

Permission to reprint or copy this article or photo, other than personal use, must be obtained from The Seattle Times. Call 206-464-3113 or e-mail resale@seattletimes.com with your request.



Freelance writer Nick Gallo died while on assignment in Athens, Greece.

Nick Gallo, curious and fastidious freelance writer, dies at 57

By Erik Lacitis

Seattle Times staff reporter

The day before Nick Gallo died last week in an Athens, Greece, hospital, he called the Seattle editor of Alaska Airlines Magazine.

It was about a story the award-winning local freelance writer had submitted.

Mr. Gallo, the author of more than 350 travel articles, 300 consumer stories and 200 features, was known for deeply caring about his writing.

"He was making sure the story was in good shape and that we knew that if it needed additional work, he wasn't in the position to do it," Paul Frichtl said. "He said it'd be another week or 10 days before he'd be able to travel."

But to the shock of his family and friends, Mr. Gallo, 57, died Oct. 11.

"We were talking to him every morning and every night. It sounded like he was doing better," said his wife, Laurie Brown, who met Mr. Gallo when she was 20 and he was 21.

Mr. Gallo had left for Greece on Oct. 5 to work on a story for *Virtuoso Life*, a travel magazine. On the Newark, N.J.-Athens leg of the flight, "he passed out on the plane," his wife said.

She said Mr. Gallo was diagnosed with pericarditis — a swelling of the membrane around the heart — and pneumonia.

She said her husband had been in good health, although he had rheumatic fever as a child, which can affect the heart. Brown said autopsy results are expected in 10 days.

News of Mr. Gallo's death spread in e-mails and on Internet blogs.

J. Kingston Pierce, a Seattle historian and freelancer, wrote on his Web site, "Any journalist who's toured around the United States or the world on behalf of a publication — especially since September 11, 2001 — wonders at some point, *What would happen if I got mortally sick on the road, and couldn't get back?* But that's supposed to be idle speculation, nothing to be taken too seriously."

Pierce said he'd remember Mr. Gallo's inquisitiveness. He said the writer "was not too proud to ask a

question" from someone he thought had the answers.

Dean Paton, another Seattle freelancer, shared office space with Mr. Gallo from 1983 to 1991, when they were both starting out.

He remembered they would tell their wives how hard they were working at freelancing, which they were. But they also found time to play catch in the dingy hallway and talk about the state of the world.

Mr. Gallo was passionate about baseball and basketball and played on softball teams and weekly basketball pickup games. Some of his friends knew him only from those games.

For many years, he played in a weekly basketball game that included an eclectic group of journalists, cartoonists, an architect and a lawyer. He was remembered as a tenacious player who didn't foul.

Mr. Gallo was born July 12, 1950, in Bridgeport, Conn. He earned a bachelor's degree in journalism in 1977 from the University of Oregon.

But before earning that degree, in the early 1970s, Mr. Gallo and his wife were hippies, she said.

Brown said the couple worked from June until October in Eastern Oregon and Eastern Washington, picking fruit. On good days, she said, they earned \$100 together.

They lived on their savings the rest of the year, with Mr. Gallo writing poetry and Brown doing art projects.

But even as a hippie, she said, Mr. Gallo showed his fastidiousness, going to orchards the night before and scoping out which trees would yield the most fruit and what height ladders the couple would need.

Mr. Gallo's professional awards were numerous. He twice won the Pluma de Plata (Silver Quill) for best travel article of the year on Mexico, awarded by the Mexico Tourism Board; he also won the Darrell Bob Houston Literary Prize for best article of the year.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by two sons, Alex Gallo-Brown, 22, a student at the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, N.Y., and Noah Gallo-Brown, 17, of Seattle; two brothers, Alex Gallo, of Eugene, Ore., and Matt Gallo, of Newport, Ore; two sisters, Lory Gallo, of Brooklyn, and Mandy Krantz, of Des Moines, Iowa; and his mother, Rose Gallo, also of Des Moines.

Services will be held at 4 p.m. Oct. 27 at The Chapel of St. Ignatius at Seattle University, 901 12th Ave.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be sent to the Nick Gallo Memorial Fund, 6312 23rd Ave. N.E., Seattle, WA 98115.

In 2003, Mr. Gallo wrote an open letter to his oldest son, Alex, who was finishing high school. It was about traveling with his son.

"Alex, let's take one more trip ... ," it said. "Soon, you'll be finishing high school and have better things to do than keep company with a greybeard"

It ended, "Let's take one more trip. One more journey. ... We're not done yet."

Erik Lacitis: 206-464-2237 or elacitis@seattletimes.com