



# A JOURNEY TOGETHER

## NEWSLETTER OF THE BEREAVED PARENTS OF THE USA

VOLUME IX NO. 1, WINTER 2004  
(January, February and March)

### TRACKS IN THE SNOW

By Juliet Freitag  
Crawford, Nebraska

It had been at least three days since the first snowfall, when I realized I had to head into town for groceries and out to the cemetery for one of my weekly visits. I cursed the snow often for covering up all the life I saw in the summer and spring. Everything was just a frozen blanket of white, a barren ice land, when the snow fell. The fact that my daughter, Kyla Louise, was buried underneath that thick coating of ice in the cemetery, made me dislike the snow even more.

So, on this day, I grumbled as I scraped my van windows in preparation for the long haul into town. My wheels crunched ice and slid as I pulled slowly out of the driveway. I let my mind wander into thoughts of a warm spring on the drive into town. I dreamed of flowers and birds, not frozen ponds and lifeless skies. I wondered if I would even be able to get into the cemetery to visit my darling's grave. Curse the snow!

After grocery shopping, I headed out to the cemetery feeling depressed and hopeless. Why had my daughter died at the tender age of four from a brain tumor? Why was I having to visit her grave covered in snow, and out of my warm arms? What was the point of it all? I shivered as I neared the cemetery. It looked like not many people had been out since the last snowfall because the ground was still a flat solid sheet of snow. Or was it?

As I let the van quietly creep into the cemetery, my eyes gazed at the snow and a small laugh escaped my lips. Across the rows and rows of frozen graves were animal tracks going every which way., Birds, rabbits, deer and who knows what other types of creatures had found a quiet, safe place to play. The tracks told of deer leaping over headstones, romping in the snow. There were tracks of rabbits darting in and out of the bushes between the headstones. Bird tracks gently dotted the snow until they disappeared where a winged one had taken flight.



I parked the van and stepped out into the glistening snow. As I walked towards my daughter's tiny grave, I saw that a bird had visited her earlier, and that a rabbit had made a resting place under the bushes near her grave. A set of tracks even went back and forth between a pinwheel (Kyla's Grandma had left at the grave) and a bush. What a wondrous sight! My little angel even had visitors when I could not be there! I looked and there were two small deer running after each other. They stopped to look at me, and I at them. Tears spring to my eyes and my heart soared. What majesty! They stood there still for a second and then they bounded off and over the fence.

I pressed my hands into the snow on my sweet Kyla's grave, leaving my handprints. Then I drew a heart with my finger. As I walked away, I looked back and saw my own tracks, proof of my love. IT was then I realized what a gift the snow was. It had shown me how full of life the cemetery and the world really are.

On my drive back home, I looked around at the shimmering white land before me. I saw that the snow protected and preserved the land beneath it like a warm blanket until the land could once again rise anew.

From BEREAVEMENT Magazine  
888-604-HOPE or  
[www.bereavementmag.com](http://www.bereavementmag.com)

### WINTERSONG

Season of lights,  
Season of love and peace,  
Season of shadow,  
Season of memories,  
Season of warmth and joy,  
Season of secret tears:

Give us the courage to laugh  
again,  
Give us the vision to hope again,  
Give us the power to love again.

For all our new seasons  
And all our new years.

Sascha  
From WINTERSUN  
Remembering her at this season

## BEREAVED PARENTS OF THE USA

*A Journey Together* is a national newsletter, published quarterly by Bereaved Parents of the USA.

All rights are reserved. However, we welcome other Newsletters reprinting articles. We ask that, when reprinting, you give proper credit to Bereaved Parents of the USA, including the National Address.

Send address changes, other materials or a request for a Newsletter to  
Betty R. Ewart, Editor  
BP/USA Newsletter  
326 Longview Ave.  
Lewisburg, WV 24901  
Phone/FAX: (304) 645-3048  
E-mail:  
newsletter@bereavedparentsusa.org

For other information, contact the  
Bereaved Parents of the USA  
PO Box 95  
Park Forest, IL 60466  
Phone: 630-971-3490  
FAX: 708-748-9184

Our web site is:  
<http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org>

## THE GATHERING

Information about the 2004 Gathering will be out soon and will be sent to all Chapters and Members at Large. Others who want to be sure to have registration forms and information, contact Dolly Criswell by e-mail at [BP2004Gathering@aol.com](mailto:BP2004Gathering@aol.com). You may call her at 843-762-4022 or write her at 1717 Oak Point Road, Charleston, SC.

Remember: the Gathering is July 9-11 at the Clarion Hotel-Charleston Airport, Charleston, SC and the theme is LET THEIR LIGHT SHINE.



