

Earl Eaton Bach Jr., 76

Earl Eaton Bach Jr., 76, a.k.a. Butch, beloved husband and father, passed away at his home in Somers, on May 31, 2023.



same about his Saint John Paul II parish community, where he became a Knight of Columbus and loved playing Santa

Butch grew up on the Jersey Shore, where he fostered a love for sailing, boating, water skiing and mischief. His "creative extracurricular pursuits" landed him at Valley Forge Military Academy, where his character and national pride were forged.



Claus, calling bingo and wearing his legendary khaki shorts.

Born with an engineer's mind, his dad's career as a pilot inspired him to become an airline mechanic with UAL in California. Having a restless soul, he had many occupations. He loved his 2 1/2 acre ranch, complete with horses and other animals, which he kept running by renting out anything and everything he could. It was here that he met his wife of 33 years.

Earl believed most in God, country and family — in that order. Evidence of this can be seen in those who survive him, his wife, Karen Cresap Bach; his children, Marianne, Rob, Heather, and Earl III; his many grandchildren and great-grandchildren; and his chihuahua, Tasha.

Earl and his wife Karen moved to Montana to have a more wholesome place to raise their children. Earl loved the community at Stillwater Christian School, where the kids attended. He felt the

Please gather with us to celebrate Earl's life at his funeral this Tuesday, June 6, at 11 a.m. at Saint John Paul II Catholic Church.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations are made to St. Jude's Children's Hospital.

Arrangements are in the care of Johnson-Gloschat funeral home.

Bryan W. Bailey, 83

Bryan W. Bailey, 83, born Jan. 16, 1940, passed away on June 11, 2023, with his loving wife by his side. He was the eldest son of George (Bill) and Emma W. Bailey.

He was raised in Newhall, California. Experiencing ranch life, he always said he had a wonderful childhood with horses, and many hunting trips.

He married Jan Loring in 1968 and thus began a 55 year love story, they experienced many adventures over the years. In 1977 they fulfilled a lifelong dream and moved eight unseen to Kallispell, where he opened B & T Custom, a welding and muffler business. Later a Custom Welding business where he designed and built roll bars, bumpers and grill guards; as well as fabricated many railings, stair cases and other projects for the building industry.

He made numerous trips into the Bob Marshall and Great Bear Wildernesses by horseback, enjoying the peace and tranquility of nature. He loved animals and had many horses and dogs over the years. His favorite horse was Brownie, and his favorite dog was Toby, a miniature schnauzer that went everywhere with him. He was a team roper and enjoyed working many brandings over

the years. He and Jan loved to boat and taught many people to water-ski over the years, they even took their boat to Lake Mead for a month in 2000.

They loved to dance and had many "favorite" songs to dance to. They also enjoyed camping and visited many ghost towns and historical sites in Montana. He had a blessed life and made countless friends that can remember the many long-winded stories he told.

He was preceded in death by his son, Bryan Scott; his father, Geo (Bill); his mother, Emma; his brother, Robert (Buzz); his grandsons, Clayton, Jordan and Nate.

He is survived by his wife, Jan; daughter, Liz (Ken) Greene; his son, Mitch (Holly); his daughters, Teri Weibert and Shari; his grandchildren, Bryan Greene, Brittney Barbee, Josie Spoklie, Destiny and Thomas; his great-grandchildren, Christian Alstad, Emiley Barbee and Maci; and new baby, Kru Kolodejchuk.

Per Bryan's wishes no service will be held. Buffalo Hill Funeral Home is caring for the family.

Bryan had a wonderful life loved and respected by all who were blessed to know him. He will be missed. Until we meet again my love.

Martha Kay Rimes Bailey, 85

Martha Kay Rimes Bailey, 85, passed away peacefully in her sleep on Feb. 6, 2023 from Alzheimer's/dementia.

Kay leaves her husband of 64 years Frederick "Jim" Clair Bailey; a younger brother, Jerry (Candy) Rimes; three daughters, Wendy (Tim) Shannon, Beth Bailey (Basiel Keener) and Clair (Paul) Beaver; and three granddaughters, Lane Beaver, Courtney Beaver and Keira Keener.

She was born in Boynton Beach, Florida on Sept. 2, 1937, and the first born of Oleta-Videll Peters Rimes and Guy Owen Rimes. After moving to Mulberry, Florida, Kay attended and graduated from Mulberry High School where she was a cheerleader and basketball player. She enjoyed riding ponies as a young girl which transcended into a lifelong joy of horseback riding and owning horses on her horse farms, both with the name Sanctuary Farms, in Cleveland, Georgia and Kalispell.

She attended St. Vincent's Hospital School of Nursing in Jacksonville, Florida and earned her RN degree when she met a Navy corpsman, Frederick "Jim" Clair Bailey. They were married April 1958, and then the navy stationed them in Guam, California, Colorado, Rhode Island and Pensacola, Florida. Kay worked for Pensacola Public Health and was also a professor of nursing at Pensacola Junior College.



When she and Jim "retired" to Kalispell, where they lived for over 20 years,

she was active in St. Matthew's Catholic Church and worked as an RN for Flathead County Home Health, David Mangold, P-AC at The Allergy and Asthma Center, as well as in accounting for Herberger's department store.

She enjoyed a lot of outdoor activities that Montana offers such as hiking, snowshoeing, river rafting and, of course, horseback riding. She volunteered for Back Country Horsemen of the Flathead and the annual The Event at Rebecca Farm, an equestrian event that raises money for cancer.

She was a talented nurse and loving wife, mother, grandmother and mentor. She had a very generous, kind and giving spirit, making every holiday and milestone special, as she was an incredible cook. Much of Kay's family resides in central Florida, but even more friends from the East Coast to the West Coast loved her and will miss her dearly.

A private family celebration of life will be planned in the future. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in her memory to Back Country Horsemen of the Flathead, P.O. Box 1192, Colombia Falls, MT 59912 or Rebecca Farms 1385 Farm to Market Rd Kalispell, MT 59901.

Robert Gregory Bain, 51

It is with great sadness that the family of Robert Gregory Bain announce his passing on April 12, 2023, at the age of 51 from diabetic keto-acidosis.

He will lovingly be remembered by his parents Debbie Bain and Greg Bain; his maternal grandparents, Karl and Betty Sorenson; brother Jake (Heidi), brother Matt (Mandy), sister Amy (Mark), and sister Jenifer; two nephews Kyle and Tucker; 12 nieces Marley, Anna, Madi, Evelyn, Brooklyn, Kallie, Megan, Savannah, Gabriella, Preslie, Landyn, and Braydie; Uncle Bill Spring; and cousins Chad and Jamie Spring; Uncle Jeff Bain and cousins Jared and Nathan Bain.

He will also be dearly missed by his friends Charlie Phillips, PJ Hofer, Nathan, Noah and Niles Culver, Marty Wheeler and Shannon Elletson. Forever bonded by their world of silence.

He was his mother's immense joy. Always lending a hand to help out around the cabin. When not working outside, you could find them experimenting with new recipes based on his vegan lifestyle. Rob was a private, humble, and kind person. He may have come off a fishing trip catching 20-plus fish, however, Rob wanted to hear what you had been up to first.



Along with his humble and kind personality, he was also strong-willed, and some might say he had a stubborn side. These attributes are what gave him strength in dealing with life's challenges.

Rob was deaf; however, this did not hold Rob back from life. He was proud to have followed in his father's footsteps and to have been a part of the "Flathead Braves" in football and tennis throughout his high school years. With excellent coaches and teammates at his side, they always found a creative way to communicate.

Rob worked several years for his father as a drafting professional and his dad often stated he was the best CADD drafting professional that he had ever hired.

He found much pleasure in reading and collecting books, browsing through all the used bookstores for that special find. Through the years he enjoyed fishing with friends and would drop a few fish off at his mom's. He and his brother Jake shared a passion for the 49ers that goes back to their childhood days. It is what drew them together every Sunday, Monday, and Thursday during the NFL season. On occa-

sion, his brother Matt (Dallas Cowboys fan) would join in, and the brotherly competition of rambling stats would begin.

