



The Compassionate Friends

# Australian National Newsletter

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## From the Editors

Cheery greetings from Chris and Maxine

Thank you for all contributions. We feel a bit like the boat owners on the shore calling 'come in number four' when waiting for your emails to roll in. Well, all states with newsletter representatives are safely ashore. If any members in Tasmania or NT are reading this, please drop us a line for the November issue.

It is wonderful to have glimpses from overseas members – and sometimes some words have a particular resonance; do you remember Betsy de Jager's description of her grandchildren as a wonderful 'bunch of flowers in our empty meadow'? (Maxine, like Betsy, is now grandmother of twins - born at around the time of the March newsletter – and has been smiling ever since).

Thank you to Joe Lawley for his reflections on the founding days of TCF in the UK all those years ago. What a precious acorn that was; the founders must be very proud of the oak tree that has grown from it, and is still branching .... Joe has also written about the origins of the TCF logo. We agree with Joe's sentiment of keeping the logo inviolate and we have adopted the copy he sent us for the newsletter's new-look front page. You will read that TCF-UK has never registered the design of the logo – so there is no need to add that little ® beside it.

We have also taken the opportunity to repeat an article written by the logo's designer John Fisher which appeared in the newsletter in 2003.

No poems were submitted for this issue – and a note from Margot says that she prefers to see poems only in local state newsletters – what do you think? We have included the piece 'Lesson from the geese' which seems appropriate to a self support group like TCF.

Note to all readers; we are happy to accept letters to the editor from any individual if you have any thoughts you wish to share. Please keep letters to about 200 words.

Finally, according to plan, Chris and Maxine will be editing the November 2006 and the March 2007 newsletters before handing over to NSW for the July 2007 issue.

Very best wishes  
Chris and Maxine

## Interstate News



### ACT and Queanbeyan

We are looking forward to our inaugural weekend retreat to be held in the Southern Highlands in August and will report about it next time.

There have been several opportunities for our members to attend loss and grief support training and education workshops, arranged by organisations within the ACT and Region Bereavement Support Network. It is good to see concepts like ‘continuing bonds’ becoming a well accepted part of learning about bereavement. Also there seems to be a sense that grief is not a finite journey but that we may mourn the loss of a person close to us for the rest of our lives – in one way or another. We don’t hear those words ‘acceptance’ and ‘closure’ at seminars either – maybe journalists will eventually stop using them too.

Some years ago our committee applied to the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) for recognition as a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) also known as a charitable status. Unfortunately the ATO found that we did not meet the requirements of the legislation and declined our application. We found this very strange as many of our sister organisations throughout Australia have DGR status. We have decided to reapply to the ATO as it seems that some of the rules have changed since our original application. TCF Mandurah has provided us with some valuable help with copies of their paperwork and some hints to make the process a little easier. If any other states have tips on their application process and how to make sure that all questions are answered we would be very pleased to hear from you.

Yours in compassionate friendship  
Chris and Maxine  
TCF ACT and Queanbeyan



### New South Wales

This has been such a busy quarter for TCF NSW that it is hard to realise that winter is here and spring just around the corner. Our quarter started on 1 April with a visit to the NSW Council by John Hurley and Anne Wicking of TCF Victoria. We had a most productive discussion of ways to increase communication and cooperation between our state organisations.

In connection with our plans to host a chapter leaders workshop, four TCF members travelled to the Petrea King Institute in Bundanoon to look over that venue. Petrea invited TCF to send two representatives to the program which their institute offers for bereaved individuals; ‘Sometimes Hearts Have to Break’. Two members of the City and Metropolitan Chapter, a parent and a sibling, attended the five-day program in June, and were very positively impacted by the experience. No definite plans for our own chapter leaders workshop have been finalised; however, all the chapter leaders have been asked for their input. We hope to be able to schedule this event in early 2007.

Our three new chapters in Nowra, Bega, and Orange are off to excellent starts. Chapter leaders throughout NSW were invited to take part in the NSW Health Department’s ‘Futures Planning Project’. Leaders attended meetings throughout NSW in June, at which they were given opportunity to speak out on priorities for the future. We were also invited to attend a focus group in Sydney hosted by the Commonwealth Government on postvention services for suicide survivors.

In attempting to further increase our outreach to bereaved individuals in the community who may not know about TCF, we have been making direct contact with as many professional organisations as possible, making sure that TCF web

site details are available. The positive impact of this outreach has resulted in over 120 persons, including 16 professionals, being registered on our web site to receive regular updates on TCF activities. Two of our members attended a workshop hosted by the NSW Health Department to learn how to use a new computerised referral program which is now available to all public and private helping agencies throughout the State. TCF has received a grant of a new computer, and more training will be available to all our volunteers so that we can maximise its use.

We wish to take this opportunity to invite all TCF members Australia-wide to join us this spring at our Annual Residential Weekend, which will be held 9-10 September 2006, at Rafferty's Resort at Lake Macquarie. Lake Macquarie is 90 minutes drive north of Sydney, and the beautiful award winning resort overlooks the lake. The City and Metropolitan Chapter is hosting the weekend. Full details, including a registration form which can be down loaded, are available on our web site: [www.thecompassionatefriends.org.au](http://www.thecompassionatefriends.org.au).

We are delighted that Julie Dunsmore will be the facilitator for this weekend. Julie, who has worked in the area of loss, grief and trauma for over 25 years, is currently the president of the National Association for Loss and Grief (NSW). She is a regular speaker on ABC radio and has made a number of television documentaries on loss and grief, including programs for Andrew Denton and for the ABC Compass program. In addition to Julie, two other facilitators will provide programs specifically targeted to the needs of bereaved siblings.

