



LAMENTATIONS



Issue 48

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

September, 1996

This month marks the 4th anniversary of the newsletter. Two journal entries from four years ago: **September 28, 1992:** *Am hoping to start some type of newsletter to send to all the grieving parents with whom I correspond. I have so much I want to say and share with those who understand my grief--if I can only find the time.* **October 4, 1992:** *Started a newsletter since I write to so many people. Decided to put it in the form of a newsletter and have named it "Lamentations" since we are all grieving and mourning the deaths of our children. It will save a great deal of time.*

An **anniversary** is defined as the yearly return of a special date. The annual recurrence of a date marking a notable event. When I began the newsletter, I would have never imagined that it would become a monthly newsletter, and that I would continue to do so for this many years. There was no direction as to where it was going or how long I would write the newsletter.

September 8 is Grandparent's Day. In the book, **Hope for the Bereaved**, the article, **When A Grandchild Dies** explains a grandparent's grief:

No one expects to outlive their own children, much less their grandchildren. It is so difficult to raise a family, see your children do the same, and then see the cycle broken in this out-of order way. As grandparents you have a double grief. You grieve for your grandchild who has died, as well as for your own child who is grieving.

You not only feel your own pain and sadness, but feel helpless and frustrated at not being able to help your bereaved child.

When the reality "hits," everyone feels even more devastated. It is important

to consider your needs as well as those of your bereaved child. Acknowledging and working on your grief will help you and, indirectly, your grieving child

As a bereaved grandparent, you may feel great sadness, loss, guilt and anger. Some older grandparents have said, "I've lived my life. It should have been me." The fact that they are still alive while a young child or adult is dead is difficult for many to bear.

Some of you who now find yourselves grieving for a grandchild may have experienced the death of your own child years ago. Your grandchild's death may trigger memories and pain that you thought were long since forgotten. If your child died more than 10 years ago, you may not have resolved your grief. If this is the case for you it is important to allow your grief to surface. If you can, talk about it with your grieving child. It may help both of you.

Be careful not to suppress your grief, and encourage your child not to suppress grief either. Suppressed grief can cause physical as well as emotional pain. In addition to being harmful to you, it may seem to your bereaved child that you don't really care and are not hurting, too. In reality, when our child suffers, we suffer. It is important for everyone to face the grief and work through it. Life will never be the same; but with time, effort and much love...grief will ease.

Don't be surprised if at first you can't reach out to help your grieving child. Remember, you are grieving! Be patient with yourself. Eventually you may be able to talk, listen and help. If you find that you can't help specifically with the grief, you can send cards, tell them that you love them, etc. Explain that you wish that you could be of more help but that you don't know what to do.

Suggestions for Helping Yourself and Your Grieving Child:

** Read about grief. It is important to understand what you and your child are experiencing.*

** It helps to be open and share your feelings. Your openness sets a good example for your child. Share the good memories and good days, as well as the pain of grief and the bad days.*

** Talk about the dead grandchild. Mention his / her name.*

** Find someone with whom you can talk freely--a friend, support group member, clergy or counselor.*

** Be available to LISTEN frequently to your child. Respect your child's way of handling the pain and expressing the grief. Don't tell your child how he or she should react.*

** At special times (anniversary of death, birthday, holidays) write and/or call your bereaved child (and their spouse). Mention that you realize what day it is. You are calling to say you love them and you wish that you could take some of their pain away.*

** When adults are grieving, remaining siblings often feel neglected...plus they don't understand the grief that they are experiencing. Try to spend extra time with your other bereaved grandchild(ren), offering to listen and reminding them that they are very important and much loved.*

** If possible, offer to take surviving grandchild(ren) for an afternoon or a day; help with practical matters, such as preparing food, doing laundry, shopping; spend time alone with your child*

** Most of us need hugs even if we don't recognize that we do. It helps to hug and hold your child if you both are comfortable doing so.*

** Allow yourself and encourage your child to cry when needed. Crying offers relief*

** Hold onto HOPE and encourage your family that eventually you/they will enjoy life again*

Grief Grafts

Wes and Farrell Jean Washam's 16-year-old son, John Mark, was killed in an automobile accident, May 20, 1990. Farrell Jean expressed her blessings:

We have been blessed from the first phone call concerning John Mark's wreck to this day with a quiet, God given peace... great over-whelming sorrow, yes, but a continuing peace. I still get out four plates sometimes... we just need two now that our daughter is away at school! I can smile when that happens, now, but so grateful that at one time we did use four plates.

