

KS Trooper Magazine
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Are You a Pot Stirrer or Active Member?

Author's Note. This article is not designed to make KSTA members immediately confrontational about issues that arise; instead, it is to make us each aware the rights each KSTA member has to stand up for themselves and to be treated fairly and respectfully.

Are you a Pot Stirrer or an Active Member? Unfortunately, being an active member of the Kansas State Troopers Association can get you labeled as a pot stirrer. I'd like to address this issue since I'm sure many of us have been "labeled."

My name is J.L. Riedel, Trooper and Public Resource Officer stationed in Salina. I joined the Patrol in March of 1994, and I was part of the last class to attend training at the old academy located at the airport. After completing field training in Greenwood County, my first duty station was Lyon County.

In 1997 I transferred to Salina and worked the road until December 2001, when I assumed the duties of Public Resource Officer. During my first several years on the patrol, I wasn't even a member of the KSTA. Only after a few years of seeing the "political" impact upon troopers in what is supposed to be a "non-political" agency did I join the Association. When Trooper Gassman was promoted and transferred to the training academy, I took over as the Troop C. director and dove in head first with my KSTA involvement.

As a troop director, I have assisted several members with grievances, evaluation appeals, and other issues. I felt it was my role as a troop director to serve as the "checks and balance" system between the Patrol and the members of the Troopers Association. Over the years, I can tell you that problems would arise out of two main areas: 1) someone making a mistake and being too proud, or bull-headed to admit it, or 2) making things "personal" instead of looking at it objectively.

Allow me to elaborate on this a little. We are all humans and we all make mistakes; that is a FACT. People who admit to making mistakes (and take responsibility for their actions) are more respected than those who don't. Think about the person you have stopped on the side of the road who says, "Yes, Sir, I did it." You probably still write them a ticket, but you respect them for acknowledging their mistake.

Secondly, when a supervisor takes a grievance being filed as a personal attack or a trooper takes disciplinary action as a personal attack, problems arise. I encourage everyone, troopers and supervisors, to have open communications and be objective about things.

Have you ever attended a KSTA meeting? Unfortunately, a large portion of our membership has not. I know that we are all busy and our schedules are full, but I encourage everyone to attend a quarterly meeting; one meeting is all I ask. Attending one of the Association's meetings would allow you to see how the KSTA operates on your behalf. Do you know how your Association's money is being spent? Attending a meeting would answer that question for you.

The KSTA offers a wide variety of benefits and supports several programs that Trooper's can take advantage of. The KSTA supports cable service at the academy's dorms in Salina, and purchased the gym stereo at troop J. The KSTA sponsors the annual KHP motorcycle ride and golf tournament, and pays for travel expenses for attendance at Law Enforcement Seminars. The KSTA recently backed the distribution of pocket press law books, provides aid and assistance for members who have experienced devastation in their lives, and makes donations to charitable organizations across the state. And that's just the tip of the iceberg.

Did you know that your association has representation on the new equipment, hardship, and law enforcement memorial committees, just to name a few? Being an active member will provide you with a better understanding of how things within the KSTA operate and answer a lot of questions you have. It will also allow you to put an end to rumors you hear floating around by giving you the facts.

In closing, I ask you to become involved with your Kansas State Troopers Association, even if it's just attending one meeting or taking a few moments to talk with your Troop Director about the opportunities available to you through membership. Don't be scared of being "labeled."

Editor's Note: Trooper J.L. Riedel is the Vice-President of the KSTA.

Success in curbing alcohol-related fatalities; work continues

Colonel William Seck, KHP Superintendent

In Kansas, on average, more than one person is killed every day in motor vehicle-related crashes and every 21 minutes, someone is injured. Those are staggering statistics. What is unfortunate is many of those lives could have been saved if a seat belt had been worn or if the driver was not drinking.

To curb these fatalities and injuries, this past year I joined Secretary of Transportation Deb Miller and Secretary of Health and Environment Rod Bremby to raise awareness across the state. We spent months traveling and listening to people, hearing their concerns and losses, and working with them to develop solutions.

