

To: Jody, JT and Melissa

Subject: Your husband and dad, my brother

Original Date: July 31, 2017

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Craig, your husband and father, was my brother and best friend for over sixty-three years. When your aunt Jan and myself got Craig, it was like the fourth of July, if I recall. There was so much hoopla, people coming and going at our house on Princeton Street in Delano. At the time, I was too young to really know what was going on just that the house was abuzz with a lot of commotion; that was 1954. Your grandfather and great grandfather built a new house for your dad to grow up on Quincy Street.

My next big adventure that is vivid in my memory took place in Grass Valley where we lived at what seemed like the top of the mountain. That area of California, along the Mother Lode of Hiway 49, is pocked with old gold mines of which all kids probably wanted to explore. Craig and I did for a little while one sunny afternoon. We went AWOL out of mom's sight for a few hours and set of what seemed like the panic of a nuclear attack. I'm sure I caught the bad end of that little incident and for good reason.

Also, while living in Grass Valley, our dad had built a custom, Chris Craft, ski boat so there were a lot of weekend trips to reservoirs in and around the area. We as kids, were too young to waterski or wakeboard the time but your grandfather had no problem. He'd start out on two skis, then kick one off and put the free foot behind the binding of the remaining ski. He was good at jumping wakes and carving out big "S" turns on one ski. Your grandmother was good at it in her own right. Later on, when we kids got a little older and could flounder somewhat out in the open water, your granddad built a wake board for the kids. Man, that was a blast and we all could do that one. We'd camp out with close friends from Grass Valley or Roseville and of course the relatives from the Sheehan and Groseclos side; all the first cousins together at the local lakes and reservoirs. That probably resembled a three-ring circus. It's probably nothing short of a miracle we were all accounted for at the end of the day. On one occasion, our family and another family, the Zoller's who had a boy and girl around the same age as us, were going camping and water skiing at one of the local reservoirs around Grass Valley. We had nine people, four adults and five kids, piled into one big station wagon, of course us kids didn't take up that much room back then, and we must have been several miles into our journey when one of the adults decided to do a final head count. Panic broke out when the total was only four kids; Craig was missing. I recall there was a lot of discussion who had responsibility for final kid count on the way back to our departure point which was the Zoller's old turn of the 19th century two story wooden house with a wraparound porch (common for the area and time). As the car and boat trailer screeched to a halt and all the adults got out to look for your dad, there he was on his tricycle doing laps around the porch as though nothing panicky happened. We had a fun weekend at the lake. I sort of recall seeing a pile of Hamm's beer cans lying around the camp fire.

After we moved from Grass Valley to Roseville, where I recall some kid on our block hit your dad with some sort of object on the head that required stitches and we continued our “boating” ways at Folsom Lake to beat the summer heat, we moved to Vacaville where days were filled playing with friends from our local age groups, so Craig had his friends and I had my set of friends. Our paths rarely crossed from about 1963 going forward, however there were still the traditional family get togethers for the holidays and that was always fun. Our mom and dad separated sometime in 1964 at which time mom gathered up the kids and moved down to Long Beach/Lakewood area to be close to her brother and sister-in-law. Again, Craig and I had different sets of friends due to our age difference, but as luck would have it, my friends had younger siblings that Craig became friends with. At this point in time, it was like one big family of relatives, friends and acquaintances, and your dad was always like a brother to my friends as well. He was lucky in that way to have two sets of friends, different age groups, always looking after him, although truth be told, we did duke it out once or twice for some silly reason.

