

LAMENTATIONS

Issue 25

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

October, 1994

Oct

October is a month that often makes our grief greater. It is a month that demonstrates that winter is near. The weather gets progressively cooler during this month, and the leaves on the trees change colors and fall from the trees. Many gardeners plant perennial flowers at this time so they will have plants blooming in the Spring.



Most perennials spread by sending out shoots from their roots which develop into new stems. Most species produce new shoots soon after they have bloomed each year. Over several years, the offshoots from only one plant may cover a wide area.

Our grief is certainly like the perennials. If we "plant" in the fall (in the beginning of our grief), it will spread its "shoots" and "develop" or spread our grief rather than letting it bloom and die naturally. The more we try to bury our grief: the more it will spread by sending out shoots and developing into new stems (or new ways of skirting our grief). Let us each plant our grief as an annual, in the "spring" of our grief. If our grief is an "annual," it will only be for a season, and then we can enjoy the "fruits" of our harvest.



This forget-me-not flower in the vase is for you. It is a "permanent" flower that will never wilt or die and can be a constant reminder that we can plant and grow our S.U.C.C.E.S.S. in time. We have to be willing to face our grief as often and as much as we are able. We can only take one step at a time.



October 12, 1492, Christopher Columbus arrived in America. He wasn't sure exactly where he was, but he had been brave enough to travel the great distance it took to get to America. He knew it would be a very difficult trip, and a great sacrifice, but he was determined to see the "new" world. Working through our grief is a "new" world. We cannot change the fact that our loved one is dead; we cannot change the fact that we won't see them again in this life time; but we can change what is happening to us and how we choose to spend the remainder of our lives. So, in the words of James Lawrence, whose birth date is October 1: ***Don't give up the ship!***

What keeps me going is knowing that Young Jim would want me to do all that I can with my life. He was always the one who would look around the room, and if he found someone that needed help or reassurance, he was there. I choose to continue his attitude of caring about others. I, like Columbus, am curious about what is on the other side of grief. I must quickly add, though, that I have been working through my grief for three years, so I am becoming "comfortable" with my tears and days of not doing well. I know that this is part of grief and I should not be afraid of it. There are many days that I think I am regressing with my grief, but then there are many days that I know I am trudging through it. Step by step. Just as the adage says: *Inch by inch, anything is a cinch.*

A wonderful friend of mine sent the following: *Each day is a gift from God. That's why it is called the PRESENT* Each day is a chal

lenge and a gift. When you have those days that are so difficult that you don't think you will make it through, remember that the following day will probably be better. It helps me to write down my thoughts and feelings and especially my memories. They are so important to me. I started keeping a journal 6 weeks after Young Jim's death, and when I go back to read them, I realize just how far I have come. I suggest you keep a journal or at least write down your thoughts periodically. You then have a concrete record of your S.U.C.C.E.S.S.

October 15 is Sweetest Day. The *sweetest* part of my day is checking the mail and finding cards and letters from you. I would like to give each of you a Hershey's chocolate *hug and kiss*. But since I can't, I give you this banana



split. Those of you who have been to Williamsburg to visit us, know that I love a theme, so Halloween is one of my favorite days! I love to make *Trick or Treat* treats and to hand them out to the young children (and college students) who come to our home. It is encouraging to know that there is still happiness and joy in this world. Often we are so consumed with our grief that we think there is only sadness and sorrow in this world.



Perhaps you can use the symbol you have chosen for your loved one and make treats that are reminders to others. Let me know your ideas and I will share them with everyone next year

Grief Grafts

The dedication of the Jim Taylor, II Stadium, September 10, was a very precious time for us. We thank those of you who came to share this time of remembrance with us.

Clyde, the 10-year-old son of Donna Carr (our symbol-making lady), died of Leukemia, 6-27-93. Chavae, Clyde's sister, wrote the following in reference to her experience with Clyde and his sickness:

The Wind Beneath My Wings

It was around the middle of October; the year was 1989. My mother had taken my little brother, Clyde, who was seven at the time, to the doctor because he kept complaining of pains in his side. Well, what we expected to be a simple checkup turned out to be so much more. The doctors decided to keep him overnight because they suspected it was much more than a pain in his side. I stayed with my aunt while my mother stayed at the hospital with Clyde.

It was a pleasant, warm and sunny Saturday evening. Around 6:30 or so the phone rang. It was Mama calling from the hospital. Her voice was very sad, kind of dull and serious. She was calling to tell us that Clyde had Leukemia. I wasn't sure how to react so I just said nothing at all. So she said that she would call back later to let us know more. After I hung up I still wasn't sure how to react. I went in the kitchen to my aunt who was baking cinnamon rolls.

