

Walter Lorne Sherry

October 14, 2013

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Ron and Lorne Sherry next to their Renegade ice boats at the Northwest Ice Yacht Regatta on Lake Mendota in Madison, WI.

Here we are all together to celebrate the life of Walter Lorne Sherry.

Dear heavenly father, welcome Lorne into your eternal paradise.

My name is Ron Sherry. I am number 5 of the 6 children Lorne and Joan had. This is a real tough one for me and many others. I have found it really hard to get motivated to do much of anything. There are a lot of people who count on him for guidance and stability. Well dad, after you catch up with all of your old friends, don't forget that there are a lot of us still counting on you for help getting through this crazy thing we call life. I am sure he and Elmer [Millenbach] are planning an awesome iceboat regatta.

Lorne was a deeply religious man. He went to Mass every morning. He was completely comfortable with life and death. He died knowing that he would be with God and then reunited with all of the friends and family that went home before him. When his brother Wendell was sick and facing his last days, I asked him how he felt about it. Without hesitation, he told me that Wendell was just a little closer to the longest race of his life than he was.

Here I was, feeling bad for him and he made me feel better. We were all very lucky to have him in our lives. The world is a better place having him in it for almost 84 years.

Something else I can say about my Dad, Lorne, is that he knew great love. His love of God was great. His love for my mother, Joan, and she for him was great. His love for Helen and she for him was so great. His love for his six children and his two step children and all of the grandchildren was great. He lived his life giving and getting great love. Of course, his love for sailing and iceboating were also great loves. They didn't always give back in the same way as the rest of us did. The depth of the loss we all feel is a tribute to the deep love we shared with him.

Lorne was diagnosed with Multiple Myeloma about two months ago. The doctors gave him his options and he decided to fight for the cure. The treatments took their toll. He went to see his doctor last Monday because of a sore tummy. The doctor told him to go to the hospital. He walked into the hospital Monday afternoon and died Wednesday evening, surrounded by his family. Just before he died, he told us he loved us. I thanked him for setting such a good example of how to live life. I told him I only hope I can live up to his example. I told him we were all ok and that he could rest now; within 4 seconds he stopped breathing. The family knew he was in pain, but found comfort in the fact that he didn't suffer for a long period of time. This just shows all of us, how important it is to keep the big picture in mind; to strive for what is right, rather than letting feelings get in the way. It shows us how important it is to enjoy every day, and to look for the good in every person and every situation. Work hard enough so you can play even harder, and be loyal to God and family.

Lorne was borne at home on Gateshead Road in Grosse Pointe, just off of Chandler Park drive on October 18, 1929. My Aunt Jackie, who is my dad's late brother, John's, wife told me this and many other amazing stories. She loves to tell the one where I put my pet frog into my cousin Cathy's Cheerios one morning. That story still makes us laugh. I can't believe I would do anything like that. Anyway, her parents, Otto and Margrett Mckenna and Lorne's parents, Roy and Caroline, were best friends. Aunt Jackie loves to tell how she slept with Lorne first, way before John or Joan came into the picture. Apparently, his birth was very hard on Lorne's mother, Caroline. She had to be packed in ice to bring her fever down. Caroline was too sick to attend her new son's baptism. Jackie was dropped off with Caroline, while her parents, who were Lorne's godparents, went to the church with Lorne and Roy. Lorne loved water, and apparently, fell fast asleep during his baptism. When they came home, they put Lorne in the crib with Jackie, so that counts as sleeping with him first.

In 1931, when Lorne was 2, the Hudson Motor Car Company laid Roy off because of tough times during the Depression. Roy and Caroline, who preferred to be called Carrie, decided to pack everything they could in the two cars they owned and moved home to Prince Edward Island where Carrie and Roy were born. Lorne lived there from 2 until almost 12 years old. Roy had Lorne and his brothers out sailing before they could walk. While living on PEI, Roy told Lorne to build an iceboat. He built the boat using ice-skates for his boat's runners. It was a square rig type sail, so he could only ride with the wind, and then he would have to walk it up wind for his next ride. One of Lorne's claims to fame was beating the best speed skater in the area with his iceboat

It was tough going at first, but with Roy's hard work, they eventually owned many businesses, including a hotel and grocery store, in Port Borden. WWII began and the government did not let any tourists over to PEI. Roy had a generous heart and gave lots of credit when his friends and neighbors couldn't afford to pay for food at the grocery. Lorne told a story of delivering dynamite with his father on their sailboat. There was a Canadian air force base being built on PEI. The car ferry, the main way to get to PEI, wouldn't allow the dynamite to be transported on board during the war. So Lorne and Roy took on the task of delivering dynamite by boat to the island. The money was good. So, Roy, Lorne and the dynamite regularly sailed across the Northumberland Straights. We're all glad that Dad was such a great sailor from such a young age.

