



Richard Curtis Shaffer

March 31, 2009

Richard Curtis Shaffer passed peacefully after a short and unexpected battle with lung cancer on March 31, 2009. He celebrated his 70th birthday the week before. There are many places he will be missed in Fort Collins. Perhaps on the city bus routes he drove for a decade till his retirement in September. From the seat of a bus you can see everything he said, the hope and promise of young fresh faces, and the fear and despair of the growing numbers of needy people. He will be missed by some who read this paper, for the many letters and soapbox articles he has published here, always championing the cause of peace, the cause of justice, and the environment. Richard credited his incredible self discipline to his Marine training. He enlisted at 17 and served on an aircraft carrier where he developed a love for the sea. He studied journalism for a time after his service was completed, and often felt more comfortable speaking with the pen than the spoken word. At thirty, feeling that he was getting very old, he acquired a thirty foot sailboat, a book on navigation, and a sextant and a compass. He navigated by the stars from San Francisco to Honolulu. This journey led him to a very different journey. Richard studied for the Priesthood, and was ordained in a non-sectarian teaching and service Order in 1971. His ministry spanned 20 years officially, but certainly has been his foundation throughout his life. Richard started his work on the most notorious heroin dealing street corner in San Francisco at the time, in a broken down ex-brothel rented from the city for a dollar a year. In time it was evident that homelessness was not just a problem of alcoholics

and drug addicts, but the women and children who were impacted by these problems. The first Raphael House came into being, again a rundown building rented from the city for a dollar a year. This was one of the first shelters for women and children in the nation. There was finally a place where women and children could find shelter from the storm, A newer Raphael House followed and continued from this humble beginning way beyond Richard's years of service, and continues to serve the city of San Francisco' s families. During those same years, Richard organized the small Christian Community with which he was associated to raise funds for Cambodian relief. The festival event, held at the Hall of Flowers in San Francisco was a great success. Its proceeds, combined with funds raised by Joan Baez, went to the refugee camps in Cambodia. San Francisco saw the scourges of war first hand and was always flooded with refugees. Richard, who never saw combat in the Marines, encountered it every day in the streets of San Francisco. Richard married his wife Deidre in San Francisco in 1972, and in 1986 he moved with his wife and three young children to Denver, away from inner city life. He joined a friend in business and became an expert craftsman, a custom bootmaker. He worked at every stock show. Cowboy poet Baxter Black wears a pair of his boots, as does Nascar racer Richard Childress. Richard and his family moved to Ft. Collins in the summer of 1998, and he became a strong supporter of Strength through Peace, and has loved working with the Community in Ft. Collins. In the few months of his illness he talked about the great need of so many young families. He was excited about the opening of the Sister Mary Alice Murphy Center for Hope, and certainly would have volunteered his services there. He asks that you send no flowers, but please think of those in need at this time, and give in whatever way you can in your own community, whether it be to your local Food Bank, or your neighbor in need. Richard is survived by his wife Deidre Shaffer of Ft. Collins; his son Zeb Shaffer of Ft. Collins; his daughter Bronwyn Shaffer of Atlanta, Ga.; his daughter Abiah Shaffer of Ft. Collins; and his granddaughter Anijah Young of Atlanta, Ga. He is also survived by his mother Catherine Currier of

Vancouver, Wash.; his sister Barbara France of Saxapahaw, N.C.; his sister Linda Kresge of Tannersville, Pa.; and his brother Nicholas Currier of Vancouver, Wash. Richard is preceded in death by his father Eugene Shaffer of E. Stroudsburg, Pa.; and his sister Kathy Jo Shaffer formerly of E. Stroudsburg. A celebration of his life will be held on April 25th, 2009 from 3:30 to 6 pm, at the home of his daughter, 2524 Timber Ct., Ft. Collins, 80521.

Tribute Wall

JS

“ We met Rich first at a peace vigil, at the corner of College and Mulberry. With his unique background and passion for truth and justice, we were so impressed by his wonderful, thoughtful, and articulate letters in the Coloradoan over the next many years. Pleasant even in difficult situations, especially when his own health issues loomed large, un-complaining, he lived a laudatory life, one worthy of being called a "Christian--one who follows Christ". Well done, good and faithful servant. As per your wishes, a donation will be made in your name to the Larimer County Food Bank.

