



# A JOURNEY TOGETHER

## NEWSLETTER OF THE BEREAVED PARENTS OF THE USA

VOLUME IX NO. 2, Spring 2004  
(April, May and June)

### IN THE SPRINGTIME OF YOUR GRIEF

By Judi Fischer, Cleveland, Ohio

From Bereavement Magazine  
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Spring has fragile beginnings; a tiny shoot of green that emerges from the cold earth, a hint of pastel against the brownish grass, a bud that awakens with the morning sun. Sometimes spring comes so quietly we almost miss it, but once it begins, it is impossible to ignore the daily growth and change. The morning sun brings sounds that were not there before. The breeze carries warmth that invites us to venture outside of ourselves. A promise is released with the budding and blossoming surrounding us. Hope emerges for the beginning of a new season; change is in the air.

What we experience in the springtime of the year is what we can experience in the springtime of our grief. There begins to be a growing radiance. The radiance is not just around us; it is within us. A gradual warming of the heart silences the chill of intense pain. The natural unfolding of the grief process moves gently to remind us that we will survive. Life is changing and growth emerges through the changes. The song of our hearts that seemed off key begins to experience a harmonious blend of the past and the present. The songs of the birds invite us to join them in a celebration of new life. In the springtime of our grief, there can be a new song for us to sing. It will be a

song we composed through the heartache of loss.

Optimism for a better day may awaken us one morning. Hearing laughter and discovering it is coming from within ourselves gives us promise for today. Dreams and hopes for a better tomorrow shine brightly with the morning sun. Surviving the winter of our grief with the openness to embrace change is a decision to embrace loss and integrate its impact into the fabric of our lives. It can be a willingness to explore new possibilities that create a different landscape to behold. We can make a decision that we will begin to appreciate what we still have, not just focus on what is missing.

We will know when we have made that decision. Something buds; something opens. The harshness of winter is softened with new life and new growth. It is not something we can force; it is something that unfolds when the time is right. The springtime of grief arrives with no dramatic entrance, no flashing lights. The stillness of the beauty unfolds and captures our attention. It is happening around us, but it is also happening in us.

If spring has already crossed the path of your personal journey of grief, rejoice! But, if the chill of winter remains in your heart, be encouraged; spring is on its way. Look for it, expect it and it will be yours to experience around you and in you!



### SPRING WAITING

By Sascha

Winter's end is almost here.  
Crocus struggle in the snow.  
Sunlight has a softer glow.

— Is the winter long this year?

Spring waits, watching for a cue  
not to rush your grief away.  
but to be there, when you say.

— Spring is waiting, friend, for  
you.

### CAN YOU REMEMBER?

By Sascha

With winter tumbling snow  
— the roses silent  
and the water ice.

With trees so barren  
that your mind refuses  
to picture leaves  
and green and even blossoms...

Can you remember,  
can you feel again,  
that spring did come  
from winter, every year?

These are both from  
THE SORROW AND  
THE LIGHT

## BEREAVED PARENTS OF THE USA

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<http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org>

## BOARD ELECTIONS

Chapters and Members At Large will soon be receiving ballots to vote for Board members.

This year Mary Murphy and Betty Ewart finish their 6th year service on the Board. We appreciate all they have done.

Theresa Valentine is the candidate for Member at Large Representative. Donna Corrigan, Jack Ewart, Beverly Hurley and Carol Welch are candidates for Chapter Representative – 2 are to be elected. Write-in nominations are accepted too, of course.



## FROM THE EDITOR

Betty R. Ewart

This has been a busy quarter. Plans for the Gathering are well underway and the information and registration forms are available. Information is later in this newsletter and on our website or you may contact Dolly Criswell at BP2004Gathering@aol.com. If you cannot attend but would like your child (children) to be a part of the Gathering, use the candle on the enclosure with this newsletter – follow the directions with the candle.

Your Board voted to link with TCF on our website and contact them about this. I am happy to report that I, as President of BP/USA, had several good conversations with Pat Loder, Executive Director of TCF. They have put us on their linking page and we have them on ours. We have agreed to keep in touch and to work together to serve the bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings. We both agreed that our two organizations have that goal in common, whatever our other differences. What a great step forward for both groups!

I personally want to thank all of you for your thoughts and notes as I have been going through the slow, tedious healing of my broken pelvis. One of my home nurses said to me, “You didn’t ask for this, but it happened and now you must begin the slow process of healing.” I told her I had heard that before. There are many similarities. Physical healing and the grief process are both healing processes, can be slow with relapses at times with many times of wishing the event had never happened. And, of course, the support group is needed to help the process. Thanks again for your concerns.

