

**FEBRUARY**

When February comes, there is finally an end in sight to the long winter. Sometimes melting snow reveals the green tips of an early crocus or even an exquisite blossom itself, a soft flower of hope invading a harsh landscape or graying snow, biting wind and an ominous sky—a small promise of a new life to come.

My heart, grieving for my son who died, was like that image of winter. For somehow, even during the darkest, coldest moments an unexpected sign of hope would intrude. And as the hours and days and months dragged on, my heart finally learned once again to be open to the promise of new life. Painful memories melted into loving ones. Life that seemed forever dormant once again sprang forth from my heart. In living hopefully and lovingly, the seasons of the heart can change. The loving memories of your special child, like the flower in the snow, can be the beginning of the end of winter.

*By Maryann Kramer, TCF, Arlington Heights, IL*

**OUR VALENTINE COOKIES**

The Valentine's Day cookies won't taste so good this year.  
I stirred in the sugar, but you were not here.  
Frosting – pink on the tip of your nose.  
Days spun too swiftly – my biggest woes!  
Did the time have to come so very soon  
When you weren't here to lick the spoon?  
My heart would dance and I would sing  
To feel you tug at my apron strings.  
But instead I'll toil with the rolling pin.

And rely on my mind's eye for your silly grin.

When the heart shapes are baked, mine will still ache.

But I'll always love you, for goodness sake!

*By Kathy Slief, TCF, Tulsa*

*Reprinted from COMFORTING FRIENDS  
February 2002*

***YOU MEND A BROKEN HEART  
ONE STITCH AT A TIME!!***

**BIRTHDAYS AND ANNUAL**

**REMEMBRANCES** – can be difficult days for bereaved parents and siblings. Perhaps you would like to lift these families up in thought and prayer as these difficult days approach for them.

**FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS**

Alexis Grace Crockott	2-13-2002
Jeffrey S. Hale	2-02-1966
Jenna Henke	2-24-1987
Benjamin S. Johnson	2-23-1981
Rachel Scher	2-17-1981
Keithen Weist	2-15-1979
Josh Vanis	2-14-1979

**MARCH BIRTHDAYS**

Benjamin Tyler Chloupek	3-05-1993
Dan LeRoy Doling	3-12-1948
Shayna Mary Kowarsky	3-01-1974

**FEBRUARY ANNUAL REMEMBRANCES**

Anna Anh T. Do	2-10-2007
Dan LeRoy Doling	2-03-2004
Benjamin S. Johnson	11-02-2003

**MARCH ANNUAL REMEMBRANCES**

Emily B. Hertig	3-14-2004
Douglas Joshua Hoegemeyer	3-07-2005
Dawn Renee Schuster	3-06-1996
Kendra Semmler	3-05-1999
James Smith	3-30-2006

In remembering are precious children, there may be errors or omissions for which we are deeply sorry. If there are any errors, please contact Trish Schuster at 402-673-5395 or trish-schuster@yahoo.com If you have attended a meeting, and have not filled out a database giving us permission to print you child's birthday and annual remembrance please let Trish know.

### *THE WHALE*

If you read the front-page story of the San Francisco Chronicle, you would have read about a female humpback whale who had become entangled in a spider web of crab traps and lines. She was weighted down by hundreds of pounds of traps that caused her to struggle to stay afloat. She also had hundreds of yards of line rope wrapped around her body, her tail, her torso, a line tugging in her mouth.

A fisherman spotted her just east of the Faralon Islands and radioed an environmental group for help. Within a few hours, the rescue team arrived and determined that she was so bad off, the only way to save her was to dive in and untangle her..a very dangerous proposition. One slap of the tail could kill a rescuer.

The worked for hours with curved knives and eventually freed her. When she was free, the divers say she swam in what seemed like joyous circles. She then came back to each and every diver, one at a time, and nudged them. Pushing them gently around, she thanked them.

Some said it was the most incredibly beautiful experience of their lives. The guy who cut the rope out of her eye was following him the whole time, and said he will never be the same.

