



Alexa Maria Dewiel

December 22, 2017

Alexa Maria DeWiel, born Hamburg, Germany, January 11, 1949; died at home in palliative care, Toronto, Ontario, December 22, 2017.

A message for my family and friends: My life has been an interesting one, at least to me, and throughout it I've taken many snapshots, most of which are digitalized. During the 1950s and 1960s, my mother always had the radio on. My adolescent life was inspired and informed by stories of the Civil Rights movement, the Vietnam War, and the music of the day. I was lucky to grow into young adulthood during the 1970s, which for me was a highly active time in all regards, including social justice work in the women's movement and the environmental and aboriginal rights movement of the times.

I was one of the founding members of Nellie's Hostel for Women in Toronto. I co-hosted a women's community radio program (Radio Free Women) in Toronto, and later in Ottawa (The Ottawa Rose Show). I published a book of poetry, *Conversations with Bibi*, (Canadian Women's Educational Press, 1975) housed in the Thomas Fisher Rare Book section of the University of Toronto Library. My interest in community radio landed me a job with the federal government and brought travel across the near-North from coast to coast, gathering information with which to fund First Nations indigenous language community radio stations.

In 1979, I met Kathy Vance who has been my sole partner and companion in life ever since. We married on November 29, 2008, the same month that Barack Obama became President in the U.S. Kathy and I have faced both births and deaths as well as illnesses among our friends and family and have had many wonderful times and celebrations. We are as different as night and day in superficial ways yet shared a common core philosophy of life and approach to people and animals.

I hope Kathy will be blessed with old and new friendships and the love that she deserves. She has taught me much about the appreciation of being alive. I have loved her family dearly as she has loved mine.

xxooxx

Alexa was asked not too long ago why she as a shy and private person would agree to

appear in a feature film in the 70s about two women being in love with each other. “I wanted to stand up for lesbians. I did it for love.” Alexa counted herself in the “me too” movement and was thrilled that men but especially women – were standing up with women – to expect a life without abuse.

Alexa was an agent in home sales in Toronto and juxtaposed this with decades of volunteer years advancing the integrity of non-equity co-op housing.

Cancer kills people in many ways, gradually taking away their ability to eat is one of them – Atul Gawande on Being Mortal was her guide through this, and her desire for the choice of Medical Assistance in Dying was unfulfilled.

Those wishing to make donations: Democracy Now Radio with Amy Goodman; Farm Radio International; the Donkey Sanctuary of Canada.

Remember Alexa in your own way. Condolences may be offered via Aftercare at <http://www.aftercare.org>. A celebration will take place at her home January 20, 2018 – 2-4 p.m. Burial will take place in the Eastern Townships in the springtime.

Alexa showed me chanting Nam myoho renge kyo, tender love without fear or jealousy, grace under fire, how to swim like a fish through troubled waters, how to release a grudge, and how to be loved deeply.

Thank you

Kathy

Comments



“ 1 file added to the album New Album Name



Martha Levesque - January 19, 2018 at 10:23 AM



“ So soon gone. I recall the times I used to call her Sexy Lexy I think just to get her going. She was a heartfelt friend, and is missed profoundly. I can only imagine how Kathy, Eva and Monica feel. Let us hope that our spirit and consciousness go on and that we all can meet again. Much love, Lucielle Csonka

lucielle csonka - January 17, 2018 at 03:37 PM



“ I will miss you, dear friend! I am so fortunate to have had you in my life. The memory of your essence is indelible. I will carry you with me! Heartfelt condolences to Kathy, Eva and Monica.

Blanche Polk - January 15, 2018 at 12:47 PM



“ Alexa was a friend of my daughter Kathryn and visited me after her passing for the same awful disease as that which has now taken her. She certainly had a very meaningful life and my sympathy goes out to Kathy and Alexa's friends and family. Kate Sword and family.

Kate Sword - January 15, 2018 at 12:03 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Alexa at Barb and Jen's Wedding



Sue Walters - January 15, 2018 at 11:03 AM



“ My heartfelt condolences, Kathy. Alexa set the room ablaze when she and Spencer (the best dog in the world) sauntered into A Women's Place back in the 70's. She was a movie star to us all when she walked in, but as we got to know each other, the stars in our eyes melted into hearts overflowing with love. I've carried that love and admiration for her for over 50 years. I'm so very sorry that she's left us.

Lamar Van Dyke (Heather) - January 15, 2018 at 10:37 AM



“ Nancy and I were so sorry to hear of Alexa's passing. Our condolences to Alexa's family.
Alexa was an integral part of our communications team at Secretary of State, Native Citizens Directorate, Ottawa.

She was a great person and a fine lady. RIP Alexa.

Gordon and Nancy Big Canoe

Gordon & Nancy Big Canoe - January 14, 2018 at 04:41 PM



“ I met Alexa way back when she was in the film August and July in the early 70's around the time she was in the inspirational movie "August and July". I worked as a volunteer at Women's Place with some people who were involved with Nellie's. Alexa and I met on several occasions around that time. She was a gem. I was felt sad to read that she is no longer with us physically but she certainly is in Spirit. I feel delighted to have met this sweet soul of a woman.

