

Janice Kay “Jan” Delaney

Born: July 8, 1940 – Died: October 16, 2015

Janice Kay “Jan” Delaney was born July 8th, 1941 at Flora, Illinois. She was the eldest of four children born to Robert Francis Delaney and Helen Gladys Boze. Jan received her education at Flora, where she graduated from high school in 1959. She continued her schooling at the McKendree College in Lebanon, Illinois before transferring to the George Peabody Teacher’s College in Nashville, Tennessee. After earning her degree, Jan taught high school English for two years in Louisville, Illinois. She then moved to North Dakota to work in the library at Dickinson State College for two more years.



In 1970 Jan came to Montana where she taught school at Plains, Cut Bank, Inverness, the Gildford Colony, and the Sage Creek Colony. She “fell in love with the Hi-Line” and made her home in Rudyard during the next 30 years. During the summer months or when she wasn’t teaching, Jan stayed busy delivering newspapers, selling books, running a hobby greenhouse, doing contract cleaning, and managing a local restaurant. She loved genealogy & history, so she became very active in researching local historical events. Jan & her Rudyard friend, Lydia Langel, who were like daughter & mother, travelled up-&-down the Hi-Line to document these interesting stories. Together, they identified all of the burials at the Rudyard Cemetery and solicited donations to provide headstones for all of the “unmarked” graves. Jan was also instrumental in acquiring the old Railroad Depot in Rudyard and soliciting funds to have it relocated & remodeled to house the site of the present Rudyard Museum. She spent countless hours on this project with other Rudyard friends to make this the wonderful facility it is today!

In 2000 Jan moved to Teller, Alaska to work as a teacher in the Bering Strait School District. During her 14 years there, Jan continued to travel to Montana in the summers to renew old friendships. She enjoyed spending time at her home in Rudyard and at her little “getaway” trailer in Plains. Jan kept up on local events through e-mails, phone calls, & news publications. In addition she wrote a weekly article for the Liberty County Times (Chester, MT) and the Clay County Republic (Flora, IL) newspapers; this article was called “North from Alaska” where Jan shared interesting tidbits about her new life & friends in the north country.

During her time in Alaska, Jan developed a close relationship with a fellow-teacher, Pamela Haugan and her family, who hailed from Watford City, N.D. When Jan completed her Alaskan teaching contract in 2014, she accepted a teaching position at Parshall, N.D. (which is near Watford City). While there she continued to write an article called “Around the Edges” for the Liberty County Times, which kept her Hi-Line friends informed about the Bakken oil boom in western North Dakota. Because Jan developed recurring health issues secondary to her breast cancer, she finished her final school year at Parshall this spring.

Over the years Jan made several memorable trips to Rudyard, England to research & meet the ancestors of the families who settled in Rudyard, Mt. This past June she was fortunate to take one last trip to England for a special celebration and to say farewell to the many friends she befriended over the years.

Jan returned to her home in Rudyard with her friend, Pamela, who assisted with her medical needs and helped plan her final details. Jan died peacefully, knowing she lead a full & active life, at her home on Friday evening (October 16th, 2015). She was 74 years old.

Jan was baptized in 1957 at the Charley Brown Memorial Park in Flora, Illinois. She maintained a private & quiet spirituality throughout her life.

Jan's love of people, genealogy, history, writing, and travelling was well-known. She enjoyed attending TOPS meetings & coffee klatches with her many Hi-Line friends. She was also an avid reader who was always eager to learn. She loved to travel "the country back roads" to experience new sceneries & adventures. She was a selfless woman who felt blessed during her lifetime, so she believed & practiced in the concept of "paying forward". She will be missed...

Jan was preceded in death by her parents, a brother (Robert Delaney), and a half-brother (Gene Vaughan).

She is survived by a sister, Lora Jane Delaney of Clay City, IL; a brother, Don Delaney of Flora, IL; a half-sister, Ella Cook of Herrin, IL; and several nieces & nephews.

Jan was cremated per her wishes with arrangements by Rockman Funeral Chapel in Chester.

A graveside memorial service was held at 2:00 p.m. Monday (Oct. 19th) at the Rudyard Cemetery. Personal remembrances were shared by Pamela Haugan, Calvin Haugan, Roger Bak, Jason Stahl, and other friends. Musical tributes provided by Pamela included "How Great Thou Art" & "I Know Who Holds Tomorrow". A coffee hour provided by Hi-Line friends & the Gildford Colony followed at the Rudyard Senior Center.

Per Jan's request, a portion of her ashes were buried in Rudyard on the grave of her friend, Lydia Langel. The remainder of her ashes will be buried in the Delaney family plot at Clay City, IL.

