

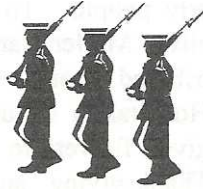
LAMENTATIONS

Issue 18

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

March, 1994

March through March



To **march** means to walk as a soldier; to walk or go on steadily; to move in a direct purposeful manner; a forward movement; progress. **Grief** is a type of march. It is not a typical march, as we think of it, or a march as soldiers march--where they march in cadence, a rhythmic manner. Rather, this is a solitary march, one that we have to do alone. It is a march that we could choose not to do, but if that choice is made, it will require that we make a longer and harder march in the future. Before we make this march, however, we must arm ourselves with what we will need for this long journey. Supplies include: strength, time, courage, knowledge of grief so we will know when we pass the different stages of our grief_ and nourishment (sometimes this needs to come from others--fellow travelers). On March 23, 1775, Patrick Henry declared "Give me liberty, or give me death!" We are all looking for liberty from our grief and we can only accomplish this by marching through that grief.

We have heard the old saying, "March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb." Doesn't this describe our grief? If you are just beginning your march through your grief, you well understand it being "like a lion." It is strong and powerful. Our grief is raw and it tears us apart. After almost 3 years of marching through my own grief, I

am beginning to see it leave "like a lamb." When I reach the end of my march, I hope to find a place of peace with Young Jim's death, and a future that will be of honor to him as we travel through life.

March 20 is the first day of Spring. Let's try to put a little "spring" in our thoughts.

Dr. Bob Browning, Pastor of First Baptist Church, Somerset, KY, and President of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, spoke on Founder's Day at Cumberland College. He used the analogy of history being like a rearview mirror. It instantly reminded me of our grief. (Aren't you surprised that I would be reminded of grief?)



Grief is like a rearview mirror in that we must look back, but also ahead to the future. We need to be armed with faith. The greatest step of grief we have taken in this journey is the first step. This step rarely comes with a road map. We really don't know where to begin, and we don't know where it will end, but we must have the faith to begin this journey. If we don't have the courage to ask for directions from others who have traveled this same road, then it may take us longer to get there. (It has helped me to keep a journal which shows my progress.)

When starting our journey, we may have to leave behind some "baggage" that we think we have to have. But this baggage may be

what will keep us from getting to our destination (S.U.C.C.E.S.S.) as efficiently as possible. This may include security, safety, our identity to the loved one we have lost, and/or our determination that we will not (and don't want to) get through our grief. Don't become too attached to your grief. Travel with the lightest baggage possible.

Be open to take risks. This may include taking a "detour" (from our grief). Be able to enjoy times that may give you a respite from your grief. I have found that I still have to do that often. It then gives me strength to once again continue my journey. Be open to perhaps changing the way you have viewed grief in the past. Be willing to read and implement ways that will help your journey. "Risk takers" can change the world! Change your world of grief. You can then help others in their journey. What we have learned can help others.

If you are traveling that road of grief, you need support from your loved ones, your fellow travelers, and God. All will give you strength. But remember, you are the driver and you are the one looking through the rearview mirror. This journey will take you places you never imagined. As you look back, and the longer you are on this journey, you will discover that you have gone far-- but we must all continue on this journey until we reach our S.U.C.C.E.S.S.

So, buckle up your seat belt and either begin or continue your journey.

Grief Grafts

Phyllis Smith wrote such a loving letter of support. She said: "I just want you to know I am in tune with your pain, not able to fix anything for you myself: but realizing we are serving one who has all the answers. My prayers will focus on your particular needs, asking God to not numb you, but asking for His grace to endure. I believe we learn something important with each wave of grief that hits us."

Geraldine Fitzgerald has experienced grief many times in her life. She was widowed at the age of 21 when her husband accidentally shot himself during maneuvers. Linda, her daughter, was 2. Her second husband died at the age of 37 as the result of injuries he sustained in an automobile accident. Her daughter, Linda, was diagnosed with Marfans Syndrome in 1982. Marfans Syndrome is a genetic disease which, among other things, affects the aorta. Linda became pregnant, against medical advice, and then was advised to abort because she was given a 0-50% survival chance. She never considered it, and gave birth to a daughter, Melissa. In 1991 she and her doctors decided to operate because of a small tear in the aorta. The operation was successful but due to complications, Linda died.