## FROM THE EDITOR

If you receive this newsletter a little late this time, it is because I fell and fractured my pelvis. I am getting around in a wheel chair and it has slowed me down. Sorry to be late.

We were all saddened in September by the death of Gary DeMeco. Many of you may remember him and Lynne from past Gatherings. He was also Paul Kinney's brother-in-law. We express our sympathies to Lynne and thank her for making BP/USA the organization to receive gifts in lieu of flowers.

John Goodrich has agreed to serve as proxy for the 2004 Board of Director Elections again this year. Chapters and Members at Large will be receiving ballots and information from John, including biographies for those of you who may not know these people. We ask that you return your vote to him. The slate this year includes – for representative of Chapters: Donna Corrigan of Hinsdale, IL, Jack Ewart of Lewisburg, WV, Beverley Hurley of Tampa, FL and Carol Welch of St. Louis, MO. Two of these are to be elected. Theresa Valentine is unopposed on the ballot for representative of Members at Large.

The Chapters and leaders in St. Louis sent the National a check from money that was left after all the bills were paid. We were pleased to get this and it will be available for expenses for future Gatherings to keep the costs down and help the sponsoring chapters with their budgets.

At our October Board meeting we discussed the best use of our Web site and you will see some new things there soon. It has been updated too showing new chapters and changes in leadership. Much of our time was spent at the Gathering site, discussing and helping Dolly Criswell and her great committee plan to make it one of the best. Plan to come!

With regret we learned of the death on December 9 of Sascha. Anyone who has read a newsletter of the many support groups has read her work. She very kindly sent copies of her books to all of our chapters just after BP/USA formed and all of us have been helped by her writings. She came to the USA from Germany in 1947. Her son Nino Hendee drowned in 1957 and her daughter Eve Hendee took her own life in 1972.

There is a section called "Sascha's Place" found at [www.geocities.com/grieffhope/sascha1.html](http://www.geocities.com/grieffhope/sascha1.html). BP/USA has posted a memorial to her there. She truly will live on in her writings and memories of her forever.

Here is a poem from the web site by Sascha which says so well what she felt and shared with us.

## WISH

I wish you gentle days  
and quiet nights.  
I wish you memories  
to keep you strong.

I wish you time to smile  
and time for song.

And then I wish you friends  
to give you love,  
when you are hurt and lost  
and life is blind.

I wish you friends and love  
and peace of mind.

~ Sascha



## CONGRATULATIONS

By Sarah Ryan, St. Louis, MO  
From Candlelight of 2002

Congratulations! Why is she congratulating me, you ask? Well, I'll tell you. I congratulate you on surviving without your link to the past. The day death visited us, we lost our link. We have very few, if any, memories that do not include our sister or brother. Our lives were intertwined throughout childhood. Our co-conspiring days of painting the dog or keeping that secret (shh! Don't tell mom or dad), those days are over. We long to take back the mean words spoken or say I love you one more time.

I congratulate you for surviving the present. Everyday you wake up and take a breath. It may not seem like much, but it is enough. Maybe you are living without a purpose. As an older child, your job was to teach and protect. As a younger child, your job was to adore and annoy. You endure people asking you, "How are your parents?" without a care for you. You are now living everyday without a person you thought you would always be with. You are going to school, moving into a new place, maybe even having a baby – all without the jokes, arguments and advice of your sibling. Everyday you live with the shrine.

I congratulate you on surviving the future. Eventually the public will not recognize that your loss is significant. Yet it still will be. As children we did not plan our futures to just include ourselves. Our future always included our brother or sister. Now, you will have to take care of your parents. You will need to create a world in which your sibling has never been a part. I have confidence in you. You will remember, with love, and tell your children how great your brother or sister is. You will live in the future because of all the great and wonderful memories you have. You will live not only for your sibling but also for you.

## A NOTE TO THE NEWLY BEREAVED (and a reminder to the rest of us)

By Sascha



The first months and years after bereavement can be terrifying. It seems as if the pain stays at a monotonous peak; it seems as if one's mind will be lost at any moment. And although most of us "get better" after the first terror, we usually do not realize that until we look back, years later.

When we think about it, this state of affairs is almost "reasonable". After such an overwhelmingly traumatic experience, we can fall – as it were – to the end of the world. Coming back from there is bound to be slow beyond our imagination and fraught with reversals. So far, no one has found a method to avoid this painful journey back. But perhaps it will help to know you have already begun to travel. You will find it is a long journey and desperately hard and you may almost want to stay where you are. But you will realize later that the wind of tomorrow is already stretching your sails, and life awaits for you across the sea. If you only knew...