Marcella C. Koenig Gagnon Hull

Born: Unknown – Died: December 22, 2015

Marcella C. (Koenig) Gagnon Hull, 91, a Chester farm wife who loved reading, cooking, gardening, playing cards, dancing, singing and playing the violin and piano, died at the Chester nursing home on Dec. 22, 2015.

Rosary prayers will be 7 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 3, at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Chester. A coffee hour will follow.

Funeral Mass will be 11 a.m. Thursday, Dec. 31, at St. Mary's. Following burial at Chester Cemetery, a reception will be held at the church. Arrangements are by Rockman Funeral Chapel in Chester.

Marcella was preceded in death by two husbands, Francis Gagnon and James Hull; her parents, Albert and Mary Koenig; and two sisters, Mary Whooley and Eleanor Ries.

She is survived by her son, Lee Gagnon of Chester; one sister, Irene Belusko of Portland, Oregon; and many nieces and nephews.



Robert Earl "Bob" Rathbun

Born: October 8, 1926 – Died: December 20, 2015

Robert Earl "Bob" Rathbun was born Oct. 8, 1926, at Great Falls, Montana.

He was the only son of three children born to Earl Rathbun and Eleanor Alex. Bob grew up and received his education in Hingham, where he graduated from high school in 1944. He was active in sports during his school years and was an exceptional basketball player for the Hingham Rangers.

Bob was inducted into the U. S. Army in 1945. Due to demobilization as World War II ended, Bob received an early release from the military. After receiving his honorable discharge, he returned to Montana.

He married Doris Stuart on Oct. 8, 1947. They lived and farmed in the Hingham community and raised a family of two, son, William; and daughter, Beverly. The couple was married 32 years when Doris passed away on Sept. 10, 1979.

Bob wed a Hi-Line area friend, Barbara Zabaleta Sande, in 1980. This union brought two step-children into Bob's life. The couple made their home in Gildford, and Bob continued to farm at Hingham. They were married 29 years when Barb died on Jan. 7, 2010.

Bob's health remained good and he continued to live independently in the years that followed. On Sunday afternoon, Dec. 20, 2015, his daughter and son-in-law stopped in Gildford to visit with him. Bob had died peacefully in his sleep during the night in the comfort of his home. He was 89 years old.

Bob was a life member of the Hingham Lutheran Church, where he received his early confirmation and served on the church council for many years. He enjoyed membership in the Chester American Legion Post 88 for 34 years and the Havre Elks Lodge for 62 years. In addition Bob served as a past member and chairman of the Hingham school board. He also volunteered as a Little League baseball coach for many years with his good friend, Bob Petrick.

The Rathbuns made many memorable trips throughout the years. Bob and Doris traveled to Hawaii, Mazatlan, Mexico, New Orleans, St. Louis and other places. Bob and Barb traveled to Alaska, Spain and Africa.

In 1967, Bob attended the World Series when Boston played St. Louis. He attended Super Bowl XIII in Florida when the Dallas Cowboys played the Pittsburgh Steelers. Bob was a lifelong fan of the New York Yankees. His enthusiasm and love for Yankee baseball passed down to his children and grandchildren. In 1963 the Rathbun family took a memorable trip to Minneapolis, where they watched several baseball legends play in a three-game series featuring the Yankees and the Twins.



Bob enjoyed personal encounters with several celebrities in a few of his travels - he had lunch with Joe Garagiola at Stan Musial's Restaurant in St. Louis, and he played golf with Joe DiMaggio in California.

Bob enjoyed many nicknames during his life. In high school he was called Bones. As an adult he acquired the name Rackets. In later years he was simply and affectionately known as Gramps.

Bob was first and foremost a Montana farmer, which he attributed to his good life. He loved to operate his 1150 Versatile tractor, which he considered his baby. He was easily identified by his signature teal-colored Chevy pickup truck with personalized plates reading "Racket." For years this old truck made the daily "Trapline" - a trip from Gildford to Fraser's Conoco in Inverness, then to Columbia Grain and/or Tire-rama in Rudyard, then to Hi-Line Fertilizer and/or the Hi-Way Bar in Hingham, and then back to Gildford - a familiar circuit where Bob would stop in to visit friends, share news and stories, play cards or enjoy a beer. (Of interest is the fact that this old pickup is presently owned by his grandson, Zach.)

Bob had many hobbies over the years, including bowling, golfing. He was an excellent bowler who enjoyed both league and tournament competition; his best bowling score was a 279 (he threw nine strikes in a row before blowing the 10th frame). His hunting adventures involved mostly birds, deer and elk, and many fun trips into the Bob Marshall Wilderness Area. When it came to reading, he enjoyed most anything (especially historicals) and he read the daily Tribune cover-to-cover. Playing cribbage was his passion, and he was an extremely lucky poker player.