## NEWSLETTER LIST

We thank those of you who returned your forms asking to continue to receive the newsletter. There was a slip up in the mailing and it should not have gone to BP Chapters, members at large and those with whom we exchange newsletters. We do not intend to remove anyone from those lists.

The kind words added to the forms were very much appreciated. It was very encouraging to read your comments and especially to see how many said that, even after 10, 15 and even 20 years, you still look forward to reading the Newsletter. Please know that we are glad that the newsletter is helpful and are happy to continue to send it to you. We were also pleased to learn that many of you send the newsletter or a copy on to friends of yours. Many also asked to receive it through the web site and that, of course, saves cost but also means you get the newsletter quickly.

If you know of anyone who might have forgotten to send in their renewal form, it is never too late to let us know that anyone wants to be on the mailing list. Send that to the address or e-mail address in column one of this page. Please let us know of anyone who would benefit from receiving the newsletter and feel free to share it with others.

We also thank you who sent donations to help with our work. Through those gifts, you help other grieving persons and honor your children’s memory. All that we do is supported by donations and all our “workers” are volunteers and we do it all for the love and memory of our children.

## NEWSLETTER EDITORS

When copying articles into your newsletters, be sure to list the source carefully. Please note that Mary Cleckley did NOT write “A Stiff Upper Lip Causes Wrinkles” in the last newsletter. Does anyone know who did? Mary was amused to learn of her second husband and other children when she read that article!

## IN REMEMBRANCE OF JOHN

By Susan Herndon  
BP/USA Marion County Chapter

One bright day he went off to war  
My precious first-born son,  
To battle in an alien land  
In a war that would never be won.

As he saved good-bye on that fateful  
day,  
My eyes were filled with tears.  
He looked so young to be leaving  
home,  
Younger than his nineteen years.

The months passed slowly, week by  
week,  
The news was ever grim.  
Despite my prayer, the fear was  
there  
At the thought of losing him.

Then, one sad day, it came to pass  
The knock upon the door.  
My dear, brave boy-the one I loved  
Would be with me no more.

He died heroically, I'm told  
A good soldier to the end.  
He never lost his faith in God  
And to all he was a friend.

Now his name is engraved on that  
famous wall  
For any and all to see.  
But, in my aching heart, I wish  
That he was here with me.

This Memorial Day we remember all  
the men and women in the armed  
services and, especially, those who  
died in the various wars. And we  
remember their bereaved parents,  
grandparents and siblings.



## A MOTHER IS FOREVER

By Shirley Ottman  
BP/USA North Texas Chapter  
From THE SLENDER THREAD

This Mother's Day will trouble you -  
it can't be otherwise  
since your son and daughter, too,  
won't be there by your side.

They won't be there to bake a cake  
or bring you cards and flowers,  
nor can they walk into your home  
to brighten lonely hours.

The memories you have of them  
I know will make you smile,  
and you'll remember all the joys  
that made your lives worthwhile.

And so on Mother's Day this year  
and in every other,  
remember they're connected still  
by love to you, their mother.

## MOTHER'S DAY

By Sascha  
From WINTERSUN

How is the weather now,  
on mother's day?  
Shining with spring,  
promising early roses?

But hides there, in secret,  
a moment of grief?  
Frost in the sunlight,  
pale heartache of sorrow?

-The children are gone.  
Are you reminded twice over:  
the children age gone?

And will you be ready perhaps  
to remember without tears  
the sunlight, the laughter, the  
roses,  
you shared with the children  
on next mother's day?

## LOVE

By Adaline Leir, Regina, SK  
From REFLECTIONS FROM THE  
HEART

Breezes whispering through the  
branches;  
Did I actually hear it,  
or is it my imagination?

*"I LOVE YOU, MOM."*

A butterfly alights near by;  
Did I actually sense it,  
or is it my imagination?

*"A HUG FOR YOU, MOM"*

Tiny raindrops fall gently,  
caressingly;  
Did I actually feel them,  
or is it my imagination?

*"A KISS FOR YOU, MOM."*

A rainbow in the eastern sky;  
Did I actually see it,  
or is it my imagination?

*MY GIFT TO YOU, MOM."*

And because of you, dear daughter,  
I want to feel, see and sense  
all of life's little pleasures  
that meant so much to you.