Thanksgiving was his favorite holiday. He would fly to Arizona with his mother and be with his Grandpa and Grandma Sorenson. Grandpa and Rob would have pages of conversations and Grandma would play cards with him. Sitting out on the patio during cocktail time when the neighborhood friends would come by and visit gave him great delight. Grandpa got tickets to a 49ers game at the Cardinal stadium for Rob, along with his brothers Jake and Matt. They had such a fun time tailgating and drinking beer. It was such a cherished memory.

He was preceded in death by paternal grandparents, Richard and Annette Bain, and Aunt Diane Humberger, and Aunt Richie Kay Stone.

"My dear sweet big brother, life without you is not the same. Pieces of me are now missing, but I will try to fill them with memories and the pieces I so admired in you. I cannot squeeze a brotherly bond into words, but I always knew you loved me, and I hope you always knew I loved you. Your little brother, Jake."

A private family gathering will be held.

Fredrick L. Baker II, 79

Fred L. Baker, 79, went home to be with his heavenly father on Father's Day June 18, 2023, with his loving family by his side. Also beside him were his faithful dogs River and Zoey. He was 79 years young.

Fred was born on Jan. 30, 1944 in Merced, California, to Fred and Terry Baker. He was baptized April 25, 2017, at Trinity Lutheran church in Kalispell.

Growing up he was active in swimming competitions in school and was an Eagle Scout. He enjoyed rock climbing, dirt racing, fishing and skiing. He later volunteered for the Dream ski program on Big Mountain.

He married Gale Bonfanti in 1970 and then had a son, Joshua. They later divorced and he moved to Montana in 1979 to work for Northwest Telephone, now Centurytel as a senior engineer. He retired from there in 2000.

He then spent the next few years contracting in Montana and Arizona traveling back and forth. His last job working for Bonneville power was his dream job. He loved the people he worked with in Kalispell Idaho and Washington. He considered them family. Traveling to various



job sites including remote mountain peaks on his motorcycle he was in his element.

He met his wife Cindy in Kalispell, and they were married in 1981. They had two daughters, Mariah, and Sierra.

Summers were spent with family windsurfing on Flathead Lake and the Gorge along with camping, fishing and mountain biking. The family traveled 14 years in a row to mountain bike in Moab Utah. The "pig farm" was also a favorite. Winter was skiing or snow biking and playing with the family dogs in the snow.

Motorcycles were his passion. To be happy was to be riding or working on a bike. He loved sharing his vast knowledge of bikes with anyone who was remotely interested or needed help. One of his favorite places to go was Penco to "talk shop" with his friends there or buy a bike. He taught his wife Cindy how to ride a motorcycle and that opened the door to many fun biking trips from the Redwoods to the Black Hills in South Dakota, and many other biking adventures, just not enough in the end.

He never met a stranger. He could engage in conversation with anyone he met and had friends from Canada to Australia and places in between.

Fred was preceded in death by his parents, Fred and Terry Baker; his father-in-law, Lavern Clare; sister-in-law, DeAnne Tripp; and niece Kaylee (Lynn)Tripp.

He is survived by his wife of 42 years Cindy; daughters, Mariah and (Chris) Hanson; grandson, Dakota Hanson; daughter, Sierra Baker; son, Joshua (Linda) Shawhan; sister, Jill Getzan; niece, Dawn Garrett; nephew, Grant Getzan; mother-in-law, Emeral Clare; brother-in-laws, Leo (Christi) and Guy Clare; sister-in-law, Heidi (Mike) Kime; many nieces and nephews, also with many, many close friends.

A memorial service will be held at 2 p.m. on Aug. 25, at Trinity Lutheran church, 400 W. California St., Kalispell.

We will miss your special light in our world but look forward to the day we will be together again.

Friends are encouraged to visit the website www.buffalohillfh.com to leave notes of condolences for the family. Buffalo Hill Funeral Home and Crematory is caring for the family.

Helen C. Baker, 89

Helen Claire Baker, 89, passed away on Oct. 19, 2023, at Logan Health in Kalispell.

She was born March 5, 1934, in Kalispell, to Arthur and Ellen Rhodes. She attended school in Kalispell. She moved to Long Beach, California, where she met Neal Baker in December of 1951. Helen and Neal married after 10 days of courtship in Yuma, Arizona, Dec. 23, 1951.

Neal was in the military and upon retirement they returned to Kalispell to raise their family. Helen worked at Elrod school as a teacher's aide, retiring in 1991.

In 1993, Neal retired and they traveled spending summers in Montana and winters in Yuma. They returned to Kalispell in 2012.

She is survived by daughters, Robin (Dan) Hagadone, and Dana (Jack) Coughlin; and daughter-in-law, Kelly Baker. She is also survived by grandchildren,



Rachael (Peter) Miller, Kelcee (Tanner) Singleton, Connor (Spencere) Coughlin,

Riley Baker, and Lily Baker; and great-granddaughter, Brinley Singleton.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Neal; and son, Joel Baker; parents, Arthur Rhodes and Ellen Rhodes Connelly; stepfather, Tim Connelly; and brother, Warren Rhodes.

As per Helen's request there will be no services. Donations may be made to Shriners Children Hospital, Spokane, Washington, or St. Judes hospital for kids.

Friends and family are encouraged to visit buffalohillfh.com to leave a note of condolence for the family. Buffalo Hill funeral Home is caring for the family.

Gerald Baldik, 76

Gerald "Jerry" Lee Baldik, 76, went to be with the Lord on July 20, 2023,



at Swedish Hospital in Seattle. After bravely fighting cancer, he went to live with Jesus.

He was born July 15,

1947, in Kalispell. He attended elementary and high school in the Flathead, graduating 1965. Continuing in Missoula he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in fisheries and wildlife. He worked for Flathead National Forest Service, Montana Fish and Wildlife, and painted houses. He moved to Seattle

in '73/'74 attending Community Bible and Training Center and attended other fellowships. He was self-employed in carpet cleaning, landscaping and sales work. He enjoyed fishing, camping and backpacking. His favorite place was Glacier National Park.

He was preceded in death by parents, Frank

and Imogene Baldik of Kalispell; and brother Daryl.

He is survived by a brother, Les Pullman of Washington; sister, Pati Guenther; and brother, Tom of Seattle; along with eight nieces; and nephews.

Any memories of Jerry's life please write, Pati- 2721 S. 234th St. DesMoines, WA. 98198.

Charles William (Bill) Baldwin, 99



Charles W. Baldwin born May 12, 1923 and a long-time resident of Whitefish passed away peacefully in his sleep on March 14, 2023 at the Columbia Falls Veterans Home. Bill was an inspiration to many people and loved everything about the Flathead Valley. Bill was

truly loved by his children, grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren, he will be missed greatly by all. He is survived by his daughters Janet Krug and Brenda Baldwin and son William Frank (Butch) Baldwin.

Colette Janeen Baracker-Flynn, 52



Colette Janeen Baracker-Flynn passed away on Monday, May 22, 2023, at the age of 52, surrounded by her loving family and many friends. The pain of her absence will be felt by so many people who loved her dearly. She was born on March 16, 1971, in Whitefish to Jerry and Sharan Baracker, the fourth of five siblings. She graduated from Whitefish High School in

1989. After a brief time in art school, she demonstrated amazing talent in accounting and business, springing from small opportunities to ever increasing responsibilities and success in many business endeavors. She married Tim Flynn in 2012. They shared remarkable gen-

erosity and love to a large circle of family and friends. They loved traveling and entertaining. Wherever their boat was in world, they would always invite people to join them. They had two beautiful homes in Las Vegas and Whitefish, and their doors were always open to host weddings, baby showers, golf tournaments and parties for every occasion. So many joyful memories were made!

Colette was preceded in death by her husband Tim and her mother Sharan Baracker. She is survived by her father Jerry Baracker and siblings Dawn Chan, Dee Anna Dillon, Kelly Baracker and Jami Baracker along with nieces and a nephew, and many aunts, uncles and cousins in the Baracker, Corne and O'Brian families. No memorial service is planned at this time.

