



A JOURNEY TOGETHER

NATIONAL NEWSLETTER OF THE BEREAVED PARENTS OF THE USA

VOLUME XII NO. 1 Winter 2007
(January, February, March)



WINTERSUN

By Sascha
From

**WINTERSUN: Thoughts of Comfort
and Understanding for Healing from Grief**

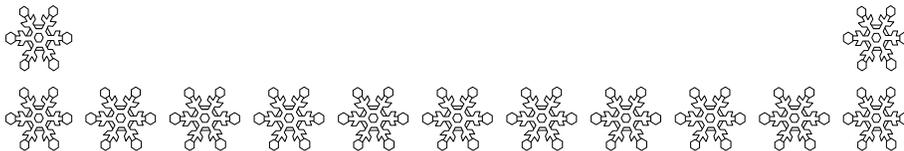
There are those days in winter
when your world is frozen
into a vision of eternal ice,
when earth and air are strangers to each other,
when sound and color seem forever gone.

There are those days in winter
when you feel like dying,
when life itself surrenders you to anguish,
to total mourning and to endless grief.

And then it happens: - from the bitter sky,
a timid sun strides to his silent battle
against the gray and hostile universe -
it changes ice to roses, sky to song.

And then it happens that your heart recalls
some distant joy, a gladness from the past,
a slender light at first, then larger, braver,
until your mind returns to hope and peace.

Let memories be beauty in your life,
like song and roses in the winter sun.



ANOTHER NEW YEAR

By Jim Hobbs
North Texas Chapter of BP/USA
From WHERE ARE ALL
THE BUTTERFLIES

Quite a few years ago we were well acquainted with a songwriter-musician and my wife and I had a great time going to her concerts. It was a time long before our son Jesse's birth.

Then, one winter, something happened to the music. There was a change going on that I didn't understand. Everything was fine with me the way it had been. Our songwriter friend wrote and performed a song called "New Beginnings." The lyrics claimed that she was expanding her horizons. I should have felt better for her, but I didn't. To me it was an end to something good, not a beginning.

When Jesse died, I was again forced into changes that I didn't choose. Except that this change was permanent. I have been seeking *new beginnings* ever since. It was so difficult the first couple of years that I couldn't think past the next week or two. Now, after four years, I am able to think and plan farther into the future, but it took time. Lots of time.

As this new year progresses, my hope for you will be that you too will be able to look forward to new beginnings and to find happiness again. If anyone deserves a happier future, it would be a bereaved parent or sibling or grandparent.

**BEREAVED PARENTS OF
THE USA**

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**A SPECIAL MEMORY
From SHARE Newsletter**

Bernadette Foley wrote in from Philadelphia that, while helping a lawyer go through the belongings of an 81 year old man who died alone, she came across a memory box saved by the man and his wife for 60 years, filled with toys, diapers, hand-made bibs, etc. of their only child, an infant they lost at birth, a child they rarely talked about. "To me this is confirmation that, even if they never told anyone how special that child was, it was very special – they saved all its belongings for 60 years," wrote Bernadette.



**FROM THE
DESK OF THE
EDITOR**

Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years are over now and we have all survived another holiday season without our beloved children, grandchildren and siblings. Those of us with a new grief, did not think we could make it, but we did. Those with an older grief know that each year still brings memories and thoughts that may be hard but are also sweet.

Now we face the winter season with the dreary weather, lack of sunshine at times and Valentines Day and other personal anniversaries and birthdays to come. The poem on the front page by Sascha always has seemed to me to remind us that the sun will be back and Spring will come again someday.

To help with the winter days and long nights, I have reviewed several books that were sent to us this last quarter that you might find helpful to read. There is much good material on the BP/USA web site in old Newsletters and special writings. I have also reviewed some excellent CD's that are available that you might find good listening. You will find these reviews on page 4.

Resolve to make 2007 the year that you remember the fun times and the joys of the life of your child, grandchild or brother or sister. There will still be tears and sad thoughts at times but hope will begin to come back into your life. Remember that he or she is still with you and your love for them and their love for you is still there.



THE FIRST IS THE WORST

By Michelle Ramsey
BP/USA, Tampa Bay, FL

They say the first is the worst.

