Stories about Joe

Dedication

This is a simple book of stories told by family members, friends, and people who worked with Joe to honour his memory and recognize his goodness.

"We all loved Joe"

Stories Index

Work

Humour

* The book cover surrounding Jow is an abstract painting by Yvonne Soper (with permission) and is called *"Trees."* I chose this becuase Joe loved nature.

Adventures

Kindness

Family

Thank You

My thanks to everyone who contributed to this story book: Patsy, Stephen, Suzanne, Johnny, Pat and Mike Hickey and Judy. Joan and Gerard wrote several stories. Gerard also crafted the poem. My son Chris drew all the sketches. David helped with the many photographs submitted for the book. Joan's sharp editing skills and her constant support kept me going to the end.

So many good surprises were in store for me as I began this project. I can't say exactly what inspired me. Maybe it was the suddenness of Joe's passing; no chance to say good-bye. I also felt that I and others didn't fully know Joe. But listening to everyone tell their stories I came to appreciate the fullness of the man. I hope you do, too.

Joe's Brother,

Paul

Biography

Born: July 13, 1945, in Saint John, New Brunswick

Parents: Sarto Joseph Hickey and Dorothy Angela O'Brien

Education: Saint John, N.B.

St. Peter's Boys' School, Grades 1-6, 1951 – 1957

St. Peter's Boys' Intermediate, Grades 7-9, 1957 – 1960

Saint John Vocational School, Grades 10-12, 1960 – 1962,
Graduated June, 1962

Apprenticed in carpentry: with Sarto J. Hickey Company, 1962 – 1966

Awarded Red Seal Designation: 1966

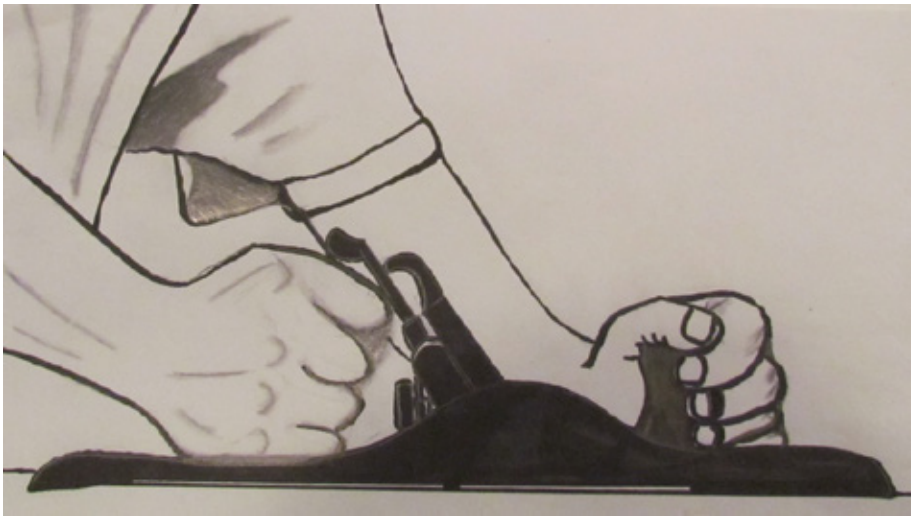
Married: Patsy McCann, 1979

Employed: with Sarto J. Hickey 1962 – Owner: S. J. Hickey and Sons Ltd.

Paul and Joe

The Early Years

Joe was aptly named *Joseph*. As the fourth child in the family, and the first born son of Sarto and Dorothy, he was, of course, named after his dad, Sarto Joseph. Being born into a devout Catholic family, since the father of Jesus was also Joseph and a carpenter as well, the name was doubly appropriate. Joe certainly followed in his father's footsteps showing a knack for carpentry work at a very young age. Sarto set high standards and Joe worked hard to meet them. His oft repeated motto, "If a job's worth doing, it's worth doing well" was taken up by Joe as well. After his four year apprenticeship with his dad, Joe wrote the necessary papers and exams and received his Red Seal Certification. As a family we understood and were always proud that he had the highest mark in New Brunswick on his final test.




Chandelier
Tree
CH

Patsy Remembers

as told to Paul

The first time I saw Joe was in the summer of 1964, when he walked by our rental cottage in Chapel Grove. Mom, sitting on the front porch beside me asked, "Who is that guy? Except for the hair, he looks like Johnny Cash." He had very light blonde hair - almost white. Sometime later, we were up at Urban Ballard's canteen, a local hang out, and Joe walked in, still dressed in black. He sat down on the bench next to me and he noticed there was a board that was broken on the bench. "I'll have to fix that", he said. Before he left, he asked me if I would like to go the Drive In. I was 16 at the time and told him I didn't think I would be allowed to go to the Drive In alone.

Soon after, we started dating. During that time, I decided that I would knit him a sweater. I'd never knitted anything before but I thought he would like it. It was baby blue, like his eyes. And he did like it. That was Joe, never critical and always appreciative.

We were married January 9th, 1970. On our month-long honeymoon, we drove across the United States and returned home driving through Canada. We visited Jesse James Hideaway and many other western sites. We drove south through New Mexico and in California we went to Disneyland. We also went to Yosemite National Park and drove our car right through an ancient redwood tree. Joe and I both loved the outdoors and all things western.

Stephen was born January 9th, 1972. The night before, Joe and I and Joan went to see *Tora, Tora, Tora* at the Capital Theatre. I'm not sure why but it did seem to speed the baby along. Uncle Charlie would visit us during my pregnancy and he wondered why the baby's room was painted blue. He thought the baby was going to be a girl. I told him there'd be no pink in this house. Blue it stayed and, later, along came our baby boy.

As Stephen grew, Joe built a hockey rink in the back yard of our home on Kennebecasis Drive. He flooded it every winter for years. Stephen started playing hockey when he was five or six. As he got older and played on competitive teams, we travelled a lot to watch him play.

Deer Hunters “This is your chance Patsy …”