When it was decided to wait until next year to meet in Tamworth as previously announced, we were fortunate to be able to book at Rafferty's, a place which previously hosted a very wonderful weekend for us in 2004. We would

welcome any of you who possibly can to join us.

Judy Tuggle  
TCF NSW



## Queensland

The biggest news from The Compassionate Friends Qld. is that Marion Downey our Co-ordinator has retired after 17-18 years of service with our organisation. Marion commenced with TCF when her beloved son Michael died in 1987. Marion has spent these years supporting, encouraging, caring and loving hundreds of bereaved parents and she has done it as a dedication of love for her precious son Michael. Marion retired on the 31 March 2006 and is currently enjoying a well earned rest and travelling overseas for 5-6 months. Words can not express the gratitude we have for Marion and the contribution she has made to TCF Qld. I know many of you will miss her but she is not gone completely, Marion has said that she will still volunteer time to TCF whenever she can, so we will see and hear from her from time to time.

On that note I would like to introduce myself; my name is Joy Van Raalte and I have been a member of TCF Qld for 12 years since my son Mark (18 years) died in 1993. I became a member, a committee member, secretary and meeting facilitator and vice president before having some respite myself last year. When the Co-ordinator's position became available I applied along with others to take on the role. I was successful and here I am contributing to your National Newsletter.

TCF Qld has been very busy since March, and not only with the change of co-ordinator. In March we held our golf day fundraiser and it went off with a bang. We had some very good sponsors and after all the hard work our members put into the day we were rewarded quite

handsomely with some very much needed funds.

We also had a Psychic show fundraiser in April with Charmaine Wilson (voted Psychic of the year 2005 by her peers) and this was also very well attended, by both TCF members and non-members. Charmaine is a bereaved parent herself and did this for us at no cost with all monies raised being donated to TCF.

In May a wonderful band of TCF volunteers worked at the Ipswich Show for three days taking admission tickets from 6am to 9pm. Once again all wages earned were donated to TCF Qld and we are very grateful that we have such a strong working network.

On 17 June we had our annual grief and loss seminar at Grace College in the grounds of the Queensland University. This year it was titled 'Mars and Venus' dealing with the differences in grieving between men and women. We had approximately 55 people attend and the guest speaker was Dr. David Donaldson, a general practitioner with an interest in emotional health issues, particularly loss and grief. He spoke on gender differences in the grieving process. David is also a bereaved parent and has been a guest speaker for us on previous occasions and as always our members were able to draw a lot of comfort from his talk. We also had morning and afternoon workshops. Our 'Creating a Memory Collage' workshop went extremely well and also our 'Caring and Sharing' session (which was equivalent to a support meeting). We also had a workshop 'Men Experience Grief Too' and this was also very well attended and I can speak from experience that it was wonderful for the men. My husband had not spoken in a group since our son died and he just opened up because there were men well into their grief journey just as he is and they were feeling the same as he does and he said this made him feel normal when all this time he thought there was something wrong with him.

We continue to have our coffee mornings and support meetings at our Drop-in-Centre and we are always busy readying ourselves for the next fundraiser or event. July has nothing planned, but this is much needed time to catch up on all the things we have had to put aside to work on other projects. 30 August brings us to Grief and Loss Awareness Week where we have a stand for one day at King George Square in the city. Other than TCF there will be six other participants; SANDS, Homicide Victims Support Group (HVSF). SIDSandKids Qld, Solace, Young Widows and Widowers, and Survivors of Suicide. For any of these groups who cannot attend on the day we are happy to hand out their literature for them. On 7 August we will be having another Psychic Show with Charmaine Wilson donating all proceeds to TCF.

In September we will be holding our stall at the Springwood Fair and our ladies are busy now making jams and relishes, knitting and sewing and making craft to sell. Unless something else arises we will not be having any more events until our Annual Christmas Candlelight Service in December which is always a very moving service.

Best wishes to you all,

Joy

On behalf of TCF Queensland Committee



## **South Australia**

All is well here....at least I hope it is!....much harder to tell these days isn't it?.

Our website is up and running at [www.compassionatefriendssa.org.au](http://www.compassionatefriendssa.org.au) .....We are grateful for the assistance we received from the HETA organisation in achieving this milestone for us.

We have our MAC grant application submitted and once we have approval, we can commence on our extensive public awareness campaign that we have decided to undertake. We have again received some great advice via the '100

Hours Project' who provided experts in the field of advertising and marketing, so hopefully, over time, we will be able to connect with more of the bereaved parents out there.

Many thanks and congratulations to our new newsletter editor, Catherine Pettit, in producing a very fine first edition.

That's all for now and best wishes to all from the committee here in S.A.

Baden  
TCF South Australia



## **Victoria**

Time passes so very quickly these days – I am not sure whether it is that we are all taking on more to do and filling our lives with many different activities or perhaps as every year passes time just seems to go faster. In Victoria over the past few months it certainly has been extremely busy. We continue on with our management review and have started working on a range of initiatives. Having a new Treasurer whose background is in auditing has certainly put a spotlight on our financial management. With her keen eye for detail we have tightened up a range of our procedures and are working on financial year-end.

We have commenced a range of activities that we are conducting in conjunction with other bereavement services. Most recently we have put together a program with Very Special Kids, an eight week closed support group (titled Identity) which allows bereaved parents to reflect together on how the death of their child/ren has affected their sense of who they are and how they can engage with themselves and others to enhance the way their identities are evolving. This program is aimed at parents who are not in the initial time of their grief, rather those who are ready to re-engage with their own community yet are not quite sure how. This is a pilot program and we will be keen to hear from the 22 bereaved parents who are participating.

The public speaking program for volunteers was opened up to members of three other organisations. The feedback on being in a group of TCF and non-TCF volunteers was extremely encouraging. We also ran a pilot six-week program on Mindfulness Meditation which again was seen by those who attended as a wonderful additional tool to support them throughout their grief.

