"Petrlik Park",
44 Whiteside Road,
Officer Vic. 3809
AUSTRALIA.
Ph. (03) 707 2232

1. 3. 1995

In memory of Stephen Andrew Peters
4.5.1963 - 28.1.1995
"The soul would have no rainbow
if the eyes had no tears"

To all his friends, family, mates and colleagues, "I.B.M.' and later "I.S.A." and especially the Hang-gliding "Eagles".

I am Margaret Peters - Stephens mother and I take this opportunity to thank you all so very, very much for the love and friendship that you gave Stephen.

It is with deep sadness to see a brilliant brain (which God had given to him)- have the power switched off, at such a young age of 31 years. I have not really grasped the reality of his death yet. I have to look at the photos of Stephen in his coffin and still I can not comprehend it fully.

No doubt you would like "the story"____?!

Stephen was a mover and shaker and was always right into making and doing things and if my memory serves me right- he always completed his projects. He was a great one for toys - more toys and still more toys - as a boy he had toys such as Fisher Technic models -with electronic kits etc., I believe this is where he grasped the nuts and bolts of the basic fundamentals of engineering principals. He made a little boat and fibreglassed it - then his father supplied an outboard motor and down we all went to Patterson River to test run the prototype. I report that it did get wet and no it did not sink - but was very much overpowered.

Stephen was a great one, participating in the Australian Air League Squadron. He was also into model building with real little motors and he actually "flew" them in between the running repairs. He was first exposed to the wonders of computer technology at the Dandenong Technical College and was addicted to it instantly. In between college it was more toys - advancing to hay contracting during the summer holidays using his father's equipment, hay carting, testing in the field with New Holland wheat harvesters. He moved on to Chisholm college where he did his Engineering studies with distinctions.

One really great experience was when he spent months designing and developing a "Shell Mileage Marathon" tandem car. Gathering the materials and taking bits to specialists to weld and/or form,- reading "The Melbourne Trading Post" to find the right Honda 50CC motor- then pull it apart and reassemble it to really "go" with a punch, then finding the proper racing bike wheels and sheathing the wheels and car body with this hi-tech material.

Well the big day finally arrived and Eddie and I hiked up to Amaroo Park in Sydney for the final day of the competition. When we finally found him - he was sweating over the car in the pit and it had been continuous fine tuning and testing time -tearing out to engineering workshop for this and for that etc. Well, the car finally was checked through and was fuelled by measure and away they went. What an adventure! What a boy! The car completed one circuit, then went back to the pit for more tinkering - then it was out again for the 2nd round - then the problems started to appear. The fine but hardened axle was bowing under the weight of two very small young ladies and it was causing the brakes to grab - so he had no choice but to send them out again for the 3rd and final run with the brakes out of action. Well they did a few laps of the prescribed distance and then the little gem ran off the track. I flew over to jam my foot under the wheel to stop them.

The next thing Stephen is saying - "don't worry Mum" we've won - we've won"! "What do you mean we've won" "says I"- "we haven't finished the circuit"! It doesn't matter - we've won!" He apparently had a very good result in either the 1st or 2nd run and it was contested on the best of three tries! Well over Stephen's entire life- this was the highest high I have ever recorded over his life time - when he was called to come up and get his winning trophy - a silver goblet on a stand - he had won! When you are a witness to the months of planning, preparation and execution of his dream and then see the performance lead to winning- I was absolutely off the planet!

Stephen's love affair with gadgets etc. toys whistles and bells went on to include water skiing, camping, converting a VW into a beach buggy and had fun, trail bike riding, helicopters but most of all - hang gliding. He absolutely loved it - the freedom and joy of it all! He flew like an eagle!

When Stephen was a young boy we had a Pekinese dog - NICKY - who was so ugly he was absolutely beautiful and was literally my shadow. Whenever Stephen needed comforting, he would pick up Nicky and nurse him. Nicky learned very quickly that there was no point in trying to wriggle out of his "steel-trap" like arms as all that Stephen would do was to hold him even tighter. So the pained and patient look on the dogs face was comical as it was sad. A dog was a very important part to Stephen during his life and is it not so beautiful that a dog should accompany him into paradise?

I spoke to my Doctor once when we had to have Nicky put down due to numerous old age problems. I said to the Doctor "It would be nice to think there was a Heaven for dogs" and my Doctor said "WHY NOT". Indeed "why not"?? I could not see him suffering and I could not kill my very best and totally loyal mate. God - please let there be a Heaven for dogs! Especially Pekinese ones! Having Nicky put down was the saddest day of my life.

Stephen really loved Austin and all that went with it. He would always return with feet above the ground and on a real "high" and took time to come down to earth again! We move on to 1994 where he was literally married to I.B.M. and he loved them all and loved it all - but it did not allow him to have the usual marriage, mortgage and kids scene which was where he was looking towards. It took him some time to consider, evaluate and decide to leave I.B.M. in pursuit of a different life style. This resulted in taking up a position with I.S.A. in Wodonga as a computer wizard.

