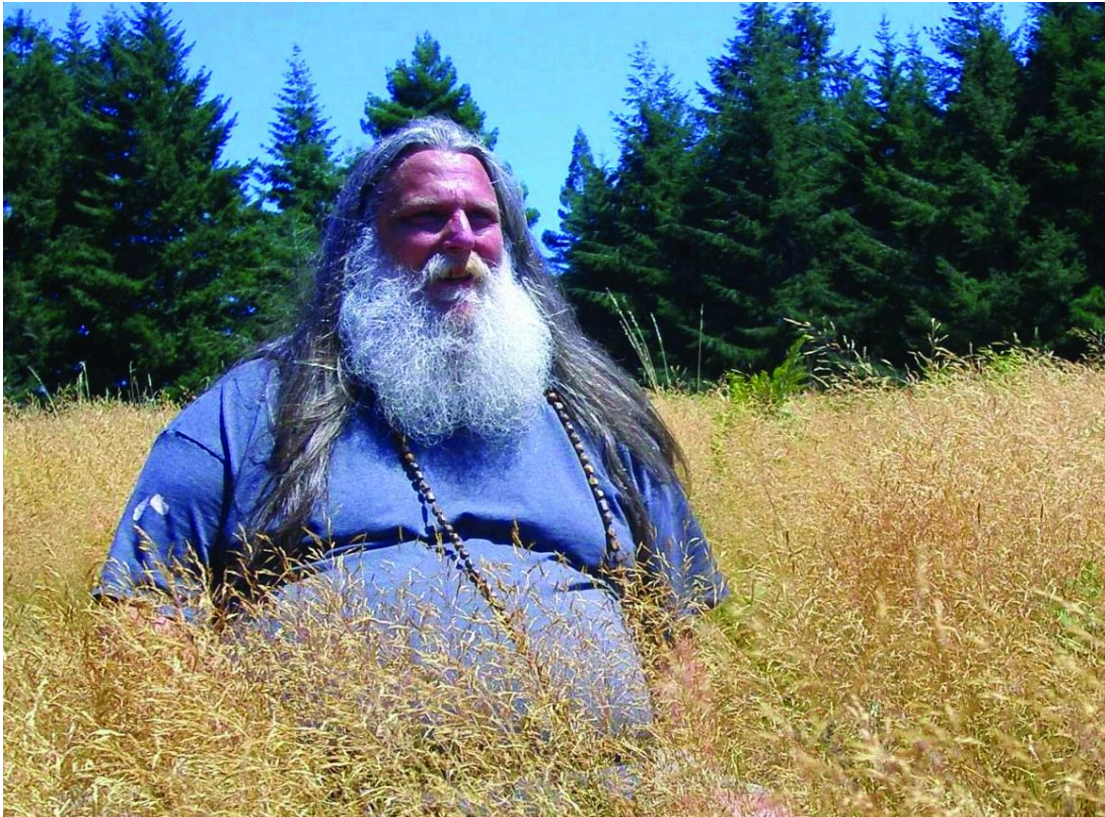


## Fredrick Kenneth Otremba

June 17, 2021



Fredrick Kenneth Otremba peacefully separated from his earthly body on June 2, 2021 after a long battle with lung cancer and congestive heart failure. Born July 13, 1960 in Crescent City, CA, he offered to all who came to know and love him an exceptionally unique and big-hearted perspective on life. To family and friends he was the other most interesting man in the world.

Born an authentic free spirit (which got him into a bit of trouble from time to time) and a preference for tie-dye attire, Fred was a passionate lifelong learner and contemplator of the universe. From Batman to Gandhi, from astronomy to geology, from Buddhism to the life cycle of salamanders, from the history of oppression to the magic of rock and roll, from meditation rituals to pondering the greater mysteries of galaxies far, far away—he was fascinated by how all things are connected.

True to his nonconformist ways, Fred lived simply and believed each of us arrived on this planet with an obligation to protect our environment. He truly loved having the ocean a short walk away and considered a swim in the Smith River just a breath away from heaven. He also believed in our collectively responsibility to care for each other no matter how privileged or disadvantaged. Fred rarely locked his door, always kept

the porch light on (which fittingly went out the night he passed) and once, he even had a spare change bowl where anyone could take what they needed to buy a meal with the promise to return coins when they were able. Often described as a mentor or spiritual guide, Fred was light on judgment and heavy on kindness, acceptance and understanding.

Eternally open-minded and adventurous, Fred cultivated many interests and talents including astrophysics, wood-carving, wire art, coin and rock collecting, painting, drawing, and yes, was well aware of the therapeutic benefits of marijuana. Throughout handwritten journals packed with Fred insights are illustrations of “Sticman,” a cartoon character he created as a purveyor of wit and sarcasm. “If you think the world is treating you badly,” observed Sticman, “then you’re in the wrong part of it.”

During his lifetime, Fred had a variety of occupations including crewing on commercial fishing boats, working in the woods as a logger, and helping to keep the peace in local bars as the gentle giant bouncer. In recent years, he particularly enjoyed producing laser light shows for local events. But above all, Fred was a gifted singer and musician. Virtually any musical instrument he could hold in his hands he could play—the sitar, banjo, zither, ukulele, bass fiddle, and of course, the beloved guitar he called his “fire-breathing dragon.”

Fred especially loved concerts, music festivals and jamming with other musicians just to see what was possible in the spontaneity of the moment. He not only played guitar but repaired them and even built two out of a burl coffee table from his childhood home. No one in the family will ever forget Fred showing up at the front door in only shorts and a T-shirt, banjo in hand after the Coast Guard had rescued him from a sinking fishing boat—a fishing boat he refused to leave without his banjo. So it’s no surprise that posted on the ceiling above his bed was this Hans Christian Andersen quote, “Where words fail, music speaks.”

Fred was the son of the late Bethany Barton Otremba and Herbert Kenneth Otremba. He is survived by sisters Jackie Boor of Sacramento and Paula Lang, a Crescent City resident along with brothers, Randy Otremba and Ron Otremba, three generations of nieces and nephews, and a kaleidoscopic array of friends near and far.

Family and friends have begun the process of planning “Fredfest” near the end of summer to celebrate his life at Beach Front Park. Those wishing to support a cause close to Fred’s heart are encouraged to send donations in his memory to the Del Norte County Historical Society, 577 H Street, Crescent City, CA 95531.