

Dear Editor:

There was a quiet, sullen, shrouded feeling throughout the community Saturday morning, March 17, after hearing of the deaths of two young people in a single-vehicle accident.

It certainly opened old wounds for Elmer and me, from when we got the message in October 1978 about 9:30 in the evening that our daughter, Linda Jo, 24 years old, a registered nurse, was in a car-tractor accident on the highway between Grant and Imperial. She didn't survive.

Our world just stopped for a little while. Oh, you are numb, your mind just goes frantic, What if? If??

Family comes, friends, relatives. The great community turns out with their love and sympathy. You cry until there are no more tears. Things happen you don't remember.

There are plans that have to be done. Thank God for the greatest mortician—John Long. He knows all the answers and guidance. You need a cemetery lot, have to meet with the minister, choose a casket, let extended family know, just on and on.

People deal with death in different ways. Some want to go see the family, but don't know what to say. You don't have to say anything, just a gentle tap or hug. Some will ignore you, and never mention the deceased's name.

The funeral is over for most all the people and they go back to their own routine, which is the way it should be.

But it is just beginning for the family of the deceased. Flowers and plants to be distributed, thank yous sent. The parents go home to see the room, clothes, belongings and all the special little traits that were part of their child's personality. It is hard, and as time goes on you think you have things under control and some little thing will happen and the world falls apart again.

There are the first birthdays, first holidays. It's so hard not to feel the void. But with faith, family and friends and lots of self discipline, a person makes it through.

One of our friends who lost a son said, "Keep busy."

Something to be thankful for is that their children and our daughter were not left an invalid.

No matter what happened or how it happened, it was all in God's plan and nothing could change things. God needs the fine young people too.

You never get over identifying what they might be like years later when you see their friends. But one thing we can do is to help others in the same circumstances to feel they are not alone. Years help to soften the feeling, but the loss never goes away.

No one, I mean no one, knows the void except those that have been through losing their child. Parents never think about outliving their children.

Our hearts and prayers are with both families.

God's blessings,

Elmer and Gerry Pankonin

Grant