



## Lawrence B. Helburg

July 19, 1941 - July 21, 2020

Lawrence Brady (Larry) Helburg – aka Rattlesnake

July 19, 1941 - July 21, 2020

“Decide how you want to be remembered, and live your life accordingly.” - LBH

Larry was a third generation Colorado native born in Boulder, CO to Lester F. and Elinor Helburg. The second of five children, he and his family lived in Boulder, South Dakota, and Estes Park before settling in Golden, CO, where he graduated from high school.

Larry graduated from Colorado State University with a Bachelor's degree in Forestry and Plant Pathology and began working as an Assistant State Forester with the Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) in 1971. He was the Project Leader for the state's Dutch Elm Disease control program. He also worked in the Community Forestry Division to monitor and assist communities in their public tree management systems.

Before Larry retired from CSFS in 1996, he also worked in the Conservation Education Division. During that time, he used a unique blend of historical characters (Rattlesnake, Crazy Nate, and L.B. Henry to name a few), stories, and current trends to teach young and older audiences alike about past conservation efforts (or lack thereof) and the importance of looking to the future to conserve our natural resources.

For almost 10 years after retirement, Larry assisted Steve Bowers, a local horse trainer/trader/educator/farmer who trained and worked with draft horses and taught driving clinics locally and around the country. He helped Steve develop driving videos and books, and was instrumental in developing a teamster training device using bicycles as horses. This device has since been used successfully by many big hitch companies around the U.S. to train their drivers, including the famous Budweiser hitch drivers.

In 1966 Larry married Jean I. Lohse in Fort Collins, where they lived for 54 years. They had no children; however, they mentored many young people throughout their marriage.

While still working for CSFS and after retiring, Larry was active in a local black powder club. He and others initiated for several years an educational rendezvous to teach people about life in the mid-1800's when mountain men trapped beaver to sell for top hats and before gold and silver were discovered in the West. He also continued telling stories and educating all ages about the life of the mountain man, prospector, range cowboy, and other characters of the Old West.

Larry was a hunter and fisherman, and he taught Hunter Education classes for 25 years. He also volunteered as Santa's helper at the Farm at Lee Martinez Park every Christmas for many years until 2009.

In late 2019, Larry was diagnosed with Cholangiocarcinoma or bile duct cancer, which is not a curable disease. The family wishes to thank the caring support from staff at Pathways Hospice, the UC Health Cancer Center, and the Medical/Hospice unit at Poudre Valley Hospital.

Besides his wife Jean, Larry is survived by three sisters -Susie, Charlotte (Stan), and Billie Jo (Bernard), 11 nieces and nephews, and many other extended family members. He was preceded in death by his parents and brother Dick.

There will be no formal memorial service at this time. A celebration of his life will be held at a later date. In lieu of flowers, please consider making a donation in Larry's name to either Pathways Hospice in care of Bohlender Funeral Chapel, 121 W. Olive Street, Fort Collins, 80521 or to the UC Health Northern Colorado Foundation (designate the Medical/Oncology Unit at Poudre Valley Hospital) in care of Bohlender Funeral Chapel, 121 W. Olive, Fort Collins, CO 80524.

"Thems what hurries thru life, plum missed the whole point." - Rattlesnake

# Comments

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“ With Our Deepest Sympathy Gift Basket was purchased for the family of Lawrence B. Helburg.



August 10 at 01:00 PM

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“ Jean, what was first just a "professional courtesy" when Don Peck DDS introduced me to you and Larry became much more over 25 years. He touched so many with his mountain man eloquence. It was obvious...he was there. My wife Pat told of having Rattlesnake as a guest for her students at Tavelli. While you liked the Lincoln Center shows, he could be the show (but would never take credit for) his mastery of the folklore. He is certainly resting in peace, Thanks for sharing him. Tim Anderson DDS (ret.)

Tim and Pat Anderson - August 05 at 11:16 PM

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“ As Jean's cousin, I've known Larry for over 50 years, so I have quite a few fond memories. This week I am remembering some recent times together in these pictures that I'll share. Larry had an interest and enthusiasm for life in so many ways. And I have always appreciated his sense of humor, and his kind and respectful manner.

Larry, Jean and I went on two tours of Finland together, one in 2012 and then again in 2015, and I'd like to share several pictures from that trip. Here is one picturing a "Rattlesnake Larry" story to Swedish relatives, and one of Larry photographing wood carving tools in a Swedish castle built in the 1600's. We saw and did so many things of interest to him, and met many people, including relatives of Jean, whom he grew to know and love.

He was a one-of-kind person, and I will always feel fortunate to have known him.



