



In loving memory of William J. "Bill" Sebena Sr., who can never be replaced and will never be forgotten. He was extraordinarily unique and truly one of a kind. The last of a dying breed, you might say. Peacefully at home, on Monday, June 30, 2008, Bill passed away in the arms of his daughter Lisa.

On October 29, 1919, Bill was born in Butte, Montana, a city he always held close to his heart. His parents, George and Mary Sebena, proudly shared their Czechoslovakian and Yugoslavian heritage with Bill and raised him to be a brilliant and vibrant young man. It was on Florence Avenue in Butte where Bill played as a child and began his lifelong mission to accomplish more than one might think possible in only one lifetime. Bill's achievements are many and diverse and include feats of construction and cuisine.

While attending Butte High, Bill decided the town needed a carnival. Utilizing his characteristic initiative and ingenuity, he embarked on building his own. Bill's carnival offered rides for the bargain price of one penny and visitors had their choice of a Merry-Go-Round, a Ferris wheel or the upside-down Hammer. He built them all; some hand-powered, some equipped with a motor. Like many of his achievements, he made the news and the "carnival" was featured in the Montana Standard in 1937.

Just after graduating from high school, Bill decided to hitch hike from Butte to San Francisco in order to make his fortune. He made it all of the way to the General Delivery in San Francisco by selling oranges, picking fruit, and staying on friendly folks' farms in exchange for a hard day's work. He returned to Butte and could be found selling fruit and Christmas trees, hand-cut by him, to the locals. It was not uncommon to see Bill taking pride and joy in handing out the boxed oranges to those hungry and in need. Shortly after, he decided to go into the hamburger business. He built *Wimpy's Palace*, located at 2101 Harrison Avenue. *Wimpy's Palace* was one of the first drive-ins in the country to have outside speakers and actual carhops. During this time he married a beautiful Irish woman, Eileen Walsh. Together, Bill and Eileen had two wonderful and handsome sons, Joe and Dan, and a precious daughter, Susan. Bill joined the army in World War II and was stationed in Paris, Texas. He left the thriving restaurant in capable hands with Eileen. While in the army, Bill was a baker and here learned many of his cooking skills. He always said that the guys in the army didn't like it much when he was not the one on duty. When he was transferred to a new job, it was not too long before he was asked back to do the baking.

In the early 1940's, *Wimpy's Palace* was changed to *Bill's Drive-In* and a bar and dance hall were added. His late brother George helped him run the business. While renovating the restaurant, he moonlighted in the potato fields at his uncle's ranch in Dillon. After closing the Drive-In he would go to Dillon to water the potatoes, then drive back to Butte and, with very little sleep, go back to work the next day. He was an excellent chef who prepared, without exception, homemade recipes. Everyone loved his ice cream and sweet rolls. Everything was made from scratch, a tradition he continued throughout all of his years in the restaurant business.

Bill built a house on Massachusetts Avenue where he would live with his wife Eileen and his three babies. He had his hands in a variety of things, including building fireplaces and doing stucco work. He had a passion for ice-skating and helped maintain the rink on "The Flats" in Butte. During the winter of 1947-48 he sponsored the hockey team, "Bill's Drive-In". He also loved a good game of tennis and played as often as he could. During the Butte days, he was so blessed to have found a select few life-long friends.

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loved a good game of tennis and played as often as he could. During the Butte days, he was so blessed to have found a select few life-long friends.

In the late 1950s, Bill relocated to the Three Forks area. He bought a restaurant and continued on his mission. He remodeled the inside and kept it for only a short time. In Manhattan he built a small drive-in burger joint called the *The Pee Wee Drive-in* and ran it during the summers. His son Dan helped to run the drive-in by making burgers and shakes, and occasionally closing up early to go fishing. His daughter Susan recalls a cherished memory of enjoying a Green River soda at the end of her long shift at the drive-in. Bill found love again in his fiery carhop at *The Pee Wee*, Anne Stotts. They were eventually married and would raise three children together: two very special sons Mark and Michael and a daughter and best friend to Bill, Lisa. Just the other day, Bill remembered Anne as the girl who had her glasses taped to keep them together. Only a month ago Anne broke her glasses again and taped them up. Bill was reminded of this story and offered to buy her some new ones.

