



## Clarence Arthur St. John

October 24, 1951 - April 27, 2025

Clarence Arthur St John was born on October 24th, 1951 in Corvallis Oregon, and was the third of three children born to Frances May (Moreland) St John and Charles “Art” Arthur St John.

He attended Lincoln Primary and Western View Middle School. In 1968 at the age 17, Clarence decided to leave Corvallis High School prematurely after getting frustrated with his studies, and made the decision to enlist in the Army the same year. While in the Army he received his GED and left the Army in October 1970.

Clarence began dating his future wife, Michele Joy Zillman, in Newport in August of 1971. By June of 1972 they were married, and a year and a half later welcomed their first and only child, Kenton St John. During Kenton’s early years they resided in Waldport and later in Corvallis Oregon.

After the military, his early career began by working a job on the Newport Bay front, launching boats, repairing boat motors and building boats. Over time, he tried his hand at a number of jobs, including a side gig logging to raise extra money to support his family. This led to him working for the City of Newport clearing timber around the water reservoir expansion project. After experiencing a head injury, Clarence started working cedar recovery and eventually teamed up to create a company with his father-in-law Walt Zillman,

selling cedar to roofing shake makers.

In 1983 he moved back to Corvallis to his parents' property where his father had a large wood shop. Clarence loved working with wood and stripped and restored one of the old houses on the property, tackling plumbing, walls, and even electrical, although electrical was not one of his favorites.

His father always provided him many opportunities in woodworking. He also dabbled in metal work as his interest in creating with other materials grew, which inspired him to make a promise ring for Michele from a boat motor brass shaft bearing. While he liked working with wood, it didn't always pay the bills. Clarence began focusing more on metal work. He partnered with a man in the Lebanon area buying wood saw mill parts in a quest to build a privately owned saw mill. He eventually became a millwright in Philomath Oregon. A job his son believes his dad was born to do.

After a divorce with Michele in 2002, Clarence experimented with buying a heavy duty pickup truck and car hauling trailer as a vehicle transporter. Although this eventually didn't pan out, but loved moving Travel Trailers across the US and up to Canada.

Clarence had a talent for building and fixing things whenever life required it. A power saw motor failed breaking out the cylinder wall, so he used a JB weld and made it work again. His GM V8 pickup motor needed rebuilding so he took it out and did it himself. He created a saw that could cut seven wooden sticks that eventually lead to him making wind spinners for his first side business. Along with Michelle, they created a self supporting business called "My, My, My Woodshop". My Husband, My Son, and Myself Woodshop.

Clarence was intrigued with creating train whistles, so one day he started making regular four tubed ones on a simple drill press. He pushed even

further by building a pneumatic drill press to make medium and large ones, even ones made from hardwoods. He completed these challenges without the tools or online videos that most of us depend on today.

He loved trips anywhere and everywhere life would lead him as driving was one of his favorite pastimes. He spent hours in the Alsea woods with his brother and friends, often getting stuck in whatever vehicle they had at the time, forcing them to use other vehicles to pull them out. A couple of times they walked through the pitch black woods at night to get a ride to town to fix a broken-down vehicle. For the past few years, Clarence enjoyed driving the Alsea forest area to hunt with his son Kenton. In reality their time hunting was more just searching than anything else. Rarely did it produce deer, but the time made way for many talks and stories about traveling the woods in his younger years.

Clarence will be missed by his family and the many that knew him as a close friend, helpful neighbor, and loyal friend.

He is preceded in death by his mother Frances May, and his father, Charles (Art) A St John, as well as his sister Ida Mae St John. He is survived by his brother Charles Leroy St John as well as his son Kenton St John, Granddaughter Natasha Costello (St John), and his Grandson Kenton Samuel St John.

# Previous Events

## Celebration of Life

JUN 6. 1:00 PM.

Alea

Alea, OR

*RSVP Kenton St John at 541-760-1026 for directions and details.*

# Tribute Wall



“ I wanted to give my condolences to Kenton and his family and wanted to share a short memory.  
Kenton and I both enjoyed building boxes for stereo speakers to put in our car and I have many great memories working in the shop with Kenton and with Clarence and even Kenton’s grandpa and just getting to be around a bunch of tools and sawdust and good humor and tricks of the trade swapping stories was just a fantastic time for me and Great memory that I will hang onto for my life as a ongoing woodworker and Tinker and car stereo enthusiast I just want to thank Kenton for that time to connect with his dad and be part of the shop getting some sawdust therapy !

---

**Todd Taylor** - May 20, 2025 at 07:41 PM