



ODU MAGAZINE™

A man wearing a light-colored long-sleeved shirt, a tan vest, dark pants, and a cap is standing in a shallow, clear river. He is holding a fishing rod and a small fish. The riverbed is covered with large, flat, light-colored rocks. The water is clear, reflecting the surrounding greenery and the sky. The background shows a lush, green forest with trees and bushes.

**Our Tribute To Larry Thornhill,
A Friend, Mentor, Teacher,
Leader and Problem Solver**







Opportunities, No Problems

Larry Thornhill's Guide to Happiness

My dear friend Larry Thornhill impacted my life in many ways, but I think the most impressive was his use of the word "opportunities." Contrary to first impression, he usually wasn't talking about potentially fortuitous scenarios, he was often referring to what most of us would call problems.

Larry presented the quintessential balance of optimism and realism. He was a man mature and sensible enough to know that life often requires us to stand still, pause, halt our

progress, let something pass. But his inner strength and steadfast commitment to whatever course he was pursuing left no room for negativity.

Therefore, in his view, there were no problems - just opportunities.

I'd heard Larry use that word many times, but none as impactful as the media trip he had invited me to join at Mexico's famed Lake El Salta. The fishing lived up to the hype, but the journalist in me found the nearby town of Cosala too inviting not to visit. The town's moniker, "El Pueblo Magico" (the magical town) refers to a rich tapestry of cultural and historical gems, including a connection to the Legend of Zorro.

During our stay, I worked out a plan with one of the lodge's drivers to spend an afternoon touring Cosala. Unbeknownst to me, Larry had already plugged me into his schedule for afternoon fishing trips.

Basically, I bungled up his schedule. It was unintentional, but nonetheless inconvenient.

When I returned from my tour, I spoke with Larry and awkwardly asked if my departure had created any problems for him. With his typical blend of patient competence, he told me that the last-minute change had simply created "opportunities."

Point taken, lesson learned.

First and foremost, don't create problems for friends - even the ones gracious enough to call them opportunities. Secondly, when life presents problems, choose to view them as opportunities.

Now, flash forward to Larry's funeral service. During the tribute speeches I twice heard references to how Larry enjoyed making dreams possible for others. Apparently, he was known for blessing others with random acts of kindness and generosity that enabled certain bucket list experiences of which a friend or loved one had been longing.

Well, shortly after saying my final farewell to a man I'll fondly remember for the remainder of my time, my wife and I learned of a situation in which a family friend was struggling financially and found herself unable to fund a special birthday trip she had been planning.

This young person faced a problem. We saw it as an opportunity. We did what Larry would have done and made a sweet young person very happy.