We are delighted to say that TCF Victoria had been chosen as one of four charities to receive \$10,000 worth of furniture from Harvey Norman – a joint promotion between Harvey Norman and our local radio station 3AW. For some time now we have been wanting to upgrade our library furniture. A couple of years ago, Holmesglen TAFE, glass and glazing students decided that they would like to design a stained glass window for our library. Approximately eight students submitted designs and we asked parents and siblings to choose the one they thought best reflected their grief journey. This window is now installed in the library. The room has a peaceful and healing sense to it – the gift from Harvey Norman has allowed us to select furniture that will add to the healing space. We also chose a new dining setting for the kitchen area – a place where we all gravitate at lunchtime; volunteers, bereaved parents and siblings, and staff. A place where there are tears, sadness, laughter and smiles.

In the past three months we have commenced a new siblings support group in the North East of metropolitan Melbourne. The group information session went extremely well and I understand at the first meeting this week we have nine new siblings attending. Our Castlemaine group (regional Victoria) held a very successful Professional Information Night where a range of representatives from the community attended to understand more of what TCF is doing in their local community. We have also recently written to all State Parliament MPs asking for their help in

letting their constituents know of TCF through their newsletters.

In friendship,

John Hurley  
President  
TCF Victoria



## **Western Australia**

### **Mandurah**

Our first 'Walk to Remember' which was held on Sunday 19 March was so successful that we have decided to hold it as an annual event just as TCF does in the USA. We achieved our three aims of a) providing an opportunity for people to come together in public in honour of their deceased loved one, b) raising much needed funds to continue the provision of our support services, and c) increasing community awareness of TCF and our work. If other chapters decide to hold a remembrance walk we will happily share the information on which we based our organisation of the event.

The annual Mothers' Day luncheon was as usual a lovely event with almost 40 bereaved mothers and grandmothers attending. Rev. Gina Froggatt put us all in a relaxed frame of mind with a meditation and our guest speaker, author Anna Jacobs, gave a very humorous and interesting talk. The tables were beautifully presented, the food was delicious and the atmosphere was lovely with old friends catching up and new friends meeting. We planted a 'Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow' shrub in the courtyard and one of our members entertained us with a lovely rendition of the song 'Mama'.

We have just had a week of P.R. events based around 15 June, the day we call National Awareness Day. We had static displays at four local libraries and manned displays at four major shopping centres and one church. Each year we sell a different butterfly badge mounted on a card with our contact details. This year we also sold pens inscribed with our

name and contact details. We distributed lots of pamphlets and had people make contact with us for the first time. On Monday I was guest speaker to our Mandurah Widows and Widowers group and we are helping them to set up a group for younger widows and widowers. During the week we also had items in three community newspapers and in several church bulletins and agencies newsletters. This week is such a grand opportunity for us to increase public awareness.

At last we have a web site! Generously designed for us by two members; we can be found on the web at [www.tcfmandurah.bravehost.com](http://www.tcfmandurah.bravehost.com) Please take a look; we welcome your comments.

By now the other Australian chapters are aware that, with the help of our Mandurah M.L.A., we are asking our Attorney General and State Health Minister to amend the term 'commit suicide' to 'complete suicide' or simply drop the word 'commit' from the legislation. I thank those who have sent us letters of support in response to our requests. This is certainly an example of the ways in which we can work together and support one another.

I believe that Marion Downey from TCF Queensland has retired. Marion has been a great support to this chapter and to me personally and I take this opportunity to wish her well.

Margot McAllister,  
President TCF Mandurah



## **TCF National Body**

Unfortunately we are unable to bring you news on the National body initiatives as John Hurley has been otherwise occupied. More news will be provided in the next issue.

Regards  
Chris for John F Hurley  
President  
TCF VIC

 **International Council News**

It is incredible how the internet has created so much interest on the international scene. Since the USA website established a link button to the International Council, I have been inundated with requests for information on setting up new groups abroad. It is difficult to know what to advise as I have no way of knowing whether these people are suitable group leader/contacts or not. I can only give rough guidelines and hope for the best.

Recent enquiries have come from Alberta Canada, Tel Aviv, Hanoi, Mexico City, Bermuda, Italy, Sweden and the Dutch Antilles. I have asked Betsy de Jager (as Dutch representative) to assist with the Antilles and Adaline Leir as our Canadian representative to respond to Alberta.

I have been in email contact with a British bereaved parent now living in Spain who will act as a telephone contact. I recently met a trained bereavement counsellor living in Hong Kong. As she is a bereaved parent, she has agreed to be a telephone/email contact for TCF out there. Dr. Mechtild Voss-Eiser is now the International Council representative for Germany.

I have just completed the up-dating of the overseas contacts list - a mammoth task - always on-going. All International Council representatives have been sent a copy.

May I take this opportunity of sending my very best wishes to you all – wherever you may be. As I enjoy summer here in UK, I hope your winter is not too cold down there!

Yours very sincerely

***Margaret Pringle***

**Chairperson**

TCF International Council

## **International News**

### **News from Switzerland**

From 19 till 21 May 2006 the first family fair of Switzerland named 'FamExpo' opened its doors in the exhibition halls of ABB in Zurich with the theme 'Information - Sale – Entertainment'.

Over 20 000 visitors, mostly families with children, but also singles and professionals strolled through this well organised three-day exhibition.

In the middle of sales booths, event offerings, speeches and children's concerts Regenbogen Switzerland (self-help organisation according to TCF) had a modest but attractively arranged stall with a pamphlet rack, a counter with seats and a play corner for children. For three long and intensive days two Regenbogen members per day spread the word about our nation-wide organisation of bereaved parents offering understanding support and encouragement to other bereaved parents and their families.

