

# Obituaries

## Helen Grace Morehouse Howk

Aug. 16, 1918 - May 3, 2013

Helen Grace Morehouse Howk, daughter of John Ephraim and Mary Ellen Pigg Morehouse, was born Aug. 16, 1918, at the family home in Davenport, Neb. She died at the Dundy County Hospital, Benkelman, Neb., on May 3, 2013, at the age of 94 years, 8 months, and 17 days.

Just before Helen was two years old, the family moved from Davenport, Neb., back to the family farm in Cheyenne County, Kan., where her parents had homesteaded when they were newly married.

Helen grew up on this farm and attended the White Lilly School that some years was taught by her older brother, Albert, or sister, Gladys. Helen graduated from St. Francis High School, St. Francis, Kan., in 1935 and over the years enjoyed many reunions with classmates at the annual alumni banquet. In 2010 she and her classmates celebrated the 75th anniversary of their high school graduation.

In the summer of 1936, Helen began working with her brother, Dr. G. Albert Morehouse, in his office in Benkelman. In 1937 she entered nursing school at Children's Hospital in Denver, Colo., graduating in 1940.

Upon graduation and receiving her license as a registered nurse, Helen returned to Benkelman and worked with her brother at the Morehouse Hospital. Helen maintained that nursing license until just a few years before her death. She took continuing education courses until she was well into her 70s and after she received her first computer as a birthday gift for her 80th birthday, continued to educate herself online.

Helen was truly one of the pioneers of nursing in Dundy County, Neb., working alongside her sister, Bernice, to establish a superior level of nursing care way ahead of its time. During her final illness, Helen was the recipient of that high quality of nursing care still being practiced in the hospital where she worked so many long hours and that she loved so much.

Helen was a nurse practitioner before that role even existed. She maintained an office in Bird City for many years with her brother visiting once a week.

She was a first responder before that duty had a name, often going to the site of an accident and treating the victims on the spot before transporting them to the hospital where she often stayed to provide special duty care. Sometimes that transport meant flying with Ernie Bressler in his crop dusting plane to hospitals in Denver.

Even after the office had long been closed, Helen continued to give allergy shots and provide blood pressure checks, answer questions, and offer advice. She demonstrated beyond a shadow of a doubt that nursing is a calling and "once a nurse, always a nurse."

While working at the hospital in the spring of 1943, Helen noticed a handsome young man visiting one of the patients. When he left, she asked the patient, Ilone Byers, who that young man was. Ilone told her it was her nephew, Merle Howk, from Bird City.

The next evening Merle came to visit again, but this time Helen's brother, Albert, asked her to give Merle a sinus treatment. After the sinus treatment, Merle invited Helen to go across the street with him to the Hamilton Drug Store for one of Snap's (Howard Hamilton, owner) famous chocolate malted milks.

Helen and Merle were married on Dec. 6, 1943. That union lasted almost 36 years until the time of Merle's death in 1979. Helen and Merle made their home in Merle's family home in Bird City

and Helen was still living independently in that home until the time of her death.

Early in their marriage, Helen and Merle helped to care for Merle's mother, who had Multiple Sclerosis, and during those early years, they also experienced the loss of their infant son who was born prematurely and died at birth. Helen was gravely ill because of complications in the late stages of her pregnancy and was told she should not attempt to have any more children.

In the summer of 1947, Helen was thrilled to receive a phone call on a Sunday afternoon telling her that a baby girl had been born in Denver and that she and Merle could adopt her if they wished.

Helen embraced motherhood and was involved in all the many community and school activities that keep the children of a community learning and growing. Helen was a 4-H leader for many years and sewed many dance costumes, cheerleading uniforms, etc., not to mention listening to the practice of countless recital pieces over the years. There were also many trips to Goodland for swimming lessons long before Bird City, or even St. Francis, had a swimming pool.

Helen took swimming lessons, too, as she had never learned to swim. She was a good student and overcame her long-held fear of the water.

