

LAMENTATIONS

Issue 17

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

February, 1994



February is not only the second month of the year, but also the shortest month. The month encompasses many events, one of which is **Ground Hog Day**.

Ground Hog Day is the second day of the month, and according to legend, the ground hog, or woodchuck, awakens from its long winter's sleep and sticks its head out of its burrow and looks around. If the sun is shining (which means the ground hog will see its shadow), the ground hog will crawl back into its borrow and that is supposed to mean that there will be six more weeks of winter. However, if the ground hog does not see its shadow, it stays out of its hole which indicates that spring weather will soon be coming.



Is this a picture of you and your grief? Are you afraid of that shadow of grief? Don't be like the ground hog who, when he sees his shadow, automatically assumes there is going to be more bad winter and goes back into its hole. Rather, come out of that hole of grief and take a look around to see if maybe your grief is getting closer to spring, or S.U.C.C.E.S.S.!

February 14 is Valentine's Day and a special day for all of us. I

remember it was the day we had our last family picture taken, (the one r sent to you) and how thankful r am that we observed that day. Each holiday can be a special day even though we don't have one of our loved ones with us.

Perhaps you can look at this short month as three days less you have to grieve in the month of February. Don't add these days onto next month, but try to eliminate them entirely from your grief calendar. Maybe they can be three days less of anger, or three days less of denial. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could eliminate the grief period all together?

Marilyn Willett Heavilin writes in *Roses in December*: *Those who handle a loss well are usually those who acknowledge their pain, admit to feelings of anger and/or bitterness, work through those feelings, and give themselves time to heal.*" She also says:

To love means to be deeply attached, thus vulnerable and open to great sorrow in loss.

In John Eareckson Tada's book, *A Step Further*, he explains:

Every person alive fits somewhere onto a scale of suffering that ranges from little to much.

And it's true. Wherever we happen to be on that scale - that is, however much suffering we have to endure - there are always those below us who suffer less, and those above who suffer more. The problem is we usually like to compare ourselves only with those who suffer less. That way we can pity ourselves and pretend we're at the top of the scale.

Colin M. Parkes said: *"Grief is the price we pay for love."* And the only way we can avoid grief is not to love anyone. Wouldn't it be sad if those of us who have experienced grief decided to never love again?

That would certainly be our loss as well as others. Shakespeare said: *It is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all.*" Do you agree with these writers?

John C. Raines, in *The Goodness of Grief*, says:

Grief is a friend who helps us remember and own the past with its shadows. And having done that, we're able to enter our new future. He continues: . . . grief is a good friend, preserving past memories so that we are born into a new future. When I felt that I couldn't live again, grief was the friend that slowly gave me permission to say Yes to life, to want to live. We can know happiness again, Raines calls it "seasoned happiness," and a "happiness with shadows."

In, *Andrew, You Died Too Soon*, Corinne Chilstrom writes about the suicide of her adopted son Andrew. She says that the work of grief is to help the heart know what the head knows. She writes: *"Anything lost must be accepted and mourned before it is possible to honor a loved memory and begin a new chapter of life."*

Chilstrom's words are moving: *Grief is chaotic and it dries up the words of prayer.*

Laments allow honesty, realism, and integrity... keep the conversation with God open. . .help break our isolation process that is often necessary in times of suffering .. A lament helps us work through a process that is often necessary in times of suffering A typical lament begins with a complaint addressed to God. It is important that it is addressed to God the goal of the lament psalm is to cast our agony on God.

To lament is to feel or show grief. . . an expression of sorrow. So **LAMENT!**

Grief Grafts

How are your own grief grafts coming? I hope you will continue to share your poems, your thoughts and your feelings. We help each other as we are helping ourselves.

Jason the 17-year-old son of Curt Davis and Barbara Davis was killed in an automobile accident 5-1-93. His best friend Jeff Hardison read the following at his funeral:

When I was first asked to eulogize Jason's life, I thought it was too soon to take on such a monumental responsibility. How could I, in two or three minutes, do justice to Jason's personal accomplishments: His academic excellence, his athletic supremacy, and his love for humanity. But one thought kept running through my mind wondering my anxiety: Jason would have been able to do it for me.

