

LAMENTATIONS

Issue 43



If you are like I, you have really looked forward to

April and the beginning of warm weather. Each day I look for signs of new beginnings. The daffodils have already bloomed and the buds are bursting from the trees. A new beginning! But do we feel like we are ready for new beginnings? Can we face the future with all the grief we have?

In the past two months, I have heard from many new families who are grieving, and there seem to be more and more who have lost older children. In the January, 1996 magazine, **HOPE for Bereaved**, Margaret H. Gerner wrote an article entitled, *When the Aging Outlive their Children*. Ms. Gerner describes their grief:

We are horrified when a young child or young adult dies, but we react with less concern when all older "child" dies. We forget that, for a parent, the age of the child has no relevance. We focus our attention on the spouse or the children of the one who has died and ignore, or at least do not recognize, the pain of the surviving mother or father. However, the pain of their loss is as real and as intense as that of the parent who loses a very young child.

When aging people lose their children, they face particular difficulties with their grief. Many have lost spouses, siblings, or even other children (the loss of all infant or a stillborn child many years in the past should not be discounted). In addition to the losses by death, many have lost their youth, health and/or independence.

Impediment to active grieving. He is of a generation that generally discourages open expression of emotions. Therefore, he has difficulty letting himself grieve in a healthy manner.

An aging bereaved parent also faces a lack of support and encouragement to grieve. Family and friends mistakenly believe that it's not healthy for the older person to cry and talk about her lost child. They encourage the aging parent to suppress her grief.

If you are an aging parent who has lost your child, the following are some suggestions for helping yourself:

- 1. Recognize that your physical and emotional reactions to your child's death are normal and that you are not losing your mind as you may fear. Reading books on grief will assure you that what you are thinking and feeling is to be expected.*
- 2. Forget everything you've learned about "being strong" and "keeping a stiff upper lip." Crying and expressing your pain will give you relief. Pushing your pain down won't.*
- 3. Ignore others when they tell you to concentrate ONLY all the good things in your life. This is impossible. Your loss is real and you do hurt. Face that reality.*
- 4. Don't let others keep you busy "so you won't think about it." This won't work and will only exhaust you.*
- 5. Allow yourself to cry and to talk about what you are thinking and feeling. Attend a support group if possible.*
- 6. Take especially good care of your health. The stress of your grief will make you more susceptible to illness and exacerbate any illness you may have already.*

Eat balanced meals. Get plenty of rest (even if you can't sleep). Exercise daily, even if it is only walking short distances.

What we all need is the support of others who understand our grief. We need to be nurtured, not isolated.

April 7 is Easter and the beginning of **Daylight Saving Time**. As we observe this most holy season, and the loss of an hour, I am reminded of Barbara Johnson's statement in her book, *Mama, Get the Hammer! There's a Fly on Papa's Head!*

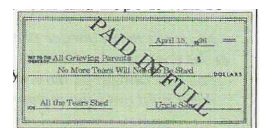


We crucify ourselves between two thieves regret for yesterday and fear of tomorrow, She continues: *Regret is a key reason why holidays produce stress with many sad memories. A loved one's birthday, a wedding anniversary, or holidays, focus our attention all the difference between what was, what might have been, and what is reality for us today.*

May each of us be able to come down from that "cross" of regret for what might have been, and be more accepting of what our life is today.

Our grief is so great and our loss will never be replaced, but we can replace that terrible pain of regret with hope for a better tomorrow.

April 15th is the day we are all responsible for giving Uncle Sam the taxes, less our exemptions, the government feels we owe. Each year I want to include in our tax form under exemptions: **Please exempt Jim and Dinah from this terrible, taxing burden of grief**. To be exempt means to be free or to be released from some liability or requirement to which others are subject; to be freed from duty. I send you this copy of a check and hope it will release you from your grief if only for a day.



Grief accompanies these losses. When an adult child dies, the aging parent may feel overwhelmed. Often, the attitude of the aging parent is an

Grief Grafts

Roxanna Aldridge, the 19-year-old twin daughter of Katie Cornish, died from a Bilateral Pulmonary Emboli, 11-23-94. Roxanna was a dispatcher with Pennyriple Emergency Assistance Center and was answering an emergency call when she was stricken. Roxanna was majoring in law enforcement at U.K. extension in Hopkinsville, and her twin sister, Crystal, is a nursing major. In 1983, Katie's husband was killed in an automobile accident. He had been drinking.

Katie shares: *I will always be so proud of my children. They're good girls. We never left the house without saying, "I love you." We already knew that life was precious and you never knew when that last day was. But that still didn't prepare us for that "DAY." One of the phrases I've read that helps so much to describe the hurt:*

**When we lose a parent we lose the past,
When we lose a child, we lose the future. . .**

It says it all.

Seeing people on TV describe "near death experiences" makes it a little easier to take. When they describe the "other side," how beautiful and peaceful it is. It makes me hope it really is and Roxanna is at peace. I'll see her again one day, but the selfish part of me wants her now.

I don't plan much in advance, but I understand that is normal. On the first anniversary of her death. I took bits and pieces from a song by Mariah Carey and wrote a memorial.

IN MEMORY OF ROXANNA LYNN ALDRIDGE NOV. 23, 1994

We won't see your smile and we won't hear your laugh anymore. Every night we won't see you walk through the

We never said "Goodbye." It isn't right'

Someday we know we'll be with you, someday in another time. For now you are gone; but it won't be for long.

No, we will never forget you. We will never let you out of our hearts. .

We will always love you, Mom, Crystal and Jr.



Katie has chosen a deer for Roxanna's symbol. "We lived close to T.V.A's Land Between the Lakes, so hunting and fishing are sports for girls as well as boys. Roxanna got her first deer a month before her death. She did a lot of fishing and hunting with her step-father, Robert. "

Pete and Mary Lou Remaley's 23-year-old son, Todd, took his life, 4-10,95. Mary Lou reveals her pain:

April 10, 1995. . .9:16 p.m., we were informed by our 27-year-old daughter that her brother had shot and killed himself NO! NO! This cannot be. A beautiful, wonderful child that we planned and loved so much; how could he be so depressed that he felt this was the only way out? Why didn't we see it??

