

LAMENTATIONS

Issue 15



January 1994

The month of January is the beginning of a new year. It is named for **Janus**, a Roman god. Janus, in Roman mythology, was a god who had two faces that looked in opposite directions. One face looked into the past, and the other looked into the future. Janus served as the god of gates and doors and of entrances and exits. January can also be the "door" to our grief. I think we must always look into our past for all those wonderful memories and events that have meant so much to us, but we must also look to the future where we hope to eventually work through our grief and attain our **S.U.C.C.E.S.S.** Sometimes doorways can be scary, but when we have the courage to go through them to see what is on the



other side, we are stronger and wiser for having traveled through.

Have you made any new year's resolutions? Evelyn Lanzillotti, a grieving parent, wrote this statement and this list of resolutions in an article she wrote in the Dec. '88/Jan. '89 issue of **Compassionate Friends**: *Combining resolutions with determination can help in healing. With healing comes renewed life. It's worth the struggle. Here are some to reflect upon:*

I resolve I am going to try to...
- put the pieces hack together

- take care of myself physically
- accept invitations
- try "firsts"
- keep my marriage intact
- give the kids back their mother and father
- smile!
- understand everyone's good intentions, even though the wrong words come out
- put normalcy back into life
- try to understand that everyone approaches life differently, and so, too, grieves differently
- ride out the low period
- enjoy laughing without feeling guilty
- not accept any point in healing--reach out for more
- let go -learn how to deal with those tough questions: *How many children do you have? Aren't you over it yet?*
- look at other children without feeling pain
- keep from becoming a recluse
- rebuild friendships
- continue when I Falter
- seek help--from a bereaved parent support group

Another fellow traveler in Mobile, AL added these resolutions:

- I will try not to expect so much understanding from others who have not walked the same path
- I will be kind to myself- in health, appearance and time to be alone
- I resolve in memory of my child to help someone else for I know in doing this my child will live on through me.

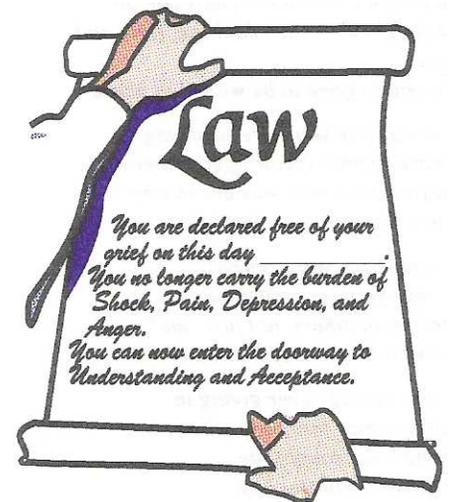
New Year's Eve is celebrated by many as a beginning of a new year and, hopefully, a better year. Many sing "**Auld Lang Syne**" which

means "old times, or long ago in one's life." The words are:

*Should auld acquaintance be forgot, and never bro't to mind?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot, and days of auld lang syne
And her's a hand, my trusty fren
and gie's a hand o'thine; we'll tak' a cup O' kindness yet, for auld lang syne.*

For auld lang syne, my dear, in auld lang syne; we'll tak' a cup O' kindness yet for auld lang syne.

On January 1, 1863, Abraham Lincoln issued the **Emancipation Proclamation**. This Proclamation declared that all persons who had been held as slaves, were now free. I have made an Emancipation order that I hope you will be' able to sign. Notice that the date is blank--only you can fill in that date. May we all be emancipated from the slavery of grief.



This time of year is a wonderful time for us to set goals and work at attaining them.
GOOD LUCK!!

Grief Grafts

Quentin, the 13-year-old son of Hubert and Pam Meade, died from a carcinoma 8-8-93. Quentin's symbol is praying hands. Pam sent a poem written by Quentin:



I Have A Dream...

I would like to see little children survive diseases like cancer and leukemia. Many children each year die of cancer and other diseases. I would like to see this change.

I could try to change that by becoming a doctor and doing research to try to find other treatments that might work on killing the cancer and leukemia. I could also try to find what causes cancer and what activates the cancer cells to form a tumor. I would also like to find an easier way to do bone marrow tests and spinal tap so it wouldn't be so painful

The results of this would be that the lives of many children would be saved and not lost: they would be able to enjoy a long happy life.

