



## Welcome *from the Editor*

Another New Year is upon us. We all have a choice to decide whether or not we are going to be more positive this year with the outlook on our life. It is time to take another step in the direction of hope and faith and to believe that good things will come for us with this New Year. And so it goes.

Thank you for taking the time to pick up this issue and explore what it offers. Please feel free to pass it along to someone else who can benefit from the writings on these pages. You can make someone's day a little bit better by sharing this with them in their time of need. If this is the first time you have heard about us and are in need of some help through our support group chapters, please see page three in the right margin for additional information about our four chapters. We also have a list of other resources on page two in the left margin that may be helpful to you. You may also contact the editor directly at 717-866-2401 or [sudsspirit@gmail.com](mailto:sudsspirit@gmail.com).

**sudSSpirit** was founded in 2008 to help provide a place of comfort, compassion, and hope for those that have experienced a sudden unexpected death or their spouse or significant other. Meetings are held monthly in Reading, PA, Etters, PA, Dover, PA and Bennington, VT. Additional information is within this newsletter. **sudSSpirit** stands for "Sudden Unexpected Death of a Spouse – Survivors in Participation to Inform, Renew, Improve, and Triumph"

### *In this issue:*

Two poems adorn our pages entitled "Seasons of Love" by John Kreiser, a re-print from a previous issue and "To My Beloved" by Celia Wenig. The editor discusses the New Year and what we all should be reflecting upon and also writes about whether or not anyone really knows how we feel? A great article about "Loss of physical contact" is included and a few points are listed about what we may think about as we enter 2014. The digital age surrounds us and is reflected in an article about social media and the internet. Our standard offerings are also included; quarterly quote, thoughts to ponder, an entry from my journal, and book review.

**Any** bereavement support group is there to help you in your time of need as you process the loss of a loved one. We encourage you to seek out and become part of one. Don't give up until you find one that you are comfortable with and you feel that it is helping you cope.

This newsletter is available to anyone anywhere regardless of their specific loss so if you know of someone that can benefit from these pages, please contact us with their email or address information and we will make sure that they become part of our mailing list for future publications. [sudsspirit@gmail.com](mailto:sudsspirit@gmail.com) or 717-866-2401 or facebook.

## Thoughts to Ponder

- Editor

"True friendship comes when silence between two people is comfortable"

-Dave Tyson Gentry

"Courage is being afraid but going on anyhow"

-Dan Rather

"Sometimes in tragedy we find our life's purpose – the eye sheds a tear to find its focus"

-Robert Brault



## Something to Reflect Upon During the New Year

- What meaning is there to be found in this loss?
- What lessons have you learned, or what can be learned from this experience?
- What self-discoveries are you making?
- What personal qualities have been strengthened as a result of this experience?
- What strengths can you identify that were not apparent before?
- What is becoming of the person you used to be? Who are you now?
- What was important to you before this loss, compared to what is important now?
- How has this experience impacted your values and spiritual beliefs?
- Do you see the world any differently now?

-Editor

Dominic Murgido - Editor

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## Quarterly Quote

- Editor

*"Hope is like a road in the country; there was never a road, but when many people walk on it, the road comes into existence"*

- Lin Yu Tang

## Resources

- Editor

GRMHA (Greater Reading  
Mental Health Alliance)  
www.grmha.org  
610-775-3000

Berks Visiting Nurses  
www.berksvna.org  
610-378-0481

St Joseph's Spiritual Care  
www.thefutureofhealthcare.org  
610-378-2297

Reading Hospital  
www.readinghospital.org  
610-988-8070

Compassionate Care Hospice  
1-800-777-5109

Family Guidance Center  
www.familyguidancecenter.com  
610-374-4963

Heartland Home Health Care  
and Hospice  
610-373-6898 or 888-800-0224

Circle of Life Coalition  
www.circleoflifecoalition.org  
610-372-3638

www.griefshare.org

Diakon Family Life Services  
www.diakon.org/fls/NPLoss.asp  
610-682-1337

VNA & Hospice of Southwestern  
Vermont Health Care  
www.svhealthcare.org  
802-442-5502

Bayada Hospice Services  
www.bayada.com  
855-696-2072

Pathways Center for Grief & Loss  
www.pathwaysthroughgrief.org  
800-924-7610

Lutheran Home Care & Hospice  
www.lutheranhomecare.org  
610-320-7979



## Another New Year is Here

by Dominic Murgido

The passage of time is marked in so many ways for us; Birthdays, Anniversaries, Seasons, Holidays, and New Year's Day.