Our son had graduated from the College of Business at ECU in the Spring of 1994, the college in which I am the administrative assistant. The faculty were always commenting on the wonderful relationship we had as they heard him say very often as he was running down the hall to his classes, "Mom, I love you. "

This child graduated from Model Laboratory School in 1990 and was very involved with his school. He had basketball scholarships offered to him, he was on the Mock Trial Team. captain of the basketball team, played tennis, ran track, and so on, and graduated with a 3.5 GPA. His last year of high school he started modeling for Images in Lexington. Does this sound like a child that was depressed?

We have just gone through the worst year of our lives. Last September (1994), my husband, who

the last 27 years, was operated on for cancer of the prostate. Then in April, Todd dies and in July we move.

Our lives have been turned inside out, upside down and it is sometimes very hard getting through the day. The city of Richmond has been absolutely wonderful to us. Our church, friends, and people we work with have been there for us and are still helping us cope.

In looking back over the last few months, we missed the signs that were associated with his depression. My family has a history of depression. The difference with Todd was he did not show any signs of being unhappy. This was the kid with a smile on his face but hurting inside.

I was an abused child, very poor, moved from one apartment to another, or with other people that were kind enough to take us in. My mother never hugged me or said she loved me. Christmas would come and go without a Christmas tree or presents. There were times when we did not have food on the table.

In having children, I wanted them to have the LOVE that I did not have. They say that many times abused children become abusive parents. Well, I went the other road and became overly protective, and had an intense love for my children.

Our home has always been opened to our kids' friend, to the point they would just open the door and come in.

We never knew who would be around for dinner. As they got older, I would go to work in the morning and find three or four cars in the driveway that weren't there when I went to bed.

In reading over the newsletters you have put together over the last few years and reading many

door. Time wasn't on your side; it isn't right!

No, we'll never forget you. We'll never let you out of our hearts.
You will always be here with us.
We'll hold onto the memories.

"Roxanna, can you hear us? Where are you to/light? Are you near us?"
We need you to be by our side.

My heart is so heavy I can hardly get through the day without crying. I cry all the time. Half of me is gone, the other half is alive for my daughter. How long had he been carrying this pain without telling anyone? That terrible day goes over and over in my mind, I picture myself looking over his apartment room with him writing his letter to us and then. . . The whole time I am yelling, "NO, NO, STOP, I love you." this will go to the grave with me.

As it turned out, he had been planning this for a few weeks. He had always come home Sunday for dinner, and I would get him groceries and bake a few things for him to take back for the week. He called mid-week and said he would not be home Sunday because he was doing "things" with his friends. Well, he called my brother in Pennsylvania just to say "Hi." He also tried to call his cousin at school. On Monday, at noon, he went to Model High School and tried to take his favorite teacher to lunch.

Living in Richmond 27 years, most people know us, but if I come across people and I mention we lost our son and they ask "How?" once I say suicide, they look at me with a look of fear as if I have some deadly disease. If a child has a broken arm or leg you fix it, but if it is mental and you don't see it, how can you fix it? I didn't know it was broken to try and fix it and that will eat at me the rest of my life.

We carry a heavy load with this type (if death, because somewhere in our minds, we feel that we should have/could have stopped Todd from feeling that this was his only way out. Did he not know we would have been there over anything? That we had an

teaches English at EKU for whether it be a person, pet or toy, yet, we do not know how to handle the situation.

Todd's symbol is a basketball. We had one put on his headstone. He loved the basketball and always had his basketball shoes in the car with him, just in case there was a game going on somewhere.

Rhonda, the 17-year-old daughter of Ron and Louise Barger, died as the result of an automobile accident, 9-5-92. Louise wrote:

Rhonda would have been 21 on March 24th. She was a beautiful pearl that washed up on the beach of my heart and I will polish her memory as long as I live and breathe.

My daughter, Renae, packed up all of Rhonda's things--put them away in a large trunk. I never would I thank God I still have one daughter. We're very close.

Rhonda's symbols are balloons and a white rose.



Mike and JoNell Wilder's daughter, Joni, was killed in an automobile accident, 7-18-92. JoNell wrote the following inspirational article in the Fall '95 edition of **THANATOS** magazine:

You Can't See My Heart

No one knows why my daughter's red Ford Probe crossed the yellow line in the path of a Volkswagen van that sunny July day. Only God knows why this lovely 17-year-old girl was taken from us. However, I do know the pain, suffering, and devastation caused by the death of a precious child.

Did God kill Joni? No. Joni's collision was an accident. Since I believe in an omnipotent God, one who can heal the sick and raise the dead, I believe that once the accident happened, God

books dealing with a loss of a child, I find a lot of my feelings are the same, except. . . Suicide, I am bothered by; why couldn't he tell me that he was hurting inside, why did he always have a smile on his face?

Why didn't I see the signs? I am his mother and I am to make things right.

I felt that Mike and I had succeeded in raising a sensitive, dependable, caring human being who would definitely leave her mark on the world. With her needing less guidance, we could focus more attention on Joe Michael, who had just entered the turbulent teen years.

Little did I know that our lives would be shattered and that our only focus for the next few years would be survival.

The Lord insulated us with shock the first hours and days following Joni's death. Shock enabled us to talk to the doctors and to sign papers to donate Joni's organs. Joni lives on as her heart was transplanted into a man in the neighboring county. Two people received her kidneys which enabled them to go off of dialysis. Her corneas gave two people eyesight. Shock also allowed us to get through the visitation and the funeral.

As the shock wore off, the pain intensified. The pain was of such magnitude that I cannot begin to explain it to someone who has not lost a child. My heart actually hurt. I felt like there was a hole in my heart. I don't ever want to hurt like that again.

