



Jonathan Bry

October 2, 1963 - November 18, 2012

Jonathan Andrew Bry, Bismarck, passed away on Sunday, November 18, 2012, at age 49. A memorial service will be held at 10:00 am Friday, November 23, at Parkway Funeral Service, 2330 Tyler Parkway, Bismarck. Reception and luncheon will follow at the Unitarian-Universalist Church, 818 E. Divide Ave, Bismarck. Jonathan was born in Bismarck on October 2, 1963, to parents Edwin and Marilyn Daley Bry. He graduated from Bismarck High School in 1982; he then attended UND, California State – Northridge, and UC – Berkeley, and in 1993 graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts and Industrial Design from San Francisco State University. As a child, he and his family spent many hours on the Missouri River, which inspired in him a life-long love of the outdoors. As an adult, Jonathan directed this passion into work as an advocate and activist for a number of causes. An avid boater, hunter, and fisherman, he was a founding member of the Board of Directors of the Friends of Theodore Roosevelt National Park, also serving as editor of its newsletter. At the time of his death, he was on the executive committee of the Dakota Chapter of the Sierra Club. For many years, Senator Byron Dorgan's staff in North Dakota and Washington relied on Jonathan's input as a community leader in environmental issues. Jon was a powerful advocate for human rights and peace, as well as environmental conservation, and was dedicated to being politically active to make the world a better place for future generations. Jonathan knew how to be a good friend and was kind, loving, and caring to all who crossed his path. His friends cherished him, as did his animals and pets,

for whom he cared with great dedication. It was this commitment to others that inspired him to be an organ donor, donating his corneas, veins, and bones. Jonathan was truly a citizen of the world. With great respect and interest in multiple cultures, he traveled in his lifetime to every continent except South America and Antarctica. Earlier in his professional life, in 1980, he enlisted in the North Dakota National Guard and had a ranking of Specialist 4. In 1984, he transferred to the California National Guard, completing his duty in 1985. Jonathan also lived in Wainwright, AK, as part of his work with Associated Pool Builders, for whom he built indoor pools with his friend Ken Traynor. While later living in California, Jonathan returned to Bismarck frequently to assist his mother, Marilyn, with the care of his father Ed, while Ed battled cancer. In 1987, he travelled for six months visiting New Zealand, Australia, and Indonesia with his girlfriend Vonny Sempelz, visiting her family. Jonathan returned to North Dakota following this trip where he spent time with his parents before moving to Oakland and Berkeley. It was in Berkeley, 1987, where he met Reid Bennett, owner of Flexitoys. Jonathan was hired part time as an assembler and was Reid's hardest entry-level worker. Because of Jonathan's hard work, dedication, innovation, and creativity, Reid identified Jonathan as the best employee he'd ever hired. Jonathan moved quickly into upper level positions, including travelling for trade shows in New York City and throughout the country, all while he was working toward his degree. Jonathan held a patent for the adaptor he designed to connect Flexiblocks to Legos. In 1993, the company moved to St. Helena in Napa Valley where Jonathan lived until the company was sold in 1996. As a result of the sale of the company and due to his mother Marilyn's diagnosis of Alzheimer's, Jonathan moved back to Bismarck to care for his mother. He then managed Solar Graphics, a subdivision of Flexitoys, while he cared for Marilyn. The help he received from FEMA during the San Francisco earthquake inspired him to work with FEMA during the Red River Flood of 1997. When that assignment ended, he continued to care for his mother while managing Solar Graphics. From 2001 to 2004, Jonathan was employed by the Sierra Club as the State

Conservation Coordinator with a focus on the Missouri River Working Group, firmly dedicated to protecting the natural beauty of the Missouri River. In 2004, Jonathan convinced Reid Bennett to relocate Flexitoys to Bismarck, where he served as manager until his death. In addition to his steadfast dedication to social and environmental justice, Jonathan was also an exceptional artist, excelling in various mediums such as painting, music, pottery, and graphic design. He was a composer as well as a self-taught musician of piano/keyboards and drums. Beekeeping and gardening were also passions of his. He was preceded in death by his parents, Edwin Bry and Marilyn Daley Bry. He is survived by his girlfriend Lisa Omlid; beloved dog and cat, Papina and Shadow Van Gogh; brothers Don, Minneapolis, Tom and Anne Coffey, Bismarck, Bob and Brenda Kesler, Bismarck; two nieces, Tessa Nathaniel, Ithaca, NY, and Maureen, Bismarck; seven nephews, Erik Shannon, Thomas, Kurt, Joel, Bismarck, Alec, Williston, Josh, Seattle, Jake Courtney, Castle Rock, CO.; longtime friend and business partner, Reid Bennett, Santa Rosa, CA. Memorials can be made to Friends of Theodore Roosevelt National Park www.friendsoftr.com or an organization of the donor's choice.