Joe and Holly Stern - May 11, 2009 at 12:00 AM

WW

“ Rich and I exchanged warm, irreverent emails sporadically for years about local social / political issues, so I was thrilled to finally meet in person formally anyway just last December when his daughter Abiah introduced us at the Sierra Club holiday potluck. His values, contributions to our community, and enthusiasm about different ways of continuing his community service in his "retirement" all continue to inspire me. Peace and many blessings to all Rich's family and friends.

Will Walters - April 20, 2009 at 12:00 AM

LS

“ When young, Uncle Dick would bring his giggling nieces laughter and he never lost that lovely smile. He transcended Shaffer silences through his writing which was and is deeply appreciated. Much love to you all, Linda Gail

Linda France Stine - April 20, 2009 at 12:00 AM

EF

“ *Uncle Rich was one of the most amazing people, an inspiration, a man who fought for both liberty and compassion. He is dearly missed.*

Erik France - April 17, 2009 at 12:00 AM

SF

“ *So sorry to hear of Uncle Richard's passing. I only met him one time, but I could tell he was a very interesting person and I would loved to have gotten to know him better. His family are in my thoughts.*

Suzanne France - April 14, 2009 at 12:00 AM

JF

“ *I never got to know Uncle Dick well, but from what I did learn, he was a very free thinker with a lot of good ideas. My deepest condolences to the family. -Jamie*

Jamie France - April 14, 2009 at 12:00 AM

VS

“ *My Uncle Dick Richard went through amazing and impressive transformations in his life. He was sensitive, very intelligent, highly spiritual, and a talented writer. The last time I visited with him, he gave me beautiful words as a gift I will treasure. I knew him as a good, kind, and thoughtful uncle and person. He will always live in my heart. I and my husband Michael and son Noah send our love and caring thoughts to my Aunt and Cousins. Love, Vickie, Michael, and Noah*

Victoria France Stavish - April 14, 2009 at 12:00 AM

AR

“ I first met Richard on the editorial page of the Coloradoan - always the first and often the only part of the paper I read. I was so impressed with his wisdom and eloquence on the issues of peace and justice, I called him up to express my appreciation. In time I had the honor of getting to know him through Strength Through Peace. He was the highest example of the kind of people in STP who walk the talk. He will be terribly missed.

Ann Ruddy - April 13, 2009 at 12:00 AM

MS

“ I am very grateful to have met Richard and enjoyed our talks. I send my love and prayers to Dierda, Abiah and Branwinsp. Please let me know if I can help in anyway.

Meta Van Skiver - April 10, 2009 at 12:00 AM

EF

“ I met Rich through the progressive political work we both are involved in, and always knew him to be a kind, committed, deeply principled and thoughtful man. I had no idea of all he had accomplished in life until I read his obituary. He left us too soon. If there is a Heaven, I know Richard is there now, agitating for better working conditions for the lowest ranking cherubs and convincing the Almighty to go easy on the smiting.

Eric Fried - April 08, 2009 at 12:00 AM

LE

“ I loved my brother even tho we have been miles apart in distance, very close in thoughts. My love to all his family.

Linda E.Kresge - April 08, 2009 at 12:00 AM

JB

“ I am so sorry to hear of Richard's passing. I have not seen him in years, but him, his siblings, and me and my siblings spent many days together in our youth. My condolences to all of the family, God Bless To All! Joyce Miller Beagle

joyce miller beagle - April 08, 2009 at 12:00 AM

MS

“ Diedre and Abiah, please know that you have a special place in my heart as you go through the next weeks and months. What a surprise to read of Richard's death. What a life of service he lead. Your friend, with love, MaryLou

MaryLou Smith - April 06, 2009 at 12:00 AM

BM

“ We will miss Rich, but his amazing life will stay with us. This poem reminded us of him: Exultation is the going Of an inland soul to sea Past the houses—past the headlands— Into deep eternity Bred as we, among the mountains Can the sailor understand The divine intoxication Of the first league out from land? --Emily Dickinson

Barry & Lisa McCann - April 06, 2009 at 12:00 AM

BF

“ WE SEND OUR LOVE TO ALL THE FAMILY. WE CELEBRATE DICK'S LIFE AND KNOW THAT HE IS DOING GOOD WORKS ON ANOTHER PLANE. MUCH LOVE, BARB AND DON

Barbara France - April 05, 2009 at 12:00 AM