Along with the pain came guilt. Why didn't I go with Joni to Wal-Mart that day? If I had been with her maybe the accident wouldn't have happened. Why hadn't I been a better mother? Why had I been so strict and thus stifled her fun? Maybe I didn't love her enough.

Is that why she died? I felt guilty for not having bought everything Joni had ever asked for. I even felt guilty when there was a light moment and I laughed. How could I laugh when Joni was dead? Through counseling and reading, I

unconditional love for him, that nothing could have stopped us from loving him? Why didn't he see this? Did we fail to relate this to him? I can go on forever with all the "WHYS?" that go through my mind. No answers!!

Having lost Todd less than a year ago, I am having the same feelings (if getting through the day as anyone with this pain. I am very unhappy, but I'm told that in time you do manage to look forward to tomorrow.

What I find so sad about all of this, is that our culture does not educate people on how to grieve or how to respond to people that grieve. Everyone at one time or another will lose someone or something they love,

permitted Joni to die. He permitted her death even though there were numerous prayer petitions for her to live.

In many ways, my life, as I knew it, ended that July 18, 1992. Joni had just that week celebrated her 17th birthday.

Life was good for the blue-eyed blond whose eyes squinted to a slit when she smiled The future looked very bright!

learned that guilt, both real and imagined, is a normal feeling following the death of a child, but one must choose it. I remember thinking, "I cannot stand this pain. I am drowning in grief I must find a way out of this because I won't live like this." The intensity of the pain caused me to find a way out of the grief. Eventually the hurt leads to healing.

As soon as possible, my husband, son, and I resumed a normal routine. I am a teacher and less than five weeks following Joni's death, school started; I was back in the classroom. It was too early. I remember striving to make it many days until the three o'clock bell.

It was then that I could cry. It did not help matters that my classroom windows faced the cemetery, and I could see her grave from the window. It is still extremely difficult for me to go to the cemetery.

I am happy because I choose to be happy. Many people think that their spouses should make them happy, and they divorce them when this does not happen. Many people keep waiting for money, a certain event, or a better job to make them happy. I have found that happiness comes from within me. There is not a minute that goes by that I do not miss Joni immensely and long to see her and talk to her. However, grieving from now on would not bring her back. Thus, I choose happiness.

*We established the **Joni Wilder Memorial Scholarship Fund** because of Joni's concern for students who would have a hard time balancing their education. In the fall of 1993, ten students were helped financially through this fund. Many people have donated to this fund, and we hope to continue it for many years.*

Some people think a person actually gets over the death of a child. Some people have even commented that I am doing fine and appear to be over the death of Joni. To those people I can only say, "Yes, I'm doing well. I am happy. However, you cannot see my heart."

John, the 16-year-old son of Bill and Beverly Donan, was killed in an automobile accident, 10-2-93. Beverly conveyed:

I have been working hard on my grief (of letting go of John) and learning to carry John with me in a new way. Our children are not dead (only in body). Their beautiful souls and free spirits have just crossed over to a higher level of energy and light. We will see them again. We finally have to let go.

If it would help others, many of the native American customs have been good therapy for me. It was what I needed



John's symbol is a hawk. Its clear call and soaring nature symbolizes John's free spirit.

Luke, the 15-year-old son of Nim and Clara Patterson, died from an accidental gunshot, 9-12-94. Clara

My family has had a rough two years. We lost my father-in-law on June 2, 1994, and on June 13, 1994, we lost my brother (Don Lynch) to a terminal illness. We were in the process (if trying to put our lives in order when we came home one night and found our son.

The police report said he was twirling the handgun on his finger and dropped it and it went off. The report stated that he had removed the bullets from the gun, apparently a shell was rusted in the chamber and he was not aware of it. This was September 12, 1994, six days before his 16th birthday.

Luke had been so excited about getting his driver's permit. We had been letting him drive, with us in the car, for several months. He was a bright and happy boy, full of life and energy.

Mike Deaton, the basketball coach at Corbin High School, told us that he had told Luke the day of his accident that he would be the starting point guard that year at CHS Luke had told us that afternoon and was so excited that he would be starting point guard. This was everything he had worked for. Each day when Luke returned home from school, he had to recap the day for us. This was an hour-long process each afternoon and one of the things I miss most about him.

I will never forget one night I went in to check on Luke while he was sleeping. I walked over to the bed and there were five basketballs in the bed with him. He never slept with any stuffed animals, but as long as I could remember until he was a teenager, he slept with those basketballs.

The 1994 basketball season at CHS, the boy's and girl's basketball teams wore black armbands with LP #00 on them in Luke's memory and a scholarship fund was set up in his memory. The first home game of the season, Luke's basketball jersey was retired at CHS, only the third basketball jersey to be retired in the history of the school. The coaches put the white jersey in the casket with Luke. They wanted the jersey to go home with him. They said that was his home jersey and it would go home with him. They will never know how much that meant to us.

The day after Luke's accident, the boy's basketball team was asking for us and concerned The coaches wanted to know when we could possibly be able to talk to them. We went to the school the morning after the accident and spent about an hour with them.

They were really Luke's other family. We wanted to help them if we could We knew they were hurting terribly and I knew if we couldn't understand what had happened, how could they?

We have been very fortunate in many ways. Luke was a very popular and well-liked boy. His friend, still come by and check on us. They call and write us often. We have a lot of poems that have been written in his memory. The first Christmas after we lost Luke, about fifteen of his friend, 'showed up to spend Christmas with us. We had told them it was our family time together.

The one thing that bothers me most is that everyone seems uncomfortable talking about Luke. I even had a lady tell me that we make her uncomfortable/ The kids are great. They talk about funny things that Luke used to do. It also gives us some insight into the part of him we did not get to see.

They told us that if anyone was sad or depressed at school, how Luke would joke and kid with them until he had them laughing. They said he could not stand to see anyone sad or depressed.

