

# LAMENTATIONS

Issue 40

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

January, 1996

It is 1996! You are probably surprised that you have made it through the past year and the holiday season. But you probably feel as I, if I can make it through the past 4 1/2 years, I can make it through the rest of my life, and so can you.

There have been great losses in each of our lives and we must now adjust to those losses and struggle to grow in wisdom and acceptance.



Christian countries celebrate January 1 as New Year's Day. On January 6, the 12th day and

12th night after Christmas, Roman Catholic, Episcopal, Eastern Orthodox, and other Christian churches celebrate the *Epiphany* (the coming of the Wise Men). If you weren't able to celebrate this past Christmas season, perhaps you would like to celebrate **The Twelve Days of Christmas**, which is celebrated, from December 25 to January 6. Last year Sara Combs mailed her Christmas cards on the 12th day of Christmas. It was a wonderful treat to receive a "Christmas greeting" after the letdown of the Christmas season.

January is an excellent time to take advantage of all the sales in the shopping centers and malls. If you had difficulty shopping during the Christmas season because of the music or everyone wishing you "Merry Christmas," now would be a



good time to shop. A *sale* is the transfer of ownership and title to property from one person to another for a price. In the death of our loved one, we had a *forced sale* at a great *price*, but now they are in the ownership of God. However, we are promised that this sale is only temporary and the real *bargain* is the fact that we will see them again.

Paul and Leisa Thigpen wrote a helpful book entitled, *52 Simple Ways to Build Family Traditions*.

They explain that research and practical experience suggest that the *families with the strongest ties tend to have the most traditions because such traditions create and reinforce emotional security in the home*.

The Thigpens explained that traditions:

-  Establish family continuity. They tie together past and present.
-  Build family stability. Consistent family customs provide regular, familiar patterns for a rhythm of life together.
-  Cultivate family identity. Customs that help make a family unique can give its members a sense of who they are and where they belong.
-  Enrich family unity. Meaningful customs build a sense of closeness that endures long after children have grown and distance separates family members.
-  Reveals the significance of our lives.
-  symbolize how family members feel about one another

What better time to start new family traditions than the first day of the new year. Perhaps on January 1 you can sit down with your family and discuss the family traditions you have and if they are meaningful to your family now. Also, ask if they would like to establish new traditions. Perhaps these suggestions will be ways of incorporating the memory of the loved one that has died into your new holiday celebrations.

The Thigpens had several good suggestions for establishing New Year's traditions.



*Having a New Year's Eve party with old family and friends.* This would be a good time to thank those who have meant so much to you since your child's death.



*Plan family goals and schedules for the new year.* Challenge yourself to be S.U.C.C.E.S.S.(ful) in your goals.



*Keep a New Year's journal that records the highlights of the year just past and mentions your hopes for the year to come.*



*Start the new year with some new traditions--and develop a new sense of direction for the months ahead.*

January 1 is also a good time to "file away" as much of your grief as you can. Anger and guilt can be two of the biggest files. Good luck:



# Grief Grafts

Ed and Pat Kuzela's 20-year-old son, Chris, died as the result of a fall from an interstate bridge while drinking on 4-24-88. Pat sent this New Year's Prayer. The author is unknown:

### New Year's Prayer

*Lord, You give us dear ones and make them the strength of our lives, the light of our eyes. They depart from us and leave us bereaved; but You are the living Source of our healing. To You, the stricken look for comfort and the sorrow-laden for consolation.*

*On this solemn day of the New Year, we see life as through windows that open on eternity. We see that love abides, the soul abides, as You, Oh God, abide forever.*

*We see that our years are more than grass that withers, more than flower that fade. They weave a pattern of life that is timeless and unites us with a world that is from end to end the abode of Your love and the vesture of Your glory.*

*In life and in death we cannot go where You are not; and where You are, all is well. Sustained by this assurance, we praise Your name. Oh God of life.*

Amen



Chris's symbol is an eagle

Becky Kemper writes about her son: *My 16-year-old son, Ross, was killed in a car accident Feb. 25, 1995.*

*Three other young people died in the accident with Ross. They were returning from a **Rave** (a concert) and the driver fell asleep.*

*One month after the accident, a **Memorial Rave** was held in Lexington. The following poem "The Eternal Dance" was written by one of Ross' best friends and left on my answering machine. It was passed out at the Rave along with the "Memorial."*



