Close friends of one of POMC’s co-founders share memories of moments with Ken

[By Angie Bridges, Kay and Paul Callahan, Joan Fleming, Mary Jackson, Barb Shurna, Terri Snider.]

On a warm June afternoon last year, Ken Czillinger arrived at Alois Alzheimer Center near Cincinnati. In just three months he had had brief stays at local hospitals and a rehabilitation center. Now he had moved from his home to an assisted living facility.

After all the tests, the doctors concurred that Ken’s primary diagnosis was a rapidly progressing dementia. Dementia can take many different paths—filled with ever-increasing loss and heartache. This particular diagnosis was void of hope, time, and comfort. Caught in a downward spiral, Ken knew that there would be continued setbacks and heart wrenching mental and physical deterioration. Everything was moving very quickly, and he felt this deeply in his mind, heart, and spirit.

“Sobering,” Ken repeated, shaking his head and gently rubbing his hands together. “This is the only word I can find that describes what I am feeling right now.” He was much thinner now, sitting there in a wheelchair. It all seemed so surreal.

Ken was color blind. He had needed a team of friends to help him pick out clothes, match colors when decorating, and review and critique all other color-related decisions. Now he needed another “team” to help him see more clearly and walk with him on this uncertain, dismal-colored journey. Ken needed their presence and direction in the dark days ahead.

Ken relied on his sister, Barb Shurna, for direction and advice. She was the bright light of family love and memories. Now, as never before, he needed her care and love. Their shared devotion to their brother, Tom, and to each other, had kept them close.

Terri was the next team member. She was Ken’s Medical Power of Attorney. Well before his illness ensued 10 years ago, Ken had asked Terri to fill this role for him. She assured him that she would stand by him and abide by all of his well-defined wishes. He instinctively knew that Terri would be a team member he could trust.

Ken’s established friend, Joan, and her husband, Jim, were devoted Notre Dame fans who enjoyed many football games with both Ken and his brother, Tom. Ken depended on Joan’s common sense and sound advice. She was a faithful friend, close neighbor, and travel companion.

Ken and Paul shared a passion for the Cincinnati Reds. Paul’s presence provided respite from the quiet loss of Ken’s recreational enjoyment of sports. Kay was a practicing nurse. Her friendship with Ken was deep and genuine, and he deeply respected her opinion. She helped Ken explore ideas and he needed her spirit of peace, love, and kindness.

Team member Angie was Ken’s church secretary in 1984. They had remained close friends. “Our lives have never been disconnected,” she said. Ken journeyed with her through the illness and passing of her husband and the diagnoses of her three grand-

(Continued on p. 2)
Continuing our dedication to helping survivors

With Executive Director

BEVERLY WARNOCK

As many of you know, Executive Director Dan Levey resigned this past October. The April National Board of Trustees Meeting appointed me as the Executive Director. I am honored to have been chosen for this opportunity.

I began working for POMC in 1993 as the Administrative Assistant and have helped in other capacities, including playing an integral part in helping with the Effective Leadership Trainings and Annual National Conferences. Over the past 23 years, I have worked with many wonderful staff members and volunteers. I look forward to continuing these relationships as I take on this new role to help survivors.

The National Staff—three full time and one part time employee—has been working hard to keep the National Office running smoothly. Sherry Nolan, our Volunteer Coordinator, opens new chapters and works with existing chapters to help resolve any problems they may have. Kayla Bauer was our recent college intern, who graduated and joined the staff full time in October as our Administrative Assistant. Her responsibilities include helping with all of the programs, as well as helping with the National Conference and creating the Conference Memorial Book. Ratna Pati works part-time as our webmaster. She keeps our website up-to-date to provide survivors with pertinent information in a timely manner.

Last year at the Orlando Conference, we held the Effective Leadership Training just prior to the start of the National Conference. This year, the Training will be held in Irvine, Cal. from July 30-Aug. 1. This training is intended for anyone—including Chapter Leaders—who needs certification to represent POMC. If you—or someone from your chapter—plan to attend training, please contact us by July 1 to ensure we have enough materials for all attendees. Registration is open and the deadline is July 1, 2017. The conference itself will run from Aug. 3-6. The Conference Committee has been planning a great conference, including a special Memorial Ceremony. We hope that you are able to join us this year.

Exciting news about the Grief Retreat Weekend Program! Former National Board of Trustees President Jean Lewis and her children, Sandra and Steve Lewis, have donated substantially for POMC to expand the program to more areas across the United States. Jean’s son, Scott, and his friend Janet, were murdered in September 1980. Jean’s husband, John died in September of 2016.

Jean was the Board President in the 1990s and facilitated the Grief Retreat Weekends with former Executive Director Nancy Ruhe. They traveled to retreats hosted by chapters in different cities to help survivors deal with their grief.

Valley of the Sun Chapter Leader Beckie Miller currently holds retreats in April and October in Phoenix, Ariz. By fall of this year, we hope to offer more Grief Retreat Weekends in other areas across the country.

The National Office will continue our dedication and passion to helping survivors.

IN MEMORIAM

We invite notices and photos of those deceased, who have served as Chapter Leaders, Co-Leaders, Contact Persons, or as State Coordinators.

REV. PERCELL COZART (1936-2017) died March 1 in Sharon, Pa. He served as an associate minister in Mt. Olive Baptist Church in Masury, Ohio. Son Darryl, 33, was murdered March 1, 1997. Cozart and his wife, Genell, were POMC Chapter Leaders in Trumbull, Ohio and Mercer, Pa. counties.

Ken’s Care Team tell their stories

(Continued from p. 1)

children with special needs. Angie’s appreciation helped him remember that life is a blessing and deserves to be celebrated. As Ken’s cooking instructor, personal shopper, competent assistant, and color coordinator, Angie brought great joy and happiness to Ken on his journey.

Team member Mary, with cheerful words, humor, and spiritual inspiration, bring Ken and the care team out of darkness and into the sunlight. Her deep faith gave the team courage and strength to support Ken throughout his perilous journey. She always found the right words to express the team’s thoughts and feelings.

