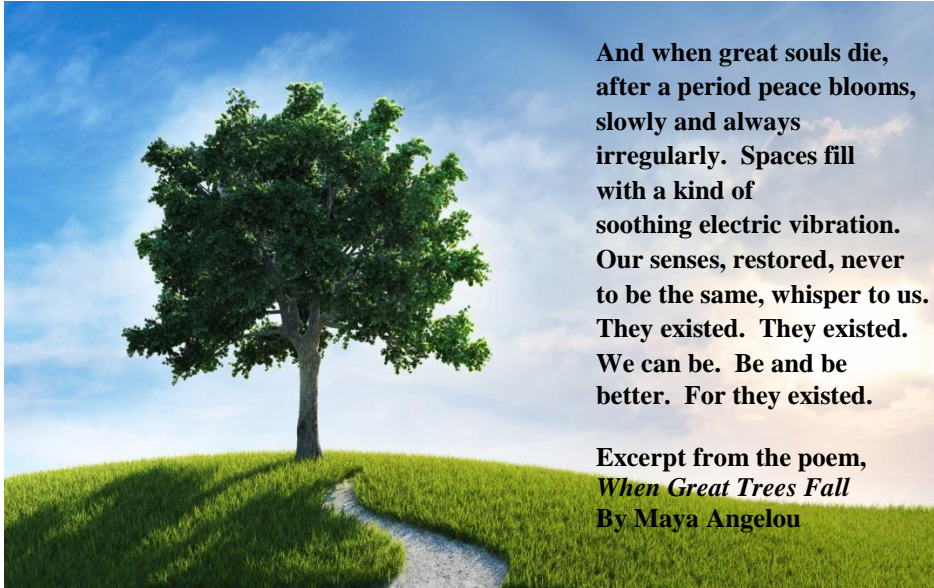


# Haven Herald



And when great souls die,  
after a period peace blooms,  
slowly and always  
irregularly. Spaces fill  
with a kind of  
soothing electric vibration.  
Our senses, restored, never  
to be the same, whisper to us.  
They existed. They existed.  
We can be. Be and be  
better. For they existed.

Excerpt from the poem,  
*When Great Trees Fall*  
By Maya Angelou

## When We Grieve the Death of a Public Figure

by Donna Huber

Well-known public figures and celebrities are a part of our lives, although we do not know them personally, and they are not part of our family. We see them on TV, in newspapers and magazines, in the movies, listen to their music, or see them play sports. They may be a president, a princess, a foreign prime minister, a rock n roll king, a movie star, a comedian, a sports figure, or local news anchor.

When we learn of their death, whether sudden, after an illness not revealed, or the result of a long decline, how do we react? We express our disbelief, our sorrow and what that person meant to us, the impact they had on our lives and our history. We post on social media, buy their music and books, watch their movies, reminisce. Some may become bigger than life – Marilyn Monroe, Elvis Presley, Princess Diana, Winston Churchill, Robin Williams, Mohammed Ali, Maya Angelou. A little piece of us is lost.

Usually after the death, there is a public outpouring of grief and this allows people to feel part of their community. It gives us an opportunity to show unity and empathy on a community level. We face our own mortality and grieve in a collective and protected environment. For some, it may be their first experience with loss. Through their experience with grief, it may help them prepare emotionally for personal grief later in life.

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## Letter from the Executive Director

Spring brings yet another change and the hope of brighter days and new life. These changes can seem a stark contrast to the feelings one experiences in grief. Acknowledging your feelings regardless of what the outside world is telling you is perfectly okay and necessary.

Spring is a busy time at Haven as we prepare for our spring groups, training and cleaning up the grounds around our little house. We welcome spring and all its beauty and the memories it can evoke.

The topic of this issue of the newsletter is about the grief we can experience when someone famous dies. We may never have met this person, yet we feel as if we know them. They are often familiar or iconic figures who, for some reason, connect with us.

I remember when Princess Diana died and the heartache it caused me, partly because I had just lost my dad the month before. Her death affected my grief, and I will forever feel the emotion and sadness, in different degrees, of both losses.

So regardless of why or how someone famous touched your life, it is important to acknowledge the loss and remember them for how they made you feel and why you wish they were still here.

Jill Bellacicco

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The impact of the death of a well-known person is different for everyone. We may cling to who the person was, what they did, how we connected with them, and what they meant to us. The effect of a celebrity's death may be that a part of our youth has died. We may suffer a loss of what makes us who we are today from the people who helped form how we are now. The memory of the person lives on in history, culture, music, and literature, and their stories continue to enrich our lives.

## What Worked for Me

### *The Day Elvis Died*

by Donna Huber



Elvis died on August 16, 1977.

It was our second wedding anniversary. My husband, Ken, and I were celebrating by having dinner on the living room floor of our apartment – why there? Ken had ruptured a disc in his lower back, and it was painful to sit so he was lying on the floor. During the meal, the phone rang. It was my brother-in-law, Ken's brother, Jeff. Instead of saying, "Happy Anniversary" (he was a teenager) he blurted out, "Elvis Presley died." I said something like don't joke about things like that. He knew how much I liked Elvis. He said, "I'm not joking – Elvis died today." The moment he confirmed this news, my happy celebration turned to something so surreal. Needless to say, it put a damper on my second anniversary, and I remember every year the day

I have adored Elvis since I was a young child – loved his music "Love Me Tender," "Can't Help Falling in Love with You," "Blue Hawaii." My Dad was not a big fan, but he knew how much I liked Elvis. He took me to a double feature: *Kissing Cousins* and *Viva Las Vegas* in Old Town, Alexandria, Virginia.