Bev Star

bev star - January 14, 2018 at 04:04 PM



“ Debbie Courneyea lit a candle in memory of Alexa Maria Dewiel



Debbie Courneyea - January 14, 2018 at 01:38 PM



“ Kathy, when Don and I spent time with you and Alexa, the happiness you shared was so present: you were wonderful partners for each other. Don and I always appreciated and enjoyed your visits when you were heading east. Our memories of Alexa will always be vivid in our minds; she was beautiful, clever, funny, and so very authentic. We are so sorry for your loss, a loss shared by all of us who had the privilege of having known her. Please convey our regrets to your families.

Dodie and Don Pirie

Dodie and Don Pirie - January 14, 2018 at 10:44 AM



“ Heart felt condolences to Alexa's life long partner, Kathy. It is Kathy whom I know in this partnership, and I learned a lot from seeing how these two women, so deeply loved by each other, continued to love and live fully through the last months of Alexa's life.

Olena

olena nitefor - January 13, 2018 at 07:59 PM



“ My condolences to Kathy and all of Alexa's family and friends. We had a cool early relationship but I like to think the ice was broken when we were both barred from the Coral Reef in Ottawa for flicking the turntable needle off an LP of disco Christmas carols. Later we worked together on the Ottawa Rose radio show. In my mind's eye, Alexa will always be a tall, beautiful, smart woman in blue jeans and Frye boots. Her death is a loss to us all.

Pat Daley - January 13, 2018 at 05:30 PM



“ My memories of Alexa go back to that film in the 70s and its influence on me. Thinking of you, Kathy, with deepest empathy and understanding.

Annette Clough - January 13, 2018 at 05:20 PM



“ NJ Boisvert lit a candle in memory of Alexa Maria Dewiel



NJ Boisvert - January 13, 2018 at 05:10 PM



“ Friends
I never met Alexa, but, I know Kathy from Ottawa days
I can understand the deep love for each other.....
That love will always be in your heart
Love never leaves and the memories stay.
You are in my circle of friends .
NJ

NJ Boisvert - January 13, 2018 at 05:26 PM



“ I first met Alexa in 1973 when a few of us had embarked on a journey to create a FM radio station, owned and operated by women. Radio Free Women never quite achieved that goal but we did produce radio programs for other stations in Toronto and we did have some really good times. Alexa was someone whose life seemed to criss cross with mine - when I moved to Ottawa to go to grad school, she also moved here for other reasons. And so, we again did some more radio work, this time for chez 106, as part of a show called Ottawa Rose. Alexa introduced me to Buddhism and for that, I will be forever grateful. The world seems like a lesser place without her and I will miss her determination, her fierceness and her calm, pensive manner. Safe journey, dear friend, see you at Eagle Peak.

Judy Girard - January 13, 2018 at 02:20 PM



“ I love the phrase "calm, pensive manner". It sums up a big part of Alexa's presence, and I would not have thought of wording it that way. Thank you.

Sheila - January 15, 2018 at 06:27 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Alexa Maria Dewiel.



January 13, 2018 at 01:40 PM



“ Reading Alexa's obituary took me right back to Nellie's. I was one of the original staff members and had the good fortune to work there with her. I can't think of her without also remembering Spencer, her dog who was almost an honorary staff member. Alexa brought so much creativity, wisdom and generosity to her work and relationships at Nellie's. Thank you Alexa. My condolences to the family.

Susan Gowans

Susan Gowans - January 13, 2018 at 11:16 AM



“ Alexa: Larger than life in my younger years.
You pushed seemingly insurmountable barriers allowing Love to shine.
I will always love you as my sister, my protector, my friend....
Eva

Eva Malloy, Alexa's sister - January 09, 2018 at 02:16 PM



“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Monica Andrews - January 09, 2018 at 02:09 PM



“ Sisters: Monica Andrews and Eva Malloy.
kathy vance - January 14, 2018 at 03:14 PM



“ Sheila Dalton lit a candle in memory of Alexa Maria Dewiel



Sheila Dalton - January 08, 2018 at 02:07 PM



“ I first met Alexa at summer camp, when we were 8 or 9 years old. All through high school, she was my "bestie". We did everything together - volunteering at farms and the humane society, going to the local dog show, writing, riding our bikes ... dreaming our dreams of a brighter future. Whatever we were going through, she was there for me.

Over the years, we kept in touch. What I loved about Alexa then, I loved about her all her life - her bold, adventurous spirit, her sensitivity to others, her social conscience, her independence of mind, her deep caring. She was a unique individual who never let life get her down, and who was an inspiration to me. I cannot express adequately how much I admired her. Oh, she wasn't larger than life, and had her faults, but I can honestly say I have never met anyone as loyal, as interesting, or as genuinely kind. After my husband died six years ago, she was there for me again. We went to visit our mothers together (they lived in the same condo building in Bronte), reminisced about our shared past, and enjoyed many a laugh together.

Alexa was talented in both the literary and visual arts. I own her book of poetry, and her painting of an owl "My Angel of Owl" graces my walls.

I will miss her more than I can say. Just having her in the world made it a safer place for me. I will try to remember her spirit and her caring, for the comfort and healing they have always given me.

Sheila Dalton - January 08, 2018 at 02:07 PM



“ 1 file added to the album New Album Name



Sheila Dalton - January 08, 2018 at 12:54 PM