

## Friendship:

Continued from Page A1

“We sat on her grandparents’ porch in the summertime and I would massage her feet and we would ponder the future,” Bob said. “I would visit with her in the evening after school, after ball practice or whatever we were doing. ... We would be inside and her granddad would come out about midnight and say, ‘Well, this boy needs his sleep. It’s time to go home.’ My neighbor was working at the mill and if I timed it right, I could get a ride with him home. Lots of times I didn’t time it right and I’d end up walking home 4½ miles. Sometimes in the summertime I rode my bicycle. Then, after I got a car, we rode around in style. It was a Model A Ford.”

### Married young

When they got around to getting married, he was just 18 and she was a few months

older at 19. Her grandparents, with whom she lived since her sophomore year in high school, had a typical reaction. Her grandmother was Hattie Fisher, who taught in Wallowa for about 40 years.

“They thought we were too young, which we probably were,” Shirley said.

Bob’s parents were enthusiastic.

“They loved her. My mother told me, ‘I expect you guys will have some trouble. If you do, Shirley’s always welcome here; you’re not.’ That was kind of funny,” he said. “As I recall, to get married, I had to be 21 and she had to be 18 without parental permission. I wasn’t 21 and I was petrified. I went to my dad and he didn’t have any problem, but he said I needed to ask my mother. I finally got up the nerve enough to ask her and I swear she could’ve done a backflip because she was so happy to turn me over to somebody else.”

After marrying at a church in La Grande, they both continued in the jobs they’d got-

ten. He was working for a neighbor’s ranch.

“Just before I graduated high school, the neighbor lost his hired man so after I graduated, my dad came to me and said, ‘Bob, you’ve graduated. It looks like you have two options. You can leave home or you can leave home and get a job.’ So I went over and applied that day to be the neighbor’s hired man and he hired me and I went to work the next day,” he said.

Shirley attended a year of college at Eastern Oregon University and went to work for the Wallowa Record newspaper doing some deep investigative reporting.

“I was the one who went around town and asked who’d been to La Grande shopping and that sort of thing,” she said. “You know, really exciting stuff. I also did the sports things, but the coaches helped a lot with that.”

### Careers in education

The Crawfords left Wallowa in 1954 and worked at various jobs, but mostly as

educators, both as teachers and Bob as an administrator. After Wallowa, they lived and held various jobs in Pilot Rock; Walla Walla and Tekoa, Washington; Lewiston, Idaho; Adel and Lakeview before retiring to Enterprise.

During those years, they had three sons and a daughter who have produced 11 grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren. It was while they lived in Lewiston that they decided to go back to school and got their teaching credentials before returning to Oregon.

One of their most unique situations as educators was their first teaching jobs at the tiny town of Adel, east of Lakeview, where they were the entire faculty for seven years in a community they loved. The folks around the small town found it interesting that the school’s two teachers were married.

“They accused us of having our faculty meetings in bed every night,” Bob laughed.

“They were just joking.”

Shirley said. “It was a great community to live in.”

The small school had just 22 kids when they moved there and the student body had increased to 50 by the time they left. They kept in touch with the folks there, even attending funerals for many of the parents and some students over the years.

Their last teaching positions were in Vale, where Shirley retired from Willowcreek School in 1993 and Bob retired from the high school in 1996.

### Retiring to Enterprise

They bought the land where their current home on Alder Slope is in 1979.

“When I was in high school, I would drive up here and look up the slope and see the place across the road and I told myself then that I wanted to live up there sometime,” Bob said. “We came up here when we were going to retire because we didn’t plan on living in Lakeview or Vale and we came up here and made an offer on the place and they

turned us down, so we went back home disappointed. Then, we got a letter from a realtor who said he had 10 acres he’d like to show us, so we came up here and looked at this piece — it was just an alfalfa field at the time — and made an offer and they accepted it.”

The Crawfords started building their home two years later.

“The first two years, we had the well done and the excavation and the septic tank,” Shirley recalled.

“One of my sons came over and helped put in the footings,” Bob said.

They’ve lived in their comfortable home on their 25 acres on the slope since 1996.

As for the coming Valentine’s Day, they’ll probably take it easy. It’s likely it’ll be much like the first Valentine’s Day of their married life that wasn’t very memorable.

“He was probably feeding and milking cows,” Shirley recalled.

“It pretty much took all day,” Bob agreed.

## Death:

Continued from Page A1

information officer.

The OHA did confirm to Ty Barnett in an email Josh Barnett shared with the Chieftain that it does use the phrase “COVID-19-related deaths” and that it could mean a person who had COVID-19 died, but that it wasn’t necessarily the cause.

“The deaths we report each day include people who died with COVID-like symptoms, which in some cases means that a person did not necessarily die as a result of COVID-19. Sometimes public health cannot determine (the) exact cause of death, so our data focuses on people who most likely or definitely had COVID-19 and died, based on local reports,” the email stated.

The OHA’s Investigative Guidelines state that any of the following are considered a COVID-19-related death:

- “Death of a confirmed or probable COVID-19 case within 60 days of the earliest available date among exposure to a confirmed case, onset of symptoms, or date of specimen collection for the first positive test;

- “Death from any cause in a hospitalized person during their hospital stay or in the 60 days following discharge and a COVID-19-positive laboratory diagnostic test at any time since 14 days prior to hospitalization; or

- “Death of someone with a COVID-19-specific ICD-10 code listed as a primary or contributing to it.”

Josh Barnett believes the numbers are inflated, and points to the fact

that individuals who die directly from COVID or die of a different cause (but have COVID) are counted together.

“They’ve already admitted there is a difference (between) dying from COVID and dying with COVID,” he said. “I think they’ve been conflating the two on purpose to make the numbers look as bad as they can.”

“I don’t believe the state has been giving the right answers for a long time.”

As for his family, he said he wants the truth — whatever it ends up being.

“I just want the record straight in terms of being honest,” he said. “...I don’t want my family or anybody else’s to be used, not as a pawn, but as ‘chalk up another line to it.’ ... I know that OHA is saying it’s a COVID death when I was there the whole time. I know that’s 100% false.”

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