Each of our agencies has a responsibility to find solutions to this problem. The Patrol is among the first to arrive on a crash scene, and usually, the ones who have to notify family members about what happened. With aggressive maintenance and construction programs, Kansas Department Of Transportation makes Kansas' roads among the

safest in the nation. Kansas Department of Health & Environment strives to save lives and prevent injuries. Kansans bears a lot of the costs accrued when fatalities occur on our state's roads. Automobile insurance premiums are exorbitant. Health and disability premiums increase. Employer productivity losses increase. These and many other costs ripple through our economy.

However, the best roads can't protect people who do not wear a seatbelt. And, the best health care and prevention cannot prevent people from driving drunk. That is why all three agencies work together, relying on enforcement and education programs to curb fatalities.

We were pleased earlier this year when the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration recognized our efforts that already are in place. Kansas led the nation in reducing the number of alcohol-related fatalities on our roadways, a 29 percent reduction in 2004. This is the culmination of hard work by all law enforcement agencies, KDHE, and KDOT, who work to keep impaired drivers off of our roadways. This news keeps our energy going as we tackle more issues of concern.

Everyday, members of the Patrol and the law enforcement community enforce our traffic laws. Troopers have zero tolerance for impaired driving. Extra law enforcement officers work on weekends and the holidays to fight drunk driving. Sobriety checkpoints are established. Intoxicated drivers are arrested.

As much as we are focused on enforcement, we must also get the message out there through education programs. The goal is to get the word out as to what the dangers are and what the consequences can be if you or another driver is drunk. The Patrol strives to reach people as young as junior-high age. Everyone, no matter what the age, needs to know the consequences of getting behind the wheel of a vehicle if you or the driver is intoxicated. It is a dual responsibility. We must ensure other drivers, including friends, family, and strangers are not behind the wheel, driving drunk. Unfortunately, we do not know who else will be on the road and whether or not they have been drinking. We must educate everyone.

Like KDOT, KDHE, and the Patrol partnering together, we must all work jointly to continue to reduce our alcohol-fatalities. Our enforcement and education efforts for impaired driving, booster seats, and safety restraints will continue. The announcement by the NHTSA was welcomed news, but we know we have a lot more to do. Solutions will continue to be cultivated, implemented, and used. All to protect Kansans, keep them safe, and ensure they arrive at their destination safely.

Motor Carrier Inspectors play important role in the Kansas Highway Patrol

By Amy Claycamp Ragland

In 2004, the Kansas State Troopers Association voted to include Motor Carrier Inspectors (MCI's) as full-fledged members of the KSTA. As members, all MCI's are

entitled to the same membership benefits as their Trooper counterparts. There are currently thirty MCI's, and they have their own Troop – Troop MC – with full representation at each KSTA Board meeting.

I recently caught up with Troop MC Director Brandon Hosheit, who filled me in on what it means to be an MCI.

ACR: So what does an MCI do during his or her daily job?

BH: Just like a Trooper, we enforce Federal and state laws. One of our primary duties is to enforce the weight and size limits of commercial vehicles. We perform CVSA (Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance) truck inspections, and we assist local agencies with making sure their vehicles are compliant. We also check for fuel compliance on non-taxable fuel. Many of our MCI's give safety classes to trucking companies and schools. In short, we help to protect Kansas citizens and roadways.

ACR: What are the differences between an MCI and a Trooper?

A Trooper's primary duty is to enforce the traffic laws of Kansas and to work accidents. The primary duty of an MCI is to enforce the weight and size laws of commercial vehicles and to perform CVSA inspections. It's a division of labor. Other than that, our roles are similar.

ACR: Are MCI's considered to be law enforcement?

BH: MCI III's are mobile units and are considered full law enforcement. An MCI Sergeant is the next step up from an MCI III, and performs supervisor duties.

ACR: What's the process for becoming an MCI?

BH: Candidates have to go through an application process that is similar to the process for becoming a Trooper. Each MCI candidate has to apply, go through the rounds of interviews, take the qualifying tests, pass a polygraph and background check, and attend the Kansas Law Enforcement Training Academy. Many of our mobile MCI's have gone through the same training academy with Troopers.

ACR: What's a typical day like for an MCI?

BH: Most MCI's patrol an area that includes several counties. During the day, we will stop commercial vehicles to check for weight and size compliance and to perform CVSA safety inspections. We will also watch for traffic violations, check motor carriers for the proper permits, and assist stranded motorists. We also assist local law enforcement agencies as well as assist troopers and local agencies working accidents. We can help fill out citation and arrest reports for other agencies as needed.

