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Post Script: Beach man's life overflowed with projects - and friends

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VIRGINIA BEACH - Leo Olson's final project would perhaps have been his greatest.

The two-story, two-car garage he was building would house the antique cars he loved to restore, and upstairs a workshop for his carpentry and woodworking.

Any additional space would help hold the hundreds of items he scavenged over the years and never threw away.

Olson didn't get to complete the garage. He died June 26 at age 71.

Bob Souders, Olson's close friend for more than 30 years, called him "the king of concrete."

The two men met in the Navy. They were part of an inspection team which traveled up and down the East Coast.

The team split up into two cars on these trips. Souders and Olson were dubbed the Milkshake Car, because neither drank.

After 27 years in the Navy, Olson retired and took a job alongside Souders as an engineer for Sentara Healthcare.

The "king of concrete" title came from Olson's habit of paving over any available surface, but over the years he had mastered most aspects of construction, from woodworking to wiring.

He was a master electrician and a carpenter. He could fix your car, repair a table he found at the dump or build an addition on your house.

Spend some time with him, and he probably would.

"He would talk to anybody," Souders said. "He used to drive us crazy."

He was the guy you called when you needed help.

"Anytime something would go wrong at the house, my wife would say, 'Call Leo,' Souders said.

Olson's stepdaughter, Lynda McKay, recalls a time her car broke down. She called Olson, who was on his way out to dinner.

"He drove out to where I was, got in his coveralls, went under the car and fixed it," McKay said. "Then he went on to dinner. He was one of those guys who can do anything."

When he wasn't restoring antique cars, such as his Morris Minor and a 1913 Ford roadster, he enjoyed dancing to big band music. That's how he met his wife, Ada, who died four years ago.

Olson kept working, and dancing, right up until he went into the hospital last month.

"He was like a brother to me," Souders said. "He's going to be missed."

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