Luke's yearbook last year had a great article and photo of him. The school started the Luke Patterson Scholarship Fund in his memory. The night after the viewing, the children came to our home and we allowed them to go to Luke's room and take a t-shirt or some memento of him that they would like to keep. Of course, we had already gotten things that we did not want anyone to have, and put them in a trunk in our room.

The coaches were reflecting on last

year when they won the district at CHS and there was really no way last year's team should have won. Coach Deaton and Conyers told us after the game that they thought there was an angel putting their shots in the basket and they knew it was Luke. The boys cut down a piece to the net and gave it to us to put with Luke's trophies.

We have so many wonderful memories of Luke. He was such a happy and outgoing boy. It's really hard to believe one child can do so much and touch so many lives in a

shared:

*short sixteen years. Our house
seems so quiet with him gone.
Luke had to be touching or picking
at you all the time. He was a very
touchy person. He was 6 feet tall*

and if I sat down in the rocker anytime, and if he wasn't on the phone of course, he would plop down in my lap and say, "Rock me mommy."

I guess it is not hard to figure out what Luke's symbol is. The only thing that was important to him was basketball. He liked to twirl the ball on his

finger; he was a bit of a show-off.

I think Luke touched many lives and for that I am also very thankful. Luke was a Christian. I know Luke is in a better place and wouldn't come back if



us.

he could, but that make it any better on

David and Lola's 18-year-old daughter, Jennifer Daugherty, was killed in an automobile accident, 12-25-95. Lola describes Jennifer:

Jennifer was our only daughter. The light of my life. She was an artist and an athlete, an honor's graduate, Class of '95 from North Laurel High, and a nursing school student at Somerset Community College. Her smile could light up a room and her laughter and comedy was infectious. She was a gentle, sweet and very loving person. Children and the elderly adored her. She always had time to stop and talk with people while she was running. She ran cross-country track, and won several trophies before hurting her right knee. She was a very accomplished artist. I have several of her drawings framed and hanging in our home.

Jennifer's death is like losing my sight. Everything is dark and dreary without her. Jennifer was born 20 years too late. She should have lived during the 70's. She loved bell bottoms, peace symbols and bead jewelry. She also loved red roses and her grandfather. I feel that she and my dad are together in a place of light and serenity. I miss her so much and will always love and cherish her.

Jennifer's symbols are a red rose, the peace symbol and a smiley face.



Michael, the 23-year-old son of Dick and Jean Sand, was killed in an automobile accident, 6-18-94. Jean shared Michael:

To tell you a little bit about Michael to

Secondly, after five years went by and we did not have the good fortune to have another child, we were told we would probably never have more children. So we went to the adoption agency and started proceedings to adopt our Richard, who, at the time, was six weeks old when we picked him up from the agency. He is a great joy and pleasure to us, as we chose him. So he is very special and has been a super child. Consequently, we felt a little bit richer with two children. Two and one-half years after we adopted our son, I thought I had the flu for three weeks, as pregnancy never entered my mind after an adoption and 8+ years since my delivery. Well, our Michael, a beautiful little bundle of joy, weighing 8.5 pounds, was born on January 25, 1971, came into this world (I cannot say big wide wonderful world, as at this point I still have mixed emotions). But we had a terrible scare as the doctor lost the heart beat after 40 hours of labor, and he told my husband we had lost Michael. And now they had to take care of me. (I suppose the doctor thought I would need my husband's support, so they told him first.) After a few more hours and much sadness to my husband, as, at this time I was in labor and very unaware of anything else going on around me, everything turned out all right and we felt very blessed to have three beautiful children. We felt like we had the world on a string and now, we were as rich as Rockefeller.

We had 23 beautiful years with Michael and we have nothing but wonderful memories of him and he will always be in our hearts. We always thought something like this could never happen to us, although, in reality, I think it is every parents nightmare. We do thank God for the 23 years we did have.

- M Meticulous
- I Indispensable
- C Caring, charming
- H Helpful, handsome
- A Adorable
- E Electrifying
- L Lovable

These were a few of the things he meant to us.

Michael had so many friends and he touched so many people's hearts. No matter what you asked him to do, no job was too much or too big for Mike. He would come home and cut the lawn for his dad, before he ever

He would come home from work, on a lunch break, and clean out the refrigerator for me and take all the extra canned goods from the kitchen pantry downstairs without being told or asked to do so. He was one in a million and he had a heart of gold.

As you can see, I love to talk about him and write about him, so you know how much I must have loved to show him off to everyone I knew. He was such a hunk. The memories will never be allowed to die. We lost some of our wealth, but Michael will always be in my heart and no one can take these precious moments away from me.

The following letter was sent by the Sand family to their family and friends:

The Lord Giveth and the Lord Hath Taken Away

Dick and I and our family did not know how many lives our son, Michael, had touched until Saturday June 18, 1994, when he was walking the golden road to a better place. We found out that same day how many people have touched our lives. Everything was so very beautiful, so complete, so final and so feeling and these are the only thoughts that have helped to get us through the last several weeks. We have a long road to travel and a high mountain to climb before we are whole again and we certainly never thought such a tragedy could ever happen to all of us, and needless to say, we are having a difficult time accepting our son's death. We now know the Lord has a much better place for Michael. We now have a special angel looking down on us and watching over us and we know that Michael has reached the end of the Golden road and has passed through the Gates of Heaven. We want to thank each and every one of you who walked with our family, and we hope this is an acceptable way of doing so. Our family and good friend, were by our side constantly. They came into our home and took over, including cooking, serving, cleaning-up and putting everything away. Michael would have been proud. The food was outstanding, the floral arrangements beautiful, the memorials greatly appreciated. The mass cards and the sympathy

start with, he was sort of a miracle baby. We were blessed with Kimberly, who was very much loved and wanted and was our first child, which is a little special in itself. came into the house, after working all cards came to us in droves. day.

