

Tribute to Matt – April 21, 2018

By Andy Burnett

Matthew Loh was my friend for well over half of my adult life. That's a long time but Matt was a good friend. For a time, we also worked together in the oil patch. He was the quintessential engineer and he always had an idea for a better mouse trap. One of those was a really cool, high-tech prop for my boat – more about that later. He could fix anything and he was always just a phone call away if I needed handyman advice - he also probably had the tool I needed somewhere. I had to be careful about asking for help too often because he was a lot better at offering it than he was at asking for it so the favors balance sheet could get out of whack pretty quickly. He was pretty good at getting us to babysit the dogs and the horses though so there was always hope.

Matt was a hockey and ringette dad so we usually saw a lot less of each other between mid-September and mid-March. There was still the occasional fund raiser or important playoff game but summers were the best. Lots of hours spent on Whitefish Lake where we used the aforementioned fancy prop that changed pitch once the boat planed off so it went a lot faster – that was Matt – better mousetraps. And he knew where all the cool stuff was. Matt introduced the kids to the cliff

with the rope tied to a tree. It was across the lake and down a ways so we had to get them there by boat but they were good for hours once they got tired of water skiing and tubing. They'd climb up, swing out into the water, drop, swim to shore, climb up and do it again and again and again. We'd just sit out there in the boat under the umbrella and watch and laugh. One of Mat's boating inventions was the double tube. Two tubes behind the boat with a kid in each. Maybe a bit dangerous but really fun and between Matt and I almost any booboo could be fixed - or so the kids thought. Connor's first run in with the law came on Whitefish Lake courtesy of Matt and I. We thought US boating laws allowed 13 year olds to operate a watercraft. It turned out that was true but they needed to have taken a course first. Of course, Connor hadn't taken said course before he started ripping around on the jet-ski and although the sheriff was pretty nice about it, a ticket was still the result. Connor took the course.

Our Montana place is only about 25 minutes away from the Loh cabin but we we're on the golf course and they're on the lake, which was so much better so that's where we usually congregated. Matt was a consummate host. He was a really good cook and his crepes were to superb. He loved the hot tub and visits to the cabin often resulted in some time in the tub. Beer was frequently involved - another Matt paradox. Inga's from Germany and John's from Hong Kong. The

German part of Matt liked his beer, but the Chinese part of his body wasn't that cooperative so he looked like he'd been on an all night bender after one, two on a good day.

Matt and I shared stories of our kids as they grew up, job problems and triumphs and just an hour here and there to catch up. We could always do that easily no matter how long it had been since we last talked.

Matt was a great guy for dropping by for a visit when he had an hour to kill. He did that a couple of weeks before he died and I'm so glad he did. Harle and the kids and I'll miss you bud.