

H A R L A N   R I C H A R D S

February 6, 2017

Robert Pollard - R.I.P.

I knew Robert (Bob) Pollard for about 5 years. He had the ability to create amazingly realistic models out of trash - cardboard cracker boxes, paper, Q-tips, and whatever else he could lay his hands on. Everyone who had the chance to see one of his creations was impressed. He worked without plans or schematics, used materials other people threw away and made precise, detailed models of motorcycles, boats, trucks, tractors, and other items.

The downside to this phenomenal talent Bob had was that model-making using scrap materials was not an authorized hobby. Every time guards caught him with a finished model, he had to throw it away. Few of his projects ever survived. He always tried to give them away to someone getting released soon in the hopes that the prisoner could sneak the model out with him when he left. Otherwise, the models were thrown away.

Bob developed a sore throat which wouldn't go away. He delayed going to see a doctor and when he finally did, he was diagnosed with cancer. He had surgery, chemo-therapy and radiation - all to no avail. It was too late. He recently died in prison, away from his family and all alone.

He had tried to gain compassionate release but it was not to be. I had heard he was in prison for a sex crime and, if so, that was why they would not release him. They would rather see him die a miserable death in prison than be seen as soft on crime.

We are a cruel nation, devoid of compassion or mercy, and those at the bottom of the social structure will always be the ones to bear the brunt of our cruelty.