

**Peter A Krusch Memorial/Celebration of  
Life**  
*Keepsake Compilation for Family & Speakers*

**Sunday 15 July 2018**



*Peter A. Krusch*  
*21 March 1931-19 May 2018*

# PROGRAM

## **MUSIC BEFORE & AFTER**

*Jane Tulloh and Patricia Fitzgerald on violin*

*Evergreen Erb on her Celtic harp*

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## **2 – 3 pm – Memorial Celebration of Peter's Life**

**Welcome** - Justin Brown, Officiant

Introduces family members.

Memories of Peter and his life

**Living with a Dragon** – Sally

### **Memories from the Family**

Peter's sons and daughter

Nancy Spier

Gregory Krush

Ernest Krusch

Grandchildren

Sean Krusch

Elizabeth Spier

Ethan Spier

**Memories of Peter during his Peace Corps years in Sierra Leone, West Africa** – Tom Wilson

### **The Family's German Origins**

Professor/ Dr. Eckart Wernicke

Peter's Cousin from Germany

**Memories from a best friend** - Bob Brunette

*As they called each other, the Sweet Baboos*

*(from the Peanuts cartoons)*

### **Musical Interlude**–

Jane Tulloh on violin with a Celtic Lament

### **Sharing of Memories**

**Logistics Announcement**– Justin

**Goodbye Peter** – song written and sung by Jean-Marie Milliken, accompanied by Evergreen Erb on the Harp

**3 pm. Taiko Drumming on the hill starts –**

**Burlington Taiko Drummers**

*They will drum through the procession up and back, except for the brief ceremony once we are all in the labyrinth.*

**3 – 4 pm. Procession up the Sandblow Hill, led by Sally with Peter's ashes**

*(the family will scatter the remainder at later time)*

Brief Ceremony in the Labyrinth

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## REMARKS AT THE MEMORIAL

**Welcome - Justin Brown, Officiant**

Good afternoon. Welcome to Peter Krusch's farm on this beautiful day. We are gathered here to celebrate Peter's life.

My name is Justin Brown. I am a friend of Peter's and the nephew of Sally Laughlin, Peter's wife of 25 years. Peter did not want to have a minister preside over his memorial. My apologies Peter but you now have the second least attractive option on your list—a lawyer.

Because there will be no receiving line, I will first introduce Peter's family members. We will next move into the sharing of personal remembrances by family and friends as identified in the program. After the musical interlude, there will be a short opportunity for anyone present to share their memories of Peter. At the end of the memorial, there will be a procession up the hill to the Pine Grove to spread Peter's ashes. We will congregate back down here after the ashes are spread for refreshments and the sharing of more memories and stories

Peter's family members in attendance are:

- Peter's son Ernest Krusch and significant other Jane Tulloh
- Peter's son Gregory Krusch and significant other Cameron Riley
- Peter's daughter Nancy Spier
- Nancy's daughter Elizabeth Spier and partner Owen Ledvina
- Nancy's son Ethan Spier
- Ernest's son Sean Krusch & fiancée Jessica Hill
- Peter's wife Sally Laughlin
- Sally's son James Laughlin and wife Rebecca and daughter Adeline
- Peter's cousin Eckart Wernicke

### Justin A. Brown Memories of Peter Krusch

Peter Krusch had a big physical presence, a big intellectual presence, and a big sense of humor. In short, Peter was a giant of a man.

I first met Peter in the late 1980s when he and my Aunt Sally began their relationship. I was about 7 years old at the time. I remember thinking my entire body could fit within Peter's massive, outstretched hands. While Peter's large physical presence is what I remember most as a child, what I will remember going forward are the three lessons I have distilled from his life and will try to apply to my own.

**First, be adventurous, it will keep you young.**

Peter was an adventurer. From working in the Alaska territory and a trip on a motor scooter through Europe in the 1950s, to running the agricultural program in Sierra Leone for the Peace Corps in the late 1960s and early 1970s, to traveling around the world in the 1980s and 1990s, Peter experienced many adventures. He loved learning how diverse peoples from across this planet lived. He enthusiastically discussed completed adventures. His eyes lit up when he discussed an upcoming trip.

His desire to explore continued to his final days. While in his late 80s, he drove to Alaska and the southwestern United States camping in his beloved Vanagon along the way. A stroke cut short his last adventure in the Colorado hot springs this past May.

Peter's insatiable desire for adventure and exploration kept him young at heart throughout his long life.

**Peter's second lesson: Be curious, it will keep you engaged in society.**

Just like his insatiable desire for adventure, Peter had an insatiable curiosity. He devoured the weekly Economist and New Yorker magazines as well as the Sunday New York Times before this paper—in Peter's words—“caved to the establishment.”

He not only loved to learn and improve his mind, but—perhaps more importantly—he loved to share what he learned with others. Before I would arrive for a visit with Peter and Sally, I made sure I had read the recent Economist magazine so I could engage in productive discourse (and banter) with my friend, Peter.

When I was a senior in college, I took a course on American democracy. Many political scientists opined that because more and more people were glued to television, computer, and smart phone screens, American democracy was dying. People were no longer discussing local, national, and international events at coffee shops and at back-yard barbecues. My professor asked if anyone disagreed. I stood up and said that American democracy was alive and well in Vermont. If these political scientists met the Vermonter Peter Krusch, they should expect to discuss milk, beef, and oil prices, the status of our infrastructure, foreign policy challenges, and environmental issues. All of this would have occurred within just the cocktail hour!

While our country's future may at times appear bleak, I am reassured by the existence of people cast in the mold of Peter Krusch. These people ask questions. These people engage community members. And these people push the envelope in the direction it needs to be pushed.

**Peter's final lesson: Be hardworking and creative, it will keep you happy in your career.**

Peter was a traditional artist-blacksmith, recognized as a master craftsman by his peers, by the Vermont crafts community, and by the galleries which showed his work. He combined the ancient methods of forge and anvil with modern welding techniques to produce unique works of art in iron and copper.

When Peter came to Vermont in 1958, blacksmithing was a dying trade. He dug his first forge out of a collapsed shed on a neighboring farm. Although he had learned the basic skills at agricultural college, he had no master to teach him the trade. Within a few years and countless hours of dedicated work, he had mastered it. This shows Peter's ingenuity—he was solution focused in often unconventional ways. When he hit a barrier, he did not give up, he improvised. Peter would think to himself, “what do I need to create to solve this problem.” Most people would give up justifying their failure on some external force like the absence of a teacher to teach them a new profession. Not Peter Krusch.

Peter made his living as an artist-blacksmith from 1971 on, and ran a shop that employed four people and trained many apprentices. In 2000, when Vermont's informal blacksmith association asked him to do a demonstration for their membership (including hobby smiths and professionals), over 90 people came to learn from Peter.