This is my dream.

Pam sent the most wonderful booklet she has compiled with drawings done by Quentin and a poem she has written. It is entitled:

Quentin

*You were a soldier brave and true
You fought a battle not many can do
You fought with such courage, faith and love*

Now you're gone to be with God above.

*From day one you were so strong
A brave fighter, a courageous son
Tho your time here was not so long
I know the battle you have won.
So many lives you inspired*

*Oh, how you were admired
Thinking of others, not just "me"
I know that heavenly home you see.
Oh how strong never giving in
Such a fighter for a boy of ten
Having you brought joy
My brave, beautiful boy.*

*You fought so hard for three long years
I know it brought many a tear
Fighting something that can't be explained
Oh what a home you have gained.*

At times the road ahead looked rough

*But you were always so very tough
When one would ask the line
How are you Quentin?
"I'm fine."*

*After the battle of two long years
Dared we dream, dared we hope
That all was thought "clear"
It was so hard to say "nope."*

*After a trip to UK
Thru out the trip, test and day My heart was
heavy with such fear The trip was not with
usual cheer.*

*Oh such a blow
That made our world shatter
The doctors had called
Something was the matter.*

*The enemy had come back
To do more harm
Say it's a rumor, but no
There it was a tumor in your right arm.*

*The doctors said what had to be done
Oh, how I wanted to run
It hit me like running into a boulder
They would have to amputate your right
arm and shoulder.*

*I could not run
I had to be strong
Knowing in my heart
I wouldn't have you long.*

*I looked at you, you at me
The fear I know you could see
You were so very strong
Not only for you, but for me.*

*Having one arm
You adjusted so well
Thru everything, your faith
Was so swell.*

*So many times I know I've said
I wish it were me in your stead
But it was not to be, not my will
But part of God's divine plan to fill.*

*Quentin
You were so strong, so faithful to God
You stand so tall
In your trying of everything
You gave it your all.*

*Oh, Quentin how I love you
How I long to hear. "Mommy, I love you
too"
I know someday I'll see you again
For that heavenly home I'm out to win.*

*I know you're not here
I can't see or touch
But I can feel your presence
Around me so very much.*

*Enough memories a lifetime to last
Of our thirteen years past*

*Some happy, some sad, some hard to recall
My dear, precious boy, we'll cherish them
all.*

*I have to fight, knowing what I must do
As you, Quentin would have me to do
For courage, strength to God I pray
To help me face each and every day.*

*So fight I will with all my might
Tho sometimes I seem contrite
Please try to understand if my mind does
wander
It's for better things I ponder.*

*You could make us laugh
No matter the situation
Even tho sometimes
You did it for pure aggravation.*

*When wanting a saint Bernard pup
For Christmas this past year
It was with such cheer
You took heed, when Dad said
"It'll cost an arm and a leg to feed."*

*"I've only got one arm left, you know"
"I've changed my mind," you said
So it's off we go
To the animal shelter instead.*

*Thru each passing surgery, oh so many
We'd wait jar the word, if any
So many, I think seventeen in all
When results were given, "Thank you Lord"
was your call.*

*You loved going to church, God, singing
and all
Throughout Vacation Bible School you
gave it your all
You painted Josh's shirt as we all know
Cause Josh had been sick, he couldn't go.*

*You helped with others along the way
And not once did I hear you say
I've only got one arm you see
And for help you come to me.
But help you did as I recall
You didn't complain, you gave it your all
You touched so many for one so young
Thru your faith, love of God, a crown of life
you have won.*

*I knew not the day, time or year
That I would lose you, my precious dear
I'm so thankful for each loving moment
For the thirteen years here you spent.*

*When news came of you having to depart
this life
How my heart hurt, struggled, what strife
Not knowing what to say, to do
But when I looked in your eyes
I knew you knew it too.*

We didn't have to speak

*It didn't have to be told
The love we have for each other
Is something to behold.*

*With what dignity when this life you passed
When in death, you drew your last
Even tho this life you did depart
You will always be in my heart.*

*A daily reading in my journal I tried to
keep
Oh How hard to write the day God called
You to eternal sleep.
We'll miss you, all of us three
Daddy, Brother Josh, and Me
For you departed this life on August 8,
1993*

*We don't want you to go, you know
But loving you so, we had to let go
Thru your suffering, you're so blest God
called you to his eternal rest.*

*We don't want to let go
But let go we must
For' in God's holy word
Do we trust.*

The family collects soft drink tabs to send children with catastrophic illnesses to Indian Summer Camp. If you would like to save them also, please send them to the Meade family, P.O. Box 566, Harold, KY 41635.