Wes, Jamie, and I grieved... and continue to do so... in very different ways and time frames. Allowing each other to do so was a learning time for us. We have been able to love on and minister to several families in our town and area who have experienced the death of a child. Tears from me flow (much less frequently) but at the most unexpected times and places... maybe a whiff of POLO, a verse in a song, someone else playing the drums for a special service in church, seeing a MR-2 Toyota, deer hunting time, knowing Wes needs a stronger arm than I have to offer on a project, or hearing "Mama" and answering before thinking. But the tears are sweet memories to 16 years of being John Mark's Mama, and for that I am so very thankful. No, by my time frame, I had not finished my job as John Mark's Mother; however, I also know we're not running on my timeline. Knowing that John Mark had accepted Jesus as his personal Savior when he was 9 years old allows me to accept this physical separation. Singing Victory in Jesus Because He Lives or When We All Get to Heaven fills me with awe realizing where our John Mark is and with whom!

Curtis, the 4-year-old son of Barbara DeLozier, died from an automobile accident, 5-26-75. Barbara expressed her concern for her fellow travelers:

It is very humbling and very sad to realize how many others are walking in the same shoes that we have somehow

been chosen to walk in. I don't have to tell you how much it helps having others who understand our pain.

I have chosen a pink carnation as Curtis' symbol. One by one, he picked all of mine in the backyard that bloomed that spring. He always brought them to me. (I had to close my eyes every time, because it was a "surprise.") He was so proud of himself that I couldn't scold him for it. For me, it is a wonderful memory. The strange part of it is that I haven't had another one bloom since his death.

But it's just as well. He's not here to pick them for me.



Bill Keith, the 17-year-old son of Judy Oaks Davidson, died from an automobile accident 9-29-87. Dr. Davidson is now the Executive Director of the **Renew Center for Personal Recovery** in Berea, Ky. The **Renew Center** is having a seminar entitled, **Spiritual Crisis Following Loss**, October 24. Dr. Jim Miller whose award-winning videos on grief, loss, and spiritual issues will be the speaker. There will be several ministers who will facilitate discussion of questions posed by bereaved persons. There will be a panel who will reflect on issues raised during the conference. They are, Rev. Chip Miller (son died from AIDS), Rev. Curt Davis (lost 2 sons), myself, Dr. Paschal Baute, and Father John Curtis. Registration is \$25. For more complete information, you may telephone 606-986-0780.

Bill Keith's symbol is a shooting star.



Andrew, the 20-year-old son of Dr. Henry and Marcia Jones, died from complications of Cerebral Palsy 12-31-93. Marcia sent an article that has shocked me. The article was written by Michael Gartner, In USA TODAY. The statistics are:

The latest statistics which are from 1992 show that there were 35,548

young people between the ages of 15 and 24 who have died. Of those, 13,662 died in accidents, and most of those-10,305-died in motor-vehicle accidents. Another 8,019 were murdered, and 4,693 killed themselves. Very few died from natural causes. The biggest killer among diseases was cancer, 1,809. Heart disease killed fewer than a thousand, AIDS fewer than 600. More men 15-24 are murdered every month than die of AIDS in a year. For every young man who dies of cancer, four kill themselves.

When comparing this to war, at the height of the Vietnam War, an average of about 5,750 died each year. America was outraged. Yet we routinely murder more young men than we were killing every year in Vietnam. Where is the outrage?

