

Obituaries (continued from page 25)

James Richard Neal

November 20, 1934 – October 5, 2015

James (Gentleman Jim) Richard Neal passed away on Monday, October 5, at St. Charles Hospital in Bend. Jim had struggled with health issues for two years and passed away knowing he was loved by his family.

Jim was born in Poplar Bluff, Missouri, to Thomas Marion Neal and Christine Newkirk Neal on November 20, 1934. During the Great Depression and World War II, Thomas Neal served overseas in the U.S. Army. Christine moved the family to Jackson Hole, Wyoming, and then to Burns, Oregon, where she worked as a grade-school teacher.

While Jim lived in Burns, he met Clint Purdy, one of the Purdy family. The Purdys operated a 15,000-acre beef and hay ranch. Jim spent many hours of many years learning and working on the ranch. The Purdys and Jim were close lifetime friends. After high school graduation, Jim joined the U.S. Air Force with the hopes of becoming a pilot, and the Air Force trained him to be a military air traffic controller. In the military, the job was to keep the planes close to each other for combat. After his tour of duty with the Air Force, Jim became an air traffic controller at the Los Angeles Air Traffic Control Center. Jim was the youngest man to hold the position

of supervisor and worked with the FAA to develop protocols and procedures. This job required that he keep the planes separated and get the planes safely on the ground.

Jim loved hunting, fishing, and horseback riding. His big black mare, Cricket, was his best hunting partner. Jim and Cricket rode in many Sisters Rodeo and Christmas parades. He was honored to ride in the first Sisters High School Homecoming Parade and activities. One year he carried the All-Around Cowboy Saddle at the Sisters Rodeo. In 1979, Jim joined the Sisters Rodeo Association and served as a board member for eight years. Jim dedicated many, many hours of work to the corrals and chutes, and the rodeos.

He and Becki were Grand Marshals of the 1999 Sisters Rodeo.

Jim and Becki Wood met in 1979 and agreed that it was love at first sight. They were together for 36 years. In 1980, they bought five acres of property east of Sisters and built their home. Within a few years, Jim built a barn and shop. Seemed there wasn't anything Jim couldn't fix or build. His wife and neighbors appreciated his help with projects. In 2008, their home burned to the ground.



With incredible help of friends, a new house was built.

There is little of the U.S. that Jim and Becki did not explore. They loved to travel and explore all the back roads. Their curiosity made for some good stories.

Jim is survived by his wife Becki; son Kirt Neal and his wife Ann Marie; sisters Tommie McCoy and Gerry Nodland. Nephews Dan McCoy and David McCoy will miss their Uncle Jim. His many nieces, nephews, and other family loved his stories, burnt bacon and biscuits and gravy.

A Celebration of Life gathering will be Saturday, November 14, at 2 p.m. at the Sisters Rodeo Grounds. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to the Sisters Rodeo Association Scholarship Fund, P.O. Box 1018, Sisters, Oregon 97759 or Bethlehem Inn, 3705 N. Hwy. 97, Bend, Oregon 97701.

Mary Dement-Smith

Mary was born December 12, 1936 in Scio, Oregon to Mary Ethel Wyman and Walter Herman Wyman.

She married Sherley Douglas Dement May 18, 1957; married Dean Gardner Smith July 10, 1982. She started volunteering for the Eugene School District in 1966 and was hired on later that year as a teacher's aide. She worked for the school district until she retired in 1990.

Her hobbies included: oil painting, photography, artwork, quilting and sewing, woodworking, and bird-watching. She started designing quilt patterns in 2000. She and Dean loved traveling to trade shows selling their patterns.

She and Dean started building a log home in the Sisters/Bend area in 1990. She was responsible for making many of the decorative



accents and built the cabinets throughout the house. They moved into the log home in 1997, where she lived till her passing on May 8, 2015.

She is survived by her brother Edwin Wyman of Livermore, California; daughter Deanne Dement of Sisters; sons Brian Dement of Bend and Dana Dement of Springfield; and four grandchildren.

She will be missed greatly by her loved ones and friends. The family will be arranging a memorial for her in the summer of 2016.

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