



### Mary Baker, 32 Bright, fun, involved

Whenever Mary H. Baker walked into the room, she immediately made it hers; she was the life of the party, and she liked it that way.

Wickedly smart, always sure of herself, and almost always right, Mary delighted in knowing what she was talking about, whether the subject was forensics, serial killers, football, or even auto mechanics, said her sister, Rhonda Roque.

"She was very strong, very headstrong. You could ask her a question, she'd know the answer. And she'd always have the knowledge to back it up," Roque said.

Mary, 32, was born and raised in Fall River and lived there all her life. She was a 1989 graduate of Diman Regional Vocational Technical High School, where she studied auto mechanics, and later attended the Sawyer School in Pawtucket, where she earned her certification as a medical assistant.

For the last six years, Mary worked at Rhode Island Ear, Nose, and Throat in Lincoln, where the doctors considered her far more than just an assistant.

"The doctors said they really couldn't replace her," said her husband, Warren L. Baker III, a motorcycle technician. The two would regularly spar over who knew better about fixing cars.

"She was very smart. She kind of knew a little bit about everything," Warren said.

Mary was a regular bowler, and she and Warren competed in the Animal House league in Somerset each week.

She averaged a 135 — not bad, said Warren, but not as good as his average. "She would beat me. Sometimes," he said.

The couple dated for six years before they were married in August 2001. They had just bought a house, Warren said.

Mary loved watching cop shows and documentaries about serial killers, as well as any kind of documentary on forensic science. She'd always wanted to get into the field herself, Warren said, but never got around to the schooling.

But her real focus in life was her children, Michael DeCosta, 12, Scott DeCosta, 11, John DeCosta, 10, and Allison DeCosta, 9, all from a previous marriage. She had big dreams for all of them — some would become concert musicians, others football players. Mary loved watching her children play football. Nothing could get her more excited than watching all four kids play and cheerlead for the local Pop Warner team, the Fall River Falcons.

"During football season, she was running up the sidelines with them, screaming," said her sister Rhonda.

— Daniel Barbarisi



### Laurie Beauchaine, 35 Devoted mom, proud wife

Lauren M. (DeSantis) Beauchaine's greatest love was her three children. From trips to the beach to rollerskating outings, nothing was too good for her kids.

She even bought them a Chihuahua, named Cocoa.

And they loved her. That's why it breaks her brother-in-law's heart when he sees his niece, 5-year-old Ashley, hold up a picture of her mom.

"The little one keeps asking about her mom," Dwayne Beauchaine, of West Warwick, says.

Born in Providence, Laurie had lived in Cranston briefly and moved to West Warwick 25 years ago. She and Ray F. Beauchaine Jr. used to hang out at parties together as teenagers. They married about 15 years ago and had three children — Christopher R., 15, Ray F. III, 7, and Ashley N., 5.

"She was very family-oriented," said Julia Silcaggio, her sister-in-law. "She was a great mother and proud of her marriage. She always told everyone how long they had been together."

Laurie, 35, would pick up Dwayne and Julia's daughter, along with her three children, and head to the beach for picnics every day in the summer.

## BEST FRIENDS SINCE KINDERGARTEN



### Tom Barnett, 38 'The sparkle in our family'

In almost every photograph of Thomas A. Barnett scattered throughout his parents' living room in West Greenwich, he is goofing around, placing two small green apples in front of his eyes or screwing up his mouth in a silly smile.

"We could never get him to pose for a regular picture," said his sister, Gerry L. Childers, of Hawaii. "Tommy was the sparkle in our family."

He was 15 years younger than Gerry, 16 years younger than his brother, Ray I. Barnett Jr. of Coventry, and 17 years younger than his eldest sister, Marjorie A. Farrell of Plainfield, Conn. The family doted on Tom and adopted his baby words into their vocabulary. They still call soda dub-da, as Tom pronounced it as a toddler.

"He was a bonus," Marjorie said. "We used to say it must have been a little tough for him, having three moms and two dads."

He treated nephews just a few years younger than him like brothers, and showered his family with love and Christmas presents each year.

