

Sign on...

I have to say goodbye this week to three high school classmates, Diane Piper, John James and Hal Look. As we get older, reading the obits is not a pleasant experience. I also heard that my friend and former physician, Dr. Roy Wittwer had passed away as well. My main goodbye, though is for J. Erwin Fredrickson, who passed away at the ripe old age of 95. Erwin, as he was called, had the Fredrickson ranch at Laqua, in the mountains south and east of Eureka, and was the roads foreman for the county in the Kneeland area. I have spent a lot of time in the Kneeland, Laqua and Shower's Pass and mostly the Mountain View area of the mountains east of us. Working at Norris Market, where a lot of the ranchers and residents shopped and many had accounts there caused me to become friends with many of them. I helped build fences, mark and move cattle, clean up windfall trees, or just go up and have lunch once in a while, mostly with the Edsall's on the Mountain View Ranch, homesteaded by Jack Shaw way back when. We cut a lot of firewood on Mountain View, windfalls and clearing for pasture land.//We are going to one of the ranches for a wedding in a couple of weeks, so my wife, my son and I drove there last Saturday to check out the accessibility and how we could handle it with my disability. It's going to work out alright. When we would go up to cut wood or work, I, at least, did not always appreciate the beauty of our local mountains. From the area just before you get to the Kneeland School, you can look out to the west and see our bay area, and to the east, over to the South Fork Mountain area. There are herds of cattle grazing, big bulls and cows, and if you are lucky you might get a close-up of

a black-tail deer grazing next to the roadway. As you wander east and south toward Bridgeville, the road is steep, windey and bumpy. I thought of Erwin and how big a job it was to maintain those roads, and as his obituary stated, how he kept the roads near the ranch houses oiled, to keep the dust down so the laundry wouldn't get soiled as it hung on the clothesline, drying in the mountain heat.* Erwin and June were also active in the Grange and came to many of our Barbershop performances. So, Erwin is laid to rest at the laqua cemetery, along with Snooks Edsall and many other mountain folks. My condolences to the family.* If you should decide to take a ride up Kneeland road, remember that it's all private property, so don't open any gates, or wander off into the pastures or the woods. I'll share some stories about Dr. Wittwer in my next comment. He was a great doctor and a wine grape grower. The stories will be about my son and his warts and the doctor's advice and his diagnosis about drawing fluid off my knee.