



# A JOURNEY TOGETHER

## NEWSLETTER OF THE BEREAVED PARENTS OF THE USA

VOLUME VII NO. 1, WINTER 2002  
(January, February, March)

### THE YEAR WE CHANGED

By Betty R. Ewart  
Editor, BP/USA Newsletter

One of our T V networks had a special series called "The Year We Changed"! It was all about how we have changed since Sept. 11, as persons and as a nation. Yes, most of us have been changed by what happened on Sept. 11. But we bereaved parents, grandparents, sisters and brothers had another year in which we changed forever. As we look at the persons now being interviewed and listen to them, we realize that we all have changed in different ways but we all have a day, a year when we changed – forever!

There have been so many news stories, television shows, etc. since Sept 11 and, if you read and listen to them, you find that the world and so many more grieving persons now understand better what the loss of a loved one is all about. One person said, "When thousands die, it is a statistic. When one person dies, it is a tragedy." Listen to some of the other things I have written down that I read or heard and just think about your own loss and whether this does not all sound familiar.

- I would pay my new found knowledge to go back to the way it was before Sept. 11. (In answer to whether a person learns anything from this experience of loss.)
- Now there is a before and an after. (Before/after *that* date.)

- I didn't know when he/she left that day that it was the last time I would see him or her.

What are the changes we may see? After the Oklahoma City, they tell us that 6 people who survived or lost loved ones completed suicide, others lost marriages, others became addicts in an attempt to find peace. They also tell us, however, of those who formed friendships and stuck together, who went to NY to help the grieving persons there by just letting them know that you can make it even though it will be hard.

### HOW DID YOU AND YOUR WORLD CHANGE FOREVER?

There has been one suicide so far in NY but there have also been 16 babies born to women whose husbands were killed on Sept. 11. And several more women have learned that they are pregnant.

We have seen grown men cry and been told that it is all right! We have seen the families go through the first Christmas and holidays – women crying as they set up a tree and prepare Christmas for their children who are still asking when Daddy is coming home!

We hear the priests tell of the constant question, "Why" and hear them say that no one knows the answer to that. Some have begun to turn the question for people into "What do I do now!"

So, how did you and your world change forever – not on Sept. 11 maybe, but on that day that you will always remember. I know how I think I have changed. I think I am now a more compassionate person and I

want to reach out to others to tell them that they can make it – hard as it may be – and that it will never "be over" but it will be easier. I know that I want to do something that would make Ruthie proud of me. I often told her I didn't know what I would do if anything happened to her! Well, I found out!

So, yes, this was "The Year We Changed" as a nation and as persons. We each have our other personal years when we changed. Did we change for the better? Did we turn to alcohol, drugs, anger, hatred, depression as the way to go on? Or have we turned to other ways to change? Have we honored the memory of our beloved child, grandchild, brother, sister by becoming more compassionate, more understanding, more loving. Memorial scholarships, memorial gardens, donations to research and charity groups – all are ways to remember, reaching out to others in his/her name .

TIME Magazine had some good insights in the Person of the Year Issue. Mayor Giuliani said he asked his father whether he was ever afraid. His father answered, "Always. Courage is being afraid but then doing what you have to do anyway." He also said, "We're not in a different world. It's the same world as before except now we understand it better."

So, as we enter the year 2002 – whether it is the first year of our loss or a later one, we have the two choices-to retreat into an escape from the pain or to use the pain for a positive purpose.

## BEREAVED PARENTS OF THE USA

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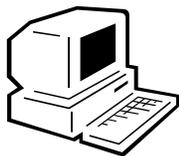
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Our web site is:

<http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org>

## ELECTIONS

Elections for Board of Directors will be at the Gathering in New Orleans. One person is to be elected for a 1 year term as Member at Large representative and 2 are to be elected as Chapter Representative for 3 year terms. If you have questions or have someone you would like to nominate for any of these positions, send the name and the reason you think this person would be a good BOB member to Pat Kinney, 1902 Emerson Ave, Louisville, KY 40205, phone: 502-456-5827; e-mail: [Patssewing@cs.com](mailto:Patssewing@cs.com).



