



John "Jack:" Thomas Vobbe

February 21, 1941 - March 30, 2017

John "Jack" Thomas Vobbe, age 76, of Bad Axe, Michigan, passed away peacefully on Thursday, March 30, 2017 at the Huron County Medical Care Center in Bad Axe. He was born on February 21, 1941, to Gayle and Jeanne Vobbe in Toledo, Ohio, who preceded him in death.

John attended DeVeaux elementary and DeVilbiss High School, class of 1959. John also attended the University of Toledo.

Growing up in Toledo, John had a fascination for radio broadcasting, tape recording, and pop music. John was a broadcaster most of his life beginning at McKinley School's educational radio station, WTDS-FM, while a student. In his spare time he would record radio shows with his friends in his parent's basement, and collected the latest rock & roll 45s. In high school he DJed "sock hops" for private and company parties, and delivered The Toledo Blade newspaper. He also worked for the family business, Vobbe's Grocery, near the corner of Page and Cherry Streets in Toledo.

After finishing school John obtained an Federal Communications Commission 1st Class radio broadcast license. His first job was with WATH AM/FM in Athens, Ohio, serving as a Staff Announcer and Chief Engineer. He took the name "Jack Thomas" when on the air. After a decade in Athens he moved to WLEW AM/FM in Bad Axe, Michigan, in 1973 in a similar role.

At both stations he set up remotes, assisted in news broadcasts, assembled music libraries, and repaired the station's broadcast equipment. John was proud that he entertained his audience with clean humor, "On This Day in History", and "Jack's Birthday Book" where he kept a list of area listener's birthdays and mentioned them on the air. John always found entertaining stories and trivia to tell listeners. John was also involved in providing background music to many businesses in the community, especially during Christmas. He always thought Christmas music in the downtown business district made people feel better and gave them time to reflect on the year and their gifts in life. His library of Christmas music was one of the largest.

After retiring from WLEW in 2006, John worked part time briefly for WCPT-FM, and was on the air as "Brother Jack". John also volunteered his engineering knowledge to other stations and engineers when they needed a hand, a part to repair something, or advice on a solution to a problem or where to go to get something done. He knew people from New York to San Francisco.

John was involved in the region by being a member of several service clubs, and Lutheran churches. He contributed to a large number of non-profit agencies either with time or money, including Lutheran service groups, Huron (MI) and Lucas (OH) County animal shelters, St Jude Children's Hospital, Paws and Whiskers, Huron County Special Olympics, Make a Wish, Oesterlein Service for Children, and Huron Council for Prevention of Child Abuse & Neglect. John was always one to help another in need, even if it meant setting aside his needs for someone else. His heart was as big as the Thumb of Michigan.

Surviving are his children Sarah Vobbe of Almont MI, Kathryn (Larry) Shisler of Sheboygan, WI, Gayle E. Vobbe of Columbus OH, and Carl Vobbe of Bad Axe MI, and his siblings Katherine (Don) Eschenburg of Almont MI, and

Frederick (Debbie) Vobbe of Lima OH.

John and his siblings wish to thank the staff and especially the caregivers on Floor 2 of Huron County Medical Care Center, (who he called his angels), for their love, attention, and companionship in his final days.

At his request he was cremated and buried with no funeral or service next to his parents in the SE section of Ferguson Cemetery in Almont, Michigan. John asked that in lieu of flowers or remembrances that we each say a quiet prayer, and pick up the job of doing a little something every year to help kids and cats. He said, "You don't have to give a lot, if enough people care to give a little."

Tribute Wall



“ *John "Jack:" Thomas Vobbe*

January 28, 2023 at 01:32 PM



“ *When I read the last line of his obituary, "his heart was as big as the thumb", I thought - now that's a good tribute! My path crossed Jack's shortly after I moved to Bad Axe in 1979. First through the radio station, and later through his involvement in many of the community groups - Jaycees, Big Brothers, and the list went on and on. If you needed something done with electronics - he was the go to guy in Bad Axe. He was interested in a whole lot of different things and always asking questions to learn more. He was a fixture in the thumb and beyond. By heartfelt condolences to the family - he will be missed.*

Gerry Prich - April 03, 2017 at 08:44 AM



“ *I was a friend of both of his daughters. He was a loving and compassionate father. He will be missed. My condolences and sympathies go out to Carl, Sarah, and Katherine.*

Karen Schulte - April 01, 2017 at 07:23 AM

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“ So many memories. I worked with Jack at WLEW for several years. He was the Bad Axe contact person for many years with the Labor Day Jerry Lewis MD Telethon. He had set up all the call in phones, had volunteers to work the phones and made the regular calls into the TV station on our pledges. Jack was one of the first people to help with the Bad Axe Christmas Parade. He made the stage for Santa to do the count down with the kids to turn all the Christmas street lights on. He was also active with the Bad Axe Jaycees. I'm sure I've missed some other things that Jack was involved with. Nice man. Rest in peace my friend.

Diane Ellicott - March 31, 2017 at 12:03 PM