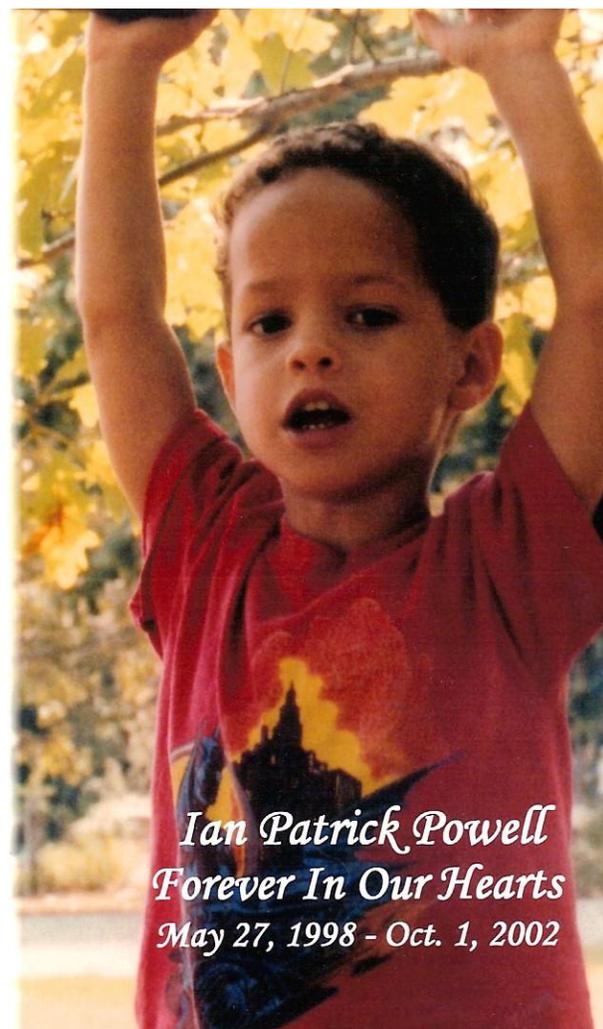
I felt this year was especially hard. Not sure why, but it was!

I am working full time now so I don't have the time to myself any more. In one way it is good, keeping very busy, the next, I dread it, but I need to work.

This picture is one that we handed out to all who were with us when we did the playground dedication for Ian. They named our local playground after him. We did a beautiful flower bed and plaque.

A big thank you for holding Ian and us in your hearts and arms.

*Love,
Jean*



Ian's symbols are a butterfly and an eagle.

Ann Sorbara's daughter, Laura Kimble (11-5-68) died from complications of non-malignant brain tumor surgery, 10-19-02.

Ann is interested in writing for Dr. Horsely in the future:

Dinah, thank you so much for your very kind heart in keeping this journey as easy as possible for everyone. God sure must have chosen you for

this. Also, let me thank you from the bottom of my heart for your very lovely and compassionate care for my Laura's anniversary date of October 19th. It was a very hard day, but then, every day is. Thank you Lord for people like Dinah.

May you be blessed dear one.

Love

Ann

What a wonderful fellowship this all is. I appreciate it so much. thank you again for everything. I hope I can fit some time into my very busy schedule to do something with this web site below. I'd love to write something.

Laura's symbol is a lily.

Shirley Baer's daughter, Laurie (10-31-76) died during corrective heart surgery, 12-4-92.

I have finally finished Laurie's 32nd birthday page with the help of Wanda Barton who made the website, angel graphic with Jesus, and helped me learn a little html at the same time....And poems written by Doyle Alldredge, Linda Henry and D.J. French. Here are the links:

<http://lauriebaer.com/32bd/32bd.html>

and the gifts page is

<http://lauriebaer.com/32gifts/32gifts.html>

or you can just use the next button on her birthday page....

*I want to thank everyone for the gifts sent for her birthday in Heaven.
Shirley, Angel Laurie's Mommy
"If love could cure, she never would have died"*

<http://lauriebaer.com>

<http://www.virtual->

[memorials.com/main.php?action=view&mem_id=5458&page_no=1](http://www.virtual-memorials.com/main.php?action=view&mem_id=5458&page_no=1)

<http://nshrine.com/shrine/LaurieMichelleBaer>

<http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=7471860>

Laurie's symbol is a Unicorn.

Dickie & Beverly Baker's son, Harlen (4-13-82) died from an accidental shooting, 7-1-08.

