

LAMENTATIONS

Issue 15

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

February, 1994



August used to be a month that was spent harvesting and preserving fruits and vegetables for the long winter ahead. Very few of us do that any more. We have found that it is much easier to go to the grocery and buy our fruits and vegetables, than to spend the long, arduous time cultivating and harvesting what we need to feed ourselves and our family. I think we often do that with grief.

Frequently, we try to put our grief aside and not permit it to show. We try to **bury** it rather than **planting** it. We don't want to acknowledge our grief for fear it will grow. We certainly don't want to cultivate it because our grief is already greater than we think we can bear. So, we want to hide it and ignore it and hope that it will go away.

But it won't. We must **cultivate** our grief. We must permit it to grow so that one day we may **harvest** it. Our greatest grief is not at the time we bury our loved one. Our greatest amount of grief is later, after it has had time to **cultivate**. I have found that this happens when we are continually reminded of our loss. Then our loss seems to be growing, rather than dying.

The figurative definitions of **cultivate** are: to loosen or break up; to give time, thought, and effort to; practice; to promote the growth or development of; to establish or strengthen; to seek the friendship of.

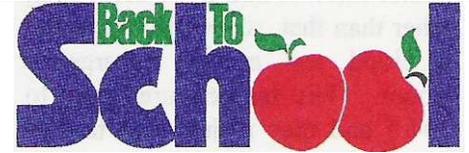
Let us not only plant our grief, but let's permit it to grow, and even give it **nourishment** (which is our tears,

our reading and understanding grief, and our acceptance of that grief). When our grief has *grown* to its fullest, let us then be prepared to harvest it. It seems that this is very difficult for us to do, especially those of us who have become "comfortable" with our grief. It becomes an old friend that we have come to rely on and it is difficult to **harvest** it and let it go.

I am not saying that we will not always experience some degree of grief; I am saying that we can harvest as much of that grief as possible. There are always some crops left in the field after a harvest. So, should we expect to totally remove our crop?

I would like to challenge you (as I daily challenge myself) to plant your grief, cultivate it, and then prepare for a harvest. Do not take the short-cut and go to the grocery for your needs. If we don't cultivate our grief now, it may reappear as a physical or mental illness. It will also affect our relationships. There are no short-cuts with our grief.

Figuratively speaking, you have helped me **cultivate** my grief by being my friend and encouraging me to develop and grow. We can do that for each other. Let me know how you are **cultivating!** I would also like to know how you are **harvesting** your grief. Let's be "share croppers"!!!



School also begins in August. I can remember Young Jim's first day in Kindergarten. It was such an exciting day for him--and us. It was a new stage in his development. Jim and I are so lucky that we also get to watch parents bringing their "babies" as freshmen here at Cumberland, and we have the privilege of watching them cultivate into adults who become productive members of our society. Even though we no longer have children of our own, we have so many here. My husband often says that he feels like Father Flanagan of Boys Town--*they are all our children*. I hope you have the privilege of experiencing this wonderful metamorphosis, either with your own children or perhaps someone in your church or your community. It is so reassuring to know that, even though our son is gone, there are other young people who will make a difference in our futures. I can't change the past, but I can help others to change the future. So can you!

In Carol Prgent's book, *When A Child Dies*, she includes *Points to Ponder* at the end of each chapter. Those include:

- * Healing involves the willingness to accept suffering as a part of life.
- * You must be willing to hurt more before you can hurt less.
- * Love is more than healing, it is a commitment.
- * A major, significant, profound change has occurred; do not tiptoe around this event.



Grief Grafts

What a month we had this past month. Jim and I were in Atlanta, Georgia for a conference. On June 23. (Thursday), Jim thought he had food poisoning. By Saturday, the doctor knew it had to be something other than that, so he recommended a blood test at the Emergency Room. His temperature went to 104.5 and they rushed him to surgery for an emergency appendectomy. On July 4th I was able to bring him home. It was not the most fun way to spend the 4th of July, but he is feeling much better. It reminded us once again how short life is and how our lives can change in a split second. I hope you are remembering that and are making as many memories as possible with your loved ones.