Life works in strange, mysterious ways. Elvis was married on May 1, 1967, and as a teenager I was not thrilled by that event. It was on May 1, many years later that my husband died. My brother-in-law's first born son, Collin, was born on January 8, which was the same date Elvis was born.

I was disappointed that I did not see him in concert, but I remember watching a live broadcast of an Elvis concert in Hawaii with my girlfriend. Years later, Ken and I stopped at Graceland, the former home of Elvis in Memphis, Tennessee. My husband wanted me to have an opportunity to visit his grave, even if I didn't see him in person. Somehow I felt complete and that I had fulfilled a need to experience all that was Elvis. Anyone who knows me, knows to this day that I love listening to his music. I have Elvis related gifts – clocks, framed photos, a Christmas tree ornament. Even though I never met him, I know he impacted my life in many ways. I often think of my Dad taking me to see his movies. A former co-worker loved him, too. He would impersonate Elvis at our Christmas office luncheons. Whenever we email each other, we sign off — "Love Me Tender, You Ain't Nothing but a Hound Dog." All this for someone I never met, but felt I knew, and who lives on in my heart and my memories. "I'm All Shook Up" just telling my story.



## Death of Famous People



My father had great affection and admiration for Winston Churchill, or “Winnie” as my father called him. I believe his WW II experiences were intertwined with Churchill’s inspirational oratory. When Churchill died in 1965, my father was greatly saddened. Decades later while watching a documentary of Sir Winston’s funeral, my father, a veteran of the Normandy Invasion, wept. At my father’s funeral, Churchill was quoted in his eulogy: *“Good night, then: sleep to gather strength for the morning. For the morning will come. Brightly will it shine on the brave and true, kindly upon all who suffer for the cause, glorious upon the tombs of heroes. Thus will shine the dawn....”* (Churchill’s broadcast to France on October 21, 1940) –Kathleen Sebek

When my father was a college student studying engineering, he was fascinated with airplanes, Charles Lindbergh and all of Charles’s accomplishments. He learned everything he could about what caused airplanes to take flight. When Charles Lindbergh died on August 26, 1974 in Hawaii, I got a call from my dad. At the time we were living in Oahu, Hawaii and a call was very unusual. He said that Lindbergh had died and he was coming for a visit; and he wanted to see Lindbergh’s grave. He had to see his hero to the end. Charles is buried on Maui on a high plateau overlooking the Pacific Ocean in a traditional Hawaiian grave made of lava rock and on his tombstone are the words *“If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea.”* –Joni Greene



Growing up in Washington, DC, I felt a special connection to President Kennedy, Mrs. Kennedy and John Jr. This connection was, in part, due to the fact that my youngest sister (and 5th sibling) was born in the same hospital (Georgetown) and delivered by the same doctor just a few days after John Jr. Because my ten-year-old brother was a big fan of JFK, my mother, whose room was down the hall from Mrs. Kennedy, asked a nurse if she could get Mrs. Kennedy’s autograph for him. The nurse took along a photograph my mother had of her four older children to show Mrs. Kennedy, who, in response, wrote the sweetest note to my brother. In the note, she mentioned that her husband had the same shirt that my brother was wearing in the photo...a red “alligator” polo...and how much she loved that shirt. Sadly for my family, especially my brother, both the photograph and note were lost. But, needless to say, my family and I were shocked and heartbroken, when President Kennedy and later John, Jr. died tragically. We were also sad when Mrs. Kennedy died. –Mary Smith

On November 22, 1963, I was walking across campus. Someone I did not know rushed up to me and said, “President Kennedy is dead! He has been shot!” The whole world turned surreal. I wandered about in a foggy daze. I did not go home to study. I went out to a dance hall/night club. Things were strange there. A young man, really more like a boy, started to cry. The club bouncer challenged him to a fight and then took him outside and beat him up. I still don’t know why he needed to be beat up. A lot of us were crying. It just didn’t show. –Ron McNally



Growing up on a farm my father entertained me, as we did chores, with stories of baseball. I loved some, especially the one about Babe Ruth pointing to where he would hit a home run in a World Series game, and then doing it. One hot summer workday, my father and I drove to an uncle’s farm, and no one was outside working. We went in the house, and everyone was huddled around the radio; Babe Ruth had just died. The fact that all work stopped for him impressed me. –Ann Lyons



### 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.

4606 Ravensworth Road

Annandale, Virginia 22003

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## **Spring Schedule**

Six-week General Bereavement Support Group

Wednesday, April 11 – May 16, 2018

7:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Six-week Suicide Loss Support Group

Thursday, March 22 – April 26, 2018

7:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Six-week Widow/Widower Support Group

Saturday, April 7 – May 12, 2018

Time(s) to be determined

Call or email Haven to register for the groups.

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