



Dr. John A. McIlhattan passed away at his home May 6, 2007 after a courageous battle with ALS. John was born in Bozeman, January 30, 1946 a fourth generation Gallatin Valley native and son of Alton and Katherine O (Bohart) McIlhattan. Growing up on the family farm, John's love for driving and training animals was soon apparent. As a young boy, he began hitching their goat "Billy" to a cart and driving him. Encouraged by his dad, who helped him with his harness and carts, John was soon driving anything he could hitch to a cart. That was the beginning of a lifetime of driving goats, ponies, saddle horses, and draft horses. This last year John was inducted in the Montana Draft Horse Teamster's Hall of Fame.

After attending Montana State University, John went to vet school at the University of Washington in Pullman. Armed with a doctor's degree in veterinary medicine, John worked in British Columbia, Canada and Butte, Montana before opening his practice at the Valley View Veterinarian Clinic north of Bozeman. A quiet man, he was trusted and relied upon by his many clients to treat their animals large and small for 30+ years at this location. Folks from all over the Gallatin Valley board their dogs at Valley View. For many years John volunteered to help the Humane Society whenever they needed a vet.

John was an accomplished trumpet player thanks to his mother, Katherine McIlhattan, who shared her love of music with all her sons. He served in the Montana National Guard with the 46th Army Band for 8 years. Following that he played in the Bozeman City Band and the German Sauerkraut Band for 29 years. John would hitch his Belgian team to a wagon and load up the City Band members on the wagon for the Sweet Pea Parade. Evenings on Main Street you would often see him with his fellow band members heartily playing old time German music.

In 1981, John and his brother Bob purchased their first buffalo. Every year after that, John's buffalo could be seen grazing on his farm north of Bozeman. In the spring, dozens of folks would make a special drive out to the farm to see the baby buffs romping in the pastures.

John spent every free minute riding his horses in the backcountry and in Yellowstone Park. Camping by a high mountain lake and pulling a shining trout from its waters was an experience he truly loved to share with his many friends. He was a valuable member of the Back Country Horsemen clearing trails and getting them ready for the members to make their rides. Winters were spent skiing at Big Sky or Bridger Bowl. John was a lady's man. They were thrilled when he invited them to share his active outdoor life style. He married Eileen Wallin and to that union was born his son, John R McIlhattan, who survives him. He also has three brothers: Jim (Carmen), Cascade, Montana; Bob (Sherry), Bozeman; Skip (Nancy), Livingston as well as numerous nieces and nephews.

Cremation has taken place. Following John's wishes there will be no services. However, a gathering of family and friends is planned for Sunday May 13 at the Springhill Community Pavilion north of Bozeman. Please come and share good food, good stories and many happy memories. Happy Trails.

Should friends desire, memorials may be made to the Heart of the Valley Animal Shelter, PO Box 11390, Bozeman 59719 or to the Montana Draft Horse Association, c/o Donna Reimer, Sec./Treasurer, 51 Horse Ranch Road, Roy, MT 59471