

Tragedy in the Pool

Life is full of ironies. Some are comical. Some are very sad. One in the latter category was chronicled by *The Times-Reporter* of New Philadelphia, Ohio. In September 1985, a party was held at a New Orleans municipal pool to celebrate the first summer in memory without a drowning at any New Orleans city pool. In honor of the occasion, 200 people gathered, including 100 certified lifeguards.

As the party was breaking up and the four lifeguards on duty began to clear the pool, they found a fully dressed body in the deep end. They tried to revive Jerome Moody, 31, but it was too late. He had drowned surrounded by lifeguards celebrating their successful season.

Before we rush to judgment of the lifeguards and the party, how many people do we encounter -- friends, acquaintances or total strangers -- who are drowning in loneliness, hurt and doubt when we, who could help them, don't realize it? Good listening skills are important, and we should learn to "read between the lines" of what may be said to us. We may be able to toss the very lifesaver that is desperately needed.

--Beecher Hunter