*This picture was a promotional item for the Rave. The kids are (from left to right, with their dates of birth): Kevin Prenatt (2-1-71), Jennifer Stovall (11-29-74), Ross Kemper (8-13-78), and Kris Gordon (2-24-79). It's a wonderful likeness of all four kids.*

### The Eternal Dance

*Sometimes I gaze upon the light show in the skies,  
And see the lustered blackness as it melts into my eyes.*

*The crickets set a rhythm and chirp their hearts aloud,  
As I stand within the meadow--alone, but in a crowd.*

*The grooving, chirping crickets start pulsing in my veins,  
While cool nocturnal whispers bring waves across the plains.*

*Amid the swirling, throbbing tempo I fall into a trance,  
Bouncing, bobbing, wavering, as the rhythm creates my dance.*

*Laughing, I fall unto the ground as I look up once again,  
Seeing the rave before my eyes, I can't suppress my grin;*

*For I see the twirling glow sticks, infinite in number,  
Spreading through the sky, waking nature from its slumber.*

*Telling nature's curfew, that bade you dance no more,  
That through the groove within our hearts you'll dance forevermore.*

-Brett Strassner

### MEMORIAL

*A month ago today the world lost four very special young people. This party is called **MEMORIAL** to honor Kevin, Jenny, Ross, and Kris. We have come together not to mourn their deaths, but to celebrate their lives. Those of you that did not personally know our friends can still share tonight's benefit with us. This tragedy has taught us all that we are a family. We travel together a lot, and we depend on each other. We all need to unite and move on as one, so take a minute tonight to tell your friends that you love them. Although our friend are gone from*

*this Earth, they will live on forever in our hearts, minds, memories and in the beat.*

Ross' symbols are a computer, musical note, and a soccer ball.



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. Ezra is in the VA hospital in Lexington and is in very poor health and needs our prayers. The family placed the following poem in the newspaper on the anniversary of Gerald's death:

### In Memory of Gerald Godby

*Three years have passed since you left us.  
These have been the hardest years for us.*

*But with your precious memories you so greatly planted,  
Keeps on growing more precious as times goes by.*

*You gave so much to others but wanted nothing in return.  
Only a little "thank you" was enough.  
We love and miss you so much.*



Gerald's symbols are roses and butterflies.  
Libby's symbols are wild flowers



Beverly Shannon's 21-year-old son, Scott, died from a malignant brain tumor, 11-5-91. Beverly expressed her feelings (as well as ours):

*I know you understand when I tell you how exhausting, painful, tears and more tears, the days are that lead up to anniversaries and birthdays. It is the same for all of us who now walk together.*

*For so long I didn't have the energy to walk from one room to another, and now I stay in a constant state of running, keeping busy.*

Scott's symbol is a baseball.



Paula Atkins' 19-year-old son, Jeremy Hardin, died 9-5-94, from injuries sustained from falling from a bridge. Paula shared the insight she has received from reading about sibling grief:

*I know that it did take several weeks after Jeremy died for me to realize that the grief Nathan and Carrie were experiencing was not the same as what I was feeling. Something so simple as this fact just didn't sink in until one night I was reading a passage from*

*"Parental Loss of a Child" and the part dealing with sibling grief. From that point on, I felt relieved to know that they did indeed mourn deeply the loss of Jeremy but they would be able to adjust more quickly than I.*

*We talk about Jeremy among the three of us a lot. We talk about what he would do in a particular situation, funny things he said, wild and crazy things he did if I tell Nathan he can't do something, he's quick to point out that Jeremy was allowed to. Sometimes it changes my mind and sometimes it doesn't. I weigh my decision the same as though Jeremy was still alive. Neither Carrie nor Nathan has developed any fear that I can tell about their own mortality. I believe they accept Jeremy's death for what it was--strictly an accident--one that can happen to any of us at any point in our lives.*

*We have kept Jeremy's possessions. Nathan shared a room with Jeremy and although Nathan can now use all the space if he wants, he, for the most part, leaves Jeremy's things alone. It's not treated as a shrine, but we have left his "stuff" the way he had it. Nathan plays all of Jeremy's tapes and CD's; he wanted all his clothes and so wears them; he even uses his bottle of Obsession. The only thing we threw away was his toothbrush. Everything else, one of us uses. I read his books, listen to his music and sometimes even borrow a shirt, Just like I did before. His trophies and awards sit where they always have, his weights sit in the basement unused, his pictures remain as they were. We "borrow" his things, but we always put them back.*