His family described Tom, 38, as "hard-working and hard-playing." He babied his midnight-blue Corvette convertible, was a voracious reader and worked long hours as a self-employed construction worker for 20 years. When he came through the door on Barnett Lane each night, he always had a couple of new jokes for his parents, Romelle M. (Bagshaw) and Ray I. Barnett.

Tom frequently imitated accents. Once, Marjorie called him and heard a British accent on the answering machine. So she did her accent and said some "fresh" things.

"I wondered why he never called me back, and asked him about it," Marjorie said.

"Tommy said, 'Marge, that wasn't me. I'm doing an Indian accent now.'"

Tom did not meet his daughter, Angel O. Amitrano of Coventry, until she was 9.

They grew close over the years, discovering they made the same faces, laughed at the same things, were both grumpy in the mornings. But it was not until last December

that the two said "I love you" to each other.

"I am so grateful I got a chance to say it back," said Angel, now 21. "My heart leapt. I didn't realize I'd been waiting 21 years to hear those words."

Her father, at 5-foot-11, stood seven inches taller than she, and when they hugged, her head fit perfectly under his chin.

"He gave the best hugs," she said. "The kind that just encapsulate your whole body."

Tom went to The Station that night with his girlfriend, Jessica Studley, and his best friend since kindergarten, Jason Morton.

The two men lived less than a half-mile apart along Route 102. They were regulars at the club, where they often went to hear live heavy-metal music. The two were so close that Tom had his own set of slippers at Jason's house — gorillas that screech when you squeeze their ears.

Jessica, who was Jason's cousin, had stepped outside to grab cigarettes from her car when she saw flames shooting from the club. She didn't worry at first, the Barnetts said, because she'd left Tom and Jason by the front door.

"From the first day of kindergarten to the day they died, they've been together. That was the friendship," Tom's mother said. "I think it would have lasted if they'd lived to 80."

— Jennifer D. Jordan

*One week after Tom's death in the fire, Ray I. Barnett, 77, suffered a stroke and was unable to attend his son's funeral. He died one week later, as his daughter Marjorie held his hand.*

*Her father could not bear the pain of losing Tommy, she said. "I honestly think his heart and mind couldn't take it."*



### Jason Morton, 38 Devoted father and friend

Jason R. Morton, a lifelong West Greenwich resident, was 6 feet tall, weighed 200 pounds and proudly worked as a laborer for 20 years.

But the same man who loved to pull the helmet off his head when he drove his Harley-Davidson across the Connecticut line also allowed his two

daughters to paint his toenails with permanent markers, stick his hair up in plastic clips and snap plastic earrings from a Potato-Head doll on his ears.

"He was a wonderful father who cherished his children, his parents, his family and friends," said his wife, Marie G. (Pellicio) Morton, as she sat in the home her husband had helped to build.

After daughters Ashley, 16, and Kaitlin, 12, were born, the couple staggered their work schedules, so one of them would always be home.

They nicknamed Ashley "Apples" because she smelled so good, and Jason's best friend, Tom Barnett, nicknamed Kaitlin "Oranges" because the two were so different, but equally sweet as babies.

Jason, 38, worked as a fireproof-batch mixer for Century Drywall in Providence, and before that at H. Carr & Sons. He also worked as a shellfisherman, owned the former Morton Land Clearing and Tree Service and was a member of the Massachusetts Laborers Union Local 223. He'd get up as early as 4 some mornings, while Marie worked the night shift as a custodian at Exeter-West Greenwich schools.

Three years ago, the couple talked about buying the girls a go-cart or a computer.

Jason, recalling what fun he had racing dirt bikes as a kid, bought the go-cart and delighted in clearing a four-foot-wide path around the house that the girls could drive on.

When the go-cart broke down, Jason felt so badly the repairs took longer than expected that he raced out and bought the girls the computer, too.

The marriage had hit hard times recently, and Jason moved across the road to a relative's house a few months ago.

The girls slept over the Wednesday of school vacation week and spent Thursday with their dad, browsing in the Dollar Store and grabbing lunch at D'Angelo's in Coventry.