Expressing his feelings in such a situation as this, was Jason's specialty. He could express his thoughts with such an eloquence that one had to listen. He spoke and we followed. Jason was never afraid to express his views, no matter how controversial they may have been. His mental and physical security enabled him to do anything he wanted. Other people's opinions of him didn't cross his mind. He described himself as a self motivated, one man army. Sometimes at night, Jason would drive to Waggener and stand out in the middle of the football field. He then would hold his hand straight lip in the air and tilt his head back looking toward the heavens. It was his field, his field of dreams.

Jason adored his family, friends, country, and God. He thought the world of his mother and father. Making friends was no problem for Jason. Everybody knew and respected him. One could even say he was famous. If asked, Jason said that he would die for his country. Jason wasn't afraid to let people know about his faith in God. He had very strong personal convictions that he relied on. In today's society, such a lifestyle is a challenge for a 17-year-old boy.

Jason and I were more than best friends, we were brothers. When I was

down and nobody was on my side, I could always count on Jason. Behind that huge frame, Jason had a heart of gold that he let you see every time you asked. Even though we disagreed on some issues, he always said we thought just alike. It was his discernment and deepness in his thoughts that gained my eternal respect. We often spoke in terms of "we" instead of "I" or "You". People would hear us say that "we were sad", or "we needed a new joy", or "We were tired". They took it as a joke, but we didn't. We were one. Well, I've lost part of myself forever but I've gained another goal. As Walter Lippman once said "The final test of a leader is that he leaves behind him in other men the conviction and the will to carry on". When I see Jason again, and I've lived "our" dreams, I'll hear him say "We've done okay, Jeff".

Jason's symbol is a gentle giant.

Janice Penkalski, whose 18-year-old son David was killed in an automobile accident 12-8-90, wrote:

There's a hush outside --the calming silence that a snow storm brings. The view from my kitchen door connects me to nature, the Earth. . . I feel so close, so one with that heartbeat in the silence. Another part of me is ripe to create stories that will dance, wake memory, seek truth. "

What beautiful words and what an optimistic attitude. May each of us adopt this new view of life. May we "dance;" "wake" the precious memories we have; and "seek truth." Thank you for that challenge, Janice.

Humbert and Pam Meade's son Quentin died 8-8-93 from Synovial cell Carcinoma. Pam has the most wonderful attitude. She writes: *I made it through Quentin's birthday (1-10-80) better than I thought I would. I know he's with God and that there's not one thing that eon ever hurt him again. Who could ask for a better birthday present? Nothing in this world can compare to what our children now have. Quentin's symbols are praying hands. Pam, how I long to be at that point. You are my inspiration.*



Dave and Kathy Griffin's 15-year-old son, Todd, died 5-13-92. Kathy wrote: "Whew! Believe it or not, we made it through. There is no question that from Thanksgiving to Christmas is a real test of survivability. Getting past the New Year without sinking into a Great depression is certainly a major accomplishment as far as I am concerned. Thankfully, the New Year brings in with it a fresh source of hope and peace from our Gracious Heavenly Father." Kathy also wrote the following:

REFLECTIONS ON TODD

Christmas_1993

From the time he was born he was a real "character" and therefore, a true Griffin -- a lover of people, particularly family, with a penchant for wanting things his own way and a determination to see it through. And yet polite innocent, kind, and fragile. Todd was a delight to be with -- he was entertaining, .Funny, bright, and curious. His freckled nose and shining eyes "fit" his personality.

He was a blessing beyond measure for me. The only baby I call ever lay claim to -- though through love rather than blood. For nearly 16 years I watched with amazement as he grew (how quickly!) from an infant to a young man. And then he was gone.

Why? Only God knows. And as painful as it is to think of him, it is as necessary as breathing the world is still too fresh for memories to be sweet. For now at least, they are bittersweet indeed -- but ever so precious. Mental treasures guarded with a heart's passion.

I don't believe that anytime will ever be more difficult than Christmas. Like most children, Todd loved it so. And he is so glaringly absent. It is so mystifying as to make it all seem somehow unreal. The season has become a shadow of its former self. It is, quite simply, incomplete without him.

Kathy also sent this touching poem from *The Musician's Quest* by George McDonald:

On either hand we behold a birth, of which, as of the moon, we see but half! To the region where he goes, the man enters newly born. We forget that it is a birth and call it death. The body he leaves



behind is but the placenta by which he drew his nourishment from his mother Earth. And as the childbed is watched on earth with anxious expectancy, so the couch of the dying, as we call it, may be surrounded by the birthwatchers of the other world, waiting like anxious servants to open the door to which this world is but the wind blown porch.