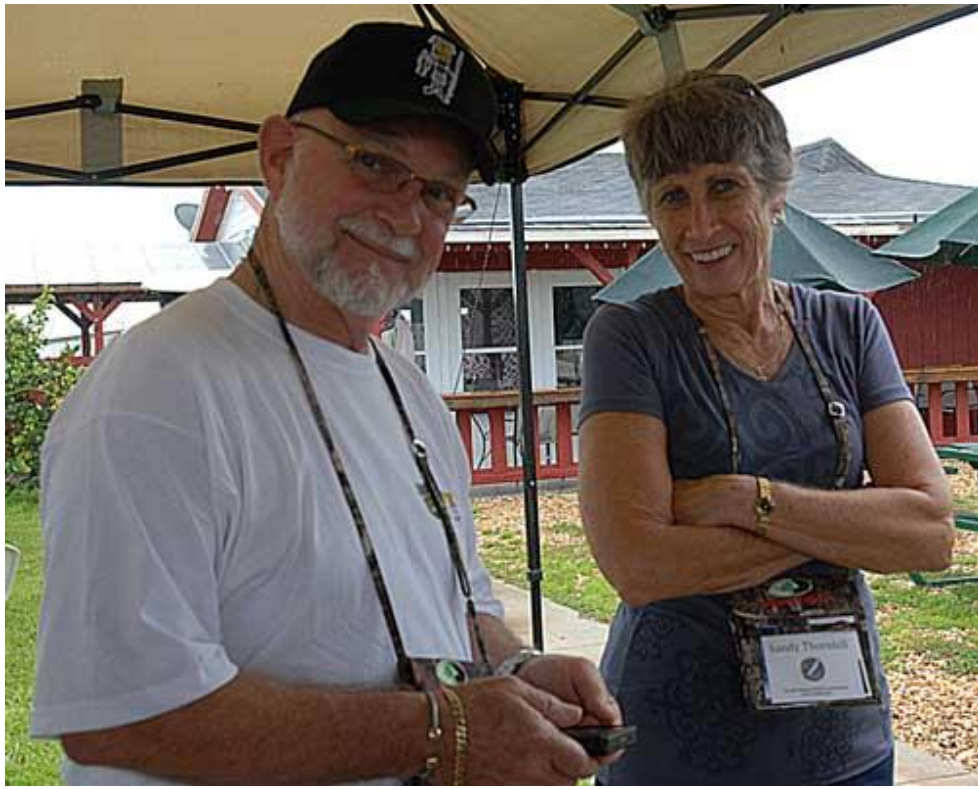
No recognition needed here. We all have Mr. Thornhill to thank for that inspiration.

Gone, but never forgotten. May the kindness and real life wisdom of this special person guide us all to turning problems into opportunities and doing whatever we can to make others happy. **By David A. Brown**

Great Trout Stream In The Sky

*I first met Larry in 1982, when he came to the corporate company where I worked. He took a job as a time study engineer. It did not take long for him to win over the love & respect from all that worked with him and for him. Shortly he became my boss and my friend. Although we did not always agree, we always came up with the best solution. By 1995, we both had our fill with the corporate life and began discussing whatever we could do outside of corporate and make a living for our families and enjoy what we were doing. Larry loved fishing so much he wanted to fish for the rest of his life. I had to laugh at him and said "Yeah right" make money fishing ha ha ha. That cannot happen. Well, he loved to prove me wrong, so in his own mind, he accepted that as a challenge and became successful in the fishing industry. As before he won the hearts of all who knew him. He was a wonderful family man as well as a entrepreneur. He remained my best friend and will stay in my heart and mind until we fish together again in that great Trout stream in the sky. Thanks Larry for all the great times we had to share. **By Dan Gallagher***





Larry Thornhill's Love of Animals

There was an aspect of Larry Thornhill that may not come immediately to mind but which always impressed me and said so much about his character. And that was his love of animals, particularly dogs.

At one point Larry and Sandy were the proud and loving owners of a Brittany spaniel – a crazy and fun loving breed in its own right. Their Brittany eventually passed but as things would go I am also the owner of a Brit, however when Brittany's are discussed one should just say "guardian."

In my line of work with so much traveling, a dog can sometimes be a problem but not with Larry. Larry and Sandy insisted that I bring my dog, Molly, with me when I visited and worked with Larry at his Virginia home. Dogs sense when they are wanted and it didn't take Molly thirty seconds to feel she had found a new friend with Larry and Sandy.

In fact, it wasn't more than an hour that Larry had my dog listening to his gentle commands.

Now Larry as you probably know what a bit of a home repair guy – at least when it came to working on his basement. Did that ever get finished? Well Molly like most dogs love their food but Brits have a way of gulping their meals – choking actually -- that makes you wonder if they'll survive to their next dinnertime.

Apparently – if I have this right – Larry had built his Brit a little wooden table, about a foot off the ground on which to place the dog's bowl. Having the dog's head somewhat elevated helps it down its dinner without so much, shall I say, gagging.

Watching Molly eating and choking in their laundry area, Larry got out the wooden stand he'd made for his old dog and placed Molly's bowl on it. It certainly made a difference. We all remarked on it.