### PLEASE ASK

By Barbara Taylor Hudson  
Parents of Murdered Children  
Cincinnati, Ohio

Someone asked me about you today, and  
It's been so long since anyone has done that.  
It felt so good to talk about you...  
To share my memories of you...  
To simply say your name out loud.  
She asked me if I minded talking about  
what had happened to you...  
or would it be too painful to speak of it.

I told her I think of it every day,  
and speaking about it helps me to release  
the tormented thoughts whirling  
around in my head.

She said she never realized the pain  
would last this long...  
and apologized for not asking sooner.

I told her, "Thanks for asking."  
I don't know if it was curiosity  
or concern that made her ask,  
But I told her, "Please,  
do it again...sometime soon."



Carol Welch and some of the St. Louis Chapter were present for the placing of the brick that the National BP/USA purchased in the area near the statue, the Angel of Hope, where we had our closing ceremony at the 2003 Gathering. It says, "Bereaved Parents of USA 2003 Gathering". This Angel is the model of the angel in THE CHRISTMAS BOX and copies of it are being placed in many places in the country. The National SHARE Office maintains the site at Blanchette Park in St. Charles, Missouri. If you are ever in the area, stop to see the statue and the bricks we and the St. Louis Chapter have there.

## QUESTIONNAIRES

Francis Palmer, a bereaved parent in the BP/USA Chapter in Annapolis, MD, is working on a book and would welcome parents willing to fill out a short questionnaire. Information and the questionnaire can be found on the web at [www.geocities.com/org/question.html](http://www.geocities.com/org/question.html).

If you were 8-12 years old when your sibling died and are willing to fill out a form to participate in a study being done of bereaved siblings by a clinical worker and bereaved parent, contact Susan Rabinaw at [www.sibgrief.com](http://www.sibgrief.com).

**TAKE THE LOVE**

**OUR CHILDREN  
GAVE US**

**AND PASS IT ON!**

By Darcie D. Sims  
From FOOTSTEPS

## THE CORD

By Terri Apostolakos

Sent to us by Gay Shelby,  
Prince William Virginia  
BP/USA Chapter

We are connected,  
My child and I, by  
An invisible cord  
Not seen by the eye.  
It's not like the cord  
That connects us 'til birth.  
This cord can't be seen  
By any on Earth.  
This cord does its work  
Right from the start.  
It binds us together  
Attached to my heart.  
I know that it's there  
Though no one can see  
The invisible cord  
From my child to me.  
The strength of this cord  
Is hard to describe.  
It can't be destroyed.  
It can't be denied.  
It's stronger than any cord  
Man could create.  
It withstands the test,  
Can hold any weight.  
And though you not here with me,  
The cord is still there.  
But no one can see.  
It pulls at my heart.  
I am bruised...I am sore,  
But this cord is my lifeline  
As never before.  
I am thankful that God  
Connects us this way  
A mother and child.  
Death can't take it away!



**WALKING THROUGH THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW: When a Jewish Child Dies:** Mort Schrag, from the TCF in Los Angeles, CA, whom many of you know and remember from workshops at our Gatherings, has sent us a copy of a new book he has written. This is a short and readable book covering both general and Jewish issues relating to the death of a child. It would be helpful for any grieving person and especially for those of the Jewish faith. If you are interested in this book, contact Mort at [sabamortla@aol.com](mailto:sabamortla@aol.com).

**GRAM'S SONG** by Karyn Henley: This book deals with the story of a young boy's relationship with his Gram and an explanation, after her death, that helps him understand and gives him hope amidst his grief. The book may be ordered from Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, IL or by contacting Debbie Lykins at [www.tyndale.com](http://www.tyndale.com).

**RESPONDING TO GRIEF: A COMPLETE RESOURCE GUIDE:** Many of you may know The Rev. Richard B. Gilbert from conferences and from his writings in BEREAVEMENT magazine. He has sent us a copy of this guide which is a very fine listing of books and web sites dealing with grief.. This is the 5th Volume, or fourth supplement, and covers entries for the year 2001. Anyone would find it a great source of help. You may receive a copy by contacting him at [dick.gilbert@shermanhospital.org](mailto:dick.gilbert@shermanhospital.org). He is at the World Pastoral Care Center and their motto is "Building Bridges – Not Walls". They are a support center rather than a membership-driven organization offering listings of course, resources, etc. To receive regular mailings and information about this organization, contact Fr. Gilbert at the same e-mail address or at The World Pastoral Care Center, 1030 Summit Street, Suite 338, Elgin, IL 60120.

