



## Steven J. Pongracz-Bartha

June 5, 1938 - April 6, 2020

Steven J. Pongracz-Bartha, age 81 died on Monday April 6, 2020 in Oregon City, OR. Steven was born on June 5, 1938 in Hajmasker, Hungary to George & Helen Pongracz-Bartha. Steven was the second of their four children. Surviving Brothers include Edward of Simi Valley, CA, Peter of Portland, OR & George of Tigard, OR. In December of 1944, Steven and his family escaped Hungary from the advancing Russian forces, ending up in Southern Germany after a series of displaced persons camps due to issues with WWII. As displaced persons the family was granted permission to immigrate to the United States in 1951 aboard the USS Naval Ship General R.M. Blatchford from Germany to New York and his family eventually settled in Portland, OR. In 1957 Steven became a US Citizen.

Steven attended Central Catholic High School and moved on to the University of Portland and graduated in 1960 with a degree in Engineering. After graduation he went to work for the US Forest Service as a road design engineer. Steven served in the United States Army from Sept 11, 1961 until September 10, 1963. He was stationed in Fort Belvoir, VA where he met and married his future wife, Beverly A. Tobin.

At the completion of his military service Steven and Beverly moved back to Portland where he got a job at Bonneville Power Administration. Most of the work he did at BPA consisted of software development and maintenance in

relation to power scheduling. He retired from BPA in 2000 but continued to work there for another 13 years as a contract employee working on maintaining old power scheduling software while a new system was being implemented.

Outside of work Steven enjoyed golfing with friends and working on mechanical projects, including fixing cars and home projects-he could fix anything.

Steven & Beverly were married for over 56 years and were devout members of the Catholic Church, rarely missing a service.

Steven is survived by his wife, Beverly Pongracz-Bartha, his children, Steven Pongracz, Michael Pongracz and Jennifer Smith. He is also survived by three grandchildren, Owen Smith, Macy Smith & Jackson Pongracz.

A memorial service is planned for a future date.

# Cemetery Details

## **Willamette National Cemetery**

11800 SE Mt Scott Blvd  
Portland, OR 97086

# Events

**Details are pending.**

# Tribute Wall



“ *Steven J. Pongracz-Bartha*

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January 28, 2023 at 02:51 PM

GP

“ It's almost a year since my brother Steve passed away and I miss him a lot. He was always fun to be around. He had a great perspective, wisdom and always had good advice.

I will never forget the time he took me to Little League Baseball practice at Jefferson high school. He was driving his Pontiac and I asked him how fast the car could go. So he gunned the engine and took off like a bat out of hell. Unfortunately a cop happened to be close by and pulled him over and gave him a ticket. He wasn't very happy about that.

He went through a weight lifting phase when he was going to college. He would position himself under the couch and then have me lay on the couch and he would proceed to basically bench press the couch. I was impressed. I also have great memories of my brother Peter and Steve wrestling in the living room and throwing each other around over the captains chairs.

When I was a teenager I would make some great open face sandwiches with our Mom's homemade bread. He loved those sandwiches and would pay me for making them.

Steve.

Steve helped me a lot with car problems and taught me how to do my own oil changes, radiator flushes and other maintenance.

When Steve was working for the Forest Service in Bear Springs and I was in grade school. He was living in a trailer provided by the forest service. I spent a cold winter week in the trailer with him. It was a very good time spent with him that I will never forget.

When Steve and Bev moved back from Virginia and I was in High School they rented a cool little one bedroom apartment on the second floor. I got to spend many weekends with them sleeping on their couch. Those were good times with my big brother.

I look forward to seeing my brother Steve again in Heaven.

Love

Brother George

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George Pongracz-Bartha - February 18, 2021 at 09:07 PM



*George, these memories were so fun to read! I wish we could relive the memories with him and have a good laugh. Thanks so much for sharing!*

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**Jennifer Smith** - March 15, 2021 at 03:52 PM

SP

*“ I too remember my uncle steve working on cars in his garage. I remember going over there with my dad Peter to fix some car we had at the time. Uncle Steve seemed to always know what to do or figure it out. I also remember uncle Steve driving that brown Chevy Vega he must of loved that car because I think it had tons of miles on it and he had rebuilt it many times I believe. We will miss you Uncle Steve*

*Love Sandor and LaShauna*

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**sandor pongracz** - May 04, 2020 at 11:56 AM

JS

*Thanks for sharing Sandor! Oh he loved that Vega and I hated it! Once he dropped me off at a school dance and i wouldn't let him even pull into the parking lot :)*

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**Jennifer Smith** - May 05, 2020 at 10:24 PM

TW

“ I have had the honor and pleasure of knowing Steve as a great friend. Our friendship goes back to the 1950s beginning at Central Catholic High School, continuing at Bonneville Power Administration and retirement.

Steve was a dedicated(loved his job),respected and loyal employee of BPA. Even after retirement from BPA,he continued working there as a contractor for another 13 years. His expertise in programming and power scheduling were valued assets.

