Welcome back and thank you again for your interest in The Vigil. As we all know there is a slight chill in the air so that could only mean one thing… Fall is here. Halloween, the changing of the leaves, plus we gain an hour of sleep… it’s the best time of the year…who can complain!?

I would like to start this issue with a big THANK YOU to all the faculty for all the teachings and confidence you all give us (students) and it shows. What I’m getting at is the greater than 90% pass rate on the National Board Exam for the Funeral Service Program. Without your support, tough love, and knowledge, we wouldn’t be the best Funeral Service Program in the nation. Thank you from the students. Let’s all keep up the good work! This is something we can all be proud of.

2012-2013 Sigma Phi Sigma Officers. Left to right. Rich Bowers, Vice President; Carolyn Smith, treasurer; Adam Scott, Secretary/Parliamentarian; Henry, our beloved mascot; Maura Edwards, President; Steven Endsley, Public Relations; Eric Kroier, UCOSA Representative.
Dia de Muertos a colorful holiday blending grief, celebrations

By Adam Scott

Día de Muertos, or Day of the Dead, is a holiday celebrated November 1–2 in Mexico and throughout much of Latin and South America, in conjunction with the Catholic holidays of All Saints' Day and the following All Souls' Day. In most areas of Mexico, November 1 is reserved for honoring only deceased infants and children; deceased adults are then honored on November 2. During the holiday, family and friends gather to pray for, celebrate the lives of, and make offerings to friends and family members who have died.

Major traditions of the holiday observed in Mexico include building private or public ofrendas, or altars, honoring one or more deceased family members. Often these include a painting, drawing, or more commonly a photograph or memento of the deceased. Offerings of marigolds, pan de muerto (bread of the dead), sugar skulls, and the favorite food and drink of the departed are left as gifts or at these altars or during a visit to the grave of a deceased person. Pan de muerto is a sweet, soft bun-shaped bread, often decorated with bone-like pieces to represent the dead person (“difuntos” for a male or “difuntas” for a female) and sometimes flavored with anise seeds. Frequently, these offerings are eaten by the living after the holiday's festivities have concluded, although they are generally considered to be without nutritional value, as the spirits of the departed are believed to have consumed the spiritual essence of the food and drink set out for them during the holiday. These offerings are made to encourage the souls of the dead to visit their living relatives, so those souls will hear prayers and the comments of the living, often of a humorous nature, directed to them.

Photo credit (for Catrina by Posada):
Photo provided by struxtravel.com
Cutline for Catrina by Posada:
This cartoon titled “La Calavera de la Catrina,” or “Skull of the Rich Woman,”
One iconic image now associated with the Day of the Dead started as a humorous comment itself -- that of “La Calavera de la Catrina,” or “Skull of the Rich Woman.” The image, depicting a woman in fancy clothes or an elaborate hat with a skull for a face, was intended originally as a satirical drawing by Mexican illustrator Jose Guadalupe Posada, who liked poking fun at the wealthy. Related to this drawing, many newspapers in Mexico have a long-standing history of accepting and publishing humorous epitaphs, themselves called “calaveras,” written by people about their friends. These traditionally will be a short piece, sometimes in verse, describing a short, humorous story about a person or an unusual quirk of his or her behavior or personality.

In turn, “La Calavera de Catrina” is herself linked to a figure from Aztec mythology named Mictecacihuatl, in whose name a festival was held by the Aztecs. In the Aztec pantheon, Mictecacihuatl is the queen of Mictlan, the underworld, which the rules with her husband Mictlantecuhtli, its king. Mictecacihuatl's role was primarily to keep watch over the bones of the dead.

While a sense of duty to the dead is a key part of the holiday, as families will clean their homes and the graves of their loved ones when they lay out offerings for them and may even spend all night holding a graveside vigil, the festival atmosphere remains a prominent element in modern Day of the Dead celebrations. Offerings for deceased children will include toys or candy, and offerings for adults frequently include tequila, pulque or other alcoholic beverages. In many areas, parades are held, with participants dressed up in colorful clothing with masks or makeup giving the look of a skull. Sometimes, the parades involved the construction of elaborate floats or large, skeleton-shaped marionettes carried on sticks by members of the procession. In many larger Mexican cities, a custom adapted from Halloween celebrations has emerged in recent years: In a parallel to Halloween's tradition of trick-or-treating, children walk along the streets in costumes, knocking on people's doors or asking people passing by for a gift of candy or money, called a calaverita.
Calendar of events

October
31. Halloween

November
4. Turn clocks back one hour!
7. Sigma Phi Sigma meeting. 7:30 am.

December
5. Sigma Phi Sigma meeting 7:30 am.
7. Presidents Christmas Party.

We are anticipating a trip to Pierce Chemical next semester. Contact an officer for more information.

Just mention Sigma Phi Sigma, Funeral Service when you place your order and we will receive a portion of the proceeds. Thank you for your support!

Don’t forget to visit your local Johnnie’s Charcoal Broiler every first Wednesday of the month and help support the Funeral Service Program at UCO.
Our most recent Graduates!

DEGREE

May, 2012

961. Horton, Ricky R
962. Lussier, Laura M
963. Pierce, Katelyn R

August, 2012

964. Jackson, Edwin B
965. Liggins, Terri D
966. Lindsay, Kaysha L
967. Nugent, Dustin
968. Rollans, Jesse W
969. Walters, Robert J

CERTIFICATE

August, 2012

317. Frizzell, Tammie S
Community Projects Update

As part of the Sigma Phi Mission Statement to “Educate the public concerning the funeral profession and increase the public’s appreciation of the profession by advocating participation in community service projects” Sigma officers have been in search of projects to further this mission. We believe that giving back to the community is an important component of being a true success in the funeral service industry and two projects underway to further this Mission are the “Adopt A Cemetery” project and the Funeral Department “Clothing Closet”.

Thanks to Barbara Matthews initiative and the kindness of several other donors we have the beginnings of a gently used "clothing closet" for student apprentices. If you would like to donate or see if there is something for you please let us know. You can come by the funeral service office in the Coyner building room 154 or contact us at funeralservice@uco.edu or 405-974-5001. This project helps promote our Mission of “Providing members various tools to advance their career goals and to assist them in securing a position with a funeral service provider”. This project will help students to “dress for success” which can be costly.

We also believe adopting a cemetery will be a great project to serve the community. The idea is to restore neglected and forgotten cemeteries through some simple manual labor. Sigma members are in the process of adopting a cemetery in Luther, OK that is in need of some TLC. If interested in helping with this or other service projects you may contact Sigma Vice President Rich Bowers at otuxcat@yahoo.com or the Funeral Service Department directly funeralservice@uco.edu 405-974-5001 or through our facebook page. A link can be found on the website www.uco.edu/funeral

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

1. Promote professionalism by providing opportunities for the development of leadership and climate for exchange of professional concepts, ethics, and ideals.
2. Educate the public concerning the funeral profession and increase the public’s appreciation of the profession by advocating participation in community service projects.
3. Encourage fellowship between students, faculty, and business entities.
4. Aid students in their academic endeavors through educational opportunities, speakers, or other tools with the goal of exceeding National/State Board Exam(s) standards.
5. Provide members various tools to advance their career goals and to assist them in securing a position with a funeral service provider.
Mortuary arts puzzle by Adam Scott
A collection of terms relating to business and social science aspects of the funeral service profession