## FROM THE EDITOR

Betty R. Ewart

The age of technology is truly great when people need help with problems. Our website had over 14,000 visits in November alone. Our Newsletter was downloaded by 1017 persons and 168 downloaded the Christmas card order form. We certainly hope that these materials were of help to those who found them. We hear every week from people asking to be put on our mailing list through the web.

We want to offer those of you who receive this Newsletter another service. The Newsletter is put on the web as soon as it is ready to mail. It can be downloaded from Adobe Acrobat Format and read there or printed out. If you do not have Acrobat, that service can be downloaded at no charge too. If you wish to receive the Newsletter this way, there are advantages. You will get it much more quickly – as fast as your printer works! It will save us printing and mailing costs also if you elect to receive it this way. If you wish to get your Newsletter from the Web, you will only need to notify us. We will have a list of names and e-mail addresses and will send you an e-mail letting you know when the Newsletter is available.

If you would like to receive the Newsletter this way, please us know by sending an e-mail to me at [president@bereavedparentsusa.org](mailto:president@bereavedparentsusa.org) giving me your name and e-mail address. This service will start with the next issue in April.

Of course we will still be sending printed copies by mail to anyone who wishes to continue to receive the newsletter in that way. If you have any questions, let me know at that e-mail address too.

Thank you! All of us on the BP/USA Board of Directors wish you the very best in 2002!

## MEMBERS AT LARGE

Hello! I am Theresa Valentine and, in July, the Members at Large elected me as their representative on the Board of Directors. I would like to hear from any of you about what your concerns are and how BP/USA and the Board can better serve you. When our son, Sean, died we were fortunate to live in an area where a Chapter was available. Many of you don't have a Chapter close to where you live but you do have the same pain in your heart and the same needs. My job, as a Board member, is to work with you to determine how the organization can best help meet your needs. Please feel free to contact me at any time. I soon will have a mailbox on the BP/USA website at [mal@bereavedparentsusa.org](mailto:mal@bereavedparentsusa.org) or you may reach me at my personal e-mail [tavisv@radiks.net](mailto:tavisv@radiks.net). For those who do not use the Web, the U. S. Postal Service and the phone company are fine ways to contact me and I look forward to hearing from all of you.

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Omaha, NE 68164

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## CHAPTER CHAT

Pat Moser will be sending the Chapter Chat to all Chapter Leaders and DM's in January. There will be many interesting things with it and we hope that you Leaders and DM's will read it over and share the information with your chapter members. We try to keep business matters to a minimum in this Newsletter so this is our way of keeping you all informed of what is going on in your organization. If you have any questions or concerns at any time, contact Pat at [chapters@bereavedparentsusa.org](mailto:chapters@bereavedparentsusa.org) or by her personal e-mail, [moser-pat@aol.com](mailto:moser-pat@aol.com). If you know of anyone who might like to be a part of BP/USA but not a chapter, refer them to Theresa at the address in the article above.

## THE NEW YEAR

Mary Cleckley, BP/USA  
Member at Large

The new year offers opportunities for progress, reinvestment, understanding, forgiveness, growth and all things positive. Be kind to yourself and pick one. Better still, choose all.

If you make New Year's Resolutions, I hope they include:

- Try to take it one day at a time.
- Forgive yourself for whatever it is you feel you did wrong.
- Figure out ways to resolve your anger so you can let go of it.
- Risk reinvestment in life.
- Concentrate on and value what you have left, as much as what you have lost.
- Let those you value know how important they are to you.

These are important steps forward. Try to be good to yourself in the New Year.

### NEW YEAR

By Sascha  
From **THE SORROW  
AND THE LIGHT**

The new year comes  
when the world is ready  
for changes, resolutions—  
great beginnings.

For us, to whom  
that stroke of midnight means  
a missing child remembered,  
for us the new year comes  
more like another darkness.

But let us not forget  
that this may be the year  
when love and hope and courage  
find each other somewhere  
in the darkness  
to lift their voice and speak:  
let there be light.

