



Obituary

Born: Thursday, June 12, 1919

Died: Sunday, July 8, 2012

Andy Echanis, a long time Pendleton resident and businessman, known for decades as Andy "Blitz" throughout Umatilla and Morrow counties, died early Sunday evening, July 8. He was 93 years old.

Born Andres Jose Echanis, June 12th, 1919 at a Basque boarding house on Grove Street in Boise, Idaho. He was the eldest of five children of Ignacio "Jack" Echanis and Maria Pagoaga, both Basque immigrants from Spain. He grew up in Ontario, Oregon in his family-owned boarding house for Basque sheep herders. All through his school years he excelled in sports; football, basketball, and baseball. Also, as a teenager and a young man he worked as a camp tender in his family sheep business in the Steens mountains area of southeast Oregon. It is estimated that he has his named carved on close to 500 trees on the mountain dating back to the 1930's which are now part of a historical landmark in that area. He had provided a good deal of oral history for the Boise Basque Museum on his subject, as well as his experience in meeting new Basque immigrants to the Ontario Area at the train station and orienting them to the town as he spoke fluent Basque.

Andy graduated from Ontario High School in 1939 and attended Oregon State University on a baseball scholarship until he joined the United States Marine Corps in 1942. He was promoted to the rank of master Tech Sergeant. He was also designated as a rifle marksman and air crafter armory specialist. He served in the Marshall Island Operations specifically on Midway Island and Guam in the south Pacific during World War II.

After his discharge in 1945, he returned to Ontario and worked various jobs, mostly related to the beverage industry. Eventually, he became the district sales representative for Lucky Lager beer in Yakima,

Service Summary

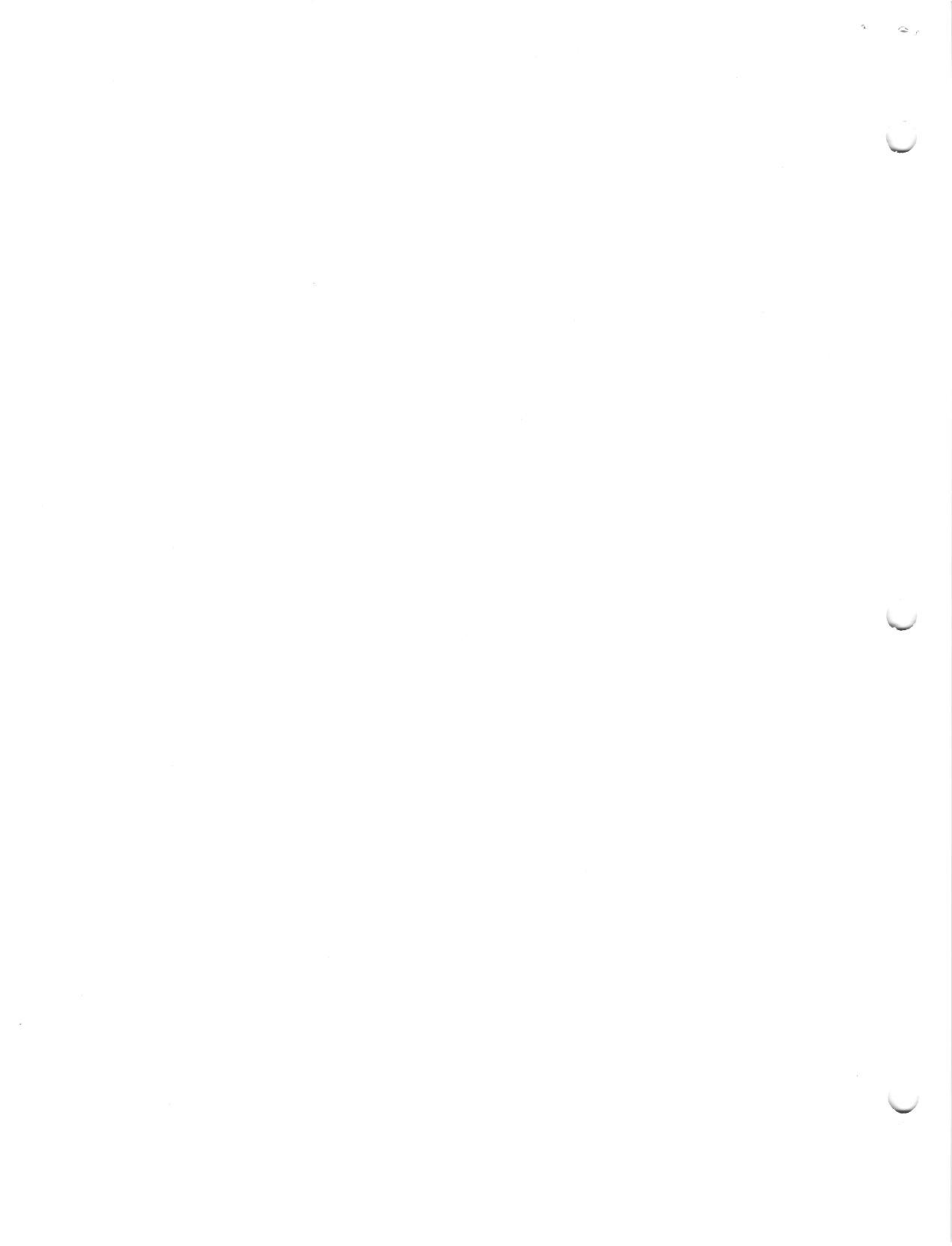
Celebration of Life

1:00 PM Sat Jul 14, 2012

Pendleton Elks Lodge

PO Box 236

Pendleton, OR 97801



Washington. In January 1953, he married Lucy McKnight and his son and daughter were born in Yakima.