Bob's favorite television included the news, grain reports, sporting events (mainly, baseball), and last but not least, he enjoyed watching "Dr. Phil." Bob also enjoyed politics and was a staunch Democrat throughout his life. Probably his greatest love was watching his grandchildren in school and athletic events. Bob was proud of each of them and loved being part of their lives. He had a fantastic memory for people and events, and he loved to share old stories from the past. When telling these stories, they were always the same each time without any embellishment. Bob had a great sense of humor with a unique laugh.

He was proud to be an independent man and deservedly earned everything he got. He was known as a man of his word and his handshake was his contract. Bob was always well-groomed and presentable and will be remembered for his trademark suspenders, his red or blue hankies sticking out of his back pockets and his caps (which were always "cocked to one side.") Bob made friends easily. He was saddened many times over the past 10 years when many of his lifelong buddies passed before him. He's now catching up with them to share a good story or conjure up a game of cribbage.

Bob was preceded in death not only by his parents and wives, but also by two sisters, Irene Rathbun in infancy and Carole "Kay" Anderson; and a grandson, Jason Groseclose. Survivors include his son, Bill and Mariah Rathbun of Hingham; his daughter, Bev and Ron Groseclose of Hingham; five grandchildren, Brandee/Brian, William/Munee, Larra, Zach/Natalie and Jeff/Hillary; seven great-grandchildren, Victoria, Alicia, Declan, Allison, Joey, Jace and Tanner; two stepchildren, Frank/Katie Zabaleta of Redlands, California, and Kitty Zabaleta of Long Beach, California; three stepgrandchildren, Allyson, Lauren and Katelyn; his sister-in-law, Irene "Shorty" Stuart of Gildford; numerous nephews and nieces; and his two loyal pet dogs, Rosie and Lillie, who have now made a new home with Bill and Mariah.

A memorial service will be 11 a.m. Wednesday, Dec. 30, at the Hingham Lutheran Church with a reception to follow at Spencer's Hi-Way Bar & Grill in Hingham. Bob's ashes will be buried privately on Thursday at Highland Cemetery in Havre. Arrangements are being handled by Rockman Funeral Chapel, Chester.

Memorials may be given to Havre's Neighbor in Need program or donor's choice.

Bernadette Christine Rockman

Born: December 22, 1952 – Died: November 17, 2015

Bernadette Christine Rockman, affectionately known as “Bernie”, was born December 22nd, 1952 in Superior, Montana. Her parents, Cecelia Joanne Dolezal and Harry Daniel Rockman, were both Chester natives and spent their early married years in the Hi-Line community. Bernie was the youngest of four children.

Bernie received her elementary education at Superior. She finished her formal education at Billings Central High School and Thompson Falls High School, where she graduated in 1971. Bernie overcame a lot of adversity in her young life when she was diagnosed and battled brain cancer at age 12. After years of doctoring in Seattle, she moved from western Montana to be near family in Billings. Bernie worked various jobs in the Billings community before being employed by the J.T.L. Company. She enjoyed those 20+ precious years at J.T.L. where she was very thankful to the Joel & Andrea Long family and her friends & co-workers for their ongoing support.



Bernie spent the last 15 years with her partner, Tom Love, with whom she had a special bond. They enjoyed fishing, camping, boating, and antiquing. In addition, they travelled to many Montana shooting ranges where Tom competed as an accomplished marksman – and Bernie was his biggest fan! They also enjoyed trips to Las Vegas where Bernie was delighted to celebrate her retirement party! Tom’s care for Bernie was remarkable and her family will forever appreciate the love & help Tom gave to her over the years.

Bernie enjoyed many personal hobbies. She loved music and had a large collection of record albums. Her favorite musical artists were “The Beatles” & “The Rolling Stones” (a highlight of her life was a trip to Seattle where she attended a live “Stones” concert). Bernie liked to read, especially the daily news. She maintained a large collection of family photos & albums; she joyfully shared these albums at family gatherings and loved reminiscing about the “good old times”. In addition, Bernie was a lifetime animal lover – especially her pet dogs. One of her greatest pleasures was shopping! She loved clothes, was an impeccable dresser, and always took pride in her general appearance.

Due to declining health, Bernie spent her final 18 months at the Canyon Creek Care Center in Billings. She loved this nursing facility, including her fellow-residents and care-givers. Bernie passed away peacefully there, surrounded by her loving family, in the early morning of November 17th, 2015. She was 62 years old. The Rockman family offers special thanks to her wonderful friends & staff at Canyon Creek for their compassion & loving care.

Bernie was a devout Catholic who loved the Lord and was a longtime member of St. Patrick’s Parish in Billings. In addition she was a hard, conscientious worker who always made the best of her life. Last, but not least, Bernie was a very thoughtful, selfless, & fun-loving woman who will always be remembered for her wit and beautiful smile.