Tom Barnett had visited that day, as usual, and the lifelong friends decided to go to The Station, a favorite hang-out, because they had free tickets to that night's show.

The Mortons and the Barnetts say they've heard reports that Jason and Tom were by the front door when the fire started, but stayed to pass people out through windows.

"They were both so strong and dependable," Marie said. "They truly died as heroes. They never thought of themselves or the people they left behind, because they never thought they'd be leaving anyone behind."

— Jennifer D. Jordan

She always made sure the children were happy, Julia said.

Laurie used to deliver The Providence Journal in the morning, so she could be home with her children during the day. She had also worked as a jewelry setter for Gianni Manufacturing, in Providence, for seven years.

Laurie and Ray both loved '80s rock and often went to The Station. Ray, who was critically injured in the fire, was released from the hospital last week.

— Megan Matteucci



### Steve Blom, 40 Summers won't be the same

Steve Blom had a Harley-Davidson in his kitchen.

"It was his baby," says his sister-in-law, Dawn Blom. "Aside from his baby," she quickly adds. Because 12-year-old Steven Jr. was his father's best friend. His dirt bike stood right next to the Harley, and the two spent many hours riding together.

Steve, 40, lived in the same Cranston neighborhood for the last 21 years. All the kids would hang out at his house, says Dawn, who lives a block away. He'd give them rides on the dirt bike, and in the summer they'd get out the hose and have mud fights, and Steve would get right into it with them.

"He was a kid himself," she says. Her son's friends have told him, "summers aren't ever going to be the same."

Steve, a self-employed painter, was always in a good mood, always laid-back and fun to be around.

"I never saw him angry," Dawn says. She can't stress enough "what a good father he was."

Steve Jr. lived with his father during the week and his mother on weekends. When he was at one par-

ent's house, he would always call the other to say goodnight.

Now he calls his uncle Kevin from his mom's. Kevin Blom, who was injured in the fire, has put plans to move to Florida on hold to be here for Steve's son.

Steve loved motorcycles so much, he used to say he wanted a Harley procession for his funeral. So that's what Dawn and her husband, Steve's brother Allen, tried to arrange.

She contacted the Ocean State H.O.G. (for Harley Owners Group) "and they all showed up at his wake" — at least 30 people. Because it was winter, they couldn't ride. But it would have meant a lot to Steve anyway, Dawn says.

"It was the closest thing to what he would have wanted."

Club members told the Bloms that their first ride of the spring will be dedicated to Steve.

— Mimi Burkhardt



### Billy Bonardi, 36 Kept his parents young

William C. Bonardi III loved to hang out with his parents and friends. He loved to eat. He loved rock 'n' roll. And he really liked cutting his grass.

A business analyst at AAi Foster Grant in Smithfield, Billy lived in the same town he worked in, and just five minutes away from his parents, William C. and Dorothy E. Bonardi of Lincoln.

He would check in on his parents during the workweek and share a meal cooked by his mom. He loved lasagna. On the weekends, he stopped by again to go grocery shopping with his mother.

Billy was the Bonardis' only child, and even at 36, he always let them know where he was.

"During meals he would fill us in

on all the stuff he did and the funny things he and his friends did," his mom recalled. "He kept us young by telling us what was going on with young people and the world."

His dad said that when Billy covered the Providence Bruins hockey team for DSN Sports on WALE radio, he made a lot of friends. "He was only 5 foot 5 and those hockey guys were huge. They would always pick him out from the crowd of announcers to talk to," Mr. Bonardi said. Billy's house is filled with hockey sticks and memorabilia from his beloved Red Sox and Washington Redskins and mementos from Japan and China.

Billy fell in love with those countries on business trips for Burns of Boston a couple of years back. "The people he met there still send him cards and presents," his father said.

Carol Hartnett and Billy became fast friends while working at AAi Foster Grant.

"As only children we don't have anybody else, so we bonded immediately like brother and sister," said Hartnett, 37, of Johnston.

They both loved rock 'n' roll, so they went to concerts together.