Like so many of you on Ken’s POMC team, we—Ken’s care team—shared memorable moments with him during our lives together. We were blessed to have been his friends—Barb’s beloved brother and our dearest friend. He captured our hearts. He and Tom became members of our families. It was only natural for all of us to come together as a Care Team with Barb to walk Ken’s last difficult journey to eternal life.
How Ken Czillinger helped found POMC

By Charlotte and Robert Hullinger

In early November 1978, six weeks after our daughter, Lisa, had been murdered, Charlotte showed up at the Roman Catholic Church in Elmwood, a Cincinnati suburb, to see the priest, Father Ken Czillinger. A crisis hot-line recommended him as a person who might be able to help in our time of grief.

From that meeting, Fr. Ken helped us find three others also grieving, and we held our first POMC meeting Dec. 11. Five parents in grief, and one priest who also knew about grieving the loss of those he loved.

From the beginning Fr. Ken selflessly gave his time, plus financial and emotional support, to survivors of homicide-victims, walking with them through the months and years needed to learn living without loved ones, dealing with emotional pain, anger, and emptiness they could not have imagined. He often attended the monthly support meetings and became a fellow traveler in the grief journey.

After four years, the group meetings soon moved from our living room to Edgecliff College. Our support meetings met there for several more years.

In 1986 Fr. Ken secured permission for POMC to move the bedroom office to the Roman Catholic Diocesan office building in downtown Cincinnati. POMC used those facilities for the next 30 years.

Fr. Ken also was a POMC Board of Trustees member who presented professionals in law enforcement, judicial, court, counseling, and victim advocacy, with the experience of surviving homicide victims. More than that, he led POMC workshops, encouraged the increasing numbers of leaders and Trustee Board members, and attended the Cincinnati POMC Chapter monthly group meetings.

Although in his mid-thirties as a local parish priest, he brought into POMC a world of wisdom about working with grieving people, much of it based upon his own grieving over the loss of his brother and parents.

We who knew him were blessed by this servant of God who shared the strength of his own experience with others also grieving.

“As Long As I Breathe... You Will Be Remembered”

POMC provides ongoing emotional support, education and awareness programs to thousands of family members of those who have died by violence. Our conferences provide numerous workshops on traumatic grief, navigating the confusing maze of the judicial and investigative process, and trainings for survivors and professionals who serve them.

The National POMC Conference Committee has been hard at work to line up the great workshops and speakers we have. We are in the midst of planning a very special memorial ceremony on Friday night.

Date: August 3-6, 2017

Place: Hilton Irvine/Orange Co. Airport
18800 Mac Arthur Boulevard
Irvine, CA 92612

Phone: (949) 833-9999

The hotel registration price is $119.00.

The Conference information also is on the POMC website: www.pomc.org
November 2016 brought great sadness to POMC with the death of one of our founders. On Nov. 23 Ken Czillinger passed away peacefully and went home to meet his God. A former Roman Catholic priest, Ken Czillinger was associated with the Archdiocese of Cincinnati and was deeply involved with grieving families.

As a result of the murder of their daughter, Lisa Hullinger, her parents, Bob and Charlotte, met Fr. Czillinger, who put them in contact with other grieving families of murder victims in the Cincinnati area. The rest, as the expression goes, “is history.” POMC was formed and expanded to become the great organization it is today. Fr. Czillinger was always available to assist POMC in any way he could.

Father Czillinger eventually left the priesthood to take care of his handicapped brother. His brother’s care became his life’s work. Those who knew Ken loved him. He was always behind the scenes through the years, but was always there when needed. Ken appeared at some POMC Annual Conferences, and in recent years, at our Effective Leadership Training classes. Ken Czillinger left an indelible mark on POMC. He was one of our founders—a friend, and a benefactor to POMC.

Thank you, Ken, for all that you have done for us. We will always remember and love you. Rest in peace. May you always sit at the right hand of God.

We hope to see everyone at the Annual POMC Conference at Irvine California. Stop by and say “Hi.” We would love to see you. Ω

Howard

Parents Of Murdered Children has received a substantial donation from the family of Jean Lewis. Jean’s husband, John died in September 2016. Jean and her two children, Sandra and Steve, gave the donation to help the Grief Retreat Weekends to expand.

Jean’s son, Scott, and his friend, Janet, were murdered in September 1980.

As of now, Beckie Miller, from the Valley of the Sun Chapter in Phoenix, holds a Grief Retreat Weekend in Pine, Ariz., each spring and fall. When West Coast chapters hold their retreats, the Phoenix Chapter facilitates them.

Jean served as a Chapter Leader in California and as the National Board of Trustees President. Together with former Executive Director Nancy Ruhe, Jean co-facilitated numerous Grief Retreat Weekends around the U.S.

Originally, the weekends were designed for chapter leaders so busy with chapter duties that they were not working on their own grief issues. Later, the retreats were held for all survivors.

Jean and her family believe the Grief Retreat Weekends are life-changing and very helpful for someone in tremendous grief. With her donation, POMC staff members Sherry Nolan and Bev Warnock will attend the next Grief Retreat Weekend in Pine, Ariz. to be trained so that the Grief Retreat Weekends can be held in Cincinnati in the future.

If your Chapter would like to host a Grief Retreat Weekend in your area, we can travel to your area to facilitate and or train. There will be scholarships for anyone who cannot afford to attend a Grief Retreat Weekend available in the future. Ω

...There’s no denying that in some sense I feel “better,” and with that comes at once a sort of shame, and a feeling that one is under a sort of obligation to cherish and foment and prolong one’s unhappiness. I’ve read about that in books, but I never dreamed I should feel it myself. I am sure H. wouldn’t approve of it. She’d tell me not to be a fool. ... C. S. Lewis in Grief Observed traces his recovery from his wife’s death. She was not murdered, but homicide-victim survivors may also feel such an obligation.

C. S. Lewis in Grief Observed traces his recovery from his wife’s death. She was not murdered, but homicide-victim survivors may also feel such an obligation.
The names that appear in this issue of SURVIVORS are those that have been submitted to the National Organization of POMC, Inc., with full or partial payment before Febr. 10, 2017. Names after this date will appear in the next issue.