The Unabomber killed three people in 18 years of terrorism. That's awful, and the man is despicable, and the immense news coverage of the suspect is defensible. The story is chilling. Yet we routinely murder three young people every four hours. In the 18 years that the Unabomber has killed three persons, we've probably murdered close to 100,000 of our young people and seen another 150,000 die in wrecks.

Where is the news coverage, the outrage, the demand that we stop this craziness?

We can't do anything about these deaths until we acknowledge the numbers and treat them with the same outrage we find in war, the same revulsion we find in a Unabomber. Until then, nothing will happen. And our sons and daughters will go on dying

Marcia has a challenge for each of us. In a conversation with Henry who is a Pediatrician, she asked him why the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) had not addressed the issue of what is really killing our youth. He replied they are doing all they can. It was the AAP who fought for seat belts and made it a law for child safety restraints and baby car seats. They fought for motorcycle and bike helmets, but when you go for gun control, you oppose the National Rifle Association

(NRA) and it takes money. Marcia has challenged me and I hope you to try to find some ways of preventing so many deaths. I would like to hear your suggestions and how you may be involved in projects that are trying to change these statistics.



Andrew's symbols are children of the world, red, yellow, black, white and handicapped too.

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

I wonder if things will ever be better? We miss our Jason so much. More and more every day. It's so hard to try to find joy when the skies seem so gray.

I'm not sure what it means to "lean into the pain." I can't stand the pain or to think sometimes. I just have to push thoughts away. I miss Jason so. I hope I'll wake up soon from this dream.

Help me Dear Lord as I start this day.
Please, Lord, show me the way.
Help me with my doubt and fear.
Give me your true vision, clear.
Help me when I cannot see.
All the things you've done for me.
Help me through these days so dark.
To find again a song in my heart.
Give to me your strength and power.
So I can make it through this hour.

Amen

Doesn't Ruth express our thoughts and dreams? Jason's symbols are a boy angel and a UK basketball.



Michael, the 23-year-old son of Dick and Jean Sand, was killed in an automobile accident 6-18-94. Mike's sister and brother, Kim and Rich, eulogized him:

Michael Sand loved life. He especially loved his family, friends, his dog Gizmo, and his Iguana.

Mike loved the country and western lifestyle. He listened to country music.

He was proud of his black Stetson cowboy hat, and showed it. He talked a lot about learning to ride a bull.

Mike loved cars and trucks, and liked to work on them. He really enjoyed going to the Indy 500 with his friends.

Mike was a dedicated person. He was dedicated to his family, friends, and to work. Whatever he did Mike gave 100%.

Mike may have been a little quick tempered, but he easily forgave. Mike was a loving person. He would do anything for you. If somebody needed help, he would be there.

Mike had not really chosen a career. He was not exactly sure what he wanted to do in life. One thing for sure, whatever career Mike would have chosen, he would have excelled in it.

There is a lot to say about Michael Sand.

He will be missed. He will never be forgotten.

Michael Sand died with his boots on, we hope that is what he wanted

Love Kim and Rich

Jean expressed:

The newsletter encourages us and gives us more strength to keep going. The only thing that I know that is bullet-proof is our faith in God and without faith we have nothing. I read the stories from fellow travelers and my heart goes out to each and every one of them. I feel for them and I want to reach out and touch and hug all of them and cry with them. It is hard to put into words, my thoughts, as nothing said or written is adequate, but they all are in our thoughts and prayers and we do know what they are feeling.

Michael is always with us in our thoughts and prayer, and has helped us and guided us from above in many decisions. It seems as though he is always at our side. God works things in funny ways as Michael was always at our side when he was alive. I go to the cemetery often to visit, and I find great comfort in doing so. I have friends who have lost a child, and they never go to the cemetery, but sometimes, I feel he is by my side and he knows I am there.

We have named a star after Michael, and some evenings that star comes to me in the form of an Angel for just a

few seconds and reverts back to a star. I think Michael is letting me know everything is OK. These have been some of my concerns. Is he OK? Is he happy and healthy? Does he have friends to share his way? How will we ever know? Sometimes I feel he comes to me as my guardian angel to answer my prayers.