ACR: What benefit do you see to becoming members of the KSTA?

BH: Before we became members, we had no real representation. Because we are such a small number of people, we really had no voice and we were ignored when it came to issues such as working conditions and pay raises. We have benefited by joining a large, respected group of employees that are listened to. Since we are included in

KSTA contract resolutions, we will have a contract to work under and know exactly what is expected of us.

KSTA Political Action Committee
By Ron Kurtz, KSTA PAC Chairman

To all of the members of the KSTA, I say hello. To my classmates of Academy Class #24, and all the other troopers I had the pleasure to meet and work with during my tenure on the KHP, I have missed you. For those of you that I have not had the pleasure to meet as of yet, let me take a few lines to introduce myself. My name is Ron Kurtz and I am an attorney in private practice in Topeka. Prior to becoming an attorney, I was a trooper from 1994 to 2000. I was stationed in Topeka and a member of the KHP's CHART team. I also served on the KSTA Board, first, as Troop Director and for a short time as Vice President prior to my departure. Finally, I am married to my very loving and tolerant wife of ten years, Linda; and, we have two young daughters, Madelynn, age 8, and Morgan, age 5.

As part of my private law practice, I have the great opportunity to serve as the chairman of the KSTA PAC. I want to say thank you to the KSTA Board, the KSTA PAC Board, Steve Kearney, and to you for this opportunity. This is special to me because I served on the KSTA Board when KSTA PAC was initially formed. It is great to see how the PAC has progressed; and, to once again be involved in its growth and continued success serving the troopers and, ultimately, the citizens of Kansas.

As you may be aware, another election cycle for members of the Kansas House is upon us. In addition, statewide offices (Governor, Secretary of State, Treasurer) are also up for election in 2006. Lastly, we have numerous relationships with Kansas Senators that we will continue to cultivate and support. Steve Kearney and I have met on several occasions to discuss the KSTA's support of legislators who support you. I envision the PAC, and my role as its chairman, as complimenting the lobbying efforts of the KSTA and supporting those legislators that support Kansas troopers. Currently, I am making the rounds and getting to know legislators and discussing issues important to you and the KSTA. We will provide periodic updates of our efforts and their results as matters progress. Finally, as the election cycle progresses, please know that I may call upon you to assist in these efforts. We want to create a presence - financial, personal and professional - that gets our elected leaders' attention and makes known the support we can offer. I look forward to working with you, and on your behalf, as the PAC chairman.

In addition to my position as chairman, I want each of you to consider my office as a trusted legal resource. Should you have a legal issue or question arise, please feel free to contact my office. I would be glad to assist you, whether it legal representation, referral to another attorney of professional, or simply answering a question. Lastly, I am enrolled in the PLEA program provided as part of your KSTA membership. Again, I look forward to assisting you if the need arises.

Finally, I want to end on a personal note. I wish you and your families a happy and healthy holiday season. Be safe out on the roads and highways protecting us during this holiday season and thereafter. And here's to a happy and prosperous new year. Thank you.

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Keeping the Kansas State Troopers Association Political Action Committee By Steve Kearney, KSTA Executive Vice-President

Many of you are aware of the formation of the Kansas State Troopers Association Political Action Committee. This affiliate organization has been established to bring sharper focus on the Kansas political scene to the welfare of law enforcement, and that of Kansas State Troopers. The Kansas State Troopers Association Political Action Committee is organized under the laws of the Internal Revenue Service and the Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission to accept contributions from individuals, organizations and corporations that support the same goals. The Kansas State Troopers Association Political Action Committee is comprised of a Chairman, Treasurer and a Board of Directors.

Pursuant to the Kansas State Troopers Association Political Action Committee bylaws, the Chairman is not an active member of the Kansas State Troopers Association, and serves as the spokesperson for the Kansas State Troopers Association Political Action Committee. I am pleased to announce to you that former Kansas State Troopers Association board member Ron Kurtz has recently accepted the position for the upcoming year as the Kansas State Troopers Association Political Action Committee Chairman. Ron Kurtz served with distinction as a Kansas State Trooper, and as a tireless board member during his tenure with the Kansas State Troopers Association.

