

# LAMENTATIONS

Issue 15

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

December, 1993



December is a month most of us would like to see removed from our life's calendar, but let us observe it (since we have to anyway).

December is a month in which many birds have flown south for the winter and when many animals hibernate. *Hibernation* is defined as a "state of deep sleep; to be or remain inactive." An animal that is hibernating needs little energy to stay alive and can live off fat stored in its body. Thus, hibernating animals can more easily survive cold winters when food is scarce.

Our minds are in a state of hibernation during the first stages of grief. We are "living off the fat"--the thought that maybe the death of our loved one is just a bad dream. Reality is "scarce" at this stage of our grief it is much easier to hibernate or be dormant than it is to be "active," and grieve.

There are, however, many animals such as mink, beavers, foxes, etc. who grow beautiful coats and "live" in the cold weather. They prepare themselves for the cold weather by growing warm coats and "gathering" food--knowing they will need it later. We can do that with our different stages of grief. Read all you can about grief so you will be armed for that "winter" of grief. Knowledge is your protective coat.

December 15, 1791, the first 10 amendments to the Constitution were ratified. This document describes our fundamental rights and liberties, and forbids the government from violating these rights. In June Kolfs book, *Reaching Out. . . How Can I Help? . . . To Someone Who Is Grieving*, she lists the **Bill of Rights for the Bereaved**, They are:

- 1 - Do not make me do anything I do not wish to do
- 2- Let me cry
- 3- Allow me to talk about the deceased
- 4- Do not force me to make quick decisions
- 5- Let me act strange sometimes
- 6- Let me see that you are grieving too
- 7 - When I am angry, do not discount it
- 8- Do not speak to me in platitudes
- 9- Listen to me, please!
- 10- Forgive me my trespasses, my rudeness, and my thoughtlessness

*Christmas* is a Christian holiday that celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ. The exact date of Christ's birth is unknown, however, most celebrate on December 25. November 28 is the beginning of the *Advent* season. *Advent* is a four week period in which Christians prepare for Christmas. The word *advent* means a coming or arrival, especially of something infrequent or unusually important. May this Christmas season be an advent for you and your family. Perhaps you can think of something that will make it an advent for you.

Christmas is also observed by preparing special foods, decorating homes with greenery, and gift giving.

Green and red are the traditional colors of Christmas. Green represents the continuance of life through the winter and the Christian belief in eternal life through Christ. Red symbolizes the blood that Jesus shed at His Crucifixion. The wreath symbolizes the strength of life overcoming the forces of winter. Wreaths were used in ancient Rome as a sign of celebration and victory. I hope you will become a wreath with your grief.



A star is placed at the top of many Christmas trees to represent the star that led the Wise Men to the stable in Bethlehem where Jesus was born. Perhaps we can use a star somewhere in our Christmas decorating to remind us that we, too, can be Wise Men and follow that star to a place of rebirth. Look for your



S.U.C.C.E.S.S.(es) with your grief this Christmas rather than with your failures and heartaches. You know them only too well. As you look toward the new year, may



you "ring it in" with a hope for the future. A future of peace, happiness, and joy!! We can make it!!

## Grief Grafts

Chris Barker gave me some *Jolly Ranchers* candy and wrote: "Remembering the Christmas tree you decorated last year in memory of Young Jim, last week I decorated a wreath in memory of Jason's life. *Jolly Ranchers* were a favorite of Jason's so I put many of them on to represent the jewels in his crown, now." Jason's symbol is a butterfly.



Luther and Rosemary Smith's cousin, who is a member of the rock band "*Gone Dogs*," had a dance after a football game at McCallie's school where their two sons Drew and Jeremiah were students. The proceeds went to the scholarship fund in their names. Their symbol is also a butterfly.



Clark, the 16-year-old son of Doug and Kathy Elliott, was remembered with these beautiful poems:

### Clark Douglas Elliott 1977-1993

*The greatest kid we ever knew  
Began each day bright and new  
One of a kind that's for sure  
Glowing, laughing and very mature.*

*Part of our family you became  
Like a brother, a son, our love was the same  
You lit up each one of our lives  
With your glowing face and glittering eyes.*

*Worked so hard to make us all proud  
No matter the stress, a frown not allowed  
This miniature chef took the kitchen by storm  
With a leftover hug so gentle and warm.*

*A restaurant so large and now so empty  
How big the difference a kid so friendly  
In our hearts there'll always be room  
For the cutest chef who hated the broom.*

*We love this kid and his family dear  
Our strength and love and support are here  
Eternity is here our darling Clark  
The time has come for your rose garden work.  
Melissa Hamilton*

*In memory of Clark Douglas Elliott by his family at Line's (The family's restaurant)*

### Memory Making

*Awakening each morn, I will usually say:  
"I have to do this or that on this day."  
Perhaps it would be much better for me to ask:  
"What new memories will I make with each task?"  
For when I am gone, when I'm here no more,  
All that is left is what's gone on before.*

