

Bath tub installed in the county jail

OUT OF THE PAST

Compiled by Cheryl Jenkins

100 YEARS AGO

Feb. 2, 2022

After a great deal of discussion, a bath tub has been installed in the county jail. It will at least save bed clothing, a great deal of which has been found necessary to burn after prisoners had served their terms.

William Ault, now in his senior year at the U. S. Naval academy at Annapolis, is keeping up his gait as the fastest and strongest basketball player in the school,

and one of the very best in the entire east. He is captain and center of his team, which is referred to by the academy publication, "The Log", as "Bill Ault's gang".

The Gotter Hotel has been sold this week to John Frawley of Union county. The hotel was opened in 1919 and contains 31 rooms.

75 YEARS AGO

Feb. 6, 1947

Glenn and Clebert Alford, returned vets, have bought Jerry's shine shop and popcorn stand from Gerald Perren, who has operated it for several months. It is situated on Main street just west of

Church's variety store and studio.

The Enterprise chamber of commerce voted to underwrite the purchase of a new athletic field for the school at an estimate of around \$1,600 with additional sums needed for improvements. The school has been needing an athletic field, football being held on the airport or golf grounds.

Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Werggen and Mr. and Mrs. W. S. Strickler were on their way to La Grande when they met with an auto accident which badly damaged the Werggens' new Oldsmobile. No one was

injured, but Bill's car will need lots of repairing.

50 YEARS AGO

Feb. 3, 1972

Truman Poulson of Crow Creek reported that a herd of about fifteen elk broke through his fence and into his barn. The big game animals seemed quite pleased with the hay dinner awaiting them in the barn. Game biologists were called out to chase the animals away.

Gail Aschenbrenner, Wallowa County's Junior Miss, participated in the Oregon Junior Miss contest and was voted by her fellow contestants as the "Spirit of Junior Miss", an award similar to Miss Congeniality in the Miss America Pageant.

Bonnie Gorbett, 31, died following an accident while she and her husband, Leo, were feeding their cattle, about 3 miles west of Lostine on the old Davidson ranch. She was driving their flat-bed truck while Leo walked behind to pull bales off. She apparently got out of the truck but left it in a very low gear when she stumbled and was run over.

25 YEARS AGO

Jan. 30, 1997

Wallowa County Court received word this week that Wallowa County has been included on President Clinton's Major Disaster Declaration list for Oregon, good news for those in the Imnaha area who suffered losses

during the New Year's Day floods.

Jessie Morgan, daughter of Randy and Becky Morgan of Enterprise, made 19 of 25 free throws to win the 8-9 year old District Championship at the Oregon State Elks District Hoop Shoot in Hermiston. She now advances to the State Hoop Shoot at Keizer.

Some 125 persons turned out to buy pies, listen to music and raise \$3,047.80 for the victims of the Imnaha flood. The funds were turned over to the American Red Cross, which has already provided over \$8,000 worth of aid to flood victims. The event was organized by Charles Trump of Wallowa, the county's old-time fiddling champion.

Gail Marie Swart

April 30, 1936 - January 28, 2022

Gail Marie Swart, 85, passed away peacefully on Friday, January 28, 2022, surrounded by family members and her dear friend, Gail Johnson, at her Wallowa Lake home due to complications of breast cancer.

Gail Swart was born on April 30, 1936, in Downers Grove, Illinois, to Gwen Tappan Coffin and Gladys Crowder Coffin. They moved to Enterprise, Ore., in 1941, when Gail was 5 years old. She began playing piano at the age of 5 and was playing the piano and organ at her church by the age of 12. She continued playing piano until the last week of her life.

She attended school in Enterprise from grades 1-12 and graduated from Enterprise High School as salutatorian of her class in 1953. She enrolled at Eastern Oregon College in La Grande where she studied music and elementary education and earned a bachelor's degree in 1957.

While attending college at EOC Gail met and fell in love with Donald Lee Swart and performed with him in a quartet that played at dance venues around eastern Oregon. They were married in 1956, and in 1957 the first of their five children, who were the light of Gail's life, arrived. Although they later divorced, they remained friends and shared many family and community events, along with Don's wife, Evelyn.

In 1958, while Donald was deployed overseas, Gail returned to Enterprise and moved in with her parents and began her first job, teaching second grade at Enterprise Elementary School.

At this time, then-superintendent Al Haberly offered Gail her next job with the Enterprise School District, teaching a split third-fourth grade class.

She later briefly accepted a similar assignment teaching a split third-fourth grade in Lostine, Ore. Shortly after that assignment, Enterprise school superintendent H.J. "Jim" Courtney invited Mrs. Swart to return to the Enterprise school district to start a music program. She accepted that assignment with some trepidation about her ability to effectively teach junior high school students, having only taught the younger, elementary students previously.

That led to the rise of her signature music program - the junior high school operetta - a musical play that she conducted every year for the next 40 years of her teaching career at Enterprise. She later confessed her strategy was, "I wanted them to learn by having fun" with titles like "Mississippi Melody" (the story of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn), "Hee Haw Hayride," and "The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe."