When it came time for me to leave from that visit Larry offered me the little wooden table for Molly to take home, saying he could easily make another one if he needed it.

That table still sits next to my dog's kennel and it is where my dog eats all her meals when we're home.

*I believe this story tells volumes about what kind of man Larry Thornhill was. **By Vic Attardo***

A Larry Moment

I can't think of my friend Larry Thornhill without thinking of his smile and his two favorite phrases: "I love it when a plan comes together" and "I'm just trying to create a win-win situation." They encapsulate his approach to business ... and I suspect to life as well.

I first met Larry quite a few years ago at an outdoor writer's conference. I was new there, but he was obviously well-established and known by seemingly everyone in the room. I guess I must have looked a little lost because he came over and introduced himself, made sure I knew the right people there and saw to it that I was getting whatever I had come for at the time.

I appreciated his graciousness. It's something you don't see often enough in any walk of life



but perhaps most especially in the outdoors industry where people are more often acknowledged for their crassness than their good manners.

But his grace wasn't nearly the only thing that made Larry different. He also had a knack for bringing people together who were somehow kindred spirits without even knowing it ... at least until Larry made the connection. Some of my best friends in the business are people I met through Larry. I never thanked him for that, and that makes me sad. I don't think I even realized it until now.

As a planner, Larry was a master, and he absolutely always had a plan. When things went according to that plan, Larry was euphoric. But once in a while, they didn't and it was when the plans fell short that you could see the "other" Larry Thornhill.

I remember one outdoor writer function that Larry had organized where we were running out of food. I mentioned this to Larry and will never forget his reaction. His eyes got big and he stared at me in apparent disbelief. I wasn't responsible for the food, so I felt a little less invested than I might have otherwise, but Larry was beside himself. A monkey wrench like that obviously didn't sit well with him. I had never seen him even come close to losing his composure, but he certainly seemed on the verge at that moment.

He stormed past me to the buffet line and saw that the food was running low. There was no getting around it. Some people were going to be hungry unless something was done ... quickly.

"What do you want to do?" I asked, but Larry just stared at me. For a moment I wondered if he was thinking of serving me to the crowd ... perhaps fried.

After a moment, he had the answer — a single word!

"Pizza!" he said. "Lots of pizza!"

Larry placed the order and soon we had plenty of pizza for everyone. It didn't get there as fast as we wanted it, but it got there and it was pretty good. Most of the attendees preferred it to the fare it had replaced. Larry was back to his usual self. Plan A had fallen short, so he had reverted to Plan B. Once that decision had been made, he was fine.

Recollecting that night, I think it showed several facets of Larry: gracious host, indefatigable planner and resourceful businessman. It may have seemed a trivial incident if you weren't there, but I can't think of Larry without thinking of that story.

It also taught me a valuable lesson. Few problems cannot be fixed — or at least made better — with pizza. And the bigger the problem, the more pizza you need.

Unfortunately, with Larry's passing, there's not enough pizza to make things better. And we have no Plan B that will bring back our favorite planner.

Instead, we can only remember our friend and try to focus on the memories that bring a smile ... or maybe a tear (for now). **By Ken Duke**

SHRIMP

*If any of you has ever had the opportunity to dine with Larry at an all-you-can-eat shrimp night, then there is no need for you to read any further. You know the damage he **could do**.*

Larry had an insatiable appetite for peel-an-eat shrimp! My husband and I would join Larry and Sandy for dinner when they would come to Tampa.

Our first dining experience was at a restaurant called Jessie's near their home in Brandon. We later found another place in St.Petersburg called the 4th Street Shrimp Company. Both locations had one day a week where they would offer a special of an all-you-could-eat shrimp night.

First round... we all ordered the special accompanied by an ice-cold beer in a frosty glass. Each plate came with about a dozen steamed shrimp and two sides, which were a couple of boiled buttered potatoes and a cup of coleslaw.