The Wall consists of solid walnut panels with each holding about 20 brass plates inscribed with the name of the victim, along with the date of birth and the date of death. A donation of $75 is required before a name will be inscribed on a plate and permanently mounted on a panel. (See order form on this page.) Not only is this donation a tribute to the memory of your loved one, but it is a tribute that will help keep alive the memory of those we miss so deeply.

The Wall is a powerful statement of the violence in our society and of the numbers of loved ones senselessly killed by others. Not only does it give comfort, but also hope, because every name on it cries out silently for awareness, prevention, and justice.

Thank You for Your Donation to Maintain the Murder Wall

Jarrod Chrisman, from Rodney & Susie Chrisman
Dwayne Chubb, from Albert & Dorothy Chubb
Becci Johnston, Pamela Walker, and Michael Crump, from Dee Engle
Michael Simmons, from Reginald & LaToyce Lee
Timothy Staunton, from Denise Coleman
Lisa Weaver, from Howard & Anna Klerk

Florida legislators consider keeping identities of murder witnesses secret

POMC mothers tell how such a law could have helped them

TALLAHASSEE, FLA. — A plan to give murder witnesses more protection in Florida barely squeaked through its first Senate committee Tuesday, Febr. 21, two weeks after House members gave an identical measure unanimous initial approval.

The legislation—and its House version, HB 111—would make murder witnesses’ identities confidential—exempt from disclosure in public records for up to two years after the crime.

Proponents say the proposal could better help law

(Continued on p. 18)
Taking a stand on the death penalty

By Mary ELLEDGE

(Mary Elledge is the Chapter Leader of the Greater Portland Area POMC Chapter.)

When people want to start a Parents Of Murdered Children (POMC) Chapter, they learn that the National POMC Office does not take a stand on the death penalty. Members generally come to understand why. The reason is we want to provide a safe place for co-victims of homicide to share their common situation and express any emotion: anger, sadness, frustration, and helplessness. We meet to support each other and we do not judge. To spend our time debating this issue would only lead to arguments that cannot be resolved.

There are many valid arguments on the pros and cons of using the death penalty. For some, it can be part of their morality. It can also be against their religious beliefs. The death penalty can divide our feelings for one another, and it can be very emotional. Some members are for it, others are against. Opinions can vary, depending on the case. Members can certainly express their opinions; but, their opinions may differ from those of other co-victims. This is why we do not take a stand.

Co-victims’ opinions on the death penalty are their own choice. We accept opinions, but we do not have to agree. Our society cannot agree on this topic, so how can we as co-victims agree with one another. There are many people who try to force an answer from us on this topic. As co-victims, we do not have to defend our opinion. It is hard enough to hear the debate about it without being told how we should feel.

Co-victims of homicide must live with their grief and loss. Many who ask us to choose a side on the death penalty have already formed their opinions and they have not experienced the loss of a loved one to homicide. Some feel that if we are in favor of the death penalty, we are vengeful or filled with hate. This is not the case. Maybe a co-victim is looking at “protection of society.” If it is their opinion, others need to listen and not judge. The same thing should be for co-victims who do not believe in the death penalty. They love their loved ones as much as someone who is in favor of the death penalty, but killing a murderer does not bring back our loved one. Co-victims should be able to share their thoughts and not be judged or forced into making a choice.

"To spend our time debating this issue would only lead to arguments that cannot be resolved."

This is not a black or white issue. There are many variables. In many cases the death penalty is used as a bargaining tool for those convicted of a crime to tell the truth to avoid it. It was used by one of the murderers in my son’s case. He told the truth to avoid death and helped convict two other murderers involved. Plea bargaining may be the only way we can solve some cases.

Hopefully, those who want to understand the pros and cons of those co-victims of homicide who want to express their feelings on the death penalty, will respect the co-victims’ choices.

There is no way that you can walk in a co-victim’s shoes. How heinous should a crime be before the death penalty should be used? How many people does a serial killer have to murder before he or she is considered a danger to others in prison? I have talked and supported mothers whose sons were murdered—while in prison—by other convicts. Their sons were not convicted of a person-to-person crime. They were serving prison time without causing problems. The mothers’ heartache parallels ours. The men that murdered their sons were already serving a sentence for murder or a violent person-to-person crime.

That is why we cannot take a stand on the death penalty. Our reason for having chapters is to provide a safe place for our members to express or discuss their opinions, if they choose. One can admire a co-victim who can express his or her opinion without judging another co-victim whose opinion is different. We also can understand why the early founders and leaders of POMC did not want to take a public stand on the death penalty. It would take away the support we need and get from one another. For some it would cause more turmoil.

Finally, judging a co-victim who chooses not to forgive the murderer is not anyone’s right. Forgiveness is between the co-victim and their God. Co-victims should not be the one to ask for forgiveness if they choose not to forgive. What about the murderer? So many co-victims were told they would go to hell if they did not forgive. I have held their hands and seen their tears. Why can’t the co-victim put forgiveness in the hands of God? The murderer is the one who should repent. What right do people have—who are not the co-victims’ confessors—to judge them?

Forgiveness for some can be letting go of wasting our energy on hating the murderer. They are not worth the problems “hate” can do to our health and happiness. Again, losing a love one to homicide is painful enough without others judging us or forcing their opinions on us. I have shared what I have seen over the many years I have worked with co-victims of homicide and the experience of my son being murdered. I have the utmost respect for others’ religion and beliefs. Every homicide is different.

For all co-victims of homicide, I wish understanding and hope for them to reach an “adjusted” normality.Ω
POMC Flag observance honors infant

Trumbull Co. Chapter adopted the ritual in 1999

BY RAYMOND L. SMITH

WARREN, OH, March 2, 2017—Brittany Watkins, the mother of a five-week-old that may have been shaken to death by the infant’s father, stood outside the Trumbull County Jail Wednesday afternoon surrounded by relatives, friends and strangers watching a flag being raised in honor of her daughter.

The red flag has children, colored in blue, holding hands, but there is a missing child. The missing child represents children who met untimely deaths.

