



John Merlin Bondhus

March 9, 2006

John Merlin Bondhus, 78, a longtime resident and Fort Collins entrepreneur, passed away unexpectedly and peacefully in his sleep on March 9, 2006. Merlin was born to Thomas S. Bondhus and Gladys Alfhild Sunde on Oct. 24, 1927, in Akron. He graduated from Akron High School and served overseas in the U.S. Army before attending Colorado A&M. He married Dorothy June Putney in Fort Collins on April 8, 1948. His early employment in the Fort Collins area included several years with Forney Industries and W&W Manufacturing and Distributing, a sporting goods concern. Upon the sale of W&W, Merlin founded Blue Cloud Archery, which he operated successfully for more than 40 years. In addition, he developed and patented the Adjust-a-Bubble fishing float that led to his starting and operating Rainbow Plastics. He later established and operated The T-Shirt Factory. As a young boy on the Colorado plains, Merlin developed a lifelong interest in Native American history. One of his most prized finds is now in the Smithsonian collections. While attending A&M, Merlin's enjoyment of Western music culminated in his joining the Sons of the Rockies band as a guitar player and singer. During a period of 15 years, they played throughout the mountain west. Flea market and garage sale trips resulted in his making many friendships and the discovery and development of several trade token collections. Merlin belonged to the Loveland Archeology Society for more than 30 years, the National Token Collectors Association, the American Token Collecting Organization and he partnered to develop the Wyoming Token Reference

Book. Merlin is survived by his wife of 57 years, June; sons, Thomas W. Janie, John R. Gail, David A., and daughter, Beverly Miller Dale, all of Fort Collins. He is also survived by his brother, Norwood Woodie Bondhus and wife, Joan, of Akron; grandchildren Candy Bradley of Bellview, Idaho, Shawna Johnson of Lovelock, Nev., Summer Bondhus, Vanessa Bondhus, Kevin Miller and Garrett Miller, all of Fort Collins; six great-grandchildren and numerous nephews and nieces. Merlin was preceded in death by his parents and brother, Everett J. Bondhus. Memorial contributions may be made to the Fort Collins United Way in care of Bohlender Funeral Chapel, 121 W. Olive St., Fort Collins, CO 80524. Cremation is planned and a memorial service will be at 10 a.m. Wednesday at Bohlender Funeral Chapel with internment to follow at Resthaven Memorial Gardens Cemetery.