You may recall that several years ago Ron left the Kansas Highway Patrol, and resigned his position with the Kansas State Troopers Association to enter law school at Washburn University. Ron has since completed his legal education with the Washburn University School of Law, and is currently in private practice in Topeka, KS. His practice includes the representation of Kansas State Troopers, and he is an attorney on the approved PLEA list. Ron's political savvy and his previous service to the Kansas State Troopers Association, I'm sure you will all agree, will stand the Kansas State Troopers Association Political Action Committee in good stead under his leadership.

Look for more information regarding the Kansas State Troopers Association Political Action Committee's activities, endorsed candidates for the Kansas legislature and statewide offices, as well as contributions made to supporters of the Kansas State Troopers Association Political Action Committee's goals. It is the intention of the

leadership of the Kansas State Troopers Association Political Action Committee to be active during this next election cycle where all 125 seats of the Kansas House of Representatives are up for election, as well as the seats of Governor and Attorney General, all of which have significant impact on the future of law enforcement and the day to day lives of Kansas State Troopers.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank former Chairman, Gene Garcia, another former Kansas State Troopers Association board member and retired Kansas State Trooper. Gene has served the Kansas State Troopers Association Political Action Committee with distinction as its first Chairman during the early years of its establishment, and has seen to it that the Kansas State Troopers Association Political Action Committee is on a path towards growth and political relevance. Gene served the Kansas State Troopers Association prior to his retirement as a board member, a member of the Kansas State Troopers Association Negotiating Team, and most immediately prior to his retirement as the Secretary of the Kansas State Troopers Association. I am certain that you all will join me in thanking Gene for his tireless service, and his undying loyalty to the betterment of every Kansas State Trooper.

**Kansas Highway Patrol Inspector Does
Well at North American Inspectors Championships
By: Scott Mayfield, Troop I**



This year, the Kansas Highway Patrol sent MCSAP Technical Trooper Tad “Charles” Krape to the North American Inspectors Championships (NAIC) in Tampa, FL. The NAIC is held annually in conjunction with the American Trucking Association’s National Truck Driving Championship. Participants are CVSA inspectors from across the U.S., Canada and Mexico. In 2005 there were 49 inspectors competing. The event was held from August 12th-15th.

The North American Inspectors Championships purpose is to recognize the inspector for demonstrating inspector excellence. Their goals are to provide contestants with education on the latest commercial vehicle safety issues, promote uniformity of inspections throughout North America, challenge contestants utilizing real world scenarios, provide CVSA a snapshot of the current inspection environment, strengthen the industry and enforcement relationships and promote camaraderie between inspectors, jurisdictions and countries.

NAIC contestants are evaluated in the following seven categories:

1. North American Standard Level I Inspection
2. North American Standard Level I Inspection Procedures
3. North American Standard Haz Mat/Transportation of Dangerous Goods Inspection

4. North American Standard Cargo Tank/Bulk Package Inspection
5. North American Standard Level V Motor Coach Inspection
6. North American Standard Personal Interview
7. North American Standard Out-of-Service Criteria Exam

All of the inspection categories are timed events and the compilation of scores for these categories result in a Grand Champion. In addition to a Grand Champion, awards are given in first, second and third places for each inspection event.

The inspectors' week starts off with a get together of all inspectors and staff. Tad said he really enjoyed visiting with other inspectors from across the U.S. and found that with the North American Standard Inspections, we all do inspect CMV's pretty much the same.

Next was getting into a dress uniform for a photo session and a videotaped interview. Tad said that he received a lot of compliments on the KHP uniform. In the interview, contestants were questioned on various CVSA issues.

The following day and a half was devoted to classes that relate to interview techniques, false logs, proper recording of violations and driver fatigue. Tad stated that after the driver fatigue portion of the class, he better understood why we have the new hours of service changes.

The next two days were spend conducting the five inspections listed above. The first day started with a breakfast banquet where the truck drivers and inspectors were able to visit with each other before beginning their respective competitions.

In the inspection competitions, no "cheat sheets" are allowed, a contestant is only allowed to use material provided by the CVSA staff upon their arrival for fair evaluation of the contestants knowledge of the various inspection procedures. Contestants are evaluated on determining all violations found during the inspection, properly citing those violations and noting if they are considered "Out-of-Service". In addition to citing violations, contestants are also evaluated on their performance of the inspections. They must follow the North American Inspection Procedure in the manner all CVSA inspectors are trained.