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

Willie and Ella Prater's daughter, Merri Kathryn (17), died from an automobile accident 4-3-96. Ella wrote from her daughter's grave:

I have just finished a letter of appreciation to the 14th Regional KAPOS Board for establishing a cheerleading scholarship in honor of Merri Kathryn. It evoked such strong emotions I left my home to come to her grave. It is so peacefully serene here. The scarlet im patiens planted in the shape of MK are in full bloom. The rose bushes are in full array; birds are singing; a soft breeze blows through the pines, but not enough to stir the green bell chime to my right nor the butterfly chimes above; butterflies beautifully flit from one flower to another--and yet my world is dark and tear stained. I come to this spot every day, sit in a hunter green glider and look at the marker bearing her name: Merri Kathryn Prater 1978-1996. How can she be gone? She was flesh of my flesh, bone of my bone. I am still here. How can this be? It is unnatural. The rest of the world goes on, but my world has come to a screeching halt, and all I can think about is my loss! No one can understand but a fellow traveler!

I surround myself with her pictures. I am so afraid my dazed and traumatized mind will forget her beautiful face. Looking at a picture taken of me braiding her hair, I question if my mind and spirit would fail me and let me forget the silky smoothness of her blonde hair. Oh, how can we hurt so badly and still be alive? There are days when I think I will survive this tragedy, but then there are days when I am certain it is more painful than ever before.

I have written so many things in these recent months--a tribute to Merri

Kathryn for her funeral service, public acknowledgment of appreciation through the media, a letter to the student body and staff at her school, an address prefacing the presentation of the Merri Kathryn Prater Ever Green Scholarship Award, notes to all 200 of her classmates for graduation, responding to each contributor to the scholarship fund, and the hundreds who displayed their love of Merri Kathryn through flowers--I feel drained and yet there is so much I yet want to do. Each selection I write takes an emotional toll, but I have been so blessed with such a



support system I feel I must respond-and it gives me another opportunity to write her name and keep her memory alive!

Roxanna Aldridge, the 19-year-old twin daughter of Katie Cornish, died from a Bilateral Pulmonary Emboli, 11-23-94. Katie shared:

I guess things in our lives are pretty much the same. Days go by, months go by and the year seems to bring on another one. (Whether we want it to or not.)

The summer has passed by so quickly. Roxanna's twin sister Crystal, is still struggling but will graduate from Kentucky Wesleyan College, May of 1997. As her little brother, Junior, will graduate kindergarten. What a span!!! One of my proudest and saddest moments will be to see Crystal graduate (without Roxanna). But I have 9 months to prepare. It will be such a touching moment. I hope to read more self-help books by then to prepare myself! .I am so proud of all my children.

I have learned a lot from your letters. Sometimes they make me cry. But any emotion is better than NO emotion. I'm progressing but it sure is a S-L-O-W process.

One phrase I keep seeing is so true. "A loss of a child is something you never get over. You just learn to deal with it." Most of us want a "quick fix." So this phrase is especially helpful to me. I just keep learning new ways to get through each day.

Crystal and myself took a trip to Las Vegas in June. We had a good time but at one point we looked at each other

and didn't say a word. Both of us were thinking, "I wish Roxanna was here, she'd have had a ball." It was just one of those moments you can't explain.

I try to "count my blessings" each day. But every once in a while that selfish mode kicks my butt. But I've learned to kick back, get up, and smile anyway.

Just writing a letter is great therapy. I'm a pretty strong person I know I have a lot to be thankful for. I keep telling myself, "when one door closes, another opens." No matter how hard life can be, I'll always be there for the kids.



Roxanna's symbol is a deer.

Marcia Carson's son, Jarvis Dell, was murdered 12-15-91. Marcia described Jarvis Dell:

He was 21-years-old when he died and was looking forward to the surprise birthday party (the party that he suspected we would throw for him, but wasn't sure). He would be 22. Two weeks before his death, he had driven with me to Kentucky. I was in the process of moving back to Kentucky and Dell had come down to look at the trailer and help me move things into it. I had brought him back to Georgia on a Saturday morning. Dell was an amateur boxer, he was looking forward to the '92 Olympics and was turning pro after winning at the Olympics. The notion that he would not win his bout never figured into his mind. He was highly confident in his abilities. He had a strong determination to move his daughter and the rest of us out of the ghetto. He thought that boxing was his ticket out.

Dell had just graduated from high school. He graduated late mainly because of missing school because of traveling around the US and other countries with the Augusta, Georgia Boxing Club. Dell left our house on that Saturday afternoon. His last words to us were to his sister Elizabeth, because I was asleep when he left. He said "I'm going to Fits (Albert) house. Tell Mama I'll see her later. That's the last we saw of Dell alive. He was shot as he walked to Fits' house with Fits' brother Ricky.

Ricky said that he and Dell had just passed two white men when one of them

pulled out a gun and began to shoot. My son was killed instantly. My son had just converted from a Baptist to a Moslem. At the time of my son's death, I was working in Lancaster, KY part time. So I was planning on leaving out of Augusta Monday morning after I kept an appointment. On Sunday night I watched the late news where it was announced that a 21-year-old male had been murdered. I began to pray for the parent of that child. I never dreamed that I was that mother. Monday morning I prepared for the interview and packed more stuff in my car for the return trip to Kentucky. I stopped in Prestonsburg to visit my son, Pierre, who was in Job Corp. He was no longer there at 12:00 Monday night. I was in Pikeville looking for him. Tuesday morning found me at 3:00 a.m. finally arriving at my trailer. After finding Pierre, he rode to Boneyville (home) with me. He got out of the car at my mother's and I drove on to my trailer. Five minutes later, Pierre came to my trailer and told me that Dell had been shot and killed.

I drove all back to Augusta. From Sunday night when Dell was killed until 9:45 a.m., Monday morning, the police and/or coroner failed to notify me of my son's death. Their excuse was that they couldn't identify Dell-I called them on that because Rick was there to identify Dell. Plus some of the officers knew him-they then said I was in Kentucky. "Stay home sometime" is what Detective Peoples told me. I told him it would not have taken much of their time to drive by my home in Augusta, see my automobile there and assume that I was there. My son Patrick found out about his brother's death when he picked up the Monday morning paper and saw his picture on the front page. My daughter Elizabeth found out when she arrived at school and one of her friends asked her why she was in school after her brother's death.

I have a shelf at home devoted to the things Dell left. His boxing trophies; ROTC trophies; school work, scholarship that he gave up to Alcorn State; for a career in Boxing; letters from senators and famous boxers; his keepsakes; a block in which he had written his name; a unicorn carved in glass; an old nut that my father had given to him

when he was five. My father had it so long and then my son, that between the two of them, they had rubbed it to a shine. I kept his large chess set. He was the only one of us with the intelligence to learn chess. I still have the set of Unicorns that I was leaving to him in my will because he was the one who still felt that they were magic, and he was the only one who felt that the world was filled with magic and everyone was worthy of love.

We planted two dwarf pine trees on either side of Dell's grave. During the holidays, we decorate them accordingly. When Dell was a baby, we called him "Jar Head" Jar for Jarvis, and Head because he loved the Marine Corps. When he began to make a name for himself in boxing, he took on the name of JHead When he became a Moslem, he became Jahead I didn't know until after his death that he had taken a Moslem name.

Den's symbols are boxing gloves and a unicorn.



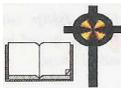
Curt, the 19-year-old son of David and Helen Gardener, died 11-20-95. Helen described Curt:

Curt was a superlative child. He loved it or hated it. Whatever it was, and he hated very little. He loved almost all foods and ate great quantities even though he was extremely thin. We enjoyed his excitement.

With Curt's death, we were thrown into an empty nest. I don't like it and I don't want it.

