



**Carl John Gösta “Charlie” Pahlman**  
**22 November 1960 — 19 January 2005**



# Celebrating Charlie

**Monday 31 January 2005 in ACT**

**2pm: 'The Abbey', Federation Square,  
Gungahlin**

- Roland Manderson – intro – ACT Greens
- Andrew Pahlman – brother
- Kari Pahlman – daughter
- Pam Boyer – partner and lover
- Cate Buchanan – friend and ANTaR
- Christine Pahlman – close friend, mother of Tina and Kari
- Daniel Stubbs – friend and ACTCOSS
- Eang Daoroung – friend and TERRA
- Mark Deasey – friend and Oxfam CAA
- Johnny Huckle – friend and musician
- Tina Pahlman – daughter

**6.30pm: Corroboree Park, Ainslie  
Celebrations continuing with a  
Charlie party – all welcome!**

Memories, tributes and photos are at  
[www.charlie.pahlman.com](http://www.charlie.pahlman.com)

Donations in honour of Charlie can be made to ANTaR (Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation) or the Charlie Mekong Fund – PO Box 1176 Rozelle NSW 2039





## Charlie in life

Charlie, Gösta, was born in Sweden in 1960.

His father Ragnar, from a family in the Swedish nobility, was a public figure in Sweden – lawyer, judge, Military Captain, UN Observer, 4<sup>th</sup> generation CEO of a family business.

Charlie's mother Anna Lena, daughter of a professor of physics, was a social worker and later worked in the family business. He has one younger brother Andrew, born in 1962.

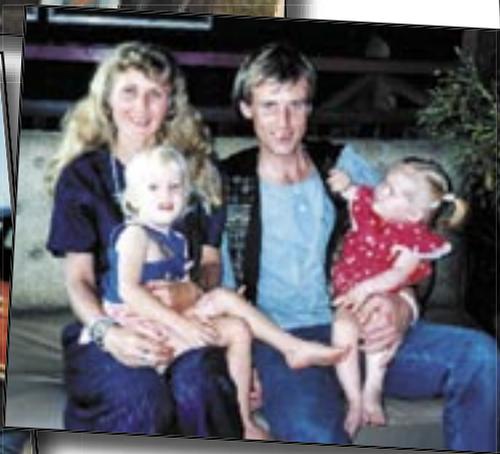
The family moved to Australia when Charlie was ten. He attended various schools, completing his HSC at Richmond High School in 1979. He studied Agricultural Science at Hawkesbury Agricultural College (now University of Western Sydney).

Charlie travelled extensively throughout the world and loved exploring, meeting people and learning about cultures and languages. He held diverse jobs including waiter, administrator, chef, share farmer, avocado farmer, stock rider, health worker, development worker and community worker.

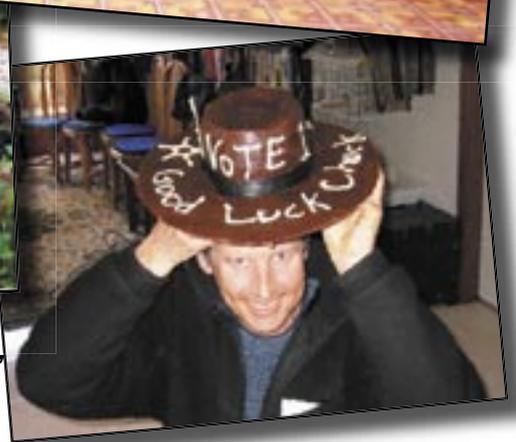
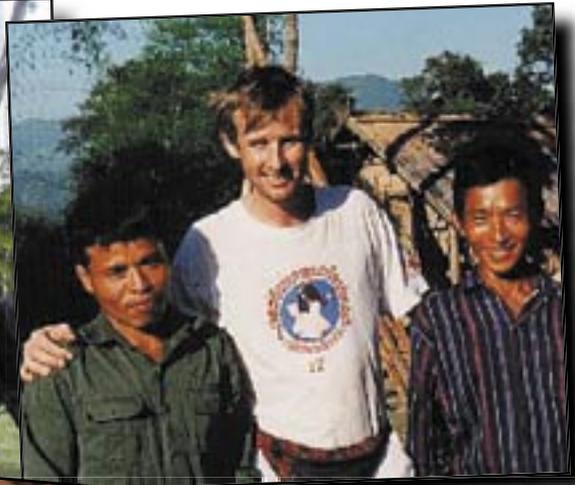
In 1987 Charlie moved to Nan in northern Thailand to work with Thai farmers on sustainable development and agriculture. This began his love affair with the Mekong region and the people of Thailand and Laos, and his work with CUSO, TERRA and Community Aid Abroad. Charlie and Christine married in Thailand and had two daughters, Tina and Kari. They then lived for five years in Vientiane, Laos.

