

Thanks everyone for coming and honouring Tim's memory. As entertaining as they are, I'm not going to rehash the stories of Tim's nine lives, famous climbs or the details of the many rescues. Some of these were captured in Cory's blog, PA's talk and in "Tim's Song" by The Wardens. Like the rest of this memorial service, I'm going to keep it fairly short, consistent with both Tim's and Sherry's wishes for a simple memorial.

We all knew Tim in many different ways; friend, mentor, neighbour family man, gifted athlete, climber, civil servant, guide, park warden and teacher and or combinations thereof. I'm going to talk a bit about his work legacy, touch on our friendship and the last year of his life.

I'd like to set the scene at the start of Tim's career. Most of us in this crowd are older. So it doesn't take much to imagine a time without cell phones, satellite communication or GPS's. Or to put the era another way, nobody skied on less than a 205 cm ski and you didn't have to know Italian to order a coffee. Avalanche beacons hardly existed outside the domain of professional ski operations. North American rescue equipment, protocols and standards were in their infancy. Accident communication was challenging and sketchy, usually well after the fact, often second hand or by an exhausted RP. Late reporting usually meant that the victim was either dead or in Tim's words "The silver lining was that if they were still alive after that length of time, no matter what we did or how we screwed up, the patient would likely live"

This was the beginning of the professionalism of the Mountain Park Public Safety program, of which Tim was such an important player. Huge internal and external challenges, with no clear roadmap. Given both Warden and Parks Canada culture at the time, any sense of elitism or inconsistency with management objectives, could have easily tanked the program. Banff, as anyone who has worked here knows, is so much more in the public eye. Particularly by the media and therefore by extension, under the scrutiny of HQ in Ottawa. Tim was the perfect person for Banff with his easy going confidence and his big toothy smile, custom made for the camera.

And it's not as if Tim necessarily had easy material to work with. Wardens had just transitioned from districts and horses, with wildly varying mountaineering skills, aptitudes and interests. But by emphasising that everyone was part of the team including rescue pilots and dispatchers, and training strong 1st party leaders and Tim built a highly respected rescue program. That same philosophy and leadership was a huge factor in building Warden "esprit de corp"; a trait often both admired and hated by some within Parks Canada. "Esprit de corp" doesn't magically happen by putting on a uniform or giving

someone a title. As a natural leader, Tim knew that it's built by teamwork, trust, common goals and cemented by the adrenalin and stress of risky work.

Those of us who worked with Tim had absolute trust in his judgement. A short story. One late October, we had an overdue on Mt Fay. When we hadn't heard anything by lunch time Tim grabbed a heli and the two of us went for a reccy. It was obvious from the tracks to the rap station that our climber had fled the coop. But it was one of those stellar warm late October days and the centre ice bulge on the North face was in perfect shape, screaming to be climbed. Tim impulsively sent the helicopter home and we jumped out with minimal ice climbing gear, no headlamps and no clear idea as to whether we'd get down before dark let alone how we would get back to Banff. We simul climbed up on perfect ice, giggling the whole way up like a couple of school kids because we were stealing a perfect climbing day from the gods. After summiting, we raced down the ridge and started descending the steep snow slopes to the climbers' right of the north face. After a few steps, it became obvious that we were rapidly running out of daylight. Tim, realizing that more drastic measures were called for turned to me and said to me "keep your feet and hands up" and then launched himself down the slope on his back. I stood open mouthed as he slid down the slope at Mach 1, flew airborne over the semi open bergschrund and landed in an explosion of snow. He got up, dusted himself off and grinning like Cheshire cat, gave me the thumbs up and waved me down. I remember thinking that I hadn't seen that technique in the guides' manual and I felt utterly intimidated by both the speed of his descent and the bergschrund at the bottom. But Tim always inspired unwavering confidence, so naturally, I jumped too. And that was Tim in a nutshell; spontaneous, so much fun to be with and he inspired absolute trust.

I could go on for ages with small snippets of Tim's work but I'd like I'd like to talk a little bit about the last year of Tim's life. I still can't think about my time spent with Tim, without thinking about Sherry. Tim's eyes would light up whenever Sherry walked into the room. Still the belle of the ball and as his health slowly deteriorated, his touch stone. And such a patient, loving and fierce advocate for Tim. It still leaves me feeling humbled and touched, wondering if I could even give ½ as much in the same circumstances.