"Clyde has leukemia," I said. She turned around and said, "I guess all we can do now is pray for him."

After she said that I still stood there. I wasn't sure if I was supposed to be strong for him or cry for him. The more I thought about it the more I wondered, the more questions went through my head that I knew no one could answer, the more I wondered why someone would want to punish a 7-year-old child with leukemia, a disease that kills. So then I started to cry. My aunt put her arm around me which caused me to cry even more because now I realized I had a shoulder to cry on. She was talking to me while I cried but I didn't hear a word she said. I shut out the outside world. I didn't want to hear what everybody else had to say because nobody else knew what I was feeling, so they couldn't relate to what was going on inside of me. They weren't the ones that were going to lose their only brother. I was.

The first time that I went to visit Clyde in the hospital was very painful. He was thin, bald, and totally helpless. He seemed totally defenseless against the world and its pains. The visit itself was not that bad it was the leaving that was the hardest. The chemotherapy made him very sick and as I was turning to leave, the medicine got to him and he started to throw up. He yelled my name because he didn't want me to leave. He had never called my name before and it shocked and touched me so bad that I wasn't sure what to do so I ran back over to his bed and held his hand while he finished being sick. That was just the first of many times that Clyde called my name because he couldn't handle the pain or just because he needed someone to be by his side.

After the news of Clyde's leukemia passed around to the family and to friends everything changed. Mama was never home, so I was always home alone with my little sister, Samantha. Everyone was always making a big fuss over Clyde and didn't give me or Samantha any attention. This situation made me grow up even faster than I already had. I knew that if Clyde were to die that I would have to "take over" the house until my mother was able to get herself back together and pick up the pieces of her life that had fallen apart. Things got pretty hard with all the medical bills and Mama had to quit her job to stay with Clyde in the hospital. With her not having a job, that meant that there was no way to pay the bills that we had coming in. Even though we had medical insurance, it didn't cover all the expenses.

We didn't see much of Clyde any more after that. He was always in the hospital for weeks, sometimes months at a time. When he did come home he was only there for about a week or so. The house always seemed dark, and lonely like there was a dark cloud constantly hanging over us.

In March of 1991, Clyde received a bone marrow transplant. The bone marrow took and for a while he was just fine. He went into remission and we knew for sure that Clyde would be okay because he was acting just as normal as any other 8-year-old would. Looks can be deceiving though, shortly after the transplant, Clyde took ill again. It wasn't looking so good this time. The doctors didn't think that he was going to pull out of it this time and we were beginning to think the same thing.

As days went by, Clyde got worse and worse. He eventually lost the use of his legs and he had to go through physical therapy to

learn to walk again. After he learned to walk again he became better. We knew for sure that we had beat the odds. We were wrong again. Why was God playing with our minds? This time when Clyde became sick again, the doctors just gave up. They said there was nothing they could do for him this time. I couldn't understand why they would just be giving up on him. He's just a little boy. If they can't help him, who will?

After the month of April, 1992, Clyde just started to deteriorate right in front of our faces. There was nothing that we could do for him except to listen to his cries of help. There was a lot of sleepless nights after he took ill again. We all took turns gelling up in the middle of the night taking care of him, making sure that he was comfortable, that he wasn't thirsty, and making sure that he was still breathing. That was the scariest part, to make sure that he was still breathing because we were all scared that one night he wouldn't be

On June 27th at around 1:30 in the morning, I noticed that my brother's cries were weaker than ever. Something didn't seem right that night, but I just couldn't put my finger on what it was. I listened to my brother's cries and just ignored them because I knew in my heart that he was about to go, but I figured that if I ignored them, that he would stop crying and the pain would go away. I knew that wasn't true... but everyone has their hopes and dreams. After a few more minutes of listening to my brother, I suddenly heard my sister start to cry and run out of his room. I knew then, that everything wasn't going to be okay. Mama came and got me out of the front room and told me to watch him and make sure that he didn't fall out of bed. I was scared but I went anyway. I sat there with him and tried to shake him. I started out shaking him soil but after he wouldn't respond, I tried harder. He still wouldn't move. His eyes were open and he seemed to be looking right at me but he wouldn't say anything or even move. He was gone and I knew it but I kept talking to him. I just knew for sure that he could still hear me. Clyde's last words to us on that night were: "I can't breathe. I'm going to die." That is a night and a sentence that I will never forget as long as I live.