When I was a child, Peter and I forged a plant hanger together. I watched as he stoked the fires and assembled the requisite tools. He explained the steps and helped me through each one as we crafted a perfect hanger for my mother. From my perspective, creating this hanger was a significant endeavor—much more difficult than a trip to the local hardware store. I admired Peter's fertile imagination, skill, and hard work as I looked around his shop at the weathervanes, chandeliers, traditional ironwork and, of course, the fire breathing dragons he constructed by hand.

Later in life, I asked Peter why he chose to create fire breathing dragons. I knew he loved the legends of dragons and was creative, but I questioned why he would dedicate so much time and energy to forge these mythical creatures. He looked at me through his bushy eye brows and said: "Dragons are difficult to critique. No one can tell me I did not construct a dragon in correct proportions because no one has ever seen a dragon." He then belted out that unique laugh we all loved so much.

Peter's dragons (some of which surround us today) stand for his creativity, hard work, vitality, and sense of humor.

Rest in peace, my friend. Your life lives on in your lessons and in your dragons.

# Living with a Dragon – Peter Was Unique

*Remarks from his wife – Sally's memories for the memorial*

Thank you all for coming out on this hot day and thanks to all who have done so much to make this event a wonderful tribute to Peter. The photo of Peter and the Dragon here in front and on your programs is a great favorite of mine, I would like to thank photographer Mark Council for taking that photo nearly thirty years ago.

## **Peter was unique**

There never was anything like him before or ever will be again!

## **He could build or repair or create anything –**

With his giant capable hands and his ever-churning creative mind

He could design a giant dragon stove or a 3-story house completely in his mind, never even drawing it out on paper.

He created things in his mind and then built them!

The dragons here...

Our wonderful house by the waterfall. (If any of you have not seen it feel free to stop in when we walk past on the way down the hill)

**30 years ago** (August 1988) we were introduced by a dragon- the giant wood stove dragon on the cover of the program now lurking outside his shop.

We arranged to have a blind date meeting at a craft show.

On the phone I asked how I would find him and he (mastering understatement) said “I will have a large sculpture outside the entrance to the show.” As I walked up the hill, I saw this amazing dragon – just as I looked at it his eyes lit up – steam came out of its nostrils – and he ROARED!! I thought it the most amazing thing I had ever seen, until I saw the man standing next to it - with twinkling blue eyes taking in my reaction!

**Four years later** we were married – 24 October 1992 - after an interesting courtship & an around the world backpacking trip, to the delighted approval of both our Mothers. We wrote our own wedding vows. The part I remember the best was saying “*we know that we are both strong minded and willful and will try each other's patience at times, but we believe our love for each other will carry us through.*”

Well that was prophetic – we did, and it did. We did need to work things out, especially in the early years, until we both got used to living with another strong minded individual. Love did indeed prevail. Last year we celebrated our 25<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary! 25 years of accomplishments professional and personal for us both having created a very pleasant and rewarding daily life, which included cocktails at dusk, on the balcony overlooking the place whenever weather permitted.

When I finally got us back to Vermont after the stroke that was to prove fatal, he said two things that will stay with me forever: With joy that night we returned by medical transport – “*We are home in Vermont, how did*

*you do this? Home in our own home. I am in my own house again.” And “These 25 years with you have been the happiest of my life. I have never loved anyone as I do you.”* That was our last conversation, because once he realized he couldn’t get better he willed himself to pass.

Like many of us, he tended to say such things only in extremis - after the heart valve replacement operation six years ago, at a point when we both thought he was going to die he said:

*“I have had a wonderful life. What I wanted most I have had.  
I had three fine children and have watched my grandchildren grow up;  
I wanted to live in the Arctic (and I did, in Alaska).;  
I wanted to live in the tropics (and I did, in Africa),  
And to have a farm in Vermont.  
To travel.  
To have a happy & fulfilling relationship, which we have had together.”*

### **Finally, this story about the Sandblow**

He wanted his ashes scattered on the Sandblow Hill of this farm he stewarded for 60 years.

Healing the Sandblow was one of the things he was proudest of and wanted to be remembered for.

The photos on the back of your program tell the story

It was bare sand with a few pine trees on the top when he bought the farm in 1958, victim of overgrazing and overcutting - which exposed the sand the glacier left behind.

First, after consulting with the extension service he planted beach grass; then over the years fed the cattle strategically so the hay and poop fertilized the ground - area by area. Now, 60 years later, it is lush growth, with no visible sand. His desire was for this part of his land to be a Nature Preserve, linking to the adjacent ancient Cambridge Pines.

We made a labyrinth there, mowed into the field at the top of the hill, in the Center of his Land, geographically and spiritually. A labyrinth is a unicursal curving path, one way in and one out, not like a maze. It is an ancient design, the oldest being engraved on coins brought back from the Trojan war; later laid into the floors of medieval cathedrals. Today they are found all over the world, with probably a dozen here in northern Vermont. Walking a labyrinth is a way to meditate or just to feel peaceful, and to connect with the land. Peter never walked it (except behind the lawnmower) but together we laid it out and he appreciated the beauty of the design. I walk it daily, except in deep snow.

Today all of us up to hiking up the hill will walk into it, as we honor this land and return Peter’s ashes to it.

# Memories from the Family: Peter's sons and daughter

## Nancy's Words for Peter

Nancy's Remarks (12/5/18)

There were many chapters to Peter's life.

I'd like to share with you today some early memories that I've carried throughout my life and some more recent memories that have brought me peace since Peter's passing.

From my childhood there are many memories that happened in the big house and on this property.

- we always sat together for our meals. The table was set or trays of plates and food were taken out to the picnic table in the back yard.

- Doing dishes was combined with conversation, fun and sometimes a dangerous snapping towel fight.

- Gardening was a necessity to provide healthy vegetables to eat all twelve months of the year. Not only was this family time but also taught me many skills needed to be as self reliant as I am today. Gardening has been a passion all throughout my life. I embrace these gardening skills that are proving to be invaluable in our current world.

- Exploring surroundings with Peter meant visiting special spots on the farm property like the huge willow tree with numerous swings, the sap buckets on the maple tree on the hill, the sandblow with the cool pines and the unforgettable smell of needles warmed by the sun, the waterfall with its different sized pools, the frozen flooded fields by the river. Hills of different sizes on the farm were used for learning to ski and killer toboggan runs.

- when time and finances allowed, we got away for a few days. Camping trips by canoe and visits to state parks for hiking, swimming and fishing were enjoyed. I was so pleased when Pe-Pa joined my family outings to make three generations of outdoor fun. Did you know you can make "shlackzanna" (whipped cream) when camping?!

