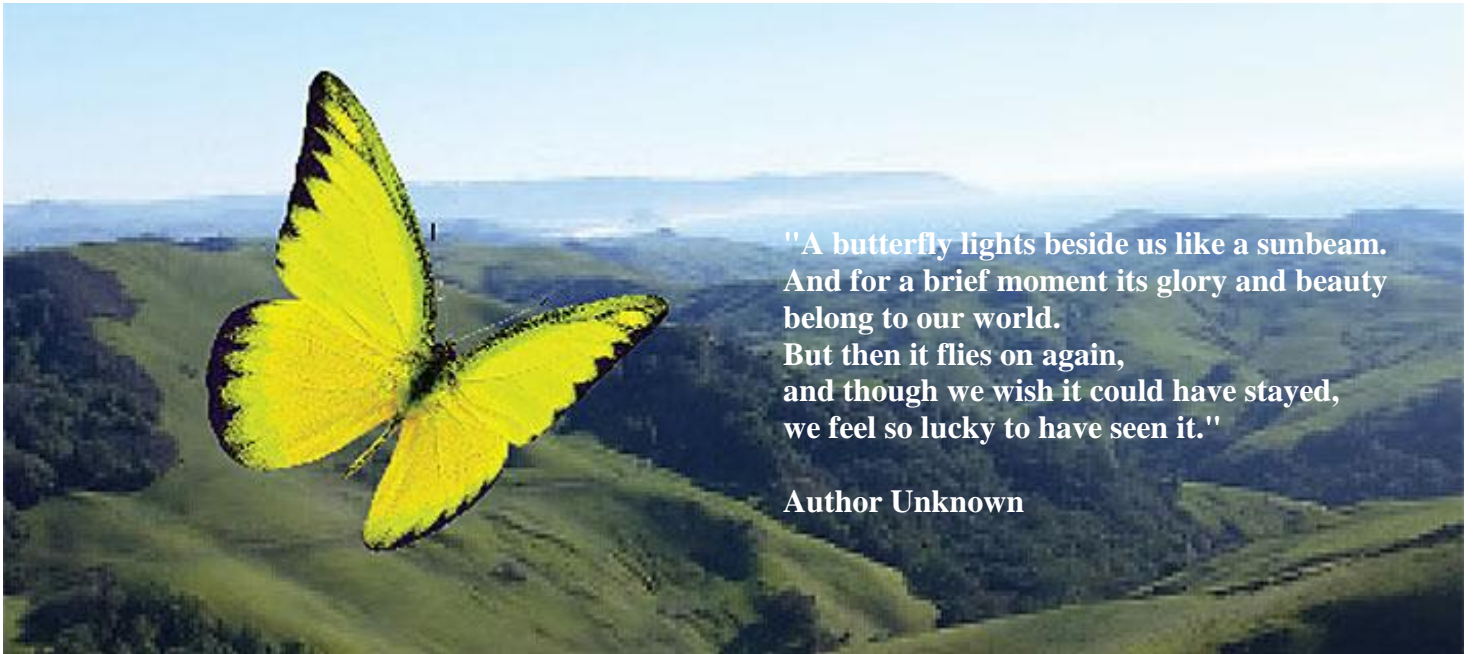




# Haven Herald



"A butterfly lights beside us like a sunbeam.  
And for a brief moment its glory and beauty  
belong to our world.  
But then it flies on again,  
and though we wish it could have stayed,  
we feel so lucky to have seen it."

Author Unknown

## Letter from the Executive Director

Summer slows us down with its warm days and less hectic schedules. Here at Haven we tend to focus on making house repairs and planning for the rest of the year as we look back and evaluate our progress so far. Summer also gives us time to reflect and remember.

Last summer my sister and I took a trip back to where we grew up and visited many cemeteries as we searched for information about our family tree. The trip was enlightening and reflective. I remember being grateful for the beautiful cemeteries and gravestones that helped us put together part of our story.

This issue of the newsletter will focus on how we memorialize those we have lost. Memorials help us remember our loved ones and bring comfort to those left behind. A memorial can be many things and is not restricted to a gravestone or marker in a cemetery. We may find ways to memorialize the person we lost that are more personal rather than traditional, but ultimately, it is about remembrance and the acknowledgement that this person's life was important to us.

Jill Bellacicco



## Why a Grave Marker?

by Joni Greene

Grave markers go back thousands of years. They are a way we honor our loved ones, a memorial to them. Grave markers show not only the place of rest for individuals, but they may also provide information about their lives.

It is fascinating to take a walk through a cemetery to see the different shapes, sizes and colors of each stone and to read the words. If the person was a veteran of one of our many wars, the grave will have a memorial flag stand with the war he served in. On Memorial Day, a flag is placed in each stand and relatives decorate graves with flowers. An example of a beautiful memorial service takes place in Hawaii at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific. Flower leis are draped on grave markers of the Hawaiian soldiers who fought in the Pacific during World War II. It is a sight to behold.



