

Bereaved Parents of the USA Anne Arundel County Chapter

May 2009

www.aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org

The Rest of the Story

When you pick up a book off the shelf, you probably look at the title, the cover, maybe the author to see if it is a book that you want to read. You start at chapter one and move through the book chronologically. Usually, you wait until you get to the last chapter to find out how the story will end. Occasionally, if you just can't stand the suspense, you will skip to the back just to see if your favorite character made it through to the end.



The story of our lives is waiting to be told. We don't have the power to look to the end and see what awaits us but instead, have to be content to go through it, chapter by chapter, day by day, until the end. When we lose a child, a grandchild, a cherished niece or nephew, or a

sibling we think we know the end of the story. Life is over. We are left only with sadness and despair. But the truth is that the story is not over. There will be sadness in the coming days, yes, but there can also be joy and happiness. In truth, we write the end of the story ourselves, so we can write in happy events and good times with family and friends. We can write in success in our work and enjoyment of hobbies. We can write in sweet memories of the one who doesn't live in our world anymore. The story is not over when our cherished one dies and we should not live as if it is!

Today, I hope you will find a way to build on the positive aspects of your life story. Do something for yourself, share lunch with a friend, go for a walk and look at the beauty of spring around you. Your story still has the opportunity for a happy ending. Write your story and don't lose heart!



— Lisa Beall Anne Arundel County Chapter – BP/USA In Memory of her brother William Frederick Carter Jr. April 24, 1959 – August 16, 1992 And of her niece Brittany Nicole Tyler October 12, 1986 – August 23, 1992

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The printing and mailing of this newsletter has been donated by Ken Smith in memory of his niece Tracy Ann Fotino



Bereaved Parents of the USA/AA County

Anne Arundel County Chapter Bereaved Parents of the USA

P.O. Box 6280 Annapolis, Maryland 21401-0280 Website: www.aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org

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Submissions for June newsletter due to Newsletter Team by May 1 newsletter@aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org

We are a self-help support organization that is dedicated to assisting parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and siblings toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child. We also aim to provide information and education to extended family, friends and coworkers desirous of being supportive to our Chapter members. We gather to listen, to care, and to understand the process of grieving as we start our recovery process and attempt to heal. Our greatest strength as bereaved families is the unity we find in shared experiences which can lead us out of isolation, give us a place to "belong", and offer us hope that together – we can make it.



<u>Telephone Friends</u>: Sometimes we may have the need to talk to someone who can understand our pain. If you feel the need to talk, have questions

to ask, or just had a difficult day, these people will welcome your call and are willing to listen to you.

Bob Bramhall 410.867.4956 Daughter (19), drunk driver; men's grief.

Marie Dyke Daughter (17), single parent, only child; car accident.

Sandy Platts 410.721.6457 Infant death.

Tia Stinnett 410.360.1341 Miscarriages and infant death.

Janet Tyler 410.969.7597 Daughter (5) and brother (33); car accident.

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May 2009

Doors open at 7:15 P.M. Meeting begins at 7:30 P.M.

Calvary United Methodist Church 301 Rowe Boulevard Annapolis, MD 21401

TEMPORARY MEETING ROOM CHANGE

The May meeting will be held in Rooms 119/121

Meetings are held on the **first Thursday of every month**. There is no cost to attend our monthly meetings.

Refreshments at our monthly meetings are donated by Chapter members. To make a contribution, please see the signup sheet on the refreshment table (drinks, ice, and paper products are provided).



For information please contact Carol Tomaszewski at 410.519.8448.

We Are Looking for Articles that Touched You

Do you have a poem, article, or quote that you like or something that you have read that you found particularly helpful? Maybe it's something that you wrote in memory of your child. Something that touched you, that made you smile or perhaps brought tears to your eyes. Something that you think would help others grieving the death of a child.