## BEREAVEMENT AND OUR PRESIDENTS

Many of you may have read all or parts of this list before but, as we approach the day for remembering our Presidents we need to remember again how many of them had so much in common with so many of us.

John & Abigail Adams:

Susanna Adams – 1768-1770

Thomas & Martha Jefferson:

Jane Randolph Jefferson – 1774-1775

Mary Jefferson – 1778-1804

Lucy Elizabeth Jefferson – 1780-1781

Lucy Elizabeth Jefferson – 1782-1785

Infant son – 2 1/2 weeks old

James & Elizabeth Monroe:

James Spence Monroe – 1799-1800

John Quincy & Louisa C. Adams:

Louisa Catherine Adams – 1811-1812

William Henry & Anna Harrison:

James Findlay Harrison – 1814 - 1817

John & Letitia Tyler:

Anne Contesse Tyler – 1825

Zachary & Margaret Taylor:

Octavia P. Taylor – 1816-1820

Margaret Smith Taylor – 1819 - 1820

Franklin & Jane Pierce:

Franklin Pierce – 1836

Frank Robert Pierce – 1839-1843

Benjamin Pierce – 1841-1853

Abraham & Mary Lincoln:

Edward Baker Lincoln – 1846 – 1850

William Wallace Lincoln – 1850-1862

Thomas "Tad" Lincoln – 1853 – 1871

Rutherford & Lucy Hayes:

Joseph Thompson Hayes – 1861 – 1863

George Crook Hayes – 1864-1866

Manning Force Hayes – 1873 – 1874

James & Lucretia Garfield:

Eliza A. Garfield – 1960-1863

Edward Garfield – 1874-1876

Chester & Ellen Arthur:

William Lewis Herndon Arthur - 1860-1863

William & Ida McKinley:

Katherine McKinley – 1871-1875

Ida McKinley – 1873 (4 mos.)

Calvin & Grace Coolidge:

Calvin Coolidge, Jr. – 1908-1924

Franklin & Eleanor Roosevelt:

Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Jr. 1909 (8 mos.)

Dwight & Mamie Eisenhower:

Doud Dwight Eisenhower – 1917-1921

John & Jackie Kennedy:

Patrick Bouvier Kennedy –1963

Stillborn daughter 1953

George & Barbara Bush:

Robin Bush – 1949-1953

### From **THE GREATEST LESSON**

by Vonette Z. Bright

"The death of a child is so painful, both emotionally and spiritually, that I truly wondered if my own heart and spirit would ever heal... I soon learned that I could help myself best by helping others... It wasn't until Robin died that I truly threw myself into volunteer work. That precious little girl left our family a great legacy: I know George and I care more for every living person because of her. We learned firsthand the importance of reaching out to help because others had reached out to us during that crucial time."

Barbara Bush



## UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, January 26, 2002 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.: A retreat for grieving persons presented by the National Catholic Ministry to the Bereaved at the Community of the Good Shepherd Catholic Church, Cincinnati OH. For information, call Carole Spontak at 513-697-9197

BP/USA Annual Gathering will be held at the Holiday Inn Select at the New Orleans Airport in New Orleans on June 28, 29, and 30, 2002 The theme will be "Together We Remember, Together We Grieve, Together We Grow." Information on speakers, workshops and costs will be in the next newsletter and will be mailed to BP/USA Chapters in early 2002. Information will also be on the BP/USA web site as soon as available ([www.bereavedparentsusa.org](http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org)). Questions may be directed to [www.BP2002Gathering@aol.com](http://www.BP2002Gathering@aol.com).

July 5-7, 2002: National TCF Conference in Salt Lake City, UT. To receive information, write TCF Conference, PO Box 1149, Bountiful, UT 84011.

September 12-15, 2002: Third International TCF Conference in Sydney, Australia. More information later.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

Again these past months we have many good books for review. We thank the many publishers who are now sending us review copies.

