

Little Amber's long trip comes to peaceful end

By LYNNE GARNETT
Staff Reporter

Four-year-old Amber Calistro shed one tear, and died peacefully in her own bed Thursday afternoon.

The child's battle with cancer, and her mother's battle with a medical establishment which she said "wanted to run the show," was a well-publicized one. Those battles ended Thursday, when Amber died on her mother's 27th birthday.

"She started slipping into a coma midnight Wednesday, but just before she died she shed one tear, which I thought was pretty remarkable," said Patti Calistro. She could hear me. She was aware I was there. She was a little sad to hear me, but at the same time she was real relieved to go."

Patti Calistro was always there, by her daughter's side, from the time a cancerous lump was discovered behind Amber's right ear in July of 1979. Amber went through traditional radiological therapy, and more controversial metabolic and immunological treatments in the Grand Bahamas, as her mother sought cures that would not cause Amber discomfort.

In late summer, Patti Calistro brought Amber home from the Grand Bahamas to

her own bed. She administered Amber's medication, adjusting the dosage this week "because the pain was so great. So for the past few days she slept most of the time," said her mother.

"I feel that at the moment of her death, she became dispersed," said Patti Calistro. "At the moment she died my body started tingling. It lasted for five minutes after she died. All I could say was 'Thank you, God. Thank you, God.' I felt He was really there. Then she left.

"Her birth was wonderful. Her life was fantastic. And her death was real good," said Amber's mother.

Her voice this morning was steady, and Patti Calistro was told how strong she sounded. "It's not me. I'm really weak. It's God, really. After Amber died I felt as though everything was ... just fine. I felt like I had not only God helping me, but Amber, too. I felt twice as strong, like she was still in the room."

Would she have done anything differently?

"No. I did everyting in my power," said Calistro. "I wish we could have had more cooperation from some of the doctors in the medical establishment. A lot of them wanted to take over the show, not work with us. They were not willing to respect me and the fact that I had intelligence and the fact I knew my daughter.

(Please turn to page 2)

Index on page 2

Amber's long fight ends with mother at her side

(Continued from page 1)

"As far as I'm concerned we did everything we could here on earth. I have no regrets."

Amber's body will be cremated, and her ashes scattered from a sailboat in Long Island Sound Monday. "Amber and Gary (Stiewing, a companion who was with Patti and Amber from the time the cancer was detected) and I lived on a boat for about five months last fall. We had a real good time, and always talked about sailing around the world."

Patti said she and Gary would then drive along the coastline and bury the urn somewhere along the way, for no particular reason. "Just led by the spirit of God, I guess."

Patti Calistro extensively photographed, filmed and recorded the last 15 months of Amber's life and plans to write a book about her daughter. She said with the book proceeds she would like to start a foundation in Amber's name to directly help people suffering in any manner.

"When I got home last night I re-wound the tape (recording) and took it back to where she died. It was such a moving experience. Even though physically she's gone I do have the tape, and I can relive those moments."

10-31-81
N.H. REGISTER