Neal Del Barber, 63



Polson — Neal Del Barber, age 63, passed away at the family home in Yellow Bay Montana on July 5, 2023. He was born in Whitefish,

Montana to Dale and Madonna (Stinger) Barber on Nov. 11, 1959. Growing up in Whitefish he was known affectionately as "Schnarbs". When he laughed, his eyes would turn to half-moons, and his dimples would highlight his contagious smile. His chuckles were boisterous and wholehearted, usually accompanied by a knee slap. If you saw him in his Chevelle, the Judge, his trusted "the Chevy" truck, or around a campfire, his brother

Earl Patton was usually on the adventure. After high school Neal worked railroad, did some logging and tended bar at Casey's. Many will recall his prowess as an arm wrestler and storyteller. In 1982 he married his high school sweetheart, Debra Olson and shortly came his daughters DeNeal in 1983 and Dacey in 1984. With a little help from his father-in-law, he opened a tire and muffler shop in Whitefish. Eventually finding his way to Oregon

for work and a fresh start. He joined the union and became the premier Tack Truck operator in the region. He met and married his second wife, Jamie Fogle and made their home in Oregon till he retired. He loved it when his girls would visit (often by train) and did his best to show them his love with trips to the ocean, zoo, waterfalls or just watching an old western movie in the rain. His annual hunts for moose with his dad and Uncle Barry were a long

tradition. Neal retired in 2016 and returned to Montana. His love for fishing and hunting adventures was lifelong. We will miss the retelling of those stories, his heartwarming laugh and of course those dimples. Neal is survived by his wife Jamie; daughters, DeNeal (Todd) Fann, Dacey (Jake) Williams; grandchildren, Hunter and Hallie Fann, Noxyn, Seeley and Essie Williams; stepdaughters Nikki Gates-Harrington

and Ashley Johnson; grandson Lincoln; and brothers, Kevin (Eve) Barber and Ron (Amanda) Barber. A Celebration of Life will be held in September. Thank you to The Lake Funeral Home for caring for Neal and his family. Messages of condolences may be shared with the family online at www.lakefuneralhomeandcremation.com. Arrangements are under the care of The Lake Funeral Home and Crematory.

Richard Bardo, 81

Richard C. "Dick" Bardo, 81, left his loving family and "changed his address to heaven" on Aug. 30, 2023.

Dick was born July 5, 1942, in Danbury, Connecticut. He was the second of eight children born to Charles and Lillian Bardo and spent most of his childhood growing up on the family farm. In 1960 he graduated from the Henry Abbott Technical High School where he focused on carpentry. After high school, Dick served in the United States Air Force which landed him in Great Falls. After the military Dick graduated from Montana State University with a bachelor's degree in engineering.

In 1976 Dick met and married his wife Sheri and they spent their honeymoon summer working as cook and packer in the Bob Marshall Wilderness. They spent the next 25 years living in the Swan Valley near Lindbergh Lake with a shared passion for horses, the outdoors, and a homesteader lifestyle.

Dick was known as the guy who could "make



it work" when it came to carpentry and after a few quick sketches on a napkin could bring to life incredibly custom log work that can be found

in homes and businesses throughout the Swan and Flathead Valleys. Often referred to as a walking "Google", he knew a little bit about everything and thrived on learning new things.

Predeceased by his wife Sheri Bardo in 2004 and brother Mark in 2023, Dick is survived by his children Jody Brewer of Elma, Washington; Seth Bardo of Columbia Falls; and Alyssa Bardo of Helena, and their spouses; siblings Karen, Ted, Alan, Brian, Bruce, and Elaine; along with numerous grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces, nephews and their families.

A celebration of life service will be planned at

Gary Barker, 75

Gary Patrick Barker, 75, completed his last earthly journey on Sunday, Nov. 5, 2023, when he entered into eternal heavenly rest, a victim of lung cancer for the last six months of his life.

He was born in Wallace, Idaho on Sept. 10, 1948 to Clifford Barker and Betty Montgomery Barker, their second child and only boy joining a sister, Vicki. Soon the family added two more sisters, Janice and Susan.

He grew up just outside of Pinehurst, Idaho, in a small community up Pine Creek called Barkerville. The Barker family owned several houses there which were occupied by family workers of the lumber mills owned by Gary's grandfather, Robert Barker. Gary spoke often of the lumber mills, one being at Pine Creek, and the other located at Magee, Idaho. Barker Lumber Company employed many workers, and Gary especially loved to tell stories of his times at the Magee mill.

When he was a toddler he contracted polio and was hospitalized for extensive periods of time while the doctors rebuilt his leg muscles allowing him to walk. Though he had a slight limp left from the disease, he was ever grateful to the Shriner's of Spokane, Washington for sponsoring his recovery. He struggled with the effects and surgeries until his teen years.

At eight years old his father passed away leaving him to be the man of the family. During those difficult times he leaned on the wisdom of his grandfathers and uncles

for the counsel and advice he needed as he became a man. He often shared fond memories of living on his own for a summer at age 13, and working odd jobs at the lumber mill for his grandpa Barker, and fishing with his grandpa Yancy.

He attended elementary school through 9th grade in Pinehurst, and completed high school graduating from Kellogg High School. He obtained a Bachelor's Degree in Forestry from North Idaho College in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. During his college days he lived with his grandmother, Rose Jones and was forever grateful for her hospitality and loving guidance during that time. He also worked very hard to pay his own tuition for college by holding various jobs with Bunker Hill Mining Co. including being a zinc stripper in the zinc plant, which he described as a "terrible job."

In 1970, Gary married Iona McCorkel. They settled in Pinehurst and welcomed their son James. The birth of daughter Jessica a few years later completed their family. Sadly, the couple divorced later, but Gary took his role as a father seriously and was ever present in the rearing of his children as they spent the greater share of their childhood in his care.

Working in forestry for a short time, it became apparent to Gary that he should find a less physically demanding job for his left leg which was weak after having polio. After an invitation to look into insurance work, he became a Farmers Insurance agent, open-

ing his own business in Pinehurst. Wanting to build his business, he made the decision in 1982 to relocate to Kalispell. There he fell in love with the wide valley, mountains, rivers and lakes.

He was introduced to kayaking soon after moving to the Flathead valley. Unable to participate in many sports due to the polio, he quickly learned the art of whitewater kayaking, finding that it was the sport where he excelled. He made many wonderful friends and was a member of the Glacier Kayak Club through those early years.

Though he enjoyed a variety of outdoor activities including dirt biking, ATV riding, whitewater rafting, snowmobiling, hiking and fishing, his first love was kayaking and he made use of every opportunity to do so. His kayaking took him to Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, the Grand Canyon, Bruneau, Flathead, Swan, and other rivers and streams in the northwest and Canada, but his all time favorites were the Lochsa River and Little North Fork of the Clearwater in Idaho. He was proud to have made his last Lochsa trip this spring at age 74 and a half.

During his high school years he fell in love with music, especially lead guitar. He practiced long and became an exceptional guitar player, and singer as well. He belonged to several bands during his years. "Justin Tyme," and "Kicks" in Idaho, and "Centerline" in Kalispell, to name a few.

In 1996 he bought a computer background and sound system and

began a new adventure in music. He edited out the guitar parts and played his own lead guitar and decided to strike out on his own on a different musical path. It was at this time that he needed a female vocalist and met Connie Hansberry Radish through her brother Randy and they began a duo, "Country RockIt."

They enjoyed many venues throughout northwest Montana and Idaho. Most recently he began playing bass guitar locally with "The Banned," last playing some songs with them at his daughter's wedding in September. He would sit in with various bands when needed, and was always eager to join in a jam session.

In 2000 Gary married Connie, the love of his life. They continued to perform together musically and she joined him working in the office. He retired from Farmers Insurance in 2017, but continued his business on a smaller scale until this past October after over 50 years as an agent. He became acquainted with many fine folks during this time and will be remembered as a man of generosity, honesty and integrity, always working for his client's best interest.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Clifford and Betty Barker.

