Cortland couple born to be wild

By Trevor Stewart

Do you know any seniors who ride motorcycles? Maybe you do. But do you know any senior couples that ride together? Now that’s something you don’t see every day. Ronny and Carol Aden are avid motorcycle riders and they don’t let their age stop them from doing what they love.

For a belated honeymoon, the couple took a trip to the Dells in Wisconsin on Ronny’s motorcycle. “I heard about a motorcycle rally going on around that same time in Madison, Wisconsin,” Carol said. “I asked Ronny how far that was from the Dells, and it wasn’t too far, so we ended up going over to the rally. It was a lot of fun!”

Ronny and Carol both grew up in Nebraska, but did not meet until much later in their lives, which makes their story especially unique.

Ronny was born July 14, 1942, in Beatrice to Gerd and Christina Aden. He was raised near Pickrell, and was the oldest of the four children. He had younger brothers Arthur and Kermit along with one sister, Roxie.

Ronny attended the Townsend country school during his elementary years, and then continued on to Adams High School where he graduated in 1959. Ronny attended business college and received a diploma in accounting in 1960.

“During that time, computer users were just starting to become popular,” Ronny said. “So I took a few computer classes to keep up.”

Ronny worked at Capitol Supply in Lincoln for 26 years, and for the first 10 or 11 years worked in the accounting department. In 1964, he received a leave of absence from the company because he was drafted into the Army. He was on active duty from 1964-1966, at Fort Wainwright in Alaska. He worked for Capitol Supply only six months when he returned home in 1966. In 1970, Ronny switched over to computer programming for Capitol Supply.

In 1959, Ronny attended the University of Nebraska, and moved onto Hastings High School where she graduated in 1971. She attended Southeast Community College and eventually earned her Associates Degree in early childhood development. “I wasn’t the average student,” Carol said. “I took 10 years to do my schooling. I took one class on techniques of child behaviors and liked it, so I took another class. I kept taking classes until I realized I was not too far off from getting a degree. So I thought I may as well finish it.”

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In 1978, Carol and Jim were married. Jim had four grown children, so Ronny left and went to work for Paramount Supply, where he worked in sales.

In 2000, Ronny’s family as Karen slipped in the garage and broke her ankle. After being fitted for a cast, Karen was driving to the hospital to get her cast placed when a blood clot formed in her injured ankle. She did not make it to the hospital and she died that same day.

Ronny and Carol found themselves attending the same grief recovery class together. They knew each other, but not well.

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As 48 and 55-year-olds we began to date, but neither of us knew how,” Carol said. “My kids would make fun of me. I think when I rode Ronny’s motorcycle with him it knew he was true love.”

On January 11, 2003, Ronny and Carol were married at the Rogers House in Lincoln. “The trike is better when you get older and are not as strong,” Ronny said. “You have to get a motorcycle to do and convert it in order to make it a three-wheeler.”

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Tips on how to have more money on hand

With the cost of gas, food, shelter, health care and other essentials rising, many seniors on a fixed income are struggling to survive. Stories of seniors foregoing medication in favor of food and shelter are not uncommon. Fortunately, for those who own a home, there may be an alternative. They may be able to obtain a reverse mortgage and convert a portion of their home’s equity into cash.

With a traditional mortgage, homeowners make monthly payments to the lender. With a reverse mortgage, the opposite occurs. Homeowners age 62 and older receive money from rather than pay the lender. As long as they remain in their home, they do not have to pay back the lender. Should they move or die, they or their heirs must repay the amount they have borrowed, plus interest.

There are three types of reverse mortgages: single-purpose, federally insured and proprietary. Single-purpose reverse mortgages are offered by state and local government agencies and nonprofit organizations. They are the least costly of the three but may only be used for the one purpose the lender agrees to, such as making home repairs or improvements. Federally insured reverse mortgages are offered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Proprietary reverse mortgages are offered by private companies.