Todd's symbol is a rose.



Judy Bowmar has also selected a rose to represent her 15-year-old daughter, Jessica Dawn, who died 10-19-93 after being struck by an automobile. Judy writes that Jessica was a writer, a poet and an artist, and was always writing and painting. Jessica gave almost all of her work to her friends. Jessica loved roses and was always painting single roses. Judy has a painting of a rose Jessica painted on Sunday before her death. Jessica also wrote the following poems. One was written 6 months before her death, and was given to a friend of the family who had just lost her son. The other was written October 14.

Rose

Lay a rose down beside me in the place where I lay watered with rain And tears from people who live within vein.

Once it passes life goes on
A willow weeps at a very sad song.

Lay a rose down beside me in the place where I lay

Dry your tears, and voice your fears.
But our memory will never go away.

Lay a rose down beside me, on the Place where I lay.

Let the rain hit my face and wash it gently away.

Let a tear from a loved one slide down their cheek

But let their pain be very bleak.

Have the rain cover my grief
And send my spirit on its way.

Lay a rose down beside me in the place where I lay.

Have the rain wash me gently away.

Mike and Maggie Peters' 13-year-old daughter, Meredith, died of Osteosarcoma, 9-24-90.

Maggie said that Meredith fought this disease for 15 months. Maggie writes:

"Meredith was grateful for all the support and love she received. There was much of that! She said she never felt so loved before and that it was a beautiful year in so many ways and not a waste. The doctors used Meredith to talk to other kids with cancer to help them. She loved science and really enjoyed learning about her disease! She had planned to become a pediatric oncologist and medical missionary had she survived. She was strong in the Lord; Amy Carmichael was one of her 'heroes' --the late missionary to India who rescued children from being orphans, poverty, prostitution. We miss her a lot still --she was a terrific oldest kiddo and role model for the other 3.

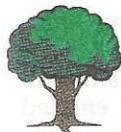
When she was first diagnosed, she said she was sorry that this happened to her, but it's a good thing it didn't happen to Lydia, Stewart, or Edith (the Peters' 3 children) because you know how they are, and they couldn't take it!. She was a very maternal, protective big sis. She still helped Stewart clean up his room while crawling on the floor in a sort of crab walk. If you've seen "Beauty and the Beast," she was much like Belle!

A good symbol for Meredith would be either:

A book- loved reading,



A tree- loved the trees in Vermont- much appreciated them after being born in South Florida,



or a heart above a cross --a symbol she often wrote on things"



Tiny and Kelly Alexander lost their 4-month-old son, Cole, to SIDS and are interested in corresponding with those who have experienced this same loss. Their address is: P.O. Box 185, Chester field, IN 46017. Cole's symbol is a Cherub or baby angel.



In the December issue of the newsletter, I told you about Joshua, the six-year-old son of Henry and Myra Goforth, who was killed by a dog. Myra wrote that her

11-year-old son Jeremiah wanted to be included in the newsletter and wanted to tell us what symbol he wanted for Joshua. His symbols are a basketball and goal, because they would play basketball together. Sometimes Joshua would shoot and make it and Jeremiah would laugh; then Jeremiah would shoot and miss it - then Joshua would laugh. He would pull wagons and other "stuff" up to the goal to shoot. Then Myra would show him how to shoot and it would make him so happy. Joshua said he was going to be a basketball player when he became older. His other symbol is Barney.



Roger and Patty Hunter's 13-year-old daughter, Alesha, died as the result of an automobile accident 8-19-93. Patty writes: *Our family is adjusting by taking one day at a time. I believe everyone has a time young or old, and when that time comes, He'll call you home. I also believe that His spirit is always near. This gives me comfort to go on each day to face what I must. I've found an inner strength that I never knew I had and I thank God each day for it. I often wonder why I was spared in the wreck, but I must have a purpose yet to fill before I depart from this life. I pray with time I will find that purpose and fill it. I believe if one gives of themselves, they will in turn, receive the comfort and love one needs.*

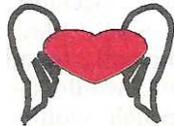
Patty explained how the family honored Alesha this past Christmas, and this will be shared in next December's newsletter. Patty said: *the day after Christmas, "the sorrow crept in. It seems you have a good day and then a bad one, but you know with God's help you can survive."*

Patty and Roger have both returned to work and find that staying busy passes time and allows the mind time to rest and the heart time to heal. Alesha's symbol is a heart. (How fitting for Valentine's Day.)



