

GREAT LAKES COALITION FOR SHORELINE PRESERVATION

NEWS LETTER

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SUMMER 2007

Vol. 11 No.1

REMEMBERING PRISCILLA

Priscilla Mueller died at 4:33 pm on June 22, 2007 in the arms of her family

Priscilla Mueller served as Secretary and Treasurer of both the Lake Michigan/Michigan chapter and at the international level. Her stewardship of the records and finances was handled in her trademark orderly style. Her passion for the objectives of the Great Lakes Coalition took her into every facet of the work that resulted in an unusually high profile with the membership. Since she provided such a profound dimension to the organization, this special issue of the Newsletter is dedicated to her so that she may be remembered by the readers.

The news of her passing was received by Priscilla's friends and associates at the Coalition with extreme sadness. She had been ill and hospitalized for several months so the absence of her contribution of time and talent to the Coalition was very evident at the few meetings she missed.

She left this world at her beloved Bendemere, with the same style and grace that she brought to life. As business was conducted and each year blended into the next, her hands on effort provided a solid base for the organization so her sudden absence leaves a serious void. It also causes everyone to consider their own mortality because no one ever thought Priscilla would leave us. Her presence was

always counted on because she was an integral part of the decision making process. There is no doubt about it, Priscilla was important to the Coalition.

Priscilla - A very special woman

Priscilla Mueller was very small in stature, surely never quite weighing in at 100 pounds. She was very large however in strength, character, charisma, intelligence, personality, warmth, enthusiasm, perseverance, vision, honor, and especially order. You could always tell when she had been there. The stage was neatly set.

She also brought a strong moral compass to the table. She told the truth so her shrewd sense of honor just would not allow anything that was not honest and above board. Her character could never be questioned so it was indeed a pleasure to work with her.

Priscilla, in spite of her small size was every bit as strong as any tough adversary. Maybe adversary is not a good word here, and she was certainly not adversarial, but she made it clear when she did not agree with the position of the majority or the leader. Furthermore, her strength often carried her position to the fore. In her strength there was a toughness you could almost cut with a knife.

On occasion, she displayed a gentle side, which was just as definite. This strength,

warmth, and gentleness probably came through most vividly in her work with the youngsters at the Fennville School.

Priscilla was quick to grasp a vision for the Great Lakes, even if appeared to be far out. Many times her cheer leading and enthusiasm drove a vision into reality.

A beautiful woman

It was easy for Priscilla's charisma to come through because she was indeed a beautiful woman. She wore clothes like a model and was dressed for the occasion, no matter if it was at the base of an eroded sand cliff on Lake Erie, east of Cleveland, or in the ballroom at McCormick Place in Chicago. Many times her Coalition duties took her to official venues in both the United States and Canada.

Sometimes all Priscilla had to do was sit in the front row and say nothing to get the attention of senators, members of parliament or congress, or army generals. The Coalition leaders were especially conscious that her very presence illustrated the fact that the Great Lakes Coalition represented shoreline concerns in a dignified and attractive manner.

Priscilla was always a class act, which provided an important dimension to Coalition activities.

A sharp mind with intuition

At times government agencies speak the truth only selectively with minimal explanation but no one had to worry about Priscilla grasping the idea quickly. She was a good listener and thus slow to speak either in favor or against a proposed strategy. When she did speak to a subject, it was clear that she had it clearly

thought out so everyone listened.

Since all Great Lakes issues are not black or white, the perception of shades of grey from Priscilla's gut helped to guide the leadership into focus.

Meetings within sight of Great Lakes water

Priscilla had a sense for ambiance that brought color to Coalition events that would have been otherwise drab without her careful and detailed planning efforts.

A philosophy slowly emerged in which all meetings of the directors were held within sight of one of the waters of the Great Lakes. Priscilla chose venues that fit this specification and designed some enjoyment into each one, which helped greatly to emphasize local issues.

A meeting near Long Point in Canada on Lake Ontario included a walk on the beach. A dance was organized at the Evanston Yacht Club in Illinois on Lake Michigan and one could actually look out the meeting room window to view Lake Michigan from Port Washington, Wisconsin. Priscilla almost bombed out when she scheduled a meeting in February at the Toledo Yacht Club on Lake Erie. The heat in the meeting room was intermittent but a successful meeting resulted anyway.

She had spirit . . . that woman Priscilla!

Computers - a slow learn

How Priscilla kept the membership lists of the Coalition straight, no one knows. The initial list ran on a dos format designed to run on an early computer. Priscilla bit her tongue and

learned to use the primitive electronic data. However, you had to know that this just would not suffice, no, not for Priscilla. She also developed an old fashioned card file for each individual member. Even when directly ordered to drop the card file, she stubbornly refused.

Guess what, on several occasions the computer files were corrupted and Priscilla came through with her card files, and a cynical smile on her face, of course.

Priscilla had a typewriter in her office well into the millennium, but finally embraced word processing with considerable kicking and screaming.

Great personal presence on the big lake

Priscilla's personal property, a couple of miles south of Saugatuck, was purchased by her parents. It was named Bendemeer (By the Sea) and she loved that place so much that she chose to spend her last hours there in the bosom of her family.

The lake bluff at Bendemere is unbelievable in that it was tastefully encased in 4x4 wood lumber after erosion problems from the high water level of 1985 required armoring. The dramatic staircase with several levels to the beach personifies Priscilla's good taste.

The fact that she was dedicated to physical exercise and good health can be seen in the beautiful tennis courts on her property.

She has been a fixture in Saugatuck and Douglas since she was a child so she never failed to greet a friend any time she ventured down town.

She arranged local Coalition meetings at every possible venue as she liked the variety and difference that each location offered. It was a pleasure to always be treated so graciously by the local people. If you were with Priscilla, you were O.K.

Her contributions to her church are recognized by every member and the staff. She really enjoyed being close to God and served his house well.

Yes, it is difficult to find someone in Saugatuck or Douglas who did not know Priscilla Mueller!

Bi coastal family

Priscilla's three children, Wende, Paul, and Marty followed their successful careers and lifestyles to distant places like Vermont, Washington, and Idaho. As a result, Priscilla was stretched thin at holiday times. The airlines must have loved her.

She did manage to spend a lot of time with each and was a real close grandmother to quite a few special young people. Of course, each summer found the Mueller clan back at Bendemeer.

Do not feel sorry for Priscilla

The pain in our heart of hearts is not because we are sorry for Priscilla because she lived a rich full life that was loaded with creative interests, excitement, and love. She enjoyed music and theater, the arts, and she was indeed a social animal that played a mean game of bridge.

She traveled the world by floating down the Rhine River on a drift boat, cruised the oceans

on both large and small ships. One time comes to mind during a Coalition event that required Priscilla's delicate touch, when it was necessary to reach her by fax on a ship in the middle of the Pacific Ocean to get her advice.

Even though she experienced periods of sadness in her life, for the most part it was filled with fun and laughter and love. She lived a life that must be celebrated. It is we whom she left behind that grieve because we can no longer enjoy her special presence.

Great Lakes Coalition held a place in Priscilla's heart that called for the best she

had in her. . . and she loved it

If all of you could walk through her neat and organized office, her dedication and creativity would stand up and look you in the eye. We at the Great Lakes Coalition salute you, Priscilla, for a life well lived and wish you well in the next world.

Bill Andresen

Former International Chairman