Send the poem, article, or quote to us or give us the citation where we can find it. You can email it to us at:

newsletter@aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org or mail it to PO Box 6280, Annapolis, MD 21401

S

Missy, Mother's Day is almost here and my heart aches and my body misses your hugs. Somehow though, I know that you are aware of how much you mean to me, and what a special place your memory and love will always have in my heart. I lived my life loving you, caring for you and about you, trying to protect you. I can say that I failed you as a



Mom because you died too young, or I can say that I fulfilled my ultimate role as a Mom because you knew how to love. There is no one I have ever known who loved more openly and genuinely than you, and after all isn't that at the heart of it all, the importance of a life lived well to know how to give and receive love? So on this Mother's Day, I can say I succeeded as your Mom or I can say I failed you....I don't know yet which I can say, my heart still hurts so.

> - Kathy Ireland Anne Arundel County Chapter – BP/USA In Memory of Melissa Ireland Frainie December 12, 1971 – February 12, 2007

A Broken-Hearted Mom

Please don't tell me not to cry Please don't say there was a reason why You don't know what I am feeling Or how much I hurt The wet spots are from tears on the collar of this shirt You think I should go on with life Forget about it and be strong But deep down I am sad, and I don't want to go along I don't expect you to understand why For no apparent reason I break down and start to cry My life has changed forever, you see And that is why I am not acting like the same ole me So please don't try to act like nothing happened Because it's changed my life forever I will never be the same again Not today, Not tomorrow, but never The best thing you can do for me is just be there Just like always, my friend My broken heart is hurting bad And it will never mend.

— Author Unknown

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Another Mother's Day!

- Another Mother's Day! but a different one this year. For, you see, I am a mother but my child isn't here.
- I am a mother who is hurting for this child who was so dear, as I face this and other occasions each and every year.
- I am a mother who feels an emptiness over and over again because I miss THIS child and all that could have been.
- I am a mother who cared as I watched my child grow and truly loved her more than anyone will ever know.
- I am a mother who has memories and many tears to cry over regrets I'll have to live with until the day I die.

- I am a mother who is thankful for the miracle of birth and all my child taught me about life and my own self-worth.
- I just can't stop being a mother because my child isn't here. Because the love we had for each other will continue for years and years.
- And so on this special "Mother's" day, I will feel within my heart, all the pride, love and joy which are the parts that make me who I am and what I'll always be. A MOTHER – just remember that – please?

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— Judy Sittner From Hope Line

What Grieving Moms Want for Mother's Day

10 Simple Ways to help Moms Cope When Mother's Day Hurts

Acknowledgement is what grieving mothers want most for Mother's Day, suggests a survey by wwww.thecomfortcompany.net. The online survey asked "What can others do to ease your pain on Mother's Day?" Over 80 percent of the 200 respondents answered, "Recognize that I am a mother."

"While Mother's Day is generally considered to be a day of celebration, for many women it is a day of pain and loss," says Renee Wood, former social worker and founder of The Comfort Company. "It's important to remember those moms who have had a failed pregnancy or who have lost a child at any age."

In response to the survey results, thecomfortcompany.net has issued a list of ten simple ways to reach out to a grieving mother on this difficult holiday.

1. Recognize that they are a mother: Offer a hug and a "Happy Mother's Day." Send a card to let them know you remember they are a mother even though their child is not with them physically.

2. Acknowledge they have had a loss: Express the message, "I know this might be a difficult day for you. I want you to know that I am thinking about you."

3. Use their child's name in conversation: One mother responded, "People rarely speak his name anymore, but when they do it's like music to my ears."

4. Plant a living memorial: A tree or rose bush, like memories, will grow in beauty as the years pass.

5. Visit the grave site: Many mothers felt that it was "extremely thoughtful" when others visited their child's grave site and left flowers or a small pebble near the headstone.

6. Light a candle: Let the mother know you will light a candle in memory of their child on Mother's Day.

7. Share a memory or pictures of the child: Give the gift of a memory. One mother wrote that the "greatest gift you can give is a heart-felt letter about my child and a favorite memory with them."

8. Send a gift of remembrance: Many mothers felt a small gift would be comforting. Suggestions included: an angel statue, jewelry, a picture frame, a library book or toy donation in the child's name or anything personalized.

9. Don't try to minimize the loss: Avoid using any clichés that attempt to explain the death of a child. ("God needed another angel.") Secondly, don't try to find anything positive about the loss ("You still have two healthy children").

10. Encourage Self-Care: Self-care is an important aspect of the "healing the mind and spirit effort" according to several mothers. Encourage a grieving mother to take care of herself. Give her a gift certificate to a day spa or any place where she can be pampered.