*'I LOVE YOU"*

Written in memory of  
Kimberley Dawn Leir



## UPCOMING EVENTS

May 14-16: Umbrella Ministries Conference at the Hyatt Regency Suites, Palm Springs, CA. This is an annual conference for bereaved mothers. It is from 4 p.m. on Fri. to noon on Sunday. The theme is "Journey of the Heart." For further information, contact Joyce Floyd by phone at 928-453-7940 or by e-mail at [texaslady@rraz.net](mailto:texaslady@rraz.net).

July 9-11: BP/USA National Gathering at the Clarion Hotel in Charleston, SC. Information and registration blanks may be obtained from Dolly Criswell, 1717 Oak Point Rd., Charleston, SC or by phone at 843-762-4022. A full schedule, registration form and other information is available on our web site at [www.bereavedparentsusa.org](http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org). There is further information on page 6 of this newsletter along with a way for those who cannot attend to be a part of the gathering.

July 30-August 1: These are the dates for the TCF 2004 National Conference. For information, send a #10 self addressed envelope to TCF 2004 National Conference, PO Box 33204, Granada Hills, CA 9194.

Dec. 24-25: In Loving Memory will not have their Sept. conference this year. Instead, there will be a gathering at the Chaparnal Suites in Scottsdale, AZ. There will be a keynote speaker on the 24th, dinner and sharing sessions. On the 25th there will be an author book display and signings and workshops. At 1 p.m. there will be a trip to see 25 decorated Christmas homes. The room price is \$89 per night with a full breakfast and the registration fee is \$35 per person or \$60 per couple. For more information contact Sandy Fox at 480-595-1503 or at [sfoxaz@hotmail.com](mailto:sfoxaz@hotmail.com) or Kay Bevington at [alivalon@bright.net](mailto:alivalon@bright.net).



## BOOK REVIEWS

**AFTERMATH: In the Wake of Murder** by Carrie M. Freitag. We received this book to review and, I must admit, I put it aside for awhile thinking that it dealt with the experiences of murder only. When I began to read it, I could hardly put it down. Although parts deal with the experiences unique to murder – legal matters, including trials, the justice system, etc. – other parts are of great help to any grieving parent, grandparent or sibling.

Chapter One, called "Grief Is" is probably one of the most comprehensive listings of what grief is that I have read. Her sections about the other people who become part of the grieving persons new family are interesting too. The chapter on the tragedy of Sept. 11 and the implications of the new understandings of grief that grew from that are very thought provoking. There is also a good listing of books and support groups for future help. Carrie tells us that each year there are between 12,000 and 24,000 murders in the US alone and she helps us to understand that each one of those is a story just like the stories we hear of the victims of Sept 11.

Her Epilogue is "Forever Changed" and she explains that "The person who finished writing this book is not the same person who started it." She reminds us that our children live on in us and what we do with the rest of our lives. Any bereaved parent, grandparent sibling or family, friends and counselors would find the book very helpful. It is published by Chevron Publishing Corp. 5018 Dorsey Hall Drive, Suite 104, Ellicott City, MD 21042, phone: 410-740-0065.

**THE DEATH OF A CHILD: Reflections for Grieving Parents** by Elaine E. Stillwell. Elaine had 2 young adult children killed in a car accident 15 years ago and is a Bereavement Coordinator for the Diocese of Rockville Centre, NY. This book should become a valuable book for parents, counselors and ministers. Although she shows the help that her religious beliefs are to her, she does so in a way that would not be a problem for a person of any faith or no faith.

Every concern and area a grieving person experiences is covered by this book. There are sections on how to deal with holidays, with vacations, with family and friends who may or may not understand the grieving process. She talks about all the different types of death – sudden, prolonged, murder, suicide, etc. She even has a beautiful section dealing with the comfort that can come from a pet and the feelings when that pet then dies, especially if it was the pet of the child or children who died. .

The end of the book deals with "Living the Promise of the Resurrection." This covers, not only her personal belief and hope of the resurrection and reunion with her children but also the use of the time before that reunion. She says, "May you have a day of resurrection, feeling restored in mind and body, reviving your commitment to pursue your hopes and dreams, renewing your enthusiasm for life and for doing what adds meaning and purpose to your life. This will be the ultimate gift of love to your child."

This is another good basic grief book for all bereaved persons. The publisher is ACTA Publications, 4848 N. Clark Street, Chicago, IL, phone: 800-397-2282.



## GRIEF NIGHTS

By Doug Parrish  
BP/USA Tampa Chapter

Four o'clock in the morning "AGAIN" and this disease called Grief has awakened me once more. You never know when it's going to turn on – that movie picture show in your mind.