He is survived by his wife, Connie of 23 years; son, Chief Petty Officer

James (Jacqui) Barker, USN (ret.); daughter, Jessica (Brad) McManus; step-daughters, Pamela Lemer, Nicole (Pat) Cheff; grandchildren, Chelsey (Cole) Molyneux, Bobby Murphy, Gage Handwork, Emily Lemer, Leah Telles, Jenna Barker, Matthew Lemer, Cynthia Killingsworth; and great-grandchildren, Wesley, Aurora, Benjamin and Ellie Jo; sisters, Vicki Barker, Janice Bebee and Susan Barker; along with several cherished nieces, nephews, cousins and beloved friends.

Memorial services were held under the direction of Darlington Cremation and Burial Services, on Nov. 11, 2023.

Donald Wayne Barta, 69

Don Wayne Barta was born to Leland and Ila Barta, who preceded him in death. He joined brother Steven and later welcomed brother James and sister Laura. Don spent his early years in Lewistown, Montana before the family moved to Columbia Falls.

Don graduated Columbia Falls High School in 1972 where he lettered in wrestling and joined his brother Steven as an Eagle Scout, something he was very proud of. He took a job at the Aluminum Plant which led to his career as an ironworker. After an accident at work in Seattle dad eventually made his way back to the Flathead and to a job at School District 6 which he eventually retired from with over 22 years of service. While working at the school Don met Kim Fleming. After a few years of working together he invited her to a floating trip for her birthday. I'm not sure Kim knew what she was in for when she said yes but they made it together for over 25 years. Dad was always there to help anyone with any project they had. Don loved Montana and all it had to offer. Chester hunting

trips with friends, camping, outdoor concerts, especially the Blues.

His biggest passion was whitewater rafting with family and friends. He was lucky enough to enjoy many trips. Lots of memories were made on rivers such as the Salmon, Snake, Lochsa, and our own Middle Fork. Dad spoke of these trips and his friends frequently. Don began his eternal "DOWN RIVER" in the early morning of Jan. 26, 2023, at home with his wife by his side.

Don leaves behind his wife of almost 26 years, Kim. Son John and wife Jessica and their sons Taylor (wife Mickaela, daughter Sawyer) and Orion; daughter Amanda and her son Bridger, daughter Brooke; son Dustin and wife Michelle and their son Jayden; daughter Autumn and husband Mike and sons Peyton, Carson; brother Steven and wife Merla; brother Jim and wife Faye; sister Laura and husband Shane; and several nieces and nephews.

There will be a celebration of life June 24, 2023, at 1 p.m., at the Kalispell Eagles FOE 234. Thank you to everyone who helped with Don's care.

Noemi Gomez Barta, 82

After battling pancreatic cancer for more than three years, Noemi Gomez Barta of Kalispell died April 11, with both family members and friends by her side. She was born in 1940 in Los Indios, Texas and would have been 83 on September 10.



Noemi was well known for her great warmth, ever-cheerful outlook, patriotism, and lifelong devotion to Christ. She cared about people deeply, regularly expressing concern about others' health and families even as her own health failed.

In one example of her kindness, she was working in a small office with a colleague who disliked work gift exchanges. Noemi didn't want the colleague to miss out, so she sent the coworker an anonymous gift package. Noemi also sent herself an "anonymous" package so the colleague wouldn't feel bad about receiving their gift.

She expressed her Christian faith through her loving spirit and participation in church communities wherever she went. For several years she was active in the West Kootenai Community Church and, after moving to Kalispell, in the Faith Covenant Church. She also participated in weekly bible

study groups. As a frequent and vivid storyteller, she drew on happenings from all aspects of her long life. It helped that she had a remarkable memory and a diverse range of experiences: growing up on a farm in South Texas, working for the federal government in other countries, raising two lively kids (plus a series of cats and Saint Bernards), moving around the U.S., and in later years traveling to countries around the globe.

She grew up on a farm near the Rio Grande River with five siblings and also had six adult half-siblings. After graduating from high school, she moved to Washington, D.C., for a job with the federal government. As a fluent English and Spanish speaker who was eager to travel, the government assigned her to the American Embassy in Managua, Nicaragua. There she met Lee Barta, a U.S. Marine embassy guard, and they were married upon their return to the United States. Stationed in various locations, they traveled around much of the country with their first child, Sondra. After Lee returned from Vietnam they had a son, James. The 10 months Lee

spent in Vietnam were difficult ones, as Noemi was caring for their young daughter and working while also exchanging letters that sometimes took many months to arrive. Lee was wounded three times and the last time he was medevacked to the naval hospital in Corpus Christi Texas. Each weekend during his recovery, Noemi drove 125 miles each way to be with him.

Noemi held administrative positions as she and Lee moved every few years for different assignments. She worked at organizations including a high school, a car dealership, a hospital, and the Montana State Crime Lab. Soon after moving from Missoula to Kalispell in 1990, she worked at Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks and eventually became the office manager.

One particularly difficult time for the Bartas was 1997 when their daughter Sondra died in a road crash. Noemi and Lee drew on their faith in God, and a network of supports to work through the grief. Noemi told stories about Sondra often — usually funny ones involving hijinks with animals — and kept her spirit alive even for those who'd never met her daughter.

After retiring in 2003 Noemi and Lee moved to the West Kootenai in the northwest corner of Montana. They remained

for more than a dozen years, making many friends among the Amish community there and watching elk and deer and throngs of hummingbirds from their porch. They also enjoyed RV'ing throughout the western U.S. and took cruises to ports of call around the Pacific and the Americas.

Noemi is survived by her husband of almost 59 years Lee Barta and son James Barta.

A memorial service will be held at Faith Covenant Church in Kalispell on May 20 at 2 p.m., followed by a reception in the Fellowship Hall. The prior week May 13th at 11 a.m. the family is holding a service with the West Kootenai Community Church. In lieu of flowers, please consider making a donation to one of Noemi's favorite causes. Among the many are Child Bridge Montana, The Salvation Army Kalispell Corps, and Flathead Food Bank.

Noemi ably expressed her faith in God through grace and love. From Matthew 25:23 "Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master."

Friends are encouraged to visit the website www.buffalohillfh.com to leave notes of condolences for the family. Buffalo Hill Funeral Home and Crematory caring for the family.

Curtis Barton, 66

Curtis Allen Barton passed away peacefully Jan. 31, 2023, in Kalispell.

Curtis was born Aug. 19, 1956, in Santa Clara, California. He was raised in Morgan Hill, California and attended Live Oak High School. Curtis moved with his young family to Kalispell in 1976. In Kalispell, Curtis started a hair salon on



Main Street and became well known as a great hair stylist. He finished his career in Morgan Hill before coming back to Flathead Valley to retire.

Curtis was preceded in death by his mother,

Betty, and his brother, Chris. He is survived by his father, Kenneth; brother, Craig; sister, Cindy; children Kandace, Kori, Kenneth, Kooper, Tucker, Tessa, Trampus, Timberli and Tobias; and 20 grandchildren.

Darlington Cremation and Burial Service is caring for Curtis and his family.

Richard 'Dick' Bassett, 82

Richard "Dick" Bassett, 82, OSC USN/USNR (retired) died peacefully surrounded by his family on Aug. 29, 2023, after a brief battle with cancer and cirrhosis of the liver.

He was born in Ellensburg, Washington on Oct. 3, 1940 to Grace and Homer (Skip) Bassett and joined older sister Carol. He spent his early years in Spokane Valley, Washington until he joined the Navy in March 1959.

He met his wife Ann in Oakland, California and they married in 1964. He served as Active Duty from 1959 until 1965 when he and Ann welcomed their daughter Julie.

After leaving the Navy, he worked for Chervon Oil Company. This job moved Dick and his family from Oakland, to Puyallup and Aberdeen, Washington to Fairbanks, Alaska. In 1973, Dick bought the Chevron Service Station in Enumclaw, Washington, where they stayed until

2012, after a brief stint in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

After he sold the service station, he worked many different jobs from Bear Automotive to delivering beer, to selling espresso machines, to working as an OSHA compliance officer for Applus. In 2012, they followed their daughter and her family to the Flathead Valley.

While in Enumclaw, he reenlisted in the Navy as a Reservist in 1983 and served in the Reserves until he retired at 60 in Oct. 2000. He would tell you, "I wasn't a very good student, but I was a damn good sailor."