After my high school year, I went off to Cal Poly, where again, a whole new set of friends and teammates, so my get together with your dad would be on school breaks of which usually were around the holidays with family and friends. The one thing this did for me was to see your dad grow up from that skinny tall, blue-eyed blond haired kid, with his 501's hanging off his ass (someone must've caught note of this as it has become the norm) because he had no hips, to a formidable opponent on any playing field. I recall my high school football coaches wanted me to convince your dad to go out for football. That wasn't really his thing, but he did go out for track and was a decent high jumper. I got to go watch him a practice on my Spring break and was quite impressed with his athleticism. Looking back, now, I'm glad he didn't go out for football; it's a violent contact sport. He was a natural. He was really a natural at whatever he was doing at the time, from musician, athlete, tinkering with cars, smart and of course those devilish good looks he had.

There was another occasion, while he was still in junior high school and taking some sort of shop class where he shaped and designed what could have been the first radical belly board. He let me try it out at some well known surfing and bodysurfing spots, which in turn spawned some new surfboard shape ideas for myself and our good friend, Howard Jacobs. Your dad's belly board design led Howie and I to shape some very small, very thin and very narrow surfboards for that time while most boards were still in the eight to eleven-foot size. We wound up making a handful of six foot plus boards, which were blazingly fast and maneuverable for that time era. Howie's and my favorite place to ride these boards was when those huge south swells roared into Huntington Cliffs like a freight train, which were generated by the usual late summer hurricanes off Mexico. It was because of your dad's design, taken to surfboards, that Howie and I missed the traditional class picture for the high school year book. When the swells roared in we were out with Mother Nature.

After my college years, I moved back to Long Beach and lived with your dad for a handful of months while figuring out what I wanted to do with my life. That was a fun time, me being twenty-three and your dad twenty-one. How much fun could we have? A lot.

I went back to school to get another degree in computer science and wound up moving to Huntington Beach with a couple of our friends but your dad would manage to come down and enjoy just about every weekend at my place, or we'd hook up at some mutually agreed place in Long Beach. Your dad was working with a handful of my buddies at Zapata, later named to Macco, Constructors in Paramount.

He drove one of the gang trucks at various sites all over Southern and Central California. His stories and adventures from those days are legendary. One of his favorite pranks was to pull alongside a competitive gang truck from another company and start honking the horn madly and point to the rear of the competitor's truck as if to indicate the poor bastard's airline was dragging on the freeway, most notably the San Diego 405, Long Beach 605 and 710, or Santa Monica 10 freeways.

Vanessa and I moved back to California, from Cookeville (kooksville as Craig called it), Tennessee, in 1990. Craig, sister Jan and step mother Bev, flew out from the bay area to help us pack and it must have been around the 4th of July. Craig suggested we go buy some bottle rockets and set them off in the back of the house (legal in the state). We were sort of isolated from any close neighbors so we bought a box or two of high powered rockets. He also came up with the idea to take a length of PVC pipe, tape it to a shovel, and voila, we had a mobile launch pad. We surmised the neighbors enjoyed the spectacular show as much as we did plus it was free to watch in their own backyards.

We all finished packing in a couple of days and headed off to Nashville so they could catch a flight back to California while Vanessa and I made the trip in a moving van pulling a car trailer. We all spent the night at the Opryland Hotel, except all rooms were booked so Craig, Vanessa and I shared one room with a king-sized bed. Of course, Craig and I had to explore this grand hotel with all the cool restaurant and bars under the glass roof. We found our calling and parked ourselves in a tucked away, jungle like place named Jack Daniels. After a long time there, we dead reckoned our way back to the room. My wife was stuck in the middle between Craig and myself; we snore.

While talking with cousin Jerry, he brought up something I had overlooked. During the summer of 2012, Craig and I drove down to Wasco for a long weekend with the mind set to lower my 2006 Dodge Magnum R/T. We removed the OEM struts and shocks to put in an air- bag system. Jerry brought up the point that for those days, Craig, Jerry, Jimmy and myself, spent some quality time together to get the project completed in that short time span. Jerry was the owner of a Big O Tire and he lent me his hydraulic lifts and front end specialist. Looking back, that really was neat to have spent that much quality time with everyone, dinners, drinks reliving family history. Craig and I would do this on a few fishing trips after modifying the car, but not with our first cousins like that weekend.