Stones can be plain, with only the name, year of birth and year of death, or more elaborate, with scenes and symbols etched in the stone. There may be a photograph on the marker or date of marriage, while others may have an epitaph such as “killed by mistake.” In a memorial garden cemetery, only a flat marker can be used. In Victorian times, one head stone with the family name was used and a foot marker for each family member was added.

If you like tracing your family roots, a cemetery is one place to go; it could give you a window to your ancestor’s life. A large obelisk stone can denote a person’s wealth or indicate a military rank or an honorific title. You might find buried next to them their spouse, a child that died young or other relatives. Grave markers, regardless of the information they provide, are a way to honor those who have died and give us a connection with the past.

## What Worked for Me

by Alyssa Navarrete

When I was a junior at Annandale High School, my dear friend James died from cancer. Because we grew up in the same neighborhood, James and I were part of a very close group of friends. James’ death was one of the first times I had ever dealt with the pain and sadness of losing someone I was close to.

All of our friends handled James’ death differently. As a group, we knew we wanted to find a way to celebrate James’ life and support cancer research. We planned a charity basketball game, James’ favorite sport, in order to raise money in his honor. While the process of working with my friends to celebrate and remember James was gratifying and helpful in its own way, I found that I personally needed additional outlets to help me through the grieving process. I decided to create a few tangible items to help me remember him. First, I turned an old tee shirt into a pillow. On the fabric, I painted memories and inside jokes that reminded me of James. Whenever I was



having a difficult moment, I could hug my pillow. I also created a scrapbook to remember James. In the scrapbook, I included memories, pictures, quotes, song lyrics, and items I collected at his memorial service (such as prayer cards and the program). To this day, when I look at the scrapbook, I am reminded of the life that James lived and the friendship I was lucky enough to share with him.

The process of creating these items was therapeutic. These items continue to remind me of the amazing person James was. I will always miss him, and I will always struggle to understand how someone so kind and compassionate could be taken at such a young age. But, I am thankful for the person that he was, the memories I have of him, and the impact he continues to have on my life.

## The Importance of Memorials

by Mary Smith

Grieving the death of a loved one might be the hardest thing we do in life. And if we live long enough, we will most likely experience such grief. One danger of grieving is to hold onto our grief for fear of forgetting our deceased. A helpful way to cope with the loss and to keep our memories alive is through memorials. They connect us to our loved one's life and may help us accept the death, knowing we've created a special place, poem, album or other memorial as evidence of a life lived and missed.



### Creative Remembrances for a Loved One

- At the Memorial Service, give out flower seeds, bulbs or tiny trees to plant in memory of the loved one.
- Ask family and friends to write their favorite memory on a card and place them in a special book.
- Write your memories on paper hearts to hang on a memory tree or branch.
- Create a memory hearth with photos and small belongings of a loved one, candles and flowers.
- Paint stones or large rocks with a loved one's name.
- Make a memory quilt with pieces of clothing, words, and symbols important to your loved one.
- Write poems or songs about a loved one.
- Make a memory box to keep special belongings of a loved one.
- Make a video of friends and family telling their favorite memories of a loved one.



#### *AIDS MEMORIAL QUILT*

*In 2012 the quilt weighted 54 tons and was composed of more than 48,000 panels dedicated to more than 94,000 individuals. Each panel must be three feet by six feet hemmed and made of durable fabric.*

*The last display of the entire AIDS Memorial Quilt was in October of 1996 when the Quilt covered the entire National Mall in Washington, D.C.*



#### HOW HAVEN IS FUNDED

Haven is classified by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. It is funded mainly by donations from individuals in the community who wish to support our work and by those who donate in memory of a loved one. Donations are tax deductible. If you are interested in making a donation, please contact Haven at (703) 941-7000 or at [havenofnova@verizon.net](mailto:havenofnova@verizon.net)

Haven of Northern Virginia, Inc.

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Annandale, Virginia 22003

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## **Summer Schedule**

Summer Workshop  
“Journey through Grief”

Saturday, July 18, 2015

2:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Please call or email to register for the workshop.

Drop-in Suicide Loss Support Group  
1st and 3rd Saturdays of each month  
11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

*Haven also offers individual support by phone and in person; please call to schedule an appointment. For immediate support without an appointment, a volunteer is available on a walk-in basis Monday through Friday between 10:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.*

## **Contact Information**

Haven of Northern Virginia  
4606 Ravensworth Road  
Annandale, Virginia 22003  
Phone: (703) 941-7000  
Fax: (703) 941-7003  
E-mail: [havenofnova@verizon.net](mailto:havenofnova@verizon.net)

## **Hours of Operation**

Monday through Friday  
9:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.  
[www.havenofnova.org](http://www.havenofnova.org)

Messages may be left on our  
voicemail after hours