Both of these types of reverse mortgages feature high upfront costs but give homeowners the freedom to use the money as they see fit. With a reverse mortgage, homeowners may never owe more than what their home is worth. Loan amounts vary according to the type of reverse mortgage provided, the age of the homeowners, the interest rate, the appraisal value of the home and other factors. Interest accrues on the loan, of course, and un- like that of traditional mortgages, it cannot be deducted from the homeowners’ taxes until it is paid off. Payment usually occurs in one of three ways: in set monthly payments, through a line of credit or as a combination of the two. Throughout the term of the loan, homeowners continue to be responsible for all expenses associated with their home, including property taxes, insurance, maintenance, repairs and so forth. As with traditional mortgages, homeowners should do their homework and shop around for the right reverse mortgage. They should become familiar with the pros and cons of reverse mortgages, study the types available and speak with a qualified financial consultant to determine if a reverse mortgage is the best option for them. In cases where homeowners want to leave their heirs substantial assets, a reverse mortgage may not be a good idea.

Reverse mortgages can be beneficial for seniors who qualify and need to supplement their income. There will come a day, however, when the loan must be repaid, and therefore, seniors should make certain that obtaining a reverse mortgage is the right solution to their situation.

So you’ve just turned 65 and you’re feeling a bit depressed. Sure, you can retire now, but you are also old enough to receive the senior citizen discount at your favorite restaurant. Worse yet, your family is throwing you a huge birthday bash for your 65th birthday. Don’t feel dis- heartened; rev up the party with some trivia that might stump some of your younger friends and family. 1. What was Walt Disney’s first animated feature film? a) Fantasia b) Bambi c) Snow White and the Seven Dwarves 2. What big band leader disagreed with the ban on playing English Channel in 1944? a) Glenn Miller b) Count Basie c) Benny Goodman 3. What was the real name of actress Rita Hayworth? a) Lupita b) Margarita Casino c) Betty Joan Perske 4. How many of the three stooges were there in all? a) 3 b) 6 c) 9 5. What year was the first Academy Awards presented? a) 1930 b) 1932 c) 1945 6. In what movie were the legs of Ronald Reagan’s character amputated? a) Kings Row b) Dark Victory c) Desperate Journey 7. Who was the first prime time TV couple to be shown together in bed? a) Alex and Donna Stone b) Matt Dillon and Kitty Russell c) Fred and Wilma Flintstone 8. Whose death in 1967 was marked in London with the turning off of all outside lights at West End Theaters? a) Jayne Mansfield b) Humphrey Bogart c) Vivien Leigh 9. What comic strip character did Joe Shuster and Jerry Siegel sell their rights to in 1938 for just $130? a) Superman b) Batman c) Wonder Woman 10. When did Babe Ruth hit his first Major League home run? a) July 5, 1913 b) July 1, 1914 c) May 6, 1915 11. What illegal activity was John Wayne doing in the opening of the 1941 movie Sheilda of the Sahara? a) Robbing a bank b) Making moonshine c) Kidnapping a child 12. Who was the name of the B-29 bomber that dropped the atom bomb on Nagasaki? a) Devil’s Bledestone b) Bledestone c) Bock’s Car Activators: a) 2,13a, 3b, 4b, 5a, b) 4,7, 8, c) 9, 10, d) 11, b) 12c A party just isn’t a party without trivia. These are just some of the many questions you could ask. Make up a few more of your own, and show how wise you’ve become in your golden years.

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A party just isn’t a party without trivia. These are just some of the many questions you could ask. Make up a few more of your own, and show how wise you’ve become in your golden years.
Middle-income Americans 55 to 75 feel uncertain about retirement finances

Proper planning can reduce your chances of having to depend on others for financial support and help ensure you have a legacy to pass on to your loved ones or a legacy to your business. Yet, a recent study found that nearly two in three, 63 percent of middle-income Americans between ages 55 and 75 with income between $25,000 and $75,000, are unsure that they’ve saved enough to live comfortably in retirement.

Rising health and long-term care costs, the declining value of investments, and an uncertain economic future highlight the need for retirement plans that protect savings and make money last. The value of utilizing the resources available--whether through your own research or a professional--is apparent when you look at what people face when planning for retirement. As the responsibility for ensuring financial security in retirement shifts to individuals, it becomes daunting when you consider the study’s finding that nearly half (47 percent) view the tasks associated with retirement planning as complex and overwhelming.

