

LAMENTATIONS

Issue 29

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

February, 1995

We usually think of February as the month of **LOVE**. February is also a month in which three of the Presidents of the United States were born. Two of these presidents lost a total of 9 children before their own deaths.

William Henry Harrison was born February 9, 1773. He and his wife had six sons and four daughters. Six of their children died before Harrison became President.

Abraham Lincoln was born February 12, 1809. He and his wife lost 3 sons.



George Washington, whose birthday is February 22, did not have children of his own, but has been ordained as the **Father of our Country**.

I continue to be inspired by the great accomplishments bereaved people have made, and are making after the death of a loved one. Could it be that it is a way of making their loved one's life have meaning, is it to help them work through their grief, is it a type of memorial to their loved one? Perhaps it is all of these. I have discovered, through extensive reading about grief, that we are never the same after a loved one's death. We must try to make the remainder of the time we have on this earth a better place for all and try to help each other along that obscure path of grief

It is time for us to become *President of our* destiny. No one else can do it for us. We are responsible for our own S.U.C.C.E.S.S. February 20 is **Presidents' Day** and I challenge you to designate this day as the beginning of your destiny through grief, not your destitution.

Valentine's Day is February 14 and it is a day we give those we love cards, candy (of course chocolate is my favorite), and/or presents. It should also be a day that we renew our relationship with our spouses. There is a wonderful article in the February 1994 issue of *Bereaved Parents Share*, entitled *Marriage Survival After Losing A Child* by Carol Ruth Blackman. I have drawn the following conclusions from that article:

Long-term stress tends to multiply the problems that a marriage has weathered or accumulated over the years. In marriage, two become one by turning to each other. In grief, two often turn away from each other, becoming isolated, resentful and lonely. The intense pain of grief seems to engulf us as we deal with our own agony. Our grief makes us very self-centered at the very time we should be supporting each other.

Men and women grieve differently and it is vital that we understand these differences. There are several good books about these differences. I will discuss this in greater detail in June's newsletter.

To survive requires us to become as a third person to each other. We should listen to our spouse and accept each other's method of grieving as we accept each other's personality differences. Survival of our marriages require us to adapt and adjust to these differences.

After the death of a loved one, our priorities and commitments are scrutinized because our stability is gone and the simplest of chores become memory riddled challenges.

"Change pulls our life-preserver from our grasp in the turbulent waters of grief. When a spouse criticizes their partner's grief or (supposedly) lack of grief, the ability to stay afloat is lost."

Our home needs to be a haven in those "turbulent waters of grief." It is vital that we find ways of supporting each other during this time.

We should share our feelings, fears, disappointments, goals, etc. with our spouses.

We all need love and support, especially during our grieving. The consensus is that men feel loved when they know they are respected and they are fulfilled sexually. Women feel loved through tenderness and understanding.

"When a woman loses a loved one, she needs extra outward expressions of understanding and tenderness and protectiveness. Physical contact such as holding, etc. is critical even though she may not desire sex. Many women feel that sex is wrong when their child has just died, whereas sex reassures men that they are loved, needed and that their wife really cares about them. Men usually relate first sexually, then verbally. Sexual intimacy nurtures the husband's emotional needs .

Suggestions for marriage survival:

- ♥ Determine that your marriage will come out stronger.
- ♥ Don't place bigger-than-life-sized expectations on your spouse.
- ♥ Seek to rebuild your relationship, with God's help and each other's.
- ♥ Remember that forgiveness is the key to healing.

There are two great books entitled *Random Act of Kindness* and *More Random Act of Kindness*. I would like to encourage you to read these books and practice your own random acts and see if you agree with Andre Gide who said: *True kindness presupposed the facility of imagining as one's own, the suffering and joy of others.*



Grief Grafts

Jeremy, the 16-year-old son of Tony and Doris Gordon, was killed in an auto accident with 6 other friends, 12-15-93. Doris writes: *Over the past year, motivation, desire, and effort have been almost non-existent. Our son, Jeremy. It was so full of life. He was an avid wildlife sportsman. He loved fishing, all types of hunting, and roaming in the fields and woods. He was strictly a lover of the outdoors. He experienced great excitement in seeing a flock of geese or a deer standing in the edge of a wooded area. During the summer of 1993, he worked at Lake Barkley Marina where he enjoyed fishing almost everyday. He was some what shy among adults and strangers but was a cut-up among friends. He was a polite, lovable, respectful, honest, and responsible young man who will remain in our hearts and our lives forever.*

We could not select only one symbol for Jeremy as it would not have been a complete representation of him.

These are Jeremy's symbols.



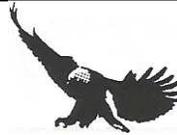
Ed and Pat Kuzela's 20-year-old son, Chris, died as the result of a fall from an interstate bridge on 4-24-88.