Mrs. Swart's long career spanned enough years that she had almost every student who attended school at Enterprise in her classroom at one time or another. Along the way she had the opportunity to share her love of music not only with her students but also her students' children and grandchildren, including her own. She was often referred to as an icon and "Wallowa County's Music Teacher."

The pinnacle of her career as a music teacher may have been in 2017 in Seattle, Wash., when she was invited to the stage of Benaroya Hall for a solo performance of "The Lord's Prayer" for a capacity crowd during the 10 Grands Concert. This event featured 10 of the world's top pianists playing on grand pianos, a fundraising event dedicated that year to supporting music education programs around the United States that were getting slashed from school curricula. Her on-stage rendition of The Lord's Prayer received a standing ovation from the 2,500 attendees, which included her children and grandchildren. Her lifetime of dedication to music education was recognized by the emcee at the 10 Grands Concert.

Back home at Wallowa Lake, Gail Swart was better known as the nice lady playing piano music for the enjoyment of people dining at Wallowa Lake Lodge, especially those who attended her annual Christmas caroling program at that location, which showcased top Wallowa County musicians.

She was frequently called upon to play

for weddings, funerals, church ceremonies and school choir concerts and music programs. She also played the piano and organ for her own church - the Enterprise Community Congregational Church - nearly her entire life.

Though Gail Swart officially retired from teaching music at Enterprise school in 1996 she continued on for several years after that as a volunteer when the school started cutting back on funding for its music program. She also taught piano lessons to gifted piano students at her home at Wallowa Lake.

She also volunteered her time in the community. She worked at the Wallowa County Soroptimist's thrift store. She served as a board member of the Wallowa County Health Care Foundation from 1996 through 2020, and she served on the board of Wallowa Lake Lodge for many years. She was inducted into PEO at the age of 19 and participated in that organization for 67 years.

She received numerous awards for her contributions to the community, including the Wallowa County Chamber of Commerce's Educator of the Year and Unsung Hero awards. And in 2020, she was named as Oregon Volunteer of the Year by the Oregon chapter of the American Association of Retired People (AARP).

While she appreciated the accolades, she kept things in perspective: "It was never about me, it was about the music. It was a gift I was given, and it was incumbent upon me to share that gift."

Despite her many achievements and honors, there was another side to Gail Swart - the mother, grandmother, foster mother, and rabid Enterprise sports fan. She had a reputation for relentlessly heckling referees and umpires at her kids' and grandkids' sporting events, and one time was even threatened by officials with a technical foul for her comments from the bleachers at an Enterprise High School basketball game.

In her last days Gail Swart received outpourings of love from her beloved Wallowa County community of friends, family, and former students. She was profoundly grateful for the love she was shown. This outpouring included a group of carolers who showed up outside her bedroom to sing to her on the traditional night of her Christmas program at Wallowa Lake Lodge, which she was unable to attend due to her failing health.

"I was blessed beyond anything I could ever imagine," she said recently.

Gail Swart was preceded in death by her parents, Gwen and Gladys Coffin, sister Nancy (Evans) Ormandy, and her longtime companion, Larry Wishart.

She is survived by her brother Bill Coffin of Enterprise, Ore., son Rick Swart, and wife Liya of Eagle Creek, Ore., son Donald L. Swart Jr., and wife Sherrol of Enterprise, Ore., daughter Jennifer (Swart) Kirkeide and husband John of Missoula, Mont., son David Swart and wife Stacy of Shelton, Wash., and daughter Lisa (Swart) Phillips, and husband Keith of Fox Island, Wash.

She is also survived by her grandchildren and great grandchildren: Adam Swart and wife LindsayLee, and their children Wyatt and Elijah; Craig, and wife Stacy Swart, and children Lincoln, Kepler and Ruby; Tony Swart and wife Anna, and children Beau and Gwen; Josh Martin and wife Lauren; Justin Stenkamp and wife Whitney and their children Dahlia and Garret; grandchildren Sam Kirkeide, Hannah (Kirkeide) Bymaster and her husband, Ben; Michael Swart, Carson Swart, Jake Phillips and his wife Lauren, and Rachel Phillips. Additionally, she is survived by many dear friends, colleagues, former students, and foster children whom she considered family.

The family will have a private memorial service Saturday, Feb. 5 at 4 p.m. The service will also be livestreamed on a public Facebook page called "Gail Swart Memorial Service."

Those who wish, may make donations in her name to the Wallowa County Health Care Foundation or Enterprise Education Foundation.

Benjamin Robert Stein

10/13/1980 - 10/24/2020

The oldest of three children, Ben was a gift from the Lord given to Mike and Sandy at 21 months old. Sandy's sister, Michelle was killed in a car accident when Ben was 7 weeks old. He was a big brother to Joel & Jessica, a sweet, gentle and kind soul.