One thing we had in common was the love of golf. Bill Tranch,Steve and I played together for many years. We never quite mastered the game but we had a great camaraderie and fun. Sand traps, water and trees always seemed be be in play and were our nemesis.

Steve didn't seem to mind because he found more balls than he lost.

Our birthdays were 17 days apart and he never failed to call on my birthday.

Linda and I loved Steve and will miss him very much.

Tom and Linda Wagenhoffer

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**Tom Wagenhoffer** - April 27, 2020 at 01:35 PM

JS

Thanks Tom for sharing your kind words and memories. My Dad adored golfing with you all. Just days before he passed he was dreaming of getting back out there. I can also relate to my Dad finding all the sand traps on the course, he had a real knack for that :)

Jenn Smith

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**Jennifer Smith** - April 28, 2020 at 07:10 PM

PP

“ My brother Steve, or Pista as we called him, showed great talent on taking things apart at an early age, and then putting it back together with only a couple of screws left over. I tried to emulate him in this endeavor but being 3 years younger I was unsuccessful. Pista grew up and became among other things a natural mechanic with forays into electronics and could fix anything including car engines. Without any training, he just “understood” how mechanical things worked. Here he is fixing our Dad’s first car in America in about 1952 or ‘53 when he was 15 years old. He helped me a lot in buying a used car from “owner” by helping me evaluate the condition of a car, for example, by smelling the exhaust and telling it smelled good meaning complete combustion and therefore a real plus. There are many other events I could relate about his willingness to help me out. Pista will be missed but he is now in a better place without pain. May he rest in peace. Brother Peter and Tilly



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**Peter J Pongracz-Bartha** - April 24, 2020 at 04:30 PM

JS

*Uncle Peter, thank you so much for sharing these memories and the photo. It means a lot! Jenn*

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**Jennifer Smith** - April 28, 2020 at 07:04 PM

BO

“ Steve talked me into taking golf lessons about 35 years ago. i have been golfing with him every summer since then. a great long time friend. he will be missed.

*my prayers go out to Bev and the family.*  
*Gery Bolden*

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**bolden** - April 21, 2020 at 07:55 PM

JS

*Thanks for your memory Gery! My Dad loved golfing with you all!*

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**Jenn Smith** - April 22, 2020 at 12:55 PM

BP

*Wow. I didn't know it was 35 years ago. He really loved playing golf with you!*

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**Bev Pongracz** - April 22, 2020 at 05:42 PM

“ was a hand grenade! Boy, were got really scared by this event. Somewhat later on, we During 1945, around the time that the German Wehrmacht surrendered to the English occupation forces, my parents and we kids were moved to a flour mill on the western shore of Lake Ratzeburg by the German Wehrmacht. My father had departed with his Hungarian Army subject personnel to Hamburg. Soon after moving in, my brother and I were playing with war materials located in an abandoned German Military truck (hand-cranked field telephones, a bunch of gas masks, ammunition, etc.). Steven at one point had something in his hands. A German man who was just passing by on the adjacent highway noticed that Steven had a round object in his hands and was attempting to pull a pin out of it. He rushed over, grabbed the object, and threw it from the edge of the highway into Lake Ratzeburg. He shouted at us kids that it got scolded by our mother, Helen. Naturally, being Steven’s older brother, I got blamed for the near fatal incident more than Steven.

Sometime around 1949, we were living in the village of Elgersweier, located near Offenburg in the German State of Baden. A number of Hungarian families were scattered around the village. Steven had a Hungarian friend, Peter Horvath. They would get into mischief here and there. According to our mother, Peter was a bad friend. I of course was always responsible for my brothers’ behaviors. One day, as Steven and I were walking home to the school building in which we had been living, I lost track of him. Not finding him, I walked home a couple of blocks. Later that evening, Steven got spanked by my father George. It turned out that Steven had hooked up with his friend, Peter Horvath. They managed to scale a fence that guarded the village bull which existed for stud service to the cows belonging to the farmers living in Elgersweier. Sitting on top of the fence, they proceeded to throw rocks at the bull to make it angry and see what would happen. The bull’s attendant scared them off. This was reported to my parents, who told me the story. Again, according to parents, George and Helen, had I looked out for my brother Steven more than I did, I could have prevented their

*misdeed.*

*As I recount a small part of my recollection of brother Steven, I once again want to express our sorrow to Beverly, all her children and loved ones, and to my two brothers, Peter and George and their families and loved ones, and to any and all of Bev and Steven's friends: Eternal light shine upon brother Steven in the mansion that our Lord, Jesus, has prepared for all those who love Him.*

*Love.*

*Rose and brother Edward*

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**Edward and Rose** - April 21, 2020 at 06:28 PM

JS

*Uncle Ed, thanks for this memory. Very nice of you to take the time to share.*

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**Jenn Smith** - April 22, 2020 at 01:00 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Steven J. Pongracz-Bartha.*



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April 20, 2020 at 01:58 PM