

IN MEMORY

The deaths of the crew and passengers of Flight 261 touched those who knew them, and many who didn't. Readers from throughout Washington, and around the world, sent stories of the loved ones they lost, and expressions of sympathy to the surviving relatives and friends. We wanted to share some of them with you.

- IN THESE IMPETUOUS TIMES of a million meetings, late nights in the office, overbooked schedules, politics as usual, hate groups and religious fanatics, when all is said and done, it is the loved ones in our lives that matter most. What we do with the time we have is a gift, and how much time we have is never known.
- A tragedy like this can only bring us all together in the human race to realize that life is so fragile, so real and so special. In memory of all those on Flight 261. Shaun Stephen Mason of Seattle
- MY FATHER WORKED FOR PAN AM when I was growing up, and I remember those "special" flights we were on when it seemed like everyone on the plane worked for Pan Am. It was like one big party. When I heard of the crash - it affected me like all the others do - immense sorrow. But in some ways it was different. A difference only airline families can really understand. My heart aches for the families and friends of everyone on board. Carrie Dovzak of Berkeley, Calif.
- I GREW UP IN THE L.A. AREA and can remember both the crash at LAX, when one plane landed on top the other, and the Cerritos crash. I guess I became immune to problems growing up there and dispatched any emotion surrounding it. But Seattle is more small-town. This is an airport and airline that I frequent. The thought of their last moments and of what their families are enduring is just heartbreaking. Michael Bell of Kent
- I KNEW BIL TANSKY in the Navy when we were both on the Navy's DC-9 wing in New Orleans. He was there because he was the Navy's Model Manager for the DC-9, and thus the cream of the crop for that airframe. He was dedicated, easygoing and respected by those of us who worked with him and loved him. From what I've read to date they handled the situation extremely well. Most noteworthy is the fact they configured the plane for landing over water. This was done to preclude a crash over land and thus prevent any further loss of life by personnel on the ground. Events proved this a wise decision. Professional to the end. Good bye Bill. Tom Kane San Antonio, Texas
- I THINK WE CAN posthumously congratulate the pilots of Flight 261 for making the request to maneuver over water rather than over land. Aside from their heroic efforts to save their passengers, their decision minimized the tragedy to just those on the aircraft and friends and family of the victims without including more untimely deaths on the ground. Greg E. McCaddon of Kirkland
- WHEN I HEARD ABOUT THE CRASH, I was very concerned, and when I heard that Tom and Peggy Stockley were on that flight, I felt stunned and saddened. I grew up with their daughter, Dina, and all I could think about was our happy times as children and how we enjoyed our time together at school (elementary, junior high and high school) and playing over at their house in Bellevue. I am at a loss for words, and want to send my sympathy and support to Dina, Paige and the rest of the Stockley family. Erin Maxwell of Seattle
- DAVID CLEMETSON was one of the kindest physicians I have ever had the honor to work beside. His calm, mild manner with patients and staff will always serve as a reminder of how physicians in general should treat their fellow man. It was an honor to have known him and I thank God our paths crossed, even for such a brief period of time. I was an RN at Highline Community Hospital for over 11 years, and David Clemetson was one of my favorites, not only for his knowledge, but for his kindness. Joy Morin of Cottage Grove, Ore.
- WORDS CANNOT DESCRIBE the sorrow I've felt after hearing about this tragedy. I worked for Alaska Airlines for 5 1/2 years and know how this airline treats every employee as a family member. My heart goes out to every family member who lost someone here. When I look at the passenger manifest it tears me up. My family and I have flown hundreds of times total, and there's nothing to prepare yourself for something like this. Please remember accidents happen and sometimes they are no one's fault. Russell of Mesa, Ariz. (Last name withheld upon request.)
