

Bereavement: a Complicated Process

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inability to accept the death, persistent dwelling on the death, and ongoing preoccupation with thoughts of the lost one. Major depressive disorder should be considered when grief lasts more than two or three months, accompanied by expressions of guilt, preoccupation with death in general, loss of self-esteem, abnormal or diminished physical activity, and inability to cope with activities of daily living.

The absence of overt grief and the inability of the individual to express grief may be signs of abnormality. The inability to weep or be demonstrative in the early phases, and the continuation of depression, is usually associated with symptoms that are serious enough to preclude normal lifestyle and function. Strong relapses of severe emotion pertaining to the loss, strong longings for the deceased with fantasies of their presence, isolation and feelings of hopelessness may persist. Loss of social interests, avoidance of people previously associated with the deceased, sleep

disturbances, and loss of health point to a condition that will require analysis and treatment.

When death occurs from violence or trauma, especially when witnessed by the patient, PTSD - post-traumatic stress disorder should be considered. Recurring and distressing images of the event, avoidance of people or places involved, insomnia, diminished attention spans, and outbursts of emotions like anger outbursts.

Relatives and friends can be most helpful in all the early stages of bereavement. In the uncommon instances, when grief becomes a pathological burden, the individual may be well served by referral to a specialist in psychiatry for a thorough evaluation. Psychotherapy with a psychiatrist (a medical doctor) or psychologist, a professional trained in non-medical treatment of mental disorders, provide opportunities for the individual to talk out feelings of loss and emotional difficulties and learn to cope with them. Support groups are helpful for some, who may find it helpful to share feelings and experiences

with other individuals who are also affected. Medications may be prescribed; antidepressants may help to alleviate some symptoms, especially if major depression is diagnosed. Medications for sleep are helpful in coping with a daily cycle of living. What is important is that the grieving individual return to good physical and emotional health with the past in perspective and the loss embedded in a positive acceptance.

Dr. Silva is a professor of surgery at Wayne State University and a resident of Woodbluff on Mackinac Island.

Mackinac Island Yacht Club Bridge Results



In Mackinac Island Yacht Club Bridge League games for the week ending Wednesday, June 15, John Webster placed first, Nicki Krzykowski placed second, and Ann Timmons placed third.

Horse Tales: Mule Power Used on Island

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and Knight of Malta. George Washington was a strong proponent of mules and worked hard at breeding them. It actually was the hoof and mouth disease, which ran rampant in the south from the 1760s to the 1780s, which helped to bring fame to the mule for his hardiness. Land exploration, one-crop cotton planters, the construction of the Erie and subsequent canals, and the opening of the prairies increased the popularity of mules. By 1860, the mule population in the United States was reported to be 1,129,553.

When mules came to Mackinac Island, they were "public livestock," under the ownership of the Department of the Army. They worked on the Island for the Fort.

Did they help to haul it over during the winter of 1780-81? It is possible, but unlikely.

The mule's real usefulness came in the 1800s when the military developed a primary system here for hauling firewood and building and improving roads. Mule power was also harnessed to the plow for the planting crops on the Island, and hauling water up the "hill."

In 1827, Major Alexander Ramsey Thompson wrote of the need for horsepower.

"The principal reason given for the removal of the Post under the hill is for the purpose of relieving the men from bringing their wood and water up the hill on their backs," he wrote. "The labor is, and has been performed since my command by the public horses allowed to this post to procure the fuel, and every stick of wood, and drop of water, is now drawn up by the horses, (as) it should be, and not on the back of the soldiers."

Mules and horses were both used in this capacity.

The armies used mules widely during the Civil War, as well as in World War I. Again, they did the grunt work, hauling

supplies as well as huge artillery. The mules continued to work best with their own kind, other mules, though they actually developed strong bonds with many of the men.

The mules were downplayed on Mackinac Island during the late 1880s, 1890s, and 1900s on Mackinac. They reappeared in the 1930s.

Next week's Horse Tales

will feature more about mules and Mackinac in the not so distant past.

Candice Dunnigan is an active member of the American Equestrian Association, the Waterloo Hunt, and the Mackinac Island Horsemen's Association. Seasonally she resides at Donnybrook and Easterly Cottage.

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Car Ferries Bridged Peninsulas

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Texas-petroleum era, the U.P. was the nation's natural resources powerhouse. In 1885, miners dug 90 percent of the nation's copper and more than 40 percent of the nation's iron ore from pits in the Upper Peninsula. Small chunks of this iron-rich ore ended up scattered at the Railroad Dock in St. Ignace, across the Straits from the GR & I's northernmost point at Mackinaw City, Michigan. While the railroads talked briefly about trying to build a bridge across the Straits to unite Michigan's two peninsulas, the enormous cost of this project and the efficiency of the car ferries made this an unviable option.

The *Chief Wawatam* and its Mackinac Company sister boats were some of the few Great Lakes vessels to boast funnels painted pure black. During the first half of the 1900s, it was the custom of the Lakes for each boat-owner to have its boats' funnels painted in a variety of bright and instantly recognizable colors. The *Chief Wawatam* tended to burn smoky coal carried northward by the GR & I from mines in Illinois or Indiana, and because the *Chief* and its sister boats rarely left the Straits of Mackinac, executives of the GR & I and its fellow railroads tended to assume that no one would ever mistake these boats for any other vessels.

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