It is hard to put into words our though is at this hour of our tremendous loss, as this day was so overwhelming for Dick and me and our family, that nothing said would be adequate. We want to thank each and everyone of you.

God bless you all and thank you so much for all of your support in our time of need.

Richard & Jean Sand & Family



Michael's symbols are a star, an angel, a Stetson and boots.

Ralph and Ruth Latham's 21-year-old son, Jason, was killed by a drunk driver, 3-13-95. Ruth lamented:

Our precious and only son, Jason, was killed by a drunk driver on March 13, 1995, on a Monday night..

Jason's symbol would have to be a UK Wildcat emblem. He was a #1 UK Wildcat fan. He was attending the University of North Alabama, and was preparing to transfer to UK in the fall. He was going to be a pharmacist. This was his dream.

Our symbol for him would be an angel, because he was a precious angel. His younger sister, Lori, got all of us angel pins to wear in his memory.



We wear our angel pins with a red ribbon to remember him and the red ribbon is to remind people not to drink and drive.

Jason played on an intramural team at UNA. This was their last game of the season. He played that game and he and a friend had a tennis match after that. They played the match and were hungry, so they went for something to eat, Jason dropped Barry off and started home. Five more minutes and he would have been home.

He came to the red light and stopped. This was at the end of Barry's street. Witnesses say that the light turned green; he started through the intersection. He was almost through when a truck going very fast came barreling down the road and ran the red light. The truck actually veered over in the turning lane and hit Jason.; car right in the driver's door. It knocked the car 108 feet. Both driver and passenger in the truck were under age 21, and both were intoxicated almost three times the legal limit. Jason was wearing both

He died from severe trauma to the head. They say death was instant. I hope he suffered no pain.

The driver had a previous DUI conviction. He was released on bond and ended up back in jail in Arkansas for stealing a car. After he was sentenced to 10 years and sent to jail, in a month's time he tried to escape. He showed no remorse. I was so angry at him for that because 10 years and he'll probably only serve 1/3 of that, is not much for taking another chance to make something of his life, and this was what his choice was. Jason won't have another chance, nor did he have a choice that night. His future and ours was taken that night. I recently saw on TV where a man got 10 years for killing a dog. Something is very wrong.

Jason was a very loving baby, child, and continued to be so as he became a young man. He was well liked by teachers and friends.

Jason was a good son. We've always said that. He wasn't perfect, but he was a very loving child. We don't grieve without hope, He was saved and we know he's with our Lord. It's just for the now, and the never to see him again in this life that we grieve. The neverness is so hard to bear. We are a very close family. We don't understand. He was his dad's best buddy, my friend and protector, his 2 sister's friend and helper. He honored and respected his dad mid me. He had a good head on his shoulders and he used it. He had a lot of friends old and young alike. He loved life and people. He was never rebellious. I miss him so. We all do.

Our oldest daughter wrote this for the paper Memorial Day:

In Loving Memory of Jason Troy Latham 2/10/74 - 3/13/95

For 21 years you brought us much joy until God called home His fine Christian boy.

Now we just have memories, sad hearts and pain. Since March 13, 1995 we've never been the same.

We've left your room just the way it was. Your baseball cards, pictures, and all your Kentucky "stuff"

The song by The Kingsmen "Wish You Were Here" is what you'd be singing to us, if we could only hear. We miss you and think of you every single day.

Nothing can replace all your special

They say it takes time for our hearts to heal.

With prayers to above, we keep faith that God will. We'll always love and miss you.

Dad, Mom, Neysa and Lori

The Latham family has used the pictures of Jason's accident to make college students aware of drunk driving, especially during **National Collegiate Alcohol Awareness Week.**

Carl and Gladys Napier's son Carl Wayne, 32, was killed in an automobile accident, 8-30-94, Gladys shared:

Carl and I lost our older son, Carl Wayne and his fiancée, Gerri Caudill, in a tragic automobile accident, August 30, 1994.

It has been very difficult coping with the loss of Carl Wayne. Birthdays, holidays, and anniversaries are extremely hard for us.

We have chosen three symbols to represent Carl Wayne which are an angel, a heart and a deer. I find all three symbols are very fitting for him. Carl Wayne had a big heart that was overflowing with love, kindness and compassion for his family, friends and everyone else he knew. He would do without something himself in order to help others. Carl Wayne was our precious angel on earth and now he's God's angel in Heaven. I chose a deer because one of his greatest enjoyments was deer hunting. Also, the day Carl Wayne was buried, a little deer came to the cemetery. Occasionally, I still see a deer there. I had a deer and an out door scene etched on his tombstone.

Carl Wayne was an outdoor person. He dearly loved deer hunting, fishing, camping, hiking, boating, and riding his 4-wheeler and Jeep.

I also started keeping a journal after Carl Wayne's death. I write my thoughts and feelings in it every day.

lap and shoulder belts.

ways.

We are planning to erect a cross at the scene where Carl Wayne and Gerri were killed.

I would like for all the fellow travelers to send me a picture of their loved ones. I want to compile a photo album of our precious little angels.

Gladys' address is:

Gladys Napier
Po. Box 13
Big Creek, KY 40914

The following poem was placed in the newspaper:

*In Loving Memory of
Carl Wayne Napier*

As your birthday draws near, the memories of you become more dear. God gave me a most precious gift November 6, 1961. A gift of love, a gift of joy. That gift was a darling precious little boy. You were the finest gift a lifetime could provide.

A constant source of happiness and pride. I watched you grow, I watched you learn, I watched you become a wonderful young man So loving and kind was your every word. I was always so proud to say, "That's my son"

This is the second year I cannot be with you on your birthday, except in memory.

I cannot hear your voice or see your smiling face that meant so much to me.

You were the joy of my life and your memory will live forever in my heart.

Sadly missed by Mom, Dad and Brother.

