

The Walnut

NEWSLETTER OF THE PROSTATE CANCER ASSOCIATION OTTAWA

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December, 2009

Remembering Marc Guertin

by Ted Johnston

Marc Guertin became a key player for the Association in March, 2006, when he signed on to re-design and manage the layout of our monthly newsletter. For the next three and a half years, he transformed weak photographs or less than sparkling text into bright attractive items that served members interests well.

He was a professional graphic designer and examples of his work can be found throughout the city. His work for the Association was pro bono as he, too, struggled with the silent killer, prostate cancer.

Marc gave a life to our Walnut, placing a ball cap on Wally's head (that's all he was, a head with legs and arms) and putting him to work in a variety of postures in each edition. Every issue was put together with little direction from his colleagues, but when changes were asked for, he responded quickly and effectively. His manner was courteous, backed with a gentle sense of humour and practicality.

Both Richard Bercuson and I, as the editors, came quickly to appreciate and rely on the man and the designer and his ability to make The Walnut a truly effective and welcome communiqué among prostate patients and their supporters.

He turned out two editions of each issue – the first in brilliant colour which went on display on the website and the second in black and white for the mail-out version. Not only that, he also worked with Phil O'Hara and later Andy Proulx to coordinate production and delivery of the newsletter each month.

Marc willingly volunteered to illustrate and design Richard Bercuson's book, *Assume the position*, having already done the groundwork with the serial version in The Walnut.

Marc and I this year found we were both faced with rising PSAs that indicated we were hormone refractory. He began chemotherapy before I did and my wife and I drew on his and his wife's early experience on how to cope with some of the side effects. We kept in touch through the months that followed, but it was a shock when I learned he was no longer responsive to chemotherapy and had been hospitalized.



Then, the blow that this gentle man had fallen final victim to his cancer.

I have lost a friend and colleague, and the Association has lost a valued contributor to our endeavours.

A true craftsman

by Wilf Gilchrist

Marc and I interacted on a monthly basis. He would send me the just completed copy of *The Walnut*. I would then post it on the PCAO website before notifying members about the new version being available. Everyone can see how good a job he did; the issues dating back to April 2006 speak for themselves. Every month there was a new example of his art.

Marc also produced the artwork this year for the new T-shirts for the Prostate Gurus. He was really good to work with on this project. I gave him my ideas and asked him to work something up. He quickly came back with several ideas. We worked out the new design over a couple of weeks. What a great guy he was to work with.

In September I had heard that he was not feeling well and asked how things were going. His reply on

September 4 was: "Thanks for asking, not bad. I have treatment number seven on the 10th so I'm on the "up" part of the 21 day cycle. It's usually a bad 5 - 8 days starting two days after the infusion (fatigue, lots of sleep, no taste or interest in food, luckily no nausea though)

then a gradual climb back to "normal" before the next one. I should be done the first week of November if I get the full 10 treatments. I see the oncologist this Tuesday to see how things are progressing. Ted and I are comparing side effects so we should be a wealth of information by the time we're done. Thanks again for asking,"

It is sad now to think back to such a short time ago.

We did not realize that the end of his life could be so near. We indeed do have a very fragile connection to this life of ours.

Marc was a true craftsman. I will miss working with him.



He was always there

by John Dugan

On a number of occasions I called on Marc's imaginative and creative skills for presentation formats to enhance the focus of our Association. Few people know that Marc developed the art work for our PCAO Information Brochure. The colour schemes for everything we produce came from Marc's overall vision.

Envelopes, letterhead, our blue and gold reef knot, not to mention the graphics for the Walnut all portrayed his total support for the needs of our Association. He was often the eye behind the camera at our monthly meetings and outreach presentations. More recently we

asked for his ideas on a revised Information Brochure feeling our current format was out-dated. The following day I received five suggestions by email all of which captured the theme that I attempted to explain in a rather uncertain manner. Marc's creative mind once

again weaved it's magic in a most dramatic fashion. The certificates that we have presented over the past two years to deserving members are a shining example of Marc's efforts on our behalf.

When the Association called for help Marc was always there. He will be missed.

With deepest respect and gratitude...



