



The New Year: A Time of Hope

Another New Year has slipped into our lives, radically changing some things and leaving other things to evolve naturally. For bereaved parents a new year marks another year on the calendar without their precious children. It is a new year, but not much has changed since the old year. Why is that?

We act as the catalysts of change for ourselves. We choose to help our selves; we choose to stay in a specific place in our grief. We choose to reach out for hope or we choose to withdraw into the familiar and postpone facing life and hope another day. There are no set rules or specific timetables in bereavement. We are each unique in our grief.

Eventually we all find hope. We find it in different ways and in different times. There will be no one moment of epiphany for bereaved parents. Instead, there are a series of minutes, hours, weeks, months and often years until we realize that we can truly say we feel the power of hope coming alive from deep within us. This moment will come for each of us. It will come in its own time and its own way.

Even those of us who have found hope and who shine its light on the paths of newly bereaved parents, still regress and withdraw into the dark sadness of our loss. And that is as it should be. For we have lost the most precious gift of our lives...our children's presence with us and their future in this life. Our children live in our hearts and our memories and our dreams. They do not share this plane with us. It is normal and it is good to think of our children often and to shed some tears for all that has been lost. These aren't setbacks as much as sweet memories that bring cathartic tears.

The element we find in these memories is a closeness to our child and our child's life. This, too, is healthy. An often-expressed fear is that our children will be forgotten. Worry not, gentle parent, your child will be remembered for all of your days and for many days thereafter. You will never forget your child. Others who knew your child will never forget. The proof of this is in our memories....sweet memories that take us back to another time when our child was with us.

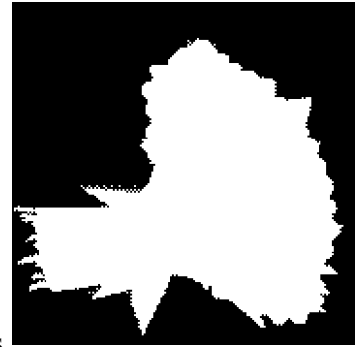
So this New Year's, whether you are a few months, a few years or many years in your grief, think about hope. You have not forsaken your child when you reach for hope. Your hope brings your child back in a positive way that will warm your heart. Reach for that hope. As you move forward in your grief in the New Year, reach for hope. Your child will still be with you. And one day you will find that your child's presence is sweeter when hope is within you.

Annette Mennen Baldwin - In memory of my son, Todd Mennen - TCF, Katy, TX



The Love & Peace Rose and Billy Hawley

By Carol Hawley



I love flowers of all types. From the dainty African Violets to chrysanthemums to orchids tooh the list is endless.

Occasionally I received bouquets of roses on my birthdays, Mothers Day and wedding anniversaries. My favorite color of roses is champagne color. The rose is a symbol of love. The ruby red rose is a huge seller during Valentine's Day. It was late spring 2004 in the evening when Billy came home and surprised me with a single long-stem rose. Billy has hit a rough spot in his life and I think that's his way of saying "I am sorry." Mothers are very forgiving creatures especially toward their children. Even though their child has misbehaved and has been a pickle.

I received a rose that has the color of orange and red mixed, but with tinges of yellow. The thing about the rose was the fragrance. It smells fruity like a peach. I quickly trimmed the end of the stem and placed the rose in a coffee cup. I put the rose on my computer desk in the bedroom. I changed the water every day and added a bit of sugar for the rose. The bud opened very slowly and it lasted the longest of all roses I ever received, close to two weeks. Billy checked on the rose every now and then. He even commented "Hey, maybe things will finally work out."

Recently I dug out my collection of flower catalogs and looked for this rose. Eventually I found out that the rose is an AARS winner and the name given is the LOVE & PEACE rose. To quote from the Wayside Gardens catalog: "The rose is a tough and lasting beauty with beautiful dark foliage, highly resistant to black spot and mildew."

Since it was only late spring in Georgia when Billy gave this rose to me, rose bushes have not bloomed yet and this cut rose is from somewhere else. I also consulted with my friend Charlotte who is an avid gardener and a member of the Master Gardener Club. She says the hot humid weather in Georgia is not ideal for this rose and it is grown elsewhere.

September 27 was four years since our son Billy has passed away. Bill, Alan (Billy's older brother) and I think of Billy often. My tears still flow but less; our pain throbs with less intensity but our longing to see, hug and talk with him is still strong.