Jane Ely - August 04 at 03:42 PM



“ Wonderful Jean,

You are so blessed to have a long marriage to Larry. The times will be tough for awhile. My hope is that you can weather the storm. You do get better, but it takes time. Be well.

We did a lot of things on P&R board, and I remember them well.

May Larry's memory be a blessing,

Mary C

mary carlson - August 04 at 10:26 AM

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“ The Rattlesnake. Never a better story teller..... ever!

I too was a teacher at Bauder Elementary and quite frankly one of my favorite days of the year was when The Rattlesnake would come to be with us. I believed everything he said!!! I too was always mesmerized. He was amazing. When I taught 4th grade he came to school to help us understand the Colorado Mountain Men when we learned about Colorado History. There was not a better teacher. When I taught 6th grade we made sure he came to school to teach us about surviving in the great outdoors. At the end of the school year, I would ask the students to make a memory book. Time after time, over and over, year after year, "The Rattlesnake" made our book.

When Larry was not in character I found him to be a gentle giant. He had a heart of gold. I saw he had passed and out loud I did a big, "Awww". I have enjoyed reading these comments as I knew just a small bit of him. It is quite apparent his love for his friends, his family and without a doubt his wife. Apparently, heaven gained a wonderful soul.

I am thankful to have met him and will always have fond memories of the one and only.... Rattlesnake.

Carol Zick

Carol Zick - August 03 at 05:34 PM

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“ Marita Näsström lit a candle in memory of Lawrence B. Helburg





**Marita Näsström** - August 02 at 03:21 PM

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“ Larry was always big hit with the sixth graders at Bauder Elementary School during our school's Eco Week program. He came up to Pingree Park to our campfire program and told stories as one of his characters known as Rattlesnake. The kids would be spellbound with his stories. He was a master storyteller, for sure. All the teachers looked forward to his visits. Thanks Larry for all the good you did.

Bill Martin

**Bill Martin** - July 31 at 09:29 PM

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“ Larry was a larger than life character, i many ways. We worked together in the same division for many years, and in spite of our widely differing personalities (he was logical and reasoned and I was... not) we blended together well and achieved a great deal. He will be missed.

**Judy Serby** - July 31 at 12:17 PM

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“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



**Mark Pugh** - July 30 at 02:55 PM

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“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Mark Pugh - July 30 at 02:53 PM

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Mark Pugh - July 30 at 02:52 PM

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“ My condolences to the family of one very unique individual. I was a young buck city forester back around 1989 and remember not knowing where to start in my new job. So I attended one of Larry's tree inventory workshops (at the old Brighton City Hall) and the light bulb came on! He got me enthused and armed to conduct my first urban tree inventory. That led to many great things in managing Westminster's urban forest. I remember that workshop to this day and will always be grateful to Larry for getting me started in urban forest management. And Rattlesnake was always a fixture at Westminster's Arbor Day school events, for 13 or so years as I recall. RIP Larry, you will be missed.  
Keith Wood

Keith Wood - July 29 at 01:07 PM

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“ For many years when EcoWeek was a 3-day trip to Pingree Park, we would take the kids hiking. Larry would stroll out of the woods (as Rattlesnake) somewhere during the hike and tell them stories! He was a "real" mountain man! Good memories!

Karen Courtney - July 29 at 09:32 AM

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“ I remember Larry well and his AKA "Rattlesnake" character. Anytime I was around him it was interesting listening to him. Most of the time that I was around him was thru Jean as I worked with her for around 30+ years at the City. Jean, so sorry for your loss but know that you have many fond memories of Larry and someday we will all join him in the great beyond.

Virgil Taylor

Virgil Taylor - July 28 at 08:36 PM



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“ I have fond memories of Larry from my early years in Urban Forestry. He was always a gentleman and a teacher. I loved seeing him play his role as Rattlesnake and would be spellbound as he wove his story. The world has lost a great person but heaven has gained a great soul! Karen Scopel

**Karen Scopel** - July 28 at 05:09 PM

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“ My deepest condolences to you Jean.

**jim o'neill** - July 28 at 04:06 PM

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“ When I was a kid I would always love seeing Larry and Jean. They were then and still are two of my favorite people. I will miss Larry, his personality shined like no other. Such a wonderful and kind soul. Such a character! Loved "Rattlesnake" and the wonderful tales he told. Hope you are at the best rendezvous ever Larry! Janeen-cousin.

