

## A Childhood Book Carries a Devoted Reader To His Last Adventure

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A youngster in the 1940's, Lance Greenleaf lived in Panama with his family. His father was a U. S. Postal Worker. His favorite book was "Paddle To The Sea." It told the story of a Native American boy who yearned to take a journey to the sea. Because he was too young for that trip, the boy carved a wooden canoe with a tiny passenger. On the bottom he carved the message: "Please put me back in water. I am Paddled to the Sea." The book follows the progress of the boat through the Great Lakes to the sea by way of the St. Lawrence River.

Lance continued to ask the book be read to him until he reached the age to read it for himself. As a married adult with three daughters, he read the book to them. Lance loved the water and the family lived on the river in Estacada, Oregon for years before moving to a suburb of Portland.

After he retired, last fall, Lance joined the Golden Dragons Dragon-Boat Team and paddled on the Willamette River in the early mornings. Lance had a model boat in the basement, a 3-foot-long model of a 1940's era Chris-Craft type cabin cruiser.

Lance died in January of this year and his wife, Helen, decided to make his death a celebration of his life. They family retrieved the model boat and named it *Paddle To The Sea II*. The boat contains the ashes of Lance Greenleaf, his shoes and a picture of a cat on the windshield with a plaque affixed to boat: "Paddle To The Sea II." Contains the ashes of Lance Hayden Greenleaf. Born Oct 9, 1939 in Colon, Panama. Died Jan 13, 2003 at home in Portland. Loving husband, father and grandfather. Please return to the water and help Lance along with his journey." She also included the family's e-mail address. With great pomp and circumstance, Lance and his boat were launched by the Dragon-Boat Team.

Two weeks later, Helen received an E-mail from a fisherman further down the Willamette who had found the boat, lodged in the rocks on the bank: "I left him in an eddy with some ducks. Although I don't think they trusted the cat on the dashboard. I hope he goes far." The following day she received another e-mail from a woman stating the boat had passed her house ½ mile from Sellwood Bridge around 5 p.m. Since then Helen has not heard further word. Helen has told Margie Boule, "He's making friends. I hope he makes it all the way to the sea."

*Margie Boule  
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Note from Lady Charli: I have purchased this book since reading the article and I highly recommend it for children of all ages.