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When You See A Butterfly

Think of me when butterflies Are flying everywhere I'm singing, dancing, laughing Free from earth's despair.

The other side of tomorrow Within God's time you'll see, I know He'll bring you safely home Then forever we will be.

Keep a song inside your heart And know that I am free Do not weep in sorrow When you remember me — Author Unknown Message

When the child you have cherished is taken, when the light of that promise is gone, when the faith which sustained you, is shaken and your days stumble painfully on,

When the sorrows of loss are unending and your God seems forever away, find the message your lost-one keeps sending: words of loving and thanking and mending... let your child shape the peace of your day.

— Alexandra Sascha Wagner For you From Sascha

SIBLING PAGE

An Open Letter to Our Siblings

Dear Sibling,

How can I possibly tell you how much I miss you? But of course you probably know, since you knew me better than anyone. No matter how much time passes, I still wish you were here to share our lives, and the future I expected us to have together.

Even though we fought and at times neglected each other, I just assumed that you would always be there. That we'd grow old together and remember stories of growing up and laugh at each other as we looked and acted more like our parents. That we'd share our joys and setbacks, and adore each other's children.

Your death has rocked me harder than I could have imagined I'd survive. Ultimately, there are no answers to my questions. There is no replacing you and there is no solace for my grief. There is only the simple choice I made every day to live on in the honor of your memory and the love we shared. To strive to carry on the best of who you were. To cherish the brief time we have with others. To celebrate the opportunity to be alive. To have compassion for the pain of others as well as my own. To have the courage to love fully as I have loved you and to remember that you would want me to go on and find joy again.

You gave me so many gifts while you were alive and I continue to discover the gifts in this loss. I am so thankful you were born my sibling. I would not have traded our time together for anything. You are always with me because you are a part of me.

— Melanie Lamoureux TCF/Marin County, CA On behalf of the sibling group

Everything Is A First

Everything is a first. Many moments must be faced. There are the first holidays, the first anniversary, the first birthday. Thoughts about my brother Dave will always be with us. It's never more than a sentence away from me... NEVER! The ordinary cannot be ordinary. A certain phrase, a look, or an article of clothing can trigger thoughts and emotions. The joy of my senior year in college was interrupted by sad reality. FORGET? How is this possible? The days and months following my brother's death were filled with grief. Flowers and food were everywhere - love and concern were translated into strength that kept me moving one step at a time. People don't know what to say - nothing is NORMAL. Tragedy has brought a seriousness to my life. Thoughts about the meaning of life and the unimportance of a lot of things I

have previously found important are circulating in my mind. I think about my own funeral now. When will it be? Tomorrow, next week, next year, before or after my parents'? There are good days and bad days. I am learning to deal with all of this. People ask me, "How are you?" Here is my answer: "I am mad Dave died at the age of 17. I am angry that my parents have to go through this. I am confused about my role in the family. I am jealous of other families. I am sad. I am fearful about the future. I am hopeful things will get better. I am courageous. I think about my brother every day. I will be strong."

> — Lisa Ann Jones Avoca, PA

Fireflies When we were young Summer nights We were having fun. And I miss you, My Friend. I miss you.

Precious smiles Show me you care. Sparkling eyes How we both would dare To be alive, My Friend. I miss you. And years have passed. I dream of you Midnight lights And a sunrise view. My soul survives, My Friend. Do you? Ocean waves, Sunsets so bright. I search for you Dancing stars in flight Like fireflies, My Friend. I see you.

Fireflies Delight

Fireflies within, It's you. Fireflies delight My summer nights.