This year Geraldine was commissioned as a Lay minister for the Catholic Church. Her field is bereavement. She made the comment: "What else?"

Geraldine sent the following:

How to Find Your Angels

Ask yourself, "Who helps me Wow? Makes me laugh! Brings out the best in me!" These may be your angels here on earth.

To find all your angels, just remember the mark of an angel is love.

Angels are everywhere . . . in every heart, every act of kindness. Their

signature is in everything that grows, every selfless desire, and every playful pirouette of every soul.

* Seek an angel with an open heart, and you shall always find one.

* The only way to know an angel is by your feeling.

* Angels may not always come when you call them, but they come when you need them.

* An angel is someone who helps you believe in miracles again.

* Sometimes you know angels only by the miracles they leave blossoming in their path after they are gone.

* An angel is someone you're always very happy to bump into.

* An angel is someone who raises your spirits.

* An angel is someone you feel you've known forever even though you've just met.

* Anyone who helps you grow is an angel.

* Angels make you feel welcome in this world.

* Angels encourage your best qualities and hidden talents.

* Angels give you those gentle pats on the back you sometimes need to keep going.

* Angels give you direction.

* Angels gently push you out your little self and into the broad arena of love.

* Angels remind you that you are enough.

* Angels help you see your life in a better light.

* An angel is someone who brings out the angel in you.

All Earth's heroes have he en men and women who allowed the angel within them to excel and to fly. Their primary purpose was simply to help others. This loving intention is so powerful it can lift us out of our own sense of limitation and allow us to achieve real greatness.

If we were all a little more like angels, Earth would be a little more like Heaven.

Linda's symbol is an angel.



Darren, the 20-year-old son of Dale and Marlene Stokes, completed suicide 3-31 -86. Darren was an avid runner, bicyclist, weight lifter, healthy, handsome young man with a great sense of humor. He loved nature, animals and elderly people. To keep his memory alive. Marlene and Dale have contributed money to the Children's Hospital in Columbus, Ohio; and given flowers to shut-ins at Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas, because Darren was so compassionate to the elderly and children. Darren was attending Hocking Technical College and had the goal of be coming a forest ranger. The Stokes have ... chosen a deer to represent Darren.



Nancy Hannon's 19-year-old son, Michael was killed in an automobile accident 2-6-93. Nancy sent the words to **HERO** by Mirah Corey. She asked: "Have you ever really listened to the words? This is our song:

HERO

There's a hero if you look inside your heart, you don't have to be afraid of what you are.

There's an answer if you reach into your soul, and then a hero comes along with the strength to carry on, and you cast your fears aside, and you know you can survive.

When you feel like hope is gone, look inside you and he strong, and you'll finally see the truth that a hero lies in you.

It's a long road and you face the world alone.

One reaches out a hand for you to hold you can find love. . .

You're to search within yourself, and that emptiness then will disappear, and a hero comes along with the strength to carry on, and you cast your fears aside and you know you can survive.

When you feel like hope is gone look inside you and he strong, and you'll finally see the truth, that a hero lies in you.

*Lord knows things are hard to follow,
but don't let anyone take them away.
Hold on, there will be tomorrow.*

*In time you'll find the way, then a hero
comes along with the strength to carry
on, and you cast your fears aside, and
You know you can survive.*

*When you feel like hope is gone, look
inside you and be strong, and you'll fi-
nally see the truth, that a Hero lies in
you,*

*That a Hero lies in You,
That a Hero lies in you.*

Nancy continued: *"A Hero lies in
each of us. We have to have a Hero
within to survive our rough times. I
guess somewhere deep inside of me
there is a little Hero because I have
survived this awful 'First' year. I really
don't think I could have made it this
past year without you fellow travelers.
It does warm my heart to know so many
people care, reach out to each other,
and show love even during their own
hard times. Thanks to each of you."*

Nancy has added a red rose sym-
bol to represent Michael. His origi-
nal symbol is a smiley face. Nancy
said that Michael drew red roses on
envelopes, paper and notes when-
ever he was in a loving kind of
mood. He gave one red rose to
every female in his life on
special occasions (since he
was 6 years of age). The
family is having a life size,
long stemmed red rose
etched on his monument.