Second round... Bring more shrimp for everyone!

Third round... two of us have had our fill, but we still order our share for one of the remaining of the two at the table to partake of.

Fourth round... three of us have now thrown in the towel, but again we still ordered our share for the last man standing.

Final round... Larry has a little more room left so he asks for one more refill.

*Now, for those of you that have not been counting, there is one individual, in particular, that has taken the term all-you-can-eat to an extreme. With a smug look of accomplishment, Larry has cheerfully put away ten dozen shrimp! **By Kathy & RC Barker***



My Son

I met Larry Thornhill some 10 yrs ago when he was hired onto the Fish Harder/Tru-Tungsten staff to handle media for us. Larry was a real character in many ways and we all could write many fun stories about him. Well maybe not all fit to print. He had the unique almost artful way of being a straight shooter always, no white washing with Larry. But he did it in a very gentile and polite way



*and always seemed to find the humor to almost any situation. After our first year of working together he became a father like figure to me as with many of you and from then on I referred to him as "Gramps" and he in turn called me "My Son". One story that comes to mind was very early on with the launch of Tru-Tungsten I was heading up the sales team. He warned that the fishing industry was a "Good Ole Boys" network and did not think me being 100% Italian and from "Jersey" of all places was going to make for an easy acceptance of the products I was trying to sell or of me personally. And he was right, I was called a "fast taking Yankee" and such so many times I could not even count. Larry gave me a piece of advice when he realized I was dead set on heading the sales team and it worked like a charm. He said tell them yes you may be a yankee but you live in Georgia for the past twenty years so your one of them now and do it with humor. As you could expect I was the brunt of many jokes when I attended the media events and shows Larry made damn sure it did not get too carried away. I loved him like a father and will miss him dearly. **By Dan Vesuvio***

*"It takes a long time to grow an old friend" is a quote from John Leonard that best sums up my relationship with Larry. A friend from the moment I met him some 20-years ago. I will greatly miss Larry's priceless, engaging smile and the conversations that we shared. Some things will never be the same without my Old Friend. **By Kelly Gohman***

Old Friend

Whatever It Takes

It is one week away from the FOWA 2015 conference, one of two places I always saw Larry. The other was SEOPA. It is hard to imagine I won't see him this year. He and Sandy were mainstays at the conference and part of what became a whole new family for Karen and me.

He was always willing to lend a hand on anything that needed to be done. I recall the first time I was asked to help with setup on auction day at FOWA. There he was, along with Sandy, digging in and getting sweaty. 'Whatever it takes' seemed to be his motto. My recollection of Larry is how hard it was to keep up with him. He was a doer, not a talker.



He was also a thinker. Larry was always thinking ahead in an effort to make something better or simply head off something bad. He was not afraid of controversy, he met it head on and you always knew where he stood on an issue. His leadership and sage advice contributed to FOWA's success over the years.

*I was blessed to know him, even if only for a few short years. He will be missed greatly. **By Ron Presley***

Calm The Water

For all those who knew Larry Thornhill I think it goes without saying that we all loved him. He was the kind of friend and person that is seemingly getting rare to find these days. Always thinking, engaging people and loving life. A man I could trust, confide in and argue bitterly with, without thinking for one second we would not be friends for life.

Losing my Dad to cancer only 8 months before I met Larry, he was many times a father figure to me. He was a friend to everyone, and invited many to share in his love for fishing and the outdoors.

After meeting Larry at ICAST (I think it was actually AFTMA back then), we quickly struck up conversation and soon after started on a business adventure. During that time we quickly became friends more than business partners. Larry would travel to Pennsylvania for weeks at a time as we worked on the business sharing stories about family, fishing, and life.

Displaying diplomacy and tact he was always an arbitrator at writer's events, Fish Harder meetings, and other fishing functions many of you were part of.

I always felt like there was an adult in the room when Larry was there. He would try to "calm the water" while the rest of us were arguing like cats and dogs, then would tell us how he really felt over a glass of scotch and occasional cigar.