He frantically sought his dream of Paradise which had to be - a bushed hill- facing north with a view to mountains and valleys and a Bed and Breakfast licence and a solar passive home. Well he bought 45 acres of rising and undulating land with the treed hill rising steeply to the ridge line. The really big day finally arrived on Thursday 26th January '95 after the purchase of this beautiful property was completed and the road made from the main road into Yackandandah up to Stephens block. Our son David and Eddie arrived with the "Christmas Stocking full of wonderful toys" for Stephen. Dave's truck has the tractor, carry all, jib, post hole digger, gate, etc. etc. and the backhoe front end loader buckets etc., on the trailer and another trailer with slasher etc and all the gear to clear the shed site, the road to his house site and a dam. Friday PM was time out and very hot, so they went shopping for a 40'X 25' shed. They put a $2,000.00 deposit on one that could be delivered in two weeks time.

Saturday was all "go" again even though there was a severe electrical storm with thunder and lightning constant. Stephens fiancee Judy, decided to go home to make our David "mashed potatoes" to have with the B.B.Q. planned for that evening. Eddie and Dave were camped in a tent on the property close to the tree. Stephen told Judy he would stay with Dad and Dave. Judy left about 2.30pm and Dave kept moving the dirt, even though it rained off and on amidst thunder and lightning. Eddie kept busy with the chain saw cutting up trees fallen- (for the BBQ that evening) and odd jobs. All the tools and materials were on the west side of a very large gum tree. Eddie was back and forth to the tree for 4 hours.

Judy arrived back after 7 pm asking "where's Stephen" "I thought he was with you", says Eddie. Eddie immediately thought that something was wrong. He thought he may have slipped on the hill and hit his head on a stone and be unconscious some where. After the three of them went off in different directions, searching and calling- It was just a fluke that later Eddie came over the boundary fence on an angle so that he could sight the east side of the big tree. He saw something on the ground and kept walking up the hill - then he saw something like a rag doll - then he continued and finally recognised Stephen on his knees slumped backwards against the tree. He called out - "it's Stephen, but he's dead, he's dead".
What a tragedy. (It is thought he was struck around 2.45 pm.)

Eddie felt him and he was cold and firm and the little Kelpie dog "Cooper" was dead beside him and he was cold and stiff. Eddie knew beyond a doubt that Stephen was dead and wondered if he was shot or something. Eddie could not work out what happened. By this time Judy came up to the tree - took one look at Stephen and said "Oh! he's been struck by lightning!" It was only then that they looked up and saw the tree. It was like you took a mountaineering spike and tore it through the bark and timber from the top to nearly the bottom in a straight line with the torn material exploding outwards is shafts. According to the coroner - death was by electrocution with the point of entry at the back of his head and exited through the right foot. Judy found a small burn hole in the back of his hat - the lining has a small heat sear mark and upon examination Judy found a tiny hole on the boot at the top and back of his ankle with the leather torn outwards.

Well with all that has happened before, during and after Stephen's life I have picked up many, many pieces of the jig saw puzzle and have managed to see enough of the picture to get some understanding of what God was all about. Individually the pieces were not significant- but when you put them together - it has quite a story to tell.

Without writing a book, this is how I see it. Stephen was given a brain that really was special and he used it in a positive way. Stephen had a personality that was like moths attracted to light and you could not help but love him. Stephen "played" with toys from babyhood to maturity continuously - he was always making something. Stephens interests led him to many near misses time and time again. Stephens death was an act of nature -instant and painless.

Amongst numerous interlocking pieces- Stephen spoke with Judy about his grand mother in particular, and how much she meant to him and how his Nana would love him in her own special way when he really needed someone to love him. He spoke to Judy about his Pop and Nana and that they were buried in Springvale Necropolis and that there was a vacant grave next to them. When I asked Judy where she would like him to be buried - she immediately said "Oh! he must be buried next to his Nana!" When I checked to see exactly what date Nana died - she died on January 28th, 1981. Stephen was taken by God on January 28th, 1995. He was buried next to Nana on February 2, 1995.

On the evening prior to Stephens burial, the rosary which was led by Rev. Fr. Phelan, was said for him in the old historic Church of England Chapel in Pakenham, where Stephens family and friends had gathered for the rosary. The funereal and relevant arrangements were made from Pakenham, as Eddie and I attend St. Patricks church regularly and Rev. Fr. Phelan - the aged Irish parish priest, was known to the Marson Family over some years.

The coffin was open for the viewing of Stephen during this rosary, and after which, his close family all gave Stephen a token of their Love . This was done with little family discussion.

The following is a record of what took place.