Ben loved playing the guitar, drawing (cartooning), reading, snowboarding and finding solitude in the woods. Ben was in the Marine Corps for nine years serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. We were very proud of him and his absence leaves such a big hole in our hearts. He was a son, brother, friend, uncle, husband and also a father to five children. He is missed every day, we love you Ben!

You don't just lose someone once, you lose them every day, for a lifetime.

See lyrics:
Spoken For by MercyMe
Scars in Heaven by Casting Crowns



Howard Lee Edwards

June 10, 1931 - January 26, 2022

Howard Lee Edwards died January 26, 2022, at the age of 90 in Salt Lake City, UT. Howard was born June 10, 1931, in Baker City, OR, and considered Enterprise, OR, their hometown. Howard passed away peacefully due to causes related to Alzheimer's disease and age. His sons Mitchell and Paul were by his side.

Howard was born in Baker City, OR, and grew up in the beautiful Wallowa Valley of rural Northeastern Oregon during the Great Depression. The only son of Elmer and Bernice Edwards, who divorced when he was 3 years old, Howard, and his older sister, Joan, grew up with his mother and his maternal grandparents, Luther and Eliza Stringham. Howard seldom saw his father after Elmer's job transferred him hundreds of miles away. Instead, his grandfather Luther taught Howard to milk cows, cut hay and build fence, instilling a lifelong work ethic.

When Howard was 10, the U.S. entered WWII, and his mother Bernice married Walt Astwood. By the time Howard was 11, his stepfather was away in the Navy, and Howard and Joan were joined by baby sister Lynne Astwood. During the war, Howard earned his own money by mowing lawns, sweeping floors at JCPenney and playing trumpet in swing dance bands.

An excellent student, Howard won a scholarship and was headed to the University of Oregon in 1949, when his grandmother Eliza expressed a dying wish that Howard attend Brigham Young University instead. Just days before classes started, Howard opted for BYU, which led to serving a mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Eastern Canadian Mission. Most importantly, when Howard returned to BYU, he met and courted the love of his life, Carolyn Bagley of Koosharem, UT. They married and welcomed their first son, Bryant, their senior year.

After college, Howard worked his way through three law schools (Stanford, Utah and George Washington), welcoming sons McKay and Mitchell before graduating and Paul a few years later. Howard enjoyed a rewarding legal career, which began at the U.S. Department of the Interior, moved to private practice at Van Cott Bagley, and then in-house with the Anaconda Mining Company, which was later acquired by ARCO. He worked in Washington D.C., Salt Lake City, New York City, Denver, Anchorage and Los Angeles. Among other things, Howard helped develop the Park City mining district into a ski resort, negotiated compensation for mines seized in Chile and helped evacuate employees from Iran after the revolution. He was an active

member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the American Mining Congress.

Howard was a life-long member of the LDS Church, serving in numerous callings, including several bishoprics and high councils. He devoted himself to educational and charitable causes that included, among others, serving as President of the BYU Alumni Association, Chair of the Dixie State College National Advisory Council, Chair of the LDS Hospital Heart and Lung Institute Community Advisory Council, Trustee of the Utah Valley University Foundation and board member of the Utah Symphony. He was active in Rotary, NCCJ and the Boy Scouts of America.

Howard and Carolyn retired to Park City, UT, in 1996, where they devoted themselves to their family, friends and community. Howard organized numerous family get-togethers and reunions as well as over a dozen bicycle trips with friends. Howard was beloved by all who knew him for his warmth, generosity, kindness, intelligence, wisdom and humility. He enjoyed gardening, travel, art, music, skiing, running, biking, and keeping current on events. But most of all, he loved people.

Howard is survived by his son Bryant and wife Linda Edwards of London, England; his son McKay and wife Pamela Edwards of Salt Lake City, UT; his son Mitchell Edwards of Henderson, NV; his son Paul and wife Margo Edwards of Provo, UT; his grandchildren: Chelsea and husband Jonathan Hunt of Los Angeles, CA; Nick Edwards of Burlington, VT; Derek and wife Liv Edwards of Silverton, CO; Thomas Edwards and partner Ellen Hayes of Seattle, WA; Hannah and husband Ryan Rust of Noblesville, IN; Cameron Edwards of Park City, UT; Halle Edwards of Salt Lake City, UT; Brendan Edwards of Provo, UT; Tess Edwards and fiancé Seth Fichtelberg of Stoneham, MA; Atticus Edwards of Salt Lake City, UT; Miriam and husband Spencer Hunsicker of La Jolla, CA; Blythe Edwards of Cambridge, MA; and Baron Edwards of Henderson, NV; three great-grandchildren; and his half-sister Lynne and husband Mike Harlow of Chubbuck, ID. Howard was predeceased by his beloved wife Carolyn Bagley Edwards in 2013, and by his parents, his sister Joan Dieterle and his half-sister, Iris Saari.

Howard will be laid to rest beside Carolyn in the Park City Cemetery in a private service. A larger memorial celebrating Howard's life will be scheduled later in 2022. The family asks that in lieu of sending flowers or making a donation, you consider visiting an elderly friend or relative in the next month. Larkin Mortuary is in charge of arrangements.