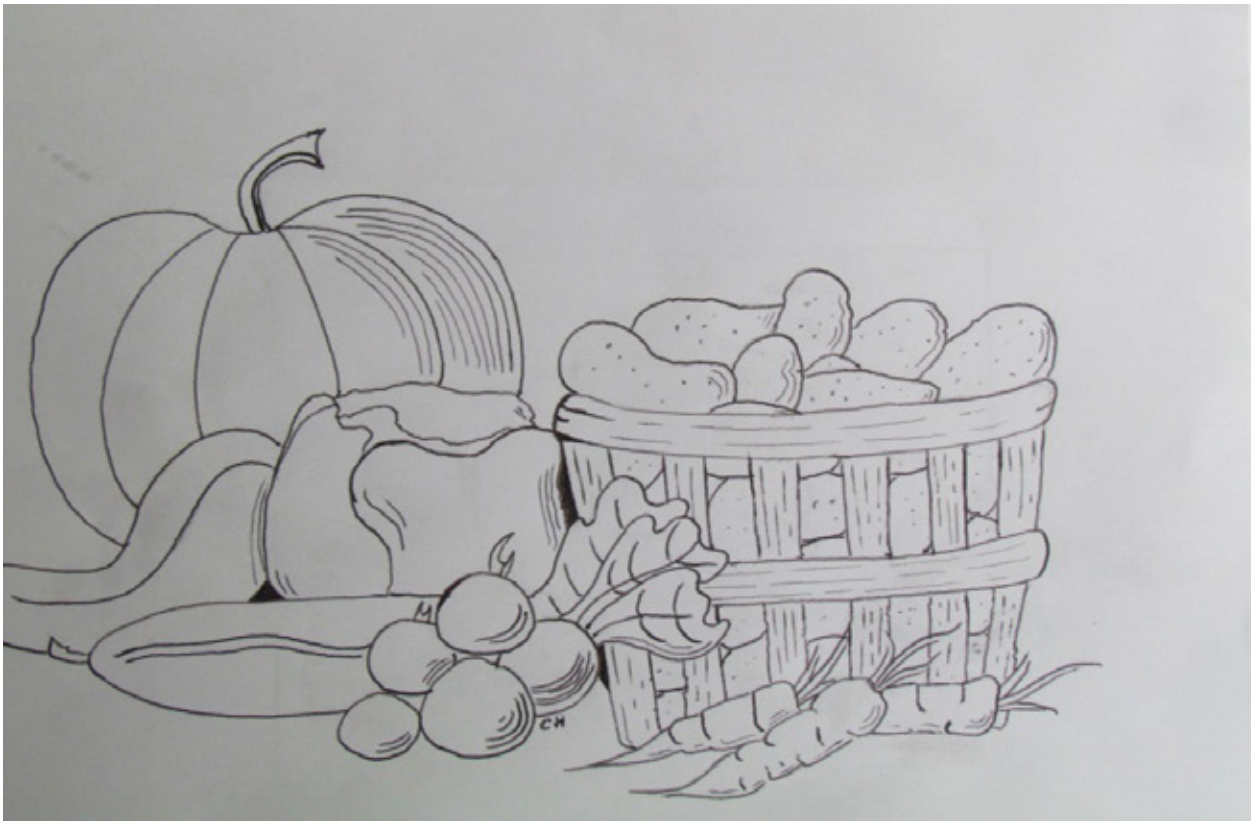
Ice fishing was something else we all enjoyed. Just down the hill from our place, Joe built the best ice fishing shack on the river. It had lots of room, with windows, and a pot- bellied stove. My girlfriends were very impressed.

One winter we fished with a family who had an autistic child. Joe made him his own little fishing shack and put it out on the river for him, too. That was Joe.

I enjoyed hunting as much as Joe did so we hunted often. I used a 4-10 shotgun and sometimes came home with a couple of partridge. Later I graduated to a 30-30 rifle and we started hunting deer together. I was really anxious to shoot my first deer. On one occasion we came across a group of deer feeding. They appeared calm and unconcerned and we managed to get very close without disturbing them.

Joe said, "Patsy, this is your chance!" I aimed through the sight and I knew I could make the shot. But – I couldn't do it. I could not shoot one of those beautiful creatures. And Joe couldn't either. We just stared in awe. Joe wasn't much for killing animals. He just loved being in the great outdoors. I often told him he should buy a camera and take pictures instead.

Joe's Generous Garden



Joe's Generous Garden

Patsy called Joe's garden A Community Garden because he gave so much of its bounty away. The garden grew just across the road from the family homestead. The garden was big enough to use a tractor and Patsy loved to drive it, too. He gave away a ton of vegetables. When the crops ripened Patsy started pickling. She pickled corn, beets, chow, sweet pickles and other things, too. One of Joe's favorite vegetables was squash. Uncle Eddie told him he was a good potato grower. Coming from the best gardener ever in the peninsula that was a real compliment.

A few months before Joe died he and Patsy talked more often and planned to spend more time together. Sadly Joe passed away too soon. Patsy told me she often said that Joe should have been a brother like Saint Francis of Assisi; not a priest but a brother. He was so aware of people in need. Like Saint Francis, Joe loved nature and had a special affection for anyone in need.

Joe hooks a Salmon on Clear Lake

Papa Joe

by Stephen

Dad, or Papa Joe as he came to be known following the birth of his only Grandchild, was a good man. He was the hardest working, kindest and most giving person most had ever known, neglecting his own well-being, both physical and financial if it was of benefit to others. This is how most people knew my father. I know this because in the months following his death so many shared their view of my dad and how he had helped them in a time of need. He truly was one of the good guys!

My father and I didn't share much in common. He was happiest when working, I was happiest when working at playing. Dad was typically very patient. Me, not so much. Dad was far from athletic, sport was all I cared about. Dad could work a 12 hour day, then dive right into the garden. I would play all day, then sneak out of the garden and into Uncle Ed's Cookie pantry. His work ethic and example of how to treat others was indeed influential through the years, and for that I am grateful.

Despite our very different temperaments and interests, we did share one common passion, the outdoors. It is because of my father that I developed such a strong love of being in the woods, on the water, in the marsh and in the field. He introduced me to fishing, hunting, gardening, clearing the land and many other out of doors activities. Chasing ducks has become my passion (now bordering on affliction) and is a direct result of my father. At the age of 23, while I was home working for SJ Hickey and Son, Dad convinced me to try waterfowl hunting. I never had time before, and now – I can't find enough time!

Joe at Clear Lake and Porcupine Mountain

But of all the places and things Dad introduced me to, Clear Lake was and remains our common ground. The now 60-year-old twelve foot by fourteen foot camp sits on the shore of one of the most beautiful lakes I've ever had the pleasure of viewing. Its Crystal-clear water, white rock shore and Mountain view is a true New Brunswick spectacle! Dad was 15 when he, my Grandfather and Uncles built the camp at Clear Lake. I would guess he did more than his share of the work even at that young age, work was always his happy place.

Clear Lake holds so many special memories for me and I know it was the same for my father. For nearly 60 years dad spent time fishing, hunting and working on that special piece of earth and water. Although the hunting was less than a huge success in those years, and the fishing was not always fast and furious, both the lake and the land that surrounds it provided so much more than just physical sustenance. It truly was a place to reconnect with the outdoors, to quiet the mind, to enjoy the company of friends, and of course, have a few drinks to boot!

There are too many memories to mention all in this story, but here are a few. I remember landing my first salmon with Dad. The almost always calm and patient father I knew wasn't so patient at that moment, not wanting me to lose the fish. I can also clearly recall snapping a picture (old school camera btw) just as dad hooked a nice salmon. The timing was perfect, capturing my father looking back, rod bent, fish out of water. It's my favourite picture of my father! We didn't hunt together very often, but I can recall more than one unsuccessful trek along the refuge line. Perhaps those walks were not necessarily unsuccessful after all. Food and cards! Everything tasted better from the old cook stove at the camp and dad loved to do up a chicken or a stew. We'd play Cribbage as the stove filled that small space with delicious smell.

As I've reflected on all these memories and so many more, I've come to the realization that although our time spent together as Father and Son could be considered limited, it was indeed rich. Rich in an appreciation for nature, it's bounty and it's beauty.

“The house praises the carpenter.” Ralph Emerson

Best Carpenter in Town

told by Johnny Hickey
Written by Paul

The activity that best defined Joe was his work. He loved what he did and he got a great deal of satisfaction from it. Johnnie Hickey, Uncle Chuck's eldest son, worked for and with Joe for about 30 years, starting with his apprenticeship. He said at that time, Joe was the best carpenter in town. He was also very good at explaining the work as they tackled new jobs. Joe was always patient and never critical. John says that Sarto was a good teacher, too, but he was very strict. You had to do it his way – the right way – and according to his instructions. Joe was Sarto's right hand man and for 20 years he was in charge of every kind of construction there was on jobs all over New Brunswick. This work included restoring older homes, building new ones, laying floors and doing renovations on bank buildings, working on wharf repairs, and doing numerous jobs for Baxter Dairies Ltd. Building a summer camp for Uncle Leo and Aunt Lil in Chapel Grove was just one of the many projects he completed as a young man. Joe did thousands of construction jobs over the years, and according to Pat Hickey, Uncle Leo's son, Joe also did great finish work.