Frank and Sharon Smith's 16-year-old daughter Frannie, was killed in a skiing accident 2-7-93. An angel is Frannie's symbol. In the *Resurrection Mass* for Frannie, the family included this poem which Frannie had written



Dusty Road

When I walk down the dusty road, I think of the new sunrise as the dust swirls lip in miniature tornadoes. I get a peaceful feeling as I'm standing there in the dim sunlight. I think also of the friends I'll miss when they depart. For I know I can't be with them forever. I feel sorrow as I bend down to sit on a rock, sitting still by the roadside. I stand up as I begin to feel the heat of the sun's rays heating down on my face looking for shade. I look around and see a tree in the mere distance. As I look at the palm tree surrounding me I notice something special about the tree the leaves resemble hand for shaking the limbs resemble arms for hugging

and the whole tree resembles friends joining for conversation. There are many things I notice going down the dusty road.

Linda Graves, the 46-year-old daughter of Loretta Deso, died 7-28-88. Linda's husband had passed away only 5 months before. Loretta has selected a poodle and roses as Linda's symbols. Loretta had Linda's poodle for 3 years after Linda's death and she gives donations in memory of Linda to the Humane Society often because Linda loved all animals.



Bonnie Chapman has selected a dancer with wings for arms for her daughter Joanne who was killed in an auto accident 7-18-92 at the age of 18. Joanne wrote the following poem: (note the difference in spelling of her name, Joanne spelled it "Joana" on purpose.)

*I am Joana
A dancer with wings for arms
I wonder how high I could fly
If I were to try*

I hear the music and can't stand still I see my feet and arms, so free to move

*I want to dance on Broadway
With Ginger Rogers and Fred Astair
I am Joana
A dancer with wings for arms*

*I pretend I am on the chorus line
And move with no worries*

*I feel that I can touch Heaven when I dance
I touch my future with the greatest of ease
I worry about nothing
I dance my worries away*

*I cry for the birds with no legs to dance
I am Joana
A dancer with wings for arms*

*understand how birds feel
Just dancing with the wind*

*I say with my body
What I think and feel*

When I dance

*I dream
What only I can dream
And no one else*

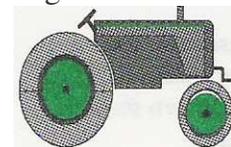
*I try my best
And dance when and how I want to*

*I hope that someone will notice
So that I can dance forever*

*I am Joana
A dancer
With wings for arms.*

Bonnie has remarried since Joanne's death and she says that Bob was her help through the first hours, days and months after Joanne's death. Bob has an 11-year-old daughter, Ashley, whose mother died this past June. Bonnie and Ashley are a great comfort for each other. Bonnie says that Ashley has been a wonderful reinvestment of her time and energies. She thanks God for her each day.

Eddie and Pam Freundorfer's 3-year-old son Christopher died from Acute Cardiac Dysrhythmia, 8-12-93. Pam says that Christopher was a very active child who loved to learn. His favorite things were riding tractors, watching his sister Stephanie, driving his jeep and playing with Drew. Christopher would share anything but his tractor. Whenever he heard the tractor started, the family could count on Christopher to be aboard. He would ride on his Pappaw's and Uncle's tractor for hours. He also loved water balloon fights, which he did the night before he died. Because of



his love for a tractor, the family has selected that as his symbol.