As time passes, we realize that life changes and we move forward one step at a time. For those of us that have lost a loved one, time is an important aspect and significant mark for us.

The New Year signifies a "start over" for so many or even a means of measurement of our progress on our journey of grief. We struggle with looking back at the past year or past years without them knowing that life was different for us and will now continue to be different for us as the New Year begins.

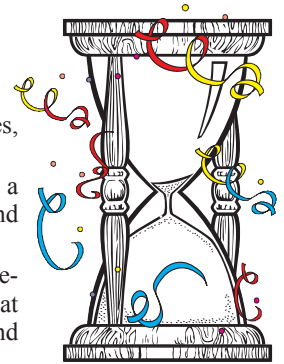
For some, the New Year will be the first year that you will begin without them and the pain and emotions that you are feeling are still very much raw with sadness. You can't even begin to separate yourself from the facts of what happened or yourself from once being part of a couple with the spouse or significant other you loved. This is ok and is a normal feeling that you are experiencing. Please know that as each New Year rolls along, things will improve for you.

For others, this New Year marks another one of many that have passed without our loved ones and in some ways the feelings that we are experiencing have changed. We tend to feel a sense of separation from the loss that has occurred. Distance is becoming more prevalent from the time of the loss. And that is ok and a normal feeling. We are learning to move forward with positive insight and the New Year marks achievement and progress in our journey. This is a time to realize that you are in the healing process and it is becoming clearer to you that your path of life is becoming your new normal.

You will forever cherish the memories of your loved and will not forget the impact that they have had on your being, but you will become stronger in identifying the person you have now become and will not feel guilty or inappropriate about enjoying life all over again.

Every New Year allows us an opportunity to look forward, to begin again, to settle old ways of life and start new, to learn from the past, and to reflect on where life can take us in the future. Those of us that are survivors of the death of a spouse or significant other are no different than anyone else greeting the New Year. We all have the same opportunity to change our attitude, look ahead, and own the life we now have and make it the best that it could be.

I wish all of you a Happy New Year filled with comfort and peace.



Book Review - Editor

### Meditations with James Van Praagh

by James Van Praagh

From the author of *Talking to Heaven* and *Healing Grief* comes a collection of meditations and affirmations that allow us to connect with our inner self.

Van Praagh addresses various issues such as the energy around you, confronting fears, good-bye to guilt, open to inspiration, tuning in to your healing, understanding others, healing your loss, forgiveness, and life changes.

This book will empower you to look at your life differently and allow you to see, feel, and listen to your inner voice. When we are searching for something to further help us on our journey of grief, *Meditations with James Van Praagh* may be the answer to our needs.

### Seasons of Love

by John Kreiser

Sunlight streaming through the trees  
Scent of lilac on the breeze  
Days grow warmer by degrees  
As do my thoughts of you  
Renewal is the current theme  
In fields and forests, lakes and streams  
Within ourselves, our hopes and dreams  
And too, my love for you  
Ahead lie many pleasant days  
Of summer storms and muggy haze  
Moonlit skies and starward gaze  
As I spend time with you  
And far off in a distant place  
Where autumn ends with quiet grace  
When life retires from the race  
I'll still be loving you

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from the author

## Does Anybody Really Know How We Feel?

by Dominic Murgido

As I continue with my life without my wife, I see changes in my world.

My world has been so very different since her passing. Some of the traditions I am still trying to hold onto while others have seen been stopped or soon will be stopped. It's hard to hold onto something that only mattered when there were two of you that enjoyed it. When there is one of you left, the fun goes away. Each year is different in its purpose to me. The purpose is for me trying to understand and accept life that is so different than the many years I have spent with my wife.

These kinds of changes have to be looked upon as a positive in your life. You must recognize that you are ready to let go of some of the things while trying to build upon new things that matter to you. In your own way at your own pace you will find new things. It will never be the same as it once was, but it can be new to you and it can become part of your new life without your loved one.

Some of us that go through this grieving process view the outside world differently now.

There are times I don't want to have any part of it and on weekends I just want to stay indoors and watch it move on through my window. I am content with that and that alone time allows me to reflect in my own private world of my house. I reflect through thoughts that are translated by pen and communicate to others only if I wish too. Other times, I feel like I need to be around people, even people I don't even know. I want to be part of their world and be in places they are in like parks, malls, restaurants, or events. Being around others at times supplies its own sense of belonging to me when I want to be a part of the outside world.