She is survived by her 3 siblings, Jeannette Janicke of Trego, MT, Claudette Klein of Chehalis, WA, and Gene Rockman (and wife, Sheila) of Billings; her uncle, George Rockman of Port Orchard, WA; and many nieces, nephews; & cousins. Bernie was preceded in death by her father in 1979 and her mother in 1996.

Memorials have been offered to Rocky Mountain Hospice and Canyon Creek Care Center, both of Billings.

It was Bernie's wishes to be cremated and buried with her parents in Chester. A memorial mass is scheduled for 11:00 a.m. Wednesday (October 12th, 2016) at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Chester. Following committal prayers & burial of her urn at the Chester Cemetery, a reception will be held at St. Mary's Church.

The Mass will be celebrated by Father Herbert Magaso. Mass music will be provided by Marie Woods (pianist) and Marcus Jochim (cantor). Arrangements are being handled by Rockman Funeral Chapel, Chester.

Coral Fern Aaberg Rude Fyall

Born: October 7, 1926 – Died: December 20, 2015

Coral Fern Aaberg Rude Fyall, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, “went to her eternal heavenly home” on Sunday, Dec. 20, 2015, at the Brendan House, surrounded by family and friends.

Coral was born Oct. 7, 1926, in Devils Lake, North Dakota, to Carl and Florence (Hassett) Aaberg.

She graduated from Devils Lake High School in 1944. While in high school she excelled in speech and drama, as well as competed in and won dance competitions with her brother Amos. She was a cheerleader and on a winning state woman’s basketball team. After graduation from high school she attended North Dakota State University, then transferred to Valley City Teachers College, in Valley City, North Dakota. After graduation she taught school in a rural North Dakota two-room school house for four years. She often told stories of being snow-bound in the school teacherage below the school for days.



In 1948 Coral took a summer job in Chester, Montana, working for her brother Larry. While living in Chester that summer, she met the love of her life, Elmer Rude. The two were married on June 18, 1949. They were active members of Our Savior’s Lutheran Church. Together they owned and operated Rude Sheet Metal. Coral was known to love a good game of pinochle, loved to dance, golf, travel and bowl. She once bowled a 300 game, receiving a trophy to prove it. Coral was a Cub Scout den mother for a number of years.

To this marriage was born Neoma (Phil) Anderson of Kalispell, Craig (Wanda) Rude of Great Falls, and Renae Solum of Kalispell.

After Elmer passed away in 1970, Coral continued to run Rude Sheet Metal until 1974 when she moved to Conrad. While there, she worked at Berg’s Greenhouse as a gardener and floral designer. In 1981 she married David Fyall of Seattle. They lived in Seattle, then Coeur d’Alene, Idaho, finally settling in Kalispell to be near family. Dave passed away in 1999. When the new Walmart opened in Kalispell, Coral went to work there. She loved her retirement job immensely and the friends she made there. She attended Christian Center Church and Bible Study Fellowship.

Coral is survived by her three children, six grandchildren, Erik and Corala Anderson, Kate and Matt Wilhelm, Kari and Dan Robertson, Ryan and Amy and Sonya Solum; four great-grandchildren, Stella Audrey Gordon, Tylee Rose Wilhelm, Arick Thorvald Anderson and Boone Kenneth Solum; her sister, Annabelle Fransen; brother-in-law Al Ploss; and numerous nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by husbands, Elmer Rude and David Fyall; infant daughter, Florence Annie Rude; parents, Carl and Florence Aaberg; son-in-law, Kenneth Solum; brothers, Larry and Amos; and sisters, Dorothy and Caroline.

Memorial services will be held at 4:30 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 24, at Hope Church, 436 Birch Grove Road in Kalispell; and in Chester at 11 a.m. on Saturday, May 28.

Stanley Duane “Pudge” Thisselle

Born: December 20, 1935 – Died: December 1, 2015

Stanley Duane Thisselle was born December 20, 1935 to Earl Thisselle and Stella Ward Thisselle. His Grandpa Ward nicknamed him Pudge. Pudge passed away from cancer December 1, 2015.

Pudge married Alice Broadhurst in 1952. When they moved to the family farm south of Chester they raised five children, cattle, horses, grain, alfalfa, and gardens. For a few years Pudge worked for his uncle Walt Lass in road construction.

Pudge was also a photographer, genealogist, collector, computer expert and organic gardener.

He was preceded in death by his parents, his brother, Buzz, two sons, Loren and Doug, and grandson Eric Keith.

Pudge is survived by daughters Kristi Thisselle, Lynnette (Bruce) Anderson, sons Wayne (Lita) Thisselle and Jon Thisselle, and sister Bev (Bob) Pugsley. He is also survived by nine grandchildren, thirteen great grandchildren, two great-great grandchildren and many cousins, nieces and nephews.

A celebration of life will be held at the Liberty County Senior Center in Chester, Montana, April 16, 2016 at 2:00 pm.