There are a lot of symptoms of grief including depression, despair, confusion, anger and loneliness. Then there's the why's. Why me? Why did this happen? Why did GOD let this happen? Why now? And, of course, Why my child?

Grief has no known cure; only God and time will make it easier to live with. For me, I think any loss of a loved one is devastating, but the loss of a child takes so much more out of you. The years, hours or moments you had to nurture that child are lost in an instant. Your dreams and aspirations for your child gone in a moment of time. It is so senseless for a young life to be taken from you before what we as parents would say "before their time."

Now all that's left are the loving memories, the pitter-patter of little feet running around the house care-free and so enjoyable. Graduation Day and the pride billowing up inside you like a cloud in the sky. Memories of hugs and kisses and "I love you, Mom and Dad!" And, of course, "We love you too!"

So, I say to all bereaved persons, hold on to those precious memories and keep them in your heart. Talk about the good ones and the love shared between you and your child. Take time to live, thank God and pray for each other. It's not easy but we will survive.

In loving memory of my son  
SCOTT DOUGLAS PARRISH

## A FATHER SPEAKS

By Jim Hobbs from  
"Where are all the Butterflies?"  
BP/USA of North Texas

Driving to work with the radio on, I sit next to a fellow co-worker and friend in the passenger seat. It's early in the morning and the conversation is light. A song reminds me of Jesse, my deceased son, so I tell a story about Jesse. A cloud of silence and dread fills the car. My friend shifts his position and I can feel how uncomfortable he is. I swallow the memories of Jesse and switch the conversation to last night's ball game. Sound familiar? It's painful to your friends to hear about your deceased child and it's painful for you to silence your memories too.

Certain studies claim that women are social beings and are more able to communicate their emotions than are men. This same studies state that men are mostly competitive and tend to hide their negative emotions, such as sadness or grief, especially from other men.

Does that mean that men have less need to deal with their emotions? I don't think so. From personal experiences and experiences of other men whom I have known, grief is one emotion that demands relief. Without grief recovery, grief can become a destructive force that, at some point, can consume your physical as well as your mental and spiritual health.

Bereavement support groups remind us that we need not walk alone. From a man's viewpoint, I think our support group's monthly gatherings offer an important avenue for men to work through the grief recovery process. Other doors are often shut to men who need to discuss their anger, guilt, sadness and even happy memories concerning their deceased children. Let's talk with and listen to each other.

## FATHER'S DAY

By Brenda Hobbs  
BP/USA North Texas Chapter  
From "Where are the Butterflies?"

Mothers' Day is a bittersweet day to me. I feel very lucky to have a surviving child and a wonderful grandchild. I realize that there are many parents who do not have any children to celebrate with and my heart breaks for them. At the same time that I delight in what remains for them, and I remember the child who is missing. That emptiness cannot be filled.

I thought about Fathers' Day coming up and I think of the pain all bereaved fathers will endure. On top of that pain, I feel that society has added a tremendous burden. Fathers are supposed to be *strong* for everyone else/ They aren't asked *how are you doing?* They are asked instead, *how's your wife holding up?* They aren't supposed to cry in public; their male co-workers and counterparts don't want to hear about their grief. Fathers often feel isolated and alone in their grief.

I'd like to tell all bereaved fathers that it's normal to hurt; it's normal to cry. If you want to talk about your pain or your child or just cry, a support group is a safe place to do all of that. No one will think that you are weak, or make any other judgments of you. We all understand. It's OK.

I'd also like to say that I'm sure that most, if not all, of your wives know that you feel just as much grief as they do. Try talking to your spouse if you haven't already. You cannot cause your spouse anymore pain by talking together and it might even help. I hope your Father's Day is peaceful.



2004 NATIONAL GATHERING  
July 9-11, 2003

**CHAPTER LEADERS**

Current or potential future chapter leaders should note that there is a training day for you at the Gathering this year. This will be on Thurs., July 8 starting with a lunch at noon with the Board of Directors. Workshops will then be held during the afternoon. Here is a chance to get some ideas and information to help you with your chapter.

**WORKSHOPS**

There will also be workshops on many aspects of the grieving process. There will also be workshops for Siblings.

**SHARING SESSIONS**

There will be a special informal sharing session at 7 p.m. on Thursday night, July 8. Other special sharing sessions will be planned Fri. and Sat. nights after the evening programs on topics requested or following up on workshops.