Yenna Lobb's 20-year-old son, Stevaki Che, completed suicide 4-23-90. Stevaki's symbol is a tropical bird. When the family was in the Cook

Islands, some friends called him "Tavaki" which is "tropic bird" in their language. Stevaki was a sophomore at Amherst College. He was majoring in English and had just been selected to be one of the producers of the campus paper, *The Students*. He loved writing and was very good. Stevaki grew up on a 50' catamaran and spent most of his life sailing since he was home schooled. Stevaki wrote many poems, which Yenna has made into a booklet. The following poem was Stevaki's last:

Looking Through a Window

*Looking through a window
Into the daylight stain
Eye reflecting inward
Saw a window pane.*

*Storm clouds gather nowhere
Fill the thundering sky
Echo through empty halls
In a reflecting eye.*

*See it through a doorway
Skies pout a velvet hue
And when the door is shut
It changes not the view.*

*Maybe, then, it's evening
But maybe, then, it's not
Two eyes see the storm sky
You're caught, my friend,
you're caught.*

*Empty air is hollow
Where voices echo still
Looking through a window
Eye sees a window sill.*

Ano, Stevaki's brother wrote this poem after his brother's death:

*Staring in bland bemusement,
Through misty panes of shattered pain,
For half my half soul I mourn the loss,
Yet dare not weep in vain.*

*Those eyes that taught my own to see,
Now lightly closed in sweet repose,
Those hands that taught my own to grasp,
Feel not so much as nothing's touch.*

*Yet still I find within my mind
A lingering strain remains to sound
A peal of laughter long and strong.*

To melt the ice within.

*The sea of tear-drenched eyes I see,
That weep the loss we grieve,
Bewildered hearts, so lost in mind,
We are all brothers in our grief*

*Yet through the pain the warmth
remains,
Of the raging heart that scorched us
all,
So deep are brand, as by God's Own
hand,
Those memories built shall never fail.*

*And so my brother you are now gone, To
traverse eternity on and on.*

April, 1990

Yenna says, "I do not try to justify what he (Stevaki) has done, but maybe it was his time. Through these pains, we grow. Life is ever more precious for me now."

Chris, the eighteen-year-old son of Bill and Carole Kemper, was killed in a truck accident 7-21-93. On September 17, two of Chris' classmates and close friends were married. Chris had been asked to be in the wedding. After Chris' death, the couple told the family that they wanted them to attend the wedding because Chris was to still be a part of it

The night of the wedding, they had asked to borrow Chris' picture. When the family arrived, they found Chris' picture on a table covered with a white cloth, a single candle and a boutonniere. After the bride walked in, the preacher took a moment to tell how Chris was a very special friend to the couple and how much he meant to them. They had not replaced him in the wedding party. After the wedding party and parents had marched out, one of the ushers came back, picked up the boutonniere and came to Carole and pinned it on her. Carole said it was a beautiful memory!!

The following poem was given to the family in lieu of flowers and it was read at Chris' funeral:

Safely Home

*I am home in Heaven, dear ones'
Oh so happy and so bright.
There is perfect joy and beauty
In this everlasting light.
All the pain and grief is over,
Every restless tossing passed;
I am now at peace forever,
Safely home in Heaven at last.*

*Did you wonder I so calmly
Trod the valley of the shade?
Oh, but Jesus' love illumined
Every dark and fearful glade.*

*And He came Himself to meet me
In the way so hard to tread;
And with Jesus' arm to lean on,
Could I have one doubt or dread!*

*Then you must not grieve so sorely,
For I love you dearly still;
Try to look beyond death's shadows,
Pray to trust our Father's will.*

*There is work still waiting for you,
So you must not idly stand;
Do it now while life remaineth,
You shall rest in Jesus' Land*

*When that work is all completed,
He will gently call you Home;
Oh, the rapture of that meeting,
Oh, the joy to see you come.*

Another friend, Jenny Bivins, wrote this poem:

FOR CHRIS

*There's a young cowboy in our hearts
That we'll always choose to love
He lived his life to the fullest
Then sadly left us for above.*

*While here he sampled many treasures
held out for him to try
From wrestling, singing, sports and
writing,
And then bid us goodbye.*

*Although his loved ones only had him
for such a few short years
And remember his love for life,
They'll often shed a tear.*

*How sad to lose a life so filled with so
many choices
We wonder what could've been
With a cry in our voices.*

*Now he's riding heaven's ranges
With a song to sing from above
He looks down on his family
And they remember his love.*