## THIS I CAN SHARE WITH YOU

By Marilyn W. Heavlin

I have not experienced the death of my only child,  
but some of us have.  
I have not experienced a child dying by suicide,  
but some of us have.  
I have not watched my child fight a terminal illness,  
but some of us have.  
None of us would dare say "I know just how you feel".  
Even if our experiences are similar,  
no two situations are exactly alike.  
But I can say  
I remember the pain when my child died.  
I remember the feelings of insanity.  
I remember the feelings of aloneness.  
I remember wishing I could die.  
I remember wanting to share something with my child,  
but he wasn't there.

So, my friend, our experiences have parts in common  
and parts that are different!  
So, why should we listen to each other?  
Do we have anything to share?  
Do you know what heartbreak feels like?  
All of us do.  
Do you know the numbness of grief?  
All of us do.  
Do you know what it's like to have empty arms?  
All of us do.  
So, let's learn what we can of our commonalities.  
We loved a child, but our child left too soon.

THIS WE CAN SHARE WITH YOU

## A STIFF UPPER LIP CAUSES WRINKLES

By Mary Cleckley  
BP/USA Member at Large

The next time someone tells you to  
"keep a stiff upper lip" tell them I  
said it causes a wrinkle.

Bereaved parents will say that losing  
their child has "aged" them. I  
used to have a baby face. Into my  
late twenties, I still couldn't buy alcohol  
without showing my driver's  
license. When I married, I inherited  
two children from my husband's  
first marriage. I used to get a kick  
out of telling people I had teen-age  
children and waiting for the flab-  
bergasted protestations to follow.

I was 33 when Nicholas died; I'm 36  
as I write this. Lately, when I tell  
people I have a 20 year old daughter,  
no one bats an eyelash! Certainly  
no protestations – not even a  
"My you must have started young!"  
More like an "Oh, that's nice."

How old do I look anyway? What  
happened to me in those three years.  
I have a theory: we don't get lines in  
our faces and gray in our hair and  
stress-related illnesses from the time  
we spend thinking about our child,  
crying and freely expressing our  
hurt, anger and guilt. We get them  
from the time we spend trying NOT  
to. Because we feel we cannot or  
should not break down before co-  
workers, acquaintances and, many  
times, even family, we keep that upper  
lip as stiff as possible and all of  
our emotions reined in as tightly as  
possible. Kept up long enough, without  
any release, our faces take on that  
pinched look and the gut finally  
protests with a message of its own.



## SOMEDAY

By Steven L. Channing  
Winnipeg MB TCF

Someday, it won't hurt so bad and I'll be able to smile again,  
Someday, the tears won't flow quite as freely whenever I think of what  
might have been,  
Someday, the answers to "why" and "what if" won't be quite as important,  
Someday, I'll be able to use what your death has taught me to help  
others with their grief,  
Someday, I'll be healed enough to celebrate your life as much as I now  
dwell on your death,  
And someday, maybe tomorrow, I'll learn to accept the  
things I cannot change...

But, for today...I think I'll just be sad.

## REFLECTIONS: BRIGHT TEETH AND LIGHTER GRIEF

By Dennis Klass, Adviser to  
BP/USA Board and St.  
Louis Chapter of BP/USA

If we can only find the right brand of stuff, we can solve our problems in just one washing, brushing, scrubbing, spoonful or easy application, according to the television commercials. Life is full of trouble, the television tells us. We have ring around our collars; our whites are not white and our colors are not bright. Prince Charming won't kiss Sleeping Beauty because she has bad breath; we have headaches; our nasal passages are clogged and, after a hard day branding cattle all we get is light beer. But that's okay because when we think our trouble is going to get us down, we learn that it's possible to get a good night's sleep, kill Johnson grass with no carry-over, fight germs while still having bright teeth and spell relief. And all of our troubles go away before the next program.

Wouldn't it be nice if there were a bereaved person spray? Just spray it on and everyone will know what to say to make us feel good. We will pass places and days that used to hurt as if nothing were ever wrong. We will remember the cheery times and blot out the ugly rings around the collars of our minds.

Some people think that going through grief should be an easy, one-step miracle process. Send back the label and proof of purchase if not completely satisfied. If I can buy a pill that absorbs 47 times more stomach acid, I should be able to find a way to grieve that will absorb 50% more of the acid in my heart.

I sincerely wish that losing a dear one were in the league with getting light beer after a hard day on the range. But it is not something we

can get over or make go away. Losing a loved one is a change in our lives that we must go through. We cannot cure our grief, go around it or wish it away. New life, hope and a profound and deeply satisfying way of living is on the other side of grief. But, first, we must go through grief. We must walk that lonesome valley.