A banner above the counter with the wording 'Life after the death of a child' informed the passers-by that the theme of our booth dealt with the sad side of life. Many mothers and fathers felt magnetically drawn to our stall. Deepened talks revealed that either in the family, in the circle of relatives or friends or in the neighbourhood a child had died and had left behind grieving parents and siblings. If only they had known earlier about our self-help organisation, the long path of suffering would not have been so terribly lonely, were many a statement made. During the three days we distributed more than 2 000 first-contact pamphlets, a considerable number of guide booklets, brochures of our sibling group 'lifewith', information material for hospitals and doctors etc. Even the new brochure 'After Suicide' which I had translated into German with the kind permission of TCF UK, was discreetly plucked from our pamphlet stand. And more than once we were told by visitors

how very valuable our organisation was in a time where so little place was left for grief.

Based on the very positive echo, this family exhibition will take place again next year. Regenbogen Switzerland would like to participate as well, maybe with one or two further members per day in order to allow more time to listen to the visitors.

Vreni Lehner  
Regenbogen Switzerland

[www.verein-regenbogen.ch](http://www.verein-regenbogen.ch)

## **Reflections on the founding of TCF**

### **From Joe Lawley co-founder**

Thank you for the opportunity to review what TCF has achieved in its 37 years of supporting bereaved parents and their families. The place for me to start such a personal review of TCF highlights, begins of course with the tragic death of three boys in 1968; Jimmy Rattigan in a motor scooter accident, Billy Henderson from cancer and our son Kenneth Lawley struck by a van whilst on his bicycle on his way to school. Jimmy and Kenneth died in the Coventry and Warwickshire Hospital within days of each other in May of that year. The Reverend Simon Stephens was serving there as assistant hospital chaplain.

The suggestion to me by Iris 'shall we send flowers to Billy's funeral signing it from Kenneth's parents, (they'll have been told who we are by Simon)' triggered off the response from Joan and Bill Henderson which resulted in a special friendship where four bereaved parents could speak to each other about their children as no one else had been able to.

Simon's instinct that perhaps this simple fact 'could help other bereaved parents' led to the now legendary meeting on the 28 January 1969 in the Nurses' Home at the Coventry and Warwickshire Hospital attended by six of us, the Hendersons, ourselves, Betty Rattigan, (the mother of Jimmy) and Simon at which TCF was

founded using its original founding name The Society of The Compassionate Friends. The events which followed were the establishing of a branch in Coventry and the obtaining of charitable status. We invited Simon to accept the title of founder in recognition of his vision, his personal ministry to us and his missionary drive and enthusiasm. He travelled up and down the U.K. on seemingly a sabbatical from his normal role of Curate at St Marks Church and Assistant Hospital Chaplain, to get TCF up and running, with the blessing of his boss the Right Reverend Cuthbert Bardsley, Bishop of Coventry.

With the growth of TCF, a series of visits by one branch to another led to the first national conference at Stoneleigh near Coventry at the beautiful parkland centre of Massey Ferguson, the great tractor manufacturer, at which the first national committee was formed. Up to that point the Coventry branch had performed that role, with Simon's flat, 27A St Columba's Court, Coventry our first National Office. It was there in 1972 that Simon, with Joan and Bill Henderson, and Iris and I, gave the first radio broadcast in the name of TCF for the BBC. Sometime later Simon with Joan Henderson and Betty Edwards were interviewed, by TimeLife magazine that also ran the interview in their US Magazine. This resulted in an invitation to Simon from Paula and Arnold Shamres in Florida to visit a group of bereaved parents there and perhaps establish TCF in the USA. The rest they say is history and the USA quickly formed into a national organisation. Not a moment too soon as Harriet Schiff's ground breaking book 'The Bereaved Parent' and subsequent TV interview (the Paul Donohue show?) opened the floodgates and bereaved parents and their families deluged the TV station with requests for information.

Canada followed on in 1977 with Joan and Bob Martin and Alison Gilmour. Simon had been by this time seconded to the Royal Navy and served as Chaplain

on the HMS Ark Royal, the Royal Navy's biggest ship and during his visits to Australia and South Africa visited the young TCFs in these countries. Perhaps for the benefit of the rest of us you and Myrtle Flemming in South Africa could give the detail on TCF's founding in your countries. Simon then became the chaplain to the Nuclear Submarine Fleet at Faslane Scotland. Somewhere around 1974 John and Maggie Fisher designed our logo, its first viewing on the UK's newsletter was in a bright green but subsequently settled down to our universal blue. In 1990 TCF-UK invited the Countess Mountbatten of Burma, herself a bereaved mother and grandmother, to accept the position of President which she did and subsequently unveiled a plaque in the Coventry and Warwickshire Hospital to commemorate 20 years of support for bereaved parents and their families. Shortly afterwards an eminent UK rose grower cultivated a new rose for us 'The Compassionate Friends Rose'

Meanwhile after developing expertise in running large national conferences, the UK organised the First International Gathering in 1994 in Birmingham and Coventry, the centre piece of which was an unbelievably emotional dedication service in the Coventry Cathedral and the ruins of the old cathedral. Simon gave the address and the service was led by Canon Paul Oestrieker, himself a bereaved parent. As we left the cathedral to proceed to the ruins a piper played 'Amazing Grace' and as a personal tribute to Bill Henderson who had died in 1991 the lament by Robert Burns 'Ae Fond Kiss'. It would be true to say 'there was not a dry eye in the house'. It was a

towering event and a great bonding moment for TCF internationally.

