

A Tribute to Phil Spaulding

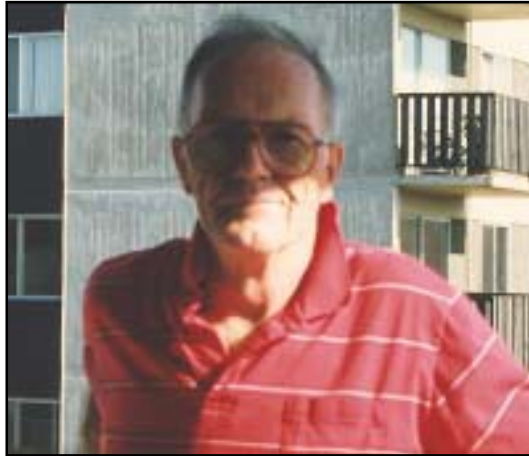
1922-2005

Phil came to Ramblers in early 1990 after more than 35 years as a researcher and teacher of Anthropology. He loved hiking and skiing and Ramblers offered lots of both so he spent the next 10 years enjoying the mountains and foothills and enjoying the company of like-minded outdoors people. As much as he loved the hiking and skiing, he loved even more the chance to discuss, to question, and, yes, to argue, about all manner of issues. He read widely and was full of curiosity about the world around him.

Phil was born in Burlington, Vermont, the second son of a wealthy man whose skills included playing golf and the stock market. His mother died soon after his birth but his father married again and this new wife was much loved by Phil. The easy life ended with the '29 market crash and the family turned to farming.

Phil joined the U.S. Navy in December 1941, ending his naval career as Boatswain's mate PO Second Class. He was part of the landing force at Normandy. After the war, he was encouraged to get an education and so he returned to school to eventually graduate with a BA and MA in Anthropology.

His greatest fascination in his work was the Aboriginal people. His BA degree came from the University of Alaska where he must have become interested in the



Aleut people because he did his Master's thesis on them and returned many years later with his second wife, Donna, to do further fieldwork.

He came to the University of Calgary in 1968 where he taught and did research for the next 20 years, retiring in 1988. Very much respected and admired for his field studies and his teaching, Phil was always prepared to listen to his students' ideas. His work with the Metis Indians of northern Saskatchewan led to his authorship of a text on Native culture still used by today's students.

Phil must have been one of the original Mr. Fix-it men. He had to build, rebuild, renovate, everywhere that he lived. Probably the only place that escaped his remodeling was the apartment he lived in for the few years around his retirement and early post-retirement time. While teaching full-time, he decided to put a second storey on his bungalow in NW Calgary. Later, he maintained that it was this rebuilding that was a major factor in the end

of his second marriage. When the house was finally sold to new owners in the mid-90s, he was more than a little disappointed when the new people decided to have the entire house remodeled professionally.

He bought a home near the Cranbrook airport and moved there in January, 2000, driving his truck and hauling a trailer filled with furniture through stormy weather and icy roads. When Phil decided to do something, he just went ahead and did it. So waiting for better weather would never have occurred to him.

In 2004, he moved to an acreage about 80 km south of Cranbrook near Kingsgate, close to the U.S. border. It was a beautiful location on the banks of the Moyie River, nestled among large evergreens, where the deer would come to graze close to his back door. He liked to call it "Just Heaven".

It was while living here that he was diagnosed with cancer in April of this year. His eldest daughter, Kate, undertook to help care for him, most of the time in his own home. In late August, she and her husband took him to their home in Northern California where he died August 26.

Phil was a man full of energy who had a great zest for life. He hated pretension and always saw through sham. He respected honesty. He had a temper but he also had a marvellous sense of humour. He loved nature, music, hiking, skiing. He was eccentric, lively and interesting. He was a Rambler.