Thomas and Anna Akers' 17-
year-old son, Joey, died as a result
of Muscular Dystrophy on
Halloween of 1993. The Akers were
so close to Joey. Anna describes
Joey: *"He was my angel, the light of my
life, we were so close. Joey quit walking
when he was 7. He had gotten to the
point he could do nothing for himself
since 1992, so he depended on us for his
every) need. My husband and I even went*

*to school and took care of his toilet
needs every day. Our whole life was
around Joey."* The Akers' daughter,
Martha helped take care of Joey, but
near his death, he only wanted Anna
to care for him. Joey was on the
M.D. Telethon on Channel 3 for 6
years. Joey loved wrestling and
spent his weekends watching
wrestling on TV. He went to several
wrestling matches, and the weekend
before he died, a doctor at the
hospital had several wrestlers come
to see Joey and bring him pictures.

The family has selected
a red candle to represent
Joey because red was his
favorite color and he was
the light of the Akers family's life.



Tabb, the 34-year-old son of
Maxfield and Sara Bahner, died of
cardiac arrest 10-3-93. Sara writes:
*"Lamentations has been a healing
ointment. The healing will never be
for life as it was before. The terrible
bleeding will abate, and a scar will
form, and life will never be the
same. For all the wrenching souls
for Tabb's loss of life's pleasures,
however, there is a peace from him
and God together which is a lovely
gift."* Tabb was a graduate of Cum-
berland College and had two ma-
jors, Music and Business
Administration. Tabb had also been
in his high school's jazz band and
Sara said that she never could un-
derstand how his hands and
feet could move so fast and
in rhythm. The Bahners
have chosen a drum as
Tabb's symbol.



Gary and Nancy Bilderback
wrote: *"Cary was the love of our
life as he was adopted. We got him
when he was 7 weeks old. He was
indeed special as we had two other
children die - one was stillborn and
the other was a fetus carried full*

*term that had died earlier in the
pregnancy. Cary was love, joy,
goodness and thoughtfulness - all
this in one little boy who was our
world for 18 1/2 years. Having lost
the other two children we fully be-
lieved that all tragedy was behind us
- we had paid our dues!! However,
that was not to be the case, for on
January 13, 1989, our Cary was
taken from us in a freak auto acci-
dent. How ironic life can be - he
came to us on August 13, 1970, and
left on January 13, 1989.*

Cary loved animals of all kind -
especially the cows on their farm
and their golden retriever. He
graduated from high school with
honors and was a class officer and
held numerous offices in school
clubs. He was very active in FFA
and won many state awards for pub-
lic speaking, soil conservation,
judging teams, and cattle showing.
He was an extremely talented water
skier. He could ski barefoot and did
all kinds of amazing tricks. Cary
was majoring in pharmacy at Ole
Miss when he was killed. They
stated: *"We had walked grief's road
on those two earlier occasions and
here we were retracing our steps
once more."*

Nancy writes letters for the shar-
ing sessions before the
Compassionate Friends Conven-
tions for Kay Bevington who pub-
lishes *Alive Alone*, a newsletter for
those who have lost all of their chil-
dren, or their only child. The
Bilderbacks wish to keep Cary's
memory and great sense of caring
alive by sponsoring the New Mex-
ico Boys Ranch by sending school
supplies for the residents; over 100
books have been donated to Crest-
view's library in Cary's name; a tree
has been planted in their town park
along a memorial walkway; Nancy
has written a play; they support The
Dream Factory, LeBonheur, and St.

Jude's Children's Hospital in Memphis. Nancy said that she wanted Cary to live through them and what they can do in his memory.

The family has chosen water skis as Cary's symbol because he loved to ski and was so proficient in this sport.



Willie and Kathy Hammond's 17-year-old son, James Edward, was killed in an automobile accident, 4-11-93. When I read her letter, she described her feelings as well as probably all our feelings, so well that I wanted to include portions verbatim.

