

Sobkowich Family Cottage History in South Beach, Gimli

Written by Lorraine Walton, 2013

Vic Sobkowich died March 30, 2013, predeceased by his beloved Betty who passed away on October 17, 2011.





Betty Sobkowich

Since 1959 they were pillars of South Beach on the southeast corner of Third and Benedict.



“Meadowood” Cottage

Lorraine Walton (Benedict St), a long-time friend of the Sobkowich family gave the funeral eulogy.

This is an excerpt from the tribute:

Mr. Sobkowich came from simple beginnings; he enlisted in the navy as a young man, returned home safely at the end of the war, worked his way through university and graduated from The University of Manitoba in 1950 as an Architect.

In 1949 married the love of his life — Betty Field and a couple years later Vickie was born followed by the twins Vincent and Valerie.

Mr. & Mrs. Sobkowich purchased their cottage in South Beach, Gimli in February of 1959. My parents, Marg and Doug Hicks, purchased their lot on the same street that spring and started building their cottage. That summer all the young moms and their children spent many hours on the beach.

It was that summer Val and my friendship developed. We remain best friends to this day.

It became a common practise that as the Sobkowich's drove by our family cottage on a Friday night; Mr. Sobkowich would honk his horn to let us know they had arrived. Within minutes I would head down to their cottage to see Val. To this day the friendly practice of honking the horn still takes place. I often hear my Mom or Dad say, Vic has arrived or Val & Bryan just drove by.

Val and I spent all our waking hours together during the summers thus the Sobkowich's became my 2nd family. As a young man Mr. Sobkowich enjoyed going berry picking and on a couple occasions Val and I joined him. Not too often mind you as Val and I found berry picking uneventful. Mr. Sobkowich enjoyed the odd game of golf. Well, we joined him only once, once was enough. At a young age Val and I decided golf was not a hobby for us. To this day neither Val nor I golf.

Vic and Betty loved to dance. They took up ball room dancing many years ago. They formed the [Westview Dance group](#), which is still active today. Once a year Vic & Betty would show their hospitality and invite the dance group to come to their cottage for a weekend of music, dance and laughter. This became a yearly event for several years.

In the late 60's the Sobkowich's purchased a motor boat. Something that was rare to see in South Beach. We finally found a hobby we would enjoy doing with Mr. Sobkowich. The family boat rarely left shore that I was not in it. Mr. Sobkowich spent many hours pulling all the kids in the area behind his boat. Many of Vickie's, Vincent's and Val's friends learned to ski

thanks to Mr. Sobkowich. Never once did I hear him utter a word of complaint about the time spent or cost of gas. He was just happy we were all having a good time.

Not being a natural skier, I remember at one point he joked with me and said I made a great spotter. A spotter is the person that sits at the back of the boat watching the skier and notifies the driver if they fall!! But I was to be a skier, because Mr. Sobkowich was blessed with a lot of patience. It took two summers for me to learn to water ski!!! I still remember the day I finally got up and stayed up on those darn skis. When Mr. Sobkowich completed the circle on the lake he motioned for me to let go of the rope. I was so excited I forgot to let go and he took me around the lake one more time. When I finally did let go, Mr. Sobkowich was as excited for me as I was.

The Sobkowich's had many beach friends over the years. I remember the Rothwells, the Lavendures, the Johnstons, sitting around the table sharing a cup of tea, playing cards or just visiting. It was common to hear music and laughter coming from within the cottage.

The Sobkowich family are pet lovers. Over the years they owned 4 dogs and 2 cats, not to mention a horse. Their pets were loved and well cared for. If a lost cat or dog was fortunate enough to arrive at the Sobkowich's home, they were always taken in, given food, water and shelter until they were reunited with their owner or until a new owner was found. Sox's Vic's dearly beloved cat has taking up residence with Val & Bryan. It was a promise that Val made to her aging parents. And the tradition continues of caring for animals.

Mr. & Mrs. Sobkowich loved to walk. They walked many miles up and down the beach over the years. I remember on the return of their walks Mr. Sobkowich would often have a piece of drift wood in his hand. One time I asked him what he was going to do with all the pieces of wood he had collected. His reply was he would someday make a picture with them. Sure enough one day I entered the cottage and on one of the walls was an arrangement of mounted varnished drift wood. To this day those pieces remain on the wall and they still fascinate me. Mr. Sobkowich had a gift — a gift to see how simple pieces of drift wood could become a piece of art.

Val and her Dad enrolled in painting classes a few years ago. The time Val spent with her father cultivated a bond with him that she did not feel she had as a child. They spent many hours together enjoying this new found hobby.

As gentle as Mr. Sobkowich was, he was strong of character and mind. It made him a good Dad and a good leader. He wanted the best for his children, and wanted them to make good decisions. Every moment was a teaching opportunity, and his children today are blessed with the lessons of a lifetime that he shared with them.

As time has passed Vickie, Vincent and Valerie have grown up, become parents and grandparents of their own and realized the importance of the many lessons their father taught them when they were children. Mr. Sobkowich could not have been prouder of the generations that followed his children in his family. His grandchildren and his great grandchildren were the sources of light, love and pride for him. He cherished their love, and was sustained even in the difficult days of these past few weeks by the family that surrounded him.

I ask that you do not forget Mr. Sobkowich. Please take a moment, think back to your association with Vic and remember how he touched our lives. How he made us laugh, his pleasant smile or the friendly wave of his hand.

I believe in my heart that Vic's biggest fan Betty is waiting for her dancing partner in a new life.

Let's be thankful that they are together once again, dancing up a storm with many of their friends who have gone before them.

Thanks Mr. Sobkowich for the wonderful memories.



Lorraine (Hicks) Walton & Val (Sobkowich) Verity