Steven and Sheri Boylan have lost two children, Ian and Emmett,

to rare deaths that occurred at their births. They have chosen as their symbols--Angel wings and hearts. Sheri writes: "They (Ian and Emmett) are both angels and we love them with all our hearts. They also both have a place within our hearts. The hearts symbolize our love for them, The end of a year always saddens me, but the beginning of a new year always gives us a new start."



Jeremy, the 10-year-old son of Weldon and Teresa Kirkland, died 12-2-92 from a disease which was diagnosed when he was 18 months old. The Kirklands were told that Jeremy would lose his ability to walk, talk, and see. Watching their son continually get worse was so hard.

Teresa says that after Jeremy's death, she had a lot of mixed feelings--relief to know he is no longer suffering, but the loneliness of not having him with her, Teresa writes: "A part of me died when I found out he was sick and another part died when he died." The Kirklands' son, Matthew, was 2 months old when Jeremy was diagnosed, Teresa and Matthew spent last summer staying busy doing things they had never been able to do before, Teresa was the only person who could feed Jeremy, so she cared for him all the time. They have chosen a brown teddy bear to represent Jeremy because Teresa was given a musical brown bear at her baby shower and they played it every night from Jeremy.



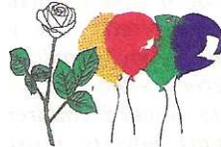
Louise Barger sent the following that was read at her daughter, Rhonda's, funeral:

"We are all standing in line, the longest line you have ever been in. We are born in this line and we live our lives moving forward in the line, moment by moment. Where is this line taking us? Our destination--eternity. Sometimes, unable to see all the way to the front, you forget what this line is all about. Caught up in the things you are doing now. We enjoy our companions and have some wonderful times here, but

the real joy, the real life, is not in the waiting line, but beyond the door in the world God has prepared for us. We miss those who have passed through the door, but they aren't 'gone,' they have 'arrived.'

Sometimes God takes one out of place and moves that one to the front of the line. This is God's line! While we wait, let's be useful, happy and busy. Every one of us will soon have our moment at the front. See you on the other side! It's wonderful over there."

Louise concludes: "I feel Rhonda is telling every fellow traveler that message," Rhonda's symbols are balloons and a white rose.



We are currently building a hotel and restaurant at Cumberland College which is adjacent to Interstate 75. There is a 16 foot dome in the lobby, and an artist, which is an alumnus of the college, is painting cherubs in this dome. Many of the symbols of our loved



ones will be in this painting. I have adopted another symbol for Young Jim. It is a **Pegasus**. It seems only fitting that it should be a horse with wings.

Michael and Susan Kauffman sent this wonderful booklet entitled "believe in the dawn. . ." by Kimberly Rinehart.

*if the heart knew no weeping,
it could not laugh.
if the soul felt no sorrow,
it would not grow.
believe in the dawn,
and the night will soon be over.
without a touch,
without a sound,
may the loving thoughts
of those who care
surround you, strengthen you,
and give you hope.
with the arms of my ,spirit
I am holding you lip.
in the silence of my thoughts
I am sending you strength.
and here in my heart,*

*I am hurting with you,
waiting with you
and believing with you. . .
. . .in a rainbow.*

*softly. . .
slowly. . .
quietly. . .*

*may you grow to accept the
changes in your life
with courage.*

*and may they leave you stronger,
wiser,
happier, . .
. . . and at peace.*

*How I wish that I could
hold you in my arms. . .
. . .and wrap you in a rainbow.*

*one day at a time. . ,
remember all that lies behind you
believe in all that lies ahead.
deep in your heart*

*may you always find
a song of new hope. . .
. . .and a wish for tomorrow.*

*one day at a time,
each step of the way,
hold onto your dreams. . .
believing.*

*may you open your eyes
and your heart
to the beauty that lies around you, to the
strength that lies within you, and to all
that lies before you. . .
. . . one day at a time,*



Their daughter Kristie, died 3-6-9.). Her symbol is an angel.

Chocolate is a serious food and should not be taken lightly (especially on Valentine's Day)



. . . it should be taken with chocolate covered marshmallow hearts; with at least 1 box of candy hearts; and a huge dose of chocolate hugs and kisses