Despite their feelings, however, more than half do not receive professional retirement advice of any kind. Instead, they turn to the Internet (50 percent) and to friends and family (38 percent) for in-patient and out-patient needs.

The Center’s retirement preparedness study found that 84 percent of those who don’t work with a professional advisor don’t feel they need one. Many feel that they can plan for retirement on their own, but they fail to do so. According to the study, 63 percent spend less than one hour per month planning, and 36 percent of those without advisors don’t do any research at all.

Meanwhile, according to the study, 68 percent of middle-income retirees and pre-retirees who work with a professional advisor feel better prepared for retirement than their peers, and 76 percent say they’re extremely or very satisfied with the experience.

Influences what happens in the present. Regardless of their circumstances, most siblings do feel a responsibility to care for parents that is built from love. And that’s a good place to start--optimistically and assuming the best.

Even the best of circumstances, though, can cause a strain for a family dealing with the issues of an aging parent. That’s where the free 50-50 Rule guide of family situations will help brokers and sisters struggling with any number of top issues. The guide helps divide care and work better as a team to dealing with end-of-life issues. In the guide, Connidis addresses situations, like the one described at the beginning of this release, with practical advice.

The guide and a website at www.solvingfamilyconflict.com will offer a variety of additional tips and resources for siblings. For more information, visit the site or contact your local Home Instead Senior Care franchise office at 402-423-8119. “Sometimes problems can be alleviated with a little extra home care for seniors and respite for family caregivers,” Kuhns said.

The extra effort will be well worth it, Connidis explained. “Siblings are sometimes the only family relationships that endure. After parents, siblings are the ones we’ve known the longest. So there is a depth of empathy we can tap into for that goes back to that relationship. When I look at my brother, I still see that little boy playing in the back yard. And I can still remember caring for my little sister. Those memories are what motivate us to care for our parents and each other. It’s what keeps us connected, even when we’re different. That sibling relationship will continue after parents are gone; research suggests that siblings don’t want to harm their relationships with each other.”

New program helps siblings overcome conflict while caring for their aging parents

Submitted by

Home Instead Senior Care

A long-time employee of an accounting firm, Mary has been waiting for this promotion for years. “This job is just what I’ve dreamed about all my life,” she excitedly told her best friend. But then Mary’s mom fell and broke her hip. As the youngest in the family and her mom’s presumed favorite, Mary suddenly is thrust into the role of family caregiver and is struggling to keep up with the demands of her new job. “I hate the feeling that I have to choose between caring for my mom and a new job all because my siblings won’t help.”

Situations like this are among the family conflicts that caregivers encounter each day while caring for aging parents. Caregiver stress, life-and-death medical crises, financial problems and property disputes often become part of the ongoing saga of a family’s caregiving story. Relationships between adult brothers and sisters can suffer as a result. That’s why the local Home Instead Senior Care® office has launched the 50-50 Rule®, a program that offers strategies for overcoming sibling differences to help families provide the best care for elderly parents.

“Any Nebraska family that has cared for a senior loved one knows that problems with siblings can lead to family strife,” said Monica Kuhns, owner of the local Home Instead Senior Care® office in Lincoln. “Making decisions together, dividing the workload and teamwork are the keys to overcoming family conflict.”

The 50-50 Rule refers to the average age (50) when siblings are caring for their parents as well as the need for brothers and sisters to share in the plans for care 50-50. Research conducted for the Home Instead Senior Care® network reveals that an inability to work together often leads to one sibling becoming responsible for the bulk of caregiving in 45 percent of families. And that can result in the deterioration of relationships with brothers and sisters.

“If you’re 50, have siblings and are assisting with the care of seniors, it’s time to develop a plan,” Kuhns said. “This program can help.”