Pat Hickey remembers Joe as a regular presence, always around fixing and repairing something. Even in his seventies, Joe often put in long hours, six to seven days a week. An 80 hour week was not unfamiliar to Joe. Not because he had to. Rather because he took great pleasure in his work.

Yankee Tender built by Joe

Joe’s Homemade Speed Boat

The Craftsman

by Paul

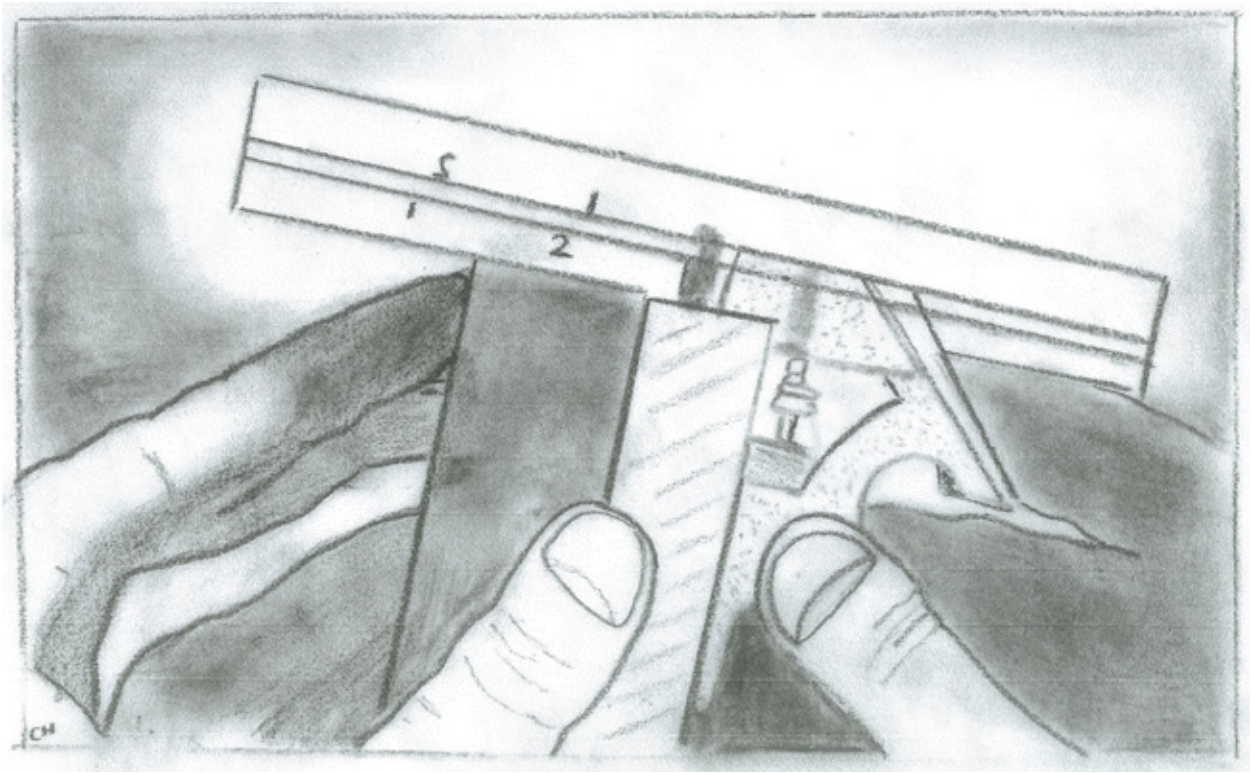
Over the years Joe did a thousand construction jobs but in his early years he did great custom work. According to Pat he built cupboards at the old homestead and it seems he was always around fixing and repairing something. Saint Bridget's Church also benefitted many times from Joe's skills as a craftsman. Apparently, he also built a large dining room table that was big enough to seat 15 people at Chuck and Dot's place. He built two boats that I can remember. One was a 14foot Yankee Tender which we rowed all over the Kennebecasis for years. Another watercraft Joe built was a mini –speed boat about eight feet long with a six hp motor and curved at the bow. He was often seen racing up the river. Man, that thing could fly.

The Fence

by Joan

When Leonce and I think of Joe, we especially remember his appreciation of the simple things in life. He once told me that he woke up in the morning and the first thing that crushed him was the thought of all his problems and the things that made him most unhappy. Just stepping outside the door to a bright sunny day was enough to cheer him up and make him happy – that and the thought that he could go to work. He loved his work.

In the last couple of years Joe did all the maintenance on our aging house. One of the last things he did for us was rebuild our fence in the summer of 2016, when we had the inground pool removed from the back yard. Joe was about 70 years old at the time and his work rhythm was methodical – never rushed, steady even pace, truly at peace and so confident in what he was doing. It was such a pleasure for me to watch him and see how content he was. And it was lovely to see him stand back at the end of the day and see how satisfied he was with the work he had accomplished. Today, when I look out our kitchen window and see the fence, I think of Joe and remember that contentment.



Mentoring and Working with the Hickey Cousins

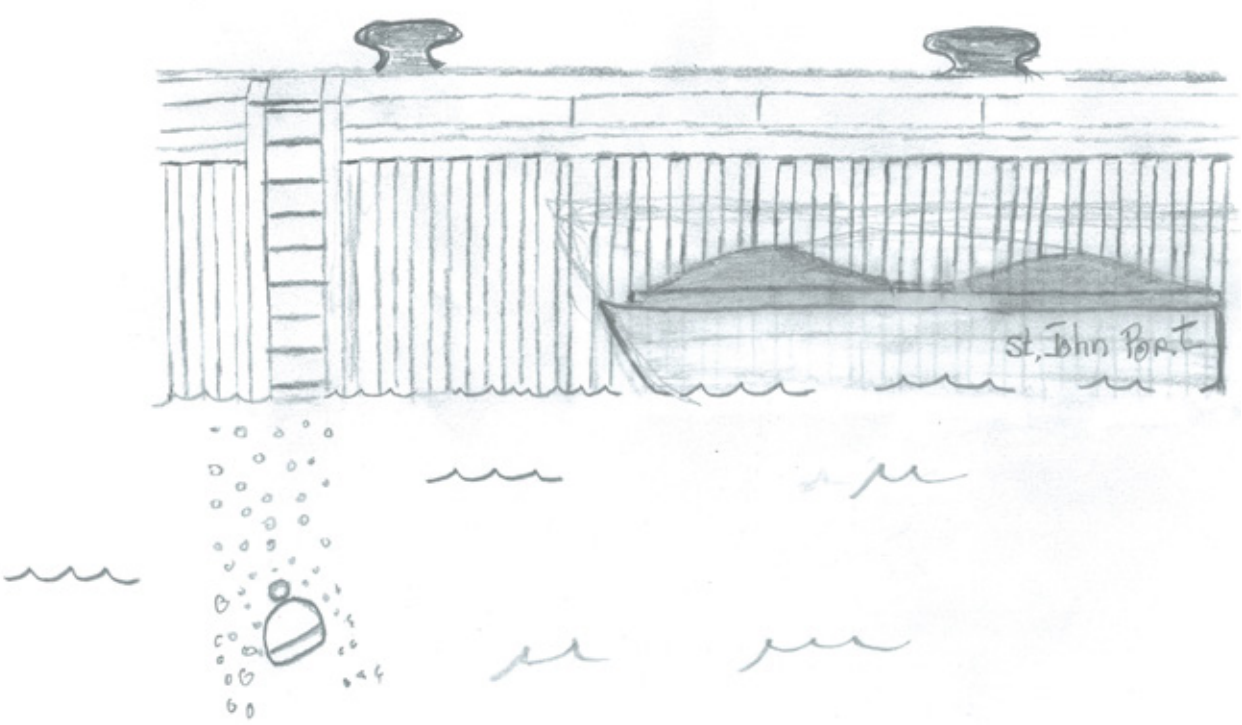
Joe. was happiest working the job. Almost all the Hickey boys became carpenters and Joe was their mentor. I believe Johnnie, Mike, Frank, Chuck and Mike learned a lot about their trade from working with Joe.Many years later years he worked for Johnny and Pat Hickey, co-owners of a large construction company. As foreman he travelled all over the province supervising renovations to government offices and banks. He was good with the sub-trades and was popular with customers. As Pat said, "For our customers Joe always went the extra mile and did more than was expected."