Hindsight is 20/20 and I missed several opportunities to be with Craig on occasions, like fishing trips to Pardee and NASCAR in Las Vegas in the past year. I wish I could go back in time and do it differently. We did do a lot of fishing trips together, though, with the Hawley brothers, dad and sometimes just us two starting back in the 1970's up until recent.

Yep, James Craig was my best friend and bubba for over sixty-three years and I was blessed to have him as my brother. I will miss him until the end of time.

A few highlights about Craig:

- Always smiling
- Always having fun
- Loved his family more than anything I can think of
- Loved to fish
- Had a mechanical mind, much like his father
- Would give the shirt off his back if you needed it

- Loved to party
- Was a good athlete
- Self-taught musician with the help of his grandfather and was a real good guitar picker
- Was darn good looking with those blue eyes, blond hair and well over six feet tall
- Like to pull practical, or not, jokes
- Loved NHRA and NASCAR, things on four wheels that went fast
- Loved to fly and came close to acquiring his license
- Was a forty-five-year devoted Laborer in SoCal and Teamster out of 853 in Oakland
- Had a practical approach to most everything
- Never got to excited about anything
- He loved all four legged animals
- The faces in the pictures might have changed, but the focus on him being he'll always be my best friend and bubba

Closing note: Craig was diagnosed with colorectal cancer in 2012 after being admitted into ER and almost lost his first battle to sepsis. He fought a good battle for the next five years with a colostomy surgery procedure. For all the time, I can't recall him ever complaining about anything, still maintained his smile and attitude about life. He passed on July 28th, from falling backward and hitting his head on the kitchen floor after his legs gave out. He was lucid and talking after the accident, but slowly faded from a broken vessel in his brain. He clung to life until his kids could join their mom at the hospital. He died peacefully with the family at his side.

The following verse depicts Craig's life:

Hebrews 13:5 Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

Links to Craig specific archives:

<http://www.surfgroup.us/JamesCraigClack/album/index.html>

<http://surfgroup.us/ClassMates/album/1972/index.html>

A short story by Tom Herman:

Craig Clack Story

One time in in the 70's a bunch of us guys decided to go to Lake Havasu for Easter break. We pooled all our money and bought ten cases of Spring Beer at Thrifty Drugs, and loaded up my green Ford "hippy" van and headed out. If I remember right, the beer was like \$2.50 a case. I can remember that there was Craig, Bruce Poole, Wayne Marshall, Dennis Marshall, Danny Deal, and me. Well, we left on Friday evening and started consuming our beer. Somewhere east of Palm Springs, Bruce Poole said he had to pee and insisted I pull over. I said the shoulder was sand and I would get stuck if I tried to pull over. Poole threatened to pee in the van, so I pulled over and immediately sunk in the sand. It was dark. We all got out and relieved ourselves, then managed to push the van back on the pavement. We quickly piled in, and needing to hurry and clear the highway, I asked if everyone was in. Poole said yes, and off we went. About an hour later I asked Craig to get me another beer (It was socially acceptable to drink and drive in those days). No answer. After about three tries to call Craig, I turned on the light and realized he was not in the van. When I asked where the hell was Craig, they all busted out laughing. We turned around and drove back about an hour through the desert and finally found Craig stumbling along in the dark trying to hitch a ride. When we got him back in the van, he was so happy to get a ride, that he laughed with the rest of us. What a guy! We went on to the lake and spent a crazy week that involved activities we were lucky to survive. Rest in peace Craig. Safe travels my friend.

Tom Herman

A short story by Mark Waite:

“I was stumbling around drunk trying to get in your apartment in the wee hours and Craig thought I was a burglar and locked and loaded a round and was gonna blow my s*** away when you stopped him.”