Another venture of Bill's was the Ruby Theatre in Three Forks. It was a marvel. The first movie Bill ever ran was *Charlotte's Web* and the original Ruby Theatre sign still stands. Within the same building he ran a doughnut shop on the old-style assembly line machine, frosting each and every doughnut by hand as it fell off the belt. He built another restaurant in Three Forks, naming it again *Bill's Drive-In*. He purchased the Old Milwaukee Depot building and moved it from its original spot to where he had a vision for its new life. He skillfully turned the Depot building into a hotel, adding on an additional structure for rooms.

Next, Bill continued full speed ahead into the paving business and taught himself, along with his two sons Joe and Dan, the trade. He built tennis courts, shuffleboards, brickwork, cement structures (Boy, how he loved cement!), all the while having a family and raising three babies. Seeking a new adventure, he made the decision to "Go East" a bit further and to give Bozeman a try. He purchased the old Siesta Motel at 824 West Main Street. He leveled the Siesta after operating it for about a year and built the Lewis & Clark Motel in its place. He built it without an official architect and fought every step of the way to be allowed to build it on his terms, and ultimately managed to brilliantly do so. When the Lewis & Clark opened in 1978, it was *the* place to stay in Bozeman. It is remembered by most in its early days as the fanciest hotel in town. It was a three-story beauty! He went from renting rooms in the old Depot building in Three Forks, also named the Lewis & Clark, for \$3.00 a night in the 1960's to renting rooms at the Lewis and Clark in Bozeman for well over \$80.00 a night in the 1980's. This illustrates how Bill adapted remarkably well to the changing times he lived through

To build the Bozeman Lewis & Clark Motel's Olympic size swimming pool, he hand-poured every drop of cement. The cosmopolitan Lewis and Clark housed a beauty shop and a busy travel agency named American International Travel. His special spot in the motel was the restaurant. Over the years, it became his life. For many years, he cooked from early in the morning until late at night serving breakfast, lunch, and dinner. It was a beautifully designed restaurant, with expansive views of the Bridger Mountains and jet-setting fixtures. Bill was known for his amazing fish and chips, huge salad bar, and of course, his special Sunday Turkey dinners. He was also very well known for his fantastic breakfasts, Bill's Buttermilk Pancakes being at the very top of the list. He took pride in every plate he put out. People still call, missing his cooking, and asking when he would open the restaurant again. He was determined to keep a nostalgic feel alive in both the restaurant and motel. He wanted his businesses to resonate the olden days, what he said were, the best days. He eventually would return to Three Forks to do a complete remodel on his Three Forks Motel. He built a grand bar and dance hall piece-by-piece, day-by-day, until his vision was complete. He constructed a pond along the front of the motel, which held four hundred Rainbow Trout when it was first completed. He was happy to have his sons Mark and Mike, Mike's dog Sonny and friend John Kalista work along side of him throughout this monumental project. On one occasion, when Bill was working on the roof, Mike got to watch both the dog and Bill sliding off the side of the roof, a story with a good ending and no one hurt.

Bill had a passion for operating heavy equipment that lasted well into his eighties. If he was on a backhoe, he was a happy man. "Call before you dig" rarely influenced his excavating; he knew where to dig! He also had a favorite pastime of going to auctions and buying pretty much

Bill had a passion for operating heavy equipment that lasted well into his eighties. If he was on a backhoe, he was a happy man. "Call before you dig" rarely influenced his excavating; he knew where to dig! He also had a favorite pastime of going to auctions and buying pretty much everything he did not need just because it was "a great deal". The auctioneers were always pleased to see him there as that meant that he would be out-bidding everyone! Sometimes he would go to the state vehicle auctions and would return with a convoy of old trucks. Finally, an answer to the mystery of why there were always so many red trucks and state vehicles always parked in the Lewis & Clark parking lot!

