

Obituaries

Francis Albert O'Shea, 71

Francis Albert O'Shea was born to Albert and Lillian O'Shea on June 28, 1931 in St. Louis, Missouri. He passed away on Jan. 20, 2003 at his home near Bonners Ferry, Idaho after a brief battle with cancer.

Known since childhood as Sonny to his family and many friends, he reached the age of 71 years.

Sonny moved with his family as a small boy to San Ramon, Calif. where he grew up on the Bishop Ranch, a large commercial farm where his father was employed. Sonny also worked in the ranch's huge pear and walnut orchards as a young man.

After serving in the Army, he married Joanne Robles on Dec. 12, 1950. Two sons were born to their home and they enjoyed the blessings of 24 years of wedded life until Joanne passed away on Oct. 12, 1974 after a long, debilitating illness.

In 1964, Sonny became a fireman for the San Ramon Fire District. He pursued his new profession with unstinting dedication and was always an example of excellence to the others in the department, especially the younger men joining the ranks—including his son Jim. He is remembered by his family as being hard-working, conscientious, and unselfishly helping his wife and family.

Now a Captain for the San Ramon Fire District, Sonny met his second wife, Elizabeth

(Betty) Saunders, at her mother's funeral in May of 1975. Betty, recently widowed, had returned to the San Ramon area from her home near Bonners Ferry, Idaho, to visit family shortly before her mother's death.

Sonny and Betty were married in Livermore, Calif., on July 12, 1975. They made their first home together in San Ramon but Sonny had been very impressed with Idaho when he had moved his new wife's belongings back to California.

In the summer of 1976, they returned to Idaho to visit Betty's oldest daughter, and her family. During this visit they happened on a small farm for sale southwest of Bonners Ferry that appealed to them.

They returned to Idaho and their new farm in the Moravia area within weeks. Along with his many farming activities, he was also active in his community. Sonny worked hard over the years with his neighbors to establish the Naples Volunteer Fire Department and served as one of its board members for many years.

After retiring from full-time farming in 1996, he kept busy taking care of a few cows and calves until he became too ill in May of 2002. Sonny and Betty enjoyed the blessings of twenty-seven and a half years of wedded life together.

Sonny faced his illness with the same courage and quiet strength that made him such a remarkable man all his life. He

was always ready to help others wherever he was needed.

He was especially fond of children and endeared himself to all ages with his kindness, good humor and love—from his own children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews, to those of his friends and neighbors. He was their hero, whether as Dad or Grampa Sonny or the Sonny Farmer much admired by the neighbors' twin grandsons. He taught by example and was the kind of a man they could look up to, even if they were taller than he was.

Those left to cherish fond memories are his wife, Betty; three sons, Bud Saunders, Byron, Calif.; Joe O'Shea, Benicia, Calif.; and Jim and Nancy O'Shea, Martinez, Calif.; two daughters, Sandra Ashworth, Bonners Ferry, Idaho; and Claudia and Tom Peterson, Bend, Oregon; 14 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren; and 4 brothers.

Funeral services were held at the Woodland Mennonite Church, Bonners Ferry, Idaho, on January 25, 2003, at 11 a.m., with burial at the Moravia Cemetery—within sight of Sonny's farm and home.

The family suggests memorials be sent to the Bonner Community Hospice Frances Lederhos Volunteers P.O. Box 1448, Sandpoint, Idaho 83864 or the Fry Foundation, HCR 61 Box 61A, Bonners Ferry, Idaho 83805.