Chris is symbolized by an eagle. Pat writes: *One of several powerful dreams I had of Chris in the first month after his death came to me at the ocean in a small, plastic trailer belonging to a fellow bereaved parent (who had once been Chris' first grade teacher). She knew the power of the sea when confronted with the incomprehensible. (I wonder how many sufferers have added their own salt water [tears] to the great oceans...) Someone had been flying a wedge-shaped kite in the form of an eagle, I dreamed of the kite that afternoon, and it turned into an eagle that spoke to me to tell me to let go of the blame I was holding for one of a group of his peers in relation to his death.*

Cris won "letters" in swimming, wrestling, football, and track, made the highest SAT grades in the class, and earned himself a NROTC scholarship to Georgia Tech.

This has been our seventh Christmas without our son and even though the rage and incredulity have subsided to what might be described as a "manageable sorrow," it is still as surreal as ever.

An eagle in flight is also the symbol for Stacey Daugherty, the 21-year-old son of Paul and Patsy. Stacey died 12-30-93. Patsy expressed the loneliness she felt on the anniversary of Stacey's death. "Seems like most of our family and all of our friends have forgotten. My best friend for over 20 years hasn't spoken to me but twice this last year. Funny how death separates people. My husband and I have no one to talk to about Stacey's death."



I think each one of us have experienced this isolation. It is very sad to say, but I have found that the greater the time since our loved one's death, the less people want to discuss their life. That is another reason why it is important for us to stay in touch with each other. We understand the importance of talking about our loved one. I would like to encourage you to take your list of fellow travelers and make contact with each other.

Doug and Kathy Elliott's 16-year-old son, Clark, died tram an auto accident, 6-20-93. Amanda, Clark's sister who is a senior at UK, wrote a paper about her brother. I am including some excerpts:

Hey Sue. . .

Even as a two-year-old, Clark impressed others with an unexpected dose of wit and charm garnished with a smile. Gravity itself could not pull his smile into a frown. Clark retained that same weightless smile as he grew tall and slender. His straight black hair continued to compliment his sweet brown eyes. The physical features that changed were his short stubby legs and plump round face.

As Clark grew, his smile occasionally added extra pounds. Physical change, hormone surges and lax responsibility temper what Mom called the terrible teenage syndrome.

Furthermore, Clark never grasped my theory that if you are on time, you are late. He rolled out of bed fifteen minutes before leaving for school. Mom reminded him to shower and comb his messy hair. Every night, she asked if he completed his homework,

Aside from the episodic, terrible, teen syndrome, Clark generally upheld an incomparable charisma. On Monday nights,

Clark waited tables at Line's the restaurant owned by our parents. The other waitresses never understood how Clark received dollar tips instead of nickels from the regular customers. "What may I bring you lovely ladies to drink this evening?" he politely asked the older retired women. Moreover, Clark assembled a delectable dessert tray a/homemade pies and cheesecakes for his customers. The waitresses only recited the dessert menu. Compared to his co-workers. Clark always received more tips. His charisma also shined outside of work. He accompanied each winsome smile with an eager affectionate hug. We classified ours as either "big hugs" or "little hugs." "Hey. Sue. I missed you so much last week. Come on, big hug, big hug" Clark candidly expressed. The strength of the embrace depended on the degree of comfort needed or joy expressed.

When Clark was six, he designated my name as Sue. Everyone around our house called me "Sue," But no one knew why he really gave me that nickname. The fact that he assigned me a random name illustrated a breezy, carefree side of Clark's wit and charm. "But Clark, her name is Amanda Jo. Where did you get 'Sue' from?" Mom questioned. "I just liked it." he simply justified. "Sue is a pretty name."

Although Clark was a people person, his passion was for golf. At age five, our distant cousins gave him a set of miniature golf clubs. The set included a small red plaid bag and about four clubs. Even then those clubs were swung quite frequently.

In the sixth grade, Clark joined the high school varsity golf team and lettered in golf. Soon, he played competitively in junior tournaments throughout Kentucky.

"Next year, I'm goin' to golfcamp so I can stay on my game." But camp was expensive. To pay for half the fee he cooked on the weekends at Line's.

Clark was definitely no stranger to cooking. Our dad is a gourmet cook and groomed Clark into a chef. When Clark stood too short to see the stove top; he dragged a dining room chair into the kitchen. He then reached and stirred or added ingredients as Dad suggested.

Soon cooking weekends paid for half of golf camp. In return golf camp paid off for Clark. In a lower flight of the local Men's Club Championship. Clark golfed against an elderly man. "Hey, Sue: hey. Sue, I won my match today," he proudly shared with me after a big hug. But it was more than golf camp and tournament experience that improved Clark's golf game. During the winter off season, he developed arm strength

"Hey Sue," he called for my attention "spot me so I can lift my weights." Clark filled two empty one gallon milk jugs with water. He attached a pole through the handle of each jug to make barbells. "I have to build stronger forearm muscles to better my game."

Clark not only maintained physical strength, but enhanced coordination as well. He enrolled in Tae Kwon Do.