Jaci, the 11-year-old daughter of Joe and Gail Friedmann, died as the result of being hit by a school bus while she was riding her bicycle, 6-8-95. Gail was interviewed by the local paper and praised the support the family received from the community:

Many people we don't even know have come by to offer their words of support. They tell us how Jaci would stop and talk to them. She made friends easily. It's sad that it takes something like this to really appreciate the kindness of the people in this community. Their outpouring of love has been wonderful and will help keep us going.

Jaci had a special affection for Disney characters, particularly Mickey Mouse. Her bedroom was filled with Mickey items and memorabilia.

(The family had purchased tickets and airfare for a long-awaited trip to Disney just prior to Jaci's death.)

Jaci was always so busy and constantly moving. She was hard to keep up with.

She packed a lot of living into her 11 years.

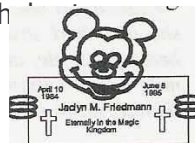
We'll always remember Jaci for her beautiful eyes and her boundless energy. She was like the glue of our family.

Jaci's eyes were donated to an organ donation program. It helps us to realize that Jaci's death will in some way help another person to see.

I don't want Jaci's death to go unnoticed. I know how difficult it is to police your kids. We can't watch over them at all times. But if a safety helmet can save the life of one child, it's worth the effort.

Although doctors told the Friedmann family that a bicycle safety helmet probably wouldn't have saved Jaci's life, the Friedmanns encourage parents to stress to their children the importance of wearing h

This is a drawing of Jaci's tombstone.



John and Joan Rambo's 41-year-old son, Bill, died from a self-inflicted injury, 9-12-95. Joan verbalized her great loss:

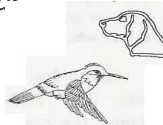
The hurt is so real day and night. I still cry every day and life does not feel the same.

I pray every day and, like you, I love angels. There was a blue angel on a small shelf at the funeral home from one of Bill's dear friend and it touched me more than any of the other flowers. I love the song, "Angels Among Us." I cry each time I hear it.

Our son was 41 years old and had just had a birthday, and we saw and talked with him every day of his life. He and my husband worked together and he had always been very close to us.

He did take his own life and we never had a clue that he could ever do it. The answers never come. He had 3 boys. I know he loved them and I

The family had chosen a hummingbird and a Labrador for Bill's symbols.



Jim and Brenda Jones' son, Rick, 35, died from pneumonia resulting from an automobile accident, 12-8-95. Brenda describes Rick:

My son, Rick, was a wonderful son and a very caring husband and father. The entire family misses him so much.

We all came to depend on him being with us. Since he was there for all of us since his auto accident.

On November 13, 1990, my son was involved in an auto accident and was given no chance of surviving, but he did. He, of course, was disabled. My husband and I took care of him while his wife was at work. Then last summer, he and his wife built a new home on a lot beside our house. We were with him every day.

He was due to move into his new home, December 10th. I had his breakfast ready for him on December 8th, but he never showed. I called; he said he was getting ready to leave, but the school had called to say his 10-year-old was sick. He said he wasn't feeling well and described all the symptoms of the flu which was going around. I checked on him and his son. He died that day. We have no idea what happened.

We feel so cheated. Vera, our daughter-in-law and grandsons have moved into the house.

Bill was so much a part of our lives. We have a son and a daughter who live close by. I will cry for hours, it is never off my mind.

His sign would be a fish and boat. As that was all he could do when he was recuperating. Someone had to go with him, but no one minded taking him fishing.

He was coach of his sons' little league teams. He became very involved with anything concerning his family.

I too find that no one seems to want to discuss Rick. I have a country grocery store, and I grew up in this area. Everyone at the store loved Rick and was so glad he was moving in our area.

When I mention his name now, they appear uncomfortable. But I loved him so much.



*We will always
in our hearts, memory
and lives.*

Psamantha, the 8 year-old adopted daughter of Gary and Diann Foster, died from an asthma attack, 3-17-91. Diann

explained the spelling of
Psamantha's name:

I'd watched our foster baby survive seizures, pneumonia, chronic lung infections, and failure to thrive. I'd watched a helicopter lift off with her, and ridden several times in a screaming ambulance. Four times in six months I'd kissed her good-bye for what the doctors felt would be her last day of life, she always came back to our home.

Still Gary and I talked about adoption. Tentatively at first because she was on the regular adoption list which automatically excluded our home. When all those prospective adoptive parents had said "no" then she was released to the Special Needs Adoption Program and other families had seniority. Over a period of months all those prospective parents were eliminated either voluntarily or by the Social Service Department.

Gary and I continued to discuss the pros and cons of adoption. Who else knew how to hold her that special way so she could breathe easier? Who else had the capacity to love her more than we? Then all the reasons "why not" came rushing into our minds. We had four birth children--healthy, happy ones--was it fair to bring a mentally and physically handicapped sister permanently into their lives? The children said 'yes.' What about medical expenses-- she could exceed our maximum insurance coverage in very short time. The State said "we'll give you a medical subsidy." Could we, as parents, give her the extra stimulation she'd require? Could we trust her enough to know she'd reach her full potential? Would we be able to always accept her as she was--not as we hoped she'd be? After much soul searching and prayer, we said 'yes.'

Many forms and social worker visits later, the State said, "Yes, we judge you to be competent parents for this child."

Then we encountered a large obstacle--her name.

"Don't change it," said the children. "We like Samantha."

"But," I objected, "I want her to be a 'P' too. All of you begin with P."

For weeks the debate waged I posted names starting with "P's" all over the house: Pansy, Petunia, Pamela, Patrina,, Phyllis. The children added a few of their own: Parsnip, Parsley, and Pretend

One rainy spring day, Gary and I were driving Samantha to yet another clinic appointment and discussing her name, again.

"Why not just put a 'P' in front of the 'S,'" he said

"What? Can we do that?"
"Why not? Think of Psalms, psoriasis, and psychology."

"We'd have to spell it for everyone." I protested

"Probably pronounce it too."
"People will ask why we spell it like that."