*Jeremy's friends were each given whatever they asked for--a hat, a shirt, a pair of sunglasses, a tape, a costume. It's like the story of the loaves and fishes. We gave to each whatever they*

*wanted or needed and there was still an abundance of mementos for us all to cherish. I had all his friends take whatever correspondence they had sent Jeremy. I could not throw anything away and yet these were private thoughts that I had no right to see. When they got done, there was nothing left except notes from a former girl friend. I saw her in the spring and told her I had found some notes she had sent Jeremy a few years back. She was so excited and happy that he had kept those. She has since claimed them.*

*Nathan was 16 when Jeremy died and Carrie 11. Nathan's peers are his confidants. This fact doesn't hurt me. He need, to explain his feelings to people his own age and his school has a support group which meets this need Carrie, as far as I know, has never spoken to anyone about Jeremy's death. I believe this to be normal and healthy for her. We do talk of Jeremy several times each day. There isn't one activity we do, whether it be playing, working, eating, traveling, or just conversing that we don't include our thoughts of Jeremy. What we don't discuss is his death--we don't feel the need*

*Having visits from Jeremy's friends has been so very helpful. We don't have a great deal of visits, but I remind myself that these young people are so uncomfortable in such an unnatural situation. When they do come by, Nathan and Carrie are ecstatic. Jeremy always brought so many kids home with him that not having them at our house anymore is a terrible loss. We miss them. Jeremy's girlfriend, Jo, keeps in touch with us and we see her every couple of months. The friend that was with Jeremy when he fell has developed a severe drug problem, withdrawn from most people and dropped out of the private college to which he had won an academic 4-year scholarship. My heart aches for him. I have been unable to emotionally reach him and his friends and family have now developed the attitude that he will have to come to terms with the loss of Jeremy at his own time. We can do nothing but stand by and be there when and if he ever reaches out.*

*When Christmas came this year, I wanted Jeremy to be part of our celebration. I told the kids they would each be getting a present that Jeremy would have bought for them if he had been with us.*

*They like this idea and were excited. After opening their presents they agreed that they were things that Jeremy would have chosen. We gave presents to six of his closest friends, the ones Jeremy always bought gifts for. I had already bought a few Christmas gifts for Jeremy before he died. These were the gifts I gave his friends. I think it made them feel special and they are.*

*One thing that seemed very important to Nathan and Carrie was the return of normalcy. They craved the stability of a happy home, a mom who could laugh and play with them. This was and is the gift I give them. Even on those many days when it takes all I have to go to work, to talk to people, to pretend that the routines in my life have any importance, I present to them that which they must have to survive this loss. Our home has always been our harbor in the storm; it is our safe port where we can expect to be loved and listened to, no matter what. And, as always, in doing for others we find the help we most need*

*There are no magic answers jar siblings just as there are none for us parents. We test the waters constantly trying to find that which works for us. I truly believe this will be a life-long game and in the end, we will all win as we are reunited with our loved ones.*

*(Maybe this attitude could be our New Year's Resolution to our family.)*

Jeremy's symbol is a twinkling star.



*Ron and Phyllis Sieg's 15-year-old daughter, Leigh Anne, died from cancer, 2-9-93. The Siegs continue to go through many different emotions, as we all do as we struggle through our grief The family has decided on Leigh Anne's symbol:*

*I wanted to let you know that we have decided on a symbol for Leigh Anne--a butterfly. She was so active and interested in so many things that it made it very hard to pick just one symbol, but*

in the end we picked the butterfly because of the following verse:



**A butterfly lights beside us like a sunbeam.  
And for a brief moment, its glory and beauty belong to our world**

**But then it flies on again. . .**

**And though we wish it could have stayed,**

**We feel so lucky to have seen it**

The verse touched us so much that we had it inscribed on her monument.