Robert and Ann Marie Meunier's daughter, Pam, died of bone cancer 3-23-92. During her two year battle, she sought to confront and express the many feelings that were part of her daily experience; thus she wrote poetry. It was her wish to have these poems published and to share her journey with all its fears, despair, anxiety, hope, faith, and courage. Pam's symbol is a panda bear. These are two of the poems Pam wrote:



ONE DAY AT A TIME

*Time ticks away.
The minutes pass and my day is spent
Just getting by.*

*My state of mind is fragile.
One bad incident and I will break.
Depression creeps in and dominates.*

*Time is no longer on my side.
I feel as if every minute that goes by
Is time closer to my death.*

*Sometimes I wonder if I will make it
through
The next five minutes.
Much less see tomorrow.
I grab onto any shred of hope
And come out of my depression.
The sun sets to end a long day.*

*I go to sleep knowing that tomorrow
The sun will rise, and
I will start living my life one day at a
time.*

FAITH WALK

*I feel like screaming and Crying
Until this whose nightmare ends.
I don't understand why this keeps hap-
pening to me.
How can a merciful God allow
So much suffering and pain.
I feel betrayed and abandoned by
someone
Whom I thought I could trust.
I don't know what I believe anymore,
Then a vision comes to mind-*

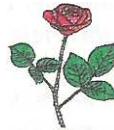
My God, hanging on a cross.

*He gave His life for me.
How can I not believe in Him?
He's always with me,
Walking with me when times are stable,
Carrying me when times are desperate,*

*I know the long, hard road lies ahead,
But I will never be alone.
No matter what happens,
I know that God will hold my hand*

Ann Marie wrote: "Your family picture fell out on my lap and just took my breath away. It still amazes me when I realize the bonding which takes place in an experience such as ours - you don't have to meet face to face or speak words. When Pam was sick she would always say - 'there is a reason for all this' - I'm just beginning to realize that I can play a major role in helping to reveal 'the reason'."

Rita Blanchfield Kleppinger's 20-year-old twin daughters were killed in an auto accident 4-23-73. Debbie was in her last year of college and working on the weekends, Diana was working as a cashier at a hospital, and planning her wedding. Rita has a great granddaughter Deanna, who is named after the twins. Their symbol is a rose.



Larry and Phyllis Smith's 26-year-old son, Larry, was killed in a motorcycle accident 7-4-92. Larry's symbol is an eagle. Phyllis wrote the following poem:

In The Valley

*While traveling down a wooden trail
With breezes warm and sweet
The fragrance of pine and autumn
leaves
And beauty so complete.*

*The trail meandered through the dale
With gently cooling shade
Serene and content with the beautiful
view*

Peace within me stayed.

*The farther down the winding trail
My faltering footsteps failed
For the steps below with crashing fear
And down and down I sailed.*

*I found myself in a deep valley
With lush, cool carpets of green.
A bubbly brook, with pebbles sang
A song so, sweet and keen.*

*I wondered how I got here
With every hair in place
Then Jesus whispered in my ear "I
caught you in my embrace."*

*Now if your life has valleys
Where you have fallen down
Remember who delivers you with His
love
The best friend I have found.*

Phyllis writes: "I have often wondered what 'positive' thing could come out of the loss of one so dear as our beloved son. Hut God has shown me in several ways how his death has touched lives, including my own, in a way that wouldn't have been touched other wise.

Through the loss of our children, who would have thought our lives could be so blessed and filled with love from people and directions that would have never come about. I stand amazed that God channels His love through strangers, allows us to be Messed by His hand through fellow travelers' we have never laid eyes on.

He has caused me to do things and think differently about life since our tragedy. I have a desire to touch other lives in a way I did not have before." AMEN Phyllis, you expressed just how I feel about our fellow travelers.



Darrell Hatton's wife, Ella, and his 4-year-old daughter Deborah were both killed in a tragic automobile accident. Darrell has selected a guardian angel for the two of them.