**Janeen Mieir** - July 27 at 05:16 PM

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“ Fresh out of college in 1974 I was hired to work for the Colorado State Forest Service on the Fort Collins District. My primary job assignment was the Dutch elm disease control program. That meant that I worked closely with the CSFS diagnostic lab where Larry and Mike Schomaker worked. Larry took me under his wing and became my mentor and friend, a position he never abandoned. To this day I speak of him and how he influenced my life. He wasn't my only mentor, but he was the best. By example, he showed me the value and importance of mentoring. To this day I try to follow his lead.

I will share one funny story. We were in Alamosa together teaching the CSFS arboriculture course in the early 90's. We were having dinner together and he ordered chicken fried steak for himself. I asked him why he ordered chicken fried steak and he told me he always ordered that particular meal because he was on a mission to find the best one in the state. So being his apprentice, I now order huevos rancheros whenever I see it on the menu in my quest for the best. And I think of my friend and mentor Larry Helburg.

Vince Urbina

**Vince Urbina** - July 27 at 10:42 AM

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“ It’s Rhonda...”Uncle” Larry was a humble man...so down to earth...so gentle...never put on airs...always teaching...

He captured my attention from the moment I first met him! I loved listening to him and loved watching him interact with people. I loved seeing him empty his pockets of all the gadgets he carried! Oh my gosh!! Too funny!

He was loved by all of his family and I know many many friends and colleagues that loved him too.

Heaven gained a special angel in Larry...those he left behind will miss him terribly..

Rhonda Schmelzer - July 26 at 08:01 PM

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“ In the mid 1980’s Larry traveled to Fort Morgan Middle School. He sat motionless cross-legged on the floor as 100 seventh grade students filed into the room. As they settled in, Rattlesnake stayed motionless on the floor. The students were curious as they commented on his garb. Suddenly he reached for his spittoon and spat a large wad of tobacco. As he leaped to his feet he yelled “Beaver. It was beaver”. Thus he began weaving his mountain man story that held the student spellbound for over an hour.

Years later students were talking about that day. As one of the teachers that day I was in awe of his storytelling and patience as students asked questions and made comments. Larry was in his element. As a hunter safety instructor myself we crossed paths over the years and always had great conversations.

Thank you Larry for all you given to us all on your journey. May you Rest In Peace. R Michie.

Rex Michie - July 26 at 09:32 AM

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“ WHAT CAN I SAY ABOUT MY UNCLE LARRY? HE WAS DEFINITELY THE EDUCATOR IN ALL SITUATIONS. BUT, HE AND AUNT JEAN LOVED EACH OTHER. AND ALWAYS MADE ME WELCOME AT HOME FOR 5 MINUTES OR A MONTH.WE ALWAYS ATE RED JELLO. WATCHED TENNIS. AND GOLF. I WILL FOREVER LOVE HIM. ND MY AUNT.

Danielle Collins - July 26 at 03:53 AM

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“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album





**Bohlender Funeral Chapel** - July 25 at 11:10 AM



“Thems what hurries thru life, plum missed the whole point.” - Rattlesnake

**Rattlesnake Helburg** - July 25 at 11:13 AM



“ So sorry for your loss prayers for your family While I never met Larry in person I knew the person he was through Charlotte and Stanley and know he will be missed by many.

**Louise Hensley** - July 25 at 11:59 AM



“ Larry lived his life philosophy very well. He never was openly angry, never cussed, never gossiped, never spoke ill about a person. Instead he always saw the positive side of a person or situation. He had unconditional love for everyone, and had the unique ability to make each person feel special. He was my oldest brother, and my first memory. He and Jean were such a positive influence in so many lives, and a wonderful example of marriage ("there is a 'you', a'me', and an 'us'.). He said that he loved his family and friends, and would be waiting in Heaven. He is up there with our parents and brother, sitting around a campfire spinning tales, and riding his mules. It has been my honor and privilege to be his sister, and unconditionally loved by him.

**Billie Jo Collins** - July 25 at 01:44 PM



“ "Snake" spun a tale one rainy afternoon in his lodge at RMCR in which our daughter was given the name of "Moose" at the age of two. As more rendezvous passed, Moose and Snake would "catch pilgrims" as they wandered into camp with rope snares carefully concealed beneath a ridge of dirt in the middle of the trail. A childhood memory and name that sticks to this day. It was our honor to have met him.

Jefferis Family

**Jefferis Family** - July 25 at 04:10 PM



“ Larry gave me my first motorcycle ride when I was about 8 years old on a big old Harley Davidson with a foot clutch and tank shift. It had a seat about the size of a recliner with metal straps on each side to hang onto. The thrill has stayed with me for many years! Larry was truly a unique individual. The children in Heaven will be glad to see him!