"So?"
I rambled through the glove compartment for paper and pen. P-S-A-M-A-N-T-H-A.

"Samantha," I asked the red haired baby sitting between us, "Do you want a 'P' in your name?"

For the very first time she answered a question. "Da-da-da."

Her daddy's and my eyes met. Psamantha with a "P" was born.

Psamantha had Down Syndrome, but she also had strawberry blond hair, a beautiful smile, and a stubborn streak a mile long. I think I am doing well, but then a "down time" will come.



Psamantha's symbol is a butterfly.

The Fosters have four birth children, four special-needs adopted children, and four foster children. What a wonderful story of love and sharing this family exemplifies!

Nancy Hannon's 19-year-old son, Michael Price, was killed in an automobile accident, 2-6-93. Nancy declared:

I guess you thought I had gone into hibernation. I wish life was that simple. Sometimes I wish I could hibernate and dwell in my thoughts without any other responsibilities, but I guess that wouldn't help matters. We can't hide from our grief, memories (good and bad), or our responsibilities. They have an uncanny way of finding us no matter what we do or where we go.

Nancy had a wonderful insight into Bob Buford's book, **Half Time**. Her comments:

I have thought a lot about March Madness and about Bob Buford's book. Our "game-plan" went astray. We used every ounce 'if strategy that we could think of in our game plan. We were winning every game. I had 19 years and a losses--19 and 0.

We went into "Half Time" undefeated.

The future looked bright and full of hope. Halftime came along and dealt us the blow 'if a lifetime, our First Loss. Some "teams" suffered more than one loss in our game of basketball. "Wow," I wish we had known the rules for this game called basketball. We would never have participated We could choose the quiet game of checkers or Old Maid for our sport.

Michael would have been a senior at UK this year. As a young child when Kentucky basketball was having lots of problems, Michael would say, "When I get to UK they will be in the Final Four once or twice and win it all in my senior year." So I am pulling for Kentucky extra hard this year.

I have been in three years of "Grief Madness" and have been "Truly Blue" every day. I have slam-dunked my madness a little too hard It is amazing how so many different things can take on a new meaning during our Half Time.

Three years of grief madness has caused many changes in my life. Some 'if the changes were inevitable, some were, I guess to try to hide from my grief, or just plain stupid Since Michael's accident (To this day I still can't say the "D" word when talking about Michael), I have changed just about everything possible, and what I didn't change on purpose, it seems to have changed anyway.

There is not much I can change (old age--I wish I could change that.) I really cannot say I made these changes because I needed them. Three years ago everything seemed to be fine, I did not try to change "things" then. I think some of these changes gave me a project to work on, something to put my energy into. Changes did not erase my grief, but I think some of the changes made handling the hurt a little easier.

Michael's symbols are a smiley face and red rose.



Bernie, 18, the only child of Mark and Janie Brashear, was killed in an automobile accident, 12-26-92 (Mark's birthday.)

Janie described Bernie:

Bernie was 18 years old He was good-looking and full of love and energy and looked forward to going on with his life. He played football for North Hopkins High School. As a senior, he played wide receiver and played on defense. He was looking forward to going to college at Georgetown University and that was all he talked about. He was talking about it on Christmas Eve night (1992). He was very active in church and his community. He had served on a Chylsalis team in November of 1992. Bernie's best friend, Tom Deeg, was also killed The driver survived. Bernie was killed instantly. We will never know what it is like to be grandparents. My church is adding a new wing on to it, so we are putting his football jersey in a frame and hanging it in the new gym, since he was active in sports. I have a butterfly garden in my backyard every summer to keep Bernie's memory alive. Every time I feel lonely and very low, there's always a butterfly that goes flying by to lift my spirits.

A butterfly is Bernie's symbol.



Pam and Hubert Meade's son, Quentin, died from cancer, 8-8-93.

Quentin's symbols are Lego's and praying hands. Pam wrote the following poems:

Being Set Free

When in this life
A child comes along
He will depend on me
To be very strong.
I'll have to be patient
Loving, filled with care
Letting him know
I'll always be there.
To kiss a "boo-boo"
Or fill the day with cheer
Try to find that little smile
While brushing away a tear.
Watching and wondering
When grown, what will he be
Praying, "Please Lord
Let me be able to see.
Him grown and knowing
He needs you, Lord
More than He will ever need me. "
When in this life
Changes may come along,
I know God will be there
Whatever may be wrong.



*I know things will happen
Beyond my control
Breaking my heart
And vexing my soul.
So I'll hold him close
As long as this might be For
some day God may call And I'll
have to set him free.*

I Don't Have to Walk Alone

*In this world of toil and care
I turn to Jesus
He's always there. He's the rock
I'm leaning on.
He's always near when I call on Him
His love for me will not grow dim
His blood for me He did atone
I don't have to walk alone.
A dear, precious friend
On whom I can depend
The one I'm leaning on
He's my rock, a living stone
I know I don't have to walk alone.
When I'm down
feeling so blue
Seems I hear Him saying
"Lean on me, I'm here for you."
All my trust is in His love
Praying to reach that home above I'll
keep pushing, pressing on
Because I don't have to walk alone.
I don't have to walk alone
I've got Jesus to call my own
He's the only friend
On whom I can depend
My rock, a living stone
Oh, I don't have to walk alone.
Close to my side
Jesus will stay
If I always obey.
Wanting to live with Him someday
Trying to do right, not the wrong
Oh! I don't have to walk alone.*

On 2-9-93, Terry and Kelly Alexander lost their 4-month-old son, Cole, to SIDS. Cole's symbol is an angel. Kelly shares her life with eight-month-old Nicholas:

*I thought that by being a "stay at home mom" that I would have plenty of time to clean the house, cook gourmet dinners, work on my computer, keep up on my letters, etc. Little did I know that I am lucky if I put on matching socks!
But I love it' I have Nicholas so spoiled rotten that I doubt I would ever find a babysitter should I decide to go back to work'*

I thank God he is a healthy and happy baby. SIDS is still constantly on my mind, of course, but every morning I see his big silly grin I feel lucky to have another day. Even when he wakes in the middle of the night and decides that it would be a good idea to get us all up and visit, I most always think maybe an angel pinched him awake for us. Still, maybe, but it sure makes those 2 A.M TV re-runs a lot more enjoyable.