The Trumbull County Chapter of the Parents Of Murdered Children will fly the flag outside the jail at least through Friday. It also will be flown in Niles [Ohio], where Aubrianna Wilson was found injured.

Watkins did not speak during the solemn ceremony.

Miriam Fife, a former victim’s advocate with the Trumbull County Prosecutor’s office and the leader and founder of the Trumbull County Chapter of Parents Of Murdered Children, said the flag raising ceremony helps families because it shows there is community support during their most difficult time.

“They have to know, it is important to know, that everyone cares, especially about the child,” Fife said.

Fife said community support was vitally important when her son, Raymond, was murdered.

“The community was 100 percent behind us,” she said. “Without the support I do not believe we would have gotten through it.”

Fife said the local chapter of Parents Of Murdered Children has been raising the flag since May 1999 when Bridget Wetzl, 10, of Weathersfield, was found after being kidnapped, raped and murdered.

The flag is flown anytime there is a murder of a child under the age of 18.

“We do not fly the flag until we receive word from (Trumbull County Prosecutor) Dennis Watkins, saying he had enough information to rule it a murder,” Fife said.

The last flag raising was done in January 2016, after the Nov. 30, 2015 death of Russell Cottrill Jr., 3, at a Cleveland hospital from what the Cuyahoga Co. coroner’s office ruled as “severe head trauma.”

Arthur Harper was indicted by Trumbull County grand jury on charges of murder, felonious assault and endangering children. A trial has not yet taken place.

“The flag is a reminder that we need to do better for the kids,” Fife said.

Matthew L. Wilson, 1017 Bellair Court, Niles, the 5 week old’s father, was indicted and has pleaded not guilty to charges of murder, felonious assault and child endangerment. He was given a $1 million bond.

[Reprinted from the Warren, Ohio, Tribune Chronicle. Used by permission.]

Open the orange AMAZON LINK above on the POMC webpage

Amazon.com is a POMC sponsor. POMC receives 4-13% (depending on item) of all Amazon.com purchases made through this link. The use of this link does not increase the cost of your purchase.

SURVIVORS

Closeup of the POMC Cincinnati Monument in Spring Grove Cemetery. It is a different way to remember the fallen. No names occur on the stone.
Parole Block™ is a program of the National Organization of Parents Of Murdered Children, Inc.

Support for the Parole Block Program:

Jarrod Chrisman, from Rodney & Suzie Chrisman
Michele Rene (Necocheos) Flores, from Marilyn Necocheos
Tim Garsow, from Patty Walters
Kim Martello, from Elizabeth Wilson
Timothy Staunton, from Denise Coleman
Lisa Weaver, from Howard & Ann Klerk
Jason C. Wright, from Stacey Richards

1601 Convicted murderers were denied parole through POMC’s Parole Block Program as conducted by the POMC National Office and POMC Chapters in the U.S.

Help Keep Murderers Behind Bars
Write letters protesting the parole of those convicted murderers listed in each issue of the SURVIVORS newsletter. Petitions can also be downloaded from POMC’s website at www.pomc.org.

• Contact National POMC if your loved one’s murderer is going to be considered for early release or parole.

• Contact National POMC to be placed on the list of those willing to circulate monthly petitions.

• Support the program by sending your tax-deductible donation.

HEARING RESULTS

PAROLES DENIED SINCE THE FALL 2016 SURVIVORS
Jon Adams
Arnolfo Ayala
Duane Henry
Ricky Knapp
Richard Lockridge
Christopher Lynn Thompson
Edward Cronell [denied for 3 years]

PAROLES GRANTED
Nathaniel Green
Thomas Opozda

DIED IN PRISON
Kenneth Lonnie Cook

RESULTS PENDING
Parole Hearing: October 31, 2016
RE: Ronnie Curtis ID#: 14366-045

(Continued on p. 9)

HEARINGS TO BE HELD

Parole Hearing: April 2017
RE: I. G. Wimbish ID#: 0059366

On Dec. 10, 1993, Tim Garsow, 20, went to retrieve a coat that he had left at a friend’s apartment. While there, I.G. Wimbish approached him. Wimbish had been vandalizing cars in the area. He thought Tim would report him to the police, so he hit Tim on the head with a blunt object. Although Tim had fallen to the ground, Wimbish continued to hit him on the head. On the way to the hospital, Tim was pronounced dead. Ω
Parole Hearing:  
June 2017  
RE: Jeffery J. Blair  
ID#: A214560-5B2  
On Nov. 13, 1988, Jeffery Blair beat, raped, and strangled Bridget Ann Buxton. He threw her body into the Mad River, and it was not found until the following day when two fishermen saw her body floating in the river.

He was serving time for previous offenses, paroled in March 1987, but ended his parole when he murdered Bridget.

Blair was convicted of murder, abuse of a corpse, and illegal conveyance to a detention facility.

He was sentenced 15 years-to-life for murder, three-to-five years for the abuse of a corpse, and two years for the last charge. He will have served only 29 years when he is considered for parole. Ω

To protest write to:  
Ohio Parole Board  
Office of Victim Services  
770 W. Broad Street  
Columbus, OH 43222

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Parole Hearing:  
June 3, 2017  
RE: Mary Elizabeth Cigainero Monte  
ADC#: 703875  
Mary Elizabeth Cigainero Monte often talked about plans to kill her husband, 30 year old, Christopher Cigainero.

On June 4, 1989, at 2:00 A.M., she followed through with those plans. She knew her husband would come home late, so she waited in the dark while their three children were sleeping. When

She confided her acts to her friends and lovers, indicating that she intentionally shot him.

Mary was convicted of first degree murder and sentenced to life in prison. She will have served only 26 years when she is considered for parole.

Justice demands that this convicted murderer be denied parole, that she serve the full prison term to which she was sentenced. Ω

To protest write to:  
Institutional Release Services  
2801 S. Olive Street,  
Suite 6-D  
Pine Bluff, AR 71603

(Continued on p. 10)

POMC Catalog Available  
Journey Through Grief  
Special gifts, memorials, and tributes for those grieving the death of a loved one to murder.