During his time in the Navy, he served on the USS Ranger CVA-61, USS Conquest MSO-488, Carrier Group Five, USS Kitty Hawk CV-63 and Carrier Group Three. He



also received numerous awards during his years of service including; the Navy Commendation Medal, Navy Achievement Medal, Navy Good Conduct Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Naval Reserve Meritorious Service (5), Naval Defense Service Medal, and the Navy Reserve Sea Service Ribbon.

He was not only a decorated sailor, but a dedicated husband, beloved father and grandfather. He spent the years after they arrived in Montana caring for his wife as she battled Parkinson's until her death in early 2022.

He loved being close to his daughter, grandchildren and great-grandson, he enjoyed attending numerous concerts and sporting events over the years. He was a constant figure in his grandchildren's lives, introducing them to quality coffee and a love of old movies and instilling in them an unwavering respect and appreciation for our

service men and women. The lasting impression he left on his family will never leave them and will sorely be missed.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Grace and Homer (Skip); his sister, Carol; and his beloved wife, Ann.

He is survived by his daughter, Julie (Rick); his step-sons; Dan (Marlinda) and Alan; his grandchildren, Samantha (Christopher), James, Melissa, Rickie, Michelle and Julia; and his great-grandchildren, Scott, Shelby, Sidney, William, Caleb, Jacob, Ben and Henry.

A memorial service with reception will be held at 1 p.m. on Sept. 9, at First Presbyterian Church, 540 S. Main St., Kalispell.

The family asks that you please wear your "red, white and blue" if you can.

Arrangements are under the care of Johnson-Gloschat Funeral Home.

Orville Baumgartner, 92

Orville L. Baumgartner, 92 of Columbia Falls, went peacefully home to be with his heavenly Father on Aug. 19, 2023, surrounded by his wife and family.

He was born on Dec. 5, 1930, in Stanley, North Dakota. Son of Herbert and Bertha Baumgartner. He was baptized, confirmed, and remained active in the Missouri Synod Lutheran Church his whole life.

After graduation from high school, he entered the US Navy and served

in the Korean War. Upon returning from the service, he married Joyce Thronson on June 5, 1955.

He moved to Montana in 1967, with his wife Joyce and five children where he enjoyed raising cattle. He worked at the Anaconda Aluminum Company, retiring after 26 years.



He is survived by his wife of 68 years, Joyce; his children, Pam Randazzo, Peggy Martin (Wes), Kathy Suvak (Dave), Jim Baumgartner (Debby), and Jeff Baumgartner; his grandchildren, Kristel and Meghan Jones, Heather, Sal and Heidi Randazzo, Kyle and Kayla Suvak; and 10 great-grandchildren.

He was a loving husband and father, good neighbor and good friend. He will be missed by all.

There will be a graveside service with military

honors at 10 a.m. on Aug. 28, at Fairview Cemetery, followed by a memorial service at 11 a.m. at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, 640 Seventh St. W., Columbia Falls, followed by a luncheon.

To send online condolences please visit Orville's tribute page at www.columbiamortuary.com. Columbia Mortuary is caring for the family. In lieu of flowers a donation made in his name to Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Columbia Falls can be made.

John Bauska, 72

John (Jack) Thomas Bauska, 72, native son of Montana, proud direct descendant of founding father, Patrick Henry.

He was born Oct. 28, 1950, in Kalispell to Lester and Camilla Bauska. He attended Elrod School, Central School and Flathead County High School graduating in 1968, prior to a short time taking classes at University of Montana Western. Born and raised in Kalispell, Jack also lived in Alaska, Louisiana, and California during his many entrepreneurial adventures. Life itself was an adventure for Jack, his love for adventure was contagious.

From newspaper boy, to farm work, to manager of women's lingerie at the old Penny's store, right out of high school (yes that's right, women's lingerie). Maybe you saw him as an extra, shooting black powder rifles in the movie, "Lady Hawke." He was a bartender and bouncer at our famous "Mooses," and moved along to owning his own cement company and bicycle store.

Together with his father Les, Jack and his dad were well known manufacturers of gun barrels. Jack started a manufacturing company for refrigeration panels in Louisiana. Always the entrepreneur, later the panels were fashioned to provide economical housing in both the middle east and Mexico for laborers. He was a steward on the Alaskan pipeline and later in life the CEO for several mining companies in the Western United States.



of his wife. He was an avid hunter of duck, deer, antelope and elk.

He loved his Arabian horses and spent more than a decade breeding Arabians here in Montana, a horse breed he was introduced to by his uncle Manny. Maybe you attended one of his extravagant barn parties.

In his lifetime, Jack has traveled to more than 90 countries either for business or pleasure. Comfortable with an immense variety of people and cultures, he made lifelong friendships in Austria, Canada, Abu Dhabi, Mexico, Morocco, Bratislava, London and South Korea, to name a few.

Described by his sister Leslie and many others, he was the eternal optimist.

He demonstrated tremendous memory skills, specifically regarding history and current events, and was an avid reader. A man who seemed to live 10 lifetimes in one. A beloved and complex man. A mountain of a man, once described by one of his business partners as, "a cross between Grizzly Adams and a rabbi," tenacious, a survivalist, a teacher and a leader.

He will always be remembered for his love of family and his generosity. Family was everything to him. When it comes to friends, he would give you the shirt off his back, even if it was his last one.

He was knowledgeable about guns of all types, an interest he shared with his dad who opened the Les Bauska Shooting Range in Kalispell, and traveled to Washington, D.C. for the signing of gun legislation that he introduced.

His love and pride for Montana was obvious. He loved taking visitors on tours of Glacier Park, hunting in Malta, packing hunting parties on horseback into the wilderness and just relaxing at Ashley Lake. He loved cruising and golf, having once golfed with Sydney Poitier.

He loved John Wayne movies and old westerns, often reciting lines prior to them being spoken, much to the amusement

He was preceded in death by his parents, Les and Camilla Bauska; and brothers, Roy and Greg.

He is survived by his wife, Pamela Bauska, and children, Darren Hall (wife Carly), Aaron Hahn, Camarron Lanphere, Christopher Hall; his sister, Leslie Millspaugh; and grandchildren, Ava, Amelia, Kellan, Araya and Harley.

A service will be held at 1 p.m. on Oct. 27, at Trinity Lutheran, 400 W. California St., Kalispell. Service will be followed by a reception for all family and friends from 2 p.m. - 5 p.m. at The Red Lion, 20 N. Main St., Kalispell.

I love you Jack, Pam.

Steven Terrill Bauska, 78

Steven Terrill Bauska was born on a warm, late summer September day in 1944 to Glen W. and Maude L. (Lynch) Bauska in Kalispell. He joined his big sister, Lorraine, making the little family complete.

Steve grew up terrorizing the Evergreen neighborhood with all his many friends and cousins, attending Evergreen Elementary and later Flathead High School.

After high school, Steve enlisted in the Army National Guard and was stationed at Fort Ord, Calif. It was around this time that Steve met and married Marie "Squeek" Boursaw, starting his own family with two beautiful daughters, Channon and Shirlan. They later divorced.

In 1967, Steve met and later married Kay Volavka, immediately gaining two more daughters, Denise and Sherry, and a son, Chaz. Shortly thereafter Steve and Kay would welcome the final piece of their family quilt, another son, Wade James.

Steve and Kay embarked on many adventures throughout their years together. Some were good, and others not so much. But they always managed to persevere and remained



that strong, rich and silky baritone voice we loved.

Steve was an avid hunter and fisherman and could be found as often as possible

up in the Pleasant Valley area enjoying one or both with his dad, Glen, or nephew Shane. More often than not, he'd just load up the whole dang family, a picnic lunch, and head for the hills. Any day was a good day to be in the woods according to him.

Steve joined his beloved Katie "Kay" in the righteousness of Heaven on Feb. 10, 2023, after a short and thankfully swift battle with lung cancer. Steve was preceded in death by his parents Glen and Maude, and a great-nephew Conor.

Steve is survived by his sister, Lorraine Graham (husband Neil, nephew Shane, and niece Whitney); his children and grandchildren: Channon (grandkids Andrew, Allyce, and Anthony); Shirlan (granddaughters Jessica and Jordan); Wade (wife

together until Kay took her last breath with Steve by her side.