At the core of the 50-50 Rule program a family relationship and communication guide of real-life situations that features practical advice from sibling relationships expert Dr. Ingrid Connidis from the University of Western Ontario. She says that relationships among siblings should be protected. “Like all relationships, siblings have a history,” Connidis noted. “Whatever happened in the past influences what happens in the present. Regardless of their circumstances, most siblings do feel a responsibility to care for parents that is built from love. And that’s a good place to start--optimistically and assuming the best.”

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Rhoads. She had five brothers, born between 1916 and 1922, to John and Myrtle Callaway. Once he got to Callaway, they lived in a sod cave in the Sandhills before his family moved to Nebraska. His father, Albert, and mother, Josephine, were the parents of seven children: Douglas, Helen, Erma, Ralph, Lena, Warren, and Frances.

Ralph went to a country school in the Sandhills before his family moved to Callaway. Once he got to Callaway, he stopped going to school.

“I got some low grades,” Ralph joked. “The teacher pleaded with me not to quit, but I was 16 and I wasn’t going to Callaway. Once he got to Callaway, he stopped going to school.”

“From then on, everyone started calling me ‘Wolf’,” Ralph said. “I always used to say how the bus driver was mean to me.”

Ralph continued to work for Union Pacific railroad until he retired in 1978. Irene worked as a clerk in post office from 1962-1967, and then became the postmaster in Pickrell from 1967-1971. The couple enjoyed taking bus tours with the Geneva State Bank after they retired, including trips to Florida, Georgia, and Wyoming.

Ralph’s favorite memory came from a trip to North Platte, where he found a trinket he still wears on his wrist to this day. “They let the water out of the North Platte River and something washed up next to me,” Ralph said. “I went down and grabbed it to see what it was. It was a beautiful $165 watch, and it was still ticking.”

Ralph also earned an interesting nickname during his travels on the bus tours. “I always used to say how the bus driver was mean to me.”

“From then on, everyone started calling me ‘Wolf’.”

As much as the couple enjoyed traveling, Irene always liked the feeling of being home in Pickrell. “It was nice to visit Georgia and Florida, but I would never want to live there,” Irene said. “Home always looked pretty good to me.”

Ralph and Irene said that their traveling days are behind them, unless it means a trip with one of their six grandchildren, or their 14 great grandchildren, or their great great granddaughter. Ralph and Irene have been a part of the Pickrell United Methodist Church for over 50 years, and always enjoy being around the citizens of Pickrell.

“Everyone here is great,” Irene said. “People bring us dinner or do nice things for us all the time. Pickrell is a great little town!”

In 1944, Irene discovered she had contracted polio. They attempted to treat her in Wyoming, but after two years, the couple headed home to Nebraska to receive better medical attention. They went to the hospital in Omaha where they received medicine for Irene’s polio.

“I had to rub a cream on her back and legs,” Ralph said. “I did that every night for a year, until she was better.”

The couple had their third child, Charles, in 1948. Ralph continued to work for Union Pacific railroad until he retired in 1978. Irene worked as a clerk in post office from 1962-1967, and then became the postmaster in Pickrell from 1967-1971. The couple enjoyed taking bus tours with the Geneva State Bank after they retired, including trips to Florida, Georgia, and Wyoming.

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“In the first fruit eaten on the moon was a peach.
Tips on how to have a fun vacation with your grandchildren

Being a grandparent puts you in the position of being able to enjoy your grandchildren without all of the responsibilities. Sadly, your family is spread out across the country, making spending time with the grandparents difficult. This year, why not change that by taking a vacation with your kids? It’s not as hard as you might think.

Most experts agree that the best age to take children on vacation is between 11 and 14 years old. By that time, children are old enough to be responsible and enjoy the trip. At the same time, they aren’t too old to have fun or be seen with anyone over age 18. Along with your grandchildren’s ages, you must take their attention span into consideration. Some children within the ideal age range simply don’t have the attention span for a trip as long as you should keep your grandchildren’s ages, attention spans and interests in mind. Children with short attention spans, for example, may not enjoy historical sites. Zoos and amusement parks might be a better idea. Whatever you do, do not plan a bus tour. Your grandchildren will not enjoy having to sit still for that long. You need to know what your grandchildren like to do in order to make the vacation fun for them. Fishing may be a good option for a grandfather and his grandson.