*A new day is God's gift to us of his trust,  
I can spend it on happiness or making a fuss,  
Will I make my choices in too much haste,  
Will I choose wisely or opportunities waste?  
Will I reach out, or will I withdraw?  
Will I say, "I love you," or nothing at all?*

*Now I will choose much more carefully,  
Between what is important and what's vanity.  
With new understanding of life, time, and need  
It's myself I'm creating with each daily deed.  
For those who remain, they strongly will lean  
On the gifts of memories and what they can glean.*

*Whose comfort is greater, a mother grieving her newborn son,  
Or the mother who just lost her only teenage one?  
My understanding say's' the latter, because she can cling  
To the memory of his laughter, it makes her heart sing.  
She can rejoice in the words', "He was such a neat boy."  
To all those who knew him he brought such joy!  
For surely the lesson here to be heeded,  
Is one for my life that is greatly needed.  
Each day is meant for special attention  
To be given to loving, and outward reflection.  
Memory making must be the goal of the living,  
For it is the gift that keeps on giving.  
Aunt Linda (Bodine)*

*Dedicated to my precious nephew, Clark, those special life "made many memories" which have brought comfort through laughter and tears to those of us who greatly miss him,*

Clark's symbols are a



Clyde, the 10-year-old son of Donna Carr, was eulogized with this loving poem:

### Little Guy

*For a short time we had him,  
And now he is gone  
But the joy he gave us all in knowing him  
Was worth it all.*

*To see him playing in the street  
And watching his smiling face  
And the Love he had in his heart,  
These things will never be forgotten.  
His memory will live on inside us forever.*

*The only regrets were watching him go  
through the pain and discomfort no child  
should ever have to Face.  
But "Little Guy" was brave and stronger  
than most adults 3 or 4 times his age.*

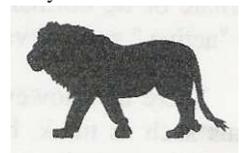
*Through him God taught us all  
Never to take life for granted.  
We have but a short while to be here.  
We should use that time wisely.  
We should cherish each and every moment.  
For tomorrow is promised to No-One.*

*God has a plan for all of us  
And he knows what his is doing at all times,  
Even though it's hard for us to understand at times.  
It is important for us not to question why?*

*But try to expect his plan with faith in our hearts.  
Knowing he is in control.  
Though there is much pain in our hearts,  
Because of 'the Great loss we are sharing.  
Knowing he is with God gives us peace. For no-one can take better care of him than God.  
With God he will have no more pain and discomfort.  
Only Joy, Love and Happiness,  
He was the nephew I never had.  
There will always be a Special Place in my heart for him.  
Because he was so Very Special.  
I will Love him now and Forever more.  
My Love and memories of "Little Guy" will never die,*

Linda Washington, June 28, 1993, In Loving Memory of Clyde Carr

C- aring  
L- ove  
Y- outh  
D- etermination  
E- verlasting



Clyde's symbol is Leo the Lion

*"Most assuredly, I say to you that you will weep and lament, hut the world will rejoice; and you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy, A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; hut as soon as she as given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world.*

Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take away from you, " --John 16: 20-22.

This scripture was included in Clyde's eulogy.



Jeff Umbel the 22-year-old son of Raymond and Wanda Umbel was killed in an automobile accident 8-15-92. The family has selected a Guardian Angel as his symbol.

Peggy Roger's 10-year-Old son, Trent, passed away December 2, 1992. Peggy writes that "He was a very, very special little boy and loved by every one that knew him. He's my special little "man"- that's what I called him." The symbol Peggy has chosen to represent Trent is "an angel with a heart around him, to show he is surrounded by lots of love."



Chris Humble, the 16-year-old son of Anita Miller, was killed by five policemen 9-6-88. She has selected a football to represent Chris. Anita wrote these two poems after this tragedy.



### I MISS YOU

I get up in the early morning hours.  
My thoughts quickly return to the sadness I feel.  
My mind recalls that you are gone,  
I miss you so much and I don't understand why you had to end your life so young.  
I pray for answers from God above  
But while the answers are slow to come, I must continue on.  
I must face the day, keep a smile on my face and pretend nothing is wrong  
When all the while I am dying inside because I miss you so my child.  
Someday I hope to know why God called on you to go.  
Why he saw a reason for you to leave  
But until he reveals the reason, I must go on and make it through the day.  
But inside my heart is heavy and I grieve because I miss you so  
And I do not understand why you had to leave.

1988

### Death at Cahaba River My Son's Death

As the shock wears off and reality takes hold.

I become more bitter about the story that was told.

They said they had no choice but to kill - But now I question- Were their reasons real?

All those policemen there on the scene, Surely they could have find another way to end the event that started that day.

I asked you why

With your knowledge and skill

Why? Why? Did you have to shoot to kill?

You had run the teenagers to the ground.