One dynamite delivery mission began with a sailboat race. Because of the tough times Roy had to sell his 30-foot long beautiful racing sailboat, the *Zephyr*. He took, on trade, an old 18-foot boat with an overhanging boom and a bowsprit along with money for the *Zephyr*. There are still trophies with Roy's name and *Zephyr* engraved on them at the Prince Edward Island Yacht Club. The race started in a big storm. Roy started the race and sailed back to his mooring. Roy told Lorne, who was 6 at the time, to go to bed because he was going to need him that night. Roy went back out on the water to help bring in all of the boats that were damaged trying to sail the race in the storm. While the sailors were in the bar telling their stories the wind went down. Roy went and woke up Lorne at about midnight and they snuck out to the boat and started the race. The word got back to the bar that Roy went out to his boat and was on his way. They scrambled to their boats, but Lorne and Roy were well on their way. After they started, Roy gave Lorne a star to steer by and went to sleep. As the sun came up, they were in the lead but they could see the *Zephyr* closing in on them. They just barely managed to beat the *Zephyr* across the finish line and won the race. They did not even have time to go in and collect their trophy because they had to go to the next city up the main land to pick up the dynamite and deliver it back to PEI. Later they figured how to smuggle the dynamite to the island in coal shipments.

Lorne lived through many great adventures and had a sense of humor starting at a very young age. On one of Carrie's trips to Summerside, she took Lorne to visit with her mother, Catherine. Lorne, though young, was still a prankster. He was allowed to run all over the farm, but when it was close to time for his mother to come back and pick him up, he was prepared by the maid and inspected by his grandmother to make sure he was clean and ready to go home. It seems, one time that Grandma found a dark spot on the back of Lorne's neck. This would not do, so she told the maid, Blanch, to scrub it a little harder with a face cloth. When it didn't remove it, she suggested a soft bristle brush. That didn't work either; the next suggestion was a little brass brush. About that time Carrie arrived and said, "What is going on?" When told of the black spot on Lorne's neck, Carrie asked Lorne, "Why didn't you tell them it was your birthmark?" He answered, "They were not hurting me."

As the war went on and on Roy continued to give out credit to friends and family. Eventually he was unable to pay the heating bill and the pipes froze and burst in the hotel. Roy and the family lost everything. The family was split up between PEI, Montreal, and Detroit looking for work. I remember my dad telling me the story of him and his brothers flying the model planes they had built into the fireplace because there was no room to take them where they were going. After moving to Montreal, Lorne sold papers at the Montreal Forum. Lorne and John sang on the radio. They also sang Little Sir Echo in person for the King and Queen of England, who were the parents of the current Queen. In Montreal, Lorne studied at aeronautical school. Before he graduated, the school closed down and Lorne and John came to Detroit so Lorne could finish aeronautical school.

In January of 1947, John and Lorne moved back to Detroit. They moved in with John and Cathleen Trainor. John and Lorne were able to move back to Detroit only because they were born there. The rest of the family had to pay a bond to move to the US and it took a while to come up with the money. John, Lorne, and Roy lived in a flat on Piper. Lorne got a job selling shoes. As the rest of the family made it to Detroit, they moved onto Copeland. On the corner of Copeland and Freud there was a store called Ilene's Sweet Shop. Joan Walsh worked there, and that is where Lorne and Joan met. Lorne fell hard for Joan right away. Lorne was 20 and Joan was 18, just out of high school. The government told Lorne if he wanted to be a US citizen he would have to join the armed services. Lorne joined the Army and went to Korea. Joan gave Lorne a big going away party before he left. Lorne was a second lieutenant in Korea. He had a mountain he had to keep and he lived in a cave. He had pictures of the cave with candles for light and a big picture of my mom.