Grandchildren should never be expected to sit still for that long. You should select a destination that you and your grandchildren will enjoy. You should inform your grandchildren where they are going and encourage them to read up on what they will be seeing. You should let them decide if there is any special place they would like to visit. If there is a place you absolutely want to see, you should let your grandchildren know that in advance so they can get used to the idea and will respect your wishes when the time comes.

For the best results, you should not plan an activity for every minute of the vacation. Let everyone have some “me” time. Too much together-ness isn’t necessarily a good thing. Whatever you do plan, inform your grandchildren ahead of time what they will be seeing or doing and keep them entertained by making a game out of things. Have them act out what happened at an historical site or create a quiz based on what they hear and see. If your vacation involves air travel, you should prepare your grandchildren for what that might entail. Explain the screening process to them and remind them not to joke about having a gun or bomb. Let them know their bag will be returned to them after it has been x-rayed as will their shoes.

Try to select a hotel geared toward children and supervise your grandchildren at all times. Monitor their TV viewing and allow them access to the mini-bar sparingly. Watch them in the swimming pool and insist they wear shoes when walking through the hotel.

Vacationing with your grandchildren can be great fun as long as you select the right destination and establish some ground rules beforehand. Let your grandchildren know what to expect and how they should behave, and everyone is sure to have fun.
Having “the talk” with your family

By Krisie Beckenbach, RN, CGC
Guardian Angels Homecare

The average woman will spend approximately 17 years caring for her children, and more than 18 years caring for her parents. That’s a surprising statistic to most of us. Depending on the age of the children and parents, these years could overlap. This situation can cause significant stress to everyone involved. It’s reported that nearly 60% of caregivers will suffer from depression. How will your family manage these challenges should they arise?

If you are a senior who is finding the activities of your daily life challenging, sit down with your children and have a frank discussion. They may have noticed the difficulties you are having and not known how to approach you. No one wants to take away your independence, but your health and safety should be the priority.

If you are the adult child who is seeing that life is becoming challenging, it may be time to reach out to your parents and have a conversation about the future. Is mail piling up? Are you finding spoiled food in the refrigerator or a change in appetite? Have you noticed medications being taken too often or at the wrong time of day? Is your loved one falling on occasion? Is something just “not right”?

These are just a few of many possible signs that it’s time to have “The Talk.”

A variety of options exist for meeting these challenges. Remaining at home is one possibility. Consideration needs to be given to nutrition, safety, personal hygiene, and transportation. Private duty homecare may be the perfect fit and can be available a few hours or 24 hours a day.

An independent living community is an option for those who are ready to give up their own home but are not ready to give up their own home but also memory care facilities for those with cognitive difficulties.

Whatever your situation, start the conversation and then listen. Listen to the wants and hopes, the needs and desires on both sides. The spectrum from occasional homecare to a skilled facility is broad. Work with a professional organization such as Guardian Angels Homecare, who can offer input and referral to organizations that will best meet the needs.

There may be some challenges along the way, but having “the talk” sooner rather than later is a good start!

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Lakeview salutes long-time employees

Recently, three staff of Lakeview Care Center in Firth were asked what kept them at Lakeview for more than 30 years. Henrietta Jurgens, Betty Weber and Pat Waltke shared their insights, each echoing the sentiment that they liked being close to home.

Jurgens cooked, cleaned and laundered during her 34-year tenure at Lakeview. A resident of Filley, Jurgens said she formed deep bonds with the people she served and with whom she worked. She added she always worked until the job was done, and even after 34 years, her work was rewarding.

“Helping someone is a great achievement,” said Jurgens.

Jurgens retired from Lakeview this past winter and celebrated with staff and family at a farewell party. Jurgens said it will be hard to let go of the residents, but she will now have more time to spend with her grandchildren, doing yard work, gardening and scrapbooking.

Firth resident Weber began her long-time career at Lakeview 32 years ago. She started in nursing, serving in different capacities and now manages health information. Weber said transitioning from working with residents to working with data 11 years ago, was a bit of a change. She added she felt fortunate for the opportunity to really be a part of enhancing the residents’ lives physically, emotionally and spiritually.