HELPING CHILDREN COPE WITH DEATH and HELPING TEENS COPE WITH DEATH are two books from The Dougy Center, a National Center for Grieving Children & Families. These would be very helpful for chapter libraries and for giving to schools where there are concerns for the grieving child or young person. Sibling

groups would find much helpful information for meetings and the many highlighted quotations from grieving children and young people which are excellent and would promote discussions in any support group –parents or siblings. Contact the Dougy Center at 866-775-5683 (toll free order line) at 3909 S. E. 52nd Ave, Portland Oregon, 97286. You may also visit their website at [www.GrievingChild.org](http://www.GrievingChild.org).

MY GRIEVING JOURNEY BOOK by Eve and Donna Shavatt was sent to us by Therese Goodrich with her comment that this is "a Great book for siblings." On one page, the authors tell about a concern of siblings and on the opposite page, they supply a work page to write or draw one's own feelings. Again, this is a great book for a library, to use for discussions and as a gift for a grieving sibling. It is published by the Paulist Press, 997 Macarthur Blvd, Mahwah, NJ 07430 or by phone at 201-825-7300. They also have a website at [www.paulistpress.com](http://www.paulistpress.com).

I HAVE NO INTENTIONS OF SAYING GOOD-BYE by Sandy Fox is a collection of stories that parents share about their times after the death of a child. As Sandy tells us, "There is no one who can help to heal the pain as much as another survivor, sharing his or her story." Almost all of the parents talk of how a support group helped them with their grief. She also provides a list of the support groups which are available, including BP/USA. The book is published by Writers Club Press and for information you may contact Sandy Fox, 7407 E Pasaro Drive, Scottsdale, AZ 85262.

TREASURES OF DARKNESS by Ken Hekman is another Writers Club Press book. The author deals with the sudden death of his firstborn, a teenage daughter. It is a collection of poems and writings and maps "a journey through four stages from being afraid to die, to not being afraid to live again. It is a very moving book. For information contact [iUniverse.com](http://iUniverse.com), Inc, 5220 S. 16th Ste. 300, Lincoln, NE 68512 or at [www.iuniverse.com](http://www.iuniverse.com).

WHEN YOUR PEOPLE ARE GRIEVING is another book by Harold Ivan Smith and is for those who are helping others through the grieving process – especially ministers. It contains many helpful suggestions for counseling, funeral or memorial services, etc. It is published by Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, Kansas City, Missouri.

SEARCHING FOR MY ESTRELLA MAILI by Gisela Castillo de Lujan. She found little written in Spanish on grief and this was translated from the original Spanish. She reminds us we must not only survive, but also embrace life again. The publisher is Astar Publishing, PMB 126, 8533 Church Ranch Blvd, #150, Westminster, CO 80021.

THE EMPTY CHAIR is a book to help with the handling of grief on holidays and special occasions by Susan J. Zonnebelt-Smeenge and Robert C. De Vries. It contains helpful readings and thoughts for all occasions which grieving parents face. It is published by Baker Book House, PO Box 6287, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 49516-6287 and their web site is [www.bakerbooks.com](http://www.bakerbooks.com).

AS YOU GRIEVE by Aaron Zerah is a book bringing together many words from traditions such as African, Buddhist, Moslem, Hindu, Native American, Jewish and Christian which present helpful and thought provoking ideas. The book is published by Sorin Books, PO Box 1006, Notre Dame, IN 46556-1006. Their website is [www.sorinbooks.com](http://www.sorinbooks.com).

EDITORS NOTE: I have more books to read and the cold, snowy winter months will help me catch up! This is a good time for anyone to do some helpful reading and help hold off the "winter blues".



**REMEMBERED VALENTINES**

Shirley Ottman  
BP/USA North Texas  
From THE SLENDER THREAD

Little hands, dimpled and fair,  
you're pasting lace on chair and hair  
and everything else within your reach.  
But oh, the smile that lights your face  
when you bring your valentine and place  
it in my hands: *Look, Mom; for you.*

You pause to watch for my delight.  
I'll never know as fair a sight  
as seeing love shine in your eyes.  
I hope as age creeps up on me  
I'll never lose my memory,  
for that's where I still play with your.

It's not just that you're grown; you're gone!  
Except in memories and dreams at dawn  
of you and us and happy times.