For the future there will inevitably be great change, nothing more so than for example in the emergence of the internet, that brilliant invention of Tim Berners-Lee. At the stroke of an <http://www> the world became a smaller place. My dream of an International Council, beset as it had seemed with the problem of 'where would such a body meet geographically', was solved. It didn't need to meet geographically did it? Suddenly we can meet in cyberspace. We have email, we have websites. Now we can correspond whenever and wherever. If we need to put a face to an email name we can send pictures instantly and if we need to meet people in the flesh we do that at the International Gatherings every four years. To date we have had one in the UK, USA, Australia, Canada and in 2009, Argentina (watch this space). To guide us through the opening period in the life of the International Council, Margaret Pringle of TCF-UK was elected Chair which she kindly accepted. It is inevitable also I believe, that TCF under the auspices of the UN will become involved in a caring role in the great international disasters, such as tsunamis, earthquakes and the death of children due to starvation and disease. You will hold up your hands in protest I know, 'We have enough to do as it is....you're mad,' I hear you cry and you're right but I sense that it will happen nevertheless.

With much love and on behalf of bereaved parents and their families everywhere.

.....THANK YOU.

Joe and Iris Lawley MBE.



### **TCF logo**

Circa 1975 TCF-UK, then under the chairmanship of my successor Alex Hartley, were approached by a John and Maggie Fisher a bereaved couple. They said 'we've lost a beloved child and we're now ready to help TCF... use us as you will'. When Alex learned that John ran a company where graphic design was a required skill, he said 'could you design a logo for TCF?'

Shortly John and Maggie produced the logo as it is in your attachment, a design of enduring beauty and pathos. No one has ever come forward to say what the various elements were meant to be; it simply reaches out to us individually. I have campaigned, 'ad nauseam' some would say, to maintain the logo **inviolate**. By this I mean no wording, butterflies or doves etc (I love these as much as any one and understand people's feeling particularly about butterflies but as the logo is not a registered trade mark (except in the USA and Canada) it is liable to be poached away from our exclusive use if it could be pointed out, 'ah but your logo has a butterfly in it etc...'. Better not to risk it. There was a period when the left hand featured an extra finger but that has now been phased out and your attachment is correct.

Love Iris and Joe.

**The following article by John Fisher about the origin of the logo was published in Compassion, the quarterly journal of TCF-UK, Autumn Edition 2003 ~September). It was reprinted in the November 2003 issue of this newsletter with permission.**

The TCF logo used around the world today, started out in Harlow, Essex, in 1975, a few months after we lost our daughter, Clare, in a road accident. I was already working for the National Committee of the Friends (as we called ourselves in those days) and had suggested a logo. Because I had a picture of it close to hand, I based a first quick sketch on the hands of Adam and God, reaching for each other in Michelangelo's painted ceiling in the Sistine Chapel. But it wasn't right.

My wife Maggie, who was in those days what TCF called the 'grid rep' for Essex, asked me wisely how such a symbol might relate to a Hindu, an agnostic or an atheist who had lost a child. So it went back to the drawing board before I took the version you see today to our next meeting. The original artwork was in black, on a white board and I propped it up at the end of the table we sat around.

What I had forgotten was that one of the people sitting there was blind. He asked me to describe what was intended to speak for itself.

Taken by surprise I blathered on about the four essential elements in the design as I saw them. Firstly, I said, it was circular, symbolising wholeness or completion. I tried to describe the lines and the 'vanishing point' they created.

At this point, I explained there was a figure, representing a child, standing some way off at the top centre of the design, in the 'road' created by the converging lines and moving away towards an horizon. In the front foreground, I concluded, 'reaching for each other in the darkness' were two hands, about to touch.

There was a silence of perhaps five seconds. 'You see this child receding down this road?' he asked quietly. Obviously I hadn't made myself clear. 'That's right,' I said. 'Has it occurred to you, John, that the child might actually be coming closer towards you?' His words took my breath away. In those dark days before I took a conscious decision to set out on what others have called 'the long search' I believed that we had lost our daughter forever. He had listened to my words but read my heart.

The committee chose first green as the colour of the symbol and later, blue. It began to appear on the letterhead, the newsletter, an enamel lapel badge and a folded card with an illustration on the front painted for us by a well-known illustrator, David Smee, that we used to raise funds. We sent the UK design to the US, where it was taken up by the Compassionate Friends in America, in those days headed up by Paula and Arnold Shamres, in Florida. They too had lost a daughter, Gabrielle, in a car accident and like so many of the Friends we were privileged to meet were fine people.

Joan Wills, of Watford, who had found her way to our door clutching a posy of flowers in one hand and - unbeknown to her - a beacon of hope in the other, is also someone to whom we shall be forever indebted. She was the first of many Friends we met and we were saddened to read of her passing in the last issue of the TCF journal.

Thirty years on, we live in Devon, where I continue to earn a living with my pen whilst Maggie has spent her working life, first with young children as a classroom assistant, then as a medical secretary, working today in the oncology department at the county hospital. Our children, Gregory and Elizabeth, have grown and married and we are blessed with four beautiful grandchildren.

As for the logo, this was our gift to TCF and although we know that nothing is forever, we hope that it may continue to serve - as a reminder of what this extraordinary international fellowship of compassionate friends is all about.

## Prose

### A lesson from the geese

As each bird flaps its wings it creates an 'uplift' for the bird following. By flying in a 'V' formation, the whole flock adds 71% more flying range than if each bird flew alone.

**Lesson:** People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going quicker and easier because they are travelling on the thrust of one another.

Whenever a goose falls out of formation it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to fly alone, and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the 'lifting power' of the birds immediately in front.

**Lesson:** If we have as much sense as a goose, we will go in formations with those who are headed where we want to go.

When the lead goose gets tired, it rotates back into the formation and another goose flies at the point position.