Beverly wrote this to Harlen on his web site:

I can only imagine when I walk beside of you and Jesus in HEAVEN one day. The pain here without you is so much. It has been just over 100 days since you left us and everyday seems like the very day. I miss your voice, your hugs, your smell and everything else about you. If only I had known that GOD was taking you home to live with Him, I would have asked to take your place. I wanted you to be able to show your girls how to survive and become all they can be. But I know in my heart that you are with Him because you are such a GREAT PERSON. GOD only takes the young so unexpectedly when they have fulfilled their purpose He sent them here to carry out on earth. All the hearts and souls that you touched prove to us all that you did a GREAT JOB at fulfilling His purpose for you.

I love you son and miss you so much! Our mother/son bond will never be broken, because I will be there with you in HEAVEN one day.

As we always said each time we spoke to each other and as we did that morning - I LOVE YOU!

MOM

www.myspace.com/rip_harlen

I hope you will visit Harlen's web site and see his beautiful twin babies.

I asked Beverly how she selected Harlen's symbols. This was her response:

He loved to hunt and deer hunting was his favorite. The deer have continued to come to his house after his death and to my parents who live just up the road. As you can tell, he loved the outdoors.

On the day of his funeral, I worried it would rain and my sister-in-law told me not to worry about it. Rain meant God was washing his footprints away and he was in Heaven. It was a beautiful day, even as we headed to

the cemetery. About half way there it began to sprinkle a small amount. When we arrived and after the Pastor gave his farewell sayings and the "Child On Loan" poem, the sprinkle stopped, the sun came out and we went back to the church to eat. After we ate, our friends in our town split us up into different cars to bring us home and as we stopped at the interstate red light, in the sky was the most beautiful rainbow. (Our friends said, that's your sign, footprints washed away and a rainbow to let you know he made it over the RAINBOW BRIDGE.) We know that is all true.

The Butterfly is because that afternoon or the next day, a butterfly landed on my husband and refused to get off. It stayed no matter what he did. We know that was ADC.

Yes, you may use his website and anything off of it for the newsletter. He is a WONDERFUL SON AND PERSON and as you can see, everyone misses him dearly.

*Thanks so much for taking such an interest in his memory and in him.
Thoughts and Prayers,
Beverly*

Yes, you may use all of it. I want others to know that they are not crazy. ADC signs are true and believing them is what gets you through the rest of your life. There were other signs that I can share with you if you like.

One of those that is most dear to my heart is the fact:

All through my life, my grandfather had a distinct smell to his body and as I grew older and came across hard times in my life, I always could smell him. I knew that meant that he was with me. As our son began his early adult years, he took on that smell and I would always say to my husband and family: Why does he have that same smell and wonder on and on about it. The day our son died, in the emergency room, I smelled that smell and no one else could. I know that smell was my grandfather letting me know that he was taking him to Heaven with him. I also know that all those years when my son took on my grandfather's smell, it was really my grandfather letting me know that he was coming to get my son and I did not have to worry. Now that they are both gone, the smell has not come back and they were the only two of my loved ones that I have ever smelled that distinct smell on.

I know they are both in Heaven together waiting on the rest of our family with my grandmother by their side. He now lays in rest by this grandfather and grandmother.

Harlen's symbols are a deer, butterfly and rainbow.

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

Colette wrote this poem for the 10th anniversary of Colette's death:

*10 years – a decade – a lifetime away
Yet not for a moment forgotten for a day!
Unprepared were we for such unwanted change
In the life that was ours,
As we witnessed your pain!*

*Melanoma a disease of which few ever speak
An illness spreading quickly, leaving strong, so very weak
It attacked you swiftly, exploded within
While no hope would be yours, you never did complain*

*Altering crisis appeared, yet faced firmly we know
Through tranquility within, you confronted unwelcome foe;
Some quietly in stride, others handled with haste
All responded in ways only family sensed how
How gallantly you taught us to live for the now!*

*Through times of turmoil, still your laughter presented
An incredible strength, for you in fact, became mentor!
I recall quiet words on that still August morn "Why me"
Never spoken though your heart it was torn;*

*As you pondered the visit of a Priest, family friend
So much to be said, to prepare for the end
"When I die, I'll be fine, but you'll all be in trouble"
"We should meet as a family when Emmet arrives."*

*How wise were your words as you counseled us so
Such a meeting was necessary, for we knew you'd soon go
The **reality** was somber as we spoke from our soul*

Each Grateful today remembering all that was told.