If Helen embraced motherhood, she reveled in being a grandmother. Her only grandchild, Elizabeth Ann Hoffman, was born in 1976 and Helen could hardly wait for Beth to arrive each summer to spend an extended time with her during Beth's preschool years. They would go to the swimming pool daily and during the Thresher Show they would be at the show grounds from the first whistle in the morning until the end of the last activity every day.

Following Merle's death in 1979, Helen took over managing the family farming operation which she continued to do until about two years before her death when she began slowly releasing the reins to her daughter, Merla.

Helen loved the land and was proud to be a farmer. She learned about different varieties of wheat and which ones might be best to plant in certain years. She was almost the only woman who waited in line at the Farm Service Agency office to sign up for government programs, etc. and she has been known to be waiting at the junction of US 36 and K-27 to find and hire a custom cutting crew as they arrived from the south. As with all Kansas wheat farmers, when her wheat was ready to cut, she wanted a crew in the field and ready to go.

Family was the highest priority in Helen's life and she would drop everything to go to one of her sisters or her daughter and her family when there was a need, particularly a need for nursing care. She spent months at a time in Arizona with her sister, Bernice, when her health was failing, and months in Colorado when her son-in-law, Mike, was gravely ill and not expected to live. She made daily trips to the nursing home in St. Francis for several years to feed her sister, Gladys, lunch and was deeply saddened when advancing age made that daily visit too much for her to manage.

Helen's faith was the lynchpin that held her life together. When she was growing up, she attend the Church of Christ with her family and the South Fork Community Church where the folks who lived in that part of the county all attended services.

After her marriage, she attended the Immanuel United Methodist Church, the church Merle had grown up attending. Hearing loss

and increasing arthritic pain limited her church attendance in the last few years, but she continued her spiritual journey at home with daily Bible readings and listening to sermons on television. When the call came that her time had come, she was ready. Surrounded by many who loved her, when the moment arrived, she let go and let God, teaching us one last lesson in grace, courage and love.

Helen was preceded in death by her husband, Merle R. Howk; her parents, John E. and Mary E. Morehouse; siblings, Dr. G. Albert Morehouse, Blanche McDowell, Bernice Baker, and Dolores Klotz; son-in-law, J. Michael Hoffman; her mother-in-law and father-in-law, Lena and Clarence Howk; four brothers-in-law, and a sister-in-law.

Helen is survived by her daughter, Merla R. Hoffman; granddaughter, Elizabeth Ann Hoffman; sister, Gladys Neilan (deceased as of May 9, 2013); and a host of family and friends who loved and supported Helen throughout her life.

A celebration of life will be held in Helen's honor at 11 a.m. at the Immanuel United Methodist Church in Bird City, on June 29, 2013, Pastor Tom Bailey officiating. Helen has chosen to be cremated and her remains will be interred in the Bird City Cemetery.

Memorials may be made in Helen's honor to the Dundy County Hospital, Benkelman, Neb., the Immanuel United Methodist Church, Bird City, Kan., or the charity of the giver's choosing.

## Milton Dale Murray

Jan. 4, 1933 - May 24, 2013

Milton Dale Murray, 80, died on May 24, 2013, at the Cheyenne County Hospital in St. Francis, Kan. He was born on Jan. 4, 1933, at the home of his parents, Ralph and Ruby Murray in Bird City, Kan.

Milton attended school in Bird City and South Star Country School and then high school in Goodland, graduating in 1951.

He married Twila Mae Kinderknecht on July 27, 1952. To this union, four boys were born: Ricky Dale, Roger Allen, Rex Lynn and Ronald Lee. Milton and Twila celebrated 60 years of marriage this past July with a reception and family barbecue.

Milton lived in Cheyenne County until 1955 when he and Twila moved to Climax, Colo., where Milton worked in the mines. They returned to the farm in 1958 where he began his career in the trucking business. He worked for S and H Drilling, David Cattle Company and then finished out his career working for Yellow Freight, where he drove over 1-million miles, accident free.

He and his family enjoyed many motorcycle trips throughout the United States and also many trips to the lake. Milton's

Ethel N. Whitten was born June 5, 1917, in Dover, Kan., to Adam and Ethel (Firestone) Dagg. She was the fifth of six children.