POMC’s “Journey Through Grief” catalog is available by contacting POMC at: (888) 818-POMC. The catalog can also be downloaded from our website at: www.pomc.org.

The catalog provides color photos and a listing for all POMC items: books, bumper stickers, brochures, clothing, music, pamphlets, etc.

Information on items for POMC’s National Day of Remembrance for Murder Victims, special gifts, memorials, and tributes also are included in the catalog.

Contact POMC today for your free catalog.

CORRECTION  
In the Fall 2016 issue, we mistakenly reported that the parole board had denied Ronald Brook "for another three years, and added an additional 15 years to his sentence!" The board did deny his parole for another three years. But, the board did not add "an additional 15 years to his sentence!"
Prof. John Trokan rates Ken Czillinger’s grief ministry in academic, hospice, and other settings

February 15, 2017

Dear Sherry,

Ken Czillinger was an extraordinary educator, minister, colleague, and mentor. Ken developed and taught the “Life Through Death” course at the Mount [Mt. St. Joseph College] for over three decades. As our RN-BSN completion programs expanded into a hospital cohort model, Ken’s course was the one our nursing department requested for their nurses to take as their religion course. For over twenty years I had the privilege of reading the student evaluations from his courses. His classes were the highest rated evaluations of any faculty member I

PAROLE BLOCK

(Continued from p. 9)

Letters from families

Response to parole result
—Thanks for trying!

Unfortunately, Thomas Opozda’s parole was granted. He has to complete a year-long restorative justice course and then a few months for transition before his release, early next year. Thank you for your help with the parole block. We did everything possible to keep him in jail to serve all his time, but it wasn’t meant to be. In a few years we will do this again for the murderer. /Ω

Sue Fitzgerald

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March 16, 2017
From family of Frank Carlson,

Dear Friends and Family,

Thank you for taking the time to help us in our crusade to keep the person in prison who killed Frank and damaged Annette so horribly.

Our letter writing campaign was moving along thanks to you when on Friday, March 10, the prisoner informed the Parole Board that he wanted to defer his hearing for three years.

This is his legal right. This is his third and last request. While we are informed 90 days in advance of a hearing, he has 45 days before the hearing to defer. It’s not fair, but very little about this crime is fair. We must deal with the laws as they are written.

Yesterday I met with our lawyer and Annette’s sister at the San Francisco District Attorney’s Office to discuss our course of action. We will communicate our expectations to the Parole Board that we will attend a hearing in 2020, and that Marsy’s Law terms will apply.

(Marsy’s Law protects and expands the legal rights of victims of crime to include 17 rights in the judicial process, including the right to legal standing, protection from the defendant, notification of all court proceedings, and restitution, as well as granting parole boards far greater powers to deny inmates parole. — Ed.)

Your letters of support make a difference, and we can’t thank you enough for taking the time to write them — and also sharing our cause with other people in your circle of friends and family members. Our website will remain up, and we will keep it current. When 2020 comes we will be ready and we will once again ask you for your support.

How much that support means to us, to Annette, to our late parents and the people that can’t be there to speak! People like Frank. /Ω

Sincerely,

Eric Carlson

Wai Ling Carlson

SURVIVORS

have ever taught with. Students raved about his knowledge, insight, depth of understanding, skill, and fostering healing in the lives of those in grief and bereavement. His ability to blend his academic knowledge of grief theory with the practice of working with hospice patients and their families, as well as families impacted by suicide was unsurpassed. As a colleague he was a tremendous support to our faculty, as well as contributor to our Spirituality Institutes. He was a treasured friend and mentor to me, who I deeply miss. God graced us with his life, his faith, his hope, and his compassion. /Ω

Blessings,

John Trokan

Hear Our Voice!

Parole Block Program Policy

The goal of the Parole Block Program is to help prevent the early release/parole of those convicted of murder. It is not the objective of the program to judge or reevaluate the circumstances surrounding the crime. A judge and/or jury has heard the facts, determined the degree of guilt, and imposed a sentence. Parole Block helps to ensure that the minimum side of the sentence is served.

POMC’s Parole Block Program is an independent program designed to block the early release of prisoners. Anyone, regardless of age or voting status, may sign the petition.
Film maker Leanora Minai reflects upon showing her film at POMC’s 2012 National Conference in Phoenix

Notes from her blog

[Leanora Minai’s documentary screened at the 2012 POMC Conference in Phoenix and at the Carrboro [N.C.] Film Festival in November 2012. As 2013 began, she reflected upon 2012’s highlights.]

I’m extremely grateful and pleased with the reception of my short documentary, “The Mothers,” which I finished in May 2012. The film is about the impact of gun murder.

I followed two mothers from the Parents Of Murdered Children Chapter in Durham, N.C. and made the film as part of earning a certificate in Documentary Arts from the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University.

After the film premiered, I traveled to Arizona, where “The Mothers” was screened during the Parents Of Murdered Children National Conference. The film was also among 33 films shown during the 7th annual Carrboro Film Festival.

In addition to screenings, I was a guest on WUNC’s The State of Things with host Frank Stasio and appeared on Tarheel Talk, a FOX 50 TV program focused on community issues in North Carolina.

Changes to Louisiana sentencing laws?

LOUISIANA. The Justice Reinvestment Task Force project is attempting to enact sweeping changes to Louisiana sentencing laws to reduce sentences for defendants, thereby reducing the number of inmates in state custody.

The state’s incarceration rate has shot up 35 percent over the past 20 years—currently double the national average: 816 per 100,000 people. This costs the state $600 to $700 million a year.

This push comes at a time when many states, including some in the South, have embraced a movement toward deincarceration and sentencing reform that’s gained support across the political spectrum.

The Task Force is made up of several state lawmakers, judges, a sheriff, the state public defender, corrections officials, a prosecutor and a leading conservative pastor. They are charged with recommending potentially sweeping changes to the way Louisiana punishes law-breakers.

Proposed changes deal with sentencing laws that involve life sentence penalties and limits to prosecutors’ ability to use the habitual offender statute. The life sentence would be eliminated for first degree (aggravated) rape, second degree murder, and first degree murder when the death penalty is not imposed.