Mike Hickey

Mike Hickey worked for Joe for many years. Mike described Joe's carpentry skills: "He had a very good set of hands." Joe seemed to have great insight for all kinds of construction work. He could read blue prints but very often didn't need them. He had a way of seeing how the job should be done. He was always calm at work and very methodical, too. Mike couldn't remember Joe ever raising his voice. Joe and Mike travelled all over the province doing a lot of federal government jobs but over half his work was doing renovations for Baxter Dairies. Sarto and Joe had a long and respectful relationship with Bob Baxter. Apparently, all Dad's work was done with a handshake.

The Wharf Accident – in Winter!

Joe had more than his fair share of accidents and some of them were very close calls. One winter, while doing a wharf job on the Saint John Harbour, Joe was working from a ladder that went 30 feet down to the water level, and although it was low tide, the water was still very deep. As Joe descended the ladder it twisted, and he fell. Since it was a cold winter day, he was wearing heavy clothing and thick winter overalls. According to Wallace Tayes, a long-time employee with both Sarto and Joe, Joe went into the water so deep that only the tassel on his toque was visible. Joe was under water long enough that Wallace truly thought they had lost him. But slowly, Joe began to rise from the bottom. When he finally emerged, Wallace was there to help him.


St. John Port

After that incident, to make it easier to complete wharf jobs, Joe built a scow, a rectangular flat-bottomed boat and put a small outboard motor on it. On one occasion, with the day's work completed, Joe had to take the scow across the harbour in order to get to his car and drive home. The harbour was rough that day and one fisherman who was watching feared for Joe's safety saying, "It's really rough out there." But Joe kept motoring and made it safely, and calmly, to the other side.

Moving the Hickey Homestead

Joe spent a lot of time at the old Hickey homestead in Bayswater. We all had summer visits with Uncle Eddie when we were young. As adults, our family scattered to various parts of New Brunswick and beyond, meaning that our visits to the Peninsula were few and far between. Joe, however, certainly continued his close connection with the land and the family there. Many years later, after Uncle Eddie died, Joe helped Pat move the family home to a new foundation 90 feet away.

Go to Hell!

This story is a jaw dropper. As a very young man, Joe supervised all the jobs for S.J. Hickey & Sons. Despite trusting Joe to be the onsite foreman, Sarto wasn't above criticizing Joe and the way Joe carried out the work. One day Dad was lecturing Joe about the work he had done in front of his co-workers. Joe surprised them all by yelling at his father telling him to "Go to Hell!" Well, I understand that Sarto stormed off in one direction and Joe, the other. Joe's face was as red as a beet which didn't surprise anyone because Joe just didn't do that sort of thing. According to Johnny, it was the best thing Joe ever did. Not many people would have the nerve to tell Sarto Hickey to bugger off and the fact that it was our Joe who did, was well – amazing, simply amazing!

Flying Hammers and Other Accidents

Joe could be accident prone. The boys remember a time when Joe's hammer got away on him, hit him in the mouth, and broke two of his teeth. On one of his out -of- town jobs, a two by four fell from an upper story and hit him square on the head. The only thing that saved him from injury was the fact that he was wearing a thick toque with an equally thick tassel.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Business and Money Matters

Although Joe was an excellent carpenter and builder, as a business owner he was not very proficient. He took great pride in his work projects but didn't seem to worry much about the financial side of things. Paper organization was not a strong point. Sarto had always looked after that end of the business. Joe did quite well after his dad passed away but over the years, he became more and more careless about keeping track of all the things that make work profitable. He wasn't great at keeping a complete list of expenses that went into jobs, nor was he timely when it came to billing customers. He left a lot of money in the pockets of those who owed him. And with taxes, it was worse. He let tax bills gather dust until they became a major cause of concern.

Sometimes Joe even avoided new work. A friend of Joan's wanted Joe to build him a new house but after many calls to Joe without a response, he just gave up. People started to refer to him as "No Show Joe".

We do know that Joe was never concerned about acquiring wealth. Money didn't sit in his pockets very long. On the other hand, he was very generous to others and he took great pleasure is giving both his skills and what money he had to those in need.

I thought of a carpentry joke.

I just wasn't sure if it woodwork.

Humor

First Crush

Joe's first crush occurred when he was only nine years old and while he was lying in a bed with a case of hepatitis. Both he and Judy were diagnosed with this form of jaundice and both turned yellow. So they could keep each other company, Mom had moved both their beds into the large front room. A nurse from the Victorian Order of Nurses, VON, came in several times a week to check on them. The VON's were a striking lot, especially this one. Dressed in a blue cape, with a shining broach, a smart nurse's cap, starched white uniform, and fancy shoes, and having a great sense of humour, Joe took a real shine to her. He knew he was way too young for her but10 year old boys don't give up easily. Joe got up the nerve to ask her to "wait for him."

The illness passed, life went on, and he didn't cross paths with her again until many years later when he saw her in a bank. He recognized her immediately and said, "Hello. I'll bet you don't remember me, do you?"

"Oh yes," she said, "I do."

"But you didn't wait for me," Joe said.

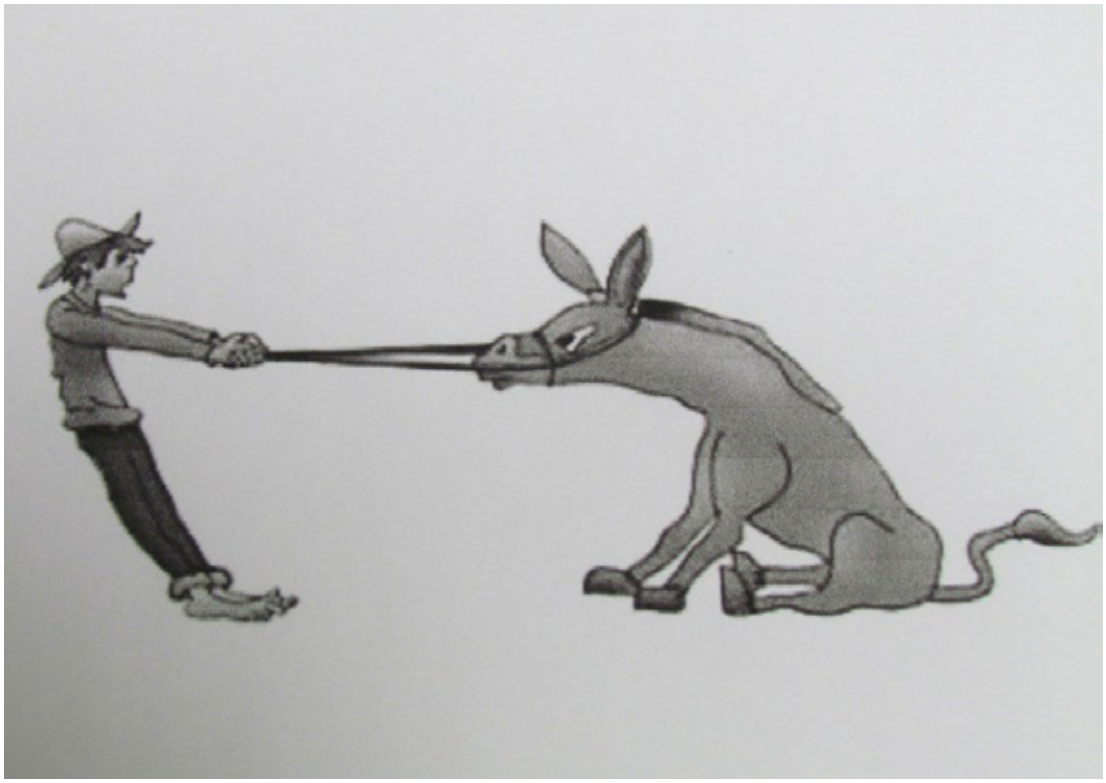
"No," she replied, "but I wish I had."