It's taken me this long to get the courage to write you. James Edward was killed April 11, 1993. A day that my whole world fell apart. I still feel numb. There are times I can talk about James and then there are times I can't.

As far as we know, James fell asleep and lost control of his car; he was killed instantly. I still feel as though there's a big empty space inside me, and nothing can fill it.

I stayed off from work for three months. I prayed for God to give me the courage to go back to work. I finally realized that I needed to get out and get on with my life, one day at a time I struggled. So one day God gave me the courage to go back. I was so nervous. I didn't want people to ask me all the time "How are you doing?" or "Are you making it O.K.?" Naturally I wanted to say when I was asked this, "I'm not doing good", or "No, I'm not making it O.K." Most of the people I work with surprised me, they hugged me and said they were glad I was back.

I wanted to tell you a little about James. He was a very sensitive and polite young man. He could never be still though. James would work on his car, or put things together. He loved to experiment on things, just to see or he could make it work. He was a good electrician He could work on anything and make them work.

James loved to go, as the kids call it, "cruising" almost every night and talk

with his friends. James though a lot of his friends and they thought a lot of him. As for a symbol for James, it would be an "Eagle." He loved eagles so much that he wore one on his chain. I think of James soaring like an eagle through Heaven talking to Jesus, and his friends' and relatives that went before him.



Beverly Shannon's 21-year-old son, Scott died of a malignant brain tumor 11-5-91. Beverly wrote: "We now belong to each other--connected by a very painful band--yet a very loving band." Yes, Beverly, we are in a very "select group that we wouldn't want anyone to have to join, but I can truthfully say that I don't think I could make it without your support, love and prayers. We all truly understand all the feelings that are expressed in these newsletters. I continue to thank God for each of you and also pray for our deliverance from our grief.

Scott's family has selected a baseball to represent him.



Dr. Terry and Kathy Jo Gutsell's 18-year-old son, Andrew died of a congenital heart defect, 8-6-93.



His symbol is a UK basketball. I have found this an-gel basketball player that makes me think of Andrew.

Kathy Jo's letter reminded me of something I had read in the book, **Five Cries of Grief** by Merton and Irene Strommen. That is: "In some inexplicable way I believe the unborn sense that I must say good-bye to a part of myself was emerging closer to my conscious mind. The instant we heard, 'Dave (their son)

has been struck by lightning,' the process of parting was set in motion. As we waited in the hospital on that afternoon of August 12, I became aware of pains deep within me, mounting in intensity. In wonder, I recognized them as the hard bearing-down pains of child labor, the final push before birth. I do not remember having any fear; only the ability to identify the pains. Before we were called into the doctor's office, the pains had gone as mysteriously as they had come. We received a letter from a friend. She wrote: "We have wept with you as fellow parents, of feeling the anguish and pain of losing a part of you. The intensity of joy at receiving an infant from the hand of our giving God must be similar to--almost the antithesis of--the unbearable pain of having to return him--prematurely from our perspective--to the giver and receiver of life!"

Kathy Jo wrote:

Two things especially touched me in the last newsletter. The poem by George McDonald likening death to birth. Since I've had four children (I love being pregnant and giving birth. and I have horses and foal mares here OII our farm every year plus board mares for other people and get them in foal; (you can tell I'm "into" the subject!) and since I had a labor-like experience when I said good-bye to Andrew just before they closed the casket. It hurt in my abdomen very much like when I gave him birth. This whole run-on-sentence is to say that George McDonald spoke to me "where I love." I love to picture the birth watchers of the other world, the communion of saints, the assembled angels, watching and waiting, just as I stay up to night watch at the barn, for Andrew to come over to the other side. It helps to picture this world as the wind-blown porch, too.

A thing I am doing that helps connect me to Andrew is this. He attended a Catholic high school which has an all

school church service every month or so. I found out they needed a musician to do the music, so I let them know I was interested and they hired me to prepare a small core of student musicians and then lead the music during the services. I love it. I get to see all the kids and it gets me inside the school often. I get to keep up with the seniors.