- MY COUSIN, Rachel (Janosik), was on Flight 261. We were very close when we were little girls. As years passed, we grew apart. The truth is that it never bothered me much because I always knew that I'd have the chance to see her and talk to her the next time I was in Enumclaw. I'd give anything right now to

tell her that I miss her, or even just to say: "Hi. How have you been?" The thought that keeps running through my mind is that it is important to tell those friends/family close to you how much you love them; life is so fragile that you never know if you'll ever have another chance again. Amy Janosik of Spokane

- IT'S BEEN YEARS since I've seen Jim Ryan or Mike Bernard, but I knew them both at WWU. One thing I'll always remember is their great sense of humor. Their entire group was always so much fun. And Jim could make anybody smile. My thoughts are with all their close friends and family. What a great loss. Sandra Bucher-ShIPLEY of Pekin, Ill.
- TO THE MOTHER of Coriander and Blake Clemetson: As a mother, I cannot begin to imagine the agony that you are going through, having lost your children in such a terrible, terrible accident! At school, my daughter used to sit at the same table as your Cori - known by all as such a wonderful sweet child. I pray that you and the relatives of all who perished will find some comfort in the heartfelt sympathy of the whole country. May God give you strength and bless with peace the final rest of the victims. Dear Cori: I am so sorry that you didn't get to come to our house and play with our daughter two weeks ago. Mila loves you and will miss you for a long, long time. Rest in peace, you and all other victims are in our hearts. Gergana Rusafov of Seattle
- THOUGH EACH STORY IS TRAGIC in its own right, collectively they underscore the nobility and worth of our fellow man. The fact that these people loved and were so obviously loved reminds the rest of us that even people whom we do not know deserve the respect and courtesy that we would want for ourselves and our loved ones. Adam Gileski of Seattle
- MY HEART GOES OUT to Jan Stokes' family. I have known Jan for many years as a wonderful smile behind the window at the Alaska Marine Highway System office in Ketchikan. I loved her laugh, her voice, and her personality. I will miss her. Kathy Lux of Ketchikan, Alaska
- ON THE WALL OF THE VIDEO STUDIO where I work in Texas is an embroidered picture of a lady holding an American flag with the words "Mission America" sewn below it. It's the ministry logo of Linda Knight, a tireless champion of the poor, oppressed and downtrodden. She and her husband, Joe, served as pastors at the Rock Church in Monroe, Wash., and were among those who traveled on Flight 261. I worked with them for many years at KTBW, Channel 20 in Seattle, a religious station, where they rotated in as hosts of the program "Seattle Praise." Last summer before I moved here from Puyallup, I edited a video of their work with children in Puerto Vallarta. Their heartfelt sacrifice on behalf of the poor is what makes this world a better place to live, and this day so incredibly sad. She was vibrant, full of life. He was a genuinely humble man, full of gentleness and mercy. May we live as they did. Patrick Butler of Tyler, Texas
- I HARDLY KNOW WHAT TO SAY. We are heartbroken over the loss of Joe & Linda Knight. Those who knew them are sure they were of great comfort to their fellow passengers in their final moments in this life. Our hearts go out to Jeff Knight as he carries forward with his parents' mission. We are thankful that the media has been sensitive and caring toward surviving family and friends. This has been a difficult story for all of us to follow. Claudia Cumming of Ellensburg, Kittitas County
- IRONICALLY, I WAS ON ACTIVE DUTY in the Coast Guard when I first met Dr. Clemetson and his daughter Cori. My future wife was their nanny and I was welcomed into their home with open arms. I cannot put into words the shock and pain at hearing of the loss of this kind and loving family. I ask anyone reading this message to offer their support to Cori and Blake's mother Claire (she was not on Flight 261) who is feeling pain that I hope I never have to experience. David Suchon of Seattle
- MY OLDEST CHILDREN, Lawrence C. Nelson and Nichelle Nelson Huseby, lost their mother, Charlene Sipe, my ex-wife. Alaska Airlines has been very helpful with offering travel arrangements and accommodations for them to mourn their mother's passing. It is very much appreciated that they have chosen to act in this manner. We continue to go through the grieving process day by day. Lawrence S. Nelson of Kent