- Exploring was not limited to the out of doors in New England. The three year adventure to Africa for a 5 year old certainly was impressive. Trips to New York City were cultural events are abound introduced me to a life different from Cambridge, Vermont. Going to the orchestra, a museum or a musical not only taught me an appreciation for the arts but prepared me for my college years in Boston.

- I carry with me today that exploration can indeed happen within different time frames and different budgets. With a bit of planning and limitless dreaming travel can happen if one chooses. I feel grounded having these experiences. Peter would say "you turned out ok kid".

More recent memories I'll treasure are touching things Peter said and did. I can be at peace knowing he cared and appreciated.

- how good it felt to hear that I could prepare Rouladin and Oma's Christmas cookies just as Peter remembered them. "you got it down" he would say.

- How good it felt when Peter made an emergency drive halfway across the country to check in on me.

- Intimate talks with Peter this past winter were pleasurable. I'd pull a stool up close to him as he rested on the couch. We would catch up on life a bit. I'd leave his home knowing his mind was sharp and that he cared about his family.

Peter gave me a gift this spring as I was to begin a travel adventure. When I visited him in the Denver hospital he was able to communicate his approval. I was relieved that I had been able to visit him at the end of his van trip. I believe he was at peace knowing I was going on my own van trip. This was a precious connection.

The childhood Peter gave me build my character. The loving confirmation at the end has brought me some peace.

## **Gregory's Remarks**

Peter was my father, he was not always my dad, but he was my old man,

From my earliest memories he instilled in me a sense of adventure and a can-do attitude with most everything he did.

He always let us kids take on any adventure that we wanted, even if it meant we might get hurt.

As kids we climbed trees, built things, used tools, explored as far as our wits and bravery would let us go,

There were never any limits on what Peter would let us do or explore growing up, canoeing, kayaking on the flooded meadow with icebergs floating around, skiing on our own, you name it.

All those experiences gave me a sense of confidence and adventure to try things that has carried on thru my life.

Peter's sense of adventure, travel and curiosity was always there, from early canoe trips down the Lamoille, moving the family and living in West Africa when all of us kids were very small, to round the world trips later in life, cross country road trips in old beaters, raft trips and many other things that others would never attempt, he was always up for an adventure

Peter was curious and always questioned things, he dug deep to find some answers. Whether in life or the many varied ways of the world he searched to gain a better understanding.

As he was starting to question the whole US foreign aid thing, he wanted to see what if any good he had done with the peace corps in sierra Leone in the late 60s. I was also curious to see Africa as an adult so we took a trip back in the 90s. What we saw made him sad but also raised many new questions about that part of the world that he continued to try to figure out.

Finding total disarray during the brief time we were back in Sierra Leone and dealing with all its travails and difficult situations we decided to cut the trip short. After numerous bribes, dashes, duplicate paperwork, fake security etc. etc we were finally set to fly out early. As we drank off a cheap bottle of whiskey and stomped cockroaches on the deck of the airport watching a beautiful tropical sun set, we both told each other that there was no one else that we knew who could deal with the adversities that we went thru and still consider it a good trip.

This was also true on our Trans-Siberian trip, this trip was a challenge with the language, alphabet and cultural differences. One memory that stands out, we were stranded with an out of gas Russian jeep on an island in the middle of lake Baikal with our driver trying to syphon gas with one hand and a lit cigarette in the other.

As we backed away from the jeep, we once again told each other that we could not imagine anyone else who could stand there and laugh and just roll with the experience. At the end of the trip as we parted ways in San Francisco he simply said “good trip “and shook my hand.

While we were not always close in proximity when we did get together we could talk for days on end about everything under the sun, politics, religion, worldaffairs, crops, vehicles, projects, what have you. We could have breakfast, yak till lunch, yak till dinner and then go on some more till we both needed to get some sleep. As his hearing degraded these talks were much more limited but we could still go on for a good long time. While he could be deaf as a post his sense of humor and distinct laugh stayed with him.

He was nearly 60 when he met Sally, I remember him telling me he truly felt he had found someone who he could really relate to in many many ways and have a real relationship with. With and without her he continued to live his life to the fullest. Right up to his very last days his adventures continued. His last trip began this past April at age 87, I brought the Vanagon to Albuquerque and Cameron and I met them at the airport. He and Sally traveled in his Vanagon exploring the Southwest deserts and soaking in hot springs, not a bad way to go.

He always cut a wide swath and left his mark where ever he went, with his bushy eyebrows, large stature and piercing blue eyes he could be very intimidating, but he also meant well and had good intentions in his own selfish way.

We can all learn from his sense of adventure and his confidence to grab the bull by the horn and just do it, we all need to seize those chances while we can. He always said this isn't a dress rehearsal for the next life. I guess he is finding that out now.

As Peter would always say, to make a long story short, I won't expound any more right now and save some good stories for later and simply say good bye to the old man.

## **Ernest's Remarks**

As you know Peter was a man of many talents, skills, a traveler and full of ideas.

I will share with you his passion for agriculture, a rototilling story and a life lesson.

Starting as a lad in elementary school, Peter had radishes in window boxes, grew lettuce on an apartment balcony, obtained a college degree in agriculture at Delaware Valley University. Then running a dairy farm in PA, a couple of years in the service plus 2 years in Alaska, and finally he settled in Cambridge, VT. With 10K chickens, 20 odd Hereford beef cattle, a huge garden to feed 3 kids, a hired man + winter ski guests.

Then he was on to Africa, he was head of the agricultural program for the Northern province of Sierra Leone. Back in Vermont, more beef, strawberry patch, asparagus (which is still here today) greenhouse lettuce all winter long and bragging about how early he had a vine ripened tomatoes, green peppers etc.

Back to veggie gardening. Kids don't like weeding, me included, but it was a chore expected of us. I do remember taking wheel barrel loads of fresh picked corn to the kitchen, bags after bag to the freezer then all the husks and cobs to the pigs. I Couldn't have had a better upbringing.

A rototilling story. As a boy at say 8-9 years old, "Dad can I mow the lawn...NO....rototill the garden 😊 ". Peter had back pain throughout his life.

Sears and Roebuck made a bone shaker, front tiller, long handles, and no control. Peters words "I planted those seeds don't take them out with the rototiller". If you hit a rock and you've cleaned out 4 corn plants and are half way in the other row. I went on with my life, Peter then bought a used Troy built self-propelled, rear tine one hand operation rototiller. He was headed up to rototill his asparagus patch, has to pee, lets the machine go by itself, up and over a cow pie, tips over and breaks the carburetor off. He made a visit to JR Tobin to get a used carburetor, not the same but close enough, and the governor didn't fit. (but who needs a governor) That Motor screamed, blew up before end of season. He rebuilt and tinkered and fussed on the thing to no end. Last I knew he bought a brand new troy built.