**Lesson:** It pays to take turns doing the hard tasks, and sharing leadership - with people, as with geese, inter-dependent with each other

The geese in formation honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.

**Lesson:** We need to make sure our honking from behind is encouraging - not something less helpful.

When a goose gets sick, wounded or shot down, two geese drop out of formation and follow their fellow member down to help and provide protection. They stay with this member of the flock until he or she is either able to fly again or dies. Then they launch out on their own, with another formation or catch up with their own flock.

**Lesson:** If we have as much sense as the geese, we'll stand by each other like that.

University of Florida Newsletter

## Resources

### A highly recommended book for TCF libraries

'Men don't cry...women do' – transcending gender stereotypes of grief, by Terry Martin and Kenneth Doka. Published by Brunner/Mazel.

I may have mentioned this book before, but I am reminded of it again because of Queensland's reference to the topic 'Mars and Venus' dealing with the differences in grieving between men and women.

The book opens with a description of a father whose infant son had died. He was surprised and troubled at the extent of his wife's grief as every night she cried herself to sleep. He wondered at his own lack of tears. But at the same time that he was asking himself why he wasn't feeling grief, he was sculpting a memorial stone for his child.

The authors suggest that the father *is* grieving – in what they name the 'instrumental' pattern (the pattern of the mother in the example they name 'intuitive'). Although these two patterns of grieving may often divide along gender lines this is not always so; men and women may display either type of grieving, and sometimes a combination of both.

I wonder whether TCF takes enough account of those of us who express our grief in an instrumental way. Our sharing meetings are certainly geared towards intuitive expression of feelings. What do you think?

### Ideas for sharing meetings

Recently I had reason to write down information about how we run sharing meetings in ACT and Queanbeyan and I thought that it could be of interest to share this. I would really welcome comments. Do we all run meetings in a similar way I wonder? Possibly other groups have printed guidelines which we could exchange. Again, no thought that we should all be doing things in exactly the same way – just an exchange of ideas. I'm sure that I would put down different points at different times of writing. This is what I came up with in June 2006:

**Underlying guidelines for meetings** – (you may wish to ask for everyone's agreement on these):

- Everything said at a meeting is confidential.
- It is OK to 'pass'
- When one person is talking, they have the floor with no interruptions. (It is important that we do not comment on what a person has said unless asked to, and that we do not add stories of our own as this can take attention away from the speaker).

- We have an extra one in ACT – no saying ‘sorry’..eg whilst reaching for a handkerchief to mop up tears. Strangely enough, it seems to be the hardest one to keep to.

*And one more thought – we are not here to ‘fix’ things for each other – much as we may want to. TCF’s philosophy is friendship, support and understanding.*

### **Sharing meeting**

Chairs are set up in a circle around a small table with flowers and a lighted candle. A selection of books and leaflets is displayed on a side table for members to look at before or after the meeting. Our memory quilt hangs on the wall. Supper things ready (supper arranged in an ad hoc way; whoever has inspiration and energy brings something to share).

### **Introductions**

Each person to introduce themselves and say something about their child who has died.

### **Further contributions in turn**

Each person to take a few minutes to share eg how things are for them at the moment, or how they have been feeling since the last meeting or talking about their child in a little more detail or an issue at the forefront of their mind....

After ‘further contributions’ there can be a time when all around the circle make comments of support to others. Again, important I think, that we are careful about questioning – we may be very concerned and interested to learn more about a person’s circumstances, but it is more appropriate to wait for further information to unfold if and when that person wishes to share it.

**Special focus** – see ideas below

**Meeting closes** – a quick review of forthcoming events, maybe a piece of music, or a relaxation exercise.

**Supper** – we feel that it is important to have supper at the end of the meeting and not break part way through (although anyone is free to fetch a drink of water or coffee at any time if needed). *We hope that supper time may lighten the mood a little after a sometimes intense gathering. Important to be relaxed for the drive home.*

### **Ideas for a focus for sharing meetings**

1. Reflections on the beginning of a new year (or on any season of the year).
2. How you ‘managed’ Christmas and what changes you might make next time.
3. Bring a photograph of your child to show and talk about.
4. To share reminiscences of your child please bring a memento, perhaps a piece of clothing or any small article that belonged to your child, or anything that has special memories of your child.
5. Mothers’ Day theme – members are invited to bring:
  - a. a card suitable for Mothers’ Day so that each person attending may choose one if they wish (there always seems to be one that has special meaning for each person and they may then speak about it to the meeting), and
  - b. a piece of poetry or prose to read out.

This meeting is traditionally facilitated by fathers who give a flower to each mother as they come in.

6. Share thoughts about exercise and leisure pursuits that have helped to keep you sane, fit and strong enough to keep going.

7. In September a special invitation to fathers to attend the meeting close to Fathers' Day – 'what does this day mean to you now'?
8. Behaviour patterns in bereavement or 'everything is normal in TCF'.
9. Our end-of-year meeting starts in the usual way with an opportunity for members to share their feelings. Then we have a focus on Christmas including:
  - Salvation Army gifts* – members are invited to bring a child's Christmas present to be passed on to the Salvation Army for delivery (some of us find it comforting to buy an extra gift at Christmas time with our own child in mind);
  - Christmas cards* – please bring a Christmas card for the table – then each of us may choose one, perhaps which evokes memories of our child;
  - Simple candle lighting ceremony*;
  - Supper* – please bring a small plate with festive food to share.