Steve Bauska was a genuine free spirit, jack of all trades (and as he would say, master of none!) kind of guy. He was our poet laureate, writing the most beautiful poems that came straight from his heart. Steve played the guitar, wrote songs and could sing as well. There won't be a single day that goes by that we won't miss

Danielle and grandsons Tyler and Brandon); Denise (grandkids Tanya, Jermaine, Mark and Skeeter); Sherry (husband Darren and grandkids Robert and Valerie) and Chaz (granddaughter Ronica and great-grandson Josiah).

Ride the winds Old Outlaw, and until we meet again — we wish you laughing waters.

A memorial service will be held later this summer in Kalispell.

Dixiedorcas Beasleyloving, 82

Dixiedorcas Dare Beasleyloving was born Jan. 1, 1941, in Richmond City, Virginia. She died July 14, 2023.

DD, as she preferred to be called, lived a modest life in Virginia, then moved to Kalispell around 1998, in her late 50s. She had many acquaintances who helped her get settled, and she enjoyed several houses and apartments while living in the community. She was a woman of quiet faith, who was extremely resourceful, resilient physically and emotionally, strong of character, and self-reliant.

She could build a fence, learned to drive a truck, and make minor household repairs. She also enjoyed walking daily and trekked north to south, east and west exploring all of Kalispell with enthusiasm and purpose. She particularly enjoyed shopping, was always on the lookout for the best deals, a true value shopper. She was an eager learner, always interested in any new idea or topic, or item, and taught herself computer skills in her mid-60s! She was fascinated with how "fast" they worked, and her shopping expanded into searching the internet.



Those who knew her enjoyed her delightful humor and her appreciative attitude for help

of any kind. Animals, especially dogs, were her special love, and she cared for many over the years. She walked them, played with them, and introduced them to various places around town, as they were her family.

As she got older and needed more support, she took her last dog, Friend, with her to her final home in Eureka. Staff and residents there welcomed both her and friend with open arms and hearts, and gave her a very peaceful, happy, and comfortable home in which to live out her days.

No one will ever forget her very distinctive name, which perfectly announced her vibrant, distinctive, and enjoyable personality to the many that knew and loved her.

She is survived by her brother, Theo Loving of Richmond, Virginia.

Austin Funeral & Cremation Services in Whitefish is caring for the family.

Kenneth Stuart Beck Sr., 98

Kenneth Stuart Beck, Sr., 98, passed away March 4, 2023 at home in Kalispell. He was born Aug. 7, 1924 in Richmond, Virginia to William Cabell Beck and Minnie Pearl Burks Beck.

He was the oldest of three children. He graduated from high school and entered the army during World War II, survived Normandy and the Battle of the Bulge and was honorably discharged on Nov. 5, 1945.

He married Clarice Mae Barnes on May 17, 1946. He worked for the railroad in Virginia, then went to work for the National Park Service, traveling from Virginia to Mississippi, then to California, then to Missouri, and on to Montana where he was Administration Officer of Glacier Park, he then went to Washington D.C. where he then retired from the Park Service.

He is survived by his children Kenneth S.



Beck, Jr. and wife Deborah of Columbia Falls, Bonnie Lancaster and husband John of Limerick, Maine, Thomas

Beck and wife Clarice of Hilo, Hawaii, and Lorren Beck and wife Debra of Eugene, Oregon; and many nieces, nephews, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his parents, his wife Clarice Barnes Beck, and son William H. Beck.

Private burial will be held in Richmond. Friends are encouraged to visit our website at www.buffalohillfh.com to leave notes of condolences for the family. Buffalo Hill Funeral Home and Crematory caring for the family.

Eddy Lou Benson, 93

Eddy Lou (Whipple) Benson, 93, of Kalispell, passed away July



29, 2023. She was born Dec. 13, 1929, in Scobey to Keith and Abnona (Fagan) Whipple, she joined a 2-year-old sister, Dixie Lee.

She attended all 12 years of school in Scobey, Wolf Point and Glendive until November 1956 when they moved to Columbia Falls and were both employed by the Anaconda Aluminum Company. Palmer was offered a position with a new Anaconda Plant in Henderson, Kentucky, where he set up the safety program.

The couple returned to Montana in January 1976. After returning to the Flathead, Eddy was employed by Kalispell Regional Hospital where she was the manager of the data processing department for 17 years, she retired in 1993.

She was very active in the Order of Eastern

Star, she served as Worthy Grand Matron of Montana 1988-1989 for the Centennial Session. She was also a member of Daughters of the Nile and several other Masonic related organizations. She was also a member of the First Presbyterian Church of Kalispell.

She was preceded in death by her husband of 54 years, an infant son, her parents and her sister Dixie Jensen-Morast.

She is survived by numerous nieces and nephews.

A graveside service will be held at 10:30 a.m. on Friday Aug. 25, at Glacier Memorial Gardens Cemetery. A reception will follow at Woodland Park Pavillion.

Memorial contributions may be made to Masonic Home of Montana, 2010 Masonic Home Road, Helena, MT 59602 or the charity of your choice. Arrangements are under the care of Johnson-Gloschat Funeral Home and Crematory.

Dorothy Berger, 86

Dorothy "Dottie" Hader Berger, 86, our cherished mom and grandma passed away at home with family by her side on Dec. 7, 2023. She loved celebrating other people's birthdays, and in perfect Dottie fashion, she held true to this even in her exit from this world as she went to join her husband on his birthday.

She was born in Savoy to Florence Olive and Sylvester "Bud" Hader. The family later moved to Washington and eventually settled in Kalispell when Dottie was a young girl.

She was such a dedicated woman in all she did, and this was evident in her relationships with family, friends, and her life of constant steady work. This work ethic began at an early age when she got her first job at 11 years old cleaning motel rooms in the summers. She transitioned into the role of waitressing not long after, where she discovered her love of serving people. The restaurants that were blessed with her employment were many in the early years including the Mayflower Café, Eddie's Café in Apgar, Skylark, Hacienda, and then 22-plus years at the Outlaw Inn before retiring. Throughout the years mom made many lifelong friends, due to the heart she wore on her sleeve every day.

Dottie married the love of her life, Philip Lee Berger, and they were married for 63 years before his passing in 2020. Together they raised four children, and the biggest loves of her life were her children, grandchildren, her Boston Bull pups and her cat Lilah.

Family was her greatest joy in life. Her kids



would drop in for daily lunches and the memories shared around the kitchen snack

bar will always be cherished. You would always find her in the kitchen cooking and baking, and whenever visiting, the cookies and desserts were brought out. She enjoyed working in her beautiful yard and playing cards and board games. Family time held a special place in mom's heart, which included vacations down the Oregon Coast, time spent at her sister's home on the bay in Olympia, picnics at the lake and school shopping trips to Spokane with her children and grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Phil; her parents; brothers, Dick and Mickey; and sisters, Betty Lou and Vickie.

She is survived by her four children, Debbie, Cheryl (Wayne), Denise (Garret), and Dennis; 11 grandchildren, 16 great-grandchildren, 14 great-great grandchildren and many nieces and nephews.

Special thanks to Brendan House and Logan Health Hospice for their dedicated care, and to her granddaughters, Trista and Trina, who traveled here to help with her care at home. At mom's request no service will be held and a private family gathering will be held this spring to celebrate her life. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the NW Montana Humane Society or the Lighthouse Christian Home of Kalispell.

Darlington Cremation and Burial Service is caring for the family.

Juanita Ortiz Bernabe, 78

On a warm and sunny Sunday, the 23rd of April, Juanita Ortiz Bernabe left her little red cane behind and walked into Heaven and the welcoming arms of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We are certain that as He spoke the words "Well done good and faithful servant," that shouts of joy and cries of "Juanita!" and "Grandma!" could be heard.