She married James A. Whitten on Aug. 20, 1938. Jim died in a boating accident in 1961.

Following Jim's death, Ethel moved to Olathe, Kan., where she managed the School Food Service for the Olathe Public Schools for 10 years. During that time, she was president of the Kansas School Food Service Association. Following a brief time back on the farm, she moved to St. Francis to be near her daughter and grandchildren.

She was a member of the Doric Chapter of Eastern Star in St. Francis, Chapter U PEO, United

Harlan Fred Boden died on Thursday, May 30, 2013. He was born to Fred and Rose Boden on March 23, 1926, and lived on the home farm in Idalia, Colo., all his life. He was 87 years old.

Harlan married Shirley Keeler on June 22, 1952. They enjoyed over 60 years of life together. They lived their entire life on the family farm in Idalia and in the last few months of Harlan's life lived together at the Hillcrest Care Center in Wray, Colo.

Farming wasn't an occupation for Harlan, it was his life. Besides farming, he also worked as a carpenter for many years and was an excellent mechanic. He loved his family and friends and always enjoyed meeting new people. He was a member of the National Rifle Association and an excellent rifle-

## Ethel N. Whitten

June 5, 1917 - June 11, 2013

Methodist Women, the United Methodist Church, helping establish the senior center in St. Francis and was an avid supporter of community activities.

Family, church, friends and especially youth were an important part of Ethel's life. She served in many capacities in the communities in which she lived. She was fortunate to be able to remain quite active during her 96 years of life.

She is survived by one sister-in-law, Maude Dagg, Auburn; her daughter, Ruth (Jim) Milliken, St. Francis; granddaughters, Kelley Milliken, Denver, Colo., Kari (Dustin) Gilliland, St. Francis, and grandson, J.W. (Tonya) Milliken, St. Francis. The lights

## Harlan Fred Boden

March 23, 1926 - May 30, 2013

Harlan Fred Boden died on Thursday, May 30, 2013. He was born to Fred and Rose Boden on March 23, 1926, and lived on the home farm in Idalia, Colo., all his life. He was 87 years old.

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Boden

He was preceded in death by his father and mother, Fred and Rose Boden and his son Michael Boden.

He is survived by his wife, Shirley Boden of Idalia, sisters Virginia Lengel of Burlington and Dorothy (Denny) Witmer of Colorado Springs; daughter Phyllis (Michael) Beecham of La Junta, Colo.; his grandchildren Sarah Beecham of La Junta, Michelle

of her life were her three great-grandchildren, Molly Gilliland, Jacki Milliken and Joel Gilliland. Many special friends, nieces and nephews are also surviving.

Ethel died on June 11, 2013, in St. Francis. Services were held at the Auburn Presbyterian Church in Auburn on Friday, June 14 with burial in the Auburn Cemetery. A memorial service will be held in St. Francis on Monday, June 24, at the United Methodist Church, St. Francis.

Memorials may be made to the St. Francis Community Foundation (Senor Living Fund), the Cheyenne County Hospital or Cheyenne County Hospice in care of Knodel Funeral Home, 202 S. Benton, St. Francis, KS 67756.

(Daniel) Blackwell of La Junta, Joshua Beecham of La Junta, Kiley (Mike) Roberts of Bakersfield, Calif., Kimberly (Charlie) Sandiford of Burnsville, Minn., Kody (Brandi) Boden of Fort Irwin, Calif.; great-grandchildren Cayden Blackwell of La Junta, Pacey, McKenzie, and Liam Roberts of Bakersfield, Presley and Finley Sandiford of Burnsville, Elizabeth and Gavyne Boden of Fort Irwin; and numerous cousins, nephews and nieces.

Funeral services were held at St. John's Church, south of Idalia on Monday, June 3, 2013. Services were officiated by Pastor Chuck Wright and Pastor Joe Berry. In lieu of flowers, contributions can be sent to Spellman-Schmidt Funeral Home in Wray, to be donated to the "Feed the Children" organization.

