



Mr. Austin Lowell Whitten

December 10, 2014

It is with great sadness that we announce the death of Austin, age 72 at the Palliative Care Unit, Sunnybrook Hospital Wednesday, December 10 2014 with his wife Patricia, and friend Peggy at his side after a lengthy battle with Metastatic Melanoma cancer. He is survived by his wife Patricia Sadleir, many friends, his Uncle Jack and Aunt Jill McGuire of Wheaton, Illinois, his Aunt Gerry Nettleton of Los Angeles, half-sisters Jan Van Tassel of Redmond, Oregon, Daisy Farmer of Oja, Arizona, half-brothers Vernon Perry of Globe, Arizona and Jimmie Perry of Glendale, Arizona.

Austin was born in Chicago, August 28, 1942. He was brought up by his mother Kathryn. After completing high school and one year at the University of Chicago, he moved to California where his Aunt Gerry, his mother's younger sister lived and he used his experience working in a Food Market in Chicago to start work in Los Angeles as Produce Manager at a supermarket. Here he met Aideen and they moved to New York for two years. They emigrated to Toronto to escape the draft for the Vietnam War in 1967. Austin didn't agree with the Americans being involved in Vietnam and felt he couldn't go to fight and kill Vietnamese. After two years in Toronto Aideen longed for the life back in California and returned there after a 10 year relationship with Austin.

Austin loved Canada and became a Canadian citizen as soon as it was possible. After working as the Produce Manager for an IGA Supermarket in

Etobicoke, for a couple of years he took a computer course and on completion began working at the Toronto Board of Education as eventually the Manager of Technical Services in the computer department working with the big IBM mainframes. Austin worked for the Board of Education for 16 years before leaving to go away cruising.

In 1977 Austin met Patricia, a Registered Nurse, working at Sunnybrook Hospital, at Harbourside Sailing Club down at Harbourfront. They were married in 1979 and lived at Harbour Square the first condo on the waterfront. They sailed the Bluenoses from Harbourside Sailing Club for pleasure and got into racing. Their sailing experience was enhanced by their close relationship with Pam Juryn who established Harbourside Sailing club in the 70's as a sailing school and club. Pam was an excellent teacher passing on to Austin much of her wisdom as well as organising sailboat charters in the British Virgin Islands, Newport Rhode Island, San Diego and Florida for the experience of sailing in waters outside Lake Ontario. Austin also got heavily involved with sailboat racing with the 8 Metre fleet out of RCYC.

By 1983 Austin and Patricia were ready to get their own boat which was built on the south coast of England in Newhaven and was launched in 1984. Austin gained ocean sailing experience when he crossed the Atlantic with 5 other men on a custom built sailboat owned by Peter Menzel, a 45 foot boat from RCYC just prior to his own boat being launched. Peter was taking his boat over to the Greek Islands for 3 years. Austin arrived on the south coast of England from his Atlantic crossing just in time to see his own boat Discovery II, a Vancouver 27, launched.

Sailing became the focus of Austin and Patricia's life over Austin's lifetime. Discovery II, became their second home as they cruised throughout the Mediterranean for 3 ½ years, crossing the Atlantic in 1987. After 2 ½ years back in Toronto to earn more money, 14 years were spent sailing through the

Pacific from the Caribbean, through the Panama Canal into the Pacific, stopping at the Galapagos Islands, the Marquesas in French Polynesia, Tahiti, the Society Islands, the Cooks Islands, Tonga. On arriving in New Zealand in 1996, they decided to take a break and lived and worked in NZ for five years becoming New Zealand citizens. In 2001 it was off to Australia, sailing across the Tasman Sea eventually to Sydney where they ended up living and working there for another 5 years.

Austin became an expert sailor exhibiting impeccable judgement in all aspects of sailing, cruising and interpreting weather so that they had a wonderful life free of any major mishaps.

In 2007 it was decided to retire from off shore cruising and return to Toronto. Discovery II was shipped to Ensenada, Mexico by freighter and Austin and Patricia sailed it up to San Diego, then had the boat trucked to Chicago and sailed though Lake Michigan, Lake Huron, Lake Erie, and the Welland Canal into Lake Ontario bringing Discover II home after 14 years away.