After the news of Clyde's death spread, people from all around starting coming just to give their condolences, to drop off food, or just to be stopping by. I hated that part because I just wanted to be left alone. I wanted to get over my brother's death in the

way that I wanted to and I couldn't do it with all those people hanging around all the time. Going to the wake was not as hard as I thought it was going to be. I actually laughed and smiled quite a bit and so did Mama. I think going to the wake together "made up" for all the times that we lost out on while Clyde was ill. I've never felt as close to my mother in my whole life as I did the day of the wake. The funeral was a little harder though. Seeing the casket being closed meant that Clyde really wasn't coming back and that I would never get to see him again, see him grow up and become a man, or even meet his wife. He always did talk about growing up and getting married and having children of his own. He'll never get that chance now.

For four years we watched Clyde fight a long hard battle that most people ten times his age couldn't fight. He was definitely a brave warrior and I look up to him for that. Clyde was 10 years old when he left us and although no one in the house ever brings up just how much they miss him, or ever cries in front of another member of the family, I know inside that we are all grieving in our own special ways. His memory will forever be with us and when times get tough, we will always remember how brave and strong Clyde was before we think about giving up.

Chavae is now in nursing school because she promised Clyde that she would become a nurse. Clyde's symbol is a teddy bear.



Within a 2 1/2 year period, Arlis and Christa Barnhill have suffered the loss of two daughters. Linda, their 19-year-old, died 9-14-91, after developing complications from a lung-transplant. Linda was the first person to receive this procedure from the University of Kentucky.

Heidi also died at age 19 from pulmonary hypertension, 4-18-94. Christa found the following two poems in Heidi's papers:

Life's Fairy Tales

*As I end this magical fairy tale,
I promised I wouldn't cry.
Rut it's never as easy as it seems to
kiss your dreams good-bye.
One day you're on the top,*

*ready to plunge into the sea of destiny.
Then you turn around and ask yourself,
"Is this really me?"
Do dreams really come true?
Are Fairy tales really real?
Is this some kind of illusion,
or one of life's little mixed up deals?*

THE END

*It is complete now.
The ends of time are neatly tied.*

*While we pray,
She's walking to the end of the line.*

*I am not strong enough to say good-bye,
to let her go, to give a sigh.*

*To the dead of body and alive of soul,
Where her name is printed on God's
great scroll.*

*We mourn forever on a love that's lost.
As she laughs from the skies like a
heavenly host.*

*So think about her when you're thinking
kind*

*For she is fragile and precious, and her
equal you shall never find.*

Heidi's symbol is the "peace" sign and Linda's is a heart.



Lisa Campbell's 10-year-old son, Corey, died 4-22-92, from severe head injuries received after being struck by a truck while riding his bicycle. Since Corey's death, Lisa has been collecting angels and has received some comfort in them, stating: *... maybe because Corey is an angel. But, of course, Corey was always my angel.*



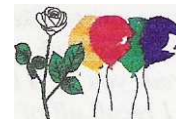
Rhonda, the 17-year-old daughter of Ron and Louise Barger, died as the result of an automobile accident, 9-5-92. Louise wrote the following poem to each of us:

Your Loved One Lives In Your Heart!

*May tender memories soften your grief
May find recollections bring you relief:
And may you find comfort and peace in the
thought of the joy that knowing your loved
one brought.
For time and space can never divide*

*Or keep your loved one from your side.
When memory paints in colors true that
happy hours that belonged to you.*

Rhonda's symbols are balloons and a white rose.



Kevin Akers, the 15-year-old son of Denny and Kathy, died from Acute Cardiac Disrhythmia, 12-14-93. Kevin's cousin, Audra Akers, wrote this poem to Kevin:

Once More

*If my loved one were here today
I know exactly what he would say.
He would tell me not to weep for him,
And never let my eyes grow dim.*

*He would tell me God has taken him
home,
And someday I can join him, too.
He would tell me of the streets of gold,
And how we will never grow old*

*He would tell me of the wonders in
Heaven he has seen.
He would make me feel much better
about his being gone.*

*Before he left for his new home,
We would have one last good-bye.
But just before he left this earth,
He'd say in a gentle voice, "Don't cry."*

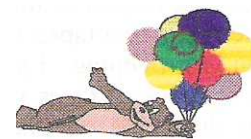
*I will always miss him-
His laughter and his smile.*



*I'll make the best of his
memories.
They will last me for a
while. —*

Kevin's symbols are music notes and roses.

Helen Warne has chosen teddy bears and balloons as symbols for her 19-year-old daughter, Melissa, who was killed in an automobile accident 4-18-94.



