

# Opal Mae Rhinhart

Pendleton

August 28, 1919-March 20, 2014

Opal passed away at St. Mary's Hospital in Walla Walla, Washington, on March 20, 2014, at the age of 94. Opal was born to JW Jack Sparks and Mae Mary Sterr in the old farmhouse that still stands on Birch Creek south of Pendleton at Sparks Station. She started elementary school at the George Canyon school. Opal's mother died in 1926 due to a TB outbreak and at the age of 14 her father sent her to live with



Rhinhart

an aunt in Ridgefield, Washington. She did very well under her aunt's care to become a proper thriving young lady.

Opal went on to graduate from Northwestern Business College in Portland. It is there at a USO dance she met and fell in love with a handsome soldier from Arkansas stationed at Fort Adair. Opal married Sgt. Wayne Bridges in 1944 shortly before he shipped out for the war in Europe. Their short time together resulted in a child. Wayne was severely injured in the Battle of the Bulge and he would not fully recover. After several years of dealing with Wayne's serious injuries in Arkansas, Wayne and Opal with heavy hearts and deep regrets decided to divorce. Opal returned to Oregon to live with her brother Robert and his family. Then at the age of just 26 due to her past exposure to the TB and symptoms, she was quarantined at a sanatorium in The Dalles, Oregon, for over a year while Wayne stayed with friends and family.

Opal returned to Pendleton and in 1949 she met and married Virgil Rhinhart. They farmed in the Pilot Rock area and had rentals in Pendleton. Marriage brought

three children, Shirley, Janet and Gary. Their family included two stepchildren, Lloyd and Rosemary. They divorced in 1956.

She worked for Brandels furniture and St. Anthony Hospital. Opal also continued to own and manage rental apartments until the age of 90 when she was told by her doctor that she could no longer get on the roof.

Opal moved to McKay Creek Estates in Pendleton

where she had many friends. Opal was very proud of her pioneer heritage in Pendleton and Umatilla County. Anybody traveling 395 regularly between Pendleton and Pilot Rock probably remembers her driving her white Datsun pickup. She was on the way every day to check on the farm (Sparks Place) along Birch Creek. If you were lucky enough to be stuck behind her (slow) you wondered if there was anyone actually driving because of her small stature. Watching all the wildlife and the grain growing on the farm was a joy for her.

Opal was preceded in death by her parents, brothers Robert, Wesley and Eugene, her infant daughter Janet, and daughter-in-law Carol Bridges. She is survived by sons Wayne Bridges Jr. and Gary (Cheri) Rhinhart, daughter Shirley Mae Lindsey, grandchildren Kerri Baltzor, Dustin Lindsoy and Casey Rhinhart, and five great-children.

Burns Mortuary in Pendleton is handling arrangements. Graveside service is Wednesday, March 26 at 2 p.m. at Olney Cemetery. Condolences can also be sent in care of Burns Mortuary.

# DANCE. THE LOCAL... sprained ankle, a case of

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a pulsing heart door knocker and glowing red windows. Sophomore Morgan Lockwood drew startled stares when she appeared on stilts wearing a spider costume, complete with eight legs and glowing eyes. Two smaller motorized spiders raced onto the floor and toward the crowd, drawing gasps. Head coach Debbie Kishpaugh got the idea for the ghostly, high-energy routine while watching the trailer for "The Haunting."

After Saturday's competition ended, the teams huddled together on the dance floor, the same room where the Portland Winterhawks play hockey. Pendleton dancers accepted the announcement of their fourth-place finish with conflicting emotions. Their string of championships had snapped, but they took solace in placing in the trickier Show division where the new teams rarely distinguish themselves.

Still, the dancers felt disappointment that their full-out focus and months of preparation hadn't culminated in another dominating season.

Instead, this year, top honors went to Parkrose.

Pendleton dancers had steeled themselves after Kishpaugh gathered them after Friday's performance to



Madison Cates performs v the OSAA state dance conrial Coliseum in Portland.

reveal that the team was sitting in fifth place going into Saturday's finals. They likely couldn't finish higher than third, even if the routine was performed perfectly.

## MUDSLIDE: About 30

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holding out hope. But he noted: "We have not found anyone alive on this pile since Saturday."

Snohomish County sheriff's spokeswoman Shari Iretton said Monday afternoon search and rescue crews discovered an additional six bodies, bringing the number fatalities to at least 14.

About 30 houses were

"They are all eager to get down here, but unfortunately they can't. It just shows how tight this community is," he said.

Doug Reuwsaat, who grew up in the area and was also helping in the search, said authorities had told people to stay away.

"We're related to a lot of these people from around here. So that's why we're here," he said.