Teamwork and coordination were the marks of my contact with Marc. He and I never met in person and we communicated, if only rarely and briefly, by e-mail. But that was all that was needed. Month after month, without

fail, The Walnut appeared magically at the printer, ready for the mail-out team to fold, stuff and send. You made our task easy, Marc. Thank you

Andy Proulx

Next Monthly Meeting: Thursday, December 17, 2009

6:30-7:30 p.m.: Mentoring for newly diagnosed in Shalom Room

7:00-7:30 p.m.: Association business

7:30 p.m.: Guest speaker will be **Gay Cook**, food columnist, cookbook author, and culinary teacher. Her topic will be *The Evolution of Canada Cuisine*

We meet the third Thursday of each month at St. Stephen's Church, 930 Watson Street. Follow the Queensway to the Pinecrest exit and proceed north, past the traffic lights, to St. Stephen's Street on the left. Parking is at the rear of the church. Please remember your contribution for the St. Stephen's Food Bank.

Magic with headline graphics and photos



A eulogy for an old and dear friend

by Tony Côté

For those who knew Marc Guertin, the news of his November 28 death from prostate cancer was shattering. Marc, at 62, was simply too young, had too much to live for, and was too important to all of us.

Some facts. Marc was married to Hillary, his childhood sweetheart from Aylmer. They had a daughter and son, Johanna and Jeff, who are partnered with John and Jessica, and five grandchildren, Lucas, Zoe, Olivia, Mia and Grace.

He had prostate cancer, was a first-rate graphic artist, and could build anything from kayaks to picture frames.

Those are the facts you can count on your fingers. And then there are the facts you measure with your heart.

It was in September, 2007, that a guy I had known for 50 years changed from an acquaintance to a friend. When Marc learned of my prostate cancer diagnosis, he was one of the first at my door with a bag of DVDs. We spent the first of what was to become many hours locked in general bull and perhaps, most important, mutual support. I learned a lot about the guy I had known for half a century.

He never stopped talking about his family. He talked about his visits to the kids where he regularly turned into the local handyman, restoring a basement foundation in Nova Scotia or preparing a house for sale in Toronto. And while he sometimes grumbled about the scenarios his young family could get themselves in, it was pretty clear he relished getting his hands dirty to help them out.

We talked about cancer and its treatment and the effects on our bodies. We laughed a lot about some of them and didn't shy away from any topic no matter how

embarrassing it might seem. There was never any talk about the unfairness of getting cancer.

Marc was an ardent believer in Canada. Flying proudly in front of the family home is a Canadian flag and carved into the risers of the front steps are fleur-de-lys, the symbol of his home province. As someone said at his wake, if Marc didn't like you he didn't have time for you. He didn't have much time for people who disrespected the flag.

For the most part, Marc saw the good in everything. If something broke there wasn't talk about responsibility, just what was needed to get it repaired and the fun it would be just doing that.

Never was that more true than the day he showed up with photos of his wood boat, minus its transom. The boat, which he had bought used and lovingly restored, had been tied up at the cottage and became the victim of a flash flood that was so powerful it pulled the transom off the boat, sending the motor to the bottom. All he talked about was the strength of Mother Nature and restoring the boat. Its repair was to have been this winter's project.

As a woodworker extraordinaire, the guy was meticulous and it showed in every piece he ever did. Marc was an invaluable source of information on everything from stains to construction technique.

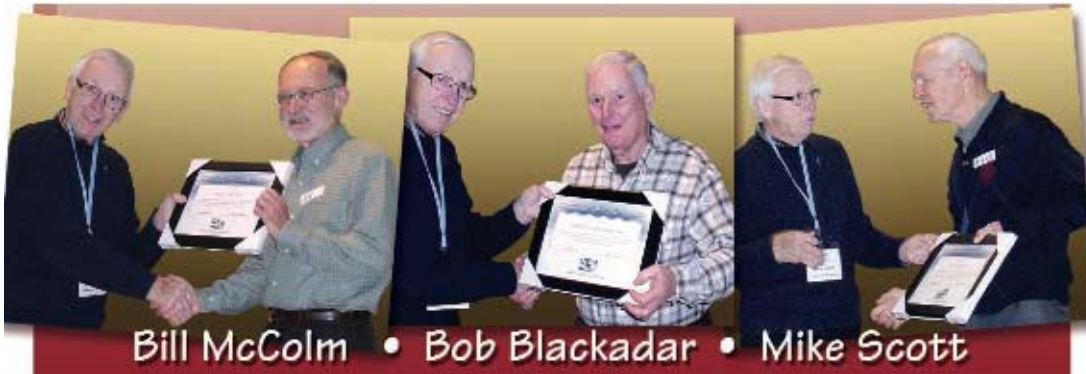
And, did you know about his calendars? Yup, he designed and produced calendars highlighting everything from outhouses to NHL old-timers. Each year there was a selection stuffed in my mailbox.

There won't be any more.

I will miss not having one, but not as much as I will miss Marc.