Oh the.....Life lesson, If you need to pee, turn off your rototiller.

Thank you for listening.

## Peter's Grandchildren Remarks

### **Sean Krusch** (read by Justin at Sean's request)

My grandfather Peter ran 20 white faced cattle on this property years ago. It has been very nice to see the lands come back with cattle as my fiancé Jesse and I have pastured cattle here the last four summers. It has been nice to see Peter and my father Ernest excited about the change in the land and see the land grow grass fed beef. Peter will be greatly missed at my wedding this coming Saturday.

### **Liz Spier**

Each of us have memories of Peter that are uniquely ours. For some it has been working the land in the field, the art of his metalwork, or even stories about his famous chocolate mousse. For me, it has been stand out moments in which Peter or one of his creations were front and center. When I was young, a swing in the shape of a bird, built by the old man's hands. In my teenage years, it was a stem of roses cast aside by Peter as scrap, that gained my affection and attention. And later as I struck out on my own, it was his vast knowledge and fierce curiosity. I too hope to never be finished with my adventures. As Peter passed, I thought of the impressions he has left on all of our family. I thought of all he had taught and learned from, and how the richness of his life impacted others. In his memory I have created the figurines on the table before me

representative of each family member and the parts of their personalities that have been magnified by the talents or values passed on by Peter himself.

- For my brother Ethan, a dragon to represent his love of cooking and his ability to laugh at anything
- For my mother Nancy, a stubborn mountain of a dragon, engraved with the trails of Smugglers Notch where the family skis
- For Ernest, a dragon emerging from a tree representing a love of nature and a talent for woodworking
- For Sean, a dragon with a fence post with all the years of agriculture to come on the land that Peter loved so much
- For Greg, a dragon with enormous wings embracing the globe to represent travel & wilderness
- For Eckart, a hand producing a dragon. Though worlds apart both men created the impossible with their hands, with a talent passed down from generations before
- And lastly for Sally, a dragon whose humility and grace never failed to compliment the robust and candid nature of her husband

## **Ethan Spier**

A few times when I was with Peter it always seemed like I was exercising my brain. In one such case was when he had me on a chainsaw cutting some down trees on his property and I was left to figure out how to cut them into sizable pieces without pinching the saw.

Peter always took a liking to dragons and could somehow put them within a few of his blacksmith pieces. Like the table with the dragon in it and the wood burning stove. I got to help him move them to sell. We needed to figure out where to put a heavy piece of artwork before we moved it out of the Vanagon. The man at the gallery questioned if it was a kit or hand made!

He and I got to work on a garage wall and since I hadn't done a lot of carpentry he walked me through it and after we did about half I was able to finish the rest. During this project at about half way I had finished all the studding on one half of the wall with him and on another day I proceeded without him and he made the comment that I had made more progress than he expected. He was surprised that I had got over a problem that he was contemplating for a couple days.

During any of the holiday get togethers it always seemed strange that all the guys would end up talking about something mechanical and each time it seemed like I would pick up a little bit of it. Knowing that everyone else has an extensive range of knowledge it always seemed like I was asking the idiot questions so that I could understand it better.

Peter always seemed to hide his love or appreciation for the family unless there was a large accident or if you made an appointment with him it always seemed like you better cover your bases if you can't make it in time or you're going to get the wrath of him. He also held himself to this policy especially when he and I were working on the garage wall

# Memories of Peter during his Peace Corps years in Sierra Leone, West Africa— Tom Wilson

Between 1968 and 1972 Peter Krusch served his country...and the world...as a staff advisor for two groups of Peace Corps Volunteers in the West African nation of Sierra Leone in a combined agricultural, construction and community development program. Most of us volunteers were fresh out of college, had been assigned to rural settings within a totally new culture and typically had little confidence that we would survive at all, much less thrive and make meaningful contributions to this desperate country. I had arrived in Africa a year before Peter and his family but extended for a third year to complete my project. Thus, over two years I got to know Peter personally as well as see him interact with two waves of volunteers.

I also had the opportunity to spend a harsh winter with Peter here in Cambridge in the old brick farm house down by the river after we both returned to the U.S. I was still suffering from reentry cultural shock, starting a new short-lived career as a stained glass craftsman while Peter was adjusting to single life, the Richard Nixon presidency and the rekindling of his own blacksmithing career—but that's a story for another time.

Rather I would like to share with you a few insights from some of my Peace Corps colleagues and their reactions to Peter's contribution while in Sierra Leone. There is a distance common theme:

Percy Brown shared, "I do not need to tell you what an inspiration he is and was to so many people. His "can do" spirit fueled many adventures and projects which led to growth of character, skill...and fun.

Steve Abrams agreed, "He exuded an amazing self-confidence, backed up by the fact that it seemed he could accomplish almost anything; it's a quality that most of us [envied]. And he had a wonderful sense of humor, important for getting oneself through the ups and downs of living."

Ken McKnight remembered, "He was a bit like General Patton in that he encouraged our group to get over our fears, ignore the difficulties and complete our projects to the best of our ability. I could see that if I was to be successful in the Peace Corps, and as a man, these were the qualities of character that I would need.

Richard Swam told the story of arriving to teach at the secondary school...except there really wasn't a usable school building to teach in. He also noted that there was no money for a builder to construct a new one. "I wanted to take a crack at it but staff in the capital said I was a teacher and should stick to education. Finally they asked Pete what he thought and Pete said, 'Give him a shot.' .... When I left Makeni, Birch Memorial had a new campus with proper classrooms. It wouldn't have happened without Pete Krusch."

My own experience with Peter was similar. With scant previous building experience, I found myself working with the local villager to construct a cooperative headquarters and rice grain storage facility. Though left largely to my own devices, Peter was always available to answer questions, and assist in acquiring necessary hand tools and transportation for our project to go forward. As we were finishing up, I got the idea that it would be cool to have a dated cornerstone on our edifice. When I proposed the idea to Peter, he looked at me a bit askance, but managed to rummage around and come up with a cold chisel and masons maul. I think I stepped over the line, however, when I sheepishly asked "Could you give me any pointers on carving stone?" He responded immediately: "Yeah...don't hit your thumb!" followed immediately by a classic Peter outburst which was something between a belly laugh and a guffaw. The implied message was clear: "Look, you've gotten this far on your project; you don't need *my* advice on cutting a few numbers in a hunk of rock; you'll figure it out." And so I did.