Sherran McDonough has had two sons to be killed 13 months and 13 days apart, and both on the very

same street heading home. Chris was 21 and was killed on his motorcycle 1/2 block from home on 7-2-92. Sherran describes Chris:

He was a wonderful son, so full of life and enthusiasm. Although he was 21 at the time of his death, he never really 'grew up.' He enjoyed life to its fullest capacity. His heart was kind and he had many, many dear and wonderful friends who were always near him. Chris very much reminds me of the song, The Wind Beneath My Wings. As a single mom for 8 years, Chris was always supportive and strong and I knew I could count on him to help keep our family together. The thing that was most outstanding about Chris in addition to his love of life itself, was that he was never judgmental of anyone-- He loved and accepted each person for their unique qualities. I am very proud



of him. He taught me many things. I miss his smile-his joyfulness.

Chris' symbol is a motorcycle.

Michael, age 19, died 8-15-93. Sherran describes Michael:

Michael was a curious child always. From infancy he wanted to know what made things work and how to fix everything--regardless of whether or not it was broken or needed to be fixed. During adolescence he was very restless, and it was only in the last 2 years of his life that he began to find real peace again I didn't realize how much I depended on him and his trusty 'hammer and nails'. I miss his broad shoulders that seemed to support our family so much. Michael seldom finished anything. His death is no exception...it seems that my beloved son left this world as an expectant father of only 2 weeks. (Just like Michael to leave Mom a project to brighten my days!) Michael's greatest gift was his kind heart so filled with love and compassion for his fellowman I miss his noise and his gentle nature.



Michael's symbol is a hammer.

Sherran writes "Each day in my life reminds me of a feather falling to

the ground That is the direction I take, depending on the way the wind blows! Maybe not a good idea for a long range life goal, but it seems to work for me for now. Most of my days are spent reading and meditating and being with true and trusted friends and nurturing my young son, Keith. "

Carole Hallam's 29-year-old son Scott, died of AIDS 5-4--93. She writes that if anyone needs help dealing with the complexities of AIDS, please call Aids Volunteers of Lexington 254-AVOL. She feels that Scott was a precious gift for 29 years, and she will always ask "Why?" but thanks God every day she had him.

Don Vo, the 16-year-old son of Don and Janie Drye, was killed in an automobile accident 7-27-93. His girlfriend wrote the following poem and it was published on the Memorial Page in Marion County's annual. Don V's symbol is an airplane.



Remembering Don V

*The sparkle of blue in your eyes,
Warm smile of kindness and love,
The laughter of a joke we shared
And the tricks we played
-Together*

*All in my mind,
Memories for my heart'
Where an eternal ache rests.
Love's brightly burning flame resists
The river of tears reflecting you.
Why time won its battle against us ...
A search for an answer that lies
Within the completeness
When our love is one day reunited
Until then... Sarah George*

Matthew Harmon wrote and read this poem at Don V's funeral:

*Times were always bright,
Whenever Don V. spent the night,
We could never fight,
Because everything seemed just right.*

*When it seemed that I didn't have a friend,
Don V. was just around the bend,
With his smiling face,*

Ready to run any race.

When it came time for Don V. to leave,

*We would always plead,
For a few more minutes together,
Because I didn't think it could get any better.*

*Now, it is time for us to part,
And I am left with a broken heart,
Although our years on earth were few*

*Someday I hope we will meet again
and start anew.*

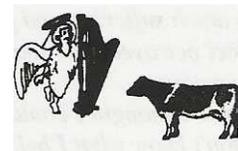
*One day I hope to meet you in the sky,
But, for right now, I have to say
good-bye,*

*I have no fear because I know,
You are walking the streets of gold.*

Springer and Anne Hoskins' 30-year-old son Jim was killed in a mountain climbing accident 6-13-93. Jim had graduated from Davidson College and attended Graduate School of Fine Arts at Temple University and had worked in London, England. At the time of his death, he was the house manager of the Folklife Center at International House in Philadelphia. His symbol is a clapstick.

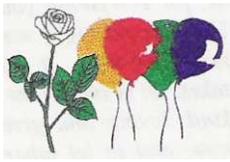


Dorothy Wilson's daughter Janet was murdered by her husband 11-24-91. Janet was a graduate of Cumberland College and had majored in music. Dorothy has had difficulty selecting a symbol for Janet, but has decided to have 2 symbols. Janet's sister Jennifer wanted an angel and Janet loved the harp and was taking harp lessons, so an angel with a harp is one symbol. The other symbol is a cow because Janet dearly loved cows and would blow the horn at the cows along the road to see how many would look up. They always made her laugh.