We're having 20 of Andrew's friends over for pizza the 20th of February to gather ideas for a Lexington Catholic memorial and to borrow their video tapes of Andrew. We're going to compile a video of his life and give it to his Friends for graduation. "

Alesha, the 13-year-old daughter of Roger and Pat Hunter, died in an automobile accident 8-19-93. Pat wrote to tell me of a wonderful way Alesha was remembered at her school. Pat explained:

Thursday night Alesha's grade school ball season came to a close and the eighth graders were honored. I asked Roger and me to come and represent Alesha. The students wanted to acknowledge her for she would have been a cheerleader this year, each student was recognized by telling who their parents were and what they inspired to do. Her teacher asked me if I wanted to write what to say about Alesha, but I felt it would mean a lot to her class to have them do it. They told of how she clowned around and the laughter she brought. Each cheerleader gave me a red rose and the twelfth was a pink one to symbolize Alesha. Her friend, Britt, gave me that one. She cheered with Alesha last year. They all gave me a hug and many parents came to Roger and me and hugged us, It was very touching. The referee came to us and told us how proud she was that we had the courage to do what we did. She lost a close friend and said "God needs roses and Alesha was a rose" as her friend was. It meant a lot to have her talk to us as she did. It was hard but I looked forward to being able to share the love I have for Alesha and to keep her memory alive.

Pat also included the following poem:

Little Angels

When God calls little children
to dwell with Him above,
We mortals sometimes question
the wisdom of his love.
For no heartache compares with
the death of one small child,
Who does so much to make our world
seem wonderful and mild.

Perhaps God tires of calling
the aged, to His fold,
So he picks a rosebud
before it can grow old.

God knows how much we need them
and so he takes but few
to make the land of Heaven
more beautiful to view.

Believing this is difficult
still somehow we must try,
The saddest word mankind knows
will always be "good-bye,"

So when a child departs
we, who are left behind
must realize God loves children,
Angels are hard to find.

Alesha's symbol is a heart



Bob and Bonni Chapman's 18-year-old daughter, Joanne, was killed in an automobile accident 7-18-92. Her symbol is a dancer with wings for arms.

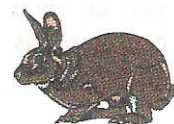


Bonni says that her goal this month is to have some of Joanne's belongings made into special memorial teddy bears to give to Bonni's sisters and nieces. There is a woman in their home town who makes beautiful keepsake bears out of items such as wedding dresses, etc. "Joanne didn't have a wedding dress, but I have her prom things, her dance uniforms, and gymnastic uniforms. I think this will be a nice way to make use of her special things and help her family and friends remember her with the bears. "

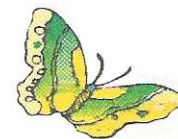
Mary Kate Gach's 21-year-old daughter Stephanie was murdered 10-9-92. Mary Kate writes about grief

The idea of pain/grief being the other side of joy, or the price we pay - whatever--was presented so well in the current film, "Shadow lands," by C.S Lewis and his terminally ill wife, Joy. I especially like what Chilstrom says about laments and what remise Barger sent about "standing in line," Our society is so far removed from God, it seems we have no idea how to lament or who to direct it toward. So we deny and/or escape.

Stephanie is represented by a brown bunny.



Mary Kate wrote about three sleep visions she has had of Stephanie, Have any of you had "visions," "dreams," "hearing voices," etc. of the loved one you have lost to death? Many of us have had them, and most of us want to have them if we haven't. In the Strommens' book, they wrote about J.B. Phillips, a noted writer and translator of the New Testament into modern English. Phillips considers "The communion of saints" from the Apostles' Creed, to mean that it includes communion with those of His people now living on the earth, and communion also with those who have died. I would really be interested in hearing about your experiences.



Luther and Rosemary Smith's two sons, Jeremiah and Drew, were killed in an automobile accident 7-23-92; Their symbol is a yellow butterfly.