Mom was born to Frank and Frances Ortiz, one of 11 children, in a humble little house in Southern California where her roots ran deep. She met and married



Luis Solis Bernabe and gave life to her four children, Elisa Ann Doucette, Patricia Bernabe Lewis, Jose' Francisco Bernabe and Mary Frances Dahlke. From dirt floors and woodstoves, thousands of miles from California to Mexico, and finally of all places, Montana, our mom lived an extraordinary life too full and rich to contain here in these small paragraphs.

But the summation of

this beautiful, humble, loving, fiercely funny and powerfully enduring soul can be declared as so: There was never a time that she did not walk with, receive her unbelievable strength from, or love deeply, Jesus. This gold thread of light wound like a river of Living Water through the entirety of her life, and now flows in four tributaries through her children.

She is survived by her four children, their families and according to Ancestry.com, 34,840 relatives. Please refer to said website as we too

are confused by the sum totals of the relatives who preceded her in death and who are survived by our mom to fully list here.

Saint Jude's Hospital is also accepting donations in Juanita's name if preferred in lieu of flowers. Services will be held on May 6, 11 a.m. at Rocky Mountain Baptist Church, 2387 Montana 35, Kalispell.

Friends are encouraged to visit the website at www.buffalohillfh.com to leave notes of condolences for the family. Buffalo Hill Funeral Home and Crematory caring for the family.

Hunter Berry, 28

Hunter Anthony Berry, 28, passed away unexpectedly on Aug. 7, 2023, as the result of a hit and run motorcycle accident.

He was born Feb. 8, 1995, in Missoula, to Richard Berry Jr. and Christy D. Treutel-Berry. He was raised in Kalispell where he attended Smith Valley School and Flathead High School. The last few years, Hunter made his home in Manhattan, Montana, where he worked in construction.



He lived for his free time outside of work. You could always find him fishing, hunting, skateboarding, or playing online games. He also loved to motorcycle because it gave him his own piece of freedom to feel the wind all around him.

Above all his passions, he adored being a dad to

his daughter, Sophia, who was the love of his life. He truly packed so much into his 28 years, and we will miss him dearly.

He is survived by his parents; daughters, Sophia and Joanna; as well as his twin brother, Dakota; and brother, Aaron.

A celebration of life will take place at 5 p.m. on Aug. 26, at Lawrence Park in Kalispell. Arrangements are in the care of Dokken-Nelson Funeral Service. www.dokkennelson.com

Robert E. 'Buzz' Berry, 79

Robert E. "Buzz" Berry, 79, of Kalispell, Montana, passed away on March 1, 2023, in Phoenix, Arizona.

Buzz was born in Kalispell on Oct. 20, 1943, to E. Elkin and Violet Berry. He spent his early childhood years riding bicycles with a slingshot in his pocket and exploring all the nooks and crannies of Kalispell. In his high school years, he would spend summers working on his Aunt Mary and Uncle Irv's farm in Flaxville, Montana. He graduated from Flathead High in 1961 and went on to complete a year at Montana



in 1970. Their unconditional love and devotion to each other grew stronger with every passing year. What a beautiful example they set for their children: patience, kindness, humor, support, and eternal love for each other.

While they each enjoyed hobbies of their own, there was no place they'd rather be than with one another. Exploring new parts of the country, field trips around the valley, snowblowing, happy

loving, supportive, and instilling his quick sense of humor in all of them.

In retirement, Buzz loved going on adventurous road trips, special trips his children planned for him, and playing in golf tournaments. In 2017, Buzz and Pam purchased a winter home in Mesa, Arizona. It was a place that brought them immense happiness — a testament to their years of hard work and raising their family. He loved the sunshine, sitting on their patio, and playing countless rounds of golf at Apache Wells with his close friends, "The Three Amigos."

known as the person to call whenever anything needed to be fixed — he could fix anything!

Buzz was preceded in death by his parents, sister Barbara Murciego, cousins Tom Gibson and Bill Jungers, nephew Tim Murciego, and several aunts and uncles.

He is survived by his wife of 52 years, Pam; his six children Bob (Betts), Kelcy (Mark), Jennifer (Steve), Christine (James), Scott (Dawn), and Brian (Chelsea); nine grandchildren, Bryon (Kirsten), Mikaila, Kyle, Emmy, Andrew, Alex, Maddox, Owen, and Bode; one

State University.

Upon his return to the Flathead Valley, he spent several summers working in Glacier National Park building trails. This resulted in a love and appreciation for the park that would span his lifetime. In 1963, he had the opportunity to purchase Main Street Texaco in downtown Kalispell. He spent 36 years as an honest and highly respected business owner. After hanging up the keys to "the station," he spent several years as a school bus contractor and driver.

Buzz met Pam in 1969, quickly fell head-over-heels, and they married

hours on their Arizona patio — it didn't matter what they were doing, it was all a special part of the wonderful life they created together.

He was a devoted husband, father and eventually, grandfather. Any time he wasn't at work, he was busy taking his children skiing, coaching their baseball teams, playing in the yard, patiently pulling his children behind the boat at their Lake Blaine summer home, or any other activity that meant time with his family. As much as he loved his children, his grandkids were truly his pride and joy. He was the best Papa to all of them — gentle,

Buzz was a man of few words, but when he did talk, you always wanted to be paying attention because it would no doubt be witty and hilarious. He had a nickname for everyone, and always a story to go along with the nickname (yep — that means he had one for you, too!). He was fondly

great-grandson, Robby; special nieces and nephews; and countless friends and golf buddies.

In lieu of flowers, memorial tributes can be sent to St. Jude's Children's Hospital in honor of Buzz Berry. A celebration of Buzz's life will be held in Kalispell on a date to be determined.

John McReil Biggs, 88

John McReil Biggs, 88, passed away peacefully on June 14, 2023, in Kalispell.

John was born in Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, and graduated from Princeton University in June of 1956, with a degree in Aeronautical Engineering. He went on to attend Naval Aviation Flight school in Pensacola, Florida.

After leaving the Navy, John had several careers: engineering, sales, real estate development and several business enterprises.

He loved baseball, aviation and nature. He had a strong musical appreciation and talent.

He lived in California from 1958- 1983; Idaho from 1984- 1990; and Hawaii from 1990- 2000.

He eventually retired in the Northwest United



States spending the latter part of his life in Idaho and then Montana until his passing.

John is predeceased by his father,

Burnard Biggs, and his mother, Ruth Biggs.

Survived by his son, Rod Kovell and his wife Tracey; his grandson, Alex Kovell; his sister, Jacqueline Churchill; and nephews, Todd and Clay Churchill, and their families.

John had an intense spirit and will be remembered by friends and family as the person who always lived life on his terms.

Carol Louise Bjork, 82

Carol Bjork, 82, died Nov. 29, 2023, of natural causes, including heart disease and COPD, at the Bee Hive Home in Kalispell.



several school buses for the Bigfork School District. Carol sold all but

one of the buses after Jack died in 1989. She moved to the Echo Lake area in 1992 and retired in June 2012 after 30 eventful years of driving her school bus and enjoying all her, "kids." She got to see many of her students grow up, have families and send their children to school on Carol's bus. That pleased her a lot.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Harvey and Isabel; her husband, Jack; her son, Rick; and her brother, Delmar and wife Marlene.

She married Jack Bjork on Nov. 24, 1957. They both worked on farms in eastern Montana until returning to the Flathead and making their home on the Bjork family farm at Holt, where they started their family. Their daughter, Jackie Lynn, arrived on Feb. 29, 1960, and their son, Ricky Lane, made his entrance on Dec. 14, 1961.

She is survived by her daughter, Jackie; her sister, Merilee (Lauren) McClurg; and several terrific nieces and nephews. A small family memorial service will be held soon at a time and place to be announced.

Carol and Jack worked the farm, milking cows, raising sheep and pig, and hay. They also worked at other jobs at that time. They purchased and operated

one of the buses after Jack died in 1989.

A small family memorial service will be held soon at a time and place to be announced.

Bella Blake, 14

Our Bella Bug has left the journey we call life. Bella Blake tragically passed away in a car accident on Oct. 29, 2023.

She was born April 23, 2009, at Kalispell Regional Hospital to Ashlee Galassi and Cameron Blake.

Bella bug was full of life and compassion. She loved hiking with her "Mimi" grandma, paddle boarding and chasing sunsets with her mom.