Tell me, were you surprised when you went down to the river and found

That you five had shot a 16-year-ole!?

You were above and they were below.

Where else did you think that could go?

I write this just so you All will always know

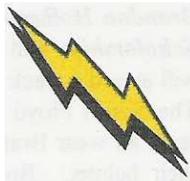
You took a young life that I loved so

Rev. Wally and Barbara Rendel's twin daughter Jill was killed in a van accident her basketball team was riding in from the Cincinnati Bible College and Seminary. The following tribute was written in the church paper the week after her death (2-18-93)

Jill is such an unusual young lady. She routinely grabbed life by the throat and squeezed out every drop of joy possible. Life was a wonderful adventure to her, she was happiest when making other people smile and laugh, she was a giver of great moments and terrific memories. Jill was generous with her hugs and kindness. She lived each day to the fullest. Her philosophy seemed to be summarized in these two questions: "Why save it up?" and "Why not give it away each day?" She placed a great value on her relationships. She cherished her family and friends.

Today there is a deep sadness and grief Rightly so. We have been separated from someone whose personality scared away mediocre and dull spirits. She had no interest in focusing on the negative. Her bubbly enthusiasm picked people up, brightened their day and changed their outlook. Jill made such a positive difference in so many lives. Whether she knew it or not, Jill was a generous gift from the Heavenly Father given to a large portion of the family of Christ.

Jill's coach said that Jill was the "live wire" on her college basketball team and always motivated and challenged the other players to do their best, so the family has chosen this as her symbol.

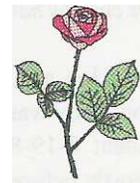


Terry and Betty Wathen's 15-year-old son Jeff was electrocuted 8-10-92, while hanging tobacco. Betty shares:

"Telling you about Jeff is like having heaven taken away from you. He was a star that stood out from all the rest (just like a guiding star). Jeff was everything you dreamed of having in a son. He was my son-- taken away too quickly."



Dave and Kathy Griffin have selected a rose to represent their 15-year-old son Todd who died 5-23-92.



When Todd died, some friends of the family gave them a rose bush. Kathy writes: "Its blooms have been most beautiful this past summer and have been precious reminders of him and encouragement to us. Most of the blooms I cut and brought into the house and placed single roses in bud vases and set them in various rooms throughout the house."



Cowboy hat and boots are the symbols selected by Bill and Carole Kemper to represent their son Chris who was killed in a truck accident. Carole writes:

Chris loved life. At an early age, he decided he wanted to be a movie star. He saw many movies which he proceeded to come home and write similar stories with him as the main character. He loved writing and would spend hours doing it.

During the last three or four years, he became interested in being a cowboy. He began listening to country music. He had a friend who was teaching him to play the guitar. Since an early age, he could name a song after hearing only the first few notes so he seemed to have an ear for music.

He loved working with horses because his father had always enjoyed horses. He had two horses. The oldest was named Heaven and the filly was named Sassy. He spent many nights after school and, Sunday afternoons riding with friends on our farms. About a year ago, he was riding Heaven, and he fell off and landed underneath her. Being the good horse she was, she jumped over him and only her hoof grazed his right

eye. The cut required a few stitches and left a scar. In spite of the incident, he still loved his horses and started riding again. He had talked about training horses or riding in a rodeo. He considered attending the Equine Institute in Lexington.

Chris never met a stranger. He would start talking to whomever he met. Last year as a senior, he co-opted with a landscaping business in the afternoons. On his way to work, he would stop by my classroom. Whenever my students saw him at the door, they would announce that "The Cowboy" is here because he always wore his cowboy hat and boots.

Joe and Iris Mazakis' 24-year-old son Andy was killed in a motorcycle accident 8-19-89. Joe wrote this poem shortly before Andy's death:

### LIFE

When life has left you empty  
And your heart has turned stone cold  
When nothing seems to make much sense  
Those so-called truths that you've been told,  
When all your blue skies turn to gray  
And it seems you just can't win  
Instead of looking for an answer outside  
I think you better look within.

When life seems to lose all meaning  
And there's no beacon left in sight  
And no matter where you look  
You just can't seem to find the light  
Just remember through your heartache  
And all of your despair  
That someone really loves you  
And that Andy really cares.

These next two poems were written by Joe:

**MY ONLY CHILD MY ONLY STAR**  
Another year, another snowfall is here  
I miss you so much being, around  
You're always in my heart  
And also on my mind  
What else can I do, when I cannot see you?  
I'm trying to cope, but I know there is no hope  
For me to live? It's easier my life to give  
You've always been my shining Star  
So I'd like to be where you are  
The snow will change into rain  
Take good care 'till see you again.  
Eternal Love Always  
Dad

### DEVASTATION

He was a young man  
Of only twenty four

When death came calling  
Knocking at our door

Why? We asked God  
He was our only one

Maybe there a God  
But then, maybe none

It was such a devastation  
That wrecked our foundation

Stricken by this sudden grief  
We stood still in disbelief

Suddenly find ourselves alone  
Not knowing about the unknown

In a state of confusion,  
There's no life, just a conclusion.

