

Bonnors Ferry Herald, Thursday, May 18, 2008

**Joseph (Joe) Henry Mesenbrink**

Joe Mesenbrink peacefully passed away May 7, 2008 at his home in Moyie Springs after fighting a year-long battle with pancreatic cancer. He was surrounded by his wife, children, and grandchildren. A service celebrating his life was held at Wellspring Community Center in Bonnors Ferry at 3pm, Saturday, May 10, 2008.



Joe was born in Bonnors Ferry, Idaho, to John and Dorothea Mesenbrink on August 16, 1945. He was raised on the family farm in the shadow of Goat Mountain where he lived with his parents, his grandpa Joe LaFountain, and his three older brothers; Eugene, Rene and Herman. As a child, Dad spent his days playing with the pigs and tormenting his brothers who were 18, 16, and 14 years older than him.

Dad received his first round of education in Boundary County, including being one of the first classes to attend Evergreen School. He graduated in 1963, Valedictorian of his class. John and Dorothea moved to California with Dad so he could attend UC Berkley, where he earned his B.S. in Geology in 1969. He continued at Berkley, working on his Master's degree, but decided he did not like working in the Nevada mines so he crossed state lines, returned to Boundary County, and promptly signed up for the Idaho National Guard.

He met the love of his life while picking up the babysitter for his brother's children in November of 1970. He came directly from the Mesenbrink Mill, expecting a teenager to meet him at the Manus residence. Cherry was expecting an "old man," having only been told by Rene that his brother would be picking her up. They were both awed by the meeting and Dad asked Mom if he could join her...after he cleaned up. They were married April 24, 1971 and the 37 years they shared together were filled with fun, laughter, and love.

To feed his family and support his hobbies, Joe founded The Boondocks in the late 1970's. Though the name stayed the same, the product changed over the years morphing from boats, to snowmobiles, to specialty wood products. Dad always claimed the main reason for his wanting to be a self-employed man was his desire to be close to his wife and children.

Among his busy hours of work, Dad managed to find time to be on the Boundary County Fair Board, the Snowmobile Club, a 4-H Leader, a volunteer fireman, a part of the local Search and Rescue team...the list goes on and on. Most recently, Dad was just elected to serve his fourth term as Mayor of Moyie Springs where he truly found his niche in serving the community he loved so well.

Dad worked hard...but he played harder. During the winter months he was an avid snowmobiler; racing on the tracks and climbing the highest heights. He loved cutting the wake on his slalom ski in the summertime behind his boat, and had the broken eardrums from hard crashes as testimony. He loved camping, fishing, travelling, dancing, hosting Halloween parties, playing cards, and just being with his friends and family. Anyone who knew Dad knows he loved The Far Side and was often heard quoting his favorites, "You know, the one about the...." There was nothing he enjoyed more than making people laugh.

Joe leaves behind his best friend and soul mate, Cherry; brother, Rene; children, Michelle (Tim Funderburg), Marie (Mike Byars), Jon (Chiaki), and Laura (Adam Harmon); grandchildren, Keevin, Devin, Mikayla, Madeleine, Jarreka, Tarrin, Rebecca, Jaden, Jennelle, and Alexander; nephews and nieces; brothers and sisters-in-law; cousins; and friends.