"Hey Sue, come at me like you're gonna hit me and watch how good I can block ya." Soon he attained a colorful array of belts. "Now hold this board, Sue, really still so I can chop it in two with my foot."

"Come on Sue best two out of three. Whoever loses has to take out the Garbage next Tuesday morning" Oh how I loved to talk trash on Tuesdays.

Aside from golf Clark devoted the winter months to his collection of tricks and talents. Each contribution to the collection involved some degree of creativity in either conception or utility.

"Hey Sue, pick a card but don't let me know what it is. I bet I can guess." Figuring out the magic in the trick or the trick in the magic challenged Clark. He practiced and polished each magic act to fascinate an interested audience. Soon, I heard the call ... "Hey Sue.

Before long, I noticed changes in Clark. As a sophomore in high school, he dedicated more time to studying. Cooking at Line's transformed into a bother as football games and friend's took precedence. He quickly received his driver's license and soon asked his friend, Melinda, on a first date. He even referred to me more as "Amanda" instead of "Sue." Nevertheless a touch of charm and devotion toward others still dominated his more matured personality.

"If I could give one gift to anybody. I would give my mother some relaxation. I tell her all the time to calm down or take a deep breath and enjoy the scenery" Mom's busy schedule during the Christmas holiday season concerned Clark. That year, she appeared on the top of his Christmas wish list.

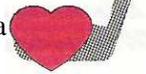
For Dad's 1993 Father's Day gift. Clark and I bought golf balls. However, I hesitated until mid-August before giving Dad the golf balls, because the Saturday night before Father's Day. Clark had a car accident. At the age of sixteen, God called Clark to a better place.

Now, even less clutter lies around the house. I miss playing golf with him, the special meals with secret ingredients, and even the littlest hugs.

In August of that same summer, Dad played in the final round of the local Men's Club Championship. His opponent was tough so the match remained extremely close. Yet the intent with which he played was evident to me, especially when he won. I saw him shed a few tears and knew Clark was still near.

"When my opponent won two holes in a row," Dad explained. "I knew I had better change my strategy. I reached into my golf bag and grabbed a special sleeve of golf balls that my children had given me for Father's Day. On the next hole ... I won."

In February a tree was planted in Clark's memory at the golf course. The 1994 high school graduating class dedicated the yearbook in Clark's memory and classmates wrote poems in his honor. Close friends, the community, and family dearly miss him. I miss above all, participating in his magic tricks being the punching bag for karate chops, the pounding headaches caused by his drumming The peaceful putting while I watch TV and seeing that ever so-charming smile. And sometimes, I can almost hear a faint, hut distant "Hey Sue ..." It must be the magic.

Clark's symbols are a  golf club and a big heart.

Meredith Peters, the 13-year-old daughter of Mike and Maggie, died from osteosarcoma, 9-24-90. Mike attends a care circle home Bible study and has really worked hard at "processing his grief and for him, the Christian philosophical tenets and upheaval it reflected." Their children are doing well, but miss Meredith.

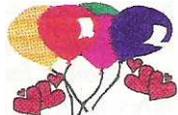
Meredith's symbols are a  cross and a heart.

Wendell and Pat Root's 14-year-old daughter, Bessie, was killed in an auto accident, 10-29-94. Pat found this poem two days after Bessie's death.

When I look up at the sky,
I think of what Heaven
will be like when I die.
I imagine the golden streets
I will walk upon and the
big pearly gate I will
walk through ...

I do not dread dying
because there's nothing
to be scared of;

It's something to look forward to.
Bessie Root

Bessie's symbols are  balloons and hearts.

Kim Delong, a friend of Bessie's, wrote and published the following poems in the local newspaper the week of Bessie's birthday.

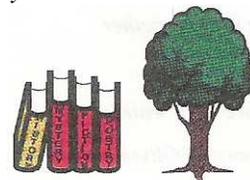
Laughing, smiling, talking, crying.
That was all her time was buying.
I remember the police saying, "She didn't
make it."

I remember the pain and I still can't take it.
They said it was already her time to leave.
That's a fact I didn't want to believe.
I would do all I could to get her life back.
It's her beautiful smile that we all lack.
I miss her glowing and happy face.
The one that no one can ever replace.
I feel so had you're probably wondering
"Why?"

It's the simple fact that I never said
"Good bye."
Her death has left us in such sorrow.
But we've got to realize there's no
promise for tomorrow.