The overall thrust of the task force is to reduce minimum and maximum sentences that may be imposed even for violent crimes.

Begun in June 2016, the Task Force is submitting proposals during 2017.

Like my journalism work, making the film was uniquely rewarding. It made a difference in the lives of Diane Jones and Mina Hampton, the main mothers in the film and Co-Leaders of the Durham Chapter, and that filled my heart.

Mina’s daughter, Charlotte Hampton, posted a comment on my website as I filmed and wrote updates about the story on this blog:

“This is not a topic that everyone will read, and some who read will not understand. Leanora, you are so brave and so deeply caring to even attempt it. Thank you for letting us know we are not forgotten, and that our loved ones will live on through us and your efforts to bring these stories to others.”

People can link to the film in the column at the following address:
https://vimeo.com/leanora/themothers

People also can access her film on the Durham North Carolina Chapter webpage. Go to the POMC web page—pomc.org—select the Chapter tab on left of page, choose Durham Chapter, click on this photo—

People also can contact Ms. Minai at her address:
LeanoraMinai@gmail.com
CONTACT PERSONS, CHAPTER LEADERS, AND STATE COORDINATORS CORNER

A WORLD OF THANKS, VOLUNTEER!
We appreciate all that you do. You give your time and energy, too. You brighten lives like a shining star. What a truly special person you are. You make a difference by caring, and change the world by VOLUNTEERING!

THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING CHAPTERS for the dedication, compassion, and selflessness shown through their continued efforts to provide on-going emotional support to others through phone calls, email, support group meetings, court accompaniment, local events bringing about awareness, education, and advocacy to victims of crime, and remembrance programs for the surviving family members whose loved ones' lives were taken from them.

In this 2017 anniversary, POMC acknowledges those Chapters with Articles of Association that were signed between Jan. 1 and April 30 of the year they became a probationary POMC Chapter:

- Central Minnesota Chapter/MN-17 years
- Central Missouri Area Wide Chapter/OH- 27 years
- Delaware County Chapter/PA- 22 years
- DuPage County (and Beyond) Chapter/IL-12 years
- Durham North Carolina Chapter/NC- 20 years
- Greater Cincinnati Area Chapter/OH-16 years
- Greater Portland Area Chapter/OR-35 years
- Heights Chapter/TX- 21 years
- Inland Empire Chapter/CA-9 years
- Kansas City Area Wide Chapter/MO&KS-27 years
- Los Angeles Chapter /CA- 5 years
- Maine Chapter/ME-27 years
- Metro Detroit Chapter/MI- 35 years
- Miami-Dade County Chapter/FL- 34 years
- Queens Chapter/NY- 14 years
- Sacramento California Area Chapter/CA- 9 years
- St. Louis Area Wide Chapter/IL&MO-32 years
- Southeast Minnesota Chapter/MN-19 years
- Southeastern Massachusetts Chapter/MA-9 years
- Southwest Florida Chapter/FL-18 years
- Sumter Chapter/SC- 3 years
- Valley of the Sun Chapter/AZ- 31 years

THANKS ALSO TO CONTACT PERSONS AND STATE COORDINATORS

- Alabama
- Hawaii
- Mississippi
- Montana
- Nebraska
- North Dakota
- Oklahoma
- Rhode Island
- Tennessee
- Utah
- Vermont
- Washington, D.C.
- Wyoming

HUNDRED S of survivors across the U.S. volunteer for the National Organization of POMC as Chapter Leaders, Co-Leaders, and Contact Persons. If you are at a point in your life where you are ready to reach out to others who have suffered the loss of a loved one due to violence, please contact me.

The following states need someone to offer support services through phone, email, support group meetings, & court accompaniment, etc.

- Alabama
- Arkansas
- California
- Colorado
- Connecticut
- Florida
- Georgia
- Idaho
- Illinois
- Indiana
- Iowa
- Kansas
- Kentucky
- Louisiana
- Maryland
- Massachusetts
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- New Hampshire
- New Jersey
- New Mexico
- New York
- North Carolina
- Ohio
- Oregon
- Pennsylvania
- South Carolina
- South Dakota
- Texas
- Virginia
- West Virginia
- Wisconsin
2016 Fairhaven Woman of the Year: Anne Murphy helps grieving parents heal

By AIMEE CHIAVAROLI

Fairhaven, MA — Anne Murphy went through photos on her phone of some children who have been murdered, recalling pieces of their story. The youngest was 1-year-old.

Murphy knows their families’ pain all too well. Her 16-year-old son was one of those lost too soon to violence, but she found her calling and helped ease her pain, by reaching out to help others.

The Co-Leader of the Southeastern Massachusetts Chapter of Parents Of Murdered Children—which meets at the Harrop Center next to the Unitarian Memorial Church in Fairhaven—said she used to work at Channel 7.

But after losing her son, she needed to do something else.

“I knew that I had to be of service to people,” Murphy said. “And I know what my purpose is—to help other bereaved family members.”

For her efforts in helping parents whose children have suffered violent deaths, Murphy is The Standard-Times 2016 Fairhaven Woman of the Year.

Murphy recalled visiting the parents of children murdered at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, CT with POMC, a national organization, to provide information and resources.

“People were crying and firemen were crying...; there were just teddy bears everywhere,” she said. “You couldn’t leave there without being changed.”

Now, she said those parents are active in victims’ rights and spreading awareness about gun violence.

Parents Of Murdered Children also had a conference in Orlando, Fla. not long after the deadly mass shooting at Pulse nightclub.

Murphy said the police chief spoke at the conference. He said “it’s not a coincidence this group is here after what we experienced.”

Murphy lost her son Devyn in 2002 when he was stabbed at a house party and later died in a hospital. Her son’s murder hasn’t been solved “yet,” she said. “The last words he said to me were ‘I love you mom,’ ” Murphy said.

“I realize this is going to be for the rest of my life,” she said. Murphy said she can still go into a store where a song playing triggers sad memories and she has to leave.