- MOM, CHARLENE LAURA SIPE, was on Flight 261. I felt I should let the world know a little about my Mom. Mom liked things low-stress. Accidents were okay, hugs were common, come as you are. Crying was allowed, but also laughing so hard you almost wet yourself. I made my Mom laugh. She allowed me that since I was little. There was a family time when something funny was said and Mom started laughing, sometimes she'd lose a little control and Mom would let out a little snork. We thought the snork was hilarious. Mom started snorking so we all were laughing a little harder, the snorks got louder and then we heard a little toot. Like throwing gasoline on the fire, she made us burn a little hotter and brighter. We all laughed so hard that some of us had fallen and couldn't get up. It took most of us three days before our tummies recovered from such an intense workout, and we talked about our great laugh for weeks. I think maybe the snorks were on purpose for the benefit of us all. The things you remember. . . . I miss my Mom so much. Larry C. Nelson of Lynnwood

- **MY EX-HUSBAND**, Jeff Lougheed, is a flight attendant for Alaska. I know that he often flies to Mexico. Driving home from work Monday night, I heard the news about the crash on the radio. I called his home repeatedly, but no answer. I thought of our 18-year-old daughter - had she heard the news of the crash? Had she heard from her father? When I arrived home, Jenni was relieved - her dad was safe at home. However, she was clearly shaken at the fact that he very well could have been on that flight. It just hit so close to home. We were glued to the TV all night in disbelief and shared the pain of families who lost their loved ones. So many people I know have been affected by this tragedy. It's impossible to prepare for. Margaret Salvino of Seattle
- **I HAD THE PLEASURE** of working for Bill Knudson for five years, and had known Brad Long for two years prior. These gentlemen were both kind and generous, and gave much back to the community and those around them quietly, without fanfare or publicity. Years ago as a struggling single mother, I would have been financially unable to attend my mother's funeral. Bill made sure I was able to go. Bill and Brad hosted an annual Summer Ball, which benefited the Sacramento Aids Foundation and gave to a number of causes as well. They truly will be missed by those whose lives they touched. February 3rd would have been Bill's 54th birthday. Marcia Rodriguez of Seattle
- **BEING IN THE WINE BUSINESS**, we met Tom Stockley at several industry events. He was so immediately likable - so kind and generous. Meeting him for the first time was a surprise because he was so approachable and friendly. Over time, he made a lasting impression because he seemed to always enjoy himself - whether tasting wine, traveling or just being with people. He began stopping in at our store, The Spanish Table, every couple of weeks to give us his used wine shippers and to chat. It was an awful shock to read that both Tom and his wife Peggy had perished in the plane crash. We send our deepest condolences to Tom and Peggy's daughters and hope that the community's expressions of love and respect for your parents will help provide solace from the terrible loss. Sharon Baden & Steve Winston of Seattle
- **STANFORD POLL** was a generous man. He worked with businesses that were experiencing difficulties, providing guidance and financial resources. Stanford had an uncanny ability to understand businesses, how they work and what needed to be done. I have known and worked with Stanford for eight years. I have always found him to be honest and more than fair, giving the benefit of the doubt more often than not. Stanford has assisted many people, helping them do better and providing opportunities for ambitious individuals. I will miss him and do not expect to meet another like him. Steve Murphy of Seattle
- **I KNEW THE CLEMETSON FAMILY**, I was their neighbor at one time and had baby-sit for them once. They were a beautiful family. They were so generous to me and I will never forget that. My thoughts and sympathy are now with all three mothers. Cori and Blake's, Carolyn's and David's. I can't imagine what they are going through. Michelle Greenwell of Seattle
- **HOW DO YOU FEEL** when you hear about any horrible tragedy? You cry, you question. You automatically feel it in your heart. You think to yourself, that could have been me, that could have been someone I know. And then you realize the people who lost their lives are people someone loved, someone knew, someone lost. The tragedy affects all of us. Because it could have been any of us. Pia DelRosario of San Jose, Calif.