Hartnett said Billy was a "fanatic for his lawn," to the point where a friend once gave him a Yankee candle with a scent called "fresh cut grass."

Salvatore Esposito, 32, met Billy when they both worked at Burns of Boston.

Billy loved Esposito's four-month-old baby "like he was his."

"He was always really caring. Put you first," Esposito said.

They both liked all kinds of rock 'n' roll, and often went to The Station. They were there together that Thursday night.

Esposito said that when he saw the fire race across the ceiling he grabbed Billy and they headed toward the exit, but he lost his grip on Billy in the crowd.

"Every time we used to get together, Billy and I used to talk about what we did the time before. We'd laugh till it hurt. Billy left a lot of good memories for me."

— Tatiana Pina



### Richard Cabral Jr., 37 'Mill boy' and family man

They miss Richard A. Cabral Jr. at work.

They miss his tattoos, the ones featuring characters from author J.R.R. Tolkien's Lord of the Rings. They miss the jokerster who sometimes wore a crown at work, fashioned from the twist-ties used to close bread bags.

For the last six years, Richard, 37, of Attleboro, has been one of the "mill boys," the guys who worked together in the raw materials department of Leach & Garner in North Attleboro, making parts used to design 14-karat gold settings for jewelry.

Coworker Terri Fraatz called them the "mill boys" because they shared silly rituals such as "the banging of the pipes." That's when they would pretend that the building's pipes were musical instruments and bang out a beat.

"I only knew Richard for 2 1/2 years.

He was a quiet guy when we first met; however, over the years, we ended up debating everything under the sun," said coworker David Provencher in one of the many tributes employees have written. "It shows a lot about Dick that a fun family outing was going to Great Woods for an all-day Oz festival."

That's Oz as in Ozzy Osbourne, the heavy-metal singer and, more recently, MTV reality-show dad. Unlike some dads, Richard gladly listened to the music.

"He liked it all," his wife, Catherine, said of hard-rock music.

Catherine says Tolkien's world of hobbits and wizards battling great evil had captured her husband's interest for years. He enjoyed the recent movie adaptations and had tattoos on his back of all the major characters from the trilogy.

Mostly, though, his wife remembers a family man who doted on their children, Richard A. Cabral III and Christine R. Cabral.

"Very caring," she says, noting that the family never lacked for anything.

Richard and Catherine would have celebrated their 17th wedding anniversary in June.

— Michael P. McKinney



### Kristine Carbone, 38 'She believed in angels'

Kristine Carbone would put spice into anyone's day. She loved baking and cooking, and was always ready to whip something up for her friends, or even for those she did not know. Every dish that Kristine made was unique.

"Nothing was ever plain with Kristine," her sister, Patti, says.

Every Friday, Kristine would send her legendary goodies to Brookfield Engineering, where her boyfriend, Claude Schlieff, worked. "She would get e-mails that said, 'We haven't met you yet, but we love you. Keep the cookies coming,'" Patti says.

Kristine's cooking won praise from afar as well; she recently won first place in an informal chili cook-off.

"She was just a wonderful, giving person, and she brought people together," Patti said. Even when they were young, the two sisters did not fight. "She was my Krissy."

Kristine, 38, was a salesperson at Heritage Salmon Co. in Canton, where she made even her clients feel like good friends. "She seemed to create a personal touch with all of them," coworker Marianne Sheehan says. "Everyone that's called, even over the phone, they just felt terrible, because they knew her personally."

Sheehan said it's still difficult to walk by Kristine's desk, which holds stuffed animals, cards and photographs of her boyfriend and her cat, Mooy. "She loved that cat; she had pictures of him up all over," Sheehan said. Kristine had a second cat, Frito, whom she took in, rescuing him from a factory, where he was born.

"She'd lift everyone's spirits when they were down; it's just the way she was. It's hard to explain — everybody was 'honey' or 'sweetie'; she just made everybody feel good," Sheehan said.

Kristine loved crosses and angels and often received figurines as gifts. "She believed in angels," Patti said.

— Jessica Resnick-Ault