Andy's symbol is a musical note.



Judy Carpenter had such an inspirational letter. She said she had been depressed about having to set her clock back one hour when the time changed in October. She wrote:

When I realized we were "gaining" another hour and I just felt like--Yeah, all I need is another hour tacked onto all the rest. Little did I realize I spent most of that hour reselling all the clocks (the ones in the cars aren't easy!) I thought to myself\_ What do I do with another hour- more of the same or can I do something different with this "gift." I think for one hour each day. I'll try something different--I can't say what because I hope it changes often. I just don't want this "gift" to become routine as all my other hours have become. (And I know Dennis hopes it's not another hour I'll be on the phone!) Kellie's (their daughter) symbol is a butterfly.

Brandon, the 16-year-old son of Dennis and Linda Holbrook, was killed in an automobile accident 6-17-93. Several scholarships and memorials have been established in Brandon's memory: The United Methodist Church - **Brandon Holbrook Memorial Scholarship**; South Floyd High School **Brandon Holbrook Memorial Football Scholarship**; and the local newspaper will award a track award in his memory. The South Floyd High School football team all wear Brandon's number #81 on their helmet. Both Brandon's football and basketball jerseys were retired. Students at his school purchased a dogwood tree in his memory and placed it in the cafeteria. A plaque and plants

were placed in the foyer of the school. The school also purchased three acres of land in a Paraguay Rain forest in his memory.

Linda wrote the following about Brandon:

Seventeen years ago today (10-7-76) a beautiful baby boy was welcomed to the Holbrook family and they experienced a joy they had never known. The moment we held our son, we understood how much God truly did love us - how could he give up his son for us? Now that we had to give up our own son, we have leaned on, and understood the love of God even more,

Brandon would have to be described as a "people person." Brandon always loved being around people, especially family and friends. If he didn't know you when you entered the room, you could bet he would know you and something about you before you left! Brandon has been described by those who knew him so well as a kind, sharing, thoughtful person with a "big heart." He will always be remembered by his warm smile which said so much about his personality. Friends were so important to him, it was only appropriate that the closing song for his funeral was "Friends."

Brandon accomplished a lot during his school years. He was co-valedictorian of Melvin Elementary School and was ranked third in his class at Wheelwright High School. His future plans were to attend the University of Kentucky on scholarship and study to become an engineer.

He was involved in athletics since he was 5 years old. He participated in basketball, football, baseball, and track. According to all his coaches (including his Dad) he would give you everything he had, whether it be in a game or practice. His favorite sport was football, so it was only appropriate that we bury him in his jersey - #81. We always thought that maybe he loved football so much because he got the opportunity to be a little rowdy, hit someone, and not get into trouble. Brandon had a promising career in track. He had placed first in the EKMC only weeks before his death. He had placed third in the state regional competition at Pineville. His own running form is etched on his monument with this scripture from II Timothy 4:7: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." He has now finished his course of life and he did indeed win the big race!

Brandon also loved music, both listening and playing. He enjoyed mostly rock music, but occasionally he would listen to country songs. His favorite song was "Tears in

Heaven." Ironically, this song was written by a father who had lost his own son. He had played the saxophone and been a member of the school band since the fifth grade. At his last concert, he played a solo - "I'll be Home for Christmas, if Only in My Dreams." He will AL WAYS be with each of us in our dreams.

As you have noticed, there are symbols of rainbows all around. Just as a rainbow was God's promise to Noah, a rainbow is a symbol for our promise that we will see Brandon again some day. One day while standing on the cemetery shortly after Brandon's death, we looked in the sky and saw the most beautiful rainbow. Immediately, we smiled at each other and knew that we had "Our Promise." So whenever you see a rainbow, take a moment to smile and think of Brandon.



Heather, the 17-year-old daughter of John and Kathy Jackson, died shortly after falling from a horse on 4-3-93.

Kathy said that Heather never met a stranger and she saw only the good in people. Heather had wanted to be an organ donor, but they had told her that she could not sign the back of her driver's license until she was 18. When she died, the family donated Kathys organs without thinking twice because they knew that was what Heather had wanted. Kathy said: "She (Heather) didn't or I don't think wouldn't want to be remembered for dying, but for what she could do for others." Heather was a member of the *Kentucky Historical Society* and a member of *Future Business Leader of America*. Kathy cherishes the contact she has with fellow travelers and hopes to continue. Heather wrote the following poem:

*Silence*

The day we separated and said good-bye  
 Numerous tears fell from my eyes  
 The soft colors soon turned to a seemingly gray  
 With the endless flow of tears, I looked away  
 Knowing this was my last chance to look at you.  
 The best qualities came out, through and through. It's hard to imagine us apart.  
 With deep emotions of pain in our hearts  
 But just knowing we'll be united one day.  
 All the pain and anger will slowly drift away  
 And with that 1st silent glance  
 You say good-bye to me.