For 26 years we've had a child at home. It's been so hard to think of just walking out of the house and not checking with someone or leaving a note or something. I'm still working at my grief

Curt's symbols are an open book and an eternity cross.



After Young Jim's death, I found myself leaving messages so he would know where I was. Have you had some of these same experiences? It is as if they have been taken from us during the night.

John and Joan Rambo's 41-year-old son, Bill, died from a self-inflicted injury, 9-12-95. The family wrote the following poem:

To Our Beloved Son

God's love is very patient and kind
For a short time He let Bill be mine.

So many tears we've shed each day
Can't understand why you've gone away.

Now many days are cloudy and gray
Remembering your smile brings out the sun
to chase the gray away.

I know the Lord has let you rest
You had worked so hard and did your best.

So many loved the kindness you showed
You touched young and old, with your gentle
way and it makes us happy they remembered
and let us know.

You will always be here so deep in our heart
These are not quite the right words how we
feel
Each day I awake and you're not here
I then have to face this is real.

God granted us the years we had
I'll always be grateful even though it is so
sad

Thank you Dear Lord
from
Mom and Dad

PS. I love you now as I did before
I have to know God loved you even
more.



Your Brother
John



The family has chosen a humming bird and a Labrador for Bill's symbols.

Murl and Betty Jo Stratton describe their son, Michael:

We lost our son August 13, 1995. It seems like yesterday or today. He was not a little boy, but he was our first born.

Michael had just turned 35 when we found out he was not going to live. He had melanoma and it was in the lymph gland or node when they found it. He was treated at Vanderbilt Hospital in Nashville but they couldn't save him.



Michael was a ventriloquist and magician and had been since he was 9 years old.

He had entertained young and old and at one time he was a regular performer at Opryland

He said he really believed he was put here to entertain, but that he had a better show place to go to.

Michael had been married for 14 years and had a son 10 years old. His wife Mary Lynn and son, Alexander, live in Gallatin, TN.

We have another son, Tony, who is 30 and a daughter, Jamie, 16.

Already I am collecting angels. I also have Michael's trophies on my piano and his picture on the wall.

David and Judy Apple's 17-year-old son Brian, was killed on a motorcycle. Judy lamented:

Our 17-year-old son was killed December 13, 1995, in a car-motorcycle crash. He was on his motorcycle going to work after school when a car turned in front of him to enter a side road and it hit him. I have so many emotions and anger.

I know the lady had no intentions of hurting him, but I can't keep from feeling anger toward her. She has never contacted us and I find that hard to believe. She is a 64-year-old mother and grandmother. The newspaper in our county put a picture of his accident on the front page of our paper with the headline, **Speed Kills**. They said our son was driving over the set limit of 40 when he hit her in the side door. I have gone to the spot many times and just sat there and tried to imagine how she could have been facing toward him on a 5 lane highway and not seen him coming. She said in the police report that she didn't. They took her word that she had not been drinking or using drugs and did not even test her.

They assumed that just because my son was 17 and on a motorcycle that he possibly may have been drinking. I know he was not. He had come home from school at 2:00 where I was, and eaten a bowl of cereal and talked awhile.

His accident was at 2:45. They called me from the hospital at 3:45 and said

my son might have been in a motorcycle accident. I knew it was him. They said it was not life-threatening. He had some serious broken bones. I thought he must have broken both of his legs.

When I arrived at the hospital, they took me to see the doctor. He sat down with me and said, "Judy, Brian has passed away." I could hardly believe it could be true. I had just seen and talked with him. He worked at H.H. Gregg in Goodlettsville after school each day. He worked in the warehouse.

Brian was a happy kid. He had so many friends. He was a big cut-up and the life of every occasion. Every night he would come home from work at 10:00 and come in our bedroom and talk to me and my husband. He would tell us all about his night at work. My husband also works for H.H. Gregg as a driver.