For the past 50+ years, whenever I begin to doubt my abilities, I recall Peter's confidence in me. Like many of my colleagues, I am sure, using Peter's life as an example, fear of failure has rarely held us back from pursuing our dreams. This is empowerment in the best sense of the word—and Peter's gift to us all.

## **The Family's German Origins**

### **Professor/ Dr. Eckart Wernicke, Peter's Cousin from Germany**

Dear Sally, dear Nancy, dear Ernest, dear Gregori, dear grandchildren, dear friends of Sally and Peter's

There is a documentation more than both families Schurich Krusch and Ockel Wernicke up to the year 1651 consistently back is pursueable. A document comes from 1504. The grandmothers of Peter's mother, Marlies Krusch, and my grandmother, Marie Wernicke, were sisters.

The cohesion of the families has remained till this day, even if the living spaces have spread on two continents.

I regret very much that I have not followed to my real plan to come in the spring of this year to Vermont to visit you.

Then I would have seen to you both still together, Peter and you, dear Sally. I regret it very much, because indirectly your both also became a piece of my life - if we also live far away - in Germany and in the States.

In 1958, Peter visited my parents in Neuenhain, where I still live with my family. He was on an European tour and came with a completely overloaded Vespa scooter. I still remember that I went on this Vespa scooter. Peter brought me by this motorcycle to the school. What an experience for a young boy!

When I began after the medical study my internship in the General Hospital in Hackensack, I experienced a wonderful and impressive time with his parents, my dear aunt Marlie and uncle Herbert. They took up me like an own son in their house Warren Street 32 in Hackensack. Many nice memories of Hackensack and New York accompany me till this day.

However, this stay also was stamped by an event: Official members of the town came to the Warren Street and wanted to oblige me to the military service as a doctor. Uncle Herbert drove with me still on the same day in the direction of Canada. On the way we passed Cambridge and stayed with Peter and his family in Cambridge, at that time still in the old house.

Following were many mutual visits in Vermont or in Germany. Every time when we met us with Peter he impressed with his experimental often critical discussions and by his knowledge. Often has supported him his worldwide knowledge and also cosmopolitan experience. It was interesting to listen only to him. He could get excited so passionately about global events or about political decisions. Many experiences had helped him by staying in foreign countries. The discussions were not always easy and often controversial. He argued with pleasure.

Peter loved the freedom, the travelling, the adventure, however, also his home with his beloved Sally and his children and grandchildren.

With his craft and artistic talent he worked in the workshop with sculptures.

Aunt Marlies, when she visited us in company of her grandson Gegory in 1990 us in Frankfurt, surprised me with a bunch of flowers as a present from Peter. These were of metal, wonderfully formed pieces of art which decorate still today my sitting room and remind me of Peter and the Krusch family.

But also of his big interest in old cars, his VW-Van or the Ford Model A were for him a part of his life.

Thus he also inspired me and I took back in 2009 one of his Ford Models A, construction year 1930. The restoration lasted 2 years. Often technical questions with Peter were cleared by telephone. In the meantime, it is a wonderful and also well driving oldtimer, Peter would have his pleasure with it, it is also an eternal symbol of the recollection and the connection.

The maintaining of this connection is my biggest wish to all descendants, I believe, I pronounce him also in terms of Peter. He will remain with you, dear Sally, and with all of us

Thanks god that there are all of you and Peter stay in peace between and with us.

Thank you

## **Memories from a best friend - Bob Brunette**

*As they called each other, the Sweet Baboos.... (from the Peanuts cartoons)*

Most of you know me – Bob Brunette. Otherwise known as the Sweet Baboo. That was his nickname for me. I don't know where he got that other than Snoopy, but we were each other's Sweet Baboos. Peter was my FRIEND- and that is spelled in capital letters. We had a lot in common, our whole lives. (I won't keep you too long, I know the seats are hard.) We were both Depression babies. I don't know if everyone knows what the Great Depression was like – hard times. Our conversations started off a lot of times about how poor our families were in our youth. My father lost everything in the Depression. Peter's parents immigrated. It was just a hard, hard time then. You don't know what a hard time is – but boy our parents did. Those parallels in our lives formed the basis for the friendship we had, which went on for 35 or 40 years. It was the most rewarding thing for me. To watch him develop from doing the hated production blacksmithing he was doing at first to the artistic blacksmithing was something to watch. Most rewarding to me. Is Dana Sweet here? (*Dana says yes*). It was your fault he took that turn – it was working welding your garbage trucks that did it and turned him to the artistic work. He said he hated to see Sundays coming because you would bring your garbage truck in and he had to weld the plates in the back and although the truck was empty the smell (*Dana – yes garbage stinks*) So Peter went to the artistic bent. I got I big chuckle out of that. Now Dana drives a big nice truck around. A success story.

Peter and I did projects for Smugglers' Notch, for Peter Ingvaldstad who ran the ski school at the Mountain. He was always talking us into something. We bartered off for ski equipment. We built a snowboard with outriggers on it, and Peter tested it and didn't fall. We both loved and had a penchant for mechanical things.

The first project I did there was restore a 1931 fire engine. Made steps so the kids could get on it, good for the families visiting - they had a great time. We did the first waterpark there. Had a bunch of rocks, put faucets behind them, and when you pulled the lever one of the faucets would go off. You could tell which one and you got wet.

I don't know if any of you ever saw Peter ski. My god he was a skier. Once I said how did you ever learn to ski like that. He said "when I was on ski patrol, I was determined to learn to ski parallel so I wrapped elastic bands around my ankles. He ended up being the smoothest skier I ever saw. Everytime I went with him it was an enjoyment. I used to bomb down the hill and wait for him. He would come down, gliding. Just amazing. That was his mindset. If he decided to do something, he did it, no matter how, if he got the results he wanted he was satisfied.

We both ended up in the later years of our friendship hard of hearing. He was a little bit harder of hearing than me. You had to sit on his right side and holler like hell. Then he could hear you above the engine noise. My hearing loss was from the screaming wood saw and his from the anvil ring. Sally tells a funny story about our being in the sauna buck naked talking to each other and she could hear us in the bedroom of the house – through all the walls. And we both ended up curmudgeons. Nothing is right. Politics is wrong. The President is wrong. Religion is wrong. But we agreed – as curmudgeons we agreed. We didn't care what anyone else thought.

The sad part is I experienced a stroke the beginning of March. I made it through and kind of feel selfish. A month later my Baboo had a stroke and didn't. So, I have to stand here and say "*So long, Baboo, I will see you on the other side.*"

## **Musical Interlude –**

Jane Tulloh on violin -Celtic Lament "*Hector the Hero*"

## **Logistics Announcement – Justin**

Sally will lead a procession up the hill for those wishing to hike up the hill to where the ashes will be scattered; the Burlington Taiko Drummers will be playing in the pine grove. It is a steep hike of about 20 minutes each way and you can choose to remain in the tent to talk, look at photos, and enjoy the first round of refreshments.