*May you, and all those who love,*

*Be so blessed and fortunate..*

*To be surrounded by people*

*Who will help you get untangled*

*From the things that are binding you.*

*And, may you always know the joy*

*Of giving and receiving gratitude.*

As I wiped away my poignant tears, I couldn't help but think about how when we are bereaved, we are entangled in webs and restraints, similar to the whale's, that threaten our very existence. Every part of us is immobilized in pain, and we are held captive, incapable of freeing ourselves.

Often, we feel as if we are swimming (and even drowning) in a foreign place where we don't recognize the surroundings, and we aren't sure whether we can trust those who may come and try to rescue us. We don't know how to free ourselves, and we find it difficult to believe that anyone else can free us either. We are sometimes so frantic that "one slap of the tail" could "kill" our would-be rescuers.

When we are lucky, along comes someone-like the fishermen in the story-who care about us and views us with compassion (but who has no idea of who to help us), and that caring soul goes for aide from those who are experienced with our kind of pain and distress.

The whale waited for hours, but sometimes we must wait for days, weeks, even months (which must have seemed that long to the whale) as well. Finally, help arrives on the scene for us, but we are so entangled in our grief that even our mouths are impotent. We don't believe we can communicate with our

caregivers and even if we could, we have no idea what to tell them. We don't know what we want or need beyond our passionate desire to have "our loved one back again".

Eventually, many who are captive finally give in to exhaustion and frustrations and decide to relax a bit while cautiously "watching" to see what kind of help might be offered to them. Caring and compassionate souls can approach carefully, and begin to cut away the things that are entangling our minds and souls. Gently, patiently and very carefully, they persistently work away at their live-giving task. It often takes a long time, but if we don't fight their efforts, if we just cooperate by staying still and waiting for them to help us, we find that we can be free at last! It doesn't actually happen suddenly at all; it takes time and work and courage, but it is worth the wait and the trusting.

When we are finally released, we must remember to not just swim away and forget our champions. Instead, like the grateful whale, we need to hang around for awhile and gently nudge our heroes, offering our thanks and gratitude for their brave and unselfish work on our behalf.

There are lots of "heroes" like those who save the whale: Counselors, authors, speakers, funeral directors, friends, family members, co-workers, medical professionals, clergy and even (sometimes especially) publications like *Grief Digest* magazine. With time, patience and trust, eventually we can swim free in the ocean of life and even give back some of the love and effort that was lavished on us.

*By Andrea Gambol*

*Reprinted with permission from Grief Digest, Centering Corporation, Omaha, Ne, 1-866-218-0101.*

## ***THIS IS YOUR NEWSLETTER***

Please remember this is your newsletter to contribute to, share resources, such as books, songs, remembrance items, periodicals that have and/or are helping you in your journey of healing after the death of your child, grandchild, sibling, or friend. Please contact Trish at 402-673-5395 or [trish\\_schuster@yahoo.com](mailto:trish_schuster@yahoo.com) if you wish to share.

### **A PENNY**

*I found a penny today  
Just lying on the ground.  
That's not just a penny  
This little coin I've found.*

*Found pennies come from heaven  
That's what my Grandpa told me,  
He said angels toss them down  
Oh, how I loved that story.*

*He said when an angel misses you  
They toss a penny down  
Sometimes just to cheer up up  
To make a smile out of your frown.*

*So don't pass by that penny  
When you're feeling blue,  
That's a penny from heaven  
That an angel's tossed to you.*

Author Unknown

We Need Not Walk Alone Summer 2004

### **AN IRISH BLESSING**

*Sing as if no one is  
listening,  
Dance as if not one  
is watching.  
Live each day as if  
it might be your last!!*

## HEAVEN

If you could see where I have gone,  
The beauty of this place,  
And how it feels to know your home,  
To see the Savior's face.  
To wake in peace and know no fear,  
Just joy, beyond compare  
While still on earth you miss me yet,  
You wouldn't want me there  
If you could see where I have gone.

If you could see where I have gone,  
God made the trip with me,  
You'd know I didn't go alone,  
The Savior came with me.  
When I awoke, He was by my side,  
And reached down His hand  
Said, "Hurry, you're going home,  
To a grand and glorious land,  
Don't worry over those you love,  
For I'm not just with you,  
And don't you know with you at home,  
They'll long to be here too?"

