

Jack Pape was a behind the scenes “doer” at St. Alban’s and the go to person for any building and construction projects and the Community Garden. First and foremost, Jack was a faithful Christian and parishioner. Those who knew Jack have at least one if not more “Jack stories”. If you have a favorite story or memory of Jack and would like to share it with others, please submit it to Brad Cook (ahyeah58@gmail.com) and it will be included after the bio below.

John “Jack” Pape

Many of us know my dad as Jack Pape but his birth name is John Earl Pape.

John Earl Pape was born April 18, 1935 to Avis Euella and Earl Louis Pape in Multnomah County Portland Oregon. He was an only child. Unfortunately, Jack’s parent divorced at an early age. I learned that he spent a lot of time with his grandparents Louis and Emma Pape in his youth.

His mother Avis retained custody of her son and eventually remarried William Stephenson. Because of this marriage his name was changed to Jack Stephenson. It was at this time the family relocated to a small town in North Eastern Oregon called Hermiston.

Being a rural farming community Jack became interested in horses. He would ride in various competitions. He loved horseback riding. In high school he worked as an auto mechanic at Petersen’s Garage. As a result of this move Jack met someone who would change the course of his life. Jack met his future wife at an early age of 15. That would be Joy Ann Belles. They met in high school and fell in love. In Hermiston there was not much to offer the young Jack. Upon graduation from Hermiston High School in 1953 Jack enlisted in the US Navy on June 24 1953

Shortly after joining the Navy these two love birds decided to get married. This desire resulted in them eloping and getting married in Washington State. The first time they tried to get married were turned away for being too young. Jack was 18 and Joy was 17. Not to be denied they made a second attempt. So, on September 24, 1953 they made the trek back to Umitilla Washington to try again.

Looking at the marriage certificate one can see how they were successful the second time. It appears that they fudged on their date of birth. Immediately after getting married they returned to Hermiston. To celebrate their marriage the newlyweds found an old wheelbarrow, which Jack pushed Joy inside up and down Main Street proclaiming their recent marriage.

With a new bride and his commitment to the Navy, Jack was able to get out of the small town of Hermiston. He was stationed in Norman Oklahoma where he attended the electronic school. Eventually, the young couple ended up in San Diego California. In the Navy he was an Aviation Electronics Technician Radio.

The first place he lived in San Diego was a trailer in Imperial Trailer Park in Imperial Beach. While living there his first child Laura Jane Pape was born on February 5th, 1956. Now with a new child it was time to get a home. Their First house was on Oleander in Point Loma. The family only stayed here a short time. Upon an honorable discharge from the Navy June 12, 1957 Jack quickly got a job at General Dynamic/Convair a defense contractor. Jack took a job as an Electronics Technician. Then he was later transferred to General Atomic where he worked in research and development.

With the birth of his second child John Earl Pape Jr on November 27, 1958, the need for a larger home became evident. In 1960 Jack and Joy decided to move to a more rural part of San Diego which led them to buy a home in El Cajon California which would become his permanent home for the remainder of his life.

Although he had great experience and training through the Navy and working for Convair – General Atomics, Jack always had a dream to own his own business. That entrepreneurial desire may have been a result of his parents who owned their own businesses. His mom, Avis, owned a beauty salon and his dad, Earl, owned a restaurant. Also, Joy was a huge inspiration to start their business.

Jack engaged in many activities. He loved to explore. One early activity was trail bike riding. The first bike was a Honda 90 trail bike. Not only did he get one but also Joy got one as well. I believe he took up this activity because a trail bike was easier and less expensive to maintain than a horse. Blazing trails on these bikes

lead to a lot of outdoor activities, which eventually included camping. I remember as a child camping at least 2-3 times a month. And why not? Living in San Diego there are the mountains and the desert to explore only a few hours away from home.

On December 19, 1965 Steven Louis Pape was born. With a growing family, trail bikes turned into dune buggies. His first dune buggy was a Mercury Flat Head with a chopped framed and airplane tires. It was a beast. At that time very few people had buggies. He was an off-road pioneer. On one camping trip to the Buttercup dunes in Imperial Valley there was a Wide World of Sport hill climbing competition. It was here he saw the lightweight Volkswagen style of dune buggy. Shortly after this trip Jack decided to build his first dune buggy. It would be a Myers Manx style buggy. This project would change the course of his life.

While building the buggy, seat covers needed to be made for the fiberglass bucket seat. He hired an upholsterer to make the seat covers. When the job was delivered, he was less than impressed with the quality of the seat covers. It was at this time he said to him, "I could do a much better job" and with that statement his life as an entrepreneur began.

Originally the business started doing upholstery. Jack bought an industrial sewing machine, contacted local upholstery suppliers, and proceeded to make a better-quality seat cover for dune buggies. At this point Jack did not know a thing about how to sew, but he learned with the help of his wife Joy. As word of mouth got out about the quality of his seat covers, Pape Enterprises was born.

Eventually the side business made enough money that in 1968 he was able to leave General Atomics and pursue the business fulltime alongside his wife, Joy.

At heart Jack was a craftsman, he worked well with his hands. The tag line for the business was "Where Quality and Craftsmanship are seated together". When he set out to make something, he did it with skill and quality.

As the business grew a fiberglass shop was purchased which opened up a whole new world of products. At first the business made seat shells for the seat covers, then buggy panels made. Once he figured out how to make molds a whole new

world opened up for him. Some of the things that were made at Pape Enterprises were:

- Sleeper Cab for pickup trucks which extended the cab for additional storage. A mold was made for every make of truck meaning they fit perfectly.
- Bumper Boat fiberglass deck and hull. For this he developed a patented method used in the manufacturing process.
- Radomes for cell towers
- Microwave Antenna reflectors
- Lawn sized chess pieces
- Environmental hazards spill container.
- Fully Enclosed Fiberglass body utility trailer call the Pape Aero
- Juice vending cart
- Coffee carts
- And many other things too numerous to list

Pape Enterprises moved several times to facilitate the increase in business. This was a family business for which his wife and son were also actively involved. Pape Enterprises became well known nationally as a developer of products in the automotive field, medical and research area, and the RV industry.

Eventually Jack and Joy both retired and the business was closed down in 2005. Unfortunately, shortly after retiring, Joy his wife of 54 years passed away from cancer in January 2007.

Jack pressed on and continued sharing his quality workmanship. He completed many projects for Saint Albans Church. Such as spearheading a Community Garden and Prayer Garden, as well as taking care of the facility. He always kept busy.

Jack was a very special and talented family man. He loved to build stuff and was very handy. Whenever he set out to do something, he did it with honesty and integrity. No matter the task Jack accomplished it as a true craftsman.

One day I asked him if he had any regrets in life. His answer was he had none. I would say that is a life well lived. In 2018. Jack was diagnosed with Stage 4 colon cancer. For nearly 2 years he went through very intense chemotherapy. He was determined to fight the battle of his life. On February 22, 2020 he took his last breath and entered heaven to begin his next adventure.