... more graphic and photo magic ...



Introducing new Steering Committee members:



CHAIR: B. Fogarty-Warner
TREATMENT: *Radical Brachytherapy*, 2001



VICE CHAIR: Tony Tysocik
TREATMENT: *Brachytherapy*, 2001



VICE CHAIR (DEP): Herb Ajmone
TREATMENT: *Cryotherapy*, 2001



Hear Ye! Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

WHAT'S UP WITH ERECTILE
DYSFUNCTION???

Nothing fishy about this:

Fish oil fatty acids may help slow PC growth



Personal trainer aids in exercise regimes

by John Dugan

Drago Price, a personal trainer with the Carlingwood branch of the YMCA, was the first of three speakers at our June 18th meeting.



Assume the position: The quirky tale of one man's journey through prostate cancer brought to life with Marc's creativity



For the record, I have written, revised, deleted, reviewed, edited, deleted again, and rewritten this piece a few times. Sometimes in my head, mostly on the screen. Still, I am unable to make sense of losing Marc.

While I knew he was in dire straits of late, it would never come to this, would it? Alas, we are cheated of more of Marc's wondrous creativity, humour, and generosity. I am cheated from getting to know him more and better, from further collaboration on this labour of love, and from staring glassy-eyed at the product he'd return when it started as a bunch of articles, announcements, and photo cutlines.

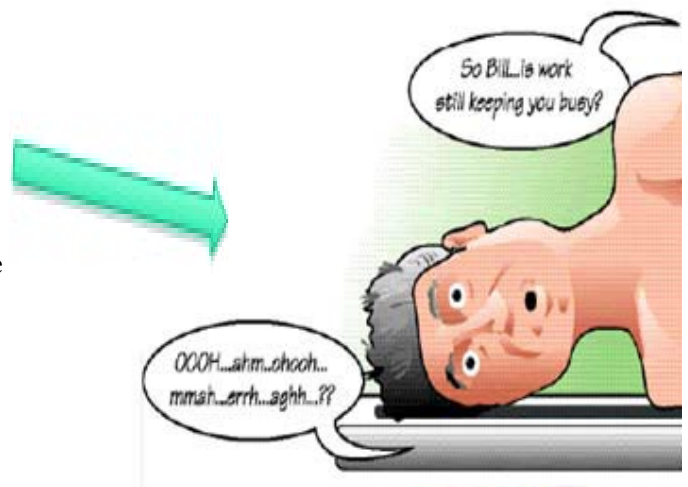
Marc amazed me. In June of 2006, I submitted my first in a series of articles to Ted Johnston for *The Walnut*. When it was published, it had this cartoon by Marc attached. I knew instantly we shared a strange sense of humour about our ordeals. It continued unabated through the serialized articles, the book, its cover (lovingly ripped off from a certain Signore L. da Vinci) and month after month of *Walnut* bits.

"Hey, how about this or that?" I'd write or call. Invariably, material came back more spectacular than I could have imagined. How did he know – how did he sense – what I was thinking? He always captured the very essence of a story or photo. For *Assume the position*, his imaginative, sometimes hilarious, graphics were each chapter's theme. I've been told frequently by readers how much they enjoyed his drawings.

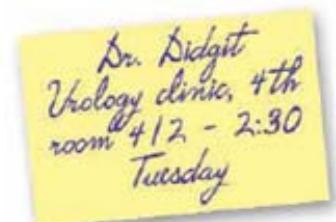
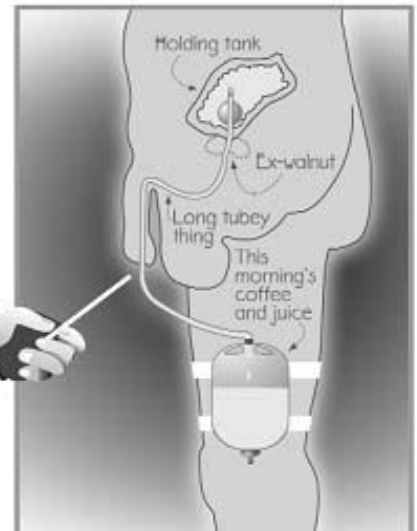
The Walnut's November issue was laid out and sent to print by Marc three weeks before he died. I managed one brief hospital visit with him, enough for me to realize how this scourge devastates and robs us of those we care about.

He left me richer for having known and worked with him. And after my own clunky layout tribute to Marc goes to print, I will again rewrite this in my head. For truly, I am at a loss.

Richard Bercuson



More of Marc's genius from "Assume the position"



Thank you, Marc