Following are some of the ways we are trying to keep Leigh Anne's memory alive. There are awards given in her memory in both volleyball and softball and a \$500 scholarship is given each year to a volleyball player. We select a volleyball player because the coach at Floyd Central has a tournament and the proceeds go toward funding the scholarship. We donated a marble sculpture to the school library and 50 movie videos to the Oncology unit at Children's Hospital in Leigh Anne's memory. This past spring that would have been Leigh Anne's junior prom-we paid for a video in which the junior and senior class brought in pictures and videos of themselves when they were younger. This was shown in the background all during the prom. There was a segment of pictures and videos of Leigh Anne from the time she was 3 months old until she died. A lot of them were with her friends, and this was shown during the last dance and dedicated to her. Since we have chosen a symbol, I am giving Leigh Anne's cousins, grandmothers, close friends, and of course myself, gold butterfly charms to wear in memory of her.

When I became pregnant again in 1973, I had a son, Brandon, 4-years-old, and I wanted a daughter so badly. I couldn't believe my luck when Leigh Anne was born. She was a good baby and became a pleasant, easy-going, loving child. She played piano, took gymnastic and dance lessons several years, was a cheerleader 2 years, made the school volleyball team, played club volleyball, and played softball, which she enjoyed the most. She played softball in a girl's league (making the all-star team every year) and couldn't wait to play on the high school

team. Unfortunately, she never got the chance. She was a pretty, popular, active, happy 14-year-old when she was diagnosed with Neurofibrosarcoma in August 1992. She had hardly any symptoms until the tumor was massive and there was no research on this type because it is so rare. Her treatment was 5 kinds of chemotherapy, and when that did not work, she decided to try high-dose chemo because to quote her,

"I want to live 70 years--not a few more months." She went through a round of high-dose chemo (100 hours) that did not affect the tumor at all and Leigh Anne died 3 weeks after leaving the hospital. We were told that she had 3 weeks to live and I cannot put into words what it is like to know there is nothing more that can be done to save your child. And even more devastating is when your child is old enough to understand the prognosis and realize they are going to die. And instead of being able to protect your child, there is nothing you can do but stand by and watch helplessly. Leigh Anne died at home, Feb. 9, 1993, and to say that a large part of me died along with her that day is an understatement. She was becoming a best friend to me besides being my daughter. I did not know a person could hurt so much and still live--or should I say exist.

Leigh Anne had always been an A student in grade school, but when she got to junior high, she became more interested in social activities than grades. She was not only in the "in" group at school, but was friends with kid, from numerous other groups because she was so friendly and considerate of others. She felt at ease with all the groups and moved effortlessly from one to the other. All her friends were very important to her. She had so many friends and family to visit the hospital; so many balloons and flowers sent to her that the nurses actually asked if she was a celebrity of some sort.

Leigh Anne was such a special person. There is no way in a letter I can convey Leigh Anne's vitality and her love of life. Throughout her illness she demonstrated her courage and determination to live. She truly believed she was going to get well. I never once heard her ask, "Why did this have to happen to me?" She faced her illness with such dignity that she would put most adults to shame.

My husband and I are so proud of Leigh Anne and will love and miss her every day for the rest of our lives.

David and Rhonda Reeve's 5-year-old daughter, Cyanna, was killed in an automobile accident, 1-1-95. The family has chosen a little girl with waist length hair bending over watering flowers as Cyanna's symbol.



Allen, the 6-year-old son of George and Doris Lilly, died from cancer, 1-28-93. Doris described Allen's birthdate since his death:

Allen's birthday is a real sad day for all his loved ones. Mostly for myself, his daddy, brothers and sisters. But we all have accepted that Allen is now in heaven with our Lord and Savior. So we tell ourselves on this special day that Allen is having the birthday of his dreams, and having all the love and things we would give to him if he was now with us. We've had a real hard time accepting Allen's death, but thank the Lord, we finely have accepted. But in ways, we still hurt. But we know through Christ that we can be together again.



Allen's symbol is a red star.

James, the 17-year-old son of Raymond and Birdellia Patrick, was killed in an auto accident 4-16-93. Birdellia's family has had a difficult summer, her Mother, Bonnie Watkins, died October 23rd. But some good news, a beautiful granddaughter, Ariel Dawn Reynolds was born October 21st.



James symbols are a heart and a clown.

Ralphie, the 19-year-old son of Ralph and Dana Coomer, was killed in an automobile accident, 6-11-94. Ralphie's birthday was July 24 and Dana described the celebration:

We had a balloon lift. There were 43 of his friends who came to the gravesite and wrote on the balloons and we watched them go all the way behind the clouds. The boys and girls really enjoyed it. They miss Ralphie so much. They still visit me every week, one or two of them. It's like they all want to still keep him alive so much and I thank God for that. I don't want anyone to ever forget my child. They talk about all the good times they had with him, and what a friend he was to each of them. There will be a day when they can be with him again; I always assure them of that.



