

OBITUARIES

Donna Jo Walter
Nov. 14, 1936 - July 7, 2016

Donna Jo Walter died peacefully on July 7, 2016, with her family at her side in St. Helens, Oregon. She was born Nov. 14, 1936, in Dayville, Oregon, to Wilma Amis Larkin and Donald "Pete" Taylor. She grew up on a ranch in the Dayville area. She was a country woman at heart, and her love of horses was evident being named princess of the Spray Rodeo.



She attended Lower Columbia College and received her associate degree in 1985 working later as a counselor. Walter was a talented woman, a pianist and accordion player. She was an avid reader with special interests in history, philosophy and politics. She was an exceptional ice skater. She was an accomplished seamstress, well known for her creation of amazing costumes for young and old.

One of her greatest passions was volunteering in the local schools as a tutor under the Foster Grandparents program. Teachers and students looked forward to her arrival every morning.

Walter had a sense of humor, often entertaining friends and families with her witty little songs and poems.

She is survived by her four children, Kelly Wyllie, Robin Loper, Wendy Gladman and Blair Walter, and seven grandchildren, Julie and Evan Loper, Leah and Kevin Wyllie, Janessa Gladman and Taylor Andexler and Chelsea Malone.

Everett Ray Swayne

Everett Ray Swayne, 97, of Mt. Vernon died Monday, July 11 at his home. A rosary will be held at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, July 14, at St. Elizabeth Catholic Church. A funeral Mass will follow at 11 a.m. Friday, July 15, at the Catholic church.

Arrangements are under the care of Driskill Memorial Chapel, 241 S. Canyon Blvd., John Day. For condolences, visit driskillmemorialchapel.com.

About Obituaries

News obituaries are a free service of the Blue Mountain Eagle. The paper accepts obituaries from the family or funeral home. Information submitted is subject to editing. Obituaries submitted to the Eagle with incorrect information may be corrected and republished as paid notices. Send obituaries by e-mail, cheryl@bmeagle.com; fax, 541-575-1244; or mail, 195 N. Canyon Blvd., John Day, OR 97845. For more information, or to inquire about a paid memorial, call 541-575-0710.

PREPARING FOR THE SHOW



Contributed photo/Kyle Cline

A dozen volunteers led by Boyd Britton spent an afternoon setting up at Oxbow Ranch for the Prairie City fireworks display.

ATTENTION ALL HOME SCHOOL PARENTS

Home school students are required by law to be tested by a qualified neutral person following grades 3, 5, 8, and 10. [OAR581-021-0026 (5) (a) (A)] **However, students who participate in interscholastic activities are required by OSAA rules to be tested every year and must score in the 23rd percentile to be eligible to participate in interscholastic activities.**

Grant ESD will offer assessment testing for home school students finishing grades 3, 5, 8 and 10. Cost is \$20.00 per student. Payment is due at the time of testing. Register your student for assessment testing by calling Grant ESD, 541-575-1349 on or before July 15, 2016.

Testing Dates: July 19, 2016 – 8:00am to 2:00pm
July 21, 2016 – 8:00am to 2:00pm

If you have any questions you may contact: Robert Waltenburg or Jo Sproul Grant County ESD 541-575-1349



Verla Jean Zielke provides final styling

By Jennifer Colton
EO Media Group

The canvas bag is packed and ready to go, tucked away behind a sofa in an immaculate living room dotted with family photos, artwork and memoirs of a life well lived. When the call comes in, Verla Jean Zielke gathers her bag of tools — combs, curling irons, brushes — and heads out the door, ready to provide a service to a family in need.

For most of her life, Verla Jean cut, washed and styled hair for thousands of people in the Hermiston community. Now retired, she only styles hair when she is asked to by her lone employer: Burns Mortuary of Hermiston.

Now 90, Verla Jean continues to pass on her skills to families in grief.

"As long as they call me, I will go," Verla Jean said. "As long as I can please the people, I'll keep doing it. That's all that matters."