Heather Jackson  
 February 1993

Kathy wrote: "It seems to me that people forget or just don't like to remember. This makes me angry" We all know that feeling don't we? I continue to stress the importance to select a symbol to represent our loved one and tell others the symbol, so they will be remembered each time that symbol is seen. It really works! The Jacksons have selected a dove and a rose as Heather's symbols. The rose was Heather's favorite flower and she always said that some day she hoped someone would love her enough to send her roses just like her dad sends them to Kathy. Now John puts roses on Heather's grave each month.



Gina Wright wrote to tell me the family had selected a symbol for their 4-year-old son, Drew who was killed in a tragic accident 6-16-93. She said that what makes them think so much of Drew is an angel within a light. "The light is truly what he was to us (and continues to be.)" Gina has now gone to work with the mentally handicapped kids and truly believes that God has directed her in this direction. She continues: "I would love to write and be in touch with different ones who have lost loved ones, not so I can live in my grief but be able to live with my grief". Her address is: HC 79, Box 387, Coldiron, KY 40819.



Walt and Mary Kane's daughter Linda Slocum was murdered 9-25-91. She left two young sons. Mary writes that the thing that bothers the family the most is "Why?" Linda was a sweet, easy kind of girl and never hurt anyone in her life. On the first anniversary of her death, the family wrote:

*A year ago today he took your life away. It took us over two months to find out the whole truth. So, Linda, listen to what your family has to say please! We didn't know what you and the two boys were going*

*through the last three years of your life. Oh!! The pain and suffering you must have gone through and you hid the truth so well from your family and friends behind your sweet smile and mask of laughter. Now!!! We need your help to get us through each and every day, because the pain and heartache hurt us all in every way. We all love and miss you so much each and every day and no one will ever take your place.*

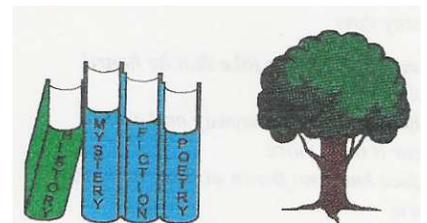
*Love and Kisses from your sons William and Keith. Mom, Walt, Lisa, Lori, Ruddy and Nanny.*

Linda's symbol is a unicorn because she loved and collected them.

Mary Ann  
 McCelvey's 20-year-old son Geoffrey ended his life after being suddenly stricken by a devastating mental illness.



He had been in and out of hospitals for 3 years before he ended his torment in 1981. She writes: "We thought we couldn't survive the grief, but we did, with the aid of our friends, the church and the community. Now with the loss of my husband (George--7-30-93) I have a terrible sense of deja vu. So much of the shock, the horrifying sense of loss are all too familiar. I like the idea of symbols. For our son Geoffrey I have chosen a tree because he loved nature so much and for George, a book- of course. I hope the library in Heaven is boundless in size and that it contains at least a few books he hasn't read. I just realized it takes trees to make books, but perhaps Geoffrey and his dad have worked all that out by now."



Curt Davis' son David died on 10-9-93, when he fell from a six floor balcony in the apartment where he lived. Curt describes David as "being a very artistic, sensitive and funny young man. He sold his art in and around Ft. Lauderdale, FL., where he had lived for the past ten years. He was trained in cosmetology

and was enrolled in the Ft. Lauderdale Art Institute. His last employment was as a make-up artist for Nieman-Marcus in Miami, FL. The family has purchased a marble bench to be installed at the mausoleum where he is interred. An artist has inscribed Doves in flight, one of which is etched in gold to memorialize David. This fittingly depicts his free and gentle spirit."



Shorty and Wanda Willis' 23 year old son Ronnie was killed in a motorcycle accident 5-22-93. The smiley face is the symbol the family has selected for Ronnie.



Ronnie was a certified Asst. Laboratory Animal Technician at UK. The following tribute was written by friends of Ronnie:

"Hello my friend" he would say with a smile.  
 And he meant every word for that was his style.  
 I remember the glow that he held in his eyes.  
 It could bring rays of sunshine from out dark stormy skies.  
 He never asked for attention he didn't seek fortune or fame.  
 He just lived to be happy, joy should have been his middle name.  
 He never questioned your status or from where you came.  
 His world was a cookout and everybody could come.  
 His mind was kept clean of the world wicked ways.  
 And if you knew Ronnie Willis you knew sunny days.  
 You could tell him a joke that he heard twice before.  
 But he would laugh anyway and ask to hear it once more.  
 His face knew no frown at least none that I saw,  
 And if he really got mad it was probably about whiffle ball,  
 Only one time me in history did "Mighty Ron" leave the plate.  
 And as we stared in amazement he simply said, "My stomach can wait."  
 Though we may never meet again to pick up the teams,  
 With "Mighty Ron" in our hearts we have our own field of dreams