“I'd rather spend half an hour in the company of a top carpenter, than three hours in the company of an average brain surgeon.” …Winston Churchill

Joe goes to Jail

Arrested! Joe?

One day while Joe and the boys were building the house on Newman Street, a police car showed up. The officers left the car, approached Joe, and said he was being arrested and had to come with them. As you can well imagine, Joe was dumbfounded. He thought they might have come for Johnny who was much more likely to be in trouble than he ever was. Head down, very troubled, off he went in handcuffs. Unbeknownst to Joe, it was a joke. This was part of a community fund raiser, and the guys had paid the police to arrest Joe. Almost everyone else, including Mom and Dad, were in on the fun except for Joe and our Aunt Jenny. Aunt Jenny cried and cried and Joe was totally distraught – so much so that that the police, long before they could put him in a cell, felt so bad for him that they turned the car around, and brought him back to the job site.



He could be stubborn

Stubborn As a Mule!

by Paul

Joe could be stubborn. He was not one for doctors and he used to brag that he never took so much as an aspirin. Well, life catches up with all of us, I guess. In his late sixties, Joe developed severe abdominal pain. He told several of us that at times, the pain was so bad that he just wanted to die. Now for most people, that would send them off to the doctor or to a hospital really quick. Not Joe. During a visit to PEI, Joe was really suffering, to the extent that he stopped what he was doing and headed for bed. Everyone was worried. Paul could hear him moaning and so he called the pharmacy. He felt that if Joe wouldn't go to out-patients, the least he could do was try to get something to ease his pain.

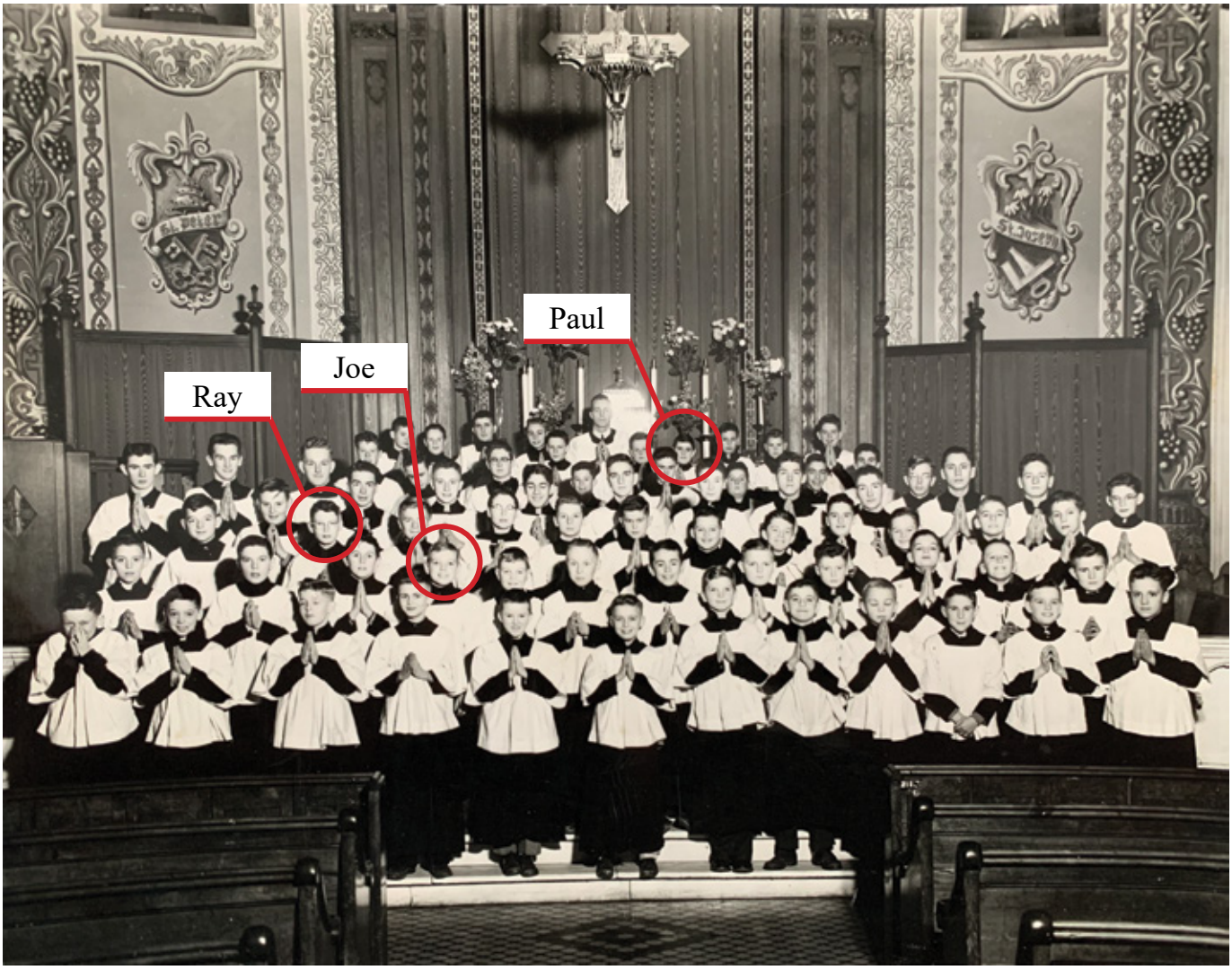
When Joe heard Paul on the phone talking to the pharmacist, he was livid, and blasted Paul yelling, "You have no right! It's my body, not yours".

In the end, Paul did get him a prescription. Joe did take it and it did work. He continued to take it for the rest of the weekend and took the rest with him when he left. But it didn't soothe the indignation he felt having someone else intrude on what only belonged to him - his body.

Another time, he was in bad shape at Judy's. This time Joe agreed to go to the out- patients clinic. But once there, being told that the wait would be three hours, Joe got up and left saying, "I can't sit around here for three hours. I have things to do." Anytime Joe was sick or hurting physically, his work seemed to focus his mind and ease his pain.

Trees by Yvonne Soper (with permission)

The Milkish Creek Bridge by E. Miller circa 1968



Saint Peter's Altar boys 1953

In Memory of Joe Hickey - July 13, 1945 – October 21, 2019

by Raymond Pierce

Joe Hickey and I were altar boys together at St. Peter's Redemptorist Parish in the mid 1950's for several years. Joe and I were both students at Saint John Vocational School in the early 1960's. I studied Culinary Arts and Joe was in a Woodworking program, naturally. At the end of one year we both won prizes for Excellence in our respective programs. My award was $10 cash in a nice envelope and Joe's was a Bronze Metal. As we walked home together Joe said, "I would rather have your award of $10.00 cash than this Bronze Metal. I can't spend this!"