Ralph's symbols are praying hands and an Eagle.

Allen Titlow, the 29-year-old son of Anne Meroney, died as the result of an accidental overdose, 3-7-92. Anne shared an article entitled *Gifts of the Spirit* written by Ardath Rodale for the December issue of **PREVENTION** magazine. Mrs. Rodale's son, David, and her husband, Bob, have both died. At a time she was so desperate, she cried out, "Let me know that you are with me!" She believes that these "messages" come in the form of feathers. Mrs. Rodale shared:

*One day in my anguish as I walked the fields, I looked down, and there at my feet was a beautiful white feather. With tears in my eyes, I gently picked it up to carry home.*

*Another day when I unlocked the door, there were two perfectly fanned white feathers right there on the stoop. I find feathers now wherever I go even though I don't look for them. I have begun to feel each time as if it is an AHA! experience and I am not alone. I feel that Bob and David are with me from up in the heavens and seeing me grow stronger every day. Could they be heavenly cheerleaders?"*

Native Americans have a **potlatch** ceremony which is a "Give Away." They only give away items that are important to them. The lesson to be learned is one that teaches us not to become too attached to the material things around us.

She has adopted this **potlatch** ceremony and gives the treasured feathers that she finds to those who need hope and love in their lives. It also fills her with joy. Mrs. Rodale encourages each of us to share precious gifts of the spirit with others.

Anne has also experienced those AHAs! She described her AHA!

*Most of the bereaved parents I know, myself included, feel that we receive symbolic "spiritual gifts" from our children. We feel that butterflies light on us more often than they do on non bereaved people; one woman I know finds marbles all of the time (her daughter told her before she died that marbles found in strange places were love messages); I find pennies. Allen saved all of his pennies in a jar as a child and he thought of "found pennies" as good-luck charms. Recently I was out on one of my long walks with my dog, and I found a lot of pennies all at once. I picked them up, and counted them when I got home. there were 29 of them (Allen was 29 when he died). Why was I not surprised? Coincidence? Maybe. Maybe we bereaved parents hang onto, and give meaning to, whatever we can. I am going to read this article to my Compassionate Friends, and, for my own potlatch, I'm going to give out those pennies I found to anyone who will take one.*



Allen's symbol is a deer.

Jamie, the 17-year-old son of Lee and Regina Cox, committed suicide, 5-23-94. Regina wrote the following poem on Jamie's birthday, 9-13. It is the first poem she has been able to write since Jamie's death:

#### MY SON

*Today, my son, you would have been nineteen,*

*But you have been gone to heaven for a year and more.*

*My heart is heavy, my arms are light,  
But you are with Jesus and he keeps you in sight.*

*The tears flow, sometimes heavy,  
sometimes light.*

*It is not easy without you in sight.  
You are missed every day, you are missed every night.*

*But with our faith in Jesus, we know  
you are all right.*

*We still have your sisters*

*They are doing all right.*

*But without you here*

*Something is missing all right.*

*They say things will get easier*

*I guess they are right*

*But believe me, son, when I say that  
I have to fight.*

*I know you are in a better place up  
there*

*But you are missing down here*

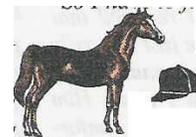
*And things are just not right.*

*Remember I love you.*

*You are my son.*

*You are missing today*

*So I have to fight.*



Love,  
Mom

Jamie's symbols are a horse and a baseball cap.

Gary and Viola Correll's 15-year-old son, Michael, died from an electrical shock in the water. Viola said: Michael was our first-born. I didn't know how to love until I had Michael. He was my "first love." He was my best friend. I miss him so much it hurts.

*Michael was a friendly, outgoing boy. He always had a smile on his face. He was very active with school clubs. He was a junior in high school. He was in FCA (Fellowship of Christian Athletes), Environmental Club, Academic Team, Student Government, berea Talent Search, the high school chorus, Somerset Police Explorers (He dreamed of being a law enforcement officer) and a member of Main Street Baptist Church.*



His symbols are a policeman, water skis and a butterfly.

