This time of year, many movies about love will be in the theaters, and Pam and I will no doubt watch one. But the best love story I ever witnessed was a couple I met years ago:

John was 52, a seeming lifelong bachelor when he met Maggie, a few years younger and a spinster-to-be by all accounts. Against all odds they fell in love and were married – a small service in his parents’ home. Time had seen to it that children were not going to be a part of their lives together, but that didn’t matter. Their love for each other was clearly apparent, and thereafter, you never saw one without the other. John had numerous physical challenges that he bore with a smile and grace that is not often seen. Maggie supported him always.

Their lives were simple; what I could best describe as the “act of becoming.” They were selfless servants to one another and to anyone in need. She was a seamstress, who specialized in the nearly extinct skill of “darning” and he was a postal clerk, who knew instinctively the fastest and least expensive way to post a letter or package. Their seemingly mundane lives were uneventful, but filled with a joy of helping others by doing “small things with great love.” One small kindness after another led them to have a circle of friends that was almost countless. Over their 40-plus years of marriage they “became” the epitomes of what others strive to be.

But as love and time marched along, so did their relationship. John had many hospitalizations as he moved past his ninth decade. Maggie, being a few years younger, remained steadfast in helping John to stay in their own home, but eventually a medical issue forced John to the hospital. Still, Maggie went every day to see him except one because of a 10-inch snow that closed the streets and highways.

Maggie’s 90th birthday was fast approaching and the nurses and doctors told her that John might not make it that long. John overheard those hushed conversations and made plans with the nurses’ aides and orderlies to celebrate Maggie’s birthday from his bedside. Flowers were ordered, he had everyone help make a surprise homemade birthday card, and even had cupcakes special ordered from the hospital commissary for her big day. John promised Maggie that her birthday would not be forgotten and that he’d be around to help her celebrate.

The morning of her 90th birthday the hospital called saying John was failing fast. Maggie hurried and arrived 10 minutes after he had died. On his hospital tray were the flowers, card, and cupcakes that he had worked so hard to make her day special. At the end of his earthly journey, John had finished “becoming” the best person and husband that one could wish for. He inspired many husbands, myself included, on what love really means.

It may never be made into a movie, but it remains my favorite love story.

Happy Valentine’s Day!

Phil
When I started work as a funeral counselor over 13 years ago, I asked my parents if they had their funerals planned.

“It’s all taken care of!” My dad cut me off saying they were both being buried at Fort Snelling.

End of conversation.

Well, that’s pretty typical in my family. I’m the youngest, and estate issues are usually above my pay grade. So it was with some surprise that I got a call from my brother-in-law a few weeks ago asking what my parents funeral plans were.

“I don’t know. I thought you knew…all I was ever told was that they want to be buried at Fort Snelling.”

So, we come to find out that the only plan my dad has is that one sentence:

“I want to be buried at Fort Snelling.”

Let me be very clear here: THIS IS NOT A PLAN! It is a recipe for chaos, hurt feelings, guilt and remorse.

If you have not given clear direction to your survivors, they will come charging in with different ideas and agendas, and a very bad day will become much, much worse.

A one-hour conversation with a funeral counselor will:

• Tell your family in clear terms, what you do and do not want.
• Fill in areas of doubt that you probably didn’t even know existed.
• Eliminate legal road blocks caused by missing paperwork and documentation (Insurance papers, veteran papers, cremation authorization and more).

Would you please, please, please do this for your family? As a son with two parents I love, I can tell you your children will be greatly blessed by this gift.

–Jeff Gould

Meet Tron!

Tron Glaser is our new maintenance person here at George Boom Funeral Home. Here are the answers to seven questions:

1: I’ve lived here my whole life.
2: About six months. Before this I worked at Avera for 14 years in maintenance and food service.
3: I like the relaxed environment and the friendly people. It’s been a good move for me.
4: Her name is Amanda. We’ve been married five years.
5: No kids yet.
6: Hunting, fishing and snowmobiling.
7: (laughs) Believe it or not, I’m named after the 1982 science fiction movie!
Happy Birthday, Mount Rushmore!

Mount Rushmore is 75 years old. Here are some fun facts about the famous attraction.

Vying for Visitors. The whole purpose of the sculpture was to increase tourism. Historian Doane Robinson thought it should have Lewis and Clark, Red Cloud and other western heroes. Obviously that plan changed, but it still worked – almost three million people see it each year.

In order of completion and why selected:
1934 George Washington - founding of nation
1936 Thomas Jefferson - expansion of nation
1937 Abraham Lincoln - unification of nation
1939 Theodore Roosevelt - preservation of nation’s resources.

Me Too! Funded by the government, Mount Rushmore was prone to political pressures. There was a bill introduced in 1937 to add Susan B. Anthony to the carvings.

Not minors, miners! Since most of the carving was done with dynamite, most of the 400 carvers were gold miners looking for work, good enough that no one died during construction.

Wrong side. Jefferson was originally intended to be on Washington’s right, but the rock wasn’t stable so they squeezed him in on the left.

Close enough. The plan originally was to finish the presidents down to the waist and remove the extra rock, but on Oct. 31, 1941, funding ran out and it was deemed complete at just under 1 million dollars and 14½ years.

Coulda been faster. The actual carving took only six years; the delays were caused by bad weather and lack of funding.

See it now. That carving is made of granite and is expected to only last 7 million years before the faces are unrecognizable.

COMING EVENTS

Cremation Questions and Answers
This is one of our most requested seminars. It covers the various kinds of cremation services requested by families along with costs, legal requirements, and time to answer any individual questions you may have.
Where: Active Generations
When: Thursday, February 16, 10 a.m.
Speaker: Jeff Gould

7 Mistakes
Survey results from families after a funeral indicate many have the same regrets. These “mistakes” are the subject of the informal seminar and feature time to ask specific questions about funeral planning in a non-threatening format.
Where: Active Generations
When: Thursday, April 20, 10 a.m.
Speaker: Jeff Gould

Pancakes
A George Boom Tradition! Bring a friend and plan on meeting many more for free pancakes, sausages and conversation. Many of you will receive invitations in the mail. You do not need to RSVP for this event- just come hungry!
Where: VFW on South Minnesota Avenue (new location)
When: Thursday, April 27, 8-11 a.m.

Active Living Expo
Active Generations popular expo features many, many vendors, prizes and goodies to eat! See you there!
Where: Active Generations
When: Thursday, May 4, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

Progress report: foundations being set and poured for the new George Boom Funeral Home
Did you hear the one about...

Why did the man with one arm cross the road? To get to the Second-Hand store!

What do you get if you divide the circumference of a pumpkin by its diameter? Pumpkin pi...

What's the difference was between mime and pantomime? No one will say.

What happens if you don't pay your exorcist? You get repossessed.

A guy walks into a bar, and there's a seal sitting at the far end of the room. The seal says to the man, "I like the way you smell. You've got a great haircut. Your jacket looks great on you. Nice tan." The man says to the bartender, "Who is he?"

The bartender says, "That's the Seal of Approval."

Doctors tell us there are over seven million people who are overweight. These, of course, are only round figures.

What do you call a doctor who graduated at the bottom of his class? A doctor.

One Sunday morning, a mother went in to wake her son and tell him it was time to get ready for church, to which he replied, "I'm not going." "Why not?" she asked. "I'll give you two good reasons," he said. "One, they don't like me, and two, I don't like them." His mother replied, "I'll give YOU two good reasons why YOU SHOULD go to church.

(1) You're 59 years old, and (2) you're the pastor!"