Charlie, Christine and the girls returned to Australia and settled in Canberra in 1996. He and Christine separated, whilst remaining close friends with a wonderful parenting partnership. Charlie worked extensively with the community sector including ACTCOSS (where he was Deputy Director), Oxfam CAA, ANTaR and the ACT Greens. He was a tireless proponent of indigenous rights and maintained his commitment to the Mekong.

Charlie met Pam in 1996 thus forming the extended Pahlman-Boyer family.



***"Charlie's glass was never half full or half empty"***  
ACTCOSS s



*empty – it was always overflowing*  
staff

# A toast to Charlie

Charlie Pahlman – father, partner, friend, confidante, leader, mentor, comrade and much more to the many people who had the privilege to meet him.

*You burst into my life with a big warm grin and helped me feel at home with a bunch of strangers. You helped me to see that my contribution was worthwhile and valuable. You were so generous – with your time, your energy, your kindness and your wicked sense of fun.*

**Annie Close, Canberra**

Words to describe Charlie: love, passion, inspiration, energy, eternal optimism, friendship, open-hearted, open-minded, genuine, compassionate spirit, warmth, smiles and bear hugs.

*Charlie brought people together, and he inspired, impelled, counselled and cajoled us onward and upward.*

**Randy Arnst, Vientiane, Laos**

Many people feel devastated to have Charlie leave us at a time when the world seems to most need people like him – people who will challenge, people who will support others, people who will resist. His work, commitment and dedication to activism underlies the immense impact Charlie had on this world, particularly through his work with others in community organisations in Thailand and Laos, with Community Aid Abroad, ANTaR, ACTCOSS and the ACT Greens.

Charlie died in a happy moment, surrounded by people he loved, in the beautiful paradise of Samoa, loving being in the open seas. While we are thankful for that, it is the loss

of Charlie that the people left behind must bear. So many have written of the difficulty of dealing with the loss.

*I have to try hard to imagine the world without him.*

**Larry Lohmann, England**

As in his life, Charlie's passing connects many different streams into one, bringing together people from Thailand, Laos, Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne, Broome, Alice Springs, England, Canada and elsewhere, in person or in spirit, to remember him and celebrate his glorious life. He would have wanted it no other way.

*If you've been to the Mekong region its life force touches you. If you met Charlie his life force touches you. The Mekong was inside Charlie, he loved it and fought passionately for the rights of local people and their livelihoods. And he inspired so many people with his passion.*

**Margie Law, Tasmania**

*The river Charlie has flowed through all our lives and made us so much richer such rivers do not dry up, they continue to flow through us.*

**Tania Struzina, Melbourne**

*...hope that people can carry on with a little bit of Charlie-spirit within.*

**Witoon Permpongsacharoen, Thailand**

Let us honour and celebrate him. There will be a global toast to Charlie at 9pm Canberra time Monday 31 January, 5am Canada and USA Eastern states, 8am Brazil, 10am England, 5pm Thailand and Laos.



## **A look at life**

**Life is a great ocean  
on which you are  
a wave  
a small  
wave**

**Sometimes you are sad  
You slink away  
into a corner  
of an ocean  
that is  
big  
while  
you are  
small  
and sad**

**You are happy  
and dance  
on the  
surface**

**You are angry  
and throw  
and heave  
and fight**

**But you are still  
that same  
little  
wave  
on a great big ocean**

*Charlie Pahlman, 1972*