To finish the story: Mark had wrapped up work at the pizza restaurant he worked in out in Fullerton, some eighteen miles away from our house. As the story was told, in a sober state of mind from Mark, he and a few friends helped themselves to a keg of Coors after work. Mark, for some reason, thought to come over to our house, parked and stumbled around the house looking for the back door. Back in 1969, nobody used to lock their doors, ever. He couldn't get oriented so tried coming in through the bedroom window where Craig was sleeping. The thing is Craig had just purchased a Remington 870 Wingmaster 12-gauge shotgun. Mark was fumbling around with the window which was right over Craig's side of the room. It didn't take Craig much time to chamber a shell at which time Mark heard that familiar sound of a pump action weapon and he asked Craig to not shoot him. I think they all had a good laugh over a couple of beers and Mark spent that night at the house. I was off to Cal Poly that summer, early for football practice so I missed the event first hand. Cousin Jim Groseclos might have been living there too at the time as he just got out of the Army.

Short stories by Ron Petke:

To all the friends and family of my friend Craig Clack.

I met Craig in 1976 when he was living in Belmont Shore with Howard Jacobs. I had just moved to Long Beach from Illinois. They got my attention because they were always playing loud music out of their apartment. As soon as I met Craig, I knew he would be a lifelong friend. He was always inviting me to join them and of course, drink beer.

I wound up going with him, Howard, Cal, and Tom Hamilton to San Felipe for a Hobie Cat race. We pitched tents and drank a lot of beer. Eggs and bacon in the morning with beer. A great way to start the day. We told stories around the campfire and had a great time. A wonderful memory for me that I will always remember.

Later in our lives, I went to Northern California to Cal's wedding. I brought this huge video camera and a separate deck to tape the wedding. They put me up in the balcony out of everyone's way. The night before we had had Cal's bachelor party. I think it went on to the wee hours of the morning. After getting set up the wedding started. Craig was the best man I believe. From up in the nose bleeds where I was, he was doing some mighty swaying back and forth. For sure we thought he'd be out for the count, but being a true Clack, he stayed upright. It was also during the trip that we drove some sort of triangle to many different bars and did a burger tasting at each one. I think we really did it for the beer.

I think it was about 1982 that the city of Long Beach moved the Spruce Goose out of hangar in the harbor to the dome by the Queen Mary. I worked for the cable company then and was invited to video tape and document it. I knew Craig loved aviation so I invited him and his dad down to see the Goose. They also met one of Howard Hughe's right hand men Glen Odiker. We were all in good spirits that day.

Last, but not least, in 1986 Craig and Jody came to be witness at my wedding on the Big Island of Hawaii. It was very kind of them to do that and it really meant a lot to me and my wife Mary, The boys, Ed Bell, Craig and I went out for my bachelor party and Jody tracked us down to be a part of the fun. It's hard to hide on an island.

I will always remember Craig as a giving, fun loving guy. I could go on and on about all the backgammon games we played and all the laughs we had. I will miss him dearly but his memory will always live on.

Note to Ron's wedding story: I was over on Oahu, downtown Honolulu, writing software for Dollar-Rent-A-Car at the same time. Craig, Jody and Ed Bell came over together and we hooked up for a few days running around Oahu, looking at the sights in downtown, Waikiki, the North Shore, Kam Hiway, etc. You name the place we visited the place. Dollar had rented me a corner suite on the 37th floor of a high rise close to the International Market Place. Craig, Jody and I think Ed Bell stayed there with me until we went over to the big island for Ron and Mary's wedding. Craig had this brilliant idea to buy some balsa wood gliders and let them fly off the 37th floor and see where they landed. We must have done this in the evening when the trades had settled down. After we ran out of balsa planes, we raided the Yellow Pages from the phone book and folded up our own little fighter planes. We would track these gliders, sometimes

making a complete loop around the building. As evening wore into darkness, we weren't quite finished. One of us came up with the idea to put a little fire on the rear so it would be easier to track the flight; it was. Our thought was it was too wet due to all the rains and there was little chance to start a major fire. That was quite a spectacle and we had a good time naming our flight patterns after the main ad on the Yellow Page.