On the Tuesday's when we walked home together, we often stopped at St. Peter's Church to attend the devotions to Our Mother of Perpetual Help. One Tuesday as we entered the church, Brother Joe Duffy, the sacristan, was at the back of the church looking worried. The devotions were just starting and Brother Joe called us over. He said the regular ushers who take up the collection were not there for some unknown reason. So, he asked if Joe and I could get two more students and take up the collection. No problem! We were happy to do it!

We put the baskets of money on the altar railing as instructed and Brother Joe would pick them up from there. Easy as pie! The following Tuesday, Joe and I returned to attend the devotions as usual. There was no sign of Brother Joe anywhere and no sign of the ushers. So, Joe and I considered this dilemma and decided we should do something about it. So, we got two more students and took up the collection again and placed it on the altar railing.

The third week we again arrived for the devotions and thankfully Brother Joe was waiting for us. He beckoned to us and we came closer. Then he whispered to us secretively, "Thank you boys for last week's collection. We really appreciate it, but you see, e only take up a collection at the devotions once a month!"

“The hunter travels out into the woods is lost to the world but finds himself” .

Anonymous

Adventures

Lost

Joe loved the woods. He was young when he first began hunting deer with Sarto. On one occasion, he set out to hunt alone, parked his truck on a side road, and headed into the woods. Thoroughly absorbed in what he was doing and enjoying it, Joe spent several hours tracking and looking for deer. As dusk approached, Joe decided it was time to head for home. But the route home was elusive, and eventually Joe realized he was lost. Joe didn't arrive home that night and everyone was worried, except Sarto. He said that Joe would be alright. And sure enough, shortly after dawn, as a search party was forming, Joe sauntered out of the woods near the old Hickey homestead. Joe calmly explained that once the sun had set, he decided that the best course of action was to sit under a tree until the sun came up, figuring that he would get his bearings in the morning. And he did!

Deliverance on the Bonshaw

April 15, 1975, sunny, a warm 54 degrees Fahrenheit, canoe on board! Joe, Paul, and Gerard were heading out to paddle the Bonshaw River, one of PEI's most popular paddling sites. The three brothers, strong, fit, and in their late twenties, were really looking forward to a great afternoon.

To really appreciate this story, a little background is needed. The year before, in 1974, three things occurred. First, Joe had a craftsman in Pownal, PEI, craft a 16 foot fibreglass canoe for him. The canoe was a beauty with high bows but Paul was concerned that the freeboard was a little shallow. Secondly, Paul had spent 10 days at a canoeing school in Nova Scotia becoming nationally certified as a canoe instructor. And lastly, Paul had read Pole, Paddle and Portage by Bill Riviere, a life time outdoorsman, who wrote extensively on the great outdoors of Maine. Among the many lessons in his book, he talked about the many hazards nature lovers encountered while in the wild. He especially noted the dangers of hypothermia. Being immersed in frigid waters affects the body immediately. Blood is instantly withdrawn from the limbs and sent to the core organs in order to protect them. This leaves the limbs and muscles numb and weak. Hypothermia also affects the brain. One becomes muddled and confused and stops making good decisions.

"A trapper in Maine fell through thin ice, managed to climb out, and then run to his warm cabin where he soon died."

From Pole, Paddle and Portage by Bill Riviere

The author recalled two incidents: A trapper in Maine fell through thin ice, managed to climb out, and then run to his warm cabin where he soon died. His heat loss was too great for him to recover despite being inside a heated cabin. In the second incident, a hiker in the Appalachians, dressed in shorts and a shirt, also died when the temperature dropped and his body cooled. Those who discovered his body found long pants and a jacket in his backpack but the loss of body heat prevented him from making the wise decision to stop and change.

Being well informed by Bill Riviere's lessons, Paul was confident that the three of them could manage the adventure safely. Just to be sure, he packed three sets of warm clothing in separate plastic bags and included water proof matches . . . just in case. With life jackets on and the warm bags of clothing tied to the thwarts, they were off.

The Bonshaw River meanders gently through forests and farmers' fields, narrow at first, and then widens two or three miles downstream. The sun, shining water, and silence were broken only by the boys' quiet acknowledgement of the beauty that engulfed them. With three paddlers, it was a leisurely ride. An hour passed and they approached the Dunedin Bridge which was centered in the half mile of the Causeway. This is when the real adventure began.

As they neared the bridge, Paul could see that there was an incoming tide. At first, he wasn't concerned, but 100 feet further along, he saw how fast the water was flowing under the bridge. Hey! Three strong young men could muscle through that surge. "Put the ash to her," he yelled. But the current was stronger. It dragged the canoe down and within seconds the boys were all in the water. Again, no one was overly concerned. They were only 30 feet from shore and three bags of warm, dry clothes were tied safely to the canoe. Calm quickly turned to alarm, however, when they discovered that the power of the currant kept them from getting any grip on the bottom of the river and their hands became so numb, no one could untie the bags from the canoe. They quickly decided to let the canoe go, swim with the current, and land further upstream. Fifteen minutes later, the water was calm enough to make their way to shore. Paul could see Joe struggling and he was still quite a distance from him and Gerard. He got close enough to yell at him to turn in. Slowly all three managed to make their way to shore. Exhausted, Joe and Gerard wanted to sit and rest. Paul insisted that they had to get warm as soon as possible.

With Gerard and Paul on either side supporting Joe, it took them ten minutes to climb the hill to the nearest farm and make their way to a welcoming reception from a good farmer and his wife.

Their orders - “Get in the bathroom and strip off those wet clothes.” In the middle of this bathroom sat a large oil stove all fired up and throwing off a tremendous heat. As the boys stripped down and huddled around the stove, they could see the effects the cold water had on their bodies. They were blue, black, purple, and orange. Their new friends quickly had them wrapped in warm blankets and drinking a glass of brandy. These kind folks knew what they were doing.

Kindness comes in bunches. Ten minutes later, an ambulance arrived to take them to the hospital. Apparently a number of cars had lined up along the causeway to watch what many thought was a training exercise. But one fellow had assessed that these guys were in trouble and called 911. Bundled up in blankets, the brothers were on their way to the QEH in Charlottetown where Dr. Burke checked them over and declared them good to go. There weren’t any long terms effects from this adventure, but Paul says it took three weeks for his hands to stop tingling.

Joe told this story often and said that he truly thought he was going to die that day. He said his hands felt like leaden lumps and he couldn’t believe how weighted his arms were in that cold water. He also said that without the help and encouragement from his brothers he probably would have died. This is, indeed, a story of deliverance, and brotherly love.

Gondola in Switzerland

The European Trip 1980/81

by Joan

When Leonce worked for Air Canada, he and Joe travelled to Europe visiting England, Ireland, Switzerland, Germany and France. Leonce especially remembers that Joe displayed a child's wonder at many of the historical sites he visited and how he listened closely to any information Leonce could provide about them. Leonce even got him to kiss the Blarney Stone.

Joe also loved to have fun. One memorable night they were in a Germanic pub off Trafalgar Square in London, England. After a few ales, and with the music blasting, all of a sudden Joe and a couple of ladies were on the pub table dancing their hearts out to the German music, each with a beer in their hands. Leonce said he was frantically pushing against the table so the threesome wouldn't fall off. He concluded the story by saying, "What a night! A lot of fun!"