Today is your birthday, you would have
been fifteen.
I know that you're still with me even
though you can't be seen.
I need you here to help me share my ups
and downs.
And even though you've gone away, you'll
always be around.
For in my heart, you'll never die.
You'll be there till the end. Bessie, this is
my good bye.
Until we meet again. Happy Birthday Bess.
Kim Delong

Mary Ann Mc-Celvey's 20-year-old son, Geoffrey ended his life after being suddenly stricken by a devastating mental illness. Her husband, George, died 7-30-93. George's symbol is a book, and Geoffrey's symbol is a tree. Mary Ann writes: *I think I'm progressing--at least in comparison with my state of mind last year at this time. I don't think the pain is less. I just think I tolerate it better. In this case, familiarity doesn't breed contempt-it breed's tolerance.*



Justin, the 11-year-old son of Becky Powell, was hit as he was getting off the bus, and died 4-11-93. Becky writes: *I have spent the past several weeks looking through family memorabilia-- Pictures of great-great-grandparents, our 1873 family Bible, etc. All remind me of how short and fleeting our lives really are. It has really helped me to put things in perspective. I feel we are put here for a purpose--to give more than we take (otherwise we just take up space! I think a lot of people do this.) Our children have fulfilled Their purpose--we haven't--so, we have a few more years to do. In the end, though, our rewards will be great.*

Karen Hall's husband, Denzil, and only child, Olivia, were killed in an automobile accident, 1-10-93. Their symbols are musical notes. Karen sent a copy of a song that was written by Cece Houston, a graduate of Cumberland.



IN JESUS' ARMS

*I never thought I'd face spending
Christmas without you
But if it weren't for Jesus. I don't
know what I'd do.
There's not a day that passes by when
you don't cross my mind
But I receive comfort I knowing your at
Jesus' side.*

CHORUS

*You were an angel sent by God and it
hurt to let you go
But I find peace in knowing that
Heaven is now your home
Where you shed no tears and you're
safe from harm
Praising God in Jesus' arms.
You touched the hearts of many in
such a short time
And the holidays seem empty without you
at our side
You shared the Love of God and
helped show us the way
Now Jesus is our strength, He helps us
through the day.*

*I miss the time that we spent together
And how we used to talk
But I look forward to the day
When on Heaven's shore we'll talk.*

Written in loving memory of Olivia
Nikole Hall

The following poem was written by
Karen:

*In Loving Memory of Denzil Ray &
Nikole Hall*

*Death is nothing at all
It does not count
We have only slipped away.
The old live we lived so fondly
together is untouched, unchanged.
Whatever we were to each other that
we are still
Call us by the old familiar names.
Speak of us in the easy way which
you always did
Put no difference unto your tone
Wear no forced air of sorrow
Laugh as we always laughed at the
little jokes that we enjoyed together
Let our names be ever the household
names they always were
Let these words be spoken without
effort, without the ghost of a shadow
upon them
Life means all that it ever meant.
What is this death but a negligible
accident?
Why should we be out of mind
because we are out of sight?
We are but waiting for you for an
interval somewhere very near just
around the corner.
In the "Harbor of love"*

Mary, the 15-year-old daughter of Woody and Jenny Curtis, died from a heart attack, 6-21-93. The family has chosen three symbols to represent Mary.

A heart-- Mary's heart was as big as all outdoors She was always trying to help others.

The Sun-- She was the sunshine of our lives.

The Stars-- She tried so hard at everything she did.

Cheerleaders-- Her childhood dream came true!



Daniel and Joy Roark's 18-year -old daughter, Natalie, died from complications of Multiple Sclerosis 6-15-94. Joy shared Natalie. *She was diagnosed with*

MS one week after her sixteenth birthday. As always, she handled the news with a smile. Even though her body was telling her that she could no longer do the things she used to do, In her mind, she was Just the same. She insisted on going to school even though her doctor said "No." She was in a wheelchair most of the lime by the end of her junior year in high school. A close friend escorted her to the Junior-Senior prom. We took her wheelchair. but she insisted on walking through the Font door on the arm of her date They made It on all night of lair staying until the very end of the prom and then for the after prom party. We knew that she had to be exhausted, but she would never admit it I think she knew all along that her time was running out and she tried to crowd-as much living, as possible into the time she had left.

In August before her senior year, she had to have oxygen frequently and became so weak that she could only talk above a whisper.

Finally she recuperated enough to complete her studies and graduate. Before her illness she had been an honor student, a member of the academic team, beta club, science club, high school band, and DARE. She was Involved in everything. We weren't sure if she would be able to go through the actual graduation ceremony when the time came, so they brought the graduation ceremony to her. She received her diploma at home a few weeks early and we had a nice party with school officials, teachers, friends, and family attending

In June, someone arranged for her to attend a Billy Ray Cyrus concert in Lexington and go back stage to meet him. She was too weak to talk, but he was very gracious. He did all the talking and sang her a song. I think it was one of the greatest nights her life. No matter how bad ,she felt, could always manage a smile when we asked her about Billy Ray

She had assured us months before that she wasn't afraid to die and many times we had seen her staring blankly at the same place on the ceiling and had asked her if she had seen angels. She would always smile and nod 'yes.'

Natalie had so much faith. She was a beautiful child inside and out and always wore a smile regardless of the circumstances. Our pastor said that Natalie touched more lives in the three years of her illness than most people do who live long full lives. He always called her his "angel" or his "little flower" so It seemed appropriate to have, an angel surrounded by powers on her monument and the following saying: "An angel visited the green earth and took

A flower away." When trying to select a symbol to represent Natalie, I first thought of a smile because she was always smiling and a heart because she was a hopeless romantic, but an angel and a flower were my final choice.