## **Goodbye Peter**

Song written and sung by Jean-Marie Milliken, accompanied by Evergreen Erb on the Harp

*Goodbye Peter  
Free of time and space now  
Dragon flying to another place now  
Carry with you love  
Of family and friends  
Safe Journey's end  
Goodbye Peter Goodbye*

Brief Ceremony in the Labyrinth. *(the family will scatter the remainder at later time).*

#### **4 pm on – Refreshments and sharing of memories and stories back at the tent**

*We had intended to share more memories after we came down the hill, but by then people were chatting and eating, and talking informally. So that never happened.*

## **Ash Scattering Ritual in the Labyrinth**

### **The Burlington Tiako Drummers began to drum on the hill. Stuart Patton and a dragon led the procession up the hill.**

Once everyone processed up the hill and we were all in the Labyrinth, standing in the paths, the Drummers stopped and a brief ceremony was held.

**Sally:** *when Peter and I married, we wrote our own wedding ceremony. An important part of it was my dear young relatives (then children!) representing the four directions and the four elements. Doing so is a way of honoring nature and the elements of the Mother Earth, and an appropriate part of any ceremony. Today these same four people will read the same words said 26 years ago, this time in farewell. The words are from a lovely collection of poetry called Earth Prayers.*

#### **Justin**

Oh great Spirit of the **East**  
Radiance of the Rising Sun  
Spirit of new beginnings  
Oh Grandfather **Fire**  
great nuclear fire of the sun  
power of life energy,  
vital spark  
Power to see far  
And imagine with boldness  
Power to purify our senses,  
Our hearts and our minds  
***We pray that we may be aligned with you  
So that your powers may flow through us  
And be expressed by us  
For the good of this planet Earth  
And all living beings upon it.***

#### **Heather**

Oh great Spirit of the **South**  
Protector of the fruitful land

And of all green and growing things  
The noble trees and grasses  
**Grandmother Earth**, Soul of Nature  
Great power of the receptive  
Of nurture and endurance  
Power to grow and bring forth  
Flowers of the field  
Fruits of the garden  
***We pray that we may be aligned with you  
So that your powers may flow through us  
And be expressed by us  
For the good of this planet Earth  
And all living beings upon it.***

#### **John**

Oh Great Spirit of the **West**  
Spirit of the Great **Waters**  
Of rain, rivers, lakes, and springs  
Oh Grandmother Ocean

Deep matrix, womb of all life  
Power to dissolve boundaries  
To release holdings  
Power to taste and to feel  
To cleanse and to heal  
Great blissful darkness of peace  
***We pray that we may be aligned with you  
So that your powers may flow through us  
And be expressed by us  
For the good of this planet Earth  
And all living beings upon it.***

**Emily**  
Oh Great Spirit of **the North**  
Invisible spirit of **air**  
And of the cool fresh winds  
Oh vast and boundless Grandfather Sky  
Your living breath animates all life  
Yours is the power of clarity and strength  
Power to hear inner sounds  
To sweep out the old patterns  
To bring change and challenge  
The ecstasy of the dance  
***We pray that we may be aligned with you  
So that your powers may flow through us  
And be expressed by us  
For the good of this planet Earth  
And all living beings upon***

**Sally**  
Peter, we return your ashes to this land you loved and cared for for 60 years.  
May the Sandblow remain a tribute to your stewardship  
and may this land one day be a nature preserve dedicated to your memory.

**Unison Reading**(*Sally, then all*)

When the gentle spring winds blow  
**We will remember you**

When the summer grasses wave and the gardens produce their bounty  
**We will remember you**

**Circles of Return, Wendell Berry's Poem  
Bill and Elissa alternate stanzas.**

Within the circle of our lives  
we dance the circles of the year  
the circles of the seasons  
within the circles of the years,  
the cycles of the moon  
within the circles of the seasons  
the circles of our reasons  
within the cycles of the moon.

Again, again we come and go  
changed, changing. Hands  
join, unjoin in love and fear,  
grief and joy. The circles turn,  
each giving into each, into all.  
Only music keeps us here,

each by all the others held  
in the hold of hands and eyes  
we turn in pairs, that joining  
joining each to all again.

And then we turn aside, alone  
Out of the sunlight gone

Into the darker circles of return.

When autumn comes in her glory on these hills and fields

**We will remember you**

And when the deep snows of winter blanket the land

And the Fox walks the labyrinth (for he does, sometimes the full circuit)

**We will remember you.**

As long as I live your memory will live, as long as your friends and family live, you will live

For you are part of us.

**As long as we remember.**

**Drumming starts again and the procession walks out (last in, first out). Sally and Eckart scatter the ashes on the walls of the Labyrinth as we go.**

*Peter's children and grandchildren will scatter the remainder in private at later time..*

# Addendum

## Peter's Obituary 23 May 2018

PETER A. KRUSCH passed away 19 May 2018 in his home in Cambridge, Vermont, at the age of 87. He was a master artist blacksmith who created unique works ranging from chandeliers to dragons, the father of three, an organic farmer, avid skier, life long traveler, political activist, and beloved husband to his wife Sally for 25 years.

He was the only child of Marlies and Herbert Krusch, who immigrated separately from Germany, and met and married in New York City in 1930. Peter was born 21 March 1931. The family returned to Berlin, Germany when he was a toddler, unfortunate timing. Peter's father, grandfather, and uncle were arrested for running a (suddenly illegal) liberal printing press after Hitler came to power. His parents barely escaped the Nazi regime by fleeing to Denmark and eventually back to the US, where Peter grew up in New York City and New Jersey. Farming was always a passion for him; he graduated from the National Agricultural College (now Delaware Valley University) in Doylestown, PA in 1952 – the first college graduate in his family and their circle of friends.

His spirit for travel and adventure started early. He handbuilt his first pair of skis, rebuilt a Model A at 14, and hand forged his first ironwork (a candlestick for his mother) in the family furnace. In 1956 he and his first wife Anne drove to Alaska, where they lived for three years while he worked for the Bureau of Land Management, traveling throughout the territory, researching and processing homesteaders land claims before statehood. They saved enough money to buy a farm in Vermont – and to take a very low budget year-long trip to Europe, covering thousands of miles by motor scooter.

On their return in 1958 he purchased the farm in Cambridge where he lived the remainder of his life, raising his children in the old farmhouse, creating works of art, keeping an organic garden, living in as self-sufficient manner as possible, nurturing the land, and in 1988 building a new house with his own hands next to his waterfall, using wood cut from his land. When he and Sally married in 1992, he added a dining room and a large screened porch to the house.