Another European memory that Leonce still chuckles about happened while he and Joe were crossing the English Channel by ship from Calais to Dover. Leaving a county whose language Joe did not speak, Joe said, "Can't wait to get somewhere where I can understand what they are saying." When they arrived at a petrol station, one of the workers spoke to Joe. Joe quickly turned to Leonce and said, "Leonce, what did he say?" British accents were as incomprehensible as French.

It was in Europe, too, that Leonce learned that Joe was scared of heights. They were in Switzerland taking a gondola up into the Alps. Leonce said Joe was so scared that he had to pry his fingers one by one off the holding pole when they arrived at the top. And later, driving by car through the Alps, Joe simply buried himself as far as he could into the back seat. The thought of him looking out the window and down into the abyss simply terrified him. Once they were out of the mountains, Leonce had to buy Joe a double rum to help him relax. *This was a real surprise to Paul since he had seen Joe working with complete ease and comfort on high staging so many times. I guess, Joe, like all of us, could at times be very paradoxical.*

Paddling to Porcupine Mountain

The stern paddler

Clear Lake Get Together

In the spring of 1990, Joe invited his brothers, brothers-in law and their sons to spend time together at the cabin in Clear Lake, near St. George, N.B. Brother Gerard, and brother-in-law, Brian and his son Joey, couldn't make it but the others all did. The motley crew consisted of Joe and Stephen, Leonce and Andrew, Paul with Chris and David, and Gerard's two sons, Peter and Jason.

The spring that year was a very rainy one and so large sections of the dirt road that carried them on the first part of their journey were badly flooded, ensuring that simply getting there was an adventure in itself. The many mucky areas were navigated by having all the boys sit on the trunk of Paul's Toyota and that extra weight got them though the deepest spots. They left the vehicles, loaded everything and everybody into two canoes and onto a flat raft with a small outboard motor. Once across that lake, they then lugged the canoes, raft, and all their gear through the woods until they arrived at Clear Lake. And then they paddled again. The raft was loaded to the gunnels with gear and people. The deck lay only about an inch above the water. That didn't seem to bother Joe at all. Thankfully the lake was as smooth as glass that day.

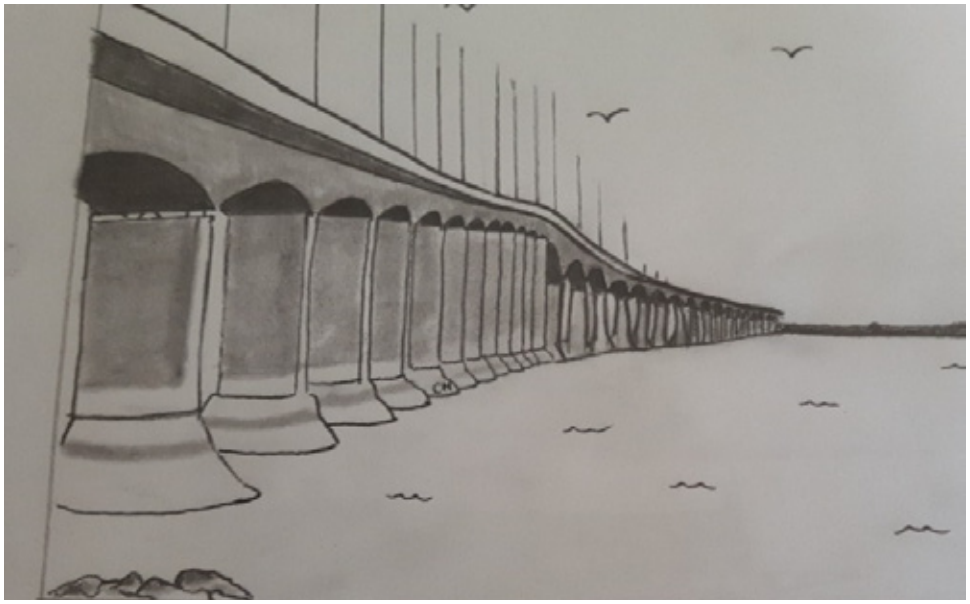
The cabin was about 12 by 8 feet with two sets of bunk beds, a small table, and a large cast iron stove. There was a deck out front and an outhouse in back - lots of room for three adults and six teenagers. And what a nice time they had. They even had a birthday party that weekend. Jason turned 16 so he enjoyed a small cupcake and everybody sang "happy birthday."

Cousins at Clear Lake - Andrew, Stephen, Peter, Chris, David, Joe, Jason, Paul

(Leonce took the photo)

Joe did most of the cooking, the kids hung out reading comics, and at night the three adults played cribbage. They did some fishing but Stephen caught the only fish, a trout. The only weekend mishap was Paul's. Paddling solo, he was docking the canoe and when he inadvertently leaned too far to one side, the canoe tipped, and in he went. Despite the dousing, he was fine, but being a nationally certified canoeist, he was a little embarrassed to say the least.

Porcupine Mountain lay across the lake and Joe suggested they paddle across the lake and climb the mountain. So, they did. Later, Paul sent Joe a souvenir photo he had taken, the mountain in the background and Joe's canoe on the edge of the lake in front. Joe framed the photo and proudly hung it in his home. That weekend at Clear Lake was special. Joe took great care of everybody and was very happy to have his family and his nephews experience the great outdoors at a place that meant a great deal to him.



Confederation Bridge Walk 1997

Last Trip on the old Abegwuit

Anne and Joe

Walking to PEI on the New Bridge 1998

by Joan

When the Confederation Bridge first opened to walkers in June of 1998, Leonce, Joe, and I decided to walk the new bridge together. The day before the big event we crossed to the Island by ferry and spent time with Paul. Paul's plan was to join the runners the next morning. Leonce, Joe, and I drove back to the ferry having decided to cross from the N.B. side. Islanders received inquiries from all over the world for this historic event so they were expecting a huge crowd. Thus, the traffic wardens were out to control parking and access. That meant we had to park about seven kilometres away from the ferry. That was our first hike of the day.

On the ferry was *Anne of Green Gables*. Joe's delight at meeting her and having a chat was obvious. Once the ferry docked, a bus carried us to an area that was about a ten kilometre walk from the bridge. We waited for ages, along with many others, but no transportation arrived to carry us closer so we decided to walk the 10 kms to the bridge. We were surprised that for an acclaimed entrepreneurial Premier, Frank McKenna, there was absolutely nothing, food nor water on the NB side. But that didn't dampen our spirits.

Once on the bridge, what amazed us most was the footwear choices we saw for a thirteen kilometre walk, everything from good sneakers to heavy boots to bare feet and flip flops. But the atmosphere was amazing. Everyone coming and going in both directions was in high spirits and having a great time.

By the time we crossed the bridge, we had travelled a total of approximately 30 kilometres, and we still had to walk seven more kilometres to get to our car. Joe so enjoyed being a part of this historical event. Not a word of complaint or discontent did he utter. He was happy throughout!

Paul, Joe, Gerard, Judy, Joan

Joe on left

Family Pride

by Joan

Joe's pride of family, in many ways, reminded all his siblings of Uncle Eddie. Uncle Eddie always found some quality in each of our children that made them feel very special. This one was the fastest, that one was the most determined, another one was as smart as they come. Joe, too, was very proud of his family. He was certainly proud of his brother Gerard and his singing abilities. On a trip to PEI to watch the Christmas show hosted by Phase II, Joe told us that he wished he could jump up on the stage and tell everybody, "**That is my brother!**" And for a man who had no sense of rhythm and couldn't carry a tune in a paper bag, he loved to be on the dance floor or at a singsong where he delighted in other people's talents. In Joe's eyes, there could never be a better son than Stephen. No one was smarter than Paul and Joan, and for Joe, Gerard was Elvis Presley and Tom Jones rolled up in one.