Off to the big island: We left for Hawaii to a condo which I had Dollar set up for us to stay, just south of the town of Kailua. As luck would have it, Hawaii got the storm of the century ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hurricane_Estelle_\(1986\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hurricane_Estelle_(1986))) while we were there, with surf so big it put most of the sail and powerboats up high dry on the road closest to the harbor. We watched boulders being tossed into the swimming pool at the condo we were staying at. The swimming pool was out from the condos towards a point. It was a wild scene, but we all had fun watching it happen live. We watched waves breaking inside, on the bottom floor, of the Marriott Hotel. Condos and houses with their bottom floors gutted by the waves. We all had a great time at Ron and Mary's wedding and the trip.

Condolences:

From Michael Halligan:

Hi Cal

I am so sad to hear of Craig.

As this year is 20th anniversary of Paul's death from cancer.

I too did everything with my brother growing up and he left a light on that continues to burn. His award to University of Toronto Pharmacy hospital resident is given annually. The golf tournament and basketball game for cancer has raised over \$250k.

Yes we are truly blessed and I will let Mom know. She will as I will say a prayer for Craig, and family today.

Take care friend.

Michael

From Jo Anne Waid:

Dear Cal and family Clack,

My sincere condolences for your greatest of loss. I feel blessed that I got to talk with Craig recently after so many years. It was so nice to hear his voice, catch up and connect. I'm happy to know he had a happy life and loving family especially when he faced his medical challenges with the spirit to live. Craig was a good man and we had a lot of good times with great memories that will last my lifetime. Thank you for this, it shows how much you love him. Craig was my first great love and will be in my heart forever and always.

Love always; thank you Jo Anne

From Greg DeLine:

Cal,

I am very sorry to hear about your brother. God Bless you and your family. It is a blessing he and you were brothers and best friends. He was a tough dude with what he went through these past years. I didn't know him well but he had my admiration.

Regards

Greg

From Joe Mangeng:

So sad to hear, I feel your pain. He was like a brother to me. I will contribute but my wife, well I have to go somewhere to use it. RIP Craig you will be missed

From Ron Steele:

Hi Cal

I am very sorry to hear of Craig's passing. I remember you and Craig when we were growing up and your loving Mom being at the Groseclos' place. He was a kind and fun guy and I only wish I had been with him more in adult life.

My thoughts and prayers are with your family.

From Don Hawley:

Cal

I am sorry to hear about Craig's passing.

One never really knows what to say in these circumstances. Losing a younger brother has got to be tough. The lifetime of memories hopefully tempers the sadness.

Don

From Peter Fessenden:

Cal and Jan..Sandy and I are so sorry to hear about Craig (Moma Nita's "baby" as she used to tell me). Our love, accompanied by peace and strength, go out to you.

From Ben Hawley:

Cal, so sorry to hear about Brother Craig.

From Scott Russell:

cal:

Sorry to hear of the passing of a good friend and your brother. please let me know when the service is?

scott

skippy

From Dion Record:

Calvin,

I am very sorry to hear about the passing of your brother. I don't know what to say really. I hope that you can find some peace during this time. I am sure that this cannot be an easy time for you.

I am thinking about you.

From William Mercado:

Hi Cal,

Mrudang let us know about your brother. I'm very sorry to hear about your loss and if there's anything we can do let us know.

Are you doing a paddle out?

From Mrudang Patel:

Cal,

I'm very sorry to hear about your brother. Please, accept my sincere condolences. Our thoughts and prayers are with you & family.

warm regards,
mrudang & family

From Sandy Bishop:

Cal, I am so sorry about your brother; words just don't cover it. What an amazing letter you wrote and those pictures are fantastic. I appreciate you sharing both of those with us.

My thoughts are with you and sending hugs your way.