A remarkable man, he lived a rich full life. Before focusing on blacksmithing, he utilized his agricultural background in operating a large poultry farm. He could always build, repair, or weld anything. In 1968, he became Peace Corps staff and ran the agricultural program in Sierra Leone, moving his wife and family to live in West Africa for three years. On his return, he took up blacksmithing full time and combined the ancient methods of forge and anvil with modern welding techniques to produce unique, perfectly crafted, beautiful works in iron and copper. With his fertile imagination and skill, he created fire breathing dragons, weathervanes, chandeliers, traditional ironwork and much more. His butterfly weathervane was featured in a Smithsonian magazine article. He was an acclaimed artist, in many juried shows, and was leader in the Vermont Crafts revival movement in the 1970s.

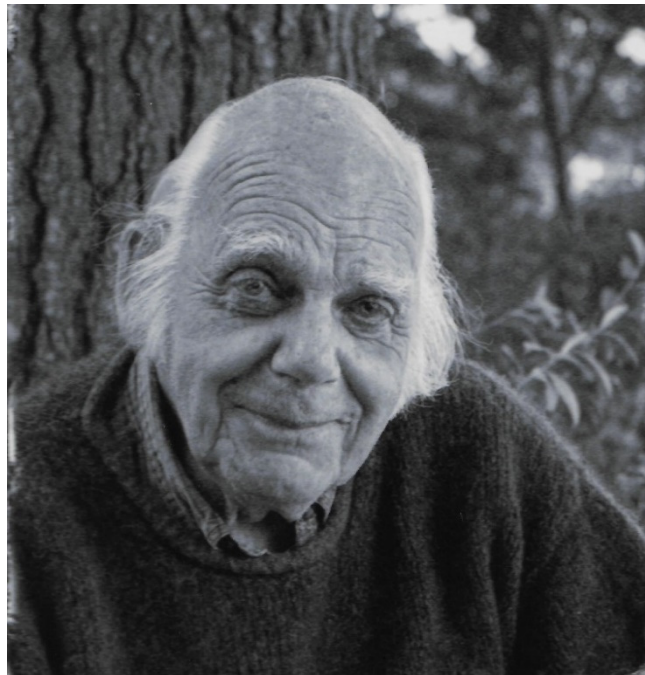
His love for travel was lifelong, from an around world backpacking trip with Sally in 1989 to a second around the world trip with son Gregory in the 1990s, crossing Russia, Siberia, and Mongolia on the Trans-Siberian Railroad. Twice he and Sally lived in Bolivia under VOCA, working with graduate students to establish a

natural history museum. He had two 1980s vintage VW Vanagons in which he loved to travel and camp, returning to Alaska in 2010 and traveling across country to Colorado many times. He and Sally were just completing a three week trip through wild areas of New Mexico and Colorado when he was felled by a stroke. A MedFlight transportation from a Denver hospital back to Vermont made it possible for him to spend the last ten days of his life in the peaceful surroundings of his home, attended by his family and the Bayada Hospice nurses.

Peter is survived by his wife of 25 years, Sally Laughlin; his son Ernest Krusch and significant other Jane Tulloh of Cambridge; his son Gregory Krusch and significant other Cameron Riley of Fort Collins, CO; his daughter Nancy (Krusch) Spier of Jericho; and three grandchildren Elizabeth Spier, Ethan Spier, and Sean Krusch and fiancée Jesse Hill; his cousin Dr. Professor Eckart Wernicke and family of Frankfurt, Germany; and dear friends foremost of which is Bob Brunette.

His intention was to make a portion of his land (including brooks, ravines, forest, and hill top field) adjacent to the Cambridge Pines State Forest into a permanently protected natural area for the Town of Cambridge, working with the Town of Cambridge Conservation Commission. Donations in his memory should go the Vermont Land Trust specified for *the Peter Krusch Memorial Fund for the protection and stewardship of land in Cambridge*. Send to: Vermont Land Trust, 8 Bailey Avenue, Montpelier, VT 05602.

A Celebration of Peter's life will be held on Sunday 15 July at 2 p.m. at his home, 140 Forge Drive, in Cambridge, to which all friends are invited.



## PETER AS ARTIST BLACKSMITH

Peter was a traditional artist-blacksmith, recognized as a master craftsman by his peers, by the Vermont crafts community, and by the galleries which showed his work. He combined the ancient methods of forge and anvil with modern welding techniques to produce unique, perfectly crafted, beautiful works in iron and copper. With his fertile imagination and skill, he created fire breathing dragons, weathervanes, chandeliers, traditional ironwork and much more. He also served the community of Cambridge as village blacksmith, repairing farm machinery, garbage trucks, and traditional tools.

His work was shown widely in galleries and juried shows: the New England Craftsman's' Guild in Boston; numerous Vermont galleries (Gallery II in Woodstock, T W Wood Gallery in Montpelier, Frog Hollow State Craft Centers in Middlebury, Burlington, and Manchester; American Craft Council Shows in Baltimore MD and Springfield MA and in numerous other juried exhibitions. His work was featured in *Architectural Digest*, *Smithsonian*, and *Vermont Life*, as well as Vermont newspapers. The Vermont Folklife Center featured his work in the exhibition "*Thinking Like a Blacksmith*" as did the Bennington Museum in the exhibition *State of the Craft* (2010).

When Peter came to Vermont in 1958, blacksmithing was a dying art. He dug his first forge out of a collapsed shed on a neighboring farm (with the permission of the farmer and at some risk to life and limb). Although he had learned the basic skills at agricultural college, he had no master to turn to in order to learn the trade - and could find no books on the topic. Within a few years he had mastered the craft and gained recognition. He made his living at the craft from 1971 on and ran a shop that employed four people and trained many apprentices. In 2000, when Vermont's informal blacksmith association asked him to do a demonstration for their membership (including hobby smiths as well as professionals) over 90 people from as far away as New Hampshire, Quebec, and New York came to learn the things Peter wished he had had could have learned from a master half a century earlier

# GUEST BOOK

Peter A Krusch Memorial / Celebration  
of Life - 15 July 2018

Jane Fuller

Molly + Mark Mullen

Tom Wilson + Kate Helen Wilson

Dean and Susan Greenberg

Maria Kowchuk-DeVito

Bob & Gloria Brunette

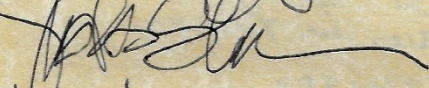
Evan Parry

Krista "Lolly" Bayne

Evergreen End

Mariah Mellickers

Terril Gregory



Full Trust

Susan Barthel

CHRIS PARKER

Holly S. Ferris

Lewin + Diane Jacobs  
Richard + Peg Macchia  
Dan + Steve Shanks  
Jerry + Margaret Feggs  
Mary Western  
Rob Feltner  
Peter + Linda Warner  
Sue Wigg  
Bernie + Arzon Juskiwicz  
Julie Paterson Harg  
Carol Martin Wood  
Eun Bishop  
Dana + Bob Sweet  
Buck Kemper  
Madison Kemper  
Frieda Bross  
Sara Lavinie  
Abigail DeFreest  
Dennie Smith  
Lester Crum  
Jim Kimmey  
Max Council

BROOKS ALLEN

Bob Nolan + angel

Andrew Robertson

Sam Laughlin

Oliver Laughlin

Manay Spin

Wally Gatz

HEARZ HEARTS, EL MOORE + ADA + QUINN

Holly Howard

Steve Cushing

Cynthia Dwyer

STUART PATON DURLINGTON TALCO

Jerry + Beth Cole

Holly J. Spier ♥

Maureen ~~W~~ 

Pat + Dave DeLang -

K <sup>Ethan</sup> ~~Jan~~

KAR LORER + George Duncan

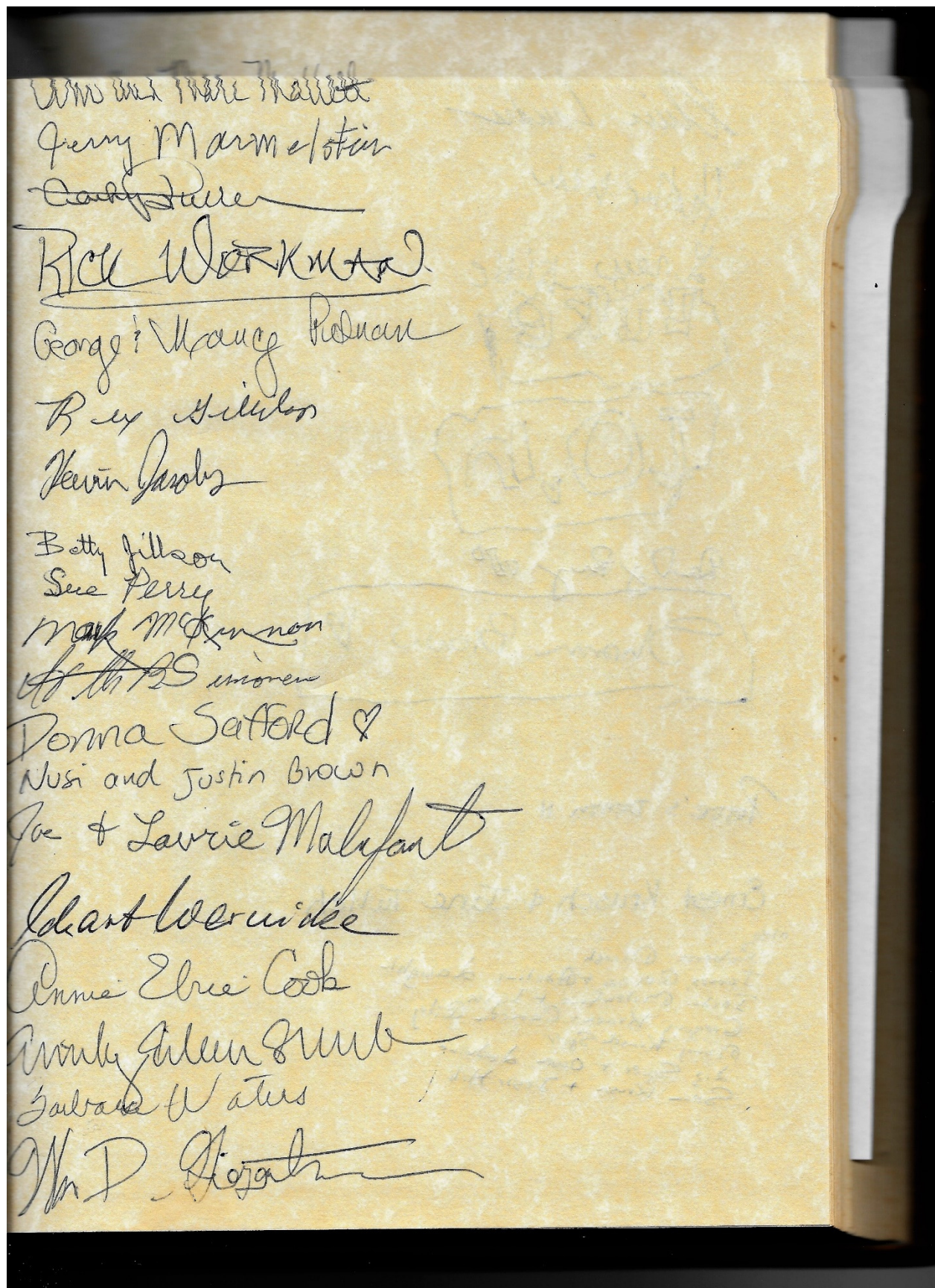
Sam + Anita Latt

Andrew Latta

Ann Satter Throat

Don Satter Smith

Bill Putnam



Oliver Landre

Hester Wille

L. ney Wille

LUKE

LO, H

Paul & Mary 1870

Thom Brown 1870

Rever's DEATH H

Ernest Krusch & Jane Tulloh

also

Roberta Marsh

James, Rebecca + Adeline Laughlin

Jordan Milenfar + Lydia

Gregory Krusch + Cameron Riley

Nancy Krusch Spier

L. J. Spier + Owa Loduine

Sam Krusch + Jessie Hill

112

125

## PHOTOS by Susan Greenberg



Justin Brown



Nancy Spier



Sally Laughlin



Greg Krush



Ernest Krusch



Tom Wilson



Liz Spier



Eckart Wernicke



Ethan Spier



Bob Brunette



Jane Tulloh and Patricia Fitzgerald



Processing up the hill



Evergreen Erb



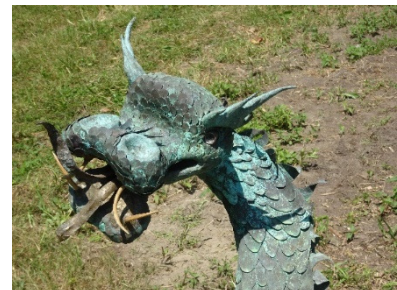
Jean-Marie Milliken



Stewart Patton, Burlington Taiko Leader



Cousin Laurie Malenfant organizes the food



## THE DRAGONS CREATED BY GRANDAUGHTER LIZ