*So good-bye my friend I will say with a smile,  
 There's not another one like you, you've got your own style,*

*Ronnie was special. There are two qualities in Ronnie's life that we should remember and strive to achieve as he had. They are having your priorities in their proper order and doing everything to the fullest. Ronnie had his priorities in proper order first was his love of Jesus and His church. Ronnie tithed in his giving, volunteered his time by keeping the 2 year old nursery and was a leader of the high school age group Student Impact, was in another group helping people that needed work done around their house, did missionary work in Jamaica, plus many other labors around the church.*

*Second was his love for his family and friends. He loved and honored his mother, father, and sisters. The hundreds of people that came to the hospital, visitation, and funeral are a tribute to his love of his Fiends. Many from out of state saying, "Ronnie would have been there for me."*

*Third was his love for his work. Ronnie enjoyed his work knowing what he was doing in the basement was helping other people upstairs in the hospital. He would come early and never had any sick time entered on his work record in the over 4 years he worked at UK. He took his responsibilities seriously and was an excellent employee.*

*Fourth was his love of play. Ronnie would never pass up a chance to play any sport, He excelled in high school football, tremendously enjoyed softball, played a pretty decent game of basketball, and had raised his bowling average over 30 pins in just 2 years. He was a welcome addition on many, many teams. Ronnie also enjoyed just spending time with his friends and was especially quick to smile and laugh.*

*In everything Ronnie did, he did to the best of his ability. Whether it was softball, helping at church, or taking on an extra project at work, he did his best always. He did not want it on his "record" anywhere that he was "lukewarm" about anything.*

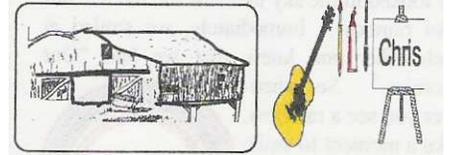
*Yes, Ronnie was special. He will be missed but not forgotten.*

*Dr. Larry Iten*

Wanda said that each time she prays for God to ease the pain in their lives, she always prays the same prayer for all the other parents and family members and friends who are experiencing the same pain as they,

Chris, the 19-year-old, only son of Lori Douglas, drowned 6-23-93, Lori

writes: "On Chris' tombstone we have his favorite song, **"Simple Man"** at the top with a guitar on each side of it. Also his friends still check on me often and we talk of Chris. I've taken his favorite school picture and put it on my key chain, this way I feel Chris goes everywhere I go, and I've also joined the **Compassionate Friends** Chapter of Danville." Chris' symbols are a guitar and an artist. Lori sent several copies of pictures that Chris had drawn and I have included one of them



Chris wrote this poem about Christmas

**Christmas:**

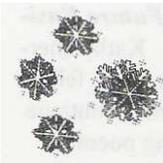
**Christmas is:** a time for the man above  
 a time for laughter  
 a time for love,

**Christmas is:** a white month  
 a nice month  
 a right month.

**Christmas is:** a time for the man above  
 a joyful laughter  
 a lot of love  
 and fun the Christmas after  
 the right month is in the  
**Christmas month.**

**Merry Christmas**

From your letters, I am constantly touched by the courage and bravery of so many of our children, Tanya Baker McCue wrote about her brave 8-year-son, Brookes, who died a month after receiving



a heart-lung transplant. Tanya writes:  
*"I will be spending the rest of my life trying to model his spirit of courage and love. I have chosen the milkweed to be Brookes' symbol because he believed in blowing them in the wind to make wishes and hope for a healthy life. At his funeral 300 children took baskets of milkweed and blew them in the wind outside near the hills and valleys of Vermont. Now I have a bowl of milkweed at home and at my office desk that reminds me and gives me strength - sometimes when I drive in my car feeling blue or anxious, a quiet milkweed star will be quietly floating nearby to remind me he's never far from my heart."*  
 Brookes died 9-3-88.

Tanya works with the organization, **Parent to Parent**, which is a network of support and information for families with children with disabilities and/or chronic illnesses.

Marti Cupp has a wonderful word for where her son, Jeremy is buried--it is his "condo" Marti shared her ideas for the different seasons:

*I've taken Jeremy's Halloween decorations down at his condo and put up a turkey. I have also written a letter to him telling him of all the things I'm thankful for. I've put up the Christmas lights for him in his honor. I'll cut off the top of our Christmas tree and take it to him for Christmas. The ornaments will be pine cones I've collected I will glue them and sprinkle them with glitter. And yes, I will hang his stocking up with the rest of ours as he is still just as much a part of this family as he always was.*

*Jeremy's birthday is Dec. 21, he would have been 17. Jordan (6) wants to give Jeremy a little brown bear in a plastic bag and a balloon and a card. Joylyn (4) wants to bring him a cake. Jenna (20 month) won't care what we do. Each daughter will exchange gifts to each other on his day.*