Ron and Louise Barger's 17-year-old daughter, Rhonda, died

as the result of an automobile accident 9-5-92. Her symbols are balloons and a white rose.



Louise wrote this poem:

RHONDA LOUISE BARGER
Our Loss Was Heaven's Gain

*"How old was your child?" a concerned one said.
She was only 17 with a bright future ahead.
"How did she go?" the concerned one said.
Away with the angels around midday to Heaven's shiny portals, up and away.
Oh! How my heart aches and I often cry,
When I think of the memories, I ask,
"My God, Why?"
He asks, "Why do you question?" and I sadly say,
"My God, how I loved her and now she's gone away."
He whispers, "She's never away, she's so much a part,
She was a beautiful diamond, so close to your heart."
He said, "She'll never ever leave you because she's so much a part,
Like a beautiful painting of truly rare art."
"Your beautiful daughter she struggled so long to breathe with metal tubes, I decided they had to leave,
So I took her to heaven; so you simply must not grieve."
"Now," He continues, "in Heaven she can sing,
No tubes, no whispers, how the harps ring
You still have your memories of her Zeal for life,
Even though at times the hurtful ones may cut like a knife.
Stop! Look! Listen! and you will know how much I love you and want you to know,
Do you think Rhonda was happy in this world here below?
I have better things in store for each of you*

*If to my name and my Holy Book you're true.
I gave you a jewel, rare it's true, so full of life,
With so much to do."*

*To all my daughter met, she gave a smile.
She was like a beacon of flight to brighten every mile.
To each of you, I give you hope.
Call on Jesus, he'll help you cope.
the way may get rocky and oh so steep,
that's why our tears come to help us in our grief
Time is so fragile and eagerly passes by,
Make the most of each moment or ask yourself why.
So grab the ones you love and enjoy
Each fleeting day,
Then you may look at life in a much richer way.
Cherish your memories, try not to live in the past,
Because only what's done to God's glory will last.
Reach out to others and give them a smile,
And remember time passes so quickly.
Be thankful for your memories, and humble yourself like a child.
Only then can God use us to his greatest glory. I love you. John 3:16*

A friend of Rhonda's, Peggy Gibson, wrote this poem:

*God chose a beautiful bud
On a short September day.
He chose Rhonda
To bloom in Heaven's bay.
He looked down on His bountiful harvest.
He picked the most beautiful jewel to glitter for Him in Heaven each day.
Her hair was like the sunshine,
Eyes like His sky.
Her skin like ivory,
Her smile would soften the coldest marble and turn it into clay.
In Heaven with God you'll see her some day.*

As I am writing this newsletter, I am looking out the window and it is snowing. Brandon, the 16-year-old son of Dennis and Linda Holbrook, was killed in an automobile accident 6-17-93. His symbol is a rainbow. The family sent a home made snowflake in a card and the card elaborated:



Each Life is Like a Snowflake

*Our life and a snowflake are so much alike. Each one that is created is totally different and unique. It may have characteristics of all the rest, but something will make it special, whether shape, or duration.
As snowflakes fall from the sky, they do not know what path may lie ahead. Some may fall and melt as soon as they touch the ground. Others will vanish before they even touch the ground. Some are fortunate enough to collect at just the right time and last for days, weeks, months, or years.
Brandon's snowflake has indeed unique and beautiful, although the path it chose to follow did not endure as long as we would have liked. However, how fortunate we are, that his snowflake lasted long enough to make a difference to others.*

Randy and Eula Floyd's son, Adam, died 1-19-93 at the age of 12 from Leukemia. He loved 50's music and the "LaBamba." Eula writes: "I get some comfort knowing that all these wonderful, beautiful kids are together watching over each other. I know they don't want us to be sad. Adam and Jim are with us not only on Christmas and/or birthdays, but always. Our love for each other binds us together."



Debbi Dickinson, who has lost 3 babies in the second trimester, is a prolific writer of all types of writings and has been published widely. Debbi wrote this poem.