The people around us really don't know how we feel. Those that are neighbors, friends, co-workers, even family members just don't get it. They think that our grieving process can be compared to a bad cold or sore back and in a few weeks, we will be good again. They can't understand our confusion, tears, sensitivity, and sometimes our unwillingness to be part of their day. They question our emotional state and suggest that there must be something wrong with us that it is taking so long to get over it. "It", imagine someone referring to us being robbed of our loved one way too early as an "It"?

**There are people who really do know how we feel.** Where do you find them? A bereavement support group. I am a firm believer in support groups, any kind of support groups that are existing to help those that are in need to become better at who they are or help to cope with a situation in their life like the loss of a loved one. Being part of a bereavement support group will allow you to express yourself to others and listen to others. This is such a great healing process because it provides you a sense of not being alone in your grief. Continued attendance in support groups builds a bridge that will allow you to slowly cross to the sunny side on your journey through this process. Being part of multiple bereavement support groups has helped me and continues to help me cope and stay focused with who I am and where I am going with my life.

If you are not part of one, I encourage you to do so. You have nothing to lose but some pain and heartache that you are feeling and you will not be alone in your grief.

*(Re printed from a previous edition of our newsletter - Editor)*

## Loss of Physical Contact *Submitted by b k carver*

It was 17 weeks ago today I lost you, Ray. Today, the loss of our physical contact hit me hard. I remember how I could always come up and hug you for no special reason, just because I love you was reason enough. That loss of contact is hitting me hard. I woke up sobbing last night from the pain. Does this pain ever ease? I feel each day that a little more of me dies from the loneliness. I look for signs of you being here every where and it hurts when I can't find them.

You told me the night before you died that I would be okay because I am strong. I do not feel strong. I feel like a broken object that can never be put back together. I pray for help but am not feeling it. The security of your love is missing. I

miss hearing your voice. I wish we had some sort of after death communication, anything, just to hear from you.

It eats at me that I wasn't with you when you passed. If only I had known that you were leaving me, I would have stayed in the room with you and held you as you left earth and moved on to Heaven. Were you trying to protect me? I love you so much and it hurts to be without you.

Ray, you were my first and only love. You had so much patience with me. You were my strength when I was working through my issues. You never gave up on me. You always loved me. You helped me grow. You were always here to help me.

You used to tell me how nice it was to wake up to a happy and smiling wife. You were the reason I was happy. You could always make me smile.

I miss cooking for you. I miss watching TV together. I miss playing cards with you. I miss sitting on the back patio talking to you or watching a storm come in and listening to the rain. I miss folding your laundry. I miss shopping with you. I miss everything that was you.

I hope you found your brother when you arrived in Heaven and our pets. I look forward to the day when I will see you again. You are my life. I love you and miss you.

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### sudSSpirit

Bereavement Support Group currently meets monthly in **four** locations:

**Berks Chapter**, Reading, PA.  
4<sup>th</sup> Wed. of the month 6 PM  
Exeter Library

**Cumberland Chapter**,  
Etters, PA.  
2<sup>nd</sup> Thurs. of the month 7PM  
Fishing Creek  
Salem U.M. Church

**York Chapter**,  
Dover, PA.  
3<sup>rd</sup> Thurs. of the month 7PM  
St. David's E.C. Church

**Bennington Chapter**,  
Bennington, VT  
4<sup>th</sup> Tues. of the month 6 PM  
Bennington Library

For additional information, please check our facebook page or email:

[sudsspirit@gmail.com](mailto:sudsspirit@gmail.com)  
- Reading, PA

[lmurray2@comcast.net](mailto:lmurray2@comcast.net)  
- Etters, PA

[yorksudsspirit@gmail.com](mailto:yorksudsspirit@gmail.com)  
- Dover, PA

[sudsspirit.vt@gmail.com](mailto:sudsspirit.vt@gmail.com)  
- Bennington, VT

or phone:

717-866-2401 - Reading, PA

610-777-4181 - Reading, PA

717-938-1928 (ext 241)  
- Etters, PA

717-764-0033 - Dover, PA

802-441-5562  
- Bennington, VT

- Editor





# Internet, Social Media are Changing the Way We Grieve

by Jeffrey A. Johnson | [jjohnson@pennlive.com](mailto:jjohnson@pennlive.com)

Eight months after the death of a local music promoter Mike Van Jura, his friends still drop by his Facebook page and revisit memories of shows at the Abbey Bar. The blog of the man known as “Jersey Mike” remains untouched, offering a window into his views on everything from city politics to aggressive driving. Van Jura, 36, who died three days after submitting an application to fill a vacant Harrisburg City Council seat, left behind more than 12,000 tweets to soak in. All of this digital property presents the perfect example of the way the Internet is changing the way we deal with death. Mike Van Jura, known in the Harrisburg area as Jersey Mike, died of a heart attack at age 36.

