Cancer victim puts his experience on film

"No man is an island." John Donne

If Donne's statement is true, then Bob Calola was a continent. Calola gave of timeelf all his life, including giving to others in his death. The 32-year-old former Plymouth Town-ship firefighter died Wednesday in a Trav-erse City Hospital. He was a victim of can-cer.

cer.
Yet, even in death, Bob overcame the can-cer which claimed his stomach, spleen and

Yet, even in death, 150h overcame une cancer which claimed his stomach, spleen and
bone marrow.
"In the last hour of this guy's life I saw
hope, encouragement and power," asid Connie Newell.

Newell and Calois were working on a movie exploring the devastating effects of cancer. The lifth features candid discussions
Calois had with some Traverse City highshoot students.

Calola and his wife Beverly moved to Traverse City in December 1980. In August of 1982, he was told he had cancer of the

of 1932, he was toke ne nau where the stomach.

He underwent surgery and was released from the hospital. After the surgery, Caloia and Newell decided to make the film.

"It is one guy's effort at sharing threself openly, allowing threself to be used to teach these kids. Any question they wanted to ask, he answered," Newell said.

Talking with students was something with which Bob was familiar. During his eight years as a township fireflighter, he frequently paid visits to Plymouth-Canton Community Schools.

years as a township firedighter, he frequently paid visits to Plymouth-Canton Community Schools.

"He was well known in the schools here, He put on CPR classes and fire career talks," said Township Fire Chief Larry Groth, "He loved the kids and they wanted him back — it's obvious by the letters we received," Groth said.

Caloia planned to film four sessions with the Traverse City students. Each of the sessions was to deal with an aspect of Bob's estains was to deal with an aspect of Bob's mental, and spiritual, "What we've got on film right now is two mental, and spiritual, achemotherapy nurse at Osteopathic Hospital in Traverse City.

"In the first one Bob looked great. He talked about "What's cancer?" There were altot of laughts, a lot of borsing around, and a lot of good questions from the kids," Newell said.

The need for chemotherapy nostnoaed the

said.

The need for chemotherapy postponed the second illming. The high-school students learned of the uncertainty in a cancer victim's life as they waited for the second film-

tim's are as any wave-ing, wanted the kids to understand that's the life of a cancer victim. We would plan some-thing and God would say, 'No, not today,'' Newell said. Bob was a spiritual man who used prayer

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as one method of dealing with his disease, said Newell. "I think Bob needed to do something cre-ative with death, rather than letting it be a

ere was something in Bob that said this "There was something in Boo that said this message was God's — there's something being done here that was bigger than him and how was just an instrument. God changed the plans so many times. 'Newell said. God changed the plans so many times.' Newell said. In the something the said of the said

weaker and showing the cirects of the disease which was slowly conquering his body. The session dealt with the emotional ef-fects of cancer and death. "God said if you're going to talk about emotions, we're going to show some," Newell

emotions, we re going a said.

While there were some light-hearted moments, the session was tense. Bob cried at some points, at other points he sat in complete ailence. Sweat dripped from his brow as he spake.

The students probed the thoughts of a man facing death.

lacing death.

Just two week before his death, Bob talked with a reporter from the Traverse City

Record Eagle. He told the reporter about himself and the film.
"Most of the questions had to do with death—probably because that's what I looked like," he said in the article.
"You have to have fun with this. It's no big

last scene with the vicinis playing, control the reporter.

"I don't see myself as being courageous at all. If I can help one person get out of the hospital as fast as I did or if I can help one person hang on another day longer, then the whole project will be worthwhile," he said.

Bob said cancer was a positive step in bis vice.

life.

"I feel a little bit better about myself now.
I seem to be able to go out of my way to give
someone a smile," he said. "It's a better quality of life."

someone a smite, no same the second lity of life."

A deteriorating condition sent Bob to University Hospital in Ann Arbor shortly after the second filming.

The doctors told Caloia they couldn't do anymore for him. He was sent back to the Traversa City hospital, Newell said.

Caloia was scheduled to go home the day he died.

"He was high on going home. He put the

"He said to me, 'Connie, I'm going home today.' Then a couple minutes later he told

me again.
"I thought he was forgetting he already
told me — because of the medication. I think
he knew he was really going home," Newell

nd. Bob's wife and mother were in the hospital

Bob's wife and mother were in the hospital room when he died.
"He leaned back and said I lov's you, goodye," Nevell said. "He did it with a lot of class. That was the message of his film, to other cancer victims, do it with class."
Caloia's film is at a standstill — not because of his death, but due to a lack of funds.
"We need \$5,000 to complete the film," said Nevel.

A Bob Caloia Memorial Fund has been started in the Plymouth-Canton community, The donations will be used for completion of The donations will be Caloia final project.

Monies can be sent to 935 Hartsough Court, Plymouth, Inquiries about the fund can be di-rected to Sandy Groth, 459-8512, or Paul Rai-ney, 453-8585.

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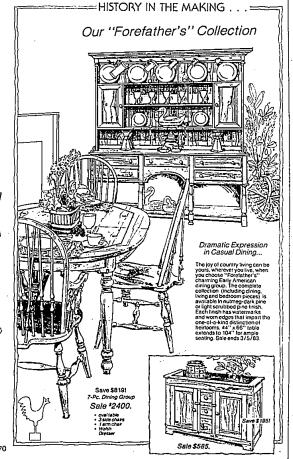
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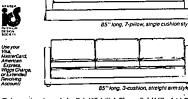
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