

# Aliner Owners Club Founder Dies

Bob Hoffmann of Sun City West, Arizona, died August 3, 2008, while visiting his hometown, Emmetsburg, IA.

Bob served with the Air Force Security Service in Peshawar, Pakistan and Brindisi, Italy. In 1966, he graduated from NW Missouri State College with a BA in Math/Physics. Immediately after graduation, he married Shirley Keen of Hyden, KY, and began a 30 year career with IBM Systems Software Engineering in Poughkeepsie, NY; Tokyo, Japan, and Rochester, MN.

Bob took early retirement in 1995 to become a fulltime caregiver for Shirley. A family website, which he began to keep friends and family informed of her condition, grew into a major resource for caregivers and medical professionals. He also produced a newsletter, "*Coping*," which was distributed to caregivers through the Alzheimer Research Center at Mayo Clinic in Rochester. Shirley died in August, 1998.



**Robert Hoffmann**

August 17, 1940 - August 3, 2008

Bob served for two years as Director of Product Development for Technology

Concepts, Inc. in Rochester, MN, before retiring to travel to Alaska in an Aliner.

A year later, Bob and his future wife, Suzanne Thompson, founded the Aliner Owners Club, growing it to include 800 members in 46 states and six Canadian provinces. They spent four years managing the Club before retiring.

Since their marriage in 2002, they traveled extensively around the US and Canada, first in the Aliner, then in a new model motorhome, the Winnebago View, also known as a Skinnie Winnie.

Bob is survived by his wife Suzanne; son Rob (Kelly) Hoffmann of Virginia Beach, VA; daughter Nicole (Pat) Blegen of Rochester, MN; granddaughters Brooke Blegen and McKenna Hoffmann, 10 stepchildren and nine step-grand children. He was preceded in death by his wife Shirley; brother Randy, sister Carolyn, step-daughter Andrea and his parents, Randall A. and Cleone (Albright) Hoffmann.

## The Aliner Years

For those of you who weren't around at the time—in 2001, Ginny Dillon took the initiative to arrange for a get-together in Pennsylvania near the Aliner factory for what was to become the first annual rally. Attendees had such a great time (despite the rain and conditions at Camp Swampy) that they decided they wanted to have another rally and a website of their own.

At that time, Bob Hoffmann's website featuring his solo trip to Alaska was one

of the most-visited travel sites on the web so he was asked to do the website. Someone said, "What about people who don't have computers?" So Suzanne agreed to do a newsletter. Several folks offered to serve on a steering committee to get a club of sorts started.

As sometimes happens, most of the steering committee members had other heavy commitments but the timing was right for Bob and Suzanne to press on with forming the club. Working from their home office, they acquired a professional logo, ordered bumper stickers and patches, designed a new-member packet, set up the website and newsletter, and designed a membership brochure that was included with the new owner documents that the factory put in new Aliners

Bob and Suzanne created a unique membership directory that encouraged getting acquainted. Along the way, Bob also started the Swap Shop which has become a convenient source for buying and selling used Aliners, and Suzanne wrote press releases and articles for the Aliner factory's newsletter.

Successful annual rallies followed in Branson, Cherokee, and Mount Rushmore. With the addition of Regional Groups, the vision was almost complete. It speaks well for the program that most of the original Directors are still in place. Sue Sarlette put the icing on the cake when she developed the membership database.

In 2005, Bob and Suzanne retired, turning the management of the club over to Tom, Dick and Gerry. Since then, the club has continued to thrive and grow.

You can visit the Hoffmann website at [www.bhoffcomp.com](http://www.bhoffcomp.com). It includes Bob's Alaska trip.

Our family thanks you for the flowers at Bob's funeral and for all the cards, emails and phone calls. It was heartwarming to see Charter members, Marlyn and Don Spieker at the service.

Bob and I had been looking forward to the SW Rally in Durango, for which we were registered.

*Suzanne Thompson-Hoffmann*



*Bob and Suzanne at Cherokee*