Paul and Patsy Daugherty's 21-year-old son, Stacey Ray, died 12-30-93 from complications of diabetes. Stacey Ray was the cousin of Chris Norton who died in December of '92. Patsy writes: *It is so ironic that Stacey Ray was born in December and died in June, and Chris was born in June and died in December. They are buried on each side of my Mom (the boys' grandmother) and hopefully in her loving care. My brother Tom (Chris's father) said "Chris is jamming on his guitar, Stacey is turning up the volume and Mom is smiling, so glad for them to be there with her."*

Tom North wrote the following poem:

Love Keeps You Alive

They say, time can heal the worst If wound"

I wonder if that's right?

'Cause we still wear the scar inside.

It haunts us day and night.

Losing you was such a pain, tho we're trying to be strong.

By living off the life you gave and not the life we lost.

Yesterday, you stood so close. today you can't be found

*You seemed to slip right through our hands, we didn't hear a sound
I wonder what you'd have to say, if we were to meet.*

Would you still smile, like yesterday, so innocent, so sweet?

We shared a lot of good times, they'll never be forgot.

We still recall your happiness, the smile you wore a lot.

But life has its untimely way of bringing us its toll.

Everything just disappears, before you even know.

I think of you most all the time, you keep my heart alive.

Every time I'm down and out, you help me to revive.

I'll cherish everything we've done, and keep the things I call.

And here's a thought I'll never lose, tho I'll never understand

I may not have you, but I've got your love that never dies.

All the joy you gave. The plans we made remain in my heart.

Throughout all times tho I don't have you-Love Keeps You Alive.

Stacey Ray's symbol is an eagle in flight.

John, the 28-year-old son of Art and Eleanor Foss, died of bladder cancer, 10-5-93. The Fosses came to J.I.M.'s Picnic from Rumson, New Jersey. It was so special to finally meet them. Eleanor wrote the following:

John, was that you the other day who gave me a rose on the 8th day of May?

The 8th day of May that was Mother's Day. A rose of bright yellow, the color of hope, our hope so tenacious your manner most gracious. The hope we held high that you would not die. I've not written that word, it's the first time ever. Surely you know, how we desperately prayed, that it would be never.

I know you're with God your pain is all gone, but dear Lord how we prayed that your life had gone all. The pain of our lives while watching you fade, the pain that we hold can never fully be told It will only recede when we see you again on that shore for away, and

John, surely you know, we can't wait for that day.

We always ask "why?" We look up at the sky. Did God need you so, to add to the glow of his heaven so bright, that he took our golden light?

I remember that call that you made from law school. The terror, your pain, though no basis in fact, clutched into my heart like a bombshell attack. "Go see a doctor, it must be a small thing." And yet in my soul, like a gong it did ring.

How we all tried The finest help we did seek. Johns Hopkins, Sloan Kettering, all did their thing. But no one, of course, did try like you did Not a tear did you shed, nor ever complain. You lived every moment on land, boat or plane. You tried to defeat, you fought as no other. The cancer was stronger, it also beat Dad and Mother.

Your smile so brilliant lit up the room. There really were times that it did chase the gloom. How we miss that smile and that teasing, none else can be so pleasing. Your loud music, your friends, toys, cars and shenanigans. I see you of course wherever I look, at the 'fridge, in your room, every cranny and nook. Your phone calls and cards, your voice on the phone. It pains to be out, it pains to be home.

I slept at your side on a cot, chair or floor. I felt every breath, every moan, every snore. I loved you so much. I truly believed that my presence and strength were all that you'd need I'm sorry to say that there was another. It's name is called cancer. It did beat your mother, your Daddy, every nurse and great doctor, every prayer, every wish, every hope, every muse. We left no stone unturned, short of abuse. There was just no earthly way we could lengthen your stay.

I have to admit, when your arms you did raise after many a week of such paralyzed pain, that you did see before you the face of our Lord cheering you on to your new room and board.

But most of all, John, on this sad Mother's Day, it's you that I miss in the most infinite way. But, your rose I did get and I must truly say, My Johnny, of course always, always found a way.



Thank you John.
Sееее yah.

John's symbols are a red BMW, a yellow rose and an angel.