If you could see where I have gone,  
And see what I've been shown,  
You'd never know another fear,  
Or ever walk alone.  
You'd marvel at the care of God,  
His hand on every life,  
And realize that He really cares,  
And bears with us each strife.  
And that He weeps when one is lost,  
His heart is filled with pain,  
But OH! The JOY! When one comes  
home,  
A child at home again!

If you could see where I have gone,  
You'd know we'll meet some day.  
And though I'm parted from you now,  
Just know that I'm away.  
I thank you dear loved one,  
For living for the Lord.

For teaching me to love Him,  
Secure in every way,  
I'm waiting here at Heaven's door,  
To greet you some sweet day.  
*Author Unknown.*

The above poem is shared in loving memory of **Dawn Renee Schuster**, who was received into her Savior's arms on March 6, 1996. As her parents in the past 12 years there is not a day, that we don't think of her, miss her, and yearn for her, and the journey is one we at many times did not think we would survive!! But our two sons, Travis and Brett, and our faith and family were our life-lines to rebuild our crushed and broken hearts and lives! In a heart beat we would of done whatever we could of, like any bereaved parent knows, to keep Dawn from suffering from her illnesses of depression and anorexia, and keep her here with us on earth, but it wasn't in our control. Just as the death of your precious child wasn't in your control. Our precious children, are all gifts from God, when God blessed us with them they did not come with a written guarantee, of how long they would be with us. Some of you only got to know your child through the time they lived in your womb, and all the hopes and dreams you had for that child, from the moment you knew a precious child would enter your lives and family. There could never be enough reasons or answers as to why any of our children died, but we hope and pray that someday for all of you, you will have enough peace to find your way through the days without the answers. Always remembering **Death does not any love and it does not end relationships!!** We have a Precious Moment figurine that has an angel sitting on a cloud

tossing pink hearts down to earth. It is entitled," Sending you my love". Our Valentine prayer for each of you to envision your child sending you their love not just on Valentine's Day, but every day!

### **LIFE IS LIKE A FLOWER**

Life is like the flower

The see sprouts

A bud forms and sprouts  
And suddenly it bursts forth  
In all it's beauty.

It is looked upon with wonder

And enjoyed in its beauty

The life of the flower is short..

It withers and dies.

But the wonder and beauty remain.

Implanted within our memories forever.

The little flower, as the little life

Gives to us the gift of love

How fortunate we are to receive that gift

Cherish it.

*By Jennifer V.M. Wilcox*

*In loving memory of her sweet granddaughter,*

*Elizabeth Anne Wilcox*

*Bereaved Parents Share, April 1995*

### **THE WEIGHT**

A big load

For such a little boy

You carried us all to your grave.

Strange place to come on your

Birthday

I bring a balloon and flowers

I polish your maker

Try to wipe off the years

The sun flashes dull on the aging bronze

No vacancy, no vacancy.

My heart so full

My world so empty

I dangle

In the hollow space between.

*We Need Not Walk Alone/ Summer 2004*

### **NOT QUILT, REGRET**

One of our basic responsibilities as parents is to keep our children from harm. So, when anything happens to them, we feel guilty whether we could realistically have done anything or not. When the ultimate tragedy occurs, we are devastated. How could we let it happen? When didn't we stop it? If we have compounded our guilt with any degree of human error or commission or omission, we are beyond devastation. Even words, either of anger or left unspoken, haunt us.

Guilt implies intent. If we intended to harm our child, we can feel guilty of that. If we never intended harm ever come to our child, the correct name of our emotion is regret. The crushing pain is still there, but regret is softer, gentler, less judgmental, and easier to forgive and to heal. It is also more accurate. If that name doesn't feel strong enough for our feelings, it will in time. Let it float there and try it now and then. Not guilt—we feel regret.

*By Kitty Sanders*

*We Need Not Walk Alone/ Summer 2004*

### **EASTER BASKETS**

The season of Easter is soon approaching... we always wonder what our child would of thought of the dying of eggs, the hunting of eggs, the new baby chicks, lambs, and bunnies! Some of us were blessed with memories of them, some of you got a few memories, and some of you have to imagine your memories!! Whatever, the age of your child – remember the real reason of Easter assures us of seeing our children once again, when heaven receives us home! Because....

**HE HAS RISEN, HE HAS RISEN  
INDEED!!!!**