I know the pain of not having my child.

I know the pain of not being able to hold her.

I know the pain I went through to have her.

I know the pain of burying my child.

I know the pain every time I go to the grave.

But no one said how the pain would increase when the

First Valentines Day came
First Easter came
First Mother's Day came
First Father's Day came
First Birthday came.

All the holidays that come during the first year are really very hard after your child dies. I know the pain of those "first's."

You will get through them.

Believe me – I know.

I'm halfway there –

Then I'll have to face the "Two's."

Those we hold most dear never truly leave us. They live on in the kindness they showed, the comfort they shared and the love they brought into our lives.

By Norton

The only truly dead are those who have been forgotten.

A Jewish Proverb

HARD TIMES

**By Dennis Klass, Ph.D.
Former Advisor to BP/USA**

How to hold on and how to let go...How to lose and how to keep...these are hard problems for the bereaved parent.

We want to keep the child in our life, we want to remember the child, we want to save those parts of our life which are tied to the child.

Yet, at the same time, we know that the child is dead – things cannot be as they were before. The memories of good times now bring pain; the memories of the bad times raise guilt and feelings of powerlessness.

The end of the grief process is a resolution of this tension between holding on and letting go.

We can remember and be sad; we can remember and be happy; we can remember and just be.

But it takes a long time for such a resolution to happen and while we are in the process, we find ourselves pulled to one side and then to the other.

Sometimes we want to leave the room exactly as it was. Other times we want to put everything away so nothing reminds us of the child.

Sometimes we want to talk over and over again about the events of the death; other times we want to avoid the topic altogether.

Sometimes, when all we have left of our child is our sadness, we don't want to give up our grief for fear of giving up on our child.

All that is a normal process. We go through it at any death. When our parent dies, the problem is how to hold onto our childhood and youth and yet give up our childhood and youth. So, we find ourselves keeping a bit of our parents in ourselves by

becoming a little more like them. I was once talking about this in a class when, suddenly, a woman blurted out, "So that's why I wanted to use the good china so much a year after she died."

It is a lot harder to give up the child and keep the child at the same time because, when our parents die, we have to lose and keep our past. When our child dies, we have to lose and keep our future.

In our grandparent's day, losing a child was an expected part of life. But it is not in our time. Few of us ever knew anyone else to whom it happened. So we have few models.

Each of us seems to have to find out our own way for ourselves. It is a hard and lonely journey. But the experience of others who have gone down this valley is that there is a resolution at the end. We can hold on and let go.

If we can, for a moment, share with others on the same journey, we can help others find directions and let them help us.

That is what Bereaved Parents is all about.

DEATH'S AFTERMATH

**By Shirley Ottman
North Texas BP/USA Chapter
From THE SLENDER THREAD
To a recently bereaved parent**

Just a little while ago, I walked where you are walking now.

Your child was special too, I know, and was quite different from mine.

Yet love is love and death is death, and pain is pain. Your pain is mine; my pain is yours.

Come, friend, let us search for hope together.

**By Margaret Gerner
St. Louis Chapter of BP/USA**

Peanuts, the cartoon character, is walking blissfully along when, all of a sudden, he takes a somersault. In the last box of the strip he says, "...and suddenly, you're reminded of a lost love." It's like that for many of us.

I was having my hair cut at the beauty shop one morning when I heard a little boy behind me telling a tall tale about fighting Indians. Suddenly I was jolted with the memory of how my six year-old son, Arthur, used to tell about the Indians he killed in the back yard. Twenty six years have passed since Arthur was killed, but that memory was like a knife through my heart.

Every time I hear the song "Betty Davis Eyes" the same thing happens. My granddaughter, Emily, has been dead for 15 years but, when I hear it, in my mind's eye I can see her dancing to that song. It hurts.

I call these experiences "potholes of grief." We can be years beyond our painful grief when, suddenly, something will remind us of him or her. A song on the radio, a place we hadn't been in years or something someone says will bring our loved one back so vividly to us. Occasionally, there are pleasant memories and bring us a feeling of warmth, but many times they hurt. Fortunately the pain doesn't last long, although, for a time, it can seem like we're back to square one in our grief.