Winter in Toronto soon drove Austin and Patricia to have Discovery II trucked to Florida where they sailed both coasts of Florida over 3 years and sailed to Cuba in 2011.

Another aspect of Austin's life was his activism. Not only did he protest the Vietnam war, but also the Iraq war and the war in Afganistan. He was out protesting on the street many hours. He was against unjust wars. He also spent many hours protesting the Occupation of Palestine. He championed the humanity of mankind. He was for protecting the environment, eating produce that was grown locally, supporting local businesses as opposed to the big box stores. This brought him in contact with Kathleen Mackintosh who established Culinarium which only sold produce and other items grown and produced

within 100 kilometers of Toronto. He delivered orders to customers of Culinarium by bicycle finally buying an electric bike to make things faster and easier. Karen Dean is another friend from the Culinarium days.

Austin was diagnosed with Prostate Cancer in June 2012 and then with Melanoma Cancer in March of 2014. Discovery II was again trucked back to Toronto in April 2014. The Cancer limited Austin's ability to sail on his beloved Discovery II. After treatment failed to slow the growth of the melanoma in his hip, he elected at the beginning of November to be transferred to the Palliative Care Unit at Sunnybrook where he received excellent care until his death.

Amazingly Austin took his diagnoses in his stride researching all aspects of his illness and treatment options He never complained and his only regret was that he couldn't be here for his wife Patricia.

Austin lived by his ideals. He read extensively sometimes having more than one book on his active reading list. He attended both the fiction and non-fiction book clubs at Mt Pleasant library. He had strongly formulated opinions and his ideals were always based on what he felt was rational thinking. Kathleen put it very well in an e-mail when she said "the world is a less bright place indeed now that his generous spirit has left us".

A Celebration of Life Get Together for Austin was held on December 30th in the afternoon at the Mount Pleasant branch of the Toronto Public Library. A thank you to all who attended. It was much appreciated.

From Austin's wife Patricia.

Tribute Wall



“ Thanks for sending his obituary. It was well written. I feel that it told a life story of a great adventure. I regret that I did not make a trip with Lynne to see his boat in Florida or Canada and share a snippet of his love for sailing. I did get an insight of his life when we met up in Arizona. I would have liked to had more time to have heard his sailing stories. But we all believe that we may live forever and will have the time tomorrow. One of my best life moments was when we were able to reconnect after many years. Share my thoughts at your Celebration on the 30th, we will be thinking of you. I am glad to have your E-mail again. I wrote it down when you called but lost it. Will try to stay in touch. If you want a warm place to visit come see us in Arizona some time. We have lots of room. Our thoughts and prayers are with you. VERNON
From Vernon Perry

Aftercare Administrator - January 05, 2015 at 03:44 PM



“ I met Austin at meetings in Brantford and at the site of the occupation at Douglas Creek Estates. He was eager to learn about the Davisville Mohawk Mission site on Hardy Road and those of us speaking out for the protection of both these lands. I learned from Austin and he from me. I am saddened to hear that he now makes a new journey. Thank you Austin for your eagerness to learn and share.

Mary-Lou Knechtel - December 26, 2014 at 01:43 PM

JT

“ *Jannie Van Tassel lit a candle in memory of Mr. Austin Lowell Whitten*



Jannie Van Tassel - December 16, 2014 at 02:38 PM

JT

For my brother, Austin who I loved very much and will miss!

Jannie Van Tassel - December 16, 2014 at 02:39 PM

JT

1 year ago today my brother Austin passed away from cancer. I miss him very much! RIP brother. ❤️

Jan Whitten Van Tassel - December 10, 2015 at 09:48 PM

JT

“ *4 files added to the tribute wall*



Jannie Van Tassel - December 16, 2014 at 02:35 PM

JT

Miss my brother, Austin. It's been 1year today that we lost him to cancer. I feel so blessed to have found him after so many years apart. He will forever be in my heart 💖.

Jan E. (Whitten) Van Tassel - December 10, 2015 at 09:41 PM