**SHARING OF OUR CHILDREN**

Buttons with your child's picture will be available. Bring a 2 3/4 inches picture for each one you want. These will be \$3 each. There will also be a bulletin board to display pictures (no larger than 5/7, please). There will be a picture presentation again at the closing session. If you wish your child's picture included in this, contact Dave & Kathy Simone, 1230 Carrie Wood Dr., Valrico, FL 33594, phone: 813-653-1717. They will need a picture, name and dates of birth and death.

**SPECIAL ROOMS**

There will be a Meditation Room, a Hospitality Room for just visiting, a Bookstore and a Butterfly Boutique.

**ANNUAL MEETING**

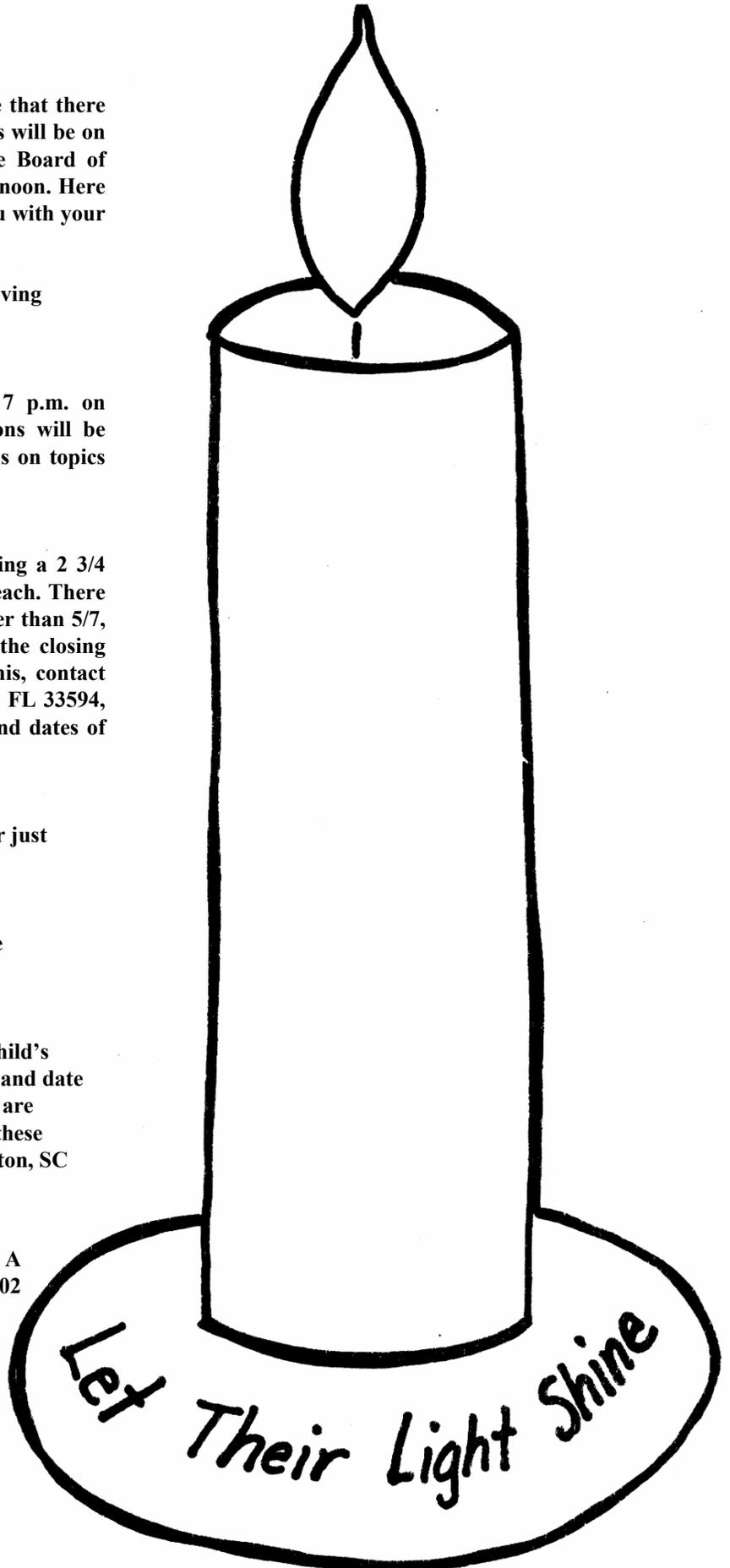
The Annual Meeting of BP/USA will be Sat. at 4 p.m. We encourage everyone to attend, not just delegates.