As well as being proud of his family, Joe exhibited a great sense of loyalty and protectiveness to every one of us. Leonce remembers that on our wedding day, 54 years ago, he had challenged our dad, Sarto, on something he said. Joe wasn't pleased that this newcomer would dare question Sarto. When dad walked away, Joe, in front of Leonce, said, "Joan, if you ever need to come home, I have the money to help you." I'm happy to say that the relationship between Joe and Leonce grew from there and they became great friends. Joe loved to come and visit us and we loved to have him.

The biggest part of Joe was his generous heart. He genuinely loved to help people and he so often did, especially with his carpentry skills. For a man who, for many years seemed to swing a hammer 70 to 80 hours a week, Joe had little in the way of material goods to show for it. Yet, he gave of himself to many others in so many ways – time, energy, his skills, and his money. And he absolutely delighted in doing so. People often questioned his choices and decisions in life, and being his sister, and loving him and caring about him, I wasn't blind to these things that we all judged unwise. But I've always felt strongly that Joe was one of the best human beings that I encountered in my entire life – a truly humble man, totally lacking in pretence, accepting of all, and good to everyone.

Judy, Joe and Joan

Joe, Uncle Leo and Pat

A Sister's Love – Judy and Joe

Joe and Judy were very close. Joe spent a lot of time with Judy and Brian at their home on Young St. often sharing their meals. He frequently arrived for breakfast, usually just after Brian left for work. Years later, a neighbour, having learned that Joe and Judy were brother and sister, confessed that she always thought Joe was an illicit boyfriend.

Judy worked for Joe for many years. Keeping Joe focused on the management side of things – keeping up records, typing up invoices, billing, collecting payments – was not easy. Paperwork was not Joe's strength.

On several occasions, when Joe was bidding a job, he'd arrived the day before the bid was due and tell Judy she had to fly to Ottawa so he could submit the tender on time. This, of course, was long before Purolator and Canada Post offered one day service. Now when you're raising four young children, it is no easy task to drop everything, abandon your young family, and fly off at a moment's notice. Judy would get an early morning flight, taxi downtown, deliver the tender, and be on a flight back to Saint John as soon as possible to rejoin her young family. These trips involved no big city sightseeing for sure. Every trip was an inconvenience but as Judy said, "How could I say no to Joe. He is my brother. Besides, everybody loves Joe."

Their relationship was strengthened over the years by the many long walks they took together at the Irving Nature Park, where Joe would often pour out his heart and Judy would listen with a caring ear.

Nana and her Children

Eddie, Gerry, Frank, Kay, Gertrude, Nana, Mabel, Charlie, Sarto

“If you admired Joe, I'll bet he admired you more.” Gerard

Kindness

Big Heart

by Joan

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He gave of himself to many others in so many ways – time, energy, his skills, and his money. And he absolutely delighted in doing so. People so often questioned his choices and decisions in life, and being his sister, and loving him and caring about him, I wasn't blind to these things that we all judged unwise. But I've always felt strongly that Joe was one of the best human beings that I encountered in my entire life – a truly humble man, accepting of everyone and good to everyone.

Too Kind

by Gerard

Anyone who knew my brother, Joe, would certainly remember him as a kind and generous soul. I can attest to his generosity through several personal experiences, but one really stands out. A number of years ago, Paul and I began talking about a trip south for a week at an all-inclusive resort. We decided we wanted to include Joe and our brother-in-law, Leonce, and thanks to Paul's organizational skills, we spent a week at a beautiful Cuban resort. I had never seen Joe so excited. He loved everything about it from the sun to the sea to the food. He was genuinely happy to spend this time with family.

Joe's financial situation at the time was not good, but he managed to put together two or three hundred dollars. We had told him that he didn't need any money as this was an all-inclusive resort. He couldn't wait to change his Canadian dollars to pesos for tips. He tipped all the waiters and waitresses, bartenders and the staff who made up our rooms. All four of us were good tippers but it was much more of a sacrifice for Joe. That was exactly who he was. Although he was pretty well broke, he saw the opportunity to give to strangers who had less than him. Joe's brand of generosity should be contagious; it would change the world.

“If you want to be holy…be kind” Frederick Buechner

” I’m the only one I know with a bucket list and I’m not on it.” Joe

Joe the Helper

by Paul

I can only imagine the number of times Joe helped others. Over the years he helped me a lot. In 1975 he came to PEI to help us build our first home. The first time, he guided me through building and erecting the walls. They were very hard to raise because of the constant wind. He said, "God, this must be the windiest place in the world." But with Joe around I was confident that we'd make it work.

Years later in the fall of 1989 the year, I left the Iron Ore Company of Canada we returned to PEI and bought a house that had major water problems. I tried everything I could but the basement flooded every time it rained hard. After several floodings I called Joe and he wasn't long in coming to the Island. A day later our problem was solved. And it was as dry as a bone ever since. Joe "jack hammered" a trench in the concrete floor all around the back bedroom and installed a sump pump, too. What a relief especially since Mary was very allergic to molds. A year before Joe died, he and Leonce came to PEI for a visit. I was getting ready to sell the house so they helped me load a large blue bin full of old branches and other debris, too.

My Brother Joe

I have a tale I'd like to tell
I surely hope to tell it well
About a man whom you all know
He was my big brother; his name was Joe

He was the eldest son of Sarto and Dot
If you didn't know them you missed a lot.
Finer folks were not to be found
No matter where you looked in Saint John town.

So much I could say – don't know where to start
I know the place. Let's begin with Joe's heart.
My brother was generous, honest, and kind,
His brand of giving was rare to find.
It was once said to me by our sister, Joan,
"Joe's the kindest person I've ever known."

My brother was also a very kind man,
Not proud of himself, but proud of his clan.
He was proud of his brothers and sisters, too
And would boast of all the things we could do.
Stephen, of course, was his pride and joy
He was oh so happy with the birth of his boy.

Joe was humble when it came to his trade.
It wasn't easy to build the things that he made.
In his later years, he wore a foreman's hat,
And was highly valued by Johnnie and Pat.

Our cousins learned much from Joe and Dad
I think Joe's working for them would make Sarto glad.
I was very lucky when I was a kid
I learned to work hard and I'm glad that I did.
I started with Dad at the end of grade eight,
Had to show up ready, and never be late.

I have lots of great memories and stories, too,
About working with Johnnie – I'm still black and blue.
It wasn't easy working for Dad
When 4:30 came, I was usually glad.

Joe was the boss of most every site
He knew his stuff and was always right.
But at that young age I just wanted some fun.
They had expectations that seemed rather high
Now that I'm older, I think I know why.

There are lessons we learn all through our youth
That help us know strength and courage and truth.
At seventy years old, there is much I don't know
But I did learn a lot from my brother, Joe.

On behalf of the Hickeys, I want to say thanks
For all of the memories, the love, and the pranks.
On the day of Joe's funeral, it's so nice to know
That everyone there loved my brother, Joe.

For all of Joe's cousins, family, and friends,
This road we call life has so many bends.
For every loss, we all feel the pain,
But then we get up and start over again.

So, for every kindness you showed to Joe
I'm sure that he would want you to know
How special you were to him each day
And continue to be, though he's gone away.

So rest in peace, brother of mine
May the waters be calm and the weather fine.
The last thing I'll say and on this I'll stand,
Joseph Hickey was a very good man.

Gerard

The Hickey Spouses

Tom, Doris, Audry, Lil, Jim, Dot, Teet, Oliver

Saint Bridget's Church
Chapel Grove

"In a world where carpenters get resurrected, everything is possible."
Eleanor of Aquitaine