Larry and Sandy invited my family many times to come visit and fish at their home on Kerr Lake and I have found a couple of pictures of my son Shane with Larry as well as Larry and Sandy on their front porch as we were leaving to head back to Pennsylvania from one of our fishing trips.

*I feel privileged to have been part of Larry's life and although it seems surreal to me that Larry is gone, my family and I will surely miss the fellowship and Love that he shared with all of us. **By Terry Monteleone***



It Was Another “First” For Him

What I remember most about Larry was our trip to the Texas Outdoor Writers Association conference. We drove in from San Antonio to Uvalde. Somewhere around Hondo Texas, we drove through a horrific storm. Turns out we drove through a rain-wrapped tornado. He chuckled and said it was another “first” for him. That was Larry. He took everything in stride.

By TJ Stallings

A True Gentleman

I am so very sorry to hear about Larry's passing, he was always kind to me as he was everyone he came in contact with a true gentleman ! The fishing industry has lost a true



*champion of the sport. My earliest memories are of fishing the Florida Bass Trail tournaments that Larry and Sandy ran in the mid 80's. They worked very hard to make everyone feel welcome and I remember one event in particular where my partner and I were late to the start, Larry new we were coming so rather than leave after blast off he hung around long enough to check our boat and let us go even though we were about an hour late! We ended up winning the event and had it not been for his commitment to his anglers we would have gone home empty handed. It's always the little things that get overlooked but in some way this simple act was a big part of my eventual success as a tournament angler, now some 40 years later I can say that he was always a friend and I will miss seeing him at the Classic and ICAST. **By Peter T***

SEOPA Rookie

As a rookie with SEOPA I looked around for a friendly face at my first Conference, anyone who could or would give me a few minutes and a lot of pointers on how to make it as an outdoors writer. It didn't take long to meet the man who became a friend. Larry didn't just take me under his wing. He wasn't just a mentor. He was a colleague! Every conversation was positive and personal. He was a great listener.

Usually after a glad-handing conference everyone says they will call and they never do. Larry was different, not only did he call, but he had some tips for me to pick up some freelance work. He also helped me with queries for editors. And he helped me with story ideas. Larry made it seem so easy. I would run into Larry all over the place. He made the fishing industry seem small, seeing him at ICAST, fishing tournaments and of course at SEOPA. As for the in-between times, Larry had time. Time to chat, time to advise, time to listen. He was great at all 3. He always took my calls. He never had to "cut them short". One of the most considerate people I've ever met. He never asked for anything, but was ready to give. I am better off for having known him.

*But his kindness extended outside our professional world. Knowing I was a diabetic, Larry was always concerned about my health. At a writer's event on Kerr Lake, Larry and his wonderful wife Sandy invited all of the guys over for a cookout. Sandy made fresh pies! I avoided the temptation, until Larry offered me a pie Sandy had prepared just for me. Sugar-free cherry pie! That was over 10 years ago. I'll never forget the pie and the thought behind it. The best compliment you can give someone is that they made you a better person, a more considerate person. And for that, I will take what Larry gave me and continue to pay it forward. Thanks Larry! **By Capt Steve Chaconas***



No one enjoyed a good cigar, four fingers of single-malt Scotch, and Taco Bell more than my friend Larry Thornhill.