I still have the rose and it's encased in a clear acrylic box. It has lost its beauty, splendor and scent. Yet, whenever I look at the rose, it brings back memories of that nice evening when Billy walked in with a smile and holding a rose behind his back – a memory I will treasure. It will be my one and only rose from my son Billy, the LOVE & PEACE rose.

Happiness held is the seed; happiness shared is the flower – anonymous –

To receive this newsletter via e-mail please contact Steve Haupt at shaupt1@rochester.rr.com

TCF Rochester Donations:

If you would like to contribute to our Compassionate Friends Chapter please forward your Love Gifts and Donations to The Compassionate Friends of Rochester at 130 Portview Circle, Rochester, NY 14617. Please make checks payable to The Compassionate Friends of Rochester, NY. Sincerest Thanks.

Bent But Not Broken

The beautiful flowering tree planted in Nina's memory on Memorial Day a year short of a decade ago (by her favorite cousins) looked so regal and smelled so delicious yesterday. I like to think it flowers this time of year as a special birthday message from my "baby girl". However, with the vicious storm we had last evening I watched the soft white petals drift and swirl to the ground, as if a deluge of tears from a breaking heart. Today, it sits almost bare - a few petals still hanging on for dear life, unable to let go, desperate to regain its former beauty.

I can't help but see a symbolism in that tree that I can associate with. It is as if it stands as a monument to my grief, the ebb and flow of emotions that I have felt for the past nine years since Nina no longer walks this earth. When the tree is in full flower it seems much like family life "before". Of course there were short-term crises, that now seem insignificant in comparison, and life's speed bumps along the way, but all in all, pretty good I mean, at least our family was intact. When the leaves were suddenly stripped of their branches and known to the ground in the furious hailstorm, it was like our lives after Nina's sudden death; thrown suddenly into a world of intense pain and sorrow, trying desperately to survive the unthinkable.

But, yet this morning, the tree stands, more barren and most definitely battered, but still hanging in there. Nine years later, those who love her, have weathered the tornado-like force of grief and loss. And nine years later, much like Nina's tree, though the storm has taken its toll, we will still manage to be upright; definitely bent, but still standing. And somehow, life roars on...

With gentle thoughts, Cathy Seehuetter - TCF/St. Paul, MN

Nothing Lasts Forever

Our days on earth we try to find a bit of joy, To hold within our arms, what time cannot destroy.

Like petals in the wind, we drift from here to there, Because nothing lasts forever, except for what we share.

And even though we hold a dream within each heart, It's in human nature's way to tear it all apart.

And so it is we strive in faith to carry on, after all is said and done, when what we've loved is gone.

But if we can contain some peace within our mind, Our heart will surely follow, and happiness we'll find.

Written by Mark Lee and submitted

by Pam Gnanamani in memory

of her brother, Dan Prescott



Welcome New Friends

At nearly every meeting we welcome new members to our group, always with mixed emotions. We are glad you found us, but we are so sorry for the circumstances that bring us together. We understand your pain; we hope our unconditional friendship and understanding will help you through your grief.

Attending a meeting for the first two or three times takes courage, but for many it is the first real step toward healing. It may seem overwhelming, so we encourage you to come to several meetings to give yourself a chance to become comfortable.



Upcoming Planned Events—Mark Your Calendars:

Euchre Party Fundraiser for TCF - January 31st, Sat. - .

3pm at Fellow's Rd. Park Building - Fairport. Must purchase ticket prior to the event.
Contact Colleen Kohl 388 -0376 or colleenkohl@hotmail.com for more information.

"Memorial Tattoo" Breakout Session—at March 24, 2009 meeting

Annual Yard Sale—June 4-5-6, 2009 at George and Joan Carafos' home—more later

Annual Balloon Release—June 9, 2009—more information to follow

Book Review:

[First You Die: Learn to Live After the Death of Your Child](#)

by Marie Levine

On August 7th 1993, three days after landing his first "real" job, three weeks after turning 22, and three months after graduating from Syracuse University, my son Peter was killed in a violent automobile accident. He was being driven home by one of his college friends. The driver and the other two young men in the car were only slightly bruised. Peter died instantly. Peter was our only child. My husband Phil and I had no grieving sibling to attend to. In some way this provided us the "luxury" of coming to grips with the unfathomable loss of our lives unencumbered by any other's needs.