Tribute Wall

CS

“ I knew Jon when he dated my sister. We worked together on a painting crew. I really enjoyed his company and we had a lot of fun together. I'm sad to hear that he's gone but I will always think of him and smile about the good times we shared. Jon was a good guy and I will always remember him that way. God bless you Jon and the family and friends he left behind. Peace to all.

Chris Sempelsz - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

YB

“ Playing Music with Jon music was all way fun. Here is a song that Jon played keyboards on in 2003. To watch this video just go to Youtube and search "Jonathan Bry song". There are lots of old pictures of Jon and your planet and a lot of pictures that jon took. Also, we like to send our deepest sympathy to the family.

Your Planet Band - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

EF

“ As I read the obituary for Mr. Bry I was truly impressed by all that he experienced and accomplished in such a short life. Reflecting on such a life as Jonathan's helps us to appreciate even more the plans our grand Creator has to restore his original purpose and make it possible for all mankind including our loved ones we have lost in death to live forever under perfect conditions. Matthew 6:10; Job 14:14 & 15 Please accept our condolences as you deal with the loss of Mr. Bry and contemplate the hope of seeing him once again.

Elton Family - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

ME

“ I wrote this one for Jon, listening to his song *First Light, First Life, After Life Postlude* inspired it. *The Crests of the Seconds Pounding* By for Jonathan Bry We watch the circle rounding the next corner like the moon above revolving around us all the slow movements and its certain curves lead us away from the center where we began looking out on the breach beyond the halo's crests for the visions above the crawl space where reasons are our own way across the great plains that had been laid out for him yet for us still awaiting his next temptation

Mark Erickson - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

DR

“ Our thoughts and prayers with family and friends. Paul & Darcie Reifschneider

Darcie Reifschneider - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

LM

“ I was so sorry to read about Jon. My condolences.

Laura McDaniel - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

SH

“ I knew John when I did organizing for Alaska conservation efforts back in the early 2000s. He was always willing to provide a bed for a night, a contact in a town, and even traveled to DC at least a time or two to lobby on behalf of wild Alaska. He will be greatly missed. My thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends.

Scott Hed - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

KB

“ *Rest in Peace my good friend. Thoughts and Prayers to family and friends thru these difficult times.*

Kevin Barnhardt - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

SB

“ *My thoughts and prayers are with all of Jonathan's family and friends.*

Stacey Bergquist - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

GH

“ *To Jon's family & friends: I send condolences to all and pray he will requiescat in pacem.*

Guy Hanson - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

RL

“ *To all of John's Family & Friends Our deepest sympathies to all of you. Rob's family and the Bry family were friends over the years and we're just so sorry for your loss. What a wonderful story about John and all the condolences being sent from all over, it's easy to see how many people his life impacted. Our prayers and thoughts are with you, Rob regretted not being able to get there for the service. The last time we saw John was at your dad Ed's funeral. God's Peace.*

Rob & Marsha Lehmann - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

AB

“ I faintly know Jonathan Bry through my Aunt Viola Bergquist. I have visited with him only three or four times in my lifetime, but I have a story I must share. As I was visiting with Johnathan at my Grandpa Gene's funeral a few years back, I stated that I was just starting my teaching career. He asked if I would be in need of any Legos. I said I would love them, but would like to pay for them. He wouldn't accept any money for them. When I received the "Legos" they were not your typical Legos! For six years they have been played with and loved. I am so grateful for his generosity. What a wonderful man and I am very thankful I got to meet him through my aunt. There will not be a year that goes by that I don't think of him as my students create and use their imaginations as they get to play.

Amy Burke - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

KB

“ My thoughts and prayers go out to Jon's family. May you find peace and comfort in this hard time. May God Bless You!

Kent Brown - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

CT

“ We were so saddened when we learned of the death of Jon following a phone call from our daughter, Susan. We are sorry that we were unable to attend the service held at Parkway, but please know our thoughts are with you all in your loss. You are always welcome to stop in when you are in Belfield and please do. Belfield friends, sonny and Barb

C C Thompsons' - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

RP

“ You hope, as you go through life, to lead by example. Jon did. He walked the walk. He was also a kindred spirit. I've long admired him, and I'm grateful he was a part of my life. We all need something to strive for - my tribute to Jon is to strive to be as true to my convictions as he. He set the bar high. Peace to you, my friend.

Rich Pearson - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

TC

“ Jonathan was one of kind. I wish I had not of wrecked our friendship, but I did and I miss him very much. I also wish I could have gone to the the service. Jonathan was a big part of my life and I will try to remember the good time not the bad end. I will try to forgive myself for causing Jonathan pain and I will forgive jon for ending his life.