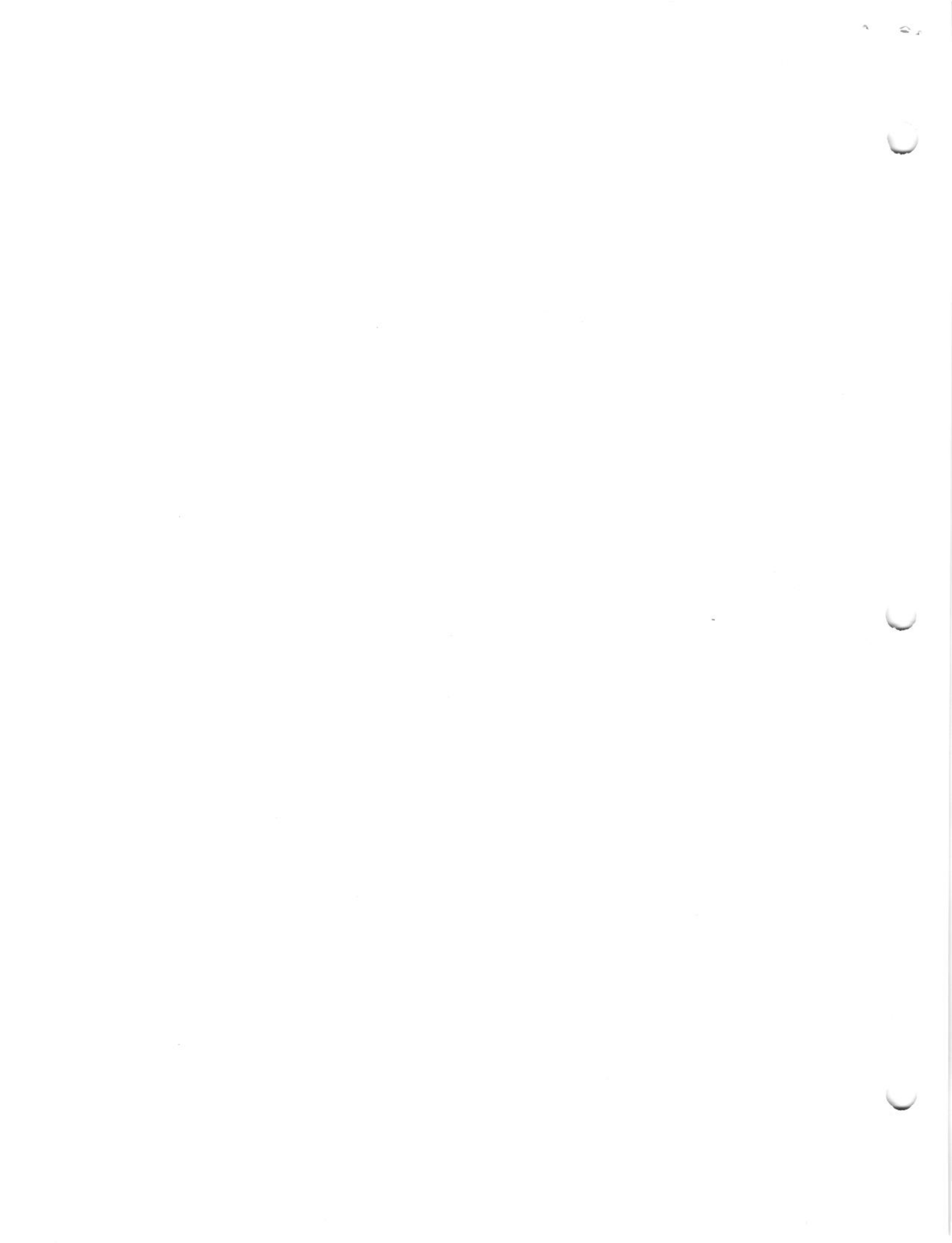
In 1956, he moved to Pendleton after purchasing Umatilla Distributing, a beer and wine sales company. The business grew and prospered over the next 28 years until its sale in 1984. He became known as Andy "Blitz" because Blitz-Weinhard was one of the name brand beers that he sold which he made very popular in this area.

Besides being known for his capacity for hard work, he had a great love for hunting, fishing, and the outdoors. Andy also enjoyed cooking specialty Basque dishes learned in his early sheep camp days. He specialized in Dutch oven campfire bread and worked on many of the large lamb barbecues put on by Mario's Basque Barbecue in this area. After his retirement from the beer business, he worked well into his 80's at the Rainbow Cafe on Main Street in Pendleton arriving sometimes as early as 4:30 am to oversee its opening at 6 am of the bar and restaurant as a relief manager for his long term friend, Don Webb.

In June 1975, he married Thelma Purcell of Pendleton, they were married for 37 years.

Andy is preceded in death by his parents and one brother. Cam Echanis. Besides his wife, Thelma, he is survived by a daughter Paula Rosenberg, Pendleton, and a son Carols Echanis, East Hampton, New York. Also, a step son and daughter, Bruce Purcell and Kim Hinkle, both of Pendleton. Seven grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. Two younger brothers, John and Frank Echanis and a sister, Josephine Keim, all of Ontario, survive as well.

In lieu of a funeral service a celebration of life will be held at the Pendleton Elks Lodge on Saturday, July 14 2012 at 1 pm. Donations in Andy's name may be made to the local Humane Society or to the Ontario



Basque
Museum.