In the **Regina Chapter Newsletter** of the **Compassionate Friends of Canada**, authored by Adaline and Herb Leir, they had a wonderful item entitled "**How Many Stockings Shall I hang?**" It read:

*What a torment! Funny how you worry what your friends will think. For days I worried. And finally I hung three upon the fireplace wall and laid one gently on the mantel.*

*But that was last year! And this year I shall hang all four above the fireplace. For this year the confusion of the mind has found new answers - with conviction! For it does not really matter whether my oldest daughter lives in Tucson, or my youngest son is dead these are my children - our family - and as long as we hang the Christmas stockings, we shall hang them all . . . with love, Shirley Melin, TCF/Aurora, II*



Joshua, the six year-old son of Henry and Myra Goforth, was killed by a dog, 6-4-93. The family has selected Barney to symbolize Joshua. Myra wrote:

"Joshua loved Barney and he would watch it with his baby brother. Right now when Jonathan hears the show or even sees a Barney he starts singing the "I love you" song. He is 19 months old. Joshua was just like Barney, he loved to be hugged and he loved people. He would share anything, so when I see Barney, I think how happy he made Joshua and his baby brother."

Merlin and Nancy Griffin's son Brent completed suicide 6-27-92. Nancy writes:

*We have decided on a star to represent Brent as he was our bright and shining star and our light. He was such Joy to have around.*



*I have looked and reached out and have not really find anything or anyone which has really helped us to deal with Brent's suicide. People tell me time will help and I do believe they are right to some extent. It's always going to be painful but as time goes on and I begin to get involved in other things I have less time to dwell on it. (The suicide) I guess that is my advice to people in the same situation is to find something to take their mind off it. Of course we will never forget. It will always be with us, I still cry when I talk about Brent and I am trying 'hard to overcome that as I want to keep his memory alive by talking about him often. "*

Sally Arias' 16-year-old son, Rito, died of Leukemia, 2-26-93. Sally's letter dealt with anger, which is what we all have through the many stages of grief She writes:

*It has been 8 months since my wonderful Cholo Inca Indian, Ray died of Leukemia and the pain has finally turned to big time anger. Why? Why? Why? I set out to do wonderful work on behalf of the Leukemia Society 5 days after all the TV Interviews, a large spread in the Lexington Herald/Leader and radio interviews, the LSA. (Leukemia Society of America) had massive cutbacks and ceased all funding to new LSA offices and cut back existing offices. Well, that didn't stop me. I have continued to answer the phone and help with support and information and patient aid forms because there are frightened parents out there-- I have walked in their shoes. I then hit the reclusive stage which lasted about 3 months. I bought a German shepherd puppy that I named Rito Heidi Ho because Rito (Ray) wanted a female shepherd when he returned from his bone marrow transplant and last week the 8 month old puppy had to be put to sleep due to the worst case of hip displasia and severe heart disease with an enlarged right lobe of the heart, She is now trully with Ray. I am not*

*active at church right now as I am mystified as to the role God designed for Ray-He had so much left here to accomplish on earth. Anger once again prevails. I will not throw in the towel but other parents are going through this too and may not want to admit it. It does exist and quite possibly should be addressed in the next Lamentations, even if the holidays are amongst us. I have prepared, canned, labeled and am selling a hot pepper jelly to keep me busy. Some of the other parents whose children have fallen to leukemia are joining me in preparing a meal, cookies, etc. for the parents, Doctors and nursing staff at the UK Medical Center in December, plus we are getting donations for toys for the kids--This is for 4 North the Hemoc, Unit.*

*I have some wonderful friends who have all invited me to spend the holidays with them. I have declined because it is extremely difficult to be in the company of a warm loving family at this time, When you lose a parent, you lose your past, when you lose your child, you lose your future. For all of the single parents out there that have lost their child or children and are all alone--Get mad, get angry, but don't give up. If you are mad at God, it is okay. My priest said he was waiting for me to hit this mogul and he said that God will wait on me as long as it takes. It may take awhile, but in the meantime, the only feeling of worth that I achieve is when I am screening a call regarding Leukemia from a frightened parent or planning the UK hospital Christmas treat,*

*I am going to have some elective surgery the day before thanksgiving because I have always wanted it--this will take me out of the hub bub for that holiday and I will vanish to the ski slopes for Christmas to avoid all the songs, tradition and yes, sadness. So when you say, do something for yourself at this time, I concur. After December 26th, I will remain in a grey zone until I relive the arrival at Children's Medical Center in Cincinnati in January and Ray's subsequent death, February 26, 1993. I cannot imagine that the second year is worse than the first--I have been to Hell and back and have spewed tears daily. This letter may in a way be a slight tonic, who knows but S.U.C.C.E.S.S, cannot happen until the anger is dealt with and it does take time. It probably would be a good time to run the poem **LOAN** again for those who have not seen it.*



Sally has added a symbol for Ray--His symbols are a tennis racket and a smiling German shepherd.