- **MY DAUGHTER IS A FLIGHT ATTENDANT** for Alaska Airlines and worked with Jim Ryan. This tragedy hit too close to home for me as a mother, so I feel this loss deeply and am saddened by all the lives lost. My heart goes out to the families, friends and co-workers of the victims. Charlotte Duncan of Juneau, Alaska
- **I WAS DEEPLY SADDENED** by the loss of so many of our Northwestern neighbors. While over 40,000 lives are lost each year in auto accidents, there is something especially tragic about the sudden, violent loss resulting from this, and any, jetliner crash. Alaska Airlines deserves a special tribute for doing everything possible to get information out to those who need it. They have demonstrated a unique human touch. Ed Gallas of Bellevue
- **MY HUSBAND IS A CAPTAIN** for Alaska Airlines. We have both been plagued with troubling dreams this week about being on board. I see the pain and sadness in his face - he knew the captain and other crew. I personally didn't know anyone on board and yet I feel a link to them all. My prayers go out to this hurting world. May we feel God's hand on our shoulders and be willing to accept His love. Mary Jane Duncan of Sequim, Clallam County
- **FOR RACHEL JANOSIK**: I met Rachel a few years ago through one of my college fraternity brothers at the University of Washington. Rachel was one of the kindest people I've ever met. Many words could describe her. Kind, warm, athletic, confident, smart and giving. Her warm smile and welcoming spirit will truly be missed. She will never be forgotten by those of us who knew her at the Delt house. My heart goes out to her family and friends. Rest in Peace Rachel. Jeremy Wilson of Seattle

- MY FAMILY AND I were on Flight 261 in November. It was a joyous time for us, getting away to a tropical paradise. The memory of the wonderful vacation is now tainted with the untimely deaths of 88 victims. I'm not a "why me" type . . . but I have to ask why these people perished. Scott Clark of Vancouver, Wash.
- I AM SICK FROM THIS TRAGEDY. When I heard of this news, I immediately went to the cnn.com and seattletimes.com Web site. Well, my heart sank. I know what it is like to lose a mother and to see those children, 16 years of age without their parents, all I could do is cry for them. To the families . . . my heart goes out to them. Marni Heilbrunn of Mercer Island
- WORDS JUST DON'T SEEM ADEQUATE. How does one recover from the loss of entire families? Most of us personally know employees of Alaska Airlines; most of us have traveled on Alaska and felt safe. I still feel safe - how does one really understand the "why?" of a tragedy like this? It makes me reflect on just what is important and realize we must live each moment to its fullest. I cannot even begin to comprehend the last moments of their lives. I am just so sorry. Patricia Woodey of Auburn
- I AM PRAYING for the many people that lost loved ones on Flight 261. I feel so sad. I hope this helps you, knowing that strangers are praying for you and that we care. As I am flying to Orlando on Feb. 9, my thoughts and prayers will be with you. May God put His shield around you and comfort you. Please accept my heartfelt sympathy. Joan Thomas of Apple Grove, W. Va.
- ALL OF MY THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS go to the families and friends of the passengers on the Alaska Air flight. As the wife of an airline pilot, and a retired flight attendant, the lump in my throat is continual thinking of the bravery and fight that the entire crew must have endured. They should be honored as well as mourned. Bless them all. Wendy Burr of Tecumseh, Mich.
- I DID NOT KNOW a single person on board Flight 261, and yet I cannot help but feel a strong sense of loss. As I read about each of the victims, I found myself holding back tears and feeling a sense of bereavement. Each one of these people managed to touch the lives of so many others and in a matter of seconds, they are gone. As my heart goes out to all of those trying to cope with this loss, I have to stop and think about what really is important in this life. This is a horrible loss and a painful tragedy. If anything remotely positive can come of this devastating event, perhaps it will be an increased awareness of the dignity and compassion of the human spirit. John Redding of Boise, Idaho
- CAROLYN CLEMETSON was a high-school classmate of mine. The last time I saw her was in 1987 at our graduation. She was the one who was always silly and could bring a smile to just about anyone. The picture of the Clemetson family that was shown in your newspaper told me that Carolyn was still that same person many years later. Our local paper published a photo of Carolyn holding Spencer. It is an image that I cannot lose. The love that she held for her husband and all of their children was clearly evident in these photos. My heartfelt sympathy is extended to all who were a part of Carolyn's life as well as all the victims and families of Flight 261. Dina Forchielli-Sanzari of Waterbury, Conn.