When Lorne came back from Korea, he bought a house off of 8 Mile, in Warren and that is where Loretta and Steve were born. After that, they moved to Carlisle, and that is where the rest of us were born.

Aunt Jackie tells the story when she and John were relaxing off of the Saint Claire Sailing Club, on the Detroit River, watching the boats go by after racing. All of the sudden they saw a Star sail boat coming in, towing a speed boat. It was Lorne, and he had a real big smile on his face as he towed the disabled power boat into the club. At that time the power boats really loved to come close by sailboats, even if they were racing, to throw their wake at them. Lorne got a round of applause by all of the sailors as he towed the disabled power boat in.

All of us children feel really blessed to have been able to grow up together at Crescent Sail Yacht Club. The lessons of sailing teach you a lot about life, but sailing also gave our mom the opportunity for some "alone" time, without the kids. My dad was married to my mom, Joan, for 30 years until her unexpected death. Two years after my mom died, my dad found Helen, which was a huge blessing. My dad and Helen grew up on Prince Edward Island at the same time, but didn't know each other. They ended up meeting in church. Helen's husband, Emmett Roche had died about the same time as Joan, so they had a lot in common. Emmett suffered with an illness for two years. Before he died, he told Helen that she was too young to spend the rest of her life alone. He told her she should find someone that she could spend the rest of her life with, and that they would all meet in heaven. Once, one of Helen and Lorne's grandchildren asked if Grandpa Emmett would have liked Grandpa Lorne. There was a brief pause and the response came quickly that they would have liked each other very much and that Grandpa Emmett would have been so very pleased that Grandma Helen, had found such a loving wonderful man to share her life with.

Helen and Lorne were an amazing couple. Every time they entered or exited a room, they would hug, kiss, and tell each other how much they love each other. What a wonderful example they set for the rest of us. Every time I told Helen how blessed we were as a family to have her in my dad's life, she would stop me and tell me how lucky she was to have Lorne in her life. They both knew great love.

I have a million stories I could tell about my dad and I sailing, but my favorite stories are from when we were racing Renegade iceboats against each other. There were many father and son teams racing in the class at that time. The Northwest Regatta in 1991 was my first regatta. I was still learning the boat and not doing very well, but my dad was winning. I wasn't fast enough to win, but I was fast enough to make sure I stayed between my dad and his competition in the last races. After the races were over, my dad said, "Now, son, you were out there trying to win, right? You weren't out there to try and help me, right?"

I told my dad I was out there to win and that, if I was fast enough to beat him, I would have. Then, in 1997, in the Renegade World Championships, I started to get the boat figured out, mostly because my dad was my tuning partner. Through making small changes to the boat and testing the changes with him between races, I was able to get my boat going really fast. I got out in front, but I could see that my dad was catching me every lap. After the races were over, and we knew I had won, I said, "Now, dad, you weren't holding back trying to help me out, were you?" He said, "Oh no, son, I would never do that!" With a little smirk on his face, he said, "If I could have caught you, I would have."

Early on, in this eulogy, I spoke of how tough a time I'm having with my father's death. What helps me get through this is the fact that God has prepared a place for all of us. An eternal paradise is waiting for all of us when it is our time, and God calls us home. Lorne's family is thankful that he is at peace. They want to thank everyone for their love, support, and prayers. The outpouring of love is inspirational to all of us. We are comforted with confidence in the fact that Lorne is standing in Heaven with family and friends who have gone before us. We believe that he will be looking down, guiding and influencing us in our decisions, and maybe giving us a puff or shift in life, as we need it. May God bless Lorne and all of us! I believe we can keep Lorne's spirit alive by talking about him and telling his stories. Everyone has a Lorne story. I believe we can still ask him questions. We just have to listen a little harder for the answers. If we do ask, and we do listen, we can close our eyes and believe we are sitting next to him, as he gives us the answers we are looking for.

Now, I would like everyone to stand up... Please repeat after me, with all of the enthusiasm Lorne deserves...

Are you ready? Just testing.

Dear Heavenly Father,

Please welcome Lorne into your eternal Paradise.

Thank you for sharing his life with us.

We all love him very much.

Thank you.

Lorne would want us to move on with our lives, and let his spirit influence us from time to time. He would want us to work together and love each other just a little more knowing we have to make the most out of every minute we have on this Earth. He wants us to know that he will be ready to welcome us home, when it is our time, and God calls us to Heaven.