Maxine

## TCF AUSTRALIAN DIRECTORY

### TCF AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL NEWSLETTER

**Postal address:**

TCF Australian National Newsletter  
C/- Grant Cameron Community Centre  
27 Mulley Street  
HOLDER ACT 2611

**Email:**

[TCF National Newsletter Editors](mailto:TCF National Newsletter Editors)

(Editors - Maxine Davies and Chris Dennys)

**Telephone:**

Maxine: (02) 6286 6134

Chris: (02) 6291 9029

**International dialling prefix : 61 2**

### TCF INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL

**Postal address:**

Chris Dennys  
73 Hemmings Crescent  
RICHARDSON ACT 2905

**Email:** [ca.me.dennys@netspeed.com.au](mailto:ca.me.dennys@netspeed.com.au)

**Website:**

<http://www.thecompassionatefriends.org>

Interim Australian Representative Chris Dennys

**Telephone:**

Chris: (02) 6291 9029

**International direct dialling prefix: 61 2**

### TCF AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY AND QUEANBEYAN

**Postal address and meeting rooms:**

TCF ACT and Queanbeyan Inc.  
Grant Cameron Community Centre  
27 Mulley Street  
HOLDER ACT 2611

**Email:** [TCFACT@thecompassionatefriends.org.au](mailto:TCFACT@thecompassionatefriends.org.au)

**Website:**

<http://www.thecompassionatefriends.org.au/ACT.htm>

**Telephone:**

Coordinator: (02) 6291 9029

Grief Support: (02) 6286 6134

Hosted on TCF NSW website

### TCF NEW SOUTH WALES

**Postal address:**

The Compassionate Friends NSW Inc.  
PO Box 1303  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

**Email:** [Admin@thecompassionatefriends.org.au](mailto:Admin@thecompassionatefriends.org.au)

**Website:**

[www.thecompassionatefriends.org.au](http://www.thecompassionatefriends.org.au)

**Office address and bereaved parent centre:**

4th Floor, Room 404  
32 York Street,  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

**Telephone:**

Office and Grief Support: (02) 2 9290 2355

Facsimile: (02) 9290 2445

**International direct dialling prefix: 61 2**

### TCF QUEENSLAND

**Postal address:**

The Compassionate Friends Queensland Inc  
PO Box 1930,  
NEW FARM QLD 4005.

**Email:** [tcfld@powerup.com.au](mailto:tcfld@powerup.com.au)

**Website:**

<http://www.uq.net.au/tcfbrisbane/>

**Office address and drop-in centre:**

505 Bowen Terrace  
NEW FARM QLD 4005

**Telephone:**

All enquiries: (07) 3254 2657

Facsimile: (07) 3358 2533

**International direct dialling prefix: 61 7**

## **TCF SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

### **Postal address:**

The Compassionate Friends South Australian Inc.  
Adelaide Chapter  
PO Box 26,  
KENT TOWN SA 5071

### **Email:**

[tcf@arcom.com.au](mailto:tcf@arcom.com.au)

### **Website:**

[www.compassionatefriendssa.org.au](http://www.compassionatefriendssa.org.au)

### **Office address and drop-in centre:**

### **Telephone:**

Message bank: (08) 8351 0344

**International direct dialling prefix: 61 8**

## **TCF VICTORIA**

### **Postal address:**

The Compassionate Friends Victoria Inc  
PO Box 171  
CANTERBURY VIC 3126

### **Email:** Grief enquiries:

[support@compassionatefriendsvictoria.org.au](mailto:support@compassionatefriendsvictoria.org.au)

Administration enquiries: [cfriends@ozemail.com.au](mailto:cfriends@ozemail.com.au)

### **Website:**

[www.compassionatefriendsvictoria.org.au](http://www.compassionatefriendsvictoria.org.au)

### **Office address and drop-in centre:**

267 Canterbury Road,  
CANTERBURY VIC 3126

### **Telephone:**

Grief Support: (03) 9888 4944

Administration: (03) 9888 4034

Facsimile: (03) 9888 4900

**International direct dialling prefix: 61 3**

## **TCF WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

### **PERTH**

### **Postal address and drop-in centre:**

The Compassionate Friends Western Australia Inc.  
Bereaved Parent Centre  
City West Lotteries House  
2 Delhi Street  
WEST PERTH WA 6005

### **Email:**

[tcf@eftel.com.au](mailto:tcf@eftel.com.au)

### **Web site**

[www.compassionatefriendswa.org.au/index.html](http://www.compassionatefriendswa.org.au/index.html)

### **Telephone:**

Grief Support: (08) 9486 8711

Facsimile: (08) 9486 8717

**International direct dialling prefix: 61 8**

## **MANDURAH**

### **Postal address and drop-in centre:**

TCF Mandurah Inc.  
Room 2 Mandurah Lottery House  
7 Anzac Place  
MANDURAH WA 6210

### **Email:**

[tcfmandurah@bigpond.com](mailto:tcfmandurah@bigpond.com)

### **Web site:**

[www.tcfmandurah.bravehost.com](http://www.tcfmandurah.bravehost.com)

### **Telephone:**

Phone/Facsimile: (08) 9535 7761.

After hours: (08) 9582 8113

**International direct dialling prefix: 61 8**

**For International dialling use the IDD  
prefix plus the last 8 digits**

**Please notify directory amendments to newsletter editor**

**Updated 11:21 pm 29 June 2006**

## TCF AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE SITE REGISTER

**TCF Chapter:** TCF ACT and Queanbeyan

**City/Town:** Canberra

**State:** ACT

**Description of site:** Children's Memorial Seat in Weston Park overlooking Lake Burley Griffin within a stand of eucalypts and near a BBQ area.

**Significance of site:** Seat has been erected by ACT Government and has a memorial plaque dedicated to our children. We use the site for TCF ceremonies and gatherings and also for private reflection.