# Women to raise money for center

The Western Kansas Child Advocacy Center reports that women in the St. Francis and Bird City communities care about kids! The new campaign, 100 Women, is a phenomenal effort that will actually bring 106 Women from all of the 32 counties that the Advocacy Center serves together as ambassadors for kids. Each of the 106 Women will pledge to raise \$1,000 in support of the children the Advocacy provides services to.

Child abuse exists in all of our communities, said Chris Smull with the Advocacy Center. One in four girls and one in six boys will be sexually abused by the time they turn 18. While shocking, these statistics are real.

The Advocacy Center provides services such as forensic interviews, specialized therapy, medical exams, victim advocacy, and court preparation for child victims and their families. Our 106 Women are a united force committed to helping stop child abuse by supporting the services provided to the kids. These women are doing a variety of amazing things to each raise \$1,000.

We have had women hold bake sales, house crawls, luncheons,

wine and cheese parties, marathon runs, sell artwork, and even use Facebook to reach out to friends and family for donations! said Vicki Hubin, fundraising coordinator. Others have made personal donations, taken family portraits, and gone door-to-door. Not only are these women part of an amazing effort to support the kids of Western Kansas, they also are bringing much needed awareness to our rural communities about child sexual abuse and how it cannot be ignored any longer. Our 106 Women have become strong voices for telling others how they can help and what they can do should they ever suspect abuse.

Ambassador from St. Francis is Linda Rogers. She is a woman in the community that cares about kids, believes when kids tell about abuse, and is not afraid to advocate for children who are victims of sexual and physical abuse, Ms. Hubin said.

The 106 Women are making a true difference for children in Western Kansas. For more information about the 100 Women campaign, or to join, please contact the Western Kansas Child Advocacy Center at (620) 872-3706.

# Book Review

Book review from the St. Francis Public Library

## Chasing the Night

By Iris Johansen

A CIA agent's two-year-old child was stolen in the night as a brutal act of vengeance. Nine years later, Catherine Ling's instincts-maternal and professional-tell her that hers on is still alive, but she needs the help of someone as driven and obsessed as she is to find him-and that person is Eve Duncan. Eve has walked this same path and shares Catherine's nightmare, having endured the disappearance of her own daughter, Bonnie. Now Eve must raise

her game as a forensic sculptor to another level, using the science of age progression to unite mother and son. But as she is drawn deeper into Catherine's horror, Eve must face looming demons of her own.

Whoever took Bonnie is still out there, and Eve will never rest until he is brought to justice and Bonnie brought home. With two indomitable women enduring the worst fear any mother can imagine, Iris Johansen's latest thrill ride is a testament to a mother's fierce love and devotion and a gut-wrenching journey into the darkest places of the soul.



**July 4th**  
**Hot Dog Eating Contest**  
*High Noon July 4th*  
*In Front of Uptown Market*  
*St. Francis*

**Two Divisions - Youth & Adult**  
**8th Grade & under and 9th Grade & up**  
*Sign up now - Call 785-332-2774*  
*or stop by Uptown Market*  
**First Place Trophies Awarded**  
*Limited to 10 people per category*  
**413 E. Washington, St., St. Francis**



**MAGNANI**  
**FIREWORKS**  
(RAY, CARRIE, DANE, DALTON)  
**Located at Our Home**  
117 W 5th — Bird City  
785-734-7204  
**June 28th - July 4th**  
**9:30 a.m. to 10 p.m.**  
**Snacks and Drinks Available**

**Help Wanted**

Clinical Case Manager position available at Good Samaritan-Atwood. Position is full-time (minimum of 4 days/week), working one week-end out of four. One day/week is office time; the rest are spent in an expanded charge nurse role, overseeing the total care of approximately 20 residents. RN licensure with at least one year of long-term care experience required. Must be MDS certified or willing to train for it - we provide training. Good communication and strong clinical skills needed. For more information, or to apply, call Pam Thomas, DNS or Shari Horinek, Human Resources at 785-626-9015. EEOC



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AAP - M/F/V/D employer