“You can’t help other people if you don’t help yourself, so it’s a learning experience,” she said. She said she discovered a more spiritual side of herself with the help of supporters and believes she has a “soul to soul” relationship with her son.

“But when you see people grow... you see that transformation and that is such a wonderful feeling,” she said. “You just reach out. It’s a way to heal.”

Murphy reached out to Lisa LeClair from Brockton on Facebook. LeClair said her 21-year-old son, Joshua, was shot outside her house and died in front of her.

“She pulled me out of the darkest spot I have ever been in in my life,” LeClair said. “My other children wouldn’t have a mother if it wasn’t for her.” LeClair has three other children and four grandsons.

“Because of her, I now do things for the city of Brockton,” she said. In 2013, the same year Joshua was murdered, she helped start a Thanksgiving dinner in an elderly high-rise building and donated leftover food to the homeless. Now, with over 100 volunteers, food is delivered to over 1,000 people in nine elderly high-rise buildings, she said.

Susan Fitzgerald became the certified Co-Leader of the POMC Southeastern Chapter in July [2016] with Murphy’s encouragement. Her son Joshua, 30, was murdered at the VFW in Fairhaven in 2008, she said.

She went to Florida to get a three-year certification at a three-day leadership seminar where a POMC conference took place a few days later.

“She came four days early to be with me and support me with that,” Fitzgerald said of Murphy. “I wouldn’t have done it alone.”

“She says the right things to people, she’s so good at that,” she said. “In the middle of all that pain people are in, she brings them hope and comfort.”
Arkansas Chapter opposes gun bill

LITTLE ROCK, AR — State Sen. Bart Hester wants the second September weekend to be tax free for guns and ammunition. To that end, he proposed Senate Bill 126—what he calls the Second Amendment Appreciation Weekend.

A Feb. 17 hearing referred the bill to the Senate Revenue & Taxation Committee and set the new hearing for March 22.

Elaine Colclasure, Contact Person of the Central Arkansas POMC Chapter, opposes the bill.

Although she is a widow because of gun violence, she cited “a possible negative financial impact” for the economy. In a KTHV newscast, she said it is not “financially responsible” to give tax credits to one special group.

Sen. Hester concedes that if the bill would create a too high economic impact (he estimates a 10% savings in his district), it might not be feasible. Ω

Victim prevention workshop held in Delray during Rights Week

DELRAY BEACH, FLA. — During National Crime Victims’ Rights Week—NCVRW) (April 2 to 8), The Delray Beach Police Department and Investigative and Training Divisions—for the first time—presented at the Delray Beach Public Library a free community workshop on How Not to Be a Victim.

This year’s theme was Strength. Resilience. Justice. The April 4 workshop covered things like internet safety, fraud prevention, stalking, and active shooter scenarios.

The cause is personal for Dawn Terrizzi, administrative assistant and community response for the Delray Beach Police Department. Her brother was murdered. She is the facilitator for the Delray Beach POMC Chapter support group.

She said that helping others not to become victims helps her find purpose from her brother’s murder. She would never been involved in something like this, she said, “if all of that didn’t happen to me. You can make something positive out of something negative. God can make something beautiful out of ashes.”

Terrizzi hopes that National Crime Victims’ Rights Week is a time for everyone to learn about victimization and promote laws and programs to help victims rebuild their lives. Ω

Survivors

Maine POMC holds National Crime Victims' Rights Week

AUGUSTA, ME. Apr. 2, 2017.— Sunday marked the beginning of National Crime Victims' Rights Week and the Maine POMC Chapter hosted its 13th Annual Celebration Luncheon in Augusta.

Guests from Maine’s new Unsolved Homicide Unit spoke to murder-victim survivors at this year’s luncheon.

Arthur Jette, the Chapter Leader says, “We’re all aware of the criminal process and how it provides constitutional rights to the accused and also to the convicted. But there was a suggestion and a feeling that those rights did not extend to the victims. Victims need to have rights too.”

Other homicide-victim survivors also emphasized that those who survive murder victims also are victims of crime. They also deserve recognition as crime victims. Ω

A hope vigil honors murdered children

FAIRHAVEN, MA— The Southeastern Massachusetts POMC Chapter held its annual vigil on Dec. 4, to remember loved ones lost to violence. The vigil was held at Fairhaven Unitarian Church.

Several Chapter speakers and musical instrumentalists shared the stage. A ritual of hanging ornaments on a memorial tree honored the murder victims.

Alice Muscovitz, Chapter Co-Leader, said, “It’s very difficult to go through a homicide and lose people you love. …There is hope for people.” Ω
In Loving Memory Of:

The difference between the living and the dead is the difference between the remembered and the forgotten.

Lest We Forget!

Michael Simmons, from Reginald & LaToyce Lee
Darrell Smith, from Barbara Smith
Timothy Staunton, from Denise Coleman
Rachel Helena Timmerman, from L.C. & Lillian Timmerman
Anthony K. Ward, from Ruthie Walker
Lisa Weaver, from Howard & Ann Klerk
Nicole Ann Willson, from Anne Spielman
Nathan Shane Wood, from Zola Wood
Steven Woodruff, from Ruth Woodruff

REMEMBERING

“It is understandable that people can’t forget how a loved one was murdered. It shakes us all to the core of our lives and community. The horrific and traumatic nature of a violent death is deeply experienced and images can easily be triggered. We are hard wired to remember the most intense moments of our lives.

They say memories are golden.
Well, maybe that is true:
I never wanted memories;
I only wanted you.” —Author Unknown

SURVIVORS

Cheryl Peekenpaugh
David & Linda Rein
Linda Roubinek
Felix Schiaffino
Jerry & Geretha Snyder
Jerome & Vivian Willging

POMC was named in a will for $10,000 in the estate of Mark Alan Nichols, who died Dec. 20, 2016. He lived in the Cleveland area. John Salvi murdered Mark’s sister, Lee Ann Nichols, in 1994. She was working at the Planned Parenthood office in Boston, Mass.