“You realize that you are part of a job that is worth doing,” Weber said. “I work at a business that not only allows me, but also encourages me, to share my faith.”

Waltke attended school in Beatrice to become a certified nursing assistant and is now in her 31st year at Lakeview. She said the small-town, home-like atmosphere has kept her enjoying work. This is evident in Waltke’s philosophy towards her care for those she serves.

“I care for the residents as if they were my own family,” said Waltke. “I treat them like I would want myself or my family to be treated.”

“Love, deep caring for others, faith, devotion and commitment are just some of the values demonstrated by Henrietta, Betty and Pat,” said Genie Watters, Assistant Administrator. “They have laid the foundation and have set the bar for all staff at Lakeview. And, I am very pleased to see these values in all of our staff at Lakeview.”

Lakeview Care Center provides comfortable living and compassionate care to Firth and surrounding communities through rehabilitation, respite care and long-term placement.

Tabitha Health Care Services assumed management of Lakeview in August 2010. Tabitha’s love embraces a community where everyone is valued and empowered to live life to the fullest with companionship at home support, innovative living communities, exceptional rehabilitation, health care and hospice services.
How to recognize signs of a stroke

Submitted by Gold Crest Retirement Center, Adams

When severe weather season is near, we re-educate ourselves on how to remain protected from danger. We learn to listen to the warnings and what steps to take during a storm. Unfortunately, when it comes to our health, we sometimes take a more relaxed approach. In the United States, strokes affect more than 700,000 people each year, and yet many Americans do not understand what they are or how to protect themselves.

By definition, a stroke occurs when the blood circulation to the brain fails, either due to a blockage or bleeding. The decreased blood flow causes a lack of oxygen and results in brain cell death. There is no “sure fire” way to completely avoid a stroke at any age; however, there are a few treatable risk factors. High blood pressure is the most potent risk factor for stroke. Cigarette smoke is a second risk factor because it leads to the buildup in arteries and its effect on the blood. Blood is less oxygenated, thicker and more likely to clot in people who smoke. A third risk factor for stroke is heart disease. Common heart disorders can result in blood clots that break loose and block vessels leading to the brain. Diabetes is another risk factor for stroke. In addition to changing the way the body uses sugar, it also destroys blood vessels throughout the body. If a person suffers a stroke while their blood sugar is high, the brain damage is usually more severe. One of the most important risk factors for stroke is having a history of stroke or any of its symptoms. Visit with your physician to help you understand the risk and what steps you can take to protect yourself.

Physical therapy may help reduce your risk of stroke. Diet, exercise and medication can all be used together to form a personalized treatment plan. Not only is it beneficial to know the risk factors of a stroke, it is vital to understand the warning signs of a stroke. These need to be taken seriously and addressed immediately by a physician or by calling 911. An easy way to remember warning signs of a stroke is the acronym FAST. Facial drooping on one side of the face; Arm: weakness or numbness on one side of the body; Speech: slurred speech or trouble understanding others; Time: call 911 immediately.

What is alzheimer’s care?

Over 4.5 million people in the United States and 26 million worldwide suffer from Alzheimer’s disease. Alzheimer’s disease is the most common type of dementia. The disease destroys brain cells and symptoms can include confusion, anger, mood swings, language breakdown and long-term memory loss. Caring for a person with Alzheimer’s disease involves specialized services that differ from other types of senior housing. Learn About Alzheimer’s Care

Watch our brief educational video to learn more about the Alzheimer’s care option for your loved one.