In August, only two months after losing Natalie, I also lost my mother. I'm sure they are together again. The symbols for my mother would definitely have to be a heart because she was the center, heart, soul, and strength of our whole family; and a cross because she had enough faith to carry us all through whatever trial we faced in life.

Weldon and Theresa Kirkland's 10-year-old son, Jeremy, died from Santavuori Disease, 12-2-92. Teresa was given a bear pin which she wears on her coat lapel. When someone comments on the pin, Teresa takes that opportunity to tell them about Jeremy. A brown teddy bear is Jeremy's symbol.



Isn't it amazing how people will comment on a pin? I usually wear something with a horse or an angel and I am often asked why I wear them, I suggest you find a pin, necklace, etc. that will give you an opportunity to talk about your loved one.

Jeff, the 22-year-old son of Lonnie and Janice Stewart, was killed in a dune buggy accident, 6-9-94. Jeff's symbol is a star. Jeff wrote this short essay about pictures;



Pictures

Pictures are the most valuable objects we have in our possession. They capture a moment in time and it will be there forever

Sometimes they remind us of bad things, or things we would rather forget about. Other times we are reminded of good things.

Special people we want to remember can always be with us in a picture to remind us of how they looked. Remember to keep your pictures; they help your memories remain with you.

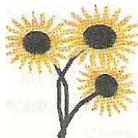
I'm sure Jeff didn't have any idea just how important pictures are to us now. I hope each of you are able to enjoy the pictures you have of your loved ones.

Nick, 15, was a passenger in an auto accident, and died 6-5-94. His parents are Rickey and Deb Thompson. Deb describes Nick::

Nick was a good kid and he really enjoyed simple things. He loved it here in the country, and he really loved to work. He had worked on the farm since he was in the sixth grade.

Nick made me feel so young. I felt like I was one of the gang. We went to concerts together with his friends and went to the FFA activities together. My husband and Nick usually did activities together on the weekends.

In Lamentations, I read that a lot of times families will pick out a symbol to represent their child. I thought that would be so hard to do as none of you knew Nick. I couldn't pick out anything that would represent how wonderful and special he was. So I forgot about it for awhile. When one day I was watering the many planters we had received from the funeral. I noticed that in almost every planter there was a sunflower ribbon or some silk sunflowers, or hoth. Then it hit me. Nick was like a sunflower. He was tall and strong and could withstand anything just like the sunflower is tall and stands up to all kinds of weather. And I see sunflowers everywhere. I have told my friends that Nick's symbol will be a sunflower and they have told me it fits him real well.



Deb wrote the two poems:

A heart of gold stopped beating, two shining eyes are at rest. God broke my heart to prove. He only takes the best. A million times I needed you, a million times I've cried. If love could have saved you, you never would have died. It broke my heart to lose you, but you didn't go alone. For part of me went with you the day God called you home,

Love, Mom

Drawings I saved that you scribbled at three, and pictures of you with two missing teeth. And the ball in the corner you'd thrown afternoons, make me think back of some special times with you. Like muddy shoes that stayed that way, even if they were cleaned every single day. But your hugs at night made my days worthwhile. Muddy shoes were forgotten with one little smile. At night

I'd watch you sleeping in your room and I'd thank God for one more day with you.



Kristen, the 3-year-old daughter of Robert and Jana Caruso, died from an aneurysm, 3-11-94. An angel is Kristen's symbol. Jana described Kristen:

For just a little over three years, we reveled in the love of this special little Angel. She was so unique; it's hard to describe how she was. She had a full head of dark brown hair, which always framed her beautiful face. Her eyes had a continual sparkle, with a hint of mischievousness. She was unusually tiny, adding to her sweet allure,

Everyone loved her. She was the epitome of the ideal baby daughter. Kristen went into a coma and was transported by helicopter to Children's Hospital in Knoxville. Everyone was amazed when the cloud, parted for the helicopter that day, but really, that was only fitting since an Angel was on board.

Kristen knew no suffering, no pain, no hate, cold or hunger. She left this world knowing only love, and went to a place where there is only love.

Angel

God invented Angels for a very special role to help us along, as onward we go.

This story is about one special Angel indeed that helped a good family that was in great need.

God used this Angel for a very special task, this important job, about 3 years would last. A dear loving family had lost their

Grandmother,

Their lives were torn, they needed some other.

So he sent a little Darling to ease their pain, and fill hearts with more love, than they could contain.

She had a sweet allure, you just wanted to watch her, Her sparkling personality, words just can't capture.

When she came into a room, all heads turned, for a moment of her attention, everyone yearned.

Those mischievous brown eyes were always glowing, and bountiful brown hair around her face was flowing.

Her visit was short, lasting only 3 years, leaving behind her a lifetime of tears,

Do these things Just happen? Oh, but we know better.