TO MY NEW COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

*Our stories may be different
But inside we're all the same,
struggling to find new meaning,
trying to ease our pain.
With courage we face tomorrow
and try to understand
though death has left its sorrow,
we honor our children's memories
by learning to live again*

Debbi and her husband Curtis raise and train 3 afghan hounds with the goal of involving them in pet therapy at nursing homes and day care centers.

Ray and Sue Hutcherson's daughter, Leslie, was killed in an automobile accident February 21, 1993. Leslie's symbols are a bear and a smiley face.



INTRODUCING The Hutesons are proud to announce that they have a new granddaughter who was born on Sue's birthday (Nov. 26) and she has been named Leslie Marie. **Congratulations!!!**

To the many of you who shared how you have honored your deceased family members this Christmas. I plan to include the ideas in next December's issue so it may give you ideas for next Christmas. Thanks so much for your response.

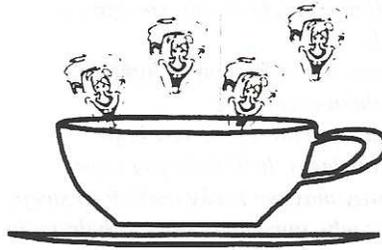
A Recipe for a Happy New Year

Gather up some pleasant thoughts and happy memories

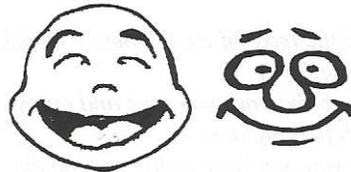


spread them throughout the day and year...

Gently blend in these
A cup or so of laughter.



A happy smile or two. . .



And then you'll have the kind of day and year that I wish for you!!!

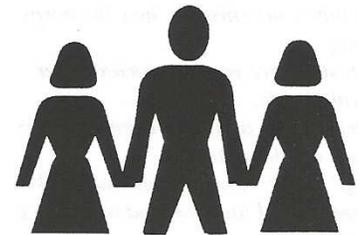


Happy New Year!!!

There is a wonderful book entitled **To Heal Again (towards serenity and the resolution of grief)**. It is written by Rusty Berkus and has stunning illustrations by Christa Wollan. I highly recommend this book for each of you and to give to others who are grieving. The text is as follows:

You sit in the shadow of sorrow seeking, searching for the magic that will make the pain go away. Weep what you must weep, not only for this loss but for all other losses you have sustained in this life. Surrender into the memory of what once was and can no longer be. This Winter of your life will pass as all seasons do. Stay In your season of Winterness as long as need

be. for everything you feel is appropriate. There is no right way to grieve--There is just Your way. It will take as long as it takes. It is important to be ever so gentle and. loving and giving to yourself right now and to let others be ever so gentle, kind, loving and giving to you. Remember how deserving you are of gentleness, kindness lovingness and givingness. No one ever said it was easy to let go, let be, let life do what It is supposed to do. Perhaps you feel you are the only one in the Universe but out of your loss is an interconnectedness with all humanity- for you are One with everyone who has ever mourned When you live fully your vulnerability takes you through the shadows of Winter where you feel you may never see the sun again, To cease living fully because you fear the Winter shadow is never to see the sun at all. Judge not the appearance of this loss. Behind the darkest cloud of the dreary Winter chill is a Springtime begging to burst forth. Bless this pain for It will bear its perfect gift for you in its perfect time out of your yearning for comfort, calm, growth and belief out of an aching void comes a mystical force. It longs to thaw the frozen Winter of your grief) or the invisible world of Spirit will be your greatest power with which to heal. Know beyond all knowing that through the power of the Spirit within you will befriend your highest Self The exquisiteness of this Friendship leads you to realms of compassion, humility and service--to a fulfillment you never knew existed into a holy instant of Springtime--of harmony, creativity, and the opportunity to once again master your life. Behold, you will sit in the radiant sun without sorrow no longer seeking, searching for the magic that will make the pain go away--ready to love to smile to sing, to give, to heal again and you will have stopped asking why.



A loving new friend of mine sent a t-shirt which reads: "friends are like chocolate. Great to have around anytime. .. Thanks to all of you for being the "chocolate" in my life!!