### THE LOAN

*"I'll lend you for a little time, a child of mine," God said: "For you to love while he lives and mourn when he is dead. It may be six or seven years, or twenty two or three*

*But will you, 'til I call him back take care of him for Me?*

*He'll bring his charms to gladden you, and shall his stay be brief  
You'll have his lovely memories, as solace for your grief.*

*I cannot promise he will stay, since all from earth return,*

*But there are some lessons taught down there,  
I want this child to learn.*

*I've looked the world over, in my search for teachers true.*

*And from the throngs that crowd life's lanes, I have selected you.*

*How will you give him all your love, not think the labor in vain.*

*Nor hate me when I come to take him back again?"*

*I fancied that I heard them say: "Dear Lord thy will he done!"*

*For all the joy thy child shall bring, the risk of grief we'll run.*

*We'll shelter him with tenderness, we'll love him while we may,*

*And for all the happiness we've known, forever grateful we'll stay.*

*But shall the angels call him much sooner than , We've planned,*

*We'll brave the bitter grief that comes, and surely understand.*

In Catherine Sanders' book, ***How To Survive The Loss of a Child***, she explains that we (grievers) need friends who won't be shocked by our anger and who will not judge us. "Anger is a natural response to the frustration and helplessness we are feeling."

Kathleen Jacques wrote about anger in "Hope for Bereaved." Mrs. Jacques explains that angry feelings are a normal and healthy response to the death of a loved one. It is a sign that we have loved very deeply. "Emotions such as anger are not right or wrong, they simply are. We often see anger as the enemy, so we continue to deny it and the pressure continues to build."

We have to deal with anger in some manner. Mrs. Jacques feels that if we don't allow ourselves these feelings, and a way of releasing them, they will accumulate. We may internalize them and have feelings of depression, apathy, guilt, low self-esteem, and may become withdrawn. This may result in excessive use of alcohol, drugs, food, smoking. Or we may

outwardly release this anger by taking it out on our friends, co-workers, and/or family. Anger and hate drain you of your energy.

This anger may be directed at ourselves, God, at our loved one who has died, at others such as the hospital, ambulance employees, etc.

It is important for us to identify our anger and allow ourselves to experience it. Anger is physical, and it helps to deal with it physically--Exercise, take a walk, a jog, play tennis, hammer nails, dig a ditch, chop wood, beat a rug, tear up the newspaper, throw rocks. Mrs. Jacques suggests that we imagine whoever or whatever we're angry at being on the other end of what we are doing, It helps,

Another suggestion is to write about it -- I continue to keep a journal and there are many pages about my anger. Talk with others who will listen and not judge you. Meditate. Consider counseling if your anger and/or depression continues, or if it is overwhelming

Anger is one of the strongest and most disturbing of the many emotions we experience after our loved one's death. Mrs. Jacques concludes: "Allow yourself the need to be angry. You have every right to be. Get it out and you can let go of it. Let go of it and you begin to heal.

We are all anxious about the holidays and what they will bring. The first thing to remember is to recognize and accept your feelings. If making plans are too overwhelming, discuss the holidays with your family and what and how they would like to spend it. We cannot alleviate the pain, but we may be able to lessen it by planning, Donna Kalb wrote an article entitled "***How To Help Ourselves Through The Holidays***," and she suggests that you set limitations and realize that it isn't going to be easy. Do the things that are very special and/or important to you and do the best that you can. Try to get enough rest and

don't over extend yourself Mrs. Kalb also suggests that "You should be gentle with yourself and not expect so much of yourself. Worrying about crying is an additional burden. If you let go and cry, you probably will feel better. It should not ruin the day for the other family members, but will provide them with the same freedom."

I have found that if I do something for someone else, it helps me as well as the recipient. Perhaps you can light a special candle or plan a special tribute for your loved one. Maybe you could have each person around your table share something funny or something very special about your loved one.

One book I read emphasized especially concentrating on the remaining family members, especially the children. The suggestions were to listen to them and to celebrate them. They may have deep feelings that will be overlooked if you focus on yourself. In the magazine ***The Hope Line***, this quote jumped at me: Enjoyment, laughter, and pleasure are not experiences in which you abandon your lost loved one, You have not forgotten them; they would not want you to be forever sad. You need not feel guilty over any enjoyment you may experience. Give yourself and members of your family permission to celebrate and take pleasure in the holiday.

I read a wonderful quote: "Remember that you can't change the past. You can take charge of the present, however, and you can shape the future. Total recovery may never come, but what you make of the ashes of your trauma is up to you."

If I could give each of you a gift, it would be the gift of peace and joy as you prepare to celebrate this special time of the year. It will be a time of sadness, but it can also be a time of joy. Yes JOY! I have found that if you prepare and then make it your goal -YOU CAN DO IT!



**Merry Christmas!!**