

Editors note: The Kocher Family wants to thank all our friends, neighbors and residents of Pine Knoll Shores for all the support, love and prayers you have generously given us. It has made our loss more bearable. May God bless all of you.

Tribute to Jay

A Good One, Gone

By Joan Lamson

We lost a good commissioner the other day. Jay Kocher, commissioner elected just last November, passed away recently and we will miss him. We will miss him in the neighborhood, where he rode his bike and visited with friends. We will miss him at the homeowners association where he provided several years of good leadership until he resigned after being elected commissioner. We will miss him on the water, where, as a boater, he volunteered to do nearly anything and everything and even talked us into appointing him volunteer "Canal Keeper" so he could check out the canal, bulkheading and docks for safety and needed repairs. We will miss him at the Public Safety Building where he was part of the Essential Personnel assigned to Emergency Operations in times of the big storms. We will miss him in the office at Town Hall where he stopped in almost daily to pick up documents for study before town

meetings and took the time to chat, just a bit, with everyone. We will miss him at Board of Commissioner meetings where he asked good questions and gave us his studied opinions, and I will miss him in my office where he often sat to try to convince me that there might be a better way to accomplish something...or another way of looking at an issue.

Jay was an active volunteer for the town long before he decided to run for commissioner. It seemed that his feet just knew where he should be headed and the path led to public service. We are grateful that we had as much time with him as we did and grateful, too, for the standard of leadership he showed in his interests and in his work.

In our country today, there are a lot of folks who just don't care, don't watch, don't understand their local government and just don't even vote. There are many who do care, think they know what's going on but don't

take the time to find out the facts, and choose to snipe. Then there are those who do watch and listen and who take the time to ask hard questions of their elected leaders. These people contribute so much to improving government because they hold us accountable and cause the bar to be raised to a higher standard of setting public policy and ethical governance. And then there are some who choose to run for office. It isn't easy, for most of us, to decide to run for public office. Among other things, it means constant scrutiny of one's words, decisions, and actions. It means exposing yourself to the "pot-shots" of grumpy citizens, who are sometimes right. And sometimes it means setting aside your personal interests for the interests of others.

Jay's path did lead him to an election day and his personality, style, attitude, hard work and character caused him to be elected. Yes, we will miss him.

Jay Kocher

By Marge Green

This is not meant as a eulogy for Jay Kocher. It's more a personal memory about a friend who has done so much to enhance everyone's life here in Pine Knoll Shores. One could easily forget his many contributions because of his quiet manner. He used the "I" word very sparingly.

He was born in Greenwich, Connecticut on September 21, 1932, the only child of Fredrick and Mamie Kocher. Most of his life was spent in the Connecticut area. He attended Norwalk High School. After two years service in the U.S. Army during the Korean War, he studied business finance, receiving his B.S. from Bridgeport University in Bridgeport, Connecticut. The accepted practice then was to work and progress up the ladder with one company. Jay did that for 31 years with the Southern New England Telephone Company ending his career as district plant manager in 1986. At home he was a great fixer, always busy with some little project. Ironically it was his daughter, Kim, who would follow along after daddy always inquiring what he was doing and how could she help him. His son Bob always found other outlets for his exuberance. Jay was a good teacher and role model for his children. Now his children are grown and married. They have given Jay and Maureen (Moe) five wonderful grandchildren.

Maureen on the other hand came from a large family. There were eight children in her family. They quickly absorbed Jay as one of their own and introduced him to all the fun and tribulations of a large family. I often like to know how people met and how did they find Pine Knoll Shores. Well Jay met Moe at the company Christmas party. As a joke she was wearing a

large blond wig. That caught everyone's eye, especially Jay's. So after a few friendly jokes about the wig they started a friendship. At that time Moe was living at home taking care of her parents as well as her brother, who suffered major trauma in a motorcycle accident. While juggling her family health care problems she continued to work at Southern New England Telephone Company and retired as a supervisor and commercial manager.

After their retirement in 1986 they moved to a 45-acre farm in Sharon Springs, New York, about 45 miles west of Albany. They really liked their little farmette where Moe had two gardens, one for the kitchen herbs and salad greens and the other for larger veggies like corn and Jay's favorite, beets. They cooperated with a neighbor in the raising of a few pigs on the neighbor's property. While they enjoyed the lifestyle there, the winters became a problem. They were bleak and cold. One day they had a 15 foot snow bank in front of their house and that really galvanized them to action. They were going south.

Jay had a love affair with the coast and wanted to show Maureen some places he had visited when he was in the service. Maureen liked the area around Beaufort so they approached a realtor. The upshot of that was they especially liked Pine Knoll Shores. They rented the Ashlands' house for a year while they looked around for a place of their own. They found a fixer upper on Loblolly and the rest is history but not the end of the story.

We have always respected the early Town fathers and their foresight in planning the town and instituting covenants that would protect

this lovely area. Nothing alive remains static. Enter Jay and the many others who have come here and freely given many hours working to preserve and enhance those early dreams. Who do you think would go down to the marinas in the middle of the night during a hurricane to make sure all the boats were secured? Who do you think kept the gates at Brock Basin and Hall Haven in working order? Who worked like a beaver to get the CAMA permitting for our bulkheads in the marinas? Anyone who has a bulkhead will understand the time that is required getting a CAMA permit.

While Jay didn't always do all the work, he was the instigator who saw the job to the end. His rapport with the various contractors for PKA projects saved us a lot of money but took a lot of his time. He was the Canal Keeper for the Town of Pine Knoll Shores as well as the Harbor Master. A funny thing about Jay was while he was an avid boater and always around the marinas, he rarely was seen in a bathing suit. He did not like to get wet except in the shower. I enjoyed working with him on the PKA Board where he was always coming up with new ideas to tweak this or that to make life simpler for everyone. His last volunteering job was that of a Town Commissioner. Unfortunately, he did not have time to leave his mark there.

I did not mean to write so much but with Jay there is so much to say. I think of him as a truly private gentle man who extended a helping hand to all who came into contact with him. He was always attentive to another's view of a given problem. With him any differences were never personal. We are all poorer because of his passing. Jay may you rest in peace.



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Photographer

Kathy Foy

E-mail: shoreline@townofpks.com

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In Memoriam

May

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