Taco Bell

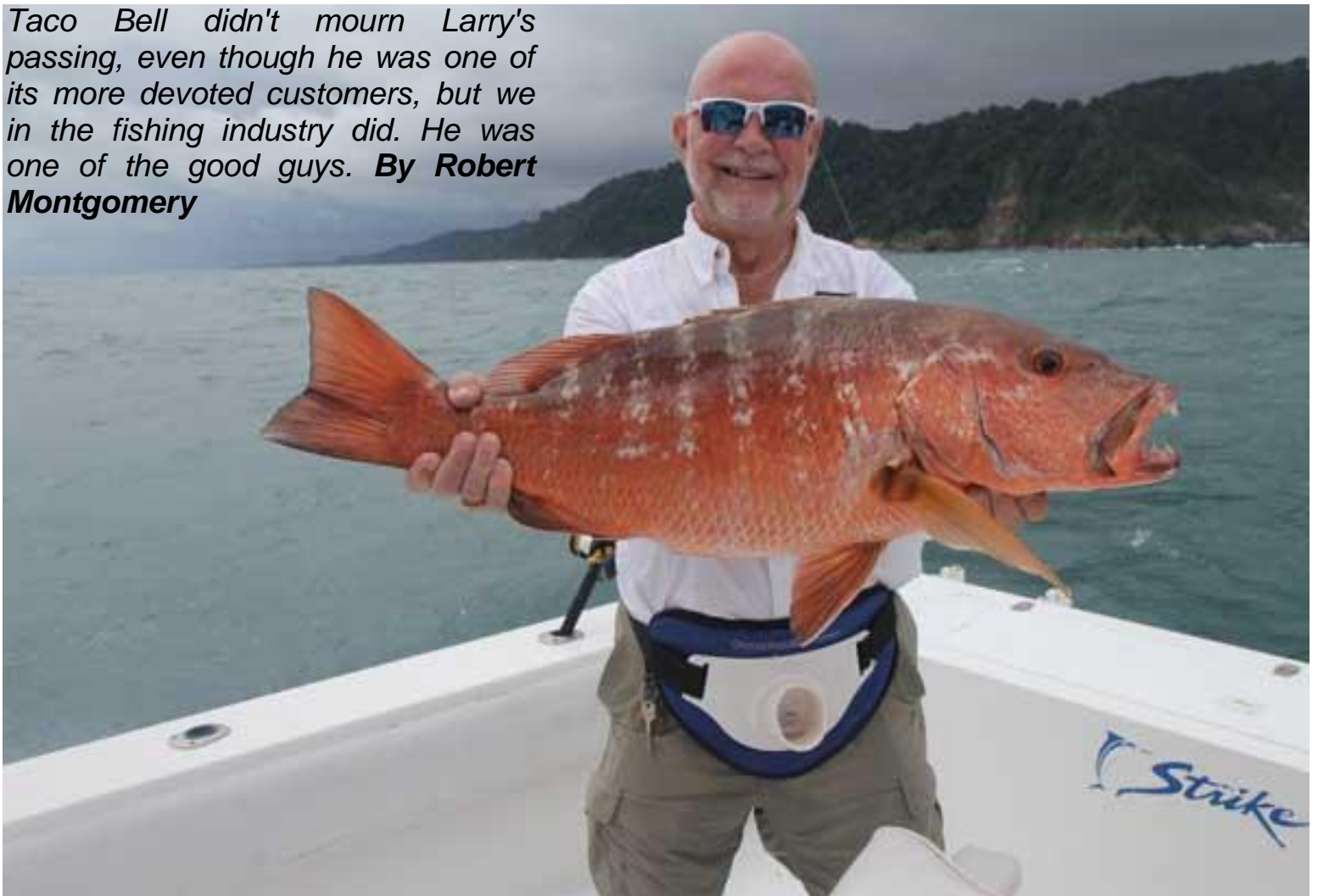
Larry came late in life to discover the culinary delights of tacos and burritos South of the Border. I learned this after we stopped at Taco Bell during a side trip from the Bassmaster Classic in Birmingham to the Tennessee Aquarium in Chattanooga. Larry ordered one of everything on the menu. I'm not kidding. And then he went back for dessert.

When I told mutual friend Dave Burkhardt about this, he laughed and told me about a trip to Lake Okeechobee with Larry a few years before. When Dave pulled into a Taco Bell on the way home, Larry told him that he had never eaten Mexican food before. Inside, he ordered by saying, "I'll have what he's having."