Tom Carr - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

TG

“ To the family of Jon Bry, Learning of Jon's passing we grieve with you. We are so, so sorry. Jon was a friend of our son Ed and would be in and out of our house in Bismarck a lot in their younger days. Jon was always courteous and easy to visit with. I felt so sorry for him the day he came to the door and told me his mother was put in a nursing home. We are thinking of you and trust the coming days will bring peace - he will be missed. Ed is deeply saddened and will miss Jon terribly. Take care all, Phyllis and Troy Green

Troy & Phyllis Green - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

MJ

“ Jon, you will be greatly missed by everyone whose lives you touched. I am glad to have had the chance to be your friend from junior high through High school. May god bless you.

Mark Jundt - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

SK

“ My thoughts and Prayers go out to Jons family and friends. I have many fond memories of Jon from High School. He was easy to talk to, had a cute shy smile and a twinkle in his eye. It sounds like he lived a full life, always giving back in some way. We could all stand to learn from Jon's dedication and commitment to family, community, environment and animals of all kind. May you rest in peace knowing that you left this world a better place. God's comfort to all.

Sarah Kiefer - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

JB

“ Jonathan's mother was my cousin. After she and Ed moved to first Belfield and then Bismarck, the close family ties were severed. We enjoyed watching the boys "grow up" in the pages of North Dakota Outdoors that Ed was editor of when he "retired" from being a game warden - I never knew Jonathan in adulthood but was thrilled to see him in the political ad stating his thoughts and mine on Rick Berg. I am sure he will be missed by all who knew him closely - and from a branch of the family he may not even remember.

Jim Benjaminson - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

TC

“ Jonathan, you will be missed. You were a friend who was filled with love and compassion for humanity and animals. I remember your sweet and innocent smile and gentle heart. You left this world much too soon but may you find peace and comfort in God's arms. With love and admiration, Tina Kemmet Clark and family

Tina Kemmet Clark - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

DJ

“ We knew Jon only briefly at the time of our daughter's wedding to Reid Bennett....he was very kind to us and we feel fortunate to have met Reid and Jennifer's friend.

Don and Sue Jones - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

CS

“ I knew Jon briefly when he worked in St. Helena for Reid Bennett and Flexitoys. I found him to be a peaceful and sensitive artist, and promising innovator. He will be missed.

Christopher Sullivan - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

CV

“ Wish I would have known Jon more....thru his family only got a glimpse of what a really awesome man he was...to all his family & friends I wish you peace...

Cindy Vollmer - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

CB

“ Impossible to fathom the loss of a brother. Our thoughts and prayers with the family. As we approach the holidays, focus on the positives and the many many great memories.

Curt Bry - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

MR

“ RIP JB

Mark Roningen - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

ME

“ Very sorry to hear about Jon. I knew him when he lived in Berkeley and Oakland with his gal Vonny and my cousin Al and his buddy Rory. Jon was a great guy, sensitive artistic, talented and quiet in an interesting way. I often wondered what he was thinking, as i knew the wheels were constantly rolling. With his jet black spiky punk hair, he resembled maybe the 5th member of The Clash. I took some great photos of him, he was quiet photogenic and natural. A good man passed this way, there is no doubt.

Mark Erickson - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

JH

“ I only knew Jon for a few years, I delivered lumber to his POE. I liked him right away, he had a calming effect on guys like me. Jon was one of a kind, he will be missed, RIP my friend.

John Holbrook - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

VS

“ Jonathan was such a lovely soul. We shared many experiences and adventures in our younger years. My fondest memory happened one night at a beach in Java, Indonesia. We got to see the pitch black waters start to glow. We were witnessing red tide. Plankton in the water rubbing together makes the water glow. It was so beautiful. Just like Jonathan. I will always have a spot for him in my heart. He was my first love. I will miss him.

vonny sempelsz - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

SL

“ I only met Johnathan a few years back while walking my dog. He would be walking his faithful companion and we would walk together. He filled me in on how much the neighborhood had changed and he always had so many stories about his parents and growing up with his three brothers. I only talked to him a few times after the flood, but he seemed excited to move back into his house. I never got the chance to tell him how well he did with the ad on TV telling people how "Berg" was not the man for North Dakota!! May he Rest in Peace!!

Sue Leingang - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

SK

“ I've known Jonathan since we started 1st grade at Lincoln school on south Washington. He was always lively with a twinkle in his eye. He will be truly missed.

Sandy Keller - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

RR

“ Jon, you were a candle burning bright that burned out way too soon. I will miss you, my old friend. May you find peace.

Randy Renner - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

CN

“ Don, Tom, and Bob— I was so sorry to hear of your brother's death. It seems a lifetime ago when we'd come from Belfield to Bismarck to see you and your folks. I still have memories of a Sunday afternoon of exploring along the river, and of your dad banding bald eagles on Oyhus's land in the Badlands. Know that Jim's and my thoughts and prayers are with you in this sad time. God bless you and keep you always.

Cindy Thompson Nelson - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

RW

“ *I am so sorry to learn of this sad news. I did not know Jonathan personally, but I do know he selflessly returned to Bismarck to help his parents' when their health failed. He was a good man.*

Rita Wolberg - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM