

Joe Fisher

1929-2001

A man for all seasons, A friend for all time

I first met Joe Fisher after we moved back to Burlington in 1984. After we had been here a few months, I felt we needed to start a Folk group here at St. Anthony's and someone, I think it was Clarence Meunier said, "You better get together with Joe Fisher because he had a folk group here back in the 70's." So we got together and formed the folk group. The group included Joe's wife Peggy and my late wife Barbara. From that point on, the four of us became close friends. As our involvement in the parish increased, our social contact with Joe and Peg increased also. Peg and Barbara became very good friends as did Joe and I.

Through Joe, I was introduced to some new activities, such as cross-country skiing and of course chasing trains. Joe taught me how to cross country ski and couldn't understand why I could not keep up with him. Watching him ski was like watching a very efficient engine that could run all day. And sometimes he did. He busted my chops pretty good the first couple of years, but eventually I learned to really enjoy skiing through the woods on a clear cold Vermont day.

Chasing trains was a different story. Many evenings he would say "lets run over to Essex to get some ice cream". What he really meant was, lets go see the 7:30 Amtrak. Joe knew some of the people running the train and couldn't wait for the train to get there. Oh how he loved trains. From being a conductor to taking pictures, building model railroads, riding the trains from coast to coast, taking videos of trains, watching videos of trains, it became a passion of the highest order. Peg often said Joe was a workaholic, which was true; but he was really a first class *trainaholic*.

Joe always had projects going, things to do, places to go and people to see. He was on the go all the time. Joe had energy levels and work habits that were fantastic. When Joe said he was going to do something, you could take it to the bank, because he was totally reliable. His workmanship was of the highest order and the breadth of his knowledge about building projects around the house was profound. He seemed to know how to do everything or if he didn't he would know someone who could do the job for a good price. One time I was helping him build the walls around his pool when he taught me the Fisher water break. We were working with 8X8 pressure treated timbers on a warm summer day that brought on a mighty thirst that was quenched by a cold beer at 9:30 in the morning. That was a first for me.

I have never known anyone who knew more people or had more friends than Joe Fisher. Almost every time I mentioned a person's name he knew that person and knew a lot about them. He loved being

with people, either old friends or meeting new acquaintances. After meeting Joe and talking for a while you would feel as though you had known him for a long time. He took such interest in what other people said or did that everyone felt comfortable around him.

Joe had a great sense of humor and loved practical jokes, especially when one was played on him. The single incident he talked about the most, was the time when he and Peggy went on vacation and asked one of the neighbors, Garrett Crowley to watch the house. After they were gone, Garrett went into the house and removed all the curtains from the front windows. The house looked totally vacant. Then he put a, for sale sign on the front lawn. Joe talked about that for years.

Joe could also be incredibly thoughtful. One year for my wife Barbara's birthday Joe took his video camera all over Chittenden county and had dozens of people say Happy birthday Barbara. It was a remarkable video and Barbara said that was the best present she ever had. That video took days to film and many hours to edit just to give Barbara a birthday to remember.

Joe Fisher was a salesman all his life as were many of his friends. As salesmen we heard all the stock phrases about being a winner. "Winning, is the only thing" "Winners never quit and quitters never win" and the best description of a winner; "Winners are those people in life who are able to do things, or are willing to do things, that others cannot do or are unwilling to do." Joe was a winner because he was willing and able to do things that other people were unable to do or that they were unwilling to do. Essentially he felt if you start the job, finish the job and do it the right way. This characteristic covered the full spectrum of his life, right up to and including his last days.

Today as we celebrate Joe Fisher's life, we also celebrate Veterans Day. How appropriate! This is a day when we remember all those who gave so much to this nation. It reminds me especially of Tom Brokaw's book "The Greatest Generation" This is the generation who after they won the war, built the greatest nation in the world. The characteristics they exhibited, Duty, Honor, Country and all the good things we value could be found in Joe, who is also of that generation. That generation and Joe especially, have left us a role model without equal. Our lives are richer and fuller for having known Joe Fisher and by learning from him how to really live.

I shall miss my friend a great deal.

Eulogy by Ed Worcester on 11/12/2001 at St Anthony Church, Burlington, VT