The best way I've found to deal with potholes of grief is just to let them happen and try not to fight them. They are a sign that your loved one is still in your heart and, no matter how much time passes, you will always miss him or her. Pot holes are bumpy but shallow places in a normally smooth road. So it is with potholes of grief. They are bumpy painful places in our lives that come after we've resolved our grief.



BOOK REVIEWS

NO ONE CRIES THE WRONG WAY by Father Joe Kempf is about "Seeing God Through Tears" Father Kempf was a speaker at the 2006 Gathering. He presents the many questions and feelings we have when suffering the loss of a loved one related to the belief in God. He writes about the misunderstandings of the causes of suffering. He goes on to deal with other important questions, prayer and grief. He tells us that we are God's response and quotes Elie Wiesel, "Above all in times of darkness, that is the time to love-that an act of love may tip the balance." The book also contains information on matters for group discussions as well as personal reflection. The book is published by Harcourt Religion Publishers, Dubuque, IA. You may reach them at www.harcourtreligion.com or by calling 1-800-922-7696.

SIBLING GRIEF by P. Gill White. This author also spoke at the 2006 Gathering. The book deals with the death of siblings of all different ages and gives help in how to deal with this particular type of grief. It contains a very good list of books and other sources of help also. The book is published by iUniverse Inc., Lincoln NE. You may reach them at 1-800-288-4677 or at www.iuniverse.com.

MY UNCLE KEITH DIED by Carol Ann Loehr is a book about suicide as it impacts a child's life. The book is a help in answering the questions of a child after his or her life has been touched by a death by suicide. It is written for young readers but can be helpful for any age. The book is available from Trafford Publishing in Victoria BC by calling 1-888-232-4444 or at www.trafford.com. Carol will be presenting a workshop at the 2007 Gathering of BP/USA and her book will be available there.

BUTTERBEAN is a book by Brandon Roberts which deals with the death of an unborn child. It talks about the plans Brandon and his wife had for the child whom they called Butterbean. It then goes on to deal with the death of Butterbean and their dealing with their grief. This book was published by Pleasant Word. You may reach them at www.pleasantwordbooks.com or 1-877-421-7323.

LOVE, MOM is a memoir by Cynthia Baseman telling of "A Mother's Journey from Loss to Hope." It is just that - a memoir of her grief experiences and how she dealt with her pain and her journey. As she said to me in an e-mail, "Clearly, this is a memoir and not a self-help book, though I believe it is a helpful book." The book is published by AuthorHouse Publishing and you may reach them at 1-800-839-8640 or at www.authorhouse.com.

THE CHRISTMAS BLESSING by Donna VanLiere is a sequel to **THE CHRISTMAS SHOES** which you may have read or seen the TV show telling of the story. Although a Christmas book, it would be helpful reading at any time. It is one of the most moving novels I have read in a long time. Although a novel, it deals accurately with grief issues. It is the story of how a young medical student is helped through the most difficult time of his life when a young patient he has come to love dies. He doubts his vocation as a doctor and deals with the grief he must face. One chapter has a quote from J. R. R. Tolkien in **THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING**, "The world is indeed full of peril and in it there are many dark places; but still there is much that is fair and, though in all lands love is mingled with grief, love grows perhaps the greater." This is well worth reading. The book is available in most book stores and is published by St. Martin's Press in New York, NY. They can be reached at www.stmartins.com or 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

FOR ONE MORE DAY by Mitch Albom is another book that is a fiction/novel book but has helpful insights into several areas of grief. This is the same author who wrote **THE FIVE PEOPLE YOU MEET IN HEAVEN**. This book deals with the wish we all have had that we might have just one more day or hour even with our loved one. When granted that wish, Charles Benetto is granted that wish and the many things he learns speak to the grieving process and what we might find if given that chance too. As James McBride said in reviewing the book, "It will make you wistful. It will make you blink back tears of nostalgia. But most of all, it will make you believe in the eternal power of a mother's love." This book is also available in most book stores. The publisher is Hyperion in New York City. You may reach them at 1-212-456-0133 or at 77 West 66th St., New York, New York 10023.