Verla Jean radiates a soft energy. Her smile is infectious, and the skill of her hands is undeniable. Originally from Wallowa, Verla Jean came to Hermiston in 1952 when her husband, Fred, took over the industrial arts program for Hermiston schools. While Fred kept busy in education and around the house, Verla Jean set up shop as a beautician, eventually converting the garage of their home into a beauty shop. Four years after she moved



EO Media Group/Jennifer Colton

Verla Jean Zielke quietly styles the hair of a deceased person in March at Burns Mortuary, Hermiston, in preparation for funeral services.

to Hermiston — and 60 years ago this May — a neighbor asked Verla Jean for a favor. The neighbor's daughter had cancer, and when the mother asked Verla Jean to help with the girl's hair, she agreed. When the daughter died, Verla Jean received a phone call that would become the first of many: Joe Burns told her the family had requested that Verla Jean do the hair for the funeral.

"I've always felt that if I was needed, I can do it," Verla Jean said, tearing up. "This is what God has given me, so I feel I should use it."

Over 60 years, Verla Jean's work has preceded more than 100 funerals.

Ken Huber, of Burns Mortuary, said having Zielke in the community is a blessing.

"A vital part of helping the family in their grief and recovery is to see that everything is just the way Mom would like it," he said. "I have had so many families that were dis-

cussing how to do Mom's hair and then felt at ease once they found out Verla Jean was still doing it. Literally thousands of families have been touched by Verla Jean's years of expertise."

Verla Jean understands loss all too well. She provided the last hair styling for her mother, her grandmother, her aunt and many friends over the years. For the beautician, the experience is a service, a final gift to a family lost in grief.

"I do this to help people face a difficult time losing someone special to them," she said. "If I can please the family, then that's my goal."

But Verla Jean does ask for something from the family — a photo of their loved one. She uses her experience and her bag of tools to re-create the hair style and, occasionally, manicure, the family would like. Each sitting takes between 30 and 45 minutes, depending on the length of the hair and the complexity of the style. Zielke pretends the person is sleeping. She works quickly and quietly so as not to disturb them.

Over the years, she has served men, women and even



Verla Jean Zielke is the beautician for Burns Mortuary in Hermiston, where she performs final styling by family request before a funeral.

teenagers. "The difficult ones are the teenagers and the young people," she said.

Fred passed away in 2013, but Verla Jean continues to live life fully. She makes greeting cards, she paints, she embroiders. She loves to spend time in her garden and with her Dachshund, Scooter. She makes a personalized, hand-made ornament for each of her grandchildren every Christmas — and she has more than 20 grandchildren and almost as many great-grandchildren.

Zielke keeps herself busy, but she always has time when the mortuary calls.

"If they still need me, I'm available," she said.

She passed on her beautician skills to a daughter and a granddaughter; her other descendants work in different fields from home health to teaching. All have taken on roles of service, much like their mother and grandmother.

"Her heart is in it for the right reasons — to help families," Huber said. "We don't even talk about retirement. We have been blessed."

A MAN WAKES UP in the morning after sleeping on... an advertised bed, in advertised pajamas.

He will bathe in an ADVERTISED TUB, shave with an ADVERTISED RAZOR, have a breakfast of ADVERTISED JUICE, cereal and toast, toasted in an ADVERTISED TOASTER, put on ADVERTISED CLOTHES and glance at his ADVERTISED WATCH. He'll ride to work in his ADVERTISED CAR, sit at an ADVERTISED DESK and write with an ADVERTISED PEN. Yet this person hesitates to advertise, saying that advertising doesn't pay. Finally, when his non-advertised business is going under, HE'LL ADVERTISE IT FOR SALE. *Then it's too late.*

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LAST WEEK'S TEMPS

JOHN DAY	H/I/O
TUESDAY	78/47
WEDNESDAY	77/49
THURSDAY	82/51
FRIDAY	72/56
SATURDAY	75/54
SUNDAY	64/49
MONDAY	78/51

RIVER FLOWS ON JULY 6

	Discharge	Last year	Avg.	% of Avg.
JD River near John Day	38	71	144	26
Middle Fork @ Ritter	36	47	117	31
North Fork @ Monument	158	260	564	28
JD River @ Service Creek	192	185	848	23
JD River @ McDonald Ferry	211	103	1,000	21
Canyon Crk @ Thissells Ranch Bridge	11	New	11	100
Canyon Crk @ Adams Drive Bridge	15	11	14	107

WEATHER FORECAST FOR THE WEEK OF JULY 13-19

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
Sunny and nice	Sunny and pleasant	Sunny and pleasant	Sunny and pleasant	Mostly sunny and pleasant	Plenty of sun	SUNSHINE AND PATCHY CLOUDS-
84	87	84	81	88	85	93
49	50	48	47	46	48	50