— Nancy Braxton TCF, Louisville, KY

Our Children Remembered

Jalen H. Alleyne Son of Jewel and Derrick Alleyne April 21, 2007 - May 21, 2007

Jordan Edward Ambrozewicz Son of Steven and Beverly Ambrozewicz May 27, 1993 - May 10, 1995

Veronica "Ronnie" Anne Arata Daughter of Rick Arata June 12, 1968 - May 25, 2000

Matthew Stephen Auer Son of Carol and Steve Auer December 11, 1982 - May 4, 2004

George Alfred Bold IV Son of Brenda and George Bold May 23, 1969 - May 17, 2005

Christopher Lewis Borngesser Son of Diane Borngesser December 21, 1961 - May 28, 2001

Christine Elaine Bramhall Daughter of Robert and Patricia Bramhall December 21, 1961 - May 9, 1981

Stanley Eugene Bright Sister of Keya Belt May 23, 1972 - November 26, 1996

Paul Shane Brough Son of Theresa and Steve Bleemke May 18, 1982 - April 4, 2003

Darius JoVan Brown Son of Victoria and Robert Brown February 1, 1992 - May 30, 2004

Michael Eugene Burke Son of Joyce Pasquella May 15, 1965 - May 6, 2007

Brenda Leeann Costello Daughter of Tana and David Duley August 29, 1983 - May 28, 2002

Kathleen "Tink" Yvette Denevan Daughter of Gregory J. Denevan August 10, 1970 - May 13, 1971

Michelle Marie Dyke Daughter of Marie Dyke May 19, 1975 - November 10, 1992

Mary Senier Egan Daughter of Mary M. Senier Sister of Terri Hayden-Molton May 8, 1951 - June 24, 1993 Joseph Fredrick Errichiello Jr. Son of Susan and Joe Errichiello April 6, 1979 - May 29, 2004

R. Daniel Ferrer Son of Anna Ferrer Severn May 25, 1972 - August 26, 1986

Tracy Ann Fotino Daughter of Martha Murphy Niece of Kenneth Smith May 14, 1971 - August 25, 2000

Andrew Thomas "Drew" Gawthrop Son of Brenda Gawthrop May 25, 1990 - August 12, 2002

John Joseph Goetz Sr. Son of John and Mary Goetz May 6, 1958 - July 21, 1996

Matthew Gordon Haines Son of Gordon and Peggy Haines May 3, 1977 - July 4, 1996

Devin Hall Son of Cyndia Hall November 10, 1985 - May 17, 1990

Sidney Mark Hardesty Jr. Son of Dawn Watkinson March 10, 1979 - May 17, 2003

Thomas "Tommy" Michael Howard Son of Thomas and Donna Howard May 27, 1984 - February 10, 2000

Brian Keith Jones Son of LeRoy and Jeanne Jones Grandson of Walter and Shirley Johnson May 22, 1974 - May 22, 1974

Traykia Melisa Jones Daughter of Rochelle Kennedy February 19, 1988 - May 11, 2004

Brice Charles Kelley Son of Hannah and Chris Kelley September 24, 2002 - May 31, 2004

Scott E. Klima Brother of Kristy Klima-Flower July 20, 1984 - May 19, 2007

Stephen Aaron Luck Son of Paul and Charlette Koehler August 2, 1966 - May 27, 1985

John F. Marinelli Son of William and Annette Marinelli May 30, 1964 - December 19, 1986

Our Children Remembered

Kyle Patrick McDonough Son of Judy McDonough February 25, 1982 - May 15, 2005

Graham Kendall Miller Son of Ken and Abby Miller February 3, 1981 - May 4, 1999

Joseph A. Miller Son of Mary J. Miller Brother of Marlene Miller December 13, 1956 - May 12, 1977

Daniel "Dan" Michael Milord Son of Mike Milord July 15, 1982 - May 5, 2004

Emily Marie Parker Daughter of Valerie Nowak and Brian Parker May 9, 2002 - July 18, 2002

Sydney Elaine Patronik Daughter of Holly and Michael Patronik March 26, 2002 - May 11, 2002

Wendy Dawn Saunders Daughter of Ronald and Aljuana Saunders May 20, 1972 - May 14, 1998

Stanley "Jerry" Schisler Son of Stan and Pam Schisler May 31, 1980 - May 9, 2001

Donald "Donny" Lee Seyfferth Jr. Son of Jody Seyfferth December 16, 1977 - May 8, 2000

Ryan Michael Sheahy Son of Deborah Sheahy May 4, 1977 - March 16, 2001

Rachel Beth Showacre Daughter of Daynie Showacre May 7, 1980 - October 30, 2002

Donna Jean Shrodes Daughter of Lydia Shrodes February 5, 1974 - May 23, 2002

Christopher Lewis Strader Son of Lewis and Peggy Strader May 27, 1979 - June 21, 1997