ASHLEY'S SONGBOOK. I would like to recommend two CD's by Alan Pedersen. The first, **Ashley's Songbook**, is songs "About a father's journey through love & loss." His second one, **A LITTLE FARTHER DOWN THE ROAD** has some very good songs. The first and title song deals with the experiences we have as we are "a little farther down the road" on our grief journey. Another song, "Tonight I hold This Candle" is very moving. We used it in our Candlelight Memorial this year and everyone was touched by the words. Alan has written these songs in memory of his daughter Ashley Marie Pedersen who died at 18 years of age in 2001. He says that "This isn't merely about Ashley and me, it is the story of all of us who lost our angels too soon." He also says, "Losing a child challenges everything about who we are, what we believe and what really matters in life." Alan will sing his songs for us on the Thursday night get-together of the 2008 Gathering. His CD's may be obtained at Ever Ashley Music in Englewood, CO and you may reach them at www.everashelymusic.com.

Editors Note: Reading FOR ONE MORE DAY reminded me of the following article from Bereavement Magazine in January 1991. You may contact Bereavement Publications at www.livingwithloss.com.

ONE MORE DAY

By Crystal (Armes) Gibb

If I were granted one more day
To spend alone with you,
I'd say the things I should have said
And do all I wanted to do.

I'd tell you that I love you.
Did I tell you that before?
Or did I just take it for granted
That you'd always walk through the
door?

I'd play all the games you asked me
to play
But I was too busy, you see.
I'm sorry for the times I wasn't
there,
Now, I wish you were here for me.

I'd tell you I miss you so very much.
You've been gone forever, it seems,
And I still hope that one of these
days

I'll wake from this terrible dream.

If one more day were given to me
To tell you the things I'd say,
The only thing I'd want after that,
Would be just one more day.

From THE CHRISTMAS BLESSING

By Donna VanLiere

"But I know that
although we may never
understand it,
there is a plan,
and though it may
be traced in pain,
in the end
there will be joy,
and it will be beautiful."



ANGELS ARE FOREVER

By Alan Pedersen
From his first CD

Our children are our angels,
They live with us
as long as we keep their memory alive
by living our lives in honor
of all they meant to us
and continue to mean to us
as we transition from
a physical "earth" relationship
in flesh and blood
to a spiritual "heart relationship
that transcends time and space.

They lift us up,
they light the way.
Angels walk beside us everyday.
With tender hands they catch us
when we fall.
They teach us love and understanding
are the greatest gifts of all.

Angels are forever I know without
a doubt.

They shine with an eternal flame that
never will go out.
We hold them and we love them
wishing they could always stay.

Angels are forever, but sometimes they
fly away.

I loved her eyes,
I adored her smile.
She was my angel for a little while.
There must have been important work
to do.
Now I lean on the love she left behind
to get me through.

So, if you have an angel,
thank God every night
that you've been blessed with happiness
and hold your angel tight.

Angels are forever.



REMEMBERED VALENTINES

By Shirley Ottman
North Texas BP/USA
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 you.

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.

From FOR ONE MORE DAY By Mitch Albom

"But there's a story behind every-
thing. How a picture got on a wall.
How a scar got on your face. Some-
times the stories are simple, and
sometimes they are hard and heart-
breaking. But behind all your sto-
ries is always your mother's story,
because hers is where yours begins."

We are built for the valley, for
the ordinary stuff we are in,
and that is where we have to
prove our mettle.

Oswald Chambers

PRESIDENTS DAY

This is a compilation of lists from several Newsletters especially the Central Savannah River Area Chapter of BP/USA

John Adams lost a son 20 years of age while Adams was president.

Thomas Jefferson had 6 children and only 2 lived to maturity. Mary, 26, died while Jefferson was president.

James Monroe had a son die at 2 years of age.

John Quincy Adams had an infant daughter die, a son die while Adams was president and another son die 5 years later.

William Harrison had 6 children who died before he became president

Zachary Taylor had 2 children who died as infants and 1 who died 3 months after her wedding.

Millard Fillmore's daughter died at 22 years of age.

Franklin Pierce had 2 sons die in infancy, and an 11 year old son die 2 months before Pierce's inauguration. History tells us that Franklin Pierce resigned from the Senate after the death of his first son and Mrs. Pierce collapsed from grief after the death of the second son and secluded herself in her bedroom for nearly 1/2 of her husband's presidency and was referred to as "The Shadow of the White House."

