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## Perinton-Fairport Post (NY)

### A man for all seasons lived in Fairport

*The stories of the life of Dunham Seeley go on after death.*

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Dunham Seeley had dozens of sides to his personality, and each one was more quirky, charming and fascinating than the last.

But it takes a funeral to bring all the stories of a man like that together. And even then, you feel like there's too much you're missing.

He was the kind of man who, having taken his daughter to the hospital because she was going into premature labor, noticed that the janitor had a new kind of ringer on his mop, and asked how it worked while she was being wheeled into the medicine lab.

Mr. Seeley, 78, a 45-year resident of Fairport, was the kind of man who set up what he called a "sniper's nest " in his second-story bathroom in order to launch a "holy war " against the squirrel population of 60 Potter Place.

He'd set up Rube Goldberg gadgets, gizmos and contraptions all around his house, with every outlet converted to power vintage 1930s-style motors.

"Growing up in our house, I got a great sense of what the industrial revolution must have been like, " his son, Stuart, said.

He rigged a 5,000 rpm motor to serve as a turning spit on an outdoor barbecue. He moved a full printing press, 10 feet by 20 feet, into a basement room 12 feet by 22 feet. His family still doesn't know why, or how they're going to get it out of there.

He was the kind of guy who, in his teens, invented the "Vibro Worm Charmer " - two metal stakes connected by a wire that, when plugged in and stuck into the ground, sent out an electrical current that got the nightcrawlers jumping up to the surface. The thing actually worked, and he and his brother put an ad in the paper to try and sell it.

A trumpet, trombone, violin and piano player in his youth, Mr. Seeley rediscovered trombone in his 60s, and began playing in three bands during his 70s - two of them professional. When joining the Irondequoit Concert Band, he asked to be introduced as just "a quiet guy who likes to play the trombone. "

But he was also the kind of man who, sick and dying of cancer, was horrified to discover that his responsibility in the family's "secret Santa pool " had been taken over by his wife, who'd bought their oldest son a coat.

Though he was ill, he thought that was far too dull a present, so he sent another son and his daughter out to purchase their brother a heavy air compressor and a nail gun instead.

He also served on the village's planning board, was an engineer; and had five grandchildren under 5. Family members say he was never happier than when he was sitting with them in front of a roaring fire he'd put together, sipping a martini.

While dying, he told his family "Don't worry, it only costs \$300 to ferry a corpse to Pennsylvania," where he was born and buried.

The only words that he wanted on his tombstone were his name, his date of birth and death, and the dates that he'd served in the United States Navy: 1943 to 1946.

That's still a mystery to his family, as is much of the time he served overseas.

"There's this whole part of his life, his military service, which we just barely understand, " Stuart Seeley said. "We know him as being a great father, great role model, great engineer, someone who had lots of patents, but this is what he considered to be the most important. "

One of the only stories that they have from that time in Mr. Seeley's life is typical: he'd gone down years earlier to enlist with his father, and both got rejected - one for being too old, and one for being too young. He made it in later, but family and friends said he'd always felt cheated of his chance to be a part of the war, rather than - as he saw it - an observer.

"I have a profound sadness that I don't know any of his military guys or that part of his life, " Stuart Seeley said.

His family did have the opportunity to meet his co-workers at Burroughs Corp., many of whom were just as young as his children when they turned out for the funeral. Though he'd retired in the 1990s, he still got together with his co-workers for an annual holiday luncheon.

"I remember meeting those guys for the first time, and thinking, 'Wow, some of them are my age!' and yet, young and old, they all thought so highly of him, " said Stuart Seeley. "And it was one of his real sources of pride that they - not the firm, but they - gave him a solid gold watch, which said 'The Big D' on it. "

After Seeley's death, the family - a wife, a brother four children and nine grandchildren - were inundated by cards, letters and phone calls. Everyone, it seemed, had a story about Dunham Seeley.

Though he died last month, the sides to his personality, each one as beloved as the last, are still being counted.

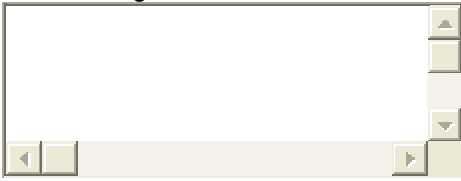
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