**AN EXCERPT FROM:  
ODE: INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY  
FROM RECOLLECTIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD**

By William Wordsworth

Though nothing can bring back the hour  
of splendor in the grass, of glory in the flower,  
we will grieve not, rather find strength,  
in what remains behind.

In the primal sympathy,  
which, having been, must ever be.  
In the soothing thoughts,  
that spring out of human suffering.

In the faith that looks through death,  
thanks to the human heart by which we live.  
Thanks to its tenderness, its joy, its fears.

To me...the meanest flower that blows,  
can give thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.



**A FABLE**

Jeanette Isley  
From the Newsletter of the  
BP/USA of MD, Inc.

There once lived a family who felt that they had been specially blessed by God. They had health, they felt secure in their love of God and their love for each other.

On the mantel of their fireplace stood a vase. It was a strong, sturdy vase – attractive but not extravagant. It had been a wedding gift and, to them, It symbolized their family. It had withstood the bumps of moving and toddlers' antics as the family had withstood the buffets and ordeals of life. The scars and chips could be detected only on very close scrutiny.

The day the oldest son in the family died, the vase was found on the mantel, shattered into many pieces. No one bothered to gather up the pieces. It was left for some time in its broken condition on the mantel.

After some time had passed, thought was given to putting the vase back together. Little enthusiasm was generated, but, eventually, the task was begun. The family worked together, each adding a piece or a suggestion about getting it mended. Each one of the family members got discouraged and, more than once, some one of them was heard to say, "It can't be done."

Finally, after many months, the vase was back in its normal place on the mantel. To the casual observer, it looked strong and sturdy and no one would guess it was less than perfect. But, on closer examination, it obviously had been shattered and put back together, and, on turning it around, one could see that one large piece was permanently missing. It had never been found and served to remind the family that, although their hearts could mend and heal, their lives would never be the same.

## HOPE

Margaret H. Gerner  
BP/USA, St. Louis, MO

I sat down regularly to read the many newsletters I received from the chapters around the country. Most of the time there were articles in them that made me cry a little.

I read about children who are dead and parents who were hurting, but never did I come away from these reading sessions depressed.

I came away with hope-hope that the searing torment does lessen and eventually give way to warm, loving memories of our child.

When we are in the deepest throes of our grief; when our beloved child has just recently been snatched from life by a tragic accident or succumbed to a fatal illness, or died in some other way, can we believe we can ever be happy again? When to simply get up in the morning is a major accomplishment, can we believe that we will ever again be able to function with enthusiasm and purpose?

When every thought of our children brings excruciating pain, can we believe that we will someday be able to think of him/her and smile? I know it is hard to believe that this will ever happen, but it will.

Words used in defining HOPE are "expect", "trust", "anticipate", "wish", "desire" and "confident". These are the key words.

If we expect, trust and anticipate feeling better, we will in time.

If we wish it, and are confident, the day will come when we will feel better. Of course, it doesn't just happen. It takes long, hard grief work. It takes many painful hours of allowing ourselves to go through our grief.

It takes patience and it takes time.  
But know you will come to the light  
at the end of the tunnel.

Know that there is hope. Know that many, many bereaved parents who have been in the same painful place that you are now have found life meaningful again.

Know that you will too.

**EDITORS NOTE:** Margaret Gerner has been a vital part of the St. Louis BP/USA since it started and vital part of the TCF before that. She has been the Editor of the Newsletter of the Chapter and her writings have inspired us all and been repeated in numerous newsletters of support

across the country. She has spoken at Gatherings and Conferences for support groups too. She recently "retired" as the Newsletter Editor in St. Louis. We know, however, that she will continue to supply us with inspiration by her past and future writings. Margaret even sent a series of writings on spousal, parental grief, etc. to us with a check to cover copying them and using them to help anyone we might reach after the Sept 11 disaster. She recently, with family and friends, observed the 30th anniversary of the death of her son, Arthur. How very many people across the years have been touched by the way she chose to remember Arthur by helping others. **THANK YOU, MARGARET!! MARGARET!!**

### THE WALL

Susan Herndon  
BP/USA Ocala, FL

It stands in somber dignity,  
Stark in its simplicity-  
The Wall.