Helen described Melissa: *Melissa was 6 feet tall, hazel eyes and sandy hair. To know her was to love her. She had loved teddy bears and balloons since she was tiny.*

Melissa's baby sister, Tina, wrote this remembrance for Melissa's birthday in their local paper:

**In Memory of Melissa L. Warne,
Always Remembering**

*There's no mistaking the obvious
You were a sister like no other.*

*And to think of all the times I tried
to trade you for a brother.*

*I recall all of the fights we had when
we were very small.*

*But I always looked up to you.
Could it be because you were so tall?*

*Together we laughed, cried and
screamed at someone, but mostly each
other.*

*And now I'm very glad I got you in-
stead of a big brother.*

*You were protective, loyal, and
honest to the very end*

*You were my advisor and confidant,
but most of all my best friend.*

*I miss your gentle, knowing eyes,
and your smile so bright.*

*I miss the way we just talked for
hours, late into the night.*

*I miss the way You looked out for
me, even after the days end.*

*But mostly I miss your being here,
as my heart begins to mend.*

*The pain is overwhelming, My big
sis' forever lost.*

*I wish you were here with us, no
matter what the cost.*

*But now, as I look back at all the
memories we made.*

*I'm happy I've got them for they will
never fade.*

*Happy Birthday, Miss- I love and
miss you more than anything!*

Since Melissa's death, Helen has had difficulty in sleeping. I know we can all identify with that. Soon after Young Jim's death, I found some subliminal audio tapes of rushing water, the wind and rain, etc., that helped to lull me to sleep. There are also tapes that will "talk" you into sleeping. I suggest you try those types of tapes if you are having difficulty. I, like Helen, will have a hot cup of tea which also seems to help. I would suggest Chamomile Herbal tea which was the same tea that Peter Rabbit's mother gave him. (So it has to be good.)

Vesta Golden's 18-year-old son, Chris, was murdered 10-3-92. When Chris was young, he found a

gold eagle, and each summer he would re-paint it. When the family was on their way to the funeral, they saw a beautiful eagle. Each time Vesta had to travel to Kentucky for the trial of the person who killed her son, she always saw an eagle. For those reasons, Vesta has chosen an eagle to represent Chris.



Judge Sara Walter Combs' husband, Judge Belt T. Combs, died 12-3-91. Sara writes: *I celebrated Judge's birthday in a very loving memorial fashion that I felt was most appropriate for us, by performing a wedding. Celebration of life and of happiness seems to be our best memorial for our beloved that have departed.* What a wonderful celebration! It seems appropriate that the scales of justice be the Judge's symbol.



Becky, the 19-year-old daughter of Lewell and Helen Oakes died 6-11-93 as a result of injuries sustained in an automobile accident. Helen shared the following poem:

FOREVER

*With the rising of the sun each day,
I think about the times we've shared
Together that brought back good
memories*

And I know they will never leave me.

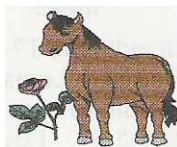
Somehow, in the time to come,

We will see each other again

*And then something magical will
happen*

*This time it will last **FOREVER.***

Becky now holds a close place in my heart since the family has chosen a horse and a rose as her symbols.



Raymond and Wanda Umbel's 23-year-old son, Jeff died in an automobile accident, 8-15-92. Wanda writes: *It has been two years since Jeff's death, and it sometimes seems like it has been forever and then sometimes it seems like it has just happened. I still miss Jeff as much as ever.*

Yes, Raymond and Wanda, we all understand. Jeff's symbol is a Guardian Angel.



Carol Ruth Blackman, editor of *Bereaved Parents Share...* wrote and requested *LAMENTATION*. Since her son, Samuel's death, 8 years old, Carol has been writing this paper of encouragement by bereaved parents for bereaved parents who have lost a child or children of any age. The purpose of the papers is to be as a "support group" which arrives in the mailbox which one can turn to when time permits or in the dark hours when you need to know someone cares.

Feel free to request sample issues and then decide if you wish to be on the mailing list. All names and addresses are confidential and will not be used for other purposes.

Resource lists in the back of each issue may be helpful for locating books or seminars of interest for grieving people.

If you are interested in the paper, this is the Correct address:

Bereaved Parents Share ...
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The other day I saw the following "Scripture" written on a friend's sweat shirt. My Daddy use to quote from the "Book of Hard Times", so we will say this is the book from which the following message came. Let me know if you ever find it in the "Good Book." I truly believe that these are words by which we can live.