*Tears shed freely, and silently, as quietly you led
Though impending separation “I’m not afraid,” you said!
“I just don’t want to leave my family” your spoken regret we know
Your Godfather speaks with feeling – and tells you it’s not so*

*“You never will leave me” “You will always be right here”
How true those spoken words, as they ring within our ears
You thus set the tone for days that remained
You freed us to speak when hearts cried out no!
Allowing solitude to silence, times filled with woe!*

*You planned with perception, memories deeply held,
Hence
Your birthday celebrated devoid of pretense
All knew it was only a matter of time
Each embraced every moment of the weekend, as mine*

*Now accepting the truth, your destiny without doubt
Your mission accomplished – insight ours to live out
The gift of your wisdom not marred by our tears
Knowing full well on this journey, you’re near*

*A strong presence we feel as our guiding light!!
Your spirit is with us though not within sight
Precious days shared together, each by the other’s side –
We gave to one another – feelings never, did you hide*

*A love freely flowed, without hesitation or qualm
A hymn to the silent, a grace ours alone!
Inadequately expressed in any phrase or rhythm
The mystery of your peace filled that special time.*

*There is no doubt you guide us, in so many different ways
We feel your spirit present as we face the empty days
Acknowledging your mission done, the many lives you touched
Enriching all you chance to meet, profoundly now at
Life’s dusk
Colette our precious angel, we’ve learned what matters – truth!*

*The treasure of our family,
And the bond that flows from you.*

I asked Colette if I could print her poem in the newsletter, and also asked how their big event went:

Dearest Dinah:

It was wonderful - with 180 actually attending. Everyone said it was the best yet. I do not plan on another one - it is just too overwhelming - My family is insisting I slow down??? I am going to concentrate on Corporate support this year.

If we can generate a few grants and great interest in the walk - it may be easier. As always it is in the Lord's Hands with our angels as our special advocates.

Talk about a raffle being "fixed" -- our Grand prize a Home Entertainment Center with a 45 inch TV was won by Colette's best friend since they were 8 y/o through college and adulthood. She and another friend were the only ones she would allow to visit in hospital outside of the family.

First Prize - Apple Ipod - a friend of our eldest son who always makes us laugh.

2nd Magellan GPS System - insurance agent friend who always gives CCMAC a break re 100,000 insurance required for the walk.

3rd Digital Camera husband of a young woman who grew up across the street from us and is a friend of Mary, our daughter.

I think Colette (their daughter) worked overtime!! We had several legislators in attendance with press etc. which is always good - it helps to get the message out.

Hugs to you both and love to Rosemary - while we are miles apart - how well we truly know one another!

Colette

The Coyne family has done so much in memory of Colette. I hope you will look at their web site and become involved. www.ccmac.org

Colette's symbol is a sunflower.

**Mike & Kathi Mullens' son, Jeffrey (9-7-70) drowned, 8-17-97.
Their granddaughter, Courtney (12-12-01) died from heart
failure, 12-22-01.**

Kathi (also known as the clogging granny) sent this email:

I know you want to hear about this story. On our way home from Gatlinburg we stopped at the commons and visited our kids. We had our 3rd granddaughter with us. She had never seen Jeffrey & Courtney (her sister) bricks. While we were looking at the bricks she found a penny, and of course we all know who sent that penny. So I explained to her about pennies from heaven and that her sister had sent a very special gift to her.

And before you ask, we were there today (Sunday) around ten and knew you were at church so we didn't stop by the house, but we are sorry we missed you, a good hug always feels good.