Russell "Rusty" Joseph Tarr Son of Lorraine A. Tarr December 22, 1963 - May 12, 1994 John Leroy Waters Jr. Son of Stella and Roy Waters September 19, 1970 - May 23, 2000

Carole Anne Wilford Sister of Aljuana Saunders January 7, 1944 - May 4, 1998

Note: If your child's name appears in the printed version of our newsletter but does not appear in this online version, it is because we have not received explicit permission from you to list it online. If you would like your child's name to also appear in future online editions of the newsletter, please send an email to dralex@sdalex.com



You're So Negative!!!

"You're so negative." How many times have we as bereaved parents and surviving siblings heard that comment from those around us? How many of our family members, friends, co-workers or even mutual acquaintances have hinted or been so bold as to say such a thing to us after we have suffered the death of a child in our lives?

Unfortunately, the death of a child is a negative event!! I don't think anyone can find one thing positive to say about the death of a child, although many have tried by using common and irritating comments. "When will you get on and try to find something worthwhile to do with yourself? When are you going to find a happier moment? Why don't you just dwell on the happier times? And on and on." We know they don't understand because they can't come close to knowing how it feels. But even after we have grieved and felt sorrow and tears for awhile, still our outlook on life is negative because we find it hard to see anything positive at the moment.

What we really want to tell the world is this...Just surviving the deaths of our children is the first positive steps we are taking to get through this tragedy. Living through one second, one minute, one hour, one day, one week, one month, one year are all positive steps towards recovery. Finding a moment of laughter or having loving, warm and happier memories is another positive step we are making. Coexisting with the deaths of our children is not something that any of us are given the choice of making. However, living and accepting this tragedy is another positive step towards learning to live some type of life again; we yearn to let the pain go. Sharing our grief, our sorrow and pain with other bereaved parents is positive because, not only does it help to comfort the other bereaved parent, it also helps us to heal as well. We all benefit from one another in our pain and sorrow, in our comfort and hugs, in the ability to lean upon each other.

Yes, the death of a child is tragic, negative and painful and whatever other adjectives one may use. But for the idea of us being negative.....NO, we're not. The next time you hear that word, say instead, "realistic," because that is what we really are. We were given a crash course of reality when our children died. We know now how precious life is, how important it is to savor every moment given to us. Take pride in the positive accomplishments you have made since the death of your child, because not only have you worked so hard to attain them, you have more than earned them.

— Chris Gilbert Kevin Gilbert's mommy Marion County Ocala, Florida Chapter Bereaved Parents of the USA

Memorial Day

For each grave Where a soldier lies At his rest

For each prayer That is said today Out of love

For each sigh Of remembering Someone who died

Let us also give thought to The mothers and fathers The brothers and sisters The friends and the lovers Whom death left behind.

> — Sascha Wintersun

Nothing Gold Can Stay

Nature's first green is gold, Her hardest hue to hold. Her early leaf's a flower; But only so an hour. Then the leaf subsides to leaf. So Eden sank to grief, So dawn goes down to day. Nothing gold can stay.

- Robert Frost

When one door closes another door opens; but we so often look so long and so regretfully upon the closed door, that we do not see the ones which open for us.

— Alexander Graham Bell.

Oh only for so short a while you have loaned us to each other, Because we take form in your act of drawing us, And we take life in your painting us, and we breathe in your singing us. But only for so short awhile have you loaned us to each other.

— Ancient Aztec Indian Prayer: Source Unknown

We gratefully acknowledge the following donation:

May 2009

Ken Smith in memory of his niece Tracy Ann Fotino

Donations are gratefully accepted to offset the costs of our local Chapter's events and communications.

ANNE ARUNDEL CHAPTER BEREAVED PARENTS OF THE USA 10th Annual Conference of Hope and Healing Saturday, May 16, 2009, 7:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Would You Like to Help? There is a wide range of roles and tasks — both large and small — that go into organizing and producing the Conference, including finding workshop presenters, setting up the workshop rooms, stuffing envelopes and mailing out the announcements, assembling conference folders, helping with registration, and, of course, helping clean up after the conference.