Most states involved have a local inspector's challenge to determine eligibility for the NAIC and some even train their officers for the competition. For the Kansas Highway Patrol, participation is voluntary, and is usually reserved for those who have not competed previously. Tad attended the 2003 NAIC. Another trooper had been selected for this years competition, but had to cancel at the last minute and Tad stepped up six days prior to the start of the competition

Out of the five inspections the participants were evaluated in, Tad placed third in the Haz Mat and Cargo Tank/Bulk Package Inspection event. For the Haz Mat inspection, Tad had to perform an inspection of a cargo tank in twenty minutes or less and record

any violations discovered. The violations had to be properly listed, and identify out of service violations. The other portion of this event was the Cargo Tank/Bulk Package Inspection in which you also had twenty minutes inspect the vehicle and properly list the violations discovered and identify the out of service violations.

Congratulations to Tad Krape for representing the Kansas Highway Patrol MCSAP Unit in an international competition.

Chaplain's Article

"Tom, pick up 4571. It's 911. They said it's urgent." Our department secretary's message as crisp and to the point. Because we work at a Level I Trauma Center, she is used to a certain degree of crisis calls. But until I came on the scene, she never got calls from law enforcement. She doesn't know what to make of the occasional requests for me to respond to an unknown problem. "They always sound so 'official'," she says, and it intimidates her. But one thing she does know – these calls are always unsettling, and that something bad has happened.

I took the call and listened carefully as dispatch relayed the unfolding details. "Tom, need you to respond to the southbound rest area on I-135. We have a probable suicide. We believe the subject is still locked inside the cab of his eighteen-wheeler. Apparently, his wife left him and he was despondent. He was staying with his parents and they thought he left on a trip to pick up a load of cattle, so they didn't worry for a couple of days. Then his supervisor called and asked if they knew where he was because he was a no-show for the pick up. That's when his family got worried and notified us. They were the ones that found his truck. It's all locked up. Sheriff is asking if you can respond."

It didn't take long to start for Newton. In this kind of work, you learn to set ordinary things aside and respond to the crisis. That's the nature of crisis care. I tried to imagine the horror his parents must be feeling. No matter how old your children are, you never completely stop worrying about them. It must be embedded into the deepest part of a parent's genes. They can be adults with their own kids, but part of your heart will always be concerned about them.

It wasn't so far from my hospital to the southbound rest area – maybe fifteen miles – and traffic was light, so I made good time. I tried to prepare myself for the work I had to do. If it was a suicide and if the parents were there, it would be devastating to them. We can't undo what happened nor can we take away their pain. Chaplains most often are called to be present. To listen. To encourage healthy grieving. The old folk wisdom, "Don't just stand there: Do something!" is turned upside down for chaplains, "Don't do something, just stand there." Chaplains will tell you that standing alongside deeply troubled people is tough, And it can hurt.

Maybe I identified with the parents because I'm a parent, too, and I determined that a couple of my kids – my sons – were probably close to the age of the possible suicide. I felt a shiver run up my spine. The thought of one of my own sons becoming despondent

and taking his life was too painful to consider so I forced that thought out of my mind. I've provided crisis care for several decades now. Whenever I work a tragedy with kids who are my own kids' age, I inevitably see the connection and know how close I could be to a similar tragedy. In fact, when they were really young, after working a tragic death, I used to walk through our house and enter each of their bedrooms and touch them. I needed to know my family was safe. When I watch a family disintegrate in grief when they hear this mournful news, it does weird things to my own spirit.

But I knew there were other matters that squeezed my heart, too. I've worked quite a number of suicides and I've had to tell family members that a beloved has made this unchangeable but devastating choice to end their life. I have watched too many parents and wives and children disintegrate before my eyes when I tell them. It's not my fault, I know that. I come into the picture long after the choice was made and the consequences were already put into place. Almost always, these are people I don't know; they are strangers to me. But in that brief moment in time, our lives are woven tightly together and I know that for the rest of their lives, they will remember the moment when I told them the worst news they would ever hear. From that moment on, their lives would be forever changed. Some tell me long after the fact that every time they see me around town or read my newspaper column, they are reminded of this wretched event. That makes it imperative to do this work with compassion.