**Location of site:** Weston Park Yarralumla

**Map reference:** UBD map 58 J9

**Access to site – hours:** 24 hour access

**Local chapter contact:** Maxine (02) 6286 6134

**Other information:** Weston Park is open to the public full details of the site are available at: <http://www.thecompassionatefriends.org.au/ACT.htm>

**TCF Chapter:** Miranda

**City/Town:** Gymea

**State:** NSW

**Description of Site:** A memorial garden and park bench in the grounds of Hazelhurst Regional Gallery and Art Centre. The garden has eleven Compassionate Roses (planted in the eleventh year of the Miranda Chapter). The roses are planted in a round bed with a small hedge border. Sutherland Council donated a memorial plaque which is mounted on a sizeable rock and placed in the garden. Placed near the rose garden we have a 'Cotswold' park bench with a similar plaque. This bench was donated to Hazelhurst through the Miranda Chapter by the Waratah Social Group. The memorial plaque is dedicated to the memory of the children of the Miranda Chapter and contains the TCF logo and a tribute to the children. Hazelhurst comes under the control of the Sutherland Shire Council, whose landscapers take care of the gardens.

**Significance of Site:** The site is used by TCF members as a meeting place for coffee and lunch and as a quiet place for the chapter leader to meet with newly bereaved parents.

**Location of Site:** Hazelhurst Gallery and Regional Arts Centre, 782 Kingsway, Gymea.

**Map Reference:** Enter on Kingsway, Gymea, between Talara Road and Holtham Road.

**Access to site:** Open 7 days a week from 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. except Christmas, Boxing Day and Good Friday.

**Local chapter contact:** Valda Hamilton (02) 9520 4921

**Other information:** The Hazelhurst Gallery is open to the public and is well worth a visit in its own right. Full details are available at <http://www.hazelhurst.co.au>

**TCF Chapter:** Miranda

**City/Town:** Kogarah

**State:** NSW

**Description of Site:** A bed consisting of nine Compassionate Friends roses planted around the flagpole on the grounds of Calvary Hospital. The rose garden is flourishing and is cared for by the hospital's maintenance staff.

**Significance of Site:** The roses are on the grounds of a hospital which serves as a hospice for terminally ill individuals so the site is a wonderful expression of the Compassionate Friends motto that 'we need not walk alone'.

**Location of Site:** 1485 91-111 Rocky Point Road, Kogarah, NSW

**Map Reference:** Located at the corner of Fitzgerald Avenue and Rocky Point Road in Kogarah

**Access to site:** Not applicable-not a public venue

**Local chapter contact:** Valda Hamilton (02) 9520 4921

**TCF Chapter:** Brisbane

**City/Town:** Brisbane

**State:** QLD

**Description of Site**

Mt. Cootha Botanic Gardens, Brisbane. It is in an area with running water not far from the Japanese Gardens.

**TCF Chapter:** Townsville

**City/Town:** Townsville

**State:** QLD

**Description of Site**

The Townsville Chapter has a TCF memorial in Queens Gardens, Paxton Street, Townsville (near the old hospital).

**TCF Chapter:** TCF Mandurah

**City/Town:** Mandurah Site 1

**State:** WA

**Description of Site:**

Memorial Jarrah Park Bench in Mandurah Lakes memorial Cemetery, situated on a grassy slope, overlooking the lake, close to shady trees with a large shady gazebo nearby.

**Significance of Site:** The bench is used as a quiet place of reflection by TCF members and is the venue for the International Children's Memorial Day event on the last Sunday in January each year. The bench has an inscribed plaque dedicated to the memory of our children.

**Location of Site:** Stock Road, Mandurah

**Map Reference:** Mandurah Regional Directory Map 29 5D

**Access to Site:** 7.30 to 5.30 daily

**Local chapter contact:** Margot McAllister (08) 9535 7761

Please notify Heritage Site directory amendments to newsletter editor

Updated 11:44 pm 29 June 2006

**TCF Australia  
Heritage Site Notification**

Please include details of the under-mentioned site/s in the International Council's listing of TCF Heritage sites:

Post or email preferred completed details to:

Chris Dennys

73 Hemmings Crescent

RICHARDSON ACT 2905

Phone: (02) 6291 9029

Email: [ca.me.dennys@netspeed.com.au](mailto:ca.me.dennys@netspeed.com.au)

<b>TCF chapter</b>	
<b>City/Town</b>	
<b>State</b>	
<b>Description of site:</b>	
<b>Significance of site:</b>	
<b>Location of site</b>	
<b>Map reference</b>	
<b>Access to site - hours</b>	
<b>Local chapter contact</b>	
<b>Other information</b>	

Example sheet:

<b>TCF chapter</b>	TCF ACT and Queanbeyan
<b>City/Town</b>	Canberra
<b>State</b>	ACT
<b>Description of site:</b>	Children's Memorial Seat in Weston Park overlooking Lake Burley Griffin within a stand of eucalypts and near a BBQ area.
<b>Significance of site:</b>	Seat has been erected by ACT Government and has a memorial plaque dedicated to our children. Site is used for TCF ceremonies and gatherings and also for private reflection.
<b>Location of site</b>	Weston Park Yarralumla ACT 2600
<b>Map reference</b>	UBD map 58 J9
<b>Access to site - hours</b>	24 hour access
<b>Local chapter contact</b>	Chris Dennys (02) 6291 9029
<b>Other information</b>	Weston Park is open to the public full details of the site are available at: <a href="http://www.thecompassionatefriends.org.au/ACT.htm">http://www.thecompassionatefriends.org.au/ACT.htm</a>

**CLOSING DATE FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER**

**10 November 2006**

PLEASE SEND ARTICLES, LETTERS AND COMMENTS TO

Maxine Davies [mmdavies@cyberone.com.au](mailto:mmdavies@cyberone.com.au) and  
Christopher Dennys [ca.me.dennys@netspeed.com.au](mailto:ca.me.dennys@netspeed.com.au)

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