



THE HARDWARE HERALD

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NEAL HARTLERODE died on February 22 this year.

Neal's love affair with Island Hardware & Supply, and thereby with most Orcas Islanders, began with him being our mainland wholesale door representative. The thousands of you who regularly went to Neal to solve your building problems of all manner know how amazingly special Neal was.

When I first met him, even over the phone, I knew I had to try to get him to join Island Hardware's team any way I could. I wish I had a nickel for every time I said to Neal, "Which would you rather do? Be rich and live in Tacoma or be poor and live on Orcas?"

After a number of years of me offering, pleading, and just old-fashioned begging for him to come work with us, he finally accepted some of the strangest employment terms I've ever offered. I could not offer him as much money as he was making at the time at the nationwide huge wholesale materials conglomerate. I offered him Harriet's second floor apartment which was empty, I threw in an old Jeep Cherokee, and we even sponsored the first, and so far only, Island Hardware wedding, reception, and honeymoon in my camp trailer at Cascade Lake! Oh, I almost forgot, I had to have a sizable dog run built for Neal and Jennie's two big dogs.

We at IHS are all very thankful for the 20 years we enjoyed having Neal as a member of our family.

He was very private about his deep religious beliefs. I am quite sure Neal is enjoying his time with Saint Peter. Also Saint Peter's gates most likely operate smoother and quieter since Neal's arrival. Hope to see you again, old buddy.



Paul

"Uncle Neal" was the go-to guy at Island Hardware for so many years. When I first started working at Island Hardware, I needed Neal's help with a customer needing a pneumatic nail gun. Upon opening the gun for the customer, he made a cool sound with the plastic wrap as he was opening, I proceeded to say "Oh, do it again, Uncle Neal, do it again," and that's how he became Uncle Neal. Rest easy, my friend.

Marce

I worked with Neal for 12 years and have many tender memories of Neal that I will cherish forever. He was an incredible teacher. I learned a great deal from him and I made sure to express my gratitude. People were amazed how many bits of wisdom he had to share. Neal was a Jack of all trades and master of SOME.

I was a daily witness to Neal's big heart. His willingness to give people his time was part of his nature, and he did it without any thought of reward. He loved Island Hardware and all of our customers. I think my favorite part about Neal is he loved people for who they are, instead of finding flaws in what they're not. Neal was so very dear, to so many islanders. He is an island legend. Rest In Peace, my friend.

Woody

Neal was a very generous person and there's a lot to say, but I'll try to be brief. We bonded over our love of woodworking and food and we both liked to share things we love. He was always freeze drying or smoking things, and my wife is always cooking awesome food. She'd bring in some homemade sauerkraut and he'd give us some freeze dried ice cream, that sort of thing. Then one day out of the blue, he showed up at my house with a whole smoked turkey; it was done so perfectly it didn't even look real. We had to take pictures because we thought people wouldn't understand how perfect it looked, and it tasted just as good. To this day it's the best turkey I've ever had. We miss him! Rest easy, Neal.

Josh

It was almost 20 years ago in a time that seems far, far away... I started calling Neal "Obi wan Kenobi." I was always amazed at how many things he had done and how many lives he had lived. He always took time to show me how to build, fix, or repair just about anything. When Neal told me he was retiring and, for some reason I was invited to take his spot, I had to admit I was a bit nervous. When I told him that, he said, "Why do you think I've been training you all these years?"

Neal may not have always had the "Force" or used the "Force," but he was a force in his mastery of craft and Jedi knowledge. However, his best quality was his generosity in sharing it with others.

Marty

COSTS JUST GO UP & UP...

Our cost are unavoidably rising weekly. Here are some of our suppliers' reasons:

1. The value of the US dollar has decreased 10% against the Chinese yuan.
2. World wide shipping container shortages raise the transoceanic costs of shipment.
3. Natural disasters and raw material shortages have drastically raised the cost of many items made here and abroad.
4. A Panamax container ship consumes over 50,000 gallons of fuel daily. A trip from Long Beach, CA to China is an average 22 day trip. 22 days x 50,000 gallons = 1,100,000 gallons of fuel! OOPS! I forgot the trip back — many times nearly empty. In Nevada, fuel prices went up about a dollar a gallon in March. I wonder how much shipping fuel costs have been affected?

Well, all this seems pretty gloomy, but one thing to remember: The USA is the strongest, most free, most *magnificent* country on this earth! We can fix about anything.



Found on Facebook, author unknown.

SEMI-RETIRED IN PAHRUMP

With about 30 rigs on this trip into Death Valley, the only 4x4 that managed to get stuck was me! That's right only my English gem got stuck TWICE. Did you ever notice that the go-anywhere Land Rover ads are racing across **flat deserts**? Well, this 22 year-old English contraption is semi-retired. It journeys to church, the library, and occasionally to the dump. Last year, it traveled 89 miles without a mechanical issue — a record for this old gal.



Why are blue sponges more than yellow sponges? Same company, same sponges— different colors, different prices. Why?

Good thing the yellow ones aren't red. Then it could be considered political. Lord knows some politicians have been known to sponge off their constituents.



Lumber prices too high? How about rock?