Michael's cousin wrote lovingly of him:

### **A TESTIMONY NOT FORGOTTEN**

"Here Lies A Christian Young Man." is what I imagined the tombstone should have said. That dark, cold, and gray headstone reminded me of a night unlike any other. A month has almost past and still my mind replays a tragedy that could've happened to anybody, but God chose one of my family instead. Not only was he a part of my earthly, physical family, but he was also a brother in Christ.

You may ask why Michael Correll has influenced me so much, especially this summer. If anyone had been through this horrible tragedy, I'm absolutely sure it would cause you to consider your ways for the rest of your life. Since then I have reexamined my walk with God a number of times. Day after day I ask "Why didn't God take me instead?" He had a long life to live and he had a better Christian attitude than I ever did. That night I realized that God could have taken me just as easily as he did Michael. I have made myself right with God now and I thank Him every day for sparing my puny, unfortunate soul.

On Saturday, August 12, 1995, Michael Wayne Correll was buried at Oak Hill Cemetery in Oak Hill, Kentucky. As pallbearers, we all lined our white carnations on the casket before we lowered it into the ground. It was a peaceful day, but at that moment a small breath of God seemed to have swept all the carnations away and they disappeared. I was reminded of the verse in James 4: 14 that says, "Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life." It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away. "

I didn't stay in Kentucky long enough to read the headstone above his grave, but I'm sure if I was the one to decide what is said, it would be inscribed with these words, "Here Lies a Christian Young Man."

In Memory of  
Michael Wayne Correll  
1979-1995

A friend wrote this poem:

### **YOUR DEATH**

Why did you leave me  
Without saying good-bye?  
Why did you go,  
Why did you have to die?  
It was hard to believe it  
When I heard the news before.  
It's like I was locked  
Behind a cold wooden door.  
They said you were gone,  
I thought it was a lie.  
How could you go,  
And not even say good-bye?  
How could they take you away  
When I care for you so much?  
You are my best friend,  
My heart is what you touch.  
It's wrong to end this way,  
You didn't say good-bye.  
And now as I sit alone,  
I can't help but cry.  
So many people loved you,  
And I love you still.  
I feel the pain of losing you,  
I guess I always will.  
It's too much for me to handle,  
I can't believe it's true.  
The pain is too strong,  
It's the pain of losing you.  
Family and friends are here together,  
With our eyes full of tears.  
We think of all the happy times  
We've shared throughout the years.  
Nobody knew about us,  
'Cause you said we were secret friends.  
But now I know what it feels like,  
When something so great ends.  
Why did you die so young,  
You had a long life ahead.  
I care for you so much,  
I can't believe you're dead.  
When we first met,  
I knew you were an angel in disguise.  
My world revolved around you,  
You were different from the other guys.  
God has a special purpose for you,  
That's why he took you away.  
But if I could have one wish,  
Then you would be able to stay.  
You were so special,  
You'll always be in my heart.  
I wish I could tell you how I feel,  
But I don't even know how to start.  
I can't explain my feelings,

My heart just won't let go.  
But I will always love you,  
I just wanted you to know.

In memory of Michael Corell  
From: Bonnie Jones

Mary, the 15-year-old daughter of Woody and Jenny Curtis, died from a heart attack, 6-21-93. Jenny shares:

My family and I are struggling along.

I've been sick some. The doctors all said it was nerves and stress until I landed in the hospital for gall bladder surgery. So I'm doing better now. Physically that is. Mentally I'm still a wreck.

Ash Lee, (6) has the same problem Mary had. The doctor says with a little luck. we'll have her for 4 to 5 years.

I hope each of you will remember this family in your prayers.

Mary's symbols are a heart, star, sunshine and a cheerleader.



Clyde, Donna Carr's 10-year-old son, died from Leukemia, 6-27-93. We haven't heard from Donna in a while. She explains:

I know you are surprised to hear from me! It's been so long since I have corresponded with any of my Fellow Travelers. It feels that I have been out of town for a while or in the service or something, and I'm getting to come home to reunite with my family. Thank you very much for continuing to keep me a member of the family, even if I have been out of touch for a while.

Let me let you in on the changes in my life. I have had a job change. I have been working at Wiseco in Georgetown since February. I really love my job.



Clyde's symbol is a teddy bear.

Grover and Mary Salyer's 36-year-old son, Tim, was killed in a mowing accident, 3-22-95. His symbol is a golf club.