IN HONOR OF

Hope Thompson, from Matthew Sabo, Alexis Schrimpfp, Ann Schrimpfp, Stephen Thomson

DONATIONS

Matthew Adamczyk
Jeffrey Cashdan
Phillip Dumas
Neal Frentheway
Casey Groettum
Amelia Kester
Nicole Lipscomb
Bill Markowitz & Nancy Grewe
Rose Minor

Donors can find information about the procedure at pomc.org.

Press orange tab (as above) on webpage and select from webpage box that opens (as below).

We Need Your Help!
Dealing with the Media

You have the right to:

★ Say “no” to an interview
★ Select the spokesperson or advocate of your choice
★ Select the time and location of all interviews
★ Request a specific reporter
★ Release a written statement through a spokesperson instead of having an interview
★ Exclude children from interviews
★ Refuse to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable or any questions you think are inappropriate
★ Know the direction the story will take, before the story about the victim and your family is reported
★ Review how you are quoted in the story, before the story is reported
★ Refuse to attend a press conference. You may choose to speak to one reporter at a time, or to not speak at all
★ Have a correction published when inaccurate information is reported
★ Ask to omit from publication or broadcast any photographs, videotape, or statements that you find offensive or disturbing
★ Keep your photograph out of publication. You also have the right to have your videotaped image distorted electronically, to maintain your privacy
★ You have the right to have photos returned when given to the press to use. Make sure you get the name of the reporter and his/her assurance your photo will be returned
★ Completely give your side of the story
★ File a formal complaint against any reporter
★ Grieve in privacy
★ Be treated with dignity and respect by the media—at all times

[Adapted from the Southeastern Minnesota POMC Chapter webpage under Criminal Justice. Used by permission.]
My 'New Normal' with illness feels anything but 'Normal'

By Rebekah Dorr

[What appears here is excerpted from a longer article about her experience with illness. Homicide-victim survivors experience a similar shift in feeling. Her full account can be found at https://themighty.com/author/rebekah-dorr/]

A “new normal.” We hear this phrase flow with ease off the tip of well-meaning, albeit ignorant tongues and read the quipped typing from those who hold not the faintest clue as to what that really means.

They do not know how a “new normal” is fought for and forged over days and weeks of struggling along with the lurking companions of anxiety and depression, silent but present. They do not know how a “new normal” often means loss of relationships or how often days stretch endlessly into nights that are frequently marked with loneliness and fear.

This “new normal” is learning how life will never be normal.

There is no more steady routine or predictable plans or the carefree spontaneity that life “before” allowed.

Our “new normal” is spent on the inside looking out, watching the world spinning along, more often the spectator than participator even though our hearts still long for a life we barely remember anymore.

The only thing constant and reliable about our “new normal” is that “normal” is always evolving, sometimes hour by hour.

We are counseled and instructed to “embrace our new normal” as though somehow that explains away the grief etched into our hearts at the loss we must endure.

While we must grasp onto the footholds of hope and anchor ourselves to the days of reprieve and love and joys in this life, they will never be the same. There is nothing normal about the “new normal” and its positive censure in denying our reality serves no one.

I wish it showed the phone that seldom rings from a friend or loved one calling just to check in and say they are thinking of us.

There is nothing normal about the “new normal”—the greatest misnomer ever to exist. Ω
Secret identities for murder witnesses

(Continued from p. 5)

seek justice and that offering protection through an exemption in Florida’s public records law could entice more witnesses to come forward who might not be doing so now out of fear of retaliation.

But, some committee members noted, witnesses’ identities would still be shared with the criminal defendant’s attorney and would be released eventually once criminal proceedings begin in open court. Some senators noted that criminal court rules already allowed judges to shield witnesses.

At least six mothers with Parents Of Murdered Children told senators how their children had been slain, yet the killers went free because witnesses were afraid to speak up.

The First Amendment Foundation objected to such a proposed exemption, noting that a similar, but broader, proposal failed in 2016. The Foundation president cited anonymous crime-reporting agencies like CrimeLine and Crime Stoppers already exist to alleviate any such concerns.

[A full account appeared in the Miami-Herald on Febr. 21, reported by Kristen M. Clark.]
Dedication Page

In memory of Scott Jonathan Lewis

The Jean Lewis family, including Sandra and Steve, have provided this issue of SURVIVORS in memory of their son and brother, Scott Jonathan Lewis (1959-1980).

Dedication Page Information

Dedication Pages can be included in each publication of the SURVIVORS Newsletter. Not only is this a way to memorialize our loved ones, it also helps to defray the cost of publishing the newsletter. We offer this opportunity to pay tribute with poems, photos (black and white only), letters/loving thoughts, or special requests. A donation of $25.00 is requested for each 3 1/2 x 4 inch square used, 2 squares for $50.00, 3 squares for $75.00, whole page $100.00. Send item and appropriate donation to "Dedication Page," POMC, 4960 Ridge Ave., Suite 2, Cincinnati, OH 45209. Please include your name and daytime phone number in case we have to contact you for clarification.

REMINDER: has something changed?
Please let POMC know if your name, address, city, state, phone number(s), or email address have changed. Call us toll free at: (888) 818-7662 or e-mail to: pomc.org

SURVIVORS Newsletter Subscription

Please find enclosed $10.00 for my annual subscription (three issues) for the SURVIVORS Newsletter ($25.00 outside the United States). Please consider adding an extra subscription fee to help defray the cost for someone who cannot afford to subscribe.

(Please Print)

Name:__________________________
Address:________________________

Email address_____________________
City, State, Zip:___________________
Daytime number: ()__________________
Amt. enclosed: $___________ for ______ year(s)
Payment method: ___Visa ___MC ___Am Ex
___Dis. ___Check
Card number:_____________________
Expiration date:_____________________

Enclosed is an extra $___________ donation for someone in need and is given in:

Memory of:________________________
Honor of:_________________________

All those donating an extra gift “in loving memory of,” or “in honor of” will be listed in the next issue of the SURVIVORS newsletter. To have POMC send a letter acknowledging your gift to the family, please provide family’s name, address, city, state, and zip code.
Parents Of Murdered Children, Inc.
For the families and friends of those who have died by violence
4960 Ridge Ave, Suite 2
Cincinnati, OH  45209

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