---

### UPCOMING EVENTS

March 26-27: TCF Crawford County Chapter will hold a regional conference at the Days Inn of Meadville, PA. For information contact Ralph or Norma McClay at 814- 333-9299.

July 9-11: BP/USA 2004 Gathering at the Clarion Hotel in Charleston, SC. Contact Dolly Criswell at BP2004Gathering@aol.com or at 1717 Oak Point Road, Charleston, SC, Phone: 843-762-4022.

July 30-August 1: TCF National Conference. For information send a #10 SASE to TCF 2004 National Conference, PO Box 33204, Granada Hills, CA 91194.

---

### By Susan Means, BP/USA Louisville, KY Chapter

This morning my ten-year old son said to me, "I wish I weren't the only boy in the family." He is the youngest and has two sisters. He should have a 13 year old brother too, whom we all miss terribly. I didn't know what to tell him. The "life isn't fair" speech is worn, the "that's just the way it is" speech is too harsh for my young son. He senses all that he's missing out on because his older brother died too soon. Not a day goes by that I don't feel that way too.

I hugged my little boy, told him I loved him and missed his brother too. After he left me, comforted for the moment, I wept for him and for all of us whose lives have been forever changed because our children died too soon.

## VALENTINE'S DAY

By Rufina Bush  
BP/USA North Texas Chapter

Today is the day, hearts are light  
and gay,  
filled with love for family and  
friends around.  
My heart today is heavy with love  
for you,  
my beloved son.

To hug you, kiss you, would be my  
delight  
But you are no more in my sight.  
A bouquet I carefully arranged:  
two red roses for the two brothers  
you left behind,  
three pink roses for you sisters who  
grieve.

From Mom, one white rose with  
angels all around;  
God's messengers to take  
my love to you.  
Carefully I place it in the vase that  
sits  
proudly on your headstone, informing  
all that you  
are gone and have been for some  
time.

I cry tears of loneliness.  
Then I feel my heart break again.  
Will this ever end?  
Cards for you are so hard to find.  
But I found one.  
It talked about no one able to fill  
your shoes!  
Yes, that is true.  
Happy Valentine's Day, my Dear.  
I do wish you were here.  
Much love always from your Mom.



## **BEREAVED PARENTS OF THE USA MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS**

<b>In Loving Memory of Gary Demeco by these persons;</b>	<b>Pat Kinney John &amp; Therese Goodrich Kay Bell Mary Bishop Dennis &amp; Shirley Shaw Linda Vordonis Thomas &amp; Patricia Turner Carl &amp; Renate McDonough Robert &amp; Kathleen Plum Audrey A. Gay James &amp; Pamela Warner Frank &amp; Valerie Nelson Mary &amp; Kevin Weckesser Judith Camillaci Mr. &amp; Mrs. John W. Lyle Mrs. Kathleen Ferrari Ms. Susan M. Allston Christie Whitney &amp; Rick Wisotzke Lucy Merlo &amp; Sandy Granata</b>
<b>In Loving Memory of son, Marc by:</b>	<b>Mitch &amp; Renee Dudnikov</b>
<b>In Loving Memory of mother, R. Zimmerman by:</b>	<b>Mitch &amp; Renee Dudnikov</b>
<b>As a get well thought for Jack Ewart from:</b>	<b>Mitch &amp; Renee Dudnikov</b>
<b>In Loving Memory of their children by:</b>	<b>BP/USA Huntington Beach, CA Chapter</b>
<b>In Loving Memory of their children by:</b>	<b>BP/USA Coeur D'Alene, ID Chapter</b>
<b>In Loving Memory of their children by:</b>	<b>BP/USA/ The Compassionate Friends of Maryland</b>
<b>In Loving Memory of their children by:</b>	<b>BP/USA St. Louis Chapters – Gathering remainder moneys</b>
<b>In Loving Memory of Debbie Bray by:</b>	<b>Dave &amp; Beverly Hurley</b>
<b>In Loving Memory of Dylan Thornton by:</b>	<b>Mary Murphy</b>
<b>In Loving Memory of son, David Horn by:</b>	<b>Russell &amp; Linda Horn</b>
<b>In Loving Memory of Paula Marie Goodrich by:</b>	<b>John &amp; Therese Goodrich</b>
<b>In Loving Memory of son Corey Chase Massa by:</b>	<b>Margaret &amp; Jesse Massa</b>
<b>In Loving Memory of Sandy Wofelby:</b>	<b>Bill &amp; Florence Wofel</b>
<b>Gift from:</b>	<b>Juliet Sanderson</b>

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](mailto: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.