David and Cindy Jo Greever's 9-year-old daughter, Michelle, died 11-5-93. Cindy Jo has written many poems. Two are included. The first poem was placed in their newspaper on the first anniversary of Michelle's death:

**Michelle Marie Greever**

**8-24-84 11-5-93**

*The Lord loaned you to us on that warm and sunny August morn.  
We knew you were His  
But you were now ours to adorn.  
You brought so much happiness to our family and friends.  
And even now as you are in Heaven  
Our love for you never ends.  
You are close in our hearts  
Our souls and our minds  
And until our vapor has ended on earth,  
We will await seeing you and being with you for all time.  
So on this November day as we reckon with your going home,  
We know, sweet Michelle, that you are forever with us as to eternal life,  
You Have Been Born!*

By: Cindy Greever  
(Mother of Michelle)  
(John 10: 28-29)

*My precious little Michelle. .  
You will always be my angel.  
My love for you will forever grow.  
My love for you knows no bounds.  
Your sweet memories replace my sorrow  
As my love for you abounds...  
My precious little angel,  
You will always be my Michelle....*

Love, Mother Heeeeen!

Michelle's 14-year-old sister is also a poet. She wrote both of these poems one year after Michelle went to heaven:

**WHAT THE ANGEL SAID**

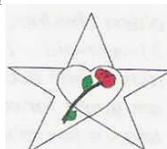
*One beautiful fall day, a young, harmless angel said:  
"Come with me and walk my way.  
Sing with me like the echo of the rain.  
Look at me. Do you see pain?"*

*No, I am an angel, one from your dream.  
I help you when you scream.  
I know what you feel  
When you feel it.  
I know what you say  
When you say it.  
Come now Child,  
It is time.  
Time to see what you dream."  
And so sweet Michelle went with the angel to see her life long dream.  
God with all of his team.*

**TRAPPED**

*It's like being in a large box.  
There is no light, no sound, no clocks.  
All there is the constant sound of your mind thinking of the day it happened  
Something new that opens a large pit in your heart.  
You don't know why, or how it starts.  
All you are is trapped.  
Trapped between the worlds of life and death.  
Almost like being stabbed  
It scares me sometimes, but I always rely on God  
I am a pea and God is my pod*

Michelle's symbols are a star with a heart and a flower.



Luciana, the 15-year-old daughter of Lucia and Skip Bayne, was accidentally shot, 4-30-94. The young man who accidentally shot her has turned his life around. He was sentenced to 1 year for manslaughter and 2 weeks after the sentencing, Lucia wrote him this letter:

*I don't know how to start this letter. I want you to find peace in your heart. It took me a long lime to find this forgiveness for you. But you can be a wonderful person in your life. Luciana is in heaven. I wish you the best. I am here for any spiritual help you need I forgive you from the deepest part of my heart.*

Since this, the young man was the class valedictorian and was named the student "most likely to succeed."

The family has opened a Christian book and angel shop in Charlotte, NC that is named, *Luciana's Angels*. Lucia believes: "When you die your guardian angel comes to comfort you and carry you to heaven." If you are interested in knowing more about her shop, you may telephone: 704-545-3117.

On January 20, 1994, (which would have been Luciana's 16th birthday), a "Celebration of Life" was held with 75 friends singing "Happy Birthday" as they released balloons into the air.

Luciana's symbols are angels.



Doug and Kathy Elliott's 16-year-old son, Clark, died from an auto accident, 6-20-93. The Elliotts have a very special project in which we should all be involved. There are two bills before our state Legislature concerning increasing the time between our young people receiving their permits and their permanent licenses. Kathy was quoted in their local newspaper: *If we can get this law changed, maybe some other family won't have to go through what we had to go through. Lives can be saved.*

One bill that has been filed by State Representative Mike Bowling, D-Middlesboro, would require a permit recipient to wait 90 days before they could receive their license.

Another bill filed by State Senator James Crase, R-Somerset, calls for a 150-day waiting period. However, Crase's bill will permit young people who are 15 3/4 years of age to obtain a permit.

This "waiting period" gives these young drivers a chance to gain more experience and also allows the licensed driver that accompanies

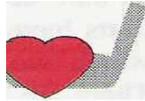
them to know whether they are gaining the skills they need to be safe drivers. Kentucky has the highest rate of teenagers killed in traffic accidents. Senator Kelly favors a six-month practice period,

Both bills also call for curfews for drivers under 18 and for (hopefully) zero tolerance on alcohol use.