Judy asked Fr. Phelan if a tape of Stephen's favourite music could be played when the coffin was raised to the shoulders of his two brothers and four closest mates when the sad procession was to leave the church on Stephens last journey. The music was played on an electric guitar by Stevie Ray Vaughan on tape, which was written especially for his wife, "Lenny". Stephen knew Stevie from the Austin Texas times of Assignments and Stevie was of similar age to Stephen , when the helicopter he was traveling in, whilst on tour, crashed and killed Stevie. Fr. Phelan needed to hear the tape to check that it would not offend anyone. So, it so happened that Martin brought along his C.D. portable player and played the piece which was Stephens favourite music for Fr. Phelan after the recitation of the Rosary. Fr. heard a few moments of the tape and then nodded agreement that it would be O.K..

The taped C.D. played "Lenny" whilst the family gathered around the coffin and each one gave Stephen a token of their everlasting love. Judy placed Stephens hat that he was wearing when he died in the coffin. His Nana Marson put her crucifix on Stephen. Pauline Meiklejohn - the godmother of Stephen gave him a gold medal of the Sacred Heart on a chain. Martin and David , put it around his neck for her. Eddie put Stephen's grandfather's rosary beads around his beautiful hands. His mother, Margaret placed a beautiful blue rosary around his head- the rosary was bought in 1990 at Medjugoria (Our Ladies very special place in Yugoslavia) Karen gave him a small posy of flowers which she had made. David bought two matching friendship rings and he placed one on Stephen's right hand and kept the other for himself as a token of his love for Stephen. David and Cheryl put a little of the earth from Stephen,s Yackandandah property in a small gold box and placed it in Stephen's right hand. Martin's gift was the gold medal that Pauline thought she gave Stephen- she actually gave it to Martin as an infant and in turn Martin gave it to Pauline and then Pauline gave it to Stephen. A letter was under his hands and it was from his niece Adria, who wrote of her love for him. Karen dropped a tiny posy of flowers on the chapel floor by accident - Stephen's Aunt, Pat Riches, saw it on the floor and picked it up - looked at it and thought it would be a nice button hole for Stephen - so she placed it on Stephen. Unbeknown to Pat - that little posy was a gift - made by Karen - for Stephens god daughter, Sarah Ruiz. Judy was given a wedding ring from David - so that she could place it on Stephens left hand.

Teresa had bought "a little thing" for Stephen - but had left home under extreme stress and had left it behind. She later went home - came back - only to find Tobin Brothers had locked up and no one was there. She then came to her parents home, not knowing what to do. She had this little thing in a box. I asked Teresa "what was the little thing" that meant so much to her and she then opened the little box and showed me a tie-tack that was a gold angel- her token was to mean that Stephen was led into Paradise by his guardian angel! She left it with me as I assured her Stephen would get his little angel. The next morning I rang the undertaker and said I had to see Stephen and had to give him something! I had to be early because of the 9 am funeral Mass. I was taken into the chapel , the lid was unscrewed and I saw his lovely face one last time, gave him Teresa's gift - Blessed him with water from Medjougoria and said goodbye.

Stephen was most surely only on loan to us all and God blessed all of Stephen's family, friends, "rellies", school mates, teachers, work mates employers and all of his greater family of treasured friends. At the completion of the burial of his earthly robe there was a very gentle fall of raindrops falling on our heads!

I believe Stephen was given 31 years to play prior to God's call -"making him an offer Stephen could not refuse" and I truly believe that Stephen will have been given a job like no other — that it will be interesting, challenging and ongoing (for as long as needs be!). Already we have experienced Stephen's embrace and family problems are being unravelled as if by an expert.

When I found a box of Stephens photographs " stashed" away a few days ago - it was really a record of his life - it appeared to be one long continuous party, party party! In the box amongst his photographic life was a card with one red rose in bloom and it said "THANKYOU". Later Eddie came to me and said that he had got his card! It was a "Fathers Day" card that Stephen never sent. The card expressed all his love, thanks and gratitude to his father for all his father had done for him.

Stephen was a beautiful baby,
a darling little boy,
a joy in adolescence,
and a lovely young man any parent would be proud to claim as their own! Stephen leaves two sisters, Karen and Teresa and two brothers, David and Martin.

Death does not extinguish the light -
but puts out the lamp for the dawn has come
Weep but briefly for your loved one as he enters
into the Kingdom of God, for he shall possess a joy and a peace that is unattainable on God's earthly realm, but rather, rejoice in his everlasting and total happiness for his eyes have seen God.

May God bless and keep you all close to his heart , may his face shine upon you and be gracious to you and may he uncover his face to you and bring you peace.

Stephen will be with you should you decide to have a "liquid lunch" and have one "on him"

Please accept our love and gratitude for the wonderful times you all gave him.

Margaret and Eddie Peters