

# LAMENTATIONS

Issue 7

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

April 1993

## Happy Renewed Life

The **Easter** season is closely associated with spring and celebrates the belief in renewed life. I believe it is analogous to our grief. The **Easter** season is not a one day festival, but the culmination of several different observances, just as our grief is not a one day ordeal which is defined as a severe trial or experience. )

The pre-**Easter** festival of Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday) is a day of gaiety and colorful celebration which is the day before Lent begins. Mardi Gras then, represents our wonderful, happy and fulfilled life before our loved one died.



The season of Lent starts the following day-Ash Wednesday. Roman Catholic priests hold a mass on this day and draw a cross with ashes on the foreheads of worshipers and say, "Remember, you are dust, and to dust you will return." The Lenten season originated as a spiritual preparation for **Easter** in remembrance of the suffering, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Doesn't this describe our period of grief? Our loved one has died, we are suffering and working through our grief, and we struggle toward the "resurrection" of our grief. We will "rise" to our S.U.C.C.E.S.S.



Holy Week is the final week of Lent. It begins with Palm Sunday and ends with Easter Sunday. This is a culmination of our grief, and the triumphal entry of our acceptance and our reentry into a new life with our memories and our goal that our loved one be remembered.

**Easter** has many symbols, and when we see them we are automatically reminded of **Easter**. The **Easter** lily and **Easter** eggs are both representative of new life as is spring.

Just as different celebrations have symbols that remind one of that particular season, so should you have a symbol that will represent your loved one. You know that you will never forget your loved one, but I truly believe that if you will select some symbol to represent your loved one, and tell others, they too will be reminded of your loved one each time they see that symbol.

Have you chosen a symbol to represent your loved one? I, without really thinking about it, have always worn "horse" theme clothing and jewelry, even before Young Jim's death. He loved horses and spent probably his happiest hours breaking and showing them. I have also chosen angels and cherubs. This Christmas I decorated my entire house with cherubs and angels because I feel that he is now an angel.



Sara Combs has chosen The Good Shepherd to represent her husband, Judge Combs; Bruce and Teresa Mason have selected the eagle as a symbol to represent their son Steve; Bob and Martha Durbin have chosen a snowflake symbolizing their daughter Sherry; Ron and Edith Barger have used balloons because their daughter Rhonda had such a difficult time breathing prior to her death; Tom and Marcia Smith released balloons at their daughter Suzanne's funeral, and so did Maynard and Joyce Head at their son Mike's grave side; Gary and Chris Barker light a candle each night for their son Jason and from the poem Chris has written about Jason, I would say that foot prints will also be one of their special.

symbols; Luther and Rosemary Smith have had many experiences seeing yellow butterflies which found them selecting a yellow butterfly for their sons Drew and Jeremiah; Woody and Donna Herndon love monarch butterflies and the monarch reminds them of their son Roger; and Dennis and Judy Carpenter have also adopted the butterfly symbolizing their daughter Kellie.

The butterfly and the rainbow are symbols for remembrance. Therese Schoeneck, in *HOPE FOR BEREAVED*, explains that the butterfly is also a symbol of HOPE. The butterfly signifies that life changes and goes on . . . going from this life to a new life. Just as a beautiful butterfly emerges from its cocoon, hopefully we will emerge from our grief.

*If I have inside of me the stuff to make cocoons,  
maybe the stuff of butterflies is there too.*

Trina Paulus

So, chase those butterflies!



I hope you will "adopt" a symbol, and please let me know. I can then share it with others and as a result, that many more people will be remembering your loved one.

You have probably guessed by the last newsletter that I love desserts (**STRESSED reversed**), and while reading Barbara Johnson's book: *Splashes of Joy in the Cesspools of Life*, I was reminded of chocolate covered raisins. "How?" you ask. In her book, Ms. Johnson confesses that she continues to deal with her own troubles and bittersweet memories which are like shrapnel piercing her heart. She feels that memories are a permanent part of our lives, and unless we deal with them, they will continue to cause pain and grief that will cripple us. Louise Barger

said that it is the little things that one remembers that bring the most joy and pain combined. It is so important that we make as many good memories as possible, so when tragedy happens, there will be enough sweet memories to absorb the shock and put a coating of love around the shrapnel, blunting its sharp edges.