Kathy lamented: *Losing a child is like having part of your heart and soul torn out. When that happens, you have two choices. You can get out and try to do something like this to help push through a bill to help someone else not have to go through what we've been through, or you can choose to wallow around in self-pity.*

*Clark was a very outgoing lover of life, I personally choose to carry out his memory by being positive and trying to do something that will help others,*

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



This is a chance for us to make our concerns known, Since Young Jim's death, we have insisted that guardrails be placed where he was killed, If they had been there when he had his accident, he would not have been killed. By contacting your congressman, we can be assured that we will have fewer parents joining our group, You can make the difference. You can contact your representative or senator by telephoning the legislative message line at 1-800-372-7181. It is vital that you do it now !!!

Jerry Jonas lost two sons, Leon Jr., and Wayne, in an automobile accident, 10-26-90, Jerry shared:

*My husband, Leon, finally won his battle with colon cancer on Sunday, November 26, Five years and one month after our sons went home to heaven, Leon joined them, Thank each one of you that prayed for his healing. He will never be in pain again, Praise God. Now Leon goes everywhere with me in the ministry in my heart.*

(Jerry Writes a religious newsletter *footprints.*)

Leon's and Wayne's symbols are two roses and a



Joe and Elaine Stillwell's two children, Peggy and Denis O'Connor, died from an automobile accident 8-2 & 8-6-88. Elaine writes a column for *In The Light*, and this is a copy of her New Year's column:

### ***New Year's Hope- Am I Making Progress?***

*As the New Year appears, bereaved persons hope that their fragile, hurting hearts will release more and more of the pain, feel stronger, and experience some joy as they continue their journey through the "Valley of the Shadow." Needing to heal and to go forward with our lives, we struggle to get our lives in order. At this time of year, we search in our hearts and ask ourselves very timidly, "Am I making progress?"*

*Each January since I lost my two oldest children, 19-year-old Peggy and 21-year-old Denis, in the same automobile accident, I check to see if I am going forward in my grief. It only takes a few minutes to assess the status of your grief journey and it helps you to get on the right "mind" track for the new year. Do yourself a favor and see if you have any areas of the heart that need nurturing. The following "check" list will help you set some goals for your heart to feel better.*

**Allow Yourself** - time to cry, space to think and to remember your loved one, realistic goals, to do whatever gives you a moment's peace, to be imperfect, to accept offers of help, to pamper yourself.

**Force Yourself** - to do old routines, to listen to your spouse and children, to do an activity that you used to do,

**Convince Yourself** - that each person grieves differently and that you will get better.

**Let Yourself** - off the hook, laugh, feel anger, tell God how you honestly feel, treasure a special friend, remember happy memories, select what you can handle, "wear-out" feelings of anger, guilt and depression

**Teach Yourself** - to take care of yourself, to learn everything about the grief process, to set goals, to turn to life, to ignore hurtful comments of others.

**Talk to Yourself**- about anything and tell yourself how your loved one would like you to handle things. Have a dialogue with your loved one.

**Forgive Yourself**- we made mistakes, we're not perfect and our loved ones weren't either. They know they were loved.

**Find Yourself**- through meditation, reading, singing, writing, or talking. We become different people with different needs. Make new friends, try new hobbies.

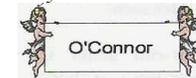
**Indulge Yourself**- shop, nap, walk, daydream, say "I deserve that" Set aside special time for yourself, don't rush or overwhelm yourself with activities.

**Express Yourself**- tell the story of your loved one, tell the world how you feel, tell your spouse how you really feel, try new activities. Find new ways to "reinvest" that special love that you shared with your loved one.

**Forget Yourself**- seek out other bereaved persons, talk to them, share what you've learned - what's given you moments of peace. You'll find "helping is healing."

**Give Yourself**- no deadlines. Choose to rebuild your life in a meaningful way, keeping memories of your loved one alive and making your loved one so proud of you.

*Get busy taking care (if yourself and may your efforts bring peace and joy to your heart.*



Denis and Peggy's symbol is an angel.

January is the month for all the football teams to be involved' in "bowl" games. My theme for this month is **Orange Bowl, Super Bowl, Rose Bowl, Cotton Bowl...**

Forget the games, make mine a **Super Chocolate Ice Cream Bowl!!**

