

# Obituaries

## Walter (Wally) Henry Rietz, Jr.

August 17, 1923–July 26, 2021

Wally Rietz passed on July 26. Wally was born at the home of his parents, Walter Sr. and Margaret Rietz in Highland Park, Illinois.

Wally graduated from Highland Park High School and attended the University of Illinois in Champaign in 1941. Wally joined ROTC on campus in December. Finishing Officer Candidate School as a second lieutenant, Wally was assigned to the 11th Armored Division, 41st Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron under the command of General George Patton.

On December 16, 1944, Wally landed on the French coast in Cherbourg. That same day, German forces initiated the counter-offensive known as the Battle

of the Bulge.

In May, Wally arrived at the Mauthausen Concentration Camp in Austria after it was liberated the day before.

Wally's service in Europe ended June 1946. He completed his degree at University of Illinois with a BS in business. He met his future wife, Jean Easton, and started his career in Indiana and Illinois.

In the early 1950s, Wally transferred to Southern California, living in Whittier for almost 20 years. He was transferred to Portland in 1970.

Spending vacations in Central Oregon, Wally and Jean purchased a five-acre property in the Desert Sands subdivision and spent 23 years there in retirement.

Wally was active in Sisters Rotary, hired as a starter at Aspen Lakes Golf Club, Sisters Jazz Festival, and Deschutes County Board for Children and Families.

Life became difficult to continue to stay at Desert Sands due to Jean's failing health. In 2008, they moved to SpringRidge in Charbonneau.

Wally is survived by a daughter, Roberta Strom (Dale) of Beaverton, grandsons Brock Strom of Norfolk, VA and Kerby Strom of Portland, brother Robert Rietz of Delaware, OH, and daughter-in-law Peggy White of Timber, Oregon. He was preceded in death by his wife of 61 years, Jean; sons James in 1950, and Scott in 1992; brother Charles in 2019.

Before Wally's passing, he wrote memoirs of his war experience and another on

his 97 years of life. The second memoir was completed days before his passing. Wally recorded a podcast on November 6, 2019, regarding his World War II experience on "Aging Today" with host Mark Turnbull ([bit.ly/WallyRietz](http://bit.ly/WallyRietz)). That episode can be downloaded.

Service to be held at Willamette National Cemetery. Procession to begin promptly at 11:15



a.m. on September 23, 2021. Reception to be determined.

## News nuggets *Snippets and tidbits from Sisters Country*

By Bill Bartlett  
Correspondent

- Gas prices continue to climb. If you drive a performance auto that requires premium unleaded fuel, you can expect to pay \$4.75/gallon in Sisters for ethanol-free gas. For everybody else it's \$3.85/gallon on average for the four petrol stations in town. That's an increase of 23 cents in just one month and \$1.09/gallon since January.

- Pump your own. Speaking of gas, the 76 station at Sisters Pumphouse & Country Store is allowing self-service due to its continuing staffing shortage. The labor crisis in Sisters remains dire with many businesses curtailing hours.

- Hospitalizations for COVID-19. St. Charles remains on high alert for the possibility of the Delta variant taxing the system, but as of Monday, five COVID-related patients were in ICU, three of whom were on ventilators. Systemwide, St. Charles has 30 ICU beds. In all of Oregon there are 651 intensive care beds, 140 specialty ICU beds that can be diverted for COVID-19, and 5,195 acute care beds.

- Sheriff hosts National Night Out event in Sisters. The Village Green was the scene of a few hundred citizens last week, many of whom were families with young children who came to meet some 40 members of the Deschutes County Sheriff's Office (DCSO).

Sheriff Shane Nelson posed with kiddos and along with Sisters Substation Commander Lt. Chad Davis and scores of deputies, gave attendees an up-close look inside the myriad vehicles



PHOTO BY BILL BARTLETT

The Deschutes County Sheriff's Office showed local children an array of law enforcement vehicles during National Night Out last week.

used by DCSO in its work — from treaded search-and-rescue vehicles to watercraft. Children, treated to ice cream bars, were able to sit in patrol cars and work the lights and sirens — much to their delight.

- Getting a jump on the fire. Central Oregon Helitack deployed three trucks and a helicopter within hours after lightning ignited three fires near Green Ridge. The Bureau of Land Management team based in Prineville included firefighters from Montana. They stationed themselves and extensive gear at Sisters Eagle Airport, often the base for helo operations in our area during fire season. Their first mission was to drop four rappellers near the fire to clear a base pad for the chopper.

- Iconic gallery begins wind-down. Ken Scott's Imagination Gallery on West Hood Avenue expects to vacate Sisters in October. The years-long tourist favorite represents 29 artists, 24 of whom are local and all of whom will need to find new representation. Scott will take up residence in Leaburg along the McKenzie Highway. He will open a small gallery and maintain

a studio for his considerable list of commissions.

- The sports nutrition company Picky Bars, in Bend, owned by American professional runners Lauren Fleshman and Stephanie Bruce and American triathlete Jesse Thomas, has been acquired by Laird Superfood for \$12 million. The brand, known for its real-food granola bars, oatmeal, and granola targets athletes and people with active lifestyles.

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