Larry liked the food so much that he not only ate there, but took along more for the road, Dave said. That's the way Larry was. When he liked something, he didn't hold back. He was that way about the fishing industry too. He loved it so much that he probably would have paid to be involved, instead of getting paid for the promotional work that he did.

And he gave back plenty. For years he was the heart and soul of a kids' saltwater catfish derby in Tampa. He solicited sponsors, he organized activities, and he served as master of ceremonies, working long hours to share his passion for fishing with children.

Taco Bell didn't mourn Larry's passing, even though he was one of its more devoted customers, but we in the fishing industry did. He was one of the good guys. **By Robert Montgomery**





He Was A Visionary

*Larry was instrumental in my becoming a published outdoor writer in the U.S. It was because of his reaching out to me with the suggestion that I write about my own perspective on fishing that I gained the confidence to tell it my way. Over the years Larry continued to support me with advice, guidance, and suggestions on how to take things to the next level. Because of Larry's belief in me I now publish articles, host a radio show every two weeks, filmed and produced a documentary, and most recently, started my own TV fishing show called Feel the Bite. Everything from naming shows to advice on how to approach sponsors, Larry always had time to hear my ideas and help get me pointed in the right direction. He saw something in me that many others were quick to overlook because of my being without sight. To Larry, it was about turning a deficit into an asset. Larry was one of those rare people who could envisage bridges and the benefits they would bring to people where no bridge presently stood. He was a visionary. He was also someone I grew to count as a friend. I only hope in some way I was able to repay Larry's generosity by giving of my own time to listen and support him over the past year as he courageously battled for his life. **By Lawrence Gunther***



A Great Mentor And Role Model

Larry was always teaching me and explaining why and how to keep the sport fishing industry first in our priorities and to make sure we always made decisions that helped someone in the industry. Larry would say to me a lot of the times, let's help them out and see how we can do it. My job was to find the best way to get it done. Larry instilled in me that the doors to www.odumagazine.com were always open to help colleagues in the industry. Sometimes

these "opportunities" opened more doors for us, but they have always turned into great friendships. It is always about the friendships Larry remarked time after time.

I have a number of fond memories about Larry. More than I could detail here. He was always available for me. He always made it a point to reach out to me after one of his trips (if not while on a trip). He always contacted me when there was a chance to hand over more information about the sport fishing industry and especially if I needed to get myself involved. He always showed me his way of making a situation work for all.

One of my favorite memories was our first ICAST together. I still can remember us sitting down and planning how we were going to work the floor. For that ICAST, Larry was the teacher and I was the student and off we went. Larry took the time to introduce me to so many people, and after meeting that new personality Larry would explain why that relationship was important and how he treasured it himself.

I am Larry's partner in Outdoors Unlimited Magazine, and as I have recently heard I was Larry's right hand man. To me, Larry was much, much more. He was a friend, adviser, confidant and a buddy. As you read through this tribute put together by Larry's friends about his legacy, it might be hard to believe that one man could be all that has been told. I am lucky to know that this was true.

Outdoors Unlimited Magazine and www.odumagazine.com will continue under the foundation that Larry Thornhill created and will carry on under the new name Outdoors Unlimited Media. The title of ODU Magazine, the digital fishing magazine, will continue and remain unchanged. As new titles are developed and launched, the name ODU Magazine will always be attached.

"I will be talking to you a lot Larry. So keep your ears open and let your rays of sunshine shine down on me as I carry the torch forward on the project we started together." By William Schwarz

A special thank you to the following friends for helping me compile these stories, photos and words for this tribute to our dear friend Larry Thornhill: David A. Brown, Dan Gallagher, Vic Attardo, Ken Duke, Kathy & RC Barker, Dan Vesuvio, Kelly Gohman, Ron Presley, TJ Stallings, Terry Monteleone, Peter T, Capt. Steve Chaconas, Robert Montgomery and Lawrence Gunther.