I imagine the raisin as my grief. I am a grape that has been reduced by my grief to a shriveled raisin. The "moisture" (our son) has been removed and I am reduced to only a portion of what I thought I was. The chocolate (memories) is the coating that not only protects me, but encases me with a delicious flavor, even though it may be bittersweet. If I eat (absorb those memories) the coating from the raisin and reconstitute the raisins I will again become a grape. Maybe not quite the same, but nevertheless, a grape. Isn't that a **delicious** thought? So I say, "treat yourself to chocolate covered raisins, get **STRESSED** and enjoy your memories." (Don't you love the way I can justify reversing my stress level?)



A friend of mine sent an article from the January issue of Reader's Digest entitled "*NO, SURVIVORS*" by Per ala and Emily d'Aulaire. I want to quote directly from the introduction:

Every week, auto accidents wipe out the equivalent of an entire senior class at a typical American high school. More than 6000 people between the ages of 15 and 20 are killed on roadways each year.

Alcohol is often assumed to be behind the shocking statistics. But in two-thirds of the cases, drinking plays no role. Instead, the culprit is an equally deadly concoction of carelessness, overconfidence and inexperience. Each day many good, decent young people simply make lethal mistakes.

By so many of our own losses, I knew this had to be true, but am comforted in knowing that this is true in the majority of the accidents. Why do people automatically assume all young people are doing something wrong when an accident occurs? I hope you will share this information with others, because it is through education that people are enlightened.

## Grief Grafts

Chris Barker wrote this poem about her son Jason after seeing the first snow since her son's death.

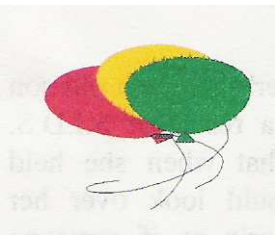
### *Footprints In The Snow*

*I miss your footprints in the snow.  
Round the house you'd go  
Frolicking to and for  
Your joyful face aglow.  
Making footprints in the snow.*

*I miss your footprints in the snow.  
Round the house you'd go  
Pushing shovel, pulling sled  
Your cheeks all rosy red  
Making footprints in the snow.*

*I miss your footprints in the snow.  
Round the house you'd go  
Warm cap upon your head  
Your cheeks all rosy red  
Making footprints in the snow.*

Jason 3-8-77 - 8-31-92



Louise Barger sent me a balloon in memory of her daughter Rhonda who would have been 18 years old March 24. Rhonda's class went to Washington D.C. for their senior trip and she gave each of them a balloon and hoped they would be thankful that they had enough air in their lungs to blow up the balloon in her memory. Rhonda had suffered so using inhalers, etc. Louise also wrote the following poem:

### IN LOVING MEMORY OF RHONDA LOUISE BARGER

On March 24th 1975, you came into the world so small.  
In your 17 years, you grew to 5 feet 5 inches tall.  
You were a beautiful girl with such thick long blonde hair.  
Oh, you were so lovely and fair.  
As loving parents, we protected you.  
But as a farm girl, there wasn't much you couldn't do.  
In school work, you were so smart.

When I think of those days, it breaks my heart.  
On June 19th, you'd gone with Brother Ron to get Dad's car.  
Dad was getting farm equipment home from the farm off afar.  
Brother Ron was first on the scene to arrive.  
He didn't know whether or not you were alive.  
The jaws of life they had to use.  
By then I had heard the terrible news.  
You were taken to Memorial Hospital, the first medical place.  
You had no serious cuts, only bruises all over your body and face.  
Dr. Meadows told us possible internal injuries and a broken hip.  
They had to prepare you for another trip.  
He said, "There is no doubt."  
Sadly he added, "We'll have to fly her out."  
Our loving friends and neighbors were very near.  
Their concern was so sincere.

When we arrived at U.K., the doctors finally came out.  
We were so scared not knowing what the results were about.  
A closed head injury and terrible bruises were all they'd found.  
Oh, Our prayers had been answered, you would be safe and sound.  
They let us go back to see you lying there so small.  
You looked like a baby that had taken a fall.  
For 5 days and nights, you were asleep.  
All we could do was stand by you and weep.  
Standing, talking to you and rubbing your skin,  
Knowing a miracle was taking place from deep within.  
When you awoke so terrified and scared,  
You never remembered what had happened to you, and we never even cared  
We just knew you would now survive.  
Two days later at home we would arrive.  
Our Darling Princess was home once more.  
How happy we were as you walked through the door.