- I'VE BEEN NUMB ever since they broke in with the live report of the crash on Monday evening. I went to a community meeting that night and we opened with a prayer for all the people who died and their families. Seattle is a small town in many ways, and we are all touched by this loss. It must be so hard for the people working in the industry to keep up their business-as-usual attitude when their hearts are so heavy. You are all in my thoughts and prayers. Pam Hering of Seattle
- I WORK FOR HORIZON AIR in Operations and the loss is too large to even put into words. Everyone here is so grateful for the support from other airlines and the community as a whole. Jana Morris of Seattle
- MY FAMILY HAD A SCARE, as my sister-in-law is a flight attendant for Alaskan Airlines. Her normal route is flight 261. We live on the East Coast and tried to get a hold of my brother. For two hours no one knew if she was on that plane. Into the evening we finally received word that she was in Phoenix. That was the flight she was to be on and they switched her itinerary for the day. So this really hits home with my family. To all of those who are affected by this tragic accident, our prayers are with you. Tanya Hoover of Shortsville, N.Y.
- JIM (RYAN) AND MIKE (BERNARD) were special spirits. I met them at WWU when they were freshmen and our group of friends immediately took them in. They made us feel very special and fortunate to know them. After we graduated we stayed close even though our lives took separate paths. In 1994 I was taking a small flight from Spokane to Seattle after burying my grandmother in Butte, Montana. When I boarded the plane the first thing I saw was the warm friendly face of Jim. He was on the flight crew and immediately raised my sagging spirit. From there he went on several trips to South America and traveled, and I moved to Dallas so we weren't able to see each other too often. The last time I saw Jim was at a wedding of a member of our group last fall in Bellingham. We were able to catch each other up in our busy lives. I am so thankful of the time I was able to spend with him.

- Since the entire Ryan family was on Flight 261 our group has stepped in to settle things with their home and property. They didn't have much family outside of their household. Next weekend our group will gather together again. We have been told Alaska will pitch in to gather us in Seattle. We will honor their memory and celebrate their legacy. We will miss you guys. Our lives will never be the same. Kelly Caldwell of Dallas, Texas
- I LIVE OFF SILVER STRAND BEACH in Oxnard, Calif. I lived in the Seattle area from 1988 to 1996. So this really hits home for me because I love Seattle and many people who live there. I only hope that, we, the living can realize how precious life is and the gift that God has given us. Dan Traub of Oxnard, Calif.
- I WORKED FOR ALASKA AIRLINES for several years in Anchorage. I now reside in Seattle and am a commercial-fishing travel consultant for a local agency. We work very closely with Alaska and, like many in the Northwest, consider Alaska Airlines "our own." Each and every one of you at Alaska and Horizon are in our prayers, and our hearts go out to you and to your loved ones. Camille Cornacchia of Seattle
- CLAIRE BARNETT, the mother of two of the Clemetson children, has been a family friend for 25 years. My heart goes out to her, her family, and all of the families that suffered such a tragic loss. Claire is the kindest, most compassionate, and loving individual I know. It pains me greatly to imagine the sadness she and her family must feel. Claire, and all of the Barnetts, I want you to know I am with you in grief and share in your sadness. I love you all. Vince Preising of Cupertino, Calif.
