

BIRDMAN ...
Continued from A-1

Harry often could be found holding court at Judy's My Place Café when it was open and also Trina's River Valley Restaurant.

Born in San Francisco (SF), Aug. 17, 1948, the baby of three children, Johnson along with two older sisters spent his formative years in the Valencia Street neighborhood of San Francisco. According to stories relayed to Cheryl, "Beginning at age 4 or 5, he would just take off and start rambling down the street. Of course, in the early 1950s, it wasn't a problem because everyone knew everyone, and everyone knew who the cute little boy with the glasses was. Eventually, Harry was rounded up and brought back home."

Ultimately, the Johnson family moved to Santa Clara. Johnson's teen years were a little wild. Harry would leave home Friday morning for high school but would head north to SF instead of classes. Apparently the Haight Ashbury district and all of its delights of the time was a draw he could not resist.

Johnson a music lover was into all the "up and coming local bands" of the mid '60s. "While Harry was partying it up in SF, he still was a geeky, nerdy, tall, skinny guy with black-framed "birth control" glasses." It was during this time that Harry began pleasure reading and his love affair with the written word began," said Cheryl.

Johnson graduated from Buchser High School in 1967 and then attended UCLA where he focused on business. His one regret was that he never completed his degree. He dropped out of college with little more than a half a year to go and never went back.

Harry had a successful career in the

retail and hotel industry. After years on the road Johnson returned back to the Bay Area with the Holiday Inn brand. Johnson spent his off work hours enjoying his family and friends, especially his sister's two sons.

Johnson loved all sports and was an athlete in high school himself lettering in football, basketball, baseball and cross-country/track. His true love was soccer and his team the Manchester United.

In 1994, Harry met Cheryl Azevedo and a love affair was born. They married in September 1996.

Harry always loved the outdoors and nature. He especially loved the beauty and treasure of our national parks. Eventually in 2003 they found the perfect escape from city life, 40 acres in O'Brien.

After joining the Illinois Valley Lions Club, where he was a member for five years Johnson wanted to share his love for "Lionism," so he transferred to the Cave Junction Lions Club so that Cheryl could join. Johnson served both clubs on their board, and eventually was on the district wide board as a Zone Chair; where he oversaw five - six clubs in the area. Additionally, he was a board member of the Lions Vision Gift (Eye Bank) in Portland, and also a board member (and board chair) of the Southern Oregon Lions Sight and Hearing Center in Medford. Johnson also served on the board of the Illinois Valley Community Development Organization and the I.V. Senior Center.

Johnson was preceded in death by his father, Harry Sr.; mother, Freda; and sister, Donna. Johnson is survived by his wife, Cheryl; sister, Cathy (Dennis) Palm; and nephews, Aaron (Christie, with daughter Hailey) Palm and Alex (Melissa) Palm.

For those wanting to honor Johnson, the family requests donating in Johnson's memory to the I.V. Safe House Alliance (IVSHA) or the Josephine Community Libraries, Inc./Illinois Valley Branch. It is also asked that the bidding be high for Johnson's favorite, pineapple upside-down cake at the Soup for the Souls event's cake auction. Don't like cake? Donate to the library. IVSHA: <http://www.ivsha.org/what-we-do/donations/>, or Josephine Community Libraries, Inc.: <https://josephinelibrary.org/get-involved/donate/how-to-donate/>

Cheryl's heart will be forever broken with the loss of her "best friend and soul mate. Harry lived large and he will missed by many. Harry was a big man ... at 6-feet-7 and overweight, he was hard to miss. For those that saw him - he was an imposing figure. For those that knew him - his best kept secret was that inside he had a heart of gold and was filled with Marshmallow Fluff. He was nothing more than a giant teddy bear."



Harry and Cheryl Johnson as a Lion (top) and on their 20th anniversary cruise last fall.

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