She was born with soft blond hair and big blue eyes, ready to spread love and happiness to anyone she encountered. She was her daddy's angel and her mom's best friend. Her older brothers Landon and Gavin adored her and looked out for her from day one.

She loved making TikToks (or CringeToks as her family liked to describe them) with her



younger brothers Benny and Lincoln, as well as her little sister Siena,

who was her sidekick and whom were inseparable. She looked up to her Big Sis, Ava.

Bella cherished her "Bama" grandma and papa Shawn. Above all, Bella taught the family empathy and love, and had a way of bringing laughter to everyone, even when times were tough.

Bella is survived by her mother Ashlee Galassi; her father, Cameron Blake; brothers Landon, Gavin Lincoln and Benny; her sisters, Ava and Siena; grandparents, Kimberly Blake, Shawn and Kari Hollopeter; and countless other family and friends.

Wayne Jay Blake, 79

Wayne Jay Blake, 79, was born May 28, 1944, in Kalispell, to William and Louise Blake. He passed away peacefully at home on July 9, 2023, with his loving wife by his side.

He attended Flathead High School, graduating in 1962.

He enlisted in the Army and served a total of 15 years.

He worked as a lumber grader for various mills in Montana for over 20 years until a back injury while training with the National Guard forced him to retire from lumber grading. He then worked for Semitool for a number of years before starting Blake's Home Maintenance.

He operated his business and drove the Snow Bus until his retirement in 2007.

He met his wife Carol while she was vacationing in Helena, and he was at a National Guard drill.

They hit it off and were married on Feb. 17, 1990.

Together they enjoyed camping, boating, fishing and hunting with friends and family.

They had season tickets to the Montana Grizzly football games and attended them faithfully until they moved to winter in Sahuarita, Arizona.

He loved joking around and pulling pranks on people. He was known as a gentle giant. He loved animals, especially dogs.

His faithful dog, Gipsy, preceded him in death.

He always had time to pet a dog and loved to feed them treats. There was never a skinny dog when Wayne was around.

In 2012, Wayne and Carol made the decision to sell their house in Montana and move to Sahuarita.

They decided to start



“camping” during the summer in their daughter’s backyard.

They enjoyed many summers watching their grandchildren and great-grandson, Tucker, play in the yard.

They attended their grandchildren’s high school sporting events, becoming some of their biggest fans. Wayne loved watching Tucker drive his power wheel, and later his 4-wheeler over to their camper where he would pretend to be a dinosaur or some other animal and would have popsicles with great-grandpa.

He enjoyed sitting outside watching Tucker jump on the trampoline right outside of their camper.

At the time of his passing, he was a member of Desert Hills Lutheran Church, The American Legion and The Elk’s Club.

He was preceded in death by his parents; sons John and Michael; and

dog Gipsy.

He is survived by his loving wife of 33 years, Carol of Sahuarita. His son Warner, and daughter-in-law Lisa Blake of Kalispell; his daughter Michelle, and son-in-law Shawn Cady of Columbia Falls; his son Paul Ulberg of Kalispell, and daughter-in-law Lisa Blake of Veradale, Washington; his brother Ron, and sister-in-law Lynda Blake of Bakersfield, California; his grandchildren Travis, Levi, Kaylee, Nikki, Justin, Tessa, Wyatt, Graceanne, Makayla, Lexi, Jager and Kiya; and his great-grandsons Tucker, Benjamin and Theodore.

Wayne’s celebration of life will be at 11 a.m. on July 22, at Desert Hills Lutheran Church in Green Valley, Arizona. He will be interred at Arizona Veterans Memorial Cemetery at Marana.

In lieu of flowers, please make a donation to a veterans charity of your choice.

Diane Blankenship, 75

It is with much sadness that we say goodbye to our beloved Diane who entered the kingdom of Heaven on April 22, 2023.

Diane Hanig Blankenship, 75, was born in Minnesota in 1948 to Arlene and Ken Hanig. She was the first of six daughters born into their family.

When she was in grade school the family moved to Kalispell, where her father was the manager of the Gambles franchise there. They later moved to Deer Lodge where her parents became the owners of the Skogmos store and she attended St. Mary's Grade School. She graduated from Powell County High School in 1966 and later attended Montana Tech in Butte.

Following college, she moved to Helena where she worked for the State of Montana and met the love of her life, Keith Blankenship. Together they made Helena their lifelong home and were married for 52 years. They had two sons, Paul (of Kalispell) and David (of Helena) who blessed them with 11 grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

Diane was a gentle soul with many passions and much love to share. Among her passions was quilting. She was an avid and magnificent quilter, even operating a quilting



shop for many years to help other people design, plan and finish their quilts. There is no telling how many quilts she made in her lifetime; we speculate the number to be in the hundreds. She was actively involved for many years with Toys for Tots and loved walking around the fairground ponds and watching the geese, ducks and swans. She enjoyed geo-caching and summer vacations at Swan Lake. She also had a great love of music, learning to play piano as a child, singing in the chorus and choir in high school, listening to her playlists daily and, more recently having ukulele jam sessions with her sisters. Although, often it seemed there was more laughter than music coming out of those sessions. The "sisterhood" won't be the same without her.

Being raised in the Catholic faith, Diane and Keith were long-time members of the St. Helena Cathedral Parish where their sons also received their first sacraments. God has now called her home and she will be missed by all who knew her.

She is survived by her husband, Keith; sons, Paul and David (Autumn); sisters, Doreen Ellis, Patty King (Tom McNeal), Paula Hanig (Joe Schendel), Susan Wolcott (Jack Wolcott); sister-in-law, Diane Marble; grandchildren, Kafi, Desiree, Alyssa, Krista, Patrick, Airk, Elora, Robert, Cadence, Corbyn and Kieran; nine great-grandchildren and many nieces and nephews.

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She was preceded in death by her parents, Arlene and Ken; sister, Donna Stevens Doney; and brothers-in-law, Chuck Stevens, Craig King and Leo Marble.

Funeral services will be held at noon on Thursday, May 18, 2023, at St. Helena Cathedral with a reception to follow downstairs in the church social center. Interment will be at a later date at the Fort Harrison VA Cemetery.

Memorials are suggested to any veteran's support organization, or to the charity of the donor's choice. Special thanks are extended to all the nurses, CNA's and staff of Compassus Hospice. They are all living angels. Please visit www.aswfurneralhome.com to offer a condolence to the family or to share a memory of Diane.

Jesse Edwin 'Ed' Sonny Blasdel, 93

Jesse Edwin "Ed" Sonny Blasdel was born June 11, 1929, to Jesse O and Ethel Blasdel of Somers. Ed passed away Monday, Feb. 20, 2023, at the Montana Veterans Home.

Ed spent all of his youth on the family farm in Somers on North Somers Road. Ed married Arta Mower. They had seven children and later divorced. In 1975, Ed married Alice Emborg and had one son, and later divorced. In 1997, Ed married Virginia Fraser and they were married until her death in 2017.



Ed was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1951 and served 21 months in the Korean theater. During his service, he was awarded the Korean Service Medal, one bronze star, Combat Infantry Badge, Japan Occupation Medal, and United Nations Service Medal.

After being discharged in 1953 Ed returned to

the Flathead Valley and worked in the agricultural and livestock industry for most of his life.

Ed is preceded in death by both of his parents, four sisters, and one grandson.

He is survived by sons, Randy, Michael, Brett and Mark; four daughters, Dorene, Kristn, Celia, Susan; and one brother, Donny. Also survived by 19 grandchildren and 25 great-grandchildren.

There will be a celebration of life on Friday, March 3, at 10:30 a.m. at the Columbia Mortuary in Columbia Falls.

Interment with military honors will be at 2 p.m. at Bethel Cemetery on North Somers Road.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests a donation in his name be made to the Kalispell FFA Jesse O Blasdel scholarship fund. Address: Kalispell FFA ATTN: Blasdel Scholarship, 644 4th Ave W, Kalispell Montana 59901

The Family wishes to extend their heartfelt gratitude to the doctors, nurses, and support staff at the Montana Veterans Home for care during the last six years of his life.