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OBITUARIES

Katherine Dow Skelton

October 27, 1935 — March 21, 2026



Katherine was born in Sacramento, California, and grew up in Fort Bragg, California. After marrying John Skelton she moved to Denver, Colorado; Duluth, Minnesota; and Corvallis, Oregon. After her husband passed away she moved to Portland, Oregon.

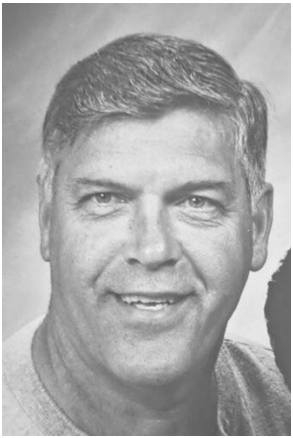
Among those left to cherish her memory are her sister, Barbara Bergman of St George, Utah, children

Laura (Thomas) Harmon of Minneapolis, Jeanette (Edward) Feldhousen of Portland, and Jeffrey of Portland, and grandchildren Nate Harmon of Tacoma and Alec and Samuel Skelton of Portland.

Funeral services will be held at the St Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church (1704 NE 43rd Avenue, Portland, OR) on April 17 at 11 AM. Please join the family after the service for refreshments and stories. Additional details can be found at <https://www.mtsfh.com/obituaries/obituary-listings>.

Steven Buff Swearengin

June 4, 1949 — March 20, 2026



Steven (Steve) Buff Swearengin, 76, passed away on Friday March 20, 2026, in his home in Corvallis, Oregon after several months of setbacks and complications from pancreatic cancer surgery.

Steven was born in Corvallis, Oregon to Eli and Ella Swearengin on June 4, 1949. He has an older sister, Roberta.

Steven graduated from Corvallis High School in 1968. He immediately went to work for the City of Corvallis in the water department. In April of 1969 Steve was drafted into the Army and served his time in Berlin, Germany protecting West Berlin from the surrounding, Soviet controlled East Berlin and East Germany. After his tour, he returned to the City of Corvallis where he remained until retirement in 2002.

On February 26, 1972, Steve married Annie Shelton in the same house in which they resided in Corvallis and where he passed. They had two children, Cameron and Janelle. He had five grandchildren: Kira, Kellen, Peyton, Kaleb and Ronin.

Steve has had many lifelong interests outside of work which include fishing, hunting, and coin collecting. Steve's interests in coin collecting led him to joining local coin clubs. After retirement from the City, he began working for Monte's Coins and More, grading coins and participating in estate auctions.

A memorial service will be held on Thursday April 23, 2026, at Suburban Christian Church located at 2760 SW 53rd Street, Corvallis, Oregon. This will be a double service for both Steven and his Wife Annalee, who passed in October of 2025.

If you wish to make any donations, Steve would have liked those to go to his local coin clubs. Please coordinate this with Monte at Monte's Coins and More.

William Lee Patrick Chaput

June 21, 1972 — March 18, 2026



William "Bill" Chaput, 53, passed away unexpectedly on March 18, 2026. He was born June 21, 1972 in Albany, Ore. to Melvin and Emily Chaput.

Bill dedicated his life to caring for others. He was a Registered Nurse at Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center. Bill is known for his compassion, outstanding care, and humor.

He is survived by his son, Aaron Chaput; his parents, sisters, step-children, nieces, and his beloved grandchildren.

Bill found joy in exploring Oregon's wilderness. He especially loved fishing with his family. He made friends worldwide through gaming, and enjoyed crafting beer.

A Celebration of Bill's Life will be Friday, April 17, 11:00 a.m. at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Albany.

True to Bill's generous and caring nature, he was an organ donor. He gave hope and life to 4 patients in critical need. Please consider becoming an organ donor, or making a monetary donation to Cascade Life Alliance.

Gary James Custer

July 18, 1946 — March 14, 2026



Gary James Custer (79) of Albany, Oregon, passed away peacefully on March 14, 2026.

Born on July 18, 1946, Gary was known for his kindness and sense of humor. He is survived by his wife, Ann, his brother, Wes, and countless friends and family members.

A memorial service will be held on May 1, 2026 at 1 pm at Sunset Hills Funeral Home in Eugene,

Oregon. A celebration of life will be held at a later date in St. Louis, Missouri.

To read the full obituary, share a memory, or leave condolences, please visit the funeral home website at SunsetHillsEugene.com.

Sunset Hills Funeral Home
4810 Willamette Street, Eugene, OR 97405
541-342-6853

OSU settles disability rights dispute

MID-VALLEY MEDIA

Oregon State University has settled a dispute with the National Federation of the Blind, the school announced Tuesday, April 7.