Forever Jeffrey's Mom & Courtney's Granny

Mike & Kathi

Butterfly Kisses & Happy Trails

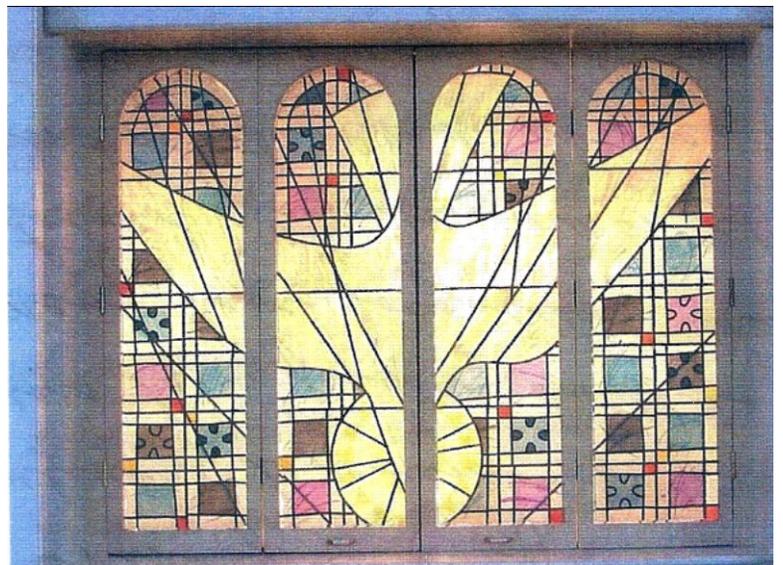
**Jeffrey's symbols are a butterfly and the American flag.
Courtney's symbol is an angel.**

**Linda Ledford's son, Joey, III (2-20-76) was killed in an auto
accident, 10-6-95.**

Linda sent this picture of the window in memory of Joey:

Dear Dinah,

Thank you so very much for continuing to remember Joey. Thirteen years have passed and so many have forgotten. The stained glass window on the front of this card is located in the sanctuary of our church in memory of Joey.



The last 3 years have brought many changes. Both my husband and brother died from cancer. I sold the house that we had lived in for 34 years and moved. My younger daughter is engaged to be married.

Thank you again for the wonderful work that you do.

*Love,
Linda*

I asked her if she had designed the window:

Dear Dinah,

I would be glad for you to share the picture of the stained glass window in the newsletter. The window is located in the sanctuary of First Christian Church in Hopkinsville. It was designed and made by an artist in Cadiz, Kentucky. I do not remember his name. We donated the funds to pay for the window in Joey's memory, and the artist worked with several church members to create the design.

Thank you for all you do in memory of our children and for caring about all of us who continue the journey.

*Love,
Linda*

Joey's symbol is a golf club.

Richard & Molly Gehring's son, Daniel (9-12-82) died from positional suffocation, 8-26-07.

Molly wrote this poem:

For me when I lost my son.....

*It is easier to face someone heartless
and unknown
without compassion
than to feel the warmth of love
in the stark reality of loss.*

*To allow the warmth is to begin the
process, the feeling*

*of the stone cold
loss of my child.
that is something I was not ready for*

*I had to leave for a while
in mind
body and
spirit
as a choice to
protect myself;
Not
hurt you
or, abandon you.
Without explanation.*

*Who can say
what I would choose
in the face of loss?
Or another?
I could not, would not
presume an answer;
ever again.....*

I asked her if she wrote this poem, and her response was:

Dear Dinah,

Yes I wrote this. It is in response to some people whom I just "cut out" of my life when Daniel died because the sadness on their face and the loving warmth they offered paralyzed me with grief. Well.....I could not have that. Specifically this was for my chiropractor whom I love very much and is so kind and loving towards me. It was hard to explain, so I wrote this to him last week upon my return to him. Thank you for the compliment.

*Love,
Molly*

Daniel's symbol is Eeyore holding a daisy.

Wendell & Pat Root's daughter, Bessie (12-28-79) died in an auto accident, 10-29-94. Their son, Randall (8-22-70) died from a drug overdose, 1-17-04.

I had lost Pat's address in 1993, but now have her new address and had sent a card to them on Bessie's angel date. I received the following email from Pat:

Dear Dinah,

It was good to hear from you. A lot has happened since saw I you last. I lost my 34 year old son to a drug overdose. I found him on Jan 17 2004 in his room at our home. Now I've lost them both. He fought the disease of addiction for years, unsuccessfully. But, I know he is far better off, because he was a child of God. He is with his sister now, and I know they are so happy. I know the Lord has some reason for taking my children, and I just have to accept that, and I have. His death was hard, but not as hard as Bessie's. If you've lost one, you grieve so hard, that there's no grief left. Not that I loved him any less, probably more since he was my first and more dependent on me. But even through my grief I can praise God and thank Him for His many blessings. Life has changed so much for me and my husband, but we're trying to make the best of it.

My only sister is battling brain cancer, she's had for 4 years, which started from cancer of the breast. But I think she's about to lose the battle, so please remember her in your prayers. Dianne Williams. She's only 59, and we're so close. I know it will be so hard, but then again I know since I've lost 2 children, I can go through anything. Please remember me and my family.