- TOM AND PEGGY STOCKLEY lived about three doors away from our friend's houseboat. Over a three-year period, we often house-sat and took care of our friend's cat for either long weekends or days at a time. Therefore, they sort of became our neighbors, too. Peggy was so fond of cats that many times she was caring for someone else's cat when we were staying there. We called her the "cat lady." She always made us feel welcome and part of their neighborhood. Peggy organized a lot of their dock parties and invited us to attend one in our friend's absence. Needless to say, some great wines were served! Everyone shopped at "Pete's Market" where Tom's wine reviews were featured. Our friend told us that Tom used to leave a bottle of wine at his neighbors' doors occasionally. He never left a note, but everyone knew who it was from. This houseboat community is just like it used to be in the old days - where everyone looks out for everyone else. Both Tom and Peggy will be missed, especially by their close-knit houseboat community. Claudia & Rachel Heiden
- I RETIRED FROM THE ALASKA Airlines family in September of 1998, after 9 1/2 years of service as a ticket agent and an operations agent in Fairbanks. During my years with Alaska Airlines I had the opportunity to meet Allison (Shanks) and speak with her on several occasions. I can't tell you how much this crash touched me to the very core of my being. I watched the TV and couldn't believe this was "our family." I was proud to have worked for this company and to be able to have had the opportunity to meet Allison. May the family members, friends, and loved ones find peace and know that so many people are thinking of you through the day and hoping and praying that you find the strength to carry on, as I know you will. Flight 261... I wore a blue ribbon today, I thought of you, wishing that this wasn't true, In a moment's notice so much has changed. The plans, the lives, the dreams, the day. The ocean is filled with tears of pain, I will continue to call out your name. To those aboard Flight 261, may you now be where the sun will always shine on. My thought, prayers and love are with each and everyone of you today. The Alaska Airlines family will always feel like "home" to me. Good luck and God Bless. Stacie Ryman of Fairbanks, Alaska
- DEAR ALASKA AIRLINES officers and employees, Our hearts and prayers go out to each of you at this terrible time of the loss of Flight 261. This tragedy occurred less than 20 miles from our home in Camarillo, and it has deeply affected and greatly saddened all of us in the Ventura County community. Southern California has also tragically lost two very valued citizens of our part of the state, the pilot and co-pilot of this flight. We know they did their utmost and everything in their power and training to prevent the unthinkable. We are praying for the families and loved ones of all victims of this crash, and are thunderstruck that so many of them were employees or close associates of yours. We pray also for you, their close co-workers and friends in your grief. As occasional travelers on Alaska Air, we've grown to thoroughly enjoy and eagerly anticipate our trips with its highly professional personnel. We've always been most favorably impressed with and commend Alaska Air for offering Bible verses on food service items. You are indeed an exemplary, premier, and world-class airline. The hearts and prayers of all of Ventura County are with you, particularly as demonstrated in memorial services held at Port Hueneme pier last evening. We grieved for the victims, their families and loved ones as a darkening sky crept over the last of the sun's rays. We carried candles, threw flowers into the sea, released balloons into the air, sang "Amazing Grace" and other favorite hymns, prayed aloud, recited Bible verses and wept - all to join in unity with the grieving loved ones of the crash victims and to find comfort in each other. Joan and Dean Browne of Camarillo, Calif.

- MY CONDOLENCES TO ALL those who have suffered the loss of one or more loved ones. I especially want to express my sympathy to the relatives of the Lakes, from Corte Madera, Calif. I had the enormous pleasure to know them and be with them on the last three weeks before the accident in which they enjoyed of a great vacation in our Mexican Paradise. Even though I only was in touch with them for such a short period of time, I was able to see the great human quality they used to project with everyone that came close to them. I work for Playa del Sol Condominiums, the place they stayed those three weeks, and as a public relations employee, I was the one who informed them previous to their departure to Puerto Vallarta Airport that their flight was on time. You don't know just how much I regret not giving them wrong information, so they would be late. Anyway, I just want to say I am sorry ... so much beauty went back to eternity. My thoughts are with all of you, I don't know you, and neither do you know me, but I hope my prayers do you some good. A Mexican friend.
Alma Clara Arredondo of Puerto Vallarta

Source: Seattle Times February 6, 2000