In summer's heat and winter's chill,  
With Mother's tears falling still-  
The Wall.

They are fallen heroes, every one,  
And among them is my own dear son.  
I've come to see him honored-  
At The Wall.

I place my fingers gently there  
As if it were his face or hair,  
Instead of just his name-  
Upon The Wall.

My eyes are filled with lonely tears  
As I think back to those happy years,  
Before war's horror led us-  
To the Wall.

I know the gates of Heaven opened wide.  
And angels welcomed him inside,  
With all the brave young men remembered-  
At The Wall.

Thoughts written by Susan in memory of her son, John, who lost his young life in Viet Nam on March 14, 1968.

## BEREAVED PARENTS OF THE USA MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Jean and Joe Dant	In loving memory of daughter, Janet, and grandson, Jarred
Nancy, Randall, Bethany, Jason & Michael Bell	In loving memory of son and brother, Marc
BP/USA North Texas Chapter	Gift to the Sept. 11 Disaster Fund in loving memory of the children of their members
BP/USA Saginaw MI Chapter	Gift to the Sept. 11 Disaster Fund in loving memory of the children of their members
BP/USA St. Louis MO Chapter	Gift to the Sept. 11 Disaster Fund in loving memory of the children of their members
BP/USA Tampa Bay FL Chapter	Gift to the Sept. 11 Disaster Fund in loving memory of the children of their members
Rodney & Tanya Carlson	Gift to the Sept. 11 Disaster Fund in loving memory of their son, Troy Carlson
Amy, Jeffrey & Carley Hubert	Gift to the Sept 11 Disaster Fund in loving memory of their son and brother, James Kyle Hubert
Pat & Paul Kinney	Gift to the Sept. 11 Disaster Fund in loving memory of their son, Jeffery John Kinney
Judith & Steven Lippmann	Gift to the Sept 11 Disaster Fund in loving memory of her son Michael
Phyllis L. Lynch	In loving memory of their son, Lee Lynch
Karen & Lee Story	In loving memory of Lee R. Story
Carole Cornell	Gift to the Sept 11 Disaster Fund
David & Ronda Gillespie	Gift to the Sept 11 Disaster Fund
David & Evonne Hallam	Gift to the Sept 11 Disaster Fund
Martha Smith	Gift to the Sept 11 Disaster Fund
BP/USA Baltimore Metro Chapter	In memory of the children of their chapter members
Mitch and Renee Dudnikov	In loving memory of mother, R. Zimmerman
	In loving memory of son, Marc
Margaret H. Gerner	Donation to the Sept. 11 Disaster Fund in loving memory of her son, Arthur
John & Therese Goodrich	In loving memory of daughter, Paula Marie Goodrich
Scott & Terrye Kinney	In loving memory of brother, Jeffrey John Kinney

If your donation does not appear on this list, it was not received before this Newsletter went to press and will appear on the next Newsletter.

Money given for the Sept 11 disaster Fund has been used to provide brochures and Newsletters to centers in New York and at the Pentagon. The Centering Corporation has been distributing these and we have sent them through that group. There is still money available if more help is needed. This is also available for sending materials to any Chapter or Member at Large who might know of a need related to these disasters and wish to have materials to send. Contact John Goodrich, Betty Ewart or Pat Moser at the addresses on Page 2. We will close the designation of Sept 11 Disaster Fund at the end of March but will keep any money separate as a Disaster Fund and welcome any future donations in order that we might respond to any future disasters, plane crashes, etc. This will enable us to respond quickly when help is needed.

Since BP/USA is a qualified charitable organization your donation may be tax deductible. We never charge for our newsletter or many of our other services. We also attempt to keep the cost of the Gathering low so that more people may attend. Donations may be designated as follows: in memory of a loved one, in appreciation for someone or something in our life, the Disaster Fund, the Gathering costs, brochure printing or the newsletter printing and postage. If not designated the money will be used for general operating funds. Please carefully designate how you wish your donation to be used and how you would like it listed on this page. We thank our chapters and individual members – both chapter members and members at large – for their generous support of BP/USA and its work.