McGillis, Lawrence

March 19, 2012

Lawrence McGillis

Lawrence McGillis passed away peacefully at the Union Hospital in Moose Jaw on December 27th, 2012 at the age of 66. He was born on May 25th, 1946 in Willow Bunch, SK to Blanche and Jacques McGillis. He was predeceased by both parents; 2 older sisters, Helen McGillis and Doris Rivard; and 2 older brothers, Henry and Omer McGillis. Lawrence is survived by daughters, Angela and Krista; 3 grandchildren; an older sister and brother-in-law, Germaine and Andy Andresen; a younger sister and brother-in-law, Louise and Brian Anderson; 16 nieces and nephews; 19 grand nieces and nephews and 6 great grand nieces and nephews. Lawrence started school in Willow Bunch, AK in 1952. He moved to Innisfail with his family in 1958, where he graduated from high school in 1964. He was an excellent student all the way through school and was also on the football team. His extra curricular activities during those years were fishing, guitar playing and hunting, all of which he became quite accomplished at. On career day in grade 12 he applied to become an RCMP. He was really disappointed when he did not get in. He'd had rheumatic fever when he was 7 years old and spent

a whole year in the hospital. The rheumatic fever had left scarring on his heart. That summer after graduation, he got a job at the Alberta School Hospital where he cared for special needs children. That field of work was just not for him, so in the fall he went to work with his brothers in high steel construction. In between the big jobs he also worked in other fields of construction. Since he was not going to be moving away from the Innisfail area, his best friend Larry Fields asked him to join his family band. He was really happy working during the week and playing in a band on the weekends. In 1974 he married Arlene Johnson, who was a lab tech at the Innisfail Hospital. Approximately 5-6 years later, when their two girls were still very young, Lawrence was diagnosed with schizophrenia. He became estranged to his entire family. For the next 16 years, he wandered around the country with his guitar, trying to find a happy place. During his travels, he quite often had breakdowns and would have to be hospitalized and medicated until he was mentally balanced again. He was hospitalized at the Union Hospital in Moose Jaw quite often during those years. He met Corinne and her husband Glen and they welcomed him into their approved care home in December 1994. During the 18 years that he resided with the Jacobsons, he was encouraged to get involved with different things. His first love was still music so once again he picked up his guitar started busking at City Hall in downtown Moose Jaw. He always grew a beard and let his hair grow in the winter so he would be warmer. Many thanks to fine folks who have donated money to him over the years. He is deeply mourned by his care home family Corinne, Glen, Leah, Eli, Beatrice, Susan and Doug. No words can express the gratitude the McGillis family feel towards Lawrence’s care givers Corinne and Glen and their family. The family would also like to thank the staffs of Mental Health Care, Union Hospital, Social Services and Capilano Court, all of whose jobs improved the quality of Lawrence’s life. The Funeral Service will be held on Monday, January 7th, 2013 at 10:30 a.m. in Moose Jaw Funeral Home. Father Rick Krofchek will officiate and interment will take place in the family plot in Willow Bunch Cemetery. Flowers are gratefully declined. Donations in Lawrence’s name may be made to the Canadian Mental Health Assoc. c/o 650 Coteau St W, Moose Jaw, SK S6H 5E6 for the Come Together Fellowship Group. Arrangements are entrusted to Moose Jaw Funeral Home, 268 Mulberry Lane. Todd Sjoberg, Funeral

Director. 693-4550.