Brian was so proud of his job and earning a paycheck. When Brian was 14, during the summer, he worked for my brother in a steel erection company. He saved every paycheck to buy a truck. The next summer he worked for farmers in the tobacco fields. He also saved that money.

When he turned 16, my husband and he went and got his truck with the money he had earned. His birthday is September 27, 1978.

He was so proud of his truck. On Halloween night his motor blew and he was back riding with friends again. He and his dad wanted to "soup" his motor up. He didn't get his truck back together until the last of April. He would use his dad's truck to go out every now and then, but mostly went with his friends.

Brian and I had a special relationship. He could tell me anything.

During the summer, he had to go to summer school. When that was out, he started working weekends at H.H. Gregg. He had only been working Monday-Friday after school about 6 weeks. He had a lot of friends and liked girls, but had his first date the weekend before he was killed.

That weekend he had spent the night on Friday with a friend from work and went out with this girl the boy knew from his school. They were all juniors.

Brian only spent a few nights away from home. But he had one, 2 or 3 stay

every weekend at our house. I miss the joy and laughter he brought to our home.

We also have another son, Jeremy, who is 14 and a 9-year-old daughter, Ashley. On March 13, 1985, I had a stillborn son, Jason. The pain I felt during that ordeal cannot compare to the depths of pain I feel at losing Brian. He had his future all planned out. He had told his friends that they would rule their school next year as seniors.

His friends said every day he would tell them stories of what had happened at work and what he had done on the weekend. He had a gift to be able to talk to anyone of any age.

His grandfather moved in with us after his wife's death. Brian gave up his bedroom and slept on the couch for 2 months until we fixed him a bedroom in the basement. His grandfather died in July, 1995, after moving into the nursing home to live. He was bed-ridden and had a brain tumor. Brian was very close to his grandfather and to his dad.

Brian and his dad were so close and had a lot in common. We are trying to cope with this tragic loss, but it is so hard to understand "Why him?" It seems like so many young kids don't get the chance to live. I didn't realize how many people have lost their children until now. I know our lives are forever changed

Brian's symbol is a pick-up truck.



Martha Ridenour's 38-year-old daughter, Suzanne, died from aspiration, 9-20-94. Martha asked a question we have all probably asked ourselves:

Since I lost my daughter, I still dream about finding her and relive the moment over and over--I wonder if everyone else does this?

I would like to hear your responses. Ballet slippers are Suzanne's symbol.



I want to again thank Gam and Becky Greer for all their time in compiling the names and addresses into counties. Gam and Becky Greer have lost all of their 4 children. Stephen, 2, died from

Leukemia, 11-17-79. January 16, 1995, their oldest son, Buzzy (23) killed his younger brother Todd (14) and his younger sister Kami (10) and then himself

Stephen's symbol is an apple,
Buzzy's symbol is a guitar.

Kami's symbol is a horse and

Todd's symbol is a UK basketball.



You are my friends, how do I know? Because you meet the criteria of friendship:

♥ True friends are those seeking solitude together.

♥ A faithful friend is the medicine of life.

♥ A friend is a person with whom I may be sincere.

♥ The friends of my friend, are my friends.

♥ Friends share in common.

♥ Of all the heavenly gifts that mortal men command, what trusty treasure in the world can counter-vail a friend?

♥ The thread of our life would be dark, Heaven knows! If it were not with friendship and love intertwined.

♥ But every road is rough to me that has no friend to cheer it.

♥ The best elixir is a friend

♥ A friend ought to shun no pain, to stand his friend in stead.

♥ But oh! if grief thy steps attend, if want, if sickness be thy lot, and thou require a soothing friend, forget me not, forget me not!

♥ A friend is known in necessity.

♥ To be a strong hand in the dark to another in a time of need

♥ Three things are known only in three places: Valour, which knows itself only in war; Wisdom, only in anger; and Friendship, only in need

♥ It is good to have friends, but bad to need them.

September 2 is Labor Day. Remember that Labor day is to celebrate all the hard work that the chocolate manufacturers do. Honor them by eating your favorite bar of chocolate.