Jerry and Adeline Hughes' 19-year-old son, Jerry Lee, committed suicide, 11-13-93. Adeline described Jerry Lee:

He was a good child. He kept himself well groomed, loved life, small children and the elderly. He was talented in many different things. He had a good sense of humor. He could always take any situation, regardless of what it was, and make you laugh. He loved his cars, four-wheeler, old music and working with wood. He knew how to make you feel better and knew that he was loved.

All my son's friends' still come to our home to see us and that helps one to know that there are so many people that really love him. We all laugh together and cry together. It is amazing at what little things your child did that really make a difference and you had no clue.

I can't put down my son's 19 years, 6 months on a piece of paper. He was one of a kind, so I've been told by anyone who really knew him.

When I think of Jerry Lee I think of love, so I guess his symbol would have to be a heart.



Adeline, I think you have just explained why so many of us are unable to our children on paper. Truly, all those years cannot be put on a piece of paper.

David Lee, the 18-year-old son of Tom and Rita Hacker, died in an automobile accident, 8-9-93. David Lee's symbol is a rose. To honor David on his birthday (6-17) this year, the family placed the following poem, with his picture in the local newspaper:



In Memory of David Lee Hacker Miss Me - But Let Me Go

*When I come to the end of the road
And the sun has set for me,
I want no rites in a gloom filled room.
Why cry for a soul set free?
Miss me a little, hut not too long,
And not with your heads bowed low
Remember the love that we all shared,
Miss Me - But Let Me Go.*

For this is a journey that we all must take,

*And each must go alone.
It's all a part of the Master's plan,
A step on the road to home.
So when you are lonely and sick of heart,*

*Go to the friends we know
And bury your sorrows in doing good deeds*

*Miss Me - But Let Me Go
We love & Miss you,
Mom, Dad, Misty, Mamaw, Ed,
Stacy, Toni & Sherry*

Gerald, the son of Ezra and Mildred Godby, died on 11-5-92. On 6-27-94, their 48-year-old daughter, Dora, died of a massive heart attack.

Please remember this family in your prayers. Gerald's symbols are and butterflies.



Ron and Louise Barger found the following poem in the jewelry box of their daughter, Rhonda, after her death, 9-5-92.

*Trouble is something no one can escape,
Everyone has it in some form or shape
Some people hide it way down deep inside,
Some people bear it with gallant-like pride,
While others rebel and become bitter and old
With hopes that are dead and hearts that are cold
But the wise man accepts whatever God sends,
Willing to yield like a storm-tossed tree bends,
Knowing that God never makes a mistake,
So whatever He sends they are willing to take,*

*For trouble is part and parcel of life
And no man can grow without trouble and strife,
So blest are the people who learn to accept
The trouble men try to escape and reject,
For in our acceptance we're given great grace
And courage and faith and the strength to face
The daily troubles that come to us all
So we may learn to stand straight and tall.
For the grandeur of life is born of defeat*



And in overcoming we make life complete

Rhonda's symbols are a white rose and balloons.

Janna, the 12-year-old daughter of David and Peggy Webb, died 7-12-93; Janna's symbols are yellow butterflies and a rainbow.



I would like to share some of Peggy's recent letter:

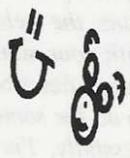
. . .your strength and ability to seize the good in life, all the while reserving a place for the love and hurt which sustains the relationship you still share with your son. [Don't you love the way Peggy describes our relationship?] I try to do the same, sometimes not very successfully, I'm afraid the celebration of the new dome and of our children who dwell in a separate but nevertheless real world was an inspiration to many. I'm sure. One thing I have been moved to do is to write to several of the people on the list of those who have lost their children. As Janna's death anniversary approaches on July 12, I can think of nothing to do which will ease the hurt and loneliness, except to reach out. I have begun to include more of Janna's friends in our activities, and while these times are painful with nostalgia and longing for her, they do provide a sense of connection with her because her life centered around these friends. They need us and we need them. They miss Janna, too, and my husband and I have the awesome responsibility of trying to provide a

good example of faith in God's everlasting goodness--even though in truth we sometimes doubt it ourselves.