Tim had a devastating disease and although it was so difficult to see that athletic body and mind melting away, it was always a privilege to spend time with him. Tim taught me so much during my career but like all good mentors, the lessons didn't end there. Tim taught me about:

COURAGE. Tim faced his disease the same way as a fabled Auger 5.9. A historical footnote for the non-climbers in the crowd. The climbing scale used to end at 5.9. I think it's now sitting at 5.15 something. But for years, Tim was convinced that all those extra numbers

were about putting fluff on what was actually only a hard 5.9. So when Tim asked you to go climbing and the route was “only 5.9”, you went with your eyes wide open. Hence the famous Auger 5.9’s that had so many of us questioning our climbing ability.

Tim had a disease that can so easily rob you of your dignity, creating a condition that would have caused many of us to hide at home and bemoan our fate. Not Tim. Not once did I ever hear him complain, express his frustration or see him attempt to hide his condition. Like an Auger 5.9, Tim faced his future with courage. Always keen to get outside, face the world, greet his neighbours and get one more glimpse of his beloved mountains.

GRACE. After recovering from his back to back climbing accidents, Tim was still keen to get on a summit but having trouble finding climbing partners. We hadn’t been in touch for quite a while and he called to ask if I would go up the standard route on Mt Edith with him. Although fit, his partially amputated fingers and fused ankle were still giving him grief. As we started on the easy scramble section, it became quite clear to me that a combination of cognition, balance and sense of touch problems precluded going any further and I told him that it just wasn’t going to work and we needed to turn around. Tim knew his climbing windows were closing very rapidly and even though he was so very keen to stand on top of a mountain again and get a last eagle eye view of his beloved Mt Louis, he accepted the decision with grace. It was my last trip in the mountains with Tim. I still have fond memories of that day, sitting with him at the base of Mt Louis; a couple of old guys reminiscing about all the routes we climbed together.

CLASS. One day I took Tim out for lunch to give Sherry a bit of a break. By that time, Tim had lost much of his ability to speak and needed help eating. As Sherry said to me when we’re dressing him up to go outside, “it’s obvious that you never had kids because you’re not very good at this sort of thing”. And inevitably, while I was helping him eat, because I’m not being very good at this sort of thing, I spilled food on Tim’s shirt. “Ahh shit Tim, I’m so sorry, my fault”, I said. Even though he hadn’t been able to articulate a damn word for the last hour, he piped up clear as a bell, “no that was my fault”. It was so Tim, always the class act and the perfect response to set you at ease.

It seems trite but it was one of those simple moments of human connection and so unexpected that we both burst out laughing. Because that’s what friends do; they can laugh over simple meaningless shite in the most difficult of circumstances.

DIGNITY. Somehow, in spite of the ravages to his mind and body, Tim still always managed to radiate dignity and charisma. Thx to Sherry, he was always looking impeccably dressed with sunglasses perched on his head, just so. Donny, Ian and I would take turns wheeling him around town in his wheelchair. I’m still trying to figure out how someone with a

condition that was gradually turning him into a human pretzel, could look so much more dapper and composed than the rubes pushing his wheelchair.

GRATITUDE. What could one possibly be grateful for when fate has tossed you such an unwarranted roll of the dice? Tim was so grateful to all of you who spent time with him or greeted him on the streets of Canmore. You could see it in his eyes, how a familiar face and a warm hello brightened him up. Even on days when he couldn't remember names, he knew the face and always greeted you with a smile or the "Auger Wave", which was his irreverent way of saying "glad to see you". On many days he had trouble speaking, but somehow, as I was preparing to leave, he would always find his voice. It was so important for Tim to look you in the eye, shake your hand and say "thank you" at the end of every visit. Tim, even as he was slowly dying, always tried to make you feel special, when really, it should have been the other way around.

I'd like to close with one last thought from Tim that seems appropriate. I had often asked Tim how he coped with the tough side of rescue work that no one talks about; the bodies of friends and grieving next of kin. Tim would constantly remind me that there wasn't anything we could do for the deceased; it was all about focusing on the living and helping those left behind. A positive mantra for all of us to remember. Thank you