Bill took great pride in designing and building the historic Lewis & Clark sign and reader board. This colorful sign has caused controversy throughout the years. It's large size and bright lights made it the perfect venue for Bill's fearless and original messages that would always garner much attention and response. Bill said, in retrospect, he would not have changed one message that he put up on that sign. Each and every one was well thought out and meant something to him. He stuck to his beliefs, morals, and values at all costs. He always said what he meant and meant what he said with no regret. Bill was a dreamer and his mind was always going a hundred miles an hour figuring out his next project. He loved to invent things and to create. Bill was incredibly passionate about everything he did in his lifetime. He was truly a perfectionist. He was filled with stories to tell and there was not a dull moment to be had in his presence. He was so smart, always predicting the future and rarely missing. He was always one step ahead of the mainstream, never taking the easy or predictable path. Instead, Bill usually chose the path less traveled and often created his own path based on strong individual beliefs. He had an incomparable work ethic and those who accepted it and who were influenced by it will always remember. If you "got" Bill and understood him, you were one of the lucky ones. If you were ever involved in one of Bill's signature handshakes you would remember that he was as strong as an ox. Of course, with the economy the way it is today, he would still recommend not taking any wooden nickels and always keeping a stiff upper lip. In the past year Bill stayed true to his beliefs of no medical treatment and no medications. He was so lucky to have a Doctor by his side that cared so much and provided amazing support - for that, Bill says thank you. He also had a very special nurse that helped him through a lot. Bill lived almost a full century and was indeed part of an unpredictable world full of change. Bill always accepted change creatively and gracefully. Bill Sebena had a soft, big heart and was an extremely compassionate man. He earned the respect of so many, young and old, and was even able to earn respect from those that may have disagreed with him. That is something that is not easy to obtain and speaks volumes. Bill lived a wonderful, fascinating, and full life. He touched so many lives and his departure leaves a void in many hearts. He will be missed dearly but thought of every single day forward. His legacy will be kept alive forever. He should be so proud of himself for all that he accomplished and for the phenomenal man that he was. Relieved of his burdens and hardships here on earth, Bill is now at peace and his soul is a free and happy one. Bill is survived by the children whom he loved so much: William "Joe" J. Sebena Jr. and his wife Kathy, Daniel Sebena and his wife Nancy, Susan Sebena, Mark Sebena and his wife Britt, Lisa Sebena, Michael Sebena and his wife Debbie. His beautiful Grandchildren he will always love, Stephanie Gandulla and her husband Nick Myers, Julie Gandulla, Eric Sebena, Tyler Sebena, Dylan Sebena, Jake Sebena, Alex Sebena, and Bill's sweet Great Grandchild Aidan Gandulla, his second wife Anne, among other loving family and true friends. Bill is preceded in death by his Dear Grandmother, whose long black, silky hair he loved to brush, his Dad George K. Sebena whom he loved dearly, his mother Mary Sebena whom he cared for and made her life richer in her final days, his brother George Sebena, and his first wife Eileen.

To my Dad

Please know how much I miss you and how difficult each small task seems without you. You are my identity and my life. I love you so very much. Here is our special poem we read so many times together.

I carry your heart with me  
(I carry it in my heart)  
I am never without it  
(anywhere I go you go,  
my dear: and whatever  
is done by only me  
is your doing, my darling)  
I fear no fate  
(for you are my fate, my sweet)  
I want no world (for beautiful  
You are my world, my true)  
And it's you are whatever a  
Moon has always meant and  
Whatever a sun will  
Always sing is you  
Here is the deepest secret  
Nobody knows  
(here is the root of the root and  
the bud of the bud and the  
sky of the sky of a  
tree called life; which grows  
higher than the soul can hope  
or mind can hide and this is  
the wonder that's keeping the  
stars apart)  
I carry your heart  
(I carry it in my heart)

With all my love to you Billy, your daughter Lisa Pearl

Viewing will be held Thursday, July 10th, from 7pm-9pm at Dokken-Nelson Funeral Service.  
Funeral services will be held Friday, July 11<sup>th</sup>, 10am at the Bozeman Pond Park, adjacent to the Gallatin Valley mall. A reception will follow. Internment will follow at Holy Cross Cemetery in Butte.