Sincerely

Pat Root

I asked Pat about a symbol for Randall:

I have decided that it is the French symbol, fleur-de-lis that's used on a lot of furniture. He loved antiques and he loved that little design on anything. I had it put on his headstone.

Thanks Pat

Bessie's symbols are two hearts & balloons. Randall's is a fleur-de-lis.

Paul & Claudia Grammatico's son, Paul (4-20-73) was killed by a drunk driver, 5-16-99.

Here is an article written by Corky Siemaszko which appeared in the Daily News on November 1, 2008, about the Grammaticos' dog. The Grammaticos were just honored by the New York Organ Donor Network 30th Anniversary Gala with the Donor Family Leadership Award.

You will enjoy reading this articles. Permission was granted on the condition that the text is accompanied by the following credit: "New York Daily News, L.P.; reproduced with permission."



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Paul's symbol is a butterfly.

Woody & Donna Herndon's son, Roger (6-25-70) was killed in a plane crash at West Point, 8-2-91.

Donna received a license plate as a gold star mother. The following are two articles written about the event:

LANDINI WRIGHT

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MURRAY, Ky. — Seventeen years have passed since Cadet Roger Herndon died in an airplane crash while training at the U.S. Military Academy.

On Monday, his mother, Donna Herndon, choked back tears as she accepted the Gold Star Mother license plate from Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Les Beavers, commissioner of the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs.

"This is bittersweet," Herndon said, clutching the red, white and blue license plate and noting that other mothers in the crowd had lost children.

"I'm so thankful for having had Roger. If the good Lord had said that you can have him for 21 years or not at all, I would have said 21 years."

In those 21 years, Roger Herndon brought joy not only to his parents but to his classmates at West Point. Beavers, also a West Point graduate, noted the letters the family received after Herndon's death that told of his infectious smile and encouraging words at the right moment.

Herndon took photographs for the Howitzer, the school yearbook, and excelled in the classroom, Beavers said.

"Roger is the epitome of a short life lived well," Beavers said. "I can't understand why lives are cut short for some. The life he had was so precious."

Donna Herndon said her son died doing what he loved best: flying. He studied aerospace engineering at West Point.

Roger Herndon died on Aug. 2, 1991.

The family donated his West Point ring back to the school where it now rests alongside the rings of President Dwight D. Eisenhower and retired Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf.

Since the inception of the Gold Star Mother license plate in 2006, Kentucky has presented more than 40 personalized plates to mothers of fallen soldiers. The mothers work with the state on the wording.

Herndon's plate reads "Rog H" in memory of her son.

The state also recently began the Gold Star Spouse license plate program.

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By GREG TRAVIS

The Murray Ledger & Times



Donna Herndon was recognized Monday afternoon with a 'Gold Star Mother' license plate from the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs.

The presentation came 17 years after her son Roger A. Herndon's death in military service. The Gold Star Mother license plate, which reads 'Rog H,' honors her son.

Roger Herndon died in a plane crash Aug. 2, 1991, while a cadet at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.

"This is bittersweet," Donna Herndon said, after accepting the license plate from Brig. Gen. Les Beavers, U.S. Army (Ret.), who is commissioner of the Department of Veterans Affairs and also a West Point graduate.

"There are several here with children who can understand. I'm just so thankful we had him (Roger) for 29 years," she remarked. "If the Good Lord had said we could only have him for 21 years, I'd have said 21 years."

She told the crowd that her son was a "truly special young man - as are all men and women who have served. Death in the service is an occupational hazard. Our freedom is directly attributed to those who are willing to give their lives."

"Roger died doing what he loved. He packed a lot of living in a short time. His life continues to inspire me. It inspires me everyday," she commented.

She told her group, "There's no place like Murray, Ky.," and she explained how her family had received "so much support" from the community.

"Roger was obviously an incredible loss to us. It's only been with God's help and the hands of Christians in this community..." she emotionally commented. "We are just so thankful."

Beavers presented the personalized plate to Mrs. Herndon as she reached out with an emotional hug - the large crowd of friends and supporters looking on.

In making his presentation, Beavers noted that Roger Herndon had a "brilliant and dynamic personality." He was a "smart and talented individual."

Roger Herndon was studying aerospace engineering and served as photographer for the West Point yearbook "The Howitzer."