If you would be interested in helping, *please contact Debi Wilson-Smith*. 410.757.8280 — debiws@verizon.net



Bereaved Parents of the USA 2009 National Gathering

Light My Way New York City Friday through Sunday, July 10 - 12, 2009 To register for the Gathering go to www.bereavedparentsusa.org

Crowne Plaza Laguardia Airport Hotel 104-04 Ditmars Blvd., East Elmhurst, NY Reservations BP/USA Discounted room rate (Double/Single) \$115.00 w/taxes \$133.88 Call toll free 1-888-233-9527 or go to www.cplaguardia.com

The Annual BP/USA Gathering this year will be in New York City — easily reachable by car or train. If you haven't attended a Gathering, we encourage you to make this one your first. Make your hotel reservation now to assure getting a room in the Gathering hotel. Also register for the Gathering as soon as possible — there is an early registration discount. Prior to June 1 registration is \$25.00 per person (up to \$75.00 per family); after June 1 the fee is \$35.00 per person (up to \$85.00 per family).

OTHER RESOURCES

Bereaved Parents of the USA (National headquarters) www.bereavedparentsusa.org 708.748.7866

Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center, Inc. (formerly known as The Stephanie Roper Committee for Victims of Violent Crime) www.mdcrimevictims.org 410.234.9885. 14750 Main Street, Suite 1B, Upper Marlboro, MD 20772.

Hospice of the Chesapeake, Maryland

Serving A.A. and P.G. counties. Help for adults, teenagers, children grieving the loss of a loved one. Counseling; support group sessions; weekend camps for children, teens and adults. www.hospicechesapeake.org or 410.987.2003.

Suicide Support Group

Meets 1st Tuesday of each month 7:30-9:00 pm in Rm 401, Woods Memorial Presbyterian Church, 611 B&A Blvd, Severna Park, MD 21146. For information call Nancy Lincoln Reynolds 410.647.2550.

MIS Support Group

For those who have experienced loss through miscarriage, infant death or stillbirth. Meets 1st Monday each month from 7:00 to 8:30 pm, St. Andrew's United Methodist Church, 4 Wallace Manor Road, Edgewater, MD. 443.481.6114

G.R.A.S.P. (Grief Recovery After A Substance Passing) Provides help, compassion and understanding for families or individuals who have had a loved one die as a result of drugs. www.grasphelp.com; mom@jennysjourney.org Call Pat or Russ Wittberger at 843.705.2217.



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P.O. Box 6280 Annapolis, MD 21401-0280 www.aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org

NEXT MEETING May 7, 2009



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED DATED MATERIAL



UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS:

Step-Parent's Grief

Thursday, May 7, 7:30 P.M

Today's families are often extended with a step-parent in the picture. A step-parent is often ignored or placed in a supporting role when a child dies. But the truth is more complex than that. This presentation looks at the wide range of grieving and the ambiguity of being a grieving stepparent.

Saturday, May 16, 7:30 A.M. — 5:00 P.M Annual Conference of Hope and Healing

Thursday, June 4, 7:30 P.M Program to be announced

We appreciate feedback on our Chapter meetings. If you have suggestions for future topics of discussion, please contact one of our Program coordinators:

Paul Balasic at pjbspmd@gmail.com or 443.566.0193, or Jane Schindler at cwschind@cablespeed.com.



WHAT TO EXPECT AT OUR CHAPTER MEETINGS

Our Chapter gathers one evening a month to address topics and offer support to those who are mourning the death of a child. Our meetings last for approximately

2 hours. We occasionally schedule a 30 minute presentation at the beginning of our meeting to address a topic that we hope is of interest and value to many of our Chapter members. When the speaker or panel has concluded the presentation, you will be invited to introduce yourself and, if you wish, to say your child's name. We then take a short break before dividing into sharing groups.

These sharing groups are facilitated by fellow Chapter members and are completely <u>confidential</u>. During this time the issues that are discussed - particularly for the newly bereaved - do not necessarily have to focus on the evening's topic, unless it is relevant to the group.

Please see page 2 of this newsletter for more details including our meeting location and other helpful information. If you have questions please contact our Chapter leader Terre Belt (410.721.1359) or tbelt@nahbrc.org.