Abraham Lincoln had 2 sons die, one at 4 years of age and one at 11 years of age while Lincoln was president. Another son died at 18 years of age after Lincoln's assassination. Lincoln said, "In this sad world of ours, sorrow comes to all....It comes with bitterest agony....Perfect relief is not possible except with time...You can not now realize that you will ever

feel better...And yet this is a mistake...You are sure to be happy again...To know this, which is certainly true, will make you some less miserable now. I have experienced enough to know what I say." His wife was unable to cope after the assassination of her husband and the death of the third son and was never well again.

Rutherford B. Hayes had 3 children die in infancy.

James Garfield had 2 children die as infants.

Chester Alan Arthur had a son die as an infant.

Grover Cleveland had a daughter die at age 13.

William McKinley had both of his children die, one at 4 months of age and one at 4 years of age. McKinley's wife was so overwhelmed with shock and grief that she became an invalid the rest of her life.

Theodore Roosevelt's son died at 21 years of age.

Calvin Coolidge's son died at age 16 during Coolidge's presidency. Coolidge recorded in his autobiography that, "When he went, the power and glory of the presidency went with him."

Franklin Roosevelt had a son die in infancy.

Dwight Eisenhower's son died at age 3. In 1969, Dwight Eisenhower said of the death of his son, "I do not know how others have felt when facing the same situation, but I have never known such a blow. Today, when I think of it...the keenness of my loss comes back to me as fresh as terrible as it was in that long dark day after Christmas in 1920."

John Kennedy had two sons die, one at

2 days of age while Kennedy was president.

George H. W. Bush had a daughter die at 4 years of age.



THE HOLIDAY OF LOVE

By Art Rogers, Hinsdale IL Chapter of BP/USA

Valentine's Day is a day of remembering our loved ones with small gifts and great feelings. When your child was living, did you often remember him/her on Valentine's Day with a card or a balloon, perhaps a gift of candy or something special that was wanted? So, why stop that tradition?

Remember your child with love on this special day; a single rose left at a grave; a special holiday balloon to float around the house, reminding you each time you look; a special photo in a nice frame to sit on the mantle. These are ideas in an article from an old BEREAVEMENT MAGAZINE.

It seems like a pretty good idea too! What a better way to celebrate the Holiday of Love than by enjoying fond memories of your child.

Try making his/her favorite dinner and treating the family. Use special photos scattered around the table to talk about some fun facts about him/her. It's important to show the others in the family how much they are also loved so don't forget some small Valentine's gifts for them too!

Just because our hearts are broken, we don't need to ignore "The Holiday of Love".

**BEREAVED PARENTS OF THE USA
MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS**

**Renee Dudnikov
Phyllis Lynch
Metropolitan Baltimore Chapter of BP/USA
Maxine Russell**

**In loving memory of her son Marc and her Mother
In loving memory of her son Lee
In loving memory of their children
In loving memory of her son Darren (Bai-Tu-White
Rabbit)**

**John & Therese Goodrich
Mary Murphy
Russell and Linda Horn**

**In loving memory of their daughter Paula
In loving memory of her son Dylan Thornton
In loving memory of their son David**

If we missed listing a donation, we apologize. 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 found chapters : there is no charge to found a chapter and each new chapter is given a group of books to help them start a library, some copies of our brochures and the quarterly Newsletter without charge.
- To help in the sending of the quarterly Newsletter which sent by mail (to over 400 persons) or e-mail (also over 400 people) at no cost.
- To help to keep costs of attending the Annual National Gathering as low as possible in order that anyone wishing to attend can do so.
- To maintain a web site (www.bereavedparentsusa.org) . This web site reaches numerous persons and provides a means to find a nearby chapter, read the newsletters, read special brochures and articles, find information about the Gathering and find links to other organizations serving the bereaved as well as a means to reach out for help with the grief process.

You may designate a 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.

**PLAN NOW TO ATTEND
THE 2007 NATIONAL
GATHERING OF BP/USA!**

**FOR INFORMATION VISIT
WWW.BEREAVEDPARENTSUSA.ORG**