The university will pay \$475,000 to resolve allegations brought by the advocacy organization and a student who is blind related to the speed and accuracy with which course materials were made accessible by OSU's disability access services office, according to a news release.

The news release did not detail the student's specific allegations. The dispute was handled before a lawsuit was filed, according to the nonprofit.

Upon the recommendations of the National Federation of the Blind, the university has also hired additional staff to support accessibility work and has begun implementing other changes.

That includes procuring tools to support the creation of accessible materials, expanding assistive technology and services that provide access to blind people, rewriting policies and developing new procedures to ensure accessibility is better addressed in the future, according to the release.

Faculty and staff will

also participate in additional training and be provided information related to accessible design and inclusive practices specific to blind and low-vision students.

In a statement, Mark Riccobono, president of the National Federation of the Blind, called the settlement a "landmark agreement," and said he appreciated OSU's accountability and leadership.

"It is long overdue for other institutions of higher education to follow OSU's example and provide innovative approaches to equality and accessibility," he said.

For its part, the university said that while it provides course materials through its disability access services department, in this case, "the complex technical materials required for some science courses exceeded the capacity of DAS to act in a timely manner."

In a statement, GL Estes Wallace, the university's new assistant dean and director for DAS said OSU in this instance "fell short" of its mission to ensure every student succeeds.

"We are grateful for the opportunity to work with the National Federation of the Blind to redesign our practices," Estes Wallace said.

Man accused of smashing car windows

CODY MANN

Cody.Mann@lee.net

Facing both felony and misdemeanor charges, a Corvallis man was booked into jail after he was allegedly caught shattering another man's car windows.

Corvallis police say Alvin Leroy Ayers, 53, got into the other man's vehicle and used a large pole or stick to break out the front and rear windshields as well as the driver's side door window.

Ayers is charged in Benton County court with felony counts of unlawful weapon use and first-degree criminal mischief, and misdemeanor menacing and second-degree trespassing. He was arraigned Monday, April 6, and held on \$1,000 bail.

The alleged victim told police he parked his car in a gravel lot across from apartments on Southwest Avery Avenue and noticed Ayers pacing nearby with a large stick.

He said Ayers "appeared to have a purpose in mind," according to an affidavit, and Ayers came up to him saying, "What are you looking at motherf---er? I will bring you to the

gravel."

Feeling threatened, the man ran to his friend's apartment.

Around a minute later, his friend showed up and told him Ayers was inside his car, and he came back outside to see his windows were smashed in. He told Ayers to get out of the vehicle, but Ayers allegedly refused while shouting nonsensical remarks.

Police arrived to find Ayers still inside the car, bleeding from the head, with the alleged victim outside the vehicle trying to talk with him, the affidavit says. Ayers was arrested at the scene.

Court records show Ayers has a lengthy criminal history dating back 35 years, including convictions for theft, resisting arrest, disorderly conduct, trespassing, meth possession and failure to appear. He has an additional open Benton County case alleging improper use of 911 and disorderly conduct.

Cody Mann covers public safety and justice. He can be contacted at 541-812-6113 or Cody.Mann@lee.net. Follow him on Twitter via @News_Mann.

Gazette-Times

CORVALLIS GAZETTE-TIMES
OFFICE OF PUBLICATION
DH and GT
600 Lyon Street S.W., Albany, Oregon

MAILING ADDRESS
P.O. Box 130, Albany, Oregon 97321-0041

SUPERVISORY PERSONNEL
Regional President: Matt Sandberg
Editor: Penny Rosenberg; 541-812-6111
Subscriber Customer Service:
877-576-4664
custservice@gazettetimes.com
Customer Service Hours:
Monday through Friday:
4:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

IDENTIFICATION
The Corvallis Gazette-Times (ISSN: 0746-3995), a Lee Enterprises Newspaper, is published Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays at 600 LYON ST SW, ALBANY, OR 97321. Periodicals Postage Paid at Corvallis, OR. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to 500 E 3RD ST, DAVENPORT, IA 52801.

PRICING
Corvallis Gazette-Times is a Lee Enterprises Newspaper and is published online daily, and three days per week in print (Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays), except for New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Jr.'s Day, Presidents Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas when it is only published online. The subscription price includes all applicable sales Tax. Print subscriptions will be charged an additional fee for the convenience of having the paper delivered. You will be notified of the amount and frequency of any delivery charge at the time you register for a Print subscription. All delivery charges are subject to change.

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