Another important aspect of our lives right now is our participation in foster adoptive parenting classes. We applied to provide respite care for foster children whose foster parents need a break.

David and Peggy have found so many ways of helping others, which in turn, helps them. Bravo!!

Ray and Sue Hutcheson's 20-year-old daughter, Leslie, was killed in an automobile accident 2-21-93. Sue shared that Leslie's graduating class, at Georgetown College, honored her by planting a tree near the English Department building in her memory and she was remembered by both the class president and the class spokesperson. Leslie's personalized license plate was "PHI-MU" which were the Greek letters of her sorority. Her sorority sisters had it framed with a plaque which reads "One Singular Sensation--Leslie E. Hutcheson." (From the musical "A Chorus Line") Leslie's scholarship continues to grow, which means that she will never be forgotten. Leslie's symbols are a bear and a smile.



Chuck and Karen Sturgill's 18-year-old son, Clint, died in an automobile accident 4-25-92. Chuck's symbol is the number 3.



Chris the 18-year-old son of Bill and Carole Kemper, was killed in a truck accident, 7-21-93. Carole wrote that

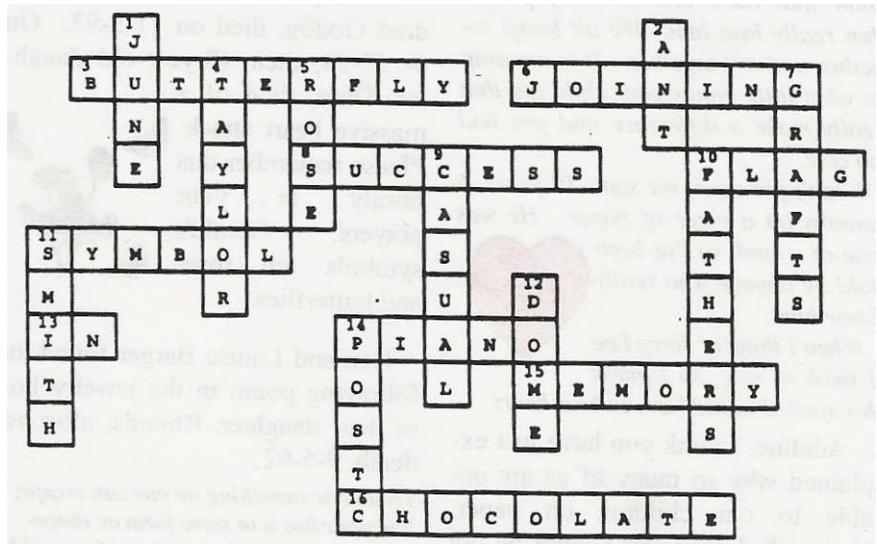
"people do not talk about Chris so much not because they are afraid that it will upset me. They don't understand that I need to keep talking about him in order to heal my hurt."

Chris' symbols are a cowboy hat and boots. (This roping horse was my idea)



Carole continued: There are so many of us hurting parents out here, and the only way we can get through it is to rely on God and others who truly understand what it is like to lose a child. I find that in talking to others who have experienced this loss, that I can handle my loss better. Although it will never go away, I can survive.

This is the solution to last month's crossword puzzle.



Happiness is a butterfly, which when pursued, is always just beyond your grasp, but which, if you will sit down quietly, may alight upon you.

Nathaniel Hawthorne

Life, according to an Arabic proverb, is composed of two parts:

That which is past--a dream; and that which is to come--a wish.

G.A. Sala

Man strives for glory, honor, fame. That all the world may know his name. Amasses wealth by brain and hand Becomes a power in the land. But when he nears the end of life And looks back o'er the years of strife, He finds that happiness depends On none of these, but love of friends.

Anonymous

A real friend is one who walks in When the rest of the world walks out.

Walter Winchell

J.I.M.'s 'Picnic

The Whiz



Even though my Mother taught me better, and all the television talk shows encourage us not to -- You know how I feel about chocolate - I can't help it . . .

I TAKE CHOCOLATE FROM STRANGERS!!

(There now, I feel better. They say confession is good for the soul.)