

Continued from page 5 – Remembering Tom Hanlon

with Alpio) when he was –just a “big boy”. Tom talked to so many people in the store that he knew the store inside out. He could tell the owner exactly how he was doing compared to the competition and he could tell the owner if he had to take care of certain problems.

He always talked about “processing” and his “processing plants.” Everything had to be processed – his tires – your thoughts - his thoughts. He had three “processing plants” – one in the cemetery of Colma – one behind San Mateo Avenue in San Bruno and one in Hayward. The ones in the cemetery and in San Bruno were more like storage rooms, but to Tom they were “his processing plants.” The three – Alpio, Tom, and Larry had a lot of fun with that.

Quite often the three of them would have lunch together. Larry and Alpio would never bring money for the lunch. As Larry – during our conversation said in his very calm and dry way: “He earned so much money on all the tires he got from us that he should at least pay for our lunch,” One lunch they will never forget. Larry ordered a cheese burger and he wanted it with jack cheese. Alpio said that he wanted the same but he wanted it with Swiss cheese. Tom said;” I want the same – but hold the cheese.” The waitress turned to him and said:”That is called a hamburger Sir.” The two of them – Larry and Alpio – never forgot this incident – and when telling the story again they were dying from laughter.

At a certain point both Larry and Alpio were serious. They talked about the character of Tom:

- He was obsessed with his work and passionate about the Tire Dealers Association
- He had old fashioned values and was very respectful of family life
- He spent a great deal of time helping people, who went to counseling at AA. People could call him – day or night – and he would be there.
- He had integrity and was honest – almost to a fault
- He was a unique and caring person.

A couple of weeks before Tom passed away Alpio and Larry went to visit him for the last time. Tom’s wife, Betty – who Larry calls “Mother Theresa – let them in, took them to the living room, closed the door and went to the kitchen. The three of them talked about all the good times they had spent together and they laughed a lot. At a certain point Tom told them about the way he had planned his burial. When he told them that they should attend both the “rosary” service in the evening and the burial service the following morning- Larry in his usual dry fashion said: “Are you trying to obtain favors from God by forcing us to go to two different services?” And they all laughed.

The services were emotional and beautiful – Tom loved the song by Frank Sinatra” My way” and he lived his life and left this life –“his way.”