And I'm no stranger to the devastating effects of suicide myself. My best friend from my childhood days got lost in his own world of depression and, after years of treatment and struggle and medicine and therapy, including ECT treatment, he ran out of energy to meet the daily burden of contending with the overwhelming, relentless and consuming depression that ate away at his soul as surely as cancer consumes an otherwise healthy body. He took his .38 Chief's Special and shot himself to death.

I was only a day home from the hospital from heart surgery when my secretary called and told me to call my friend's dad. She paused for a moment, not knowing how to say what she knew so she gently said, "It's something about the death of his son." That was enough for me to know what had happened.

Even before I knew the whole story, I knew enough to feel a deep sadness. I knew that C.L. had battled depression since at least our university days and that he never got his feet planted firmly on solid ground. I worked in a psychiatric hospital in those early days of his illness and witnessed many patients who were overwhelmed with depression and just as many who found their way through the fog of a broken spirit. But some never find their way.

"915 Newton." It was Ted's voice, a deputy I work with regularly, who interrupted my ruminations. "Newton, if you can reach 606, tell him to expedite. Parents are here and they are very upset. We're holding off entry 'til 606 gets here."

I grabbed my radio and responded. "606 to 915 direct. I'm about five out."

“10-4, 606. I’ll be standing by with the parents at the north end of the rest area.”

I could see the red lights of the deputies’ cars and an ambulance, too. A small crowd of travelers who were at the rest area gathered in a grassy area close to the restrooms and watched. Tragedies always draw the curious.

915’s unit was a hundred yards away from the suspect’s truck. 915 had already wisely decided to maneuver the parents away from the truck under the legitimate guise of gathering information. “Mom, Dad, this is Tom Shane. He’s our chaplain. We called him to be here for you in case this is what we think it is.”

915 was guarded and tried his best to tell the truth in a way that remained sensitive yet realistic. I thought his must have been the toughest assignment of all the deputies in this event. To wait with family while the inevitable bad news comes to light is to feel helpless. Cops are action-oriented professionals, but there are events when what is needed is presence. Compassion. Sensitivity. It’s not as easy as it sounds. It’s easier to wait and watch at the cab of the truck and observe the hardcore reality of the tragedy. Some of it is unpleasant. The smell is pitiful. The visual scene is wretched. But you don’t have to hear the moaning of grief-stricken parents who now know for certain that their beloved son is dead.

“What’s happening?” the mother asked me with a look of despair weighing on her face.

“I’ll check in with the sheriff,” I said. “He’ll fill me in on everything and I’ll report to you.”

I noticed that neither parent asked to come with me. Somewhere inside of them, they knew that a hundred yards away their once bright promise of a son was surely dead.

I was caught off guard when I approached the truck. The sheriff and a few officers stood silently beside the truck. Standing on a small ladder, I saw a man from Elden’s Lock and Key working to gain entry into the truck.

Then I saw it. Hundreds of flies hovered inside the cab. Probably thousands. They looked like a living black blanket that covered everything. They were the harbingers of death.

When the lock was unsealed, the locksmith stepped aside. He knew his work was done and he would not take the next step of opening the cab itself. He was as close as he intended to be.

The sheriff stepped on the truck’s tiny footrest and opened the door. Instantly, a wash of hot, putrid air tumbled from inside the cab and enveloped us with its foul odor. The smell of death was ominous in the hot Kansas August afternoon. Two days dead in a truck left little to identify but a mass of decaying human remains.

The sheriff shut the door and said to the undersheriff, "Call the coroner and get a unit to transport the body to the coroner's office. It's their job, now. I won't ask any of you to remove him."

A hundred yards away and a half hour later, I stood with the parents as they watched from afar as their son was placed in a black body bag and taken away for an autopsy.

The afternoon sun shone relentlessly on the prairie. Not a breath of air broke the shimmering heat waves which hovered over the southbound rest area. The parents thanked us for the support the department made available and for our kindness. They held hands as they walked quietly back to their car.

Pastoral care for chaplains in law enforcement is a ministry of moments. Most often we know nothing about those whose lives cross ours in their moment of tragedy. When the event is over, they slip away to their lives and we may never see them again. Oh, but we will remember. Forever we will remember.

That makes each moment – that tiny spot in time when dreams are broken – sacred. Fate or Providence or the hand of God calls us to this point in time where lives are vulnerable and where persons need the Good News of Hope because for all it seems to them, hope itself seems to have died.