God missed his Angel, and sent one to get her.

But we have no regrets, not even the pain we feel

to have known and loved her has made life a better deal

And if you know Jesus, and are a Christian someday you too, can love our Kristen.



Rob, 18, the son of James and Anita Begley, died 11-10-93 as the result of an auto accident Rob's symbol is a black corvette convertible. Anita described her grief as being a prisoner that is shackled and having to break up huge rocks with a little pick."

I think this is an excellent description. Even though we may have to use a small pick, if we work at our grief regularly and aggressively, I think we will break up that huge rock into usable "gravel"

Larry and Phyllis Smith's 26-year-old son, Larry, was killed on a motorcycle July 4, 1992. Phyllis wrote this poem

God's Valentine Parade

As God delights in His precious ones
Lined up before His throne:
Hearts made of Love, in heavenly pose,
Unite with angels in song

Our shattered dreams remind him of hearts he shared with love
As our sweet valentines took an angle wings,
And flew to lands above.

For God gave His most precious Valentine
To save us from our sins
His son was just as precious to Him
As our Rhonda, Larry and Jim

So before the King, our Valentines pose,
With splendid array, decked for celebration
They rollick and play in Heaven's great land.

Little Valentines from every nation.

Larry's symbol is an eagle



Tom and Wanda Conway have lost two children. Tommy, 22, was shot and died 12-29-87. Bryan, 16, committed suicide, 12-13-93. Tom wrote this poem

*Your brother died when you were ten.
Visitations, funeral you did not under stand
They say he has gone to Heaven.
My brother, where have you gone. I hope I can*

*The first. months you tried to adjust
Your books, sports, they didn't matter:
Time and overnight friends were a must..
But they could not replace your brother.
Your so-called breaks in life were few.
Obstacles seemed endless challenges anew:*

*Your friends though you had everything,
Brother, if only they really knew
Six years passed swiftly by
Basketball and golf were your only high:
Lack of girl friends and team concept.
every one knew better,*

Four-wheeling with your friend, you could run forever.

Just when you thought you had earned your spot.

*Just like Brother, it was not Disappointment's seemed at every turn.
Coaches' excuses choices they did burn.
But you had proven you could play.*

*Why should you have to wait till another day;
Pressure, disappointments. no more. you cannot stand,*

To you second place was unacceptable so you gave in this world no more. I have got to get away.

*Nobody knows the pain, I know today:
Embarrassments there will be no more,
I am going to meet my brother on that. Beautiful shore.*

*What have I done this cannot be.
Mom and Dad I cannot see:
O Lord. I knew You would treat me fair.
Love brokenhearted. failures. too heavy to bear*

*Brothers together at last..
Side by side forever they rest.:
Lord. Tell their memories forever shine.
To the family they have left. behind
Born an July 13.1977, you would be 17 today.*

The Bible says in death we should rejoice. But we can only wonder of your choice Happy 17th birthday. Bryan Sadly missed by Mom. Dad. Cathy Caroline and Lori, grandparents and friends.

The family has not selected symbols as yet.

Geraldine Fitzgerald lost her daughter Linda, 28, to Marfans Syndrome, 7-24-91.

Linda's symbol is an angel Geraldine is now a Bereavement lay minister. She sent me a Love Kit which included several items.



1. A RUBBER BAND

God's love binds us together
Colossians 3:12-14

2. A PIECE OF CANDY.

To remind you to spread sweetness and goodness wherever you can. (I suggest a Hershey's kiss)
1 Peter 3:8

3. A TISSUE

To dry a tear from someone's eye.
Romans 11:15

4. A WARM FUZZY: (cotton ball)

To share with others.
Ephesians 5:19

5. A PIECE OF STATIONARY:

To write to someone you love.
(or someone who needs your love!)
Titus 3: 15

6. A BAND-AID:

For healing, perhaps hurt feelings, your own or someone else's.
2 Corinthians 1.3-4

7. A PENNY:

To remind you to share God's gifts.
2 Corinthians 9:6- 7

8. A DAILY PRAYER:

Psalms 254-5

Do you know someone who needs a love kit? Then make one for them!

Brandon, the 16-year-old son of Dennis and Linda Holbrook, was killed in an auto accident, 6-17-93. The family sent the following letter to mends of Brandon on his birthday:

Tomorrow. October 7. 1994 would have been the "BIG ONE" for Brandon. It seems as though there is something magic about becoming eighteen as if we transform from children into adults on that magic day. As I think of this day. I am reminded of all the dreams we shared for that final year of high school football Senior Prom, graduation going to college, a new car, and preparing for the big world just waiting for Brandon Holbrook. Deep inside. I had prepared myself all along for that day that he would become an adult. I had no

idea it would be so soon and so final. We are now left with wonderful memories and crushed dreams to wonder what kind of person he would have been: "Would he have grown taller? Would he still love to read? Would he ever like broccoli? Who would that special girl have been? Would he still be smiling all the time?" (I'm pretty sure I can safely answer that one with a YES!)