It used to be that newspaper obituaries and word of mouth alerted us that friends and acquaintances had passed away.

Now social media gives us that information in seconds and provides new outlets for people to express and share their grief.

## Social media “incredibly beneficial” in helping some cope with death

Facebook has taken steps to address user deaths by setting up an option to “memorialize” accounts.

Friends of “Jersey” Mike Van Jura continue to visit his Facebook page and leave comments. In Van Jura’s case, his family decided to take this step, said Billy Van Jura, his brother.

Others have taken similar steps. After Patriot-News investigative reporter Pete Shellem died in 2009, his wife kept his Facebook page active, saying she found it “incredibly beneficial” in helping her face her grief.

Joyce Shellem said there were days following her husband’s death in which she would struggle to get out of bed. But often she pulled her laptop up to the bed and read news obituaries detailing the impact of her husband’s work, and the respect he received for his work. Joyce Shellem, the wife of Pete Shellem,

a celebrated investigative reporter for The Patriot-News, said social media and the Internet helped her immensely after her husband’s death.

To this day, Joyce Shellem said occasionally she punches her husband’s name into a Google search and watches thousands of hits pop up on her computer screen. A majority of the top results are positive stories outlining Shellem’s accomplishments.

“I found that very comforting, to know that his name was being spoken and being talked about and to this day is being spoke about in high regard,” Joyce Shellem said.

## Creating a new “archive”

Jenna Zomok, of Hummelstown, said Facebook has allowed her to maintain an important connection to her mother, Sandra Gaughan, who died of cancer in 2011 at the age of 68.

Zomok said she often revisits archived chat conversations she shared with her mother through Facebook. Zomok also continues to post to her mother’s Facebook page. It’s a way to keep Sandra Gaughan’s friends up to date on happenings in her family. Whereas diaries and journals were once the way to capture important memories, that process now conveniently plays out on Facebook, Zomok said.

Conversely, Facebook posed challenges for Charles Moyer, a Sunbury man whose wife, Taralee, died in 2011 in a head-on car crash in Lykens Twp.

Moyer said he was disappointed that he couldn’t find any easy way to access his wife’s Facebook page after her death. He wanted to update the information there, and alert friends that she had died.

The accident occurred on Taralee’s birthday, and many of her Facebook friends were posting birthday messages, unaware she had died.

Even later, going through photo albums on her Facebook page and watching friends post messages expressing their grief and loss also overwhelmed Moyer at times.

“It made a big difference. It made it a little harder to live with,” he said. “The constant reminder is there.”

Through the long process of organizing his brother’s digital footprint, Billy Van Jura found another way to use technology to keep the memory of his brother alive.

In the spring, more than 2,000 friends and acquaintances of his brother received an

email that seemed to come from Jersey Mike himself.

It was actually sent by Billy Van Jura and invited those friends to share any photos, videos, music or other content that held memories of Jersey Mike. The idea is to create an online archive for Jersey Mike’s two young children, Kaiya and Lennon.

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## To My Beloved

by Celia Wenig



You had a talent for  
bringing special meaning to life,  
It was such a pleasure to be your wife.  
You helped me to grow and to realize  
The fullness and the beauty in our  
lives.  
Every day I counted my blessings.  
Then God called, and you went away  
Out of this world to a brighter day.  
Suddenly my life of gladness  
Turned to utter sadness.  
My grief wears me down, I shed so  
many tears,  
As I recall your love and devotion  
through the years.  
For your sake and in memory of your  
name,  
I pray for strength to do things the  
same.  
To reach out, to fill the hours with  
useful ways,  
To comfort, to cheer and have no  
more empty days.  
I try to console myself -- it was God’s  
greater plan,  
So I must accept it, if I can.  
You moved away to His splendid  
home above,  
If there is life after death,  
I know you will be waiting there for me,  
With love.  
Though Heaven and Earth divide us,  
and the distance is so great,  
I count my blessings for the years you  
were my mate.  
I will live my life remembering, while  
you wait, slumbering.  
My beloved, may you rest in peace.

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comfort-for-bereavement.com*

## An Entry From My Journal

“I hope and pray for a light that will show me the way out of this thing called grief and allow me to go in another direction; a direction that will lead to happiness and joy again” -Editor