Michael Helburg

**Michael Helburg** - July 26 at 10:03 AM



“ My brother, oh my gosh where do I start? He was an amazing man who showed unconditional love for everybody. He was well educated person who love to share his wisdom with anybody who wanted to listen. He was a storyteller and love to share his stories with also anybody who wanted to listen. Hef had no enemies, Just friends and family who loved him dearly. He's in heaven now spreading his knowledge and his stories and his love to all that were there waiting for him. He will be terribly missed all of our family and all of his friends, but we know he will be there waiting for us with he's arms wide open and that sweet grin. R.I.P.my sweet brother. I'll see you on the other side. Love you!

**Susie (Lois) Helburg,Waddell,Minister** - July 26 at 04:05 PM



“ I met Larry, and Jean, around 1967. Larry and I rode motorcycles together and I'll never forget the day we were pumping like made on the kickstarters as a bull was trotting towards us. Fortunately, we got moving. I also told my kids that everyone is born and everyone dies but not everyone lives. Larry lived a good life and I was fortunate to have known him. My sincere condolences to family and friends. We will miss Larry.

**Pat Kelly** - July 28 at 11:14 AM



“ Larry was my first office mate when I began my career with the Colorado State Forest Service. He had been in the agency for three years prior to my arrival at my first real job. He helped me immensely get my feet on the ground. We shared an office trailer together and Larry smoked a pipe. When he quit smoking, we went thru withdrawal together. I would like to think Larry, Mike Schomaker and I transformed the culture of the State Office from an inward focus to one of service to the Districts, the public and the tree resource of Colorado. How many educational trips did we make together? How many boxes of samples and handouts did we lug to the vehicle? Larry taught me the rudiments of photography, from how a camera works to proper composition of an image.

Many, many years ago my ex and I took a trip with Larry and Jean to a professional meeting in Monterrey, CA. I remember many things about that trip but two that explain a little about Larry were the fact he went the whole way from Fort Collins to the Pacific Ocean driving 10 mph UNDER the speed limit (to better see the countryside, don't you know?). And once in San Francisco, the traffic was so bad that I learned from Larry three right turns equal one left.

A person meets maybe 10 people in their life who could be described as truly unique. Larry was one of my ten. He was one of the first experts in our agency in computer technology. He was our pathologist, then an expert in urban/community forestry. And, of course, in his "other" life he was "Rattlesnake". At the end of many a workday he would go into our pathology isolation room dressed as a regular office dweller and, like Superman, come out in fringe and beaverskin cap with a fake whiskey jug hanging from his belt. Whatever hat he was wearing, be it forester, tall tale teller, VW mechanic, enduro motorcycle rider, mule driver, Santa Claus at "The Farm" or friend, he was solid and genuine. There are a lot of flavors of "love" but whatever ones apply to brotherhood, co-worker, fellow foot soldier, peer, mentor, listener, teacher apply to my relationship with Lawrence B. Helburg. Rest in peace, old pal.

**Dave Leatherman** - July 28 at 04:55 PM



“ Larry was an excellent teacher, true friend, and mentor. I was the District Forester in Fort Morgan and trying to learn about community forestry. Larry was there to help me with a positive can do attitude. You will be missed Larry.

**Damon Lange** - July 29 at 04:28 PM



“ His memory will burn bright for all of us for years to come. Best wishes Jean and family.

Randy Moench  
CSFS - retired

**Randy** - July 31 at 05:58 PM



“ I, like hundreds of others, have wonderful memories of Larry. He and I worked together for many years with the Colorado State Forest Service. His emphasis was working with Dutch elm disease which was the catalyst to the development of Colorado's Community Forestry

program. Eventually Larry and I shared an office together and countless road trips. We worked on computerizing the street tree inventories. We developed a one and two-day, traveling arboriculture workshop which we took to many communities. We shared many stories together. Larry was a dear friend and colleague. Thank you, Larry, for sharing your life with me.

Phil Hoefler

**Philip Hoefler** - August 01 at 04:50 AM



“ Jean, I'm so sorry for your loss. Although I didn't know you were married, Tom Larry, I have to wonder if he was the same Larry Helburg who lived on Locust across the street from us when he was in college. It would have been in the early 60's. Thinking of you and sending hugs. Laurie Case Warren

**Laurie Case Warren** - August 02 at 10:19 PM



“ Sending you light, love, prayers and peace. Larry was an amazing man in so many ways. His patience, love for teaching, humor and big heart have touched so many people. I will always hold a special place in my heart for both of you. Much love, Kristie

**Kristie Sykes** - August 05 at 11:06 PM