Tomorrow truly is a big day, for it is those of us who are left behind to once again try to focus on what we shared for sixteen years rather than what we have lost forever! We are still holding on to our promise that we will see Brandon again someday - **OUR RAINBOW!**

To help our family celebrate this special birthday for Brandon, we have chosen a tulip to symbolize Brandon's new life in Heaven. This bulb lies dormant now, however it will miraculously bloom into new life in the spring. As you plant this bulb, know that in your heart that with God's love and your faith that someday, like Brandon, it too will be transformed into a beautiful sight!

The Holbrooks have dedicated a rainbow stained glass window in their church in memory of Brandon. Linda wrote that they had been invited to Senior Night at the football field and she was presented with a corsage and were presented the "Senior Award" in memory of Brandon. "It was a very touching moment for all of us. The coach released a balloon as Brandon's name was announced. The football team has worn Brandon's number, #81, on their helmets for the past two seasons"

Brandon's symbol is a rainbow and now a tulip.



Amy, the 19-year-old daughter of Arnold and Elaine White, was killed in an auto accident, 6-20-92. Amy's symbol is an angel. Amy's friend, Stephen Noe, wrote this essay:

SAYING GOOD-BYE

The sun shone through the large windows of First Baptist Church as people continued to pour in. Everyone sat quietly as the piano music filled the room. The entire altar was covered with hundred, of beautiful floral arrangements that family members and friends had sent since the

tragic accident. The funeral was about to begin

"Amy Denise North was born on August..." the speaker began. My mind drifted back to graduation day, a day that was less than one month passed. On that day, Amy came into home-room, late as usual, and made one of her silly excuses to the teacher. "The traffic out there is backed up for miles," she said, with a smile on her face. My friend and I commented that she would probably be late/or her own funeral. On June 23, 1992, however, we were proven wrong

Amy North, my friend jar Jive years, was gone. On June 18th, Amy's car hydroplaned on a rain drenched road and ran into a coal truck coming in the other lane. Two short days later, she left this world for a better one

Sobbing cries began as the minister continued. No one was ready to give Amy up including me. Again I thought of the past times Amy and I shared. Amy and I met in the eighth grade. I talked about how terrible the school's fish filets were. She erupted with laughter as I mutilated the fish on my tray. From that time on we were good friends.

"Amy's laughter was silenced." Her blue coffin sat in the center of the floral arrangements a few feet in front of the minister. Her family and friends continued to cry as the minister continued, "The Lord is my shepherd..."

Once again, I escaped the present into the memories of graduation day. Everyone, including Amy, was excited to find out what the future held. High school was over and our lives were about to begin. Our nervous anticipation was hidden by laughter as we said good-bye. We marched into the high school gymnasium, and the graduation ceremonies began. Afterward" we all went our individual ways.

"And now we must say good-bye to Miss Amy North..." said the minister as two funeral directors pushed the casket out of the church. The room blurred as held-back tears streamed down my cheeks. My heart ached as the casket reached the entrance. Images of her walking into homeroom, full of life, were shadowed by the blue casket resting in the entrance of the church. I realized that Amy was gone.

Amy's life was very important to many people. Her bright smile brought happiness to everyone she passed. Her love for life was always evident.

These are the memories of Amy I will always treasure. Sadly, it is time to say good-bye



Craig and Julia Byrd's 2-year-old daughter, Kendra, died from a house fire, 5-7-94. Julia explained: 171 is wonderful little girl was a work of art; perfect in every way and I had done this. "Oh God. My life is worth something I can

do something right" The day before Mother's Day I awoke on the edge of death, barely bringing my husband back; it was then my whole world was shattered. Over half of me was gone; my baby was gone.

Kendra Danae touched the life of every person she was near, even the ones who watched from a distance. She and I were best friends; my whole world revolved around her. My mother said she had never seen a mother and daughter as close.

She was my first and only child. I loved her more than anything. It seems to hurt worse each day.

Let's write Craig and Julie and surround them with our love and support. Their address is:

**Mr. & Mrs. Craig Byrd
165 Coffey Hill Church Road
Russell Springs, KY 42642**

This is another mother and daughter who were so close. Jo Ann Keating and Sunny. Sunny's symbols are a sunshine and an angel. Jo Ann writes:

"Precious in the sight of the Lord, is the death of His saints."



Psalm 116: IS.

That verse has come to mean a lot to me in the past several months. On July 23, 1994 my husband and I received the news that is every parents' worst nightmare. My loving, beautiful daughter, Sunny, died as the result of an automobile accident at the age of 17

Sunny was not only my daughter, but my dearest friend. We shared so much laughter. It's hard to think of her without a smile. Sunny was the perfect name for her from the beginning. And yes, it's spelled s-u-n-n-y and it was her legal first name. I say this because it never foiled that when she told someone her name they'd always ask what her "real" name was. She'd laugh and say it was sunny just like the sunshine.