Mom noticed your breathing wasn't quite right.  
You used inhalers, still you didn't breathe good at night.  
So back to the hospital before your appointment day.  
But this did not require a hospital stay.  
The doctor gave you Prednisone and let you go.  
We hoped everything would be so so.  
The next morning when you, my Darling Daughter awoke,  
You couldn't breathe, and started to choke.  
So back to the hospital once more.  
As we had done the day before.  
After being seen by an ear, nose, and throat doctor, you were admitted  
For me to stay in the room with you, was not permitted.

So I went back every hour to your room at three and  
again at four.  
You said that you needed help to the bathroom door.  
That's when your breathing stopped.  
If Mother had not been there, you would have dropped.  
I caught you and got you back to bed.  
I yelled for a nurse, thinking the worst was ahead.  
Then a tap on my shoulder and, "Are you O.K.?" a kind  
voice said.  
I replied, "It's my daughter, I think she is dead!"  
The nurse's kindness and love helped me through the  
hours ahead.  
"A tracheotomy will be performed," the doctor said.  
After two hours of surgery, the doctor returned.  
Your airway was the size of a Bic pen head, we learned.  
For seven more days, you were under the doctors' care.  
I learned to take care of you while you were there,  
Knowing a trach you would have to wear.

We took you back for check -ups twice.  
You could go to school was the doctor's advice.  
Two credits were all you had to earn,  
So now to school, you would return.  
We were amazed at your beautiful smile.  
You seemed to be happy all the while.  
You showed only love to all you met.  
You were never able to talk with the trach, but yet,  
You thought 'no sweat.'

Then on Sept. 5th for reasons we don't know,  
God called and you whispered, "I'm ready to go."  
Then as you reached out your right hand,  
I finally began to understand.  
God was calling you home, where you could breathe  
the normal way.  
You would be with the angels that very day.

I know now that children are given to us for just a  
season,

To love and rear properly is the reason.  
All our hopes and dreams are so slim,  
Compared to what our Father has in  
store for them.

So we must trust and work and not idly'  
stand,

So we too can feel the Master's hand.  
He is reaching out to us during the good and the bad.  
He doesn't want us to always be sad.  
How many of us count the price Jesus paid?  
When willingly for us on the cross He laid.  
So I'll try to be strong and not idly stand.  
Someday in heaven we both will stand and I too will  
feel the Master's hand.

Mom '93

Frank and Sharon Smith's daughter Frannie  
died as a result of a skiing accident 2-7-93.

Frannie wrote this poem a month before her  
death:

#### A SPIRIT SET FREE

*Pray for me my fellow man on the day of my death.  
Pray for the world I am entering that you may enter  
too.  
Let your minds be at ease. .for I love you, and know  
that you love me.  
Don't worry about good-byes. .for I am still with you.  
I am watching you and guiding you, just as before.  
Only now you don't see me. Let it be remembered that  
I know you and am praying/or you.  
Now. . I am Fee. . A spirit gliding in beauty.  
Every time you see God's beauty, you see me.  
I am with you. .travel with me.*

Frannie Smith

Tom and Marcia Smith's daughter Suzanne  
was killed in an automobile accident 2-11-92. Six  
months prior to her death, a friend of hers was  
killed in a motorcycle accident. In August, 1992,  
Suzanne had written a letter to her parents saying,  
"Heck, you know I love you. . I honestly don't  
know any parents who do the things you do and  
put up with the things you do."

Terry and Kelly Alexander's 4 month old son  
Cole died as a result of S.I.D.S. Kelly  
wrote that when she held Cole, he  
would look over her shoulder and grin  
as if someone was there. She feels it  
was his guardian angel.



Groucho always had a secret  
word during his program *You Bet Your Life*, and if  
you said the *secret* word, you would be paid. Let  
us adopt the secret word S.U.C.C.E.S.S.  
(Surviving Under Catastrophic Circumstances;  
Evolving Systematically and Successfully. **You  
Bet Your Life!!**)