During those first drowning days, torn between the longing to simply die and the instinct to survive, I found The Compassionate Friends (TCF), an international bereavement group (with almost 600 chapters in the United States) exclusively for parents who have lost a child, and for surviving siblings. The first TCF meeting I attended left me less than comforted. In fact, I found it so unsettling I decided not to return. I know now that some parents find immediate consolation. Not me. The meeting left me feeling even more despondent (if that was possible). However, I was encouraged to return several months later and, after that second



Chapter Information:

Meeting Location:

Lifetime Care Care
3111 Winton Road South
(across from Valley Cadillac)

Meeting Days for January 2009:

Tuesday the 13th and Tuesday the 27th
7:00 P.M. to 7:15 P.M. - social
7:15 P.M. to 9:00 P.M. - meeting

Contacts:

Linda Haines— 315-879-7739
Cathy Spoto - 585-254-6983
TCF Regional Coordinator:
Jacquie Edwards-Mitchell 718-451-0814
TCF National 877-969-0010
or www.compassionatefriends.org

Send news letter inputs to:

Colleen Kohl at: colleenkohl@hotmail.com

Miscellaneous:

December Donations and Love Gifts

Linda and Scott Haines in memory of Zackary Monroe McCarthy

Don, Kim and Caitlin Cooley in memory of Patrick Cooley

Richard and Kathleen Duncan in memory of Jennifer Duncan Young

Patricia and Robert Gerace in memory of ALL TCF children

Grow and Grow in memory of ALL TCF children

Mark and Phyllis Simon in memory of ALL TCF children

Linda and Ed Bohrer in memory of Sean Michael Bohrer

George and Joan Carafos in memory of David George Carafos

Linnea and Dewey Hammond in memory of Sabrina L. Joy

Mark Gerstner in memory of Slade Gerstner

Rochester Chapter TCF Mission:

The MISSION of the Rochester Chapter of The Compassionate Friends is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child of any age and to provide information to help others be supportive.

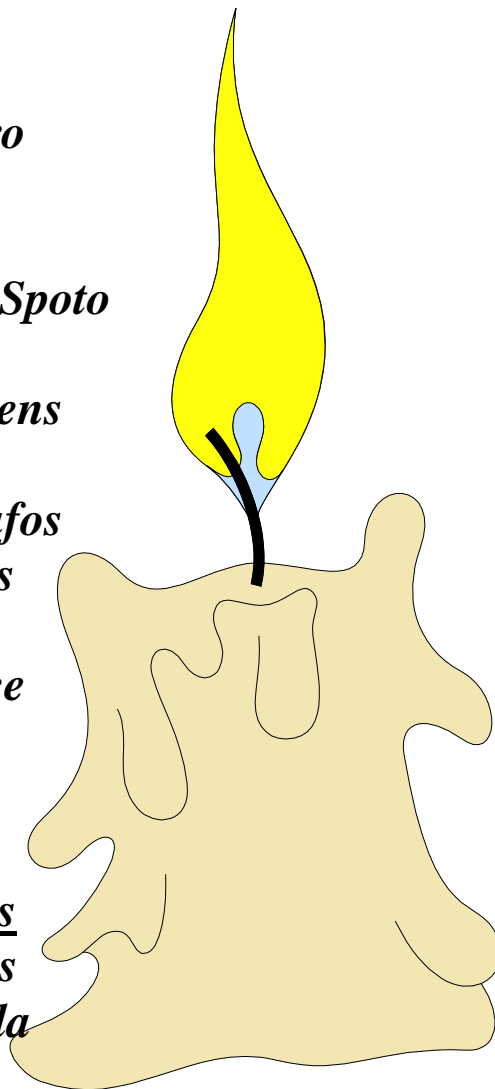


Our Children Remembered ***January, 2009*** ***Birthdays and Remembrance Days***



Birthdays

Teddy S. Piendel
Noah Jacob Passero
Larry Jay Lyons
Jim Rague
Michael Sebastian Spoto
Jillian Flagg
Gregory Ray Stephens
Damon A. Seeber
David George Carafos
Laura Anne Collins
Pat Helen Klehr
Joshua Daniel Price



January 1, 1991
January 5, 2000
January 12, 1961
January 6, 1961
January 8, 1972
January 14, 1983
January 16, 1962
January, 19, 1989
January 24, 1981
January 25, 1967
January 30, 1974
January 30, 1981



Remembrance Days

Bruce Zoltan Curtis
Shawn Patrick Viola
Emma Nolan
Michael Sebastian Spoto
Matthew J. Hall
Julie Beth Kaseman
Katelyn Jade Brewer
Christopher Thomas Miceli
Laura Catherine Mix

January 1, 2005
January 1, 2006
January 8, 1998
January 8, 1972
January 14, 2008
January 19, 2007
January 21, 2006
January 23, 2007
January 25, 1980