**LET THEIR LIGHT SHINE**

Trace the candle on this page, decorate it and put your child's name on the front of the candle and his/her date of birth and date of death with your name and address on the back. If you are attending, you may bring one with you or you may mail these candles to Dolly Criswell, 1717 Oak Point Road, Charleston, SC 29412.

FOR COMPLETE INFORMATION AND A REGISTRATION FORM, Contact Herbert Hill at 102 Blue Heron Drive, Summerville, SC 29485, phone: 843-875-1148 or download it from the website, [www.bereavedparentsusa.org](http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org).

HOTEL RESERVATIONS must be made with the hotel at 843-572-2200. Be sure to tell them you are with the Gathering in order to get the special rate. Deadline for reservations at this rate is June 8.



## BEREAVED PARENTS OF THE USA MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Marion County BP/USA Chapter	Printing of chapter packets in loving memory of their children
Arlene Priest	In loving memory of son, Marc
Celeste Cheatham	In loving memory of son, Charlie Kennerly
Jack & Betty Ewart	In loving memory of Millie Cornelius, sister of Mary Cleckley
	In loving memory of Nellie "Peg" Frances Cognard, Shirley Ottman's mother
	In loving memory of Pat, brother of Mary Murphy
	In hopes for a speedy recovery of Mitch Dudnikov
	In loving memory of daughter, Ruthie
Douglas P. Storm	In loving memory of son, Ryan Storm
Anthony & Bernadette Misita	In loving memory of son, Randall Misita
Evelyn C. Barr	In loving memory of all our children
Lois W. Hess	In loving memory of son, Stuart
Patricia S. Kinney	Toward the postage for the National Newsletter
William J. & Marguerite M. Adams	In loving memory of Tommy John Adams & Marty K. Adams
James & Dinah Taylor	Toward the expenses of the National Newsletter
Braves 400 Club	In loving memory of Millie Cornelius, sister of Mary Cleckley
Elizabeth W. Norton	In loving memory of son, Cliff
Robert, Gail & Justin Zawadowski	In loving memory of daughter & sister, Sarah
Rodney O. & Tanya E. Carlson	In loving memory of son, Troy
Rosemary Ravella	In loving memory of son, Arthur Ravella, III
Leon H. & Rose Pollack	In loving memory of Devra Pollack
F. Kent & Joan A. Guidry	Toward the expenses of the National Newsletter
Carl & Jean Dahistrom	In loving memory of Mildred & Judy Cornelius
Central Arkansas BP/USA Chapter	In loving memory of their children
Jeff & Amy Hubert	In loving memory of son, James
Glen & Linda Nielsen	In loving memory of daughter, Lisa Marie Champlin
Bob & Mona Whitley	In loving memory of son, Pete
Louise Colletti	Toward the expenses of the National Newsletter
Don & Carol Moore	In loving memory of daughter, Donna
Mitch & Renee Dudnikov	In loving memory of R. Zimmerman
	Donation to 2003 Gathering expenses
	Get well wish for Betty Ewart
Anne Arundel BP/USA Chapter	In loving memory of their children
Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham	At the request of Donald & Barbara Cook for the work of BP/USA
Pat & Robert Baiocchi	Toward the expenses of the National Newsletter
Cecil & Marie Beugnot, Julian Cadena	In loving memory of Baby Walter Crawford Smith
Tampa Bay BP/USA Chapter	In loving memory of their children
Juanita Betz Peterson	In loving memory of Roy and Roy Renee Peterson

If we missed listing a donation, we apologize. We try to be careful but might make a mistake or the donation may have come in after the newsletter went to press. If you will notify the Treasurer of your gift and the memorial, we will be sure it is acknowledged in the next Newsletter. Thank you. Our Treasurer is Dave Hurley and he may be reached at 3805 West San Juan Street, Tampa, Florida 33629-7819, by phone at 813-831-2588 or by e-mail at david.hurley@gte.net.

Since BP/USA is a qualified charitable 501(c) (3) organization, your donation may be tax deductible. The work of BP/USA is financed entirely by contributions. All the leaders, national and local, are volunteers. Donations go directly to help chapters, to help in the sending of the Newsletter and to keep costs of the Gathering as low as possible. You may designate your donation to any of these areas or to the general work of the BP/USA. If there is no designation, the money will be used for general operating funds. Please always designate carefully how you wish a memorial or gift listed. We thank our chapters, individual members and other friends for their generous support of BP/USA and its work.