I lost my Dad very unexpectedly on September 1st. It was a terrible time for my family, but I am so happy Dad got to see Nicholas for the month after he was born. He even saw him twice on the day he died Dad was so thrilled 10 have another grandson. He took it so hard when we lost Cole. We even had memorial contributions for Dad go to SIDS-which I am sure confused a lot of people who read the obituaries that weekend.

Now I feel that Nicholas has all kinds of angels watching out for him. Cole, and my Dad, and my husband's dad

Hard for me to believe that Cole has been gone over three years now. Yet it only takes one second to close my eyes and go back to that phone call from the hospital. I guess it will be that way forever, won't it?

One thing that amazes me is that some people seem to think that because we now have Nicholas, that the whole terrible thing that happened to Cole has been erased I guess I am lucky that now that I don't work I can choose the people I spend time with.

I am still at a loss when we are out and people ask if this is my first baby. I can't win here. If I say "No," they always ask ages. If I say "Yes," I feel I am betraying Cole. I am not real comfortable telling strangers that we lost our first child People get that "look" on their faces, then I feel badly for hours afterward. May be this is a question our fellow travelers can answer. Maybe someone has come up with something that will work for others, as I am sure this happens to all of us.

This is a question we have all been asked, how do you respond? Let me know what answers you have given.

Ernest and Rebecca Goode's 32 year-old son, Jeff, died from kidney failure, 3-24-95. Rebecca shared her many trials:

We lost Jeff last March. In July I was told I have bone marrow cancer (Multiple Myeloma). It has been so hard trying to fight a terrible disease and grieve. The disease was far advanced before it was diagnosed, yet I was under the care of a doctor.

We adopted Nardis 11-60, then Jeff 12-62. Jeff was typical of alcoholic syndrome. We feel his mother was alcoholic and drank while carrying him. He fell into drugs, alcohol and homosexuality, eventually becoming HIV positive and passed away of AIDS complications. We all did all that was humanly possible to save him--all of us have studied the Alcoholic Syndrome and he could not control his life-style. We do not wish to pass the blame--we had all those years to help and observe him mid care for him. Our daughter cared for him (plus dozens of friends) in his last weeks.

Jeff was very intelligent and could have contributed so much!

Friends of Nardis and Jeffs have started a Memorial to Jeff that will benefit AIDS patients. On the first anniversary of his death, his friends had a memorial service and have started a Thrift store in his memory.

We have had a double whammy and it has taken its toll on our entire family. I have two more treatments to take (1 year in all.) They give me 5 years to live, I feel (according to my literature) it will be more like 3 to 3 1/2. No one knows. I am one of only 3 in nearly a million who have this.

It will be a great day when we all gather around the throne and be together again.

Jeff was very talented in music.

His symbols are a rainbow and musical notes.



Edward and Alma Allen's 33-year-old son, Jay, was killed in an automobile accident, 10-12-92. Alma describes Jay:

My son was grown, but he was my little boy in my heart. It seemed like my heart was ripped in pieces and it has never healed. Most of the time I grieve silently. My son's favorite picture was the

one of an angel watching over a little boy and girl who are crossing a bridge.

Our son was a wonderful boy. Everybody who ever met him loved him. He always had a smile for everyone. He never was into sports because he always had a severe asthma. But from a little boy, he liked anything that had a motor. He always was into 4-wheelers, dune buggies and Volkswagens. He worked every day, but was also a volunteer fireman and very active at church. He was at church three times a week, no matter what else he had to do.

He and his friend, Eddie White, were killed when the small car they were going to work in was run completely over by a large coal truck. October 12, 1992, that's the day my heart was ripped out of me.

Our youngest daughter was just 11 years old and she cried for months. I find letters all over the house that she writes to him.

There are so many things I would like to say and don't, but I don't want anyone to forget him, ever.



Jay's symbols are a Volkswagen and an angel.



Chris Upchurch, the 20-year old son of Mike and Kathy Keohane, died in an automobile accident, 3-23-95. Kathy shared :

I am in a support group in Owensboro called "Hope for the Bereaved" and another in Rockport, IN called "Support for the Bereaved". I don't wish it on anyone. Things are getting a little better, at least I can walk in a grocery store or Wal-Mart without crying anymore now. I feel sometimes as if I'm all alone in what I'm going through, but I know I'm not.

Kathy is expressing how we all feel or have felt since we began our journey through grief.

Chris' symbol is an angel.



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

Leon, died from colon cancer, 11-26-95. Jerry shared this poem :

Message Sent From Loved One In Heaven

*If he could say to you today,
The things he wanted to ...
You'd know the happy bliss
That's given to so few.
You'd hear of how the angels sing
How he walks on the street of gold...
The beauty of the faces there
Of all that's young and old.
He'd tell about a river
Of life that runs so free...
About the beauty of God's garden
And God's love for you and me.
He'd sing all of god's praises
And of meeting loved ones there
And tell you of that city
So lovely and so far.
He'd tell you that he's happy
And not to worry here...
That someday you'll be together
In God's tender care.
He'd tell you that he loved you
And he knows you love him, too...
That love is the light of Heaven
And that light always shines through.
He'd say to you always
"Stand tall and wear a smile...
Until at last one happy day
You, too will walk that mile."
He'd say, "I'm waiting for you.
But don't hurry, God knows best!
And by God's loving promise
Someday you'll find my rest,
-Author unknown*

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



Wouldn't it be a real Easter treat if it "rained" marshmallow chocolate chips ? Or - r - r chocolate

covered peanuts or raisin or really just about anything that is covered with Chocolate!!!