Over the years she would draw a small sunshine smiling beside her name and I'll never see a sun, hear a "sunny" weather report, or hear someone's laughter without remembering her



She was everything and more than any mother could wish for in a daughter. As a young child I'd always tell her that she was "my favorite little person in the whole world" Over time she grew to be a beautiful young lady with a very promising modeling career. And I'll never forget one day not many months before her death, my 5'9" daughter told me that I was her "favorite little person"

When I was told that she died. I couldn't believe it. God wouldn't allow my Sunny to leave me. All our plans and dreams for her future were taken in an instant. Initially, I thought I couldn't live through it all. I hurt and felt such deep pain. I now have no doubt that some people truly die from broken hearts. I felt like someone had ripped mine out and shredded it into small pieces.

But when I was broken and at my weakest point. I recalled a bible verse from years ago...Philippians 4:13: I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength." It's not my strength but his that gets me though each day.

God truly gave me the "comfort that passes all understanding." You see. I know where Sunny is. Because of her faith and trust in Jesus Christ she has been given eternal life. So while my arms won't reach her, she's loved far more than this earthly mother could love her. She's with her Creator.

Yes. I still have "Sunny waves" as I call them, I'll feel the pain building and it washes over me and there's no way to avoid it. I must go through it. I've cried so many tears I sometimes wonder whose tears I'm using. Surely I have no more left.

I've come to love the words to the song which says, "This world is not my home I'm just passing though." I will see my Sunny again. God's word says "I've gone to prepare a place for you. For in my Father's house are many mansions, if it were not true. I would have told you. "Yes I would give anything in this world to have my Sunny back, but I can rest in the Lord now and thank Him for the special bond we had as mother and daughter. I can now let her go, knowing we will be together again in his Kingdom forever!"

I received the most loving letter and the author wanted me to share it with you.

My name is Chavae. I am Donna Carr's daughter. You may have heard of me through her letters and may know that I am expecting my first child soon.

The reason I am writing you is to first of all thank you and the other writers of your newsletter for helping my mom cope so well with my brother's death. It really makes her feel good when she receives letters and gifts. It really makes me feel good when she receives letters and gifts. It really makes me feel good to know she has others she can talk to who have experienced the same loss that she has. Thank you once again.

The second reason I'm writing you is to ask if you would print a special letter wrote to my mom in your next newsletter. It's kind of a surprise and I think she would like to share it with her fellow Lamentations readers

Dear Mom,

As we both know I am expecting my first child soon and although I've never showed it or said it out loud. I'm scared out of my mind. Not scared because of the pain I will endure but because of the responsibility. I've never been responsible for another life before. I'm scared of the mistakes I may make along the way and the affect these mistakes will have on my child or the love this child has for me. Because of all these fears, I'm truly grateful that you are here to help me.

I don't know where I would be had you turned me away instead of accepting me with open arms.

I know we don't always see eye-to-eye or certain subjects but that doesn't change the fact that I want you to be a significant part of my son or daughter's life,. I know that together we can make the best choices for my child and make the best of the situation that I've been handed by God's choice.

Thank you again for being here during the scariest times of my live.

Love, Chavae

Clyde, Donna's son died from Leukemia 6-27-93. His symbol is a teddy bear.



Tony and Sherrill Elam's 18-year-old daughter, Suzanne, died in an auto accident, 6-3-94. Sherrill described their Christmas: We made it through our fist Christmas by having Christmas early with each set of grandparents and then volunteering at Oneida Baptist institute the 22nd through the 27th. We painted our way through the holiday except for Sunday when we worshipped. The pain was much less intense those days away from home.

Today I read a quote from Helen Keller: "When one door of happiness closes, an-other opens, but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one that has opened for us" I'm hoping to learn to not dwell on the closed door.



Suzanne's symbol is a lily.



Helmut and Goodie Graetz's 24-year-old son, Andy, died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound, 12-12-93. Andy's symbol is a Caduceus. Andy wrote the following poem and it was included in the dedication of the 1994 UK Medical year Book:

Dark Versus Light

Many men fear the darkness
But I have no qualms,
For the sun sets when she wants
And no one can stop her
When she sets night will follow
But never fear, she will rise again.

ACG 1984

In Barbara Johnson's book, **Mama Get the hammer! There is a fly on Papa's head!** She has a chapter entitled: Yesterday is Experience... Tomorrow is Hope... Today is Getting from One to the Other

Mrs. Johnson's books are wonderful and I encourage all of you to read at least on of them. She has known great sorrow in her life—Two sons have died and a third is homosexual, but she continues to be uplifting to others and can always laugh. Mrs. Johnson suggests that you Do Not Do the following when you are feeling "blue".

- *Don't Weigh yourself
- *Don't watch *Old Yeller*
- *Don't go near a chocolate shop(I challenge that suggestion, I think it will help you overcome your blues)
- *Don't open your credit card bill
- *Don't go shopping for a new bathing suit. (unless you look like this!)

