



Robert Thompson Frost

September 14, 1924 - February 8, 2009

Robert T. “Thom” Frost, 84, died peacefully on Sunday at Bryn Mawr Hospital after a brief illness. He and his wife, Carol Reisinger Frost, had celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary in June 2008.

Born in Towson, Md., he was son of the late Kathleen and E. Murray Frost. Thom spent 3 years in WWII as a radio operator in the Merchant Marines, where he was known as “Sparks.” After the war, he courted Carol in his war-surplus-aluminum canoe. After putting himself through Johns Hopkins University where he earned a PhD, he began his career as a nuclear physicist for General Electric at the company’s KAPL division in Schenectady, N.Y., where he worked until 1961. Then he moved his family, which by then included five children, to Berwyn, Pa. where he worked at GE’s Missile & Space Division in King of Prussia until his retirement in 1986. He and Carol then lived in Accomac, Va., until moving to Narberth, Pa in 2006.

His Accomac home was near Cedar Island, an uninhabited barrier island around which he’d had some of his best canoeing and camping adventures with his wife and children in the 1960s. In 1978 his adventures began to include helping son Tom Jr. float tons of lumber to Cedar Island to rickshaw a mile up the beach and build a cottage.

Thom was an all weather skier, an Extra Class ham radio operator and an

irrepressible scholar. While living in Virginia he founded a science and philosophy seminar with Father Daniel Kelly that continues today. His many papers include a unique theory of electricity. He and Carol enjoyed extensive travel over the years, Italy being a favorite destination. At the time of his death he was planning a trip to Egypt with Tom Jr., having studied it extensively since his adventures there in his "Sparks" days. He had also been a member of the Explorers Club.

The 1945 canoe, which he paddled as recently as 2008 with Tom Jr., still graces the back yard at the Frost Farm near Lenoxville, Pa. Thom bought the farm in 1967, as a place for the family to stay while skiing, maintaining it with pride together with his family for the rest of his life. As recently as his 80th birthday Thom was lifting fifty-pound hay bales, and he shoveled coal for the farm's furnace during his final visit in January.

He was preceded in death by a brother, Mike, and by a sister, Sally.

Surviving are wife Carol, of Narberth and Lenoxville; son Tom Jr., of Lenoxville; and four daughters, Kathleen Springsteed, of Glendale Calif., Susan Todhunter, of Pittsburgh; Christine Red, of Narberth; Amy Frost Baumgarten, of Arlington, Va.; and seven grandchildren, Hans, Erika, Ian, Audrey, Emily, Jackson and Sarah.

A memorial service will be held on Friday Feb. 13 at 10 am at St. Margaret's Church in Narberth, Pa., with burial at Arlington National Cemetery. Memorial donations in lieu of flowers may be made to Christian Foundation for Children and Aging.

Previous Events

Service

FEB 13. 10:00 AM (ET)

St. Margaret's Church
208 N. Narberth Avenue
Narberth, PA

Tribute Wall



“ Tom our condolences to you and your family in your time of loss.##imported-begin##Frank (Jennings) and Debbie##imported-end##

February 17, 2009 at 06:39 AM



“ It is with great sadness we write this note. We have fond remembrances of Thom on the Lenoxville farm. May joyful memories and God's grace sustain you until your hearts are able to smile again.##imported-begin##Allen and Sandy Jones##imported-end##

February 16, 2009 at 12:04 PM



“Remembrances, as spoken by me at the funeral (written largely by my four sisters, with some editing and ad-libbing by me):

Our father was an irrepressible spirit, and his faith took many forms.

He knew astronomy and loved the night sky from his years at sea dodging German submarines as a young radio operator.

We did a lot of stargazing at the Frost Farm, and he could identify everything. Remembering it all was a challenge - he knew so much, including about the nucul - nucul - nucular rearctions [or however it was that I bungled both of those words, a couple or three times, before getting them right] nuclear reactions going on inside the stars. At least I'm not as bad as Bush.

His interest in the cosmos informed his later physics research for General Electric on ocean glitter, and more recently, the Science and Philosophy group he started with Father Kelly.

When we were kids our afternoon doodles shared space with his midnight physics equations on the family chalkboard, but woe to the kid who erased too much.

Kathie recalls that once at the dinner table he asked the kids if they had ideas for experiments that could be done on an upcoming space flight that he was involved with.

He could fix anything - maybe because equations could occasionally be used for all kinds of ingenious repairs, but mostly, he loved problem solving.

The farm, which he had great pride in, was a multi-decade fix-up project, where he directed us in doing everything ourselves. I regret that I didn't finish the barn addition when he was still around to see it. The farm was also a retreat. He would have loved that the last photo Chrissy took on his final trip to the farm in January is of him

shoveling coal for the furnace. He violated Ma's orders by going down those creaky steps to do it.

Getting five kids out on the ski slopes every weekend with the requisite number of hats, socks, boots, mittens and poles took the patience of Job. He had a tireless ability to fix our bindings too.

When a storm flooded Schenectady, he took the family canoeing in the street. Later he outfitted the canoe with a sail and took us crabbing with string and chicken necks in the Chesapeake Bay.

Music was important to him; Beethoven seems to have been a favorite. He taught himself to play the piano after hearing a pianist practicing in the distant depths of his Merchant Marine ship. He bought the sheet music for the Moonlight Sonata on a shore leave in Havana.

Of her many charms, our mother's ability to play the piano was part of what attracted him to her. When we were growing up, every evening he would come home from work and sit down at the piano where he would both unwind and meditate.

Goodbye Dad.##imported-begin##Tom Frost Jr. ##imported-end##

February 15, 2009 at 12:43 PM



“ Tom,
I am deeply saddened to hear of your dads passing. My thoughts and prayers are with you and your family.

Your neighbor.
John Wallace##imported-begin##John Wallace##imported-end##

February 13, 2009 at 07:14 PM



“ I viewed Mr. Frost's obituary in the Norfolk, VA newspaper today and wanted to extend my condolences to the family. My mother, Evelyn Greaser Chaney, now 85, grew up just a few houses from the Frost family in Towson, MD as did my sister Anita and I years later (your family on North Bend Rd, us on DeBaugh Ave). Thom's brother Mike and his family lived in the house during our growing up years, I believe. Anita and I have many fond memories playing with Mike's daughter, Michelle. I remember also her little brother "Mikey" and I believe a younger sister who was born later. I would truly enjoy hearing from Michelle or other family member at patricia.dryer@vbschools.com. Again, please accept my sincerest sympathies for your loss. Mr. Frost appears to have been an extraordinary man.##imported-begin##Patty Beall Dryer##imported-end##

February 13, 2009 at 06:18 PM



“ Stay tuned for photos! I just found the one of him handling those 50-pound bales, when Ma wasn't looking, on his 80th birthday.##imported-begin##Tom Frost Jr. ##imported-end##

February 11, 2009 at 10:37 PM