"He left a legacy in his photographs," Beavers stated. "His classmates will always remember him. He is the epitome of a short life lived well."

We lost a young man whose life was precious."

Beavers said Roger Herndon stood strong before he ever got to West Point - a result of his parents.

Roger Herndon would have graduated with the class of 1992. His graduation ring was donated back to West Point by his mother and father. The ring was placed alongside those of former President Dwight D. Eisenhower and retired Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf, Beavers reported.

“West Pointers are bound together to all graduates through academics, leadership development, physical training and a code of ethics. ‘Duty - Honor - Country’ was a motto Roger was living under,” Beavers said, as he interjected comments from a classmate who wrote how Roger’s smile “would change your day.”

The presentation ceremony took place Monday, Nov. 10, 2008, in the Blackburn Science Building on Murray State University’s campus.

Donna Herndon had requested the ceremony take place at Murray State’s ROTC program. She is a former staff member of MSU, and her husband and Roger’s father, Maj. Clarence W. (Woody) Herndon, U.S. Army (Ret.), is a former cadet battalion commander of MSU ROTC. He served in the Army as an armor officer, was a helicopter pilot and Vietnam veteran.

In April 2006, Kentucky began issuing personalized license plates to Gold Star Mothers, whose children have died in military service. To date, Kentucky has presented more than 40 of the special plates to such mothers.

Beavers noted that the Veterans Department has also implemented a Gold Star Spouse license plate program to go along with its Gold Star Mother program.

Donna Herndon has been extremely involved in the community over the years, serving in an assortment of roles. From the school system, to the Santa Project to CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates of Calloway County), Herndon has tediously worked to help others.

Greg Travis

gtravis@murrayledger.com

Roger’s symbol is a monarch butterfly.

TO: God.com

Dear Lord,

*Every single evening
As I'm lying here in bed,
This tiny little Prayer
Keeps running through my head:*

*God bless all my family
Wherever they may be,
Keep them warm
and safe from harm
For they're so close to me.*

*And God, there is one more thing
I wish that you could do;
Hope you don't mind me asking,
Please bless my computer too.*

*Now I know that it's unusual
To Bless a motherboard,
But listen just a second
While I explain it to you, Lord.*

*You see, that little metal box
Holds more than odds and ends;
Inside those small compartments
Rest so many of my friends.*

*I know so much about them
By the kindness that they give,
And this little scrap of metal
Takes me in to where they live.*

*By faith is how I know them
Much the same as you.*

*We share in what life brings us
And from that our friendships grew.*

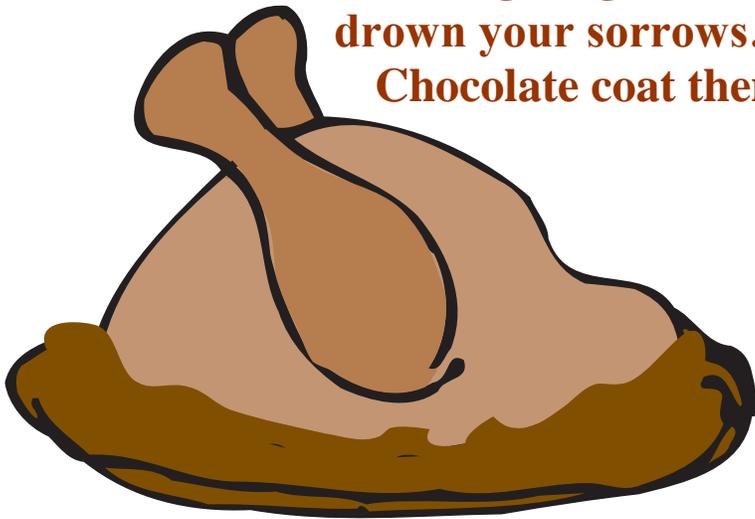
*Please take an extra minute
From your duties up above,
To bless those in my address book
That's filled with so much love.*

*Wherever else this prayer may reach
To each and every friend,
Bless each e-mail inbox
And each person who hits 'send'.*

*When you update your Heavenly list
On your own Great CD-ROM,
Bless everyone who says this prayer
Sent up to GOD.com*

Amen

**This Thanksgiving season, it is not necessary to
drown your sorrows...
Chocolate coat them instead.**



My email address is:
dinah@ucumberlands.edu

The web site's address is <http://www.ucumberlands.edu/lamentations/>