Nancy Lee's 12-year-old son, Dusty, was tragically killed 3-19-93. Dusty's symbol is a smiley face. Nancy wrote: "Could



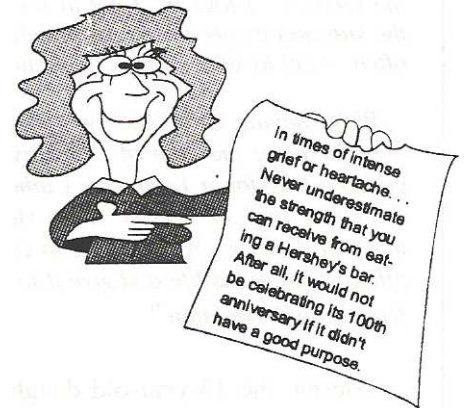
you please print in your newsletter about the wonderful person who made us aware of each other. This person is Rosemary Smith." In the book, *Finding The Right Words (Offering care & comfort when you don't know what to say)* by Wilfred Bockelman, the author says, "Common sorrow and grief can become the basis for developing a strong friendship." What would we do without Rosemary to keep us together? You are the greatest, Rosemary, and we thank you for all you do for each of us and for encouraging us in "developing strong friendships!!!"

8. The 'neatest' kid I have ever known (no prejudice)
10. The shortest month of the year
12. We are each striving to work through this

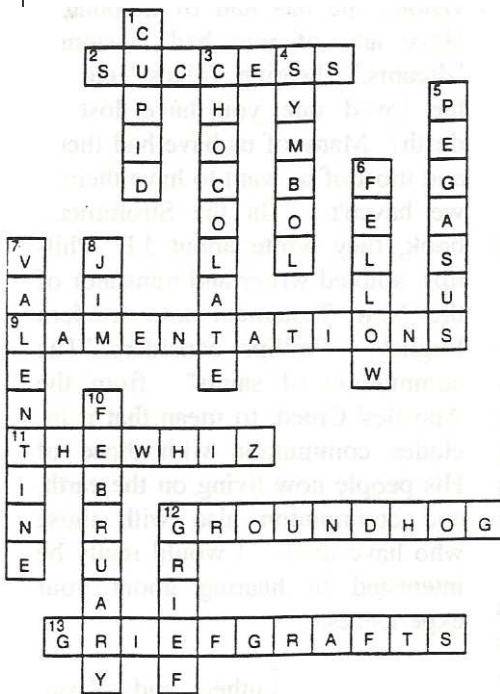
Across

2. We are are striving for this
9. You receive this newsletter each month
11. My 'Pen Name' (2 words)
12. The animal who is afraid of his shadow
13. The section of the newsletter that is YOURS

I want to leave you with some good advice on how to cope. If you are faced with a crisis and that crisis is causing you a great deal of stress" and turmoil. follow this advice:



February's puzzle solution



Have you read the book, *The Official Politically Correct Dictionary and Handbook*, by Henry Beard and Christopher Cerf? It has some really funny definitions. Here are some of them, can you match the word with the correct definition?

- Tall
Prisoner
Clumsy
Dead
Bald
Fat
Insignificant other
Cannibal
Failure
Fired (employee)
Girl
Anti-social
White collar crime
History
Acid rain
Fatso
Old
Pregnant
Body odor
Bum
Housewife/wife
Pet
Newspaper
Lie
Dirty old man
Lousy
Fail
Disabled

- incomplete success
vertically inconvenienced
client of the correctional system
handi-capable
achieve a deficiency
sexually focused
chronologically gifted individual
suboptimal
terminological inexactitude
domestic incarceration survivor
processed tree carcass
horizontally challenged
animal companion
his 'n' her story
judgmental lapse
hair disadvantaged
parasitically oppressed
possessing an alternative body image
prewoman
poorly buffered
precipitation
chronologically gifted
uniquely coordinated
nondiscretionary
fragrance
non-goal-oriented
member of society
indefinitely idle
humanitarian
terminally inconvenienced
difficult to serve
an ex-wife, ex-husband, etc.

Down

1. A figure of a winged boy used as a symbol of love. Often depicted with a bow and arrow
3. The one 'food' that is mentioned in nearly every newsletter
4. We should each select one to represent our loved one
5. A winged horse
6. We are Travelers
7. A special card or gift given in February