What is the best type of care for a loved one with the disease? Alzheimer’s care is often delivered in an assisted living or nursing home setting usually in separate floor or unit. Generally, the residents live in semi-private apartments and have structured activities delivered by staff members trained in Alzheimer’s and dementia care. Most of these care environments have secured areas to prevent wandering, a common symptom of the disease. Often, residents have access to outdoor walking paths or gardens which are within secured areas. Stand-alone memory care communities called Alzheimer’s special care units or memory care units are also available to meet the specialized needs of residents with the disease. These memory care communities have been designed specifically for seniors suffering from Alzheimer’s disease or dementia and often have features like a circular layout to ensure a resident won’t encounter a “dead-end” in a hallway (a potential source of stress for advanced cases of Alzheimer’s).
Bennet man finally sets anchor where his life started

By Gerry Baksys

If you’ve arrived late in the life of Bennet native Keith King, you may assume he’s like many other semi-retired farmers living in south-east Nebraska.

He currently lives in the house he was born. “I used to brag I slept in the room I was born in,” Keith said. “My great-grandparents on my dad’s side homesteaded this property in 1875. They had two, 80-acre sections and built their house on the line between the two properties.”

He spends time helping out at the American Legion doing maintenance work and enjoys a cup of coffee at the local co-op. “There’s usually some guys I know there and we like to spread a little manure,” Keith smiled.

But what you may not know about Keith is for most of his life he

allow more oil to flow into the boiler to
produce more steam, he said. “Other times we would have to slow it down.”

Initially, working on an aircraft carrier was a big thrill for the farm boy from Nebraska. “When I first saw the carrier, it was really big and really fantastic. It was about the length of three football fields (approximately 557 feet),” he said.

He worked the graveyard shift, a four-hour on, four hours off, four hours on, four hours off. “That was probably the worst thing I ever had to do,” Keith said. “It’s 100 degrees in the boiler room, so you always had to shower when you left. And by the time you finished with that, you might get two and a half hours of sleep before you had to be back at your post.”

Keith said his carrier was never in combat, but the planes provided cover for the occupation of an island at one point. But being stuck in the boiler room, he’s not sure which island was involved.

He was discharged in July 1946, and went back home to Bennet. He worked on his dad’s farm, and was eventually given 20 acres of his own. But there wasn’t a lot of money in it, so when a friend approached him with a business offer, he couldn’t refuse.

Keith’s uncle wanted him to get a crew together and bale hay through the winter. In the 1940s and 1950s, more hay and alfalfa were grown in Dawson County than anywhere else in the world.

Keith made more in two days of baling hay than he did in a month in the Navy. “As a 3rd Class enlisted man, I earned $24 a month,” he said. “We made 50-50 on baling which usually averaged $2 a bale.”

It was in Cozad that Keith met his future wife, Doris. Doris was a waitress in a cafe Keith used to frequent.

But again, Keith couldn’t be tied down. After the baling work dried up in the spring of 1947, he got a job working at a hay mill where he did a variety of jobs. That lasted for about a year when he took a position working at Burlington Northern in Lincoln. “But I didn’t like that job at all,” Keith said. “So when the manager of the hay mill called and asked if I was coming back, I gave my notice and left.”

In 1950, a friend of Keith’s from his time in the Navy called and asked if Keith would come down to Texas for a visit. Keith obliged.

“It’s 100 degrees in the boiler room, was a big thrill, so when I got to the boiler room and saw the steam engines there; it was a really big thrill.”

But the thrill soon wore off when he constantly had to work shifts of four hours on, eight off. It got really exhausting for a month, when they

had a notoriously hard man to

serve on. That meant the re-

their service and were sent home on

put to shore in Hong Kong. There,

the Navy found out, they assigned

him to work in the boiler room of the aircraft carrier USS Puget Sound. “There wasn’t a waiting period

for a job where he worked at a Standard Oil factory,” Keith said. “The foreman interviewed me, set up a physical for that afternoon and I was working there the next day.”

By this point, Keith and Doris were getting pretty serious in their relationship, which might explain why on June 29, 1950, Doris’ parents had to go down to Texas, picked up Keith on a Wednesday, and they drove over to Roswell, New Mexico to get married.

“When I was working there, the guy talked me into applying

for a job where he worked at a Standard Oil plant in Texas.

He spent more time working in the boiler room of at least three different ships, but again never saw any action. He was discharged the second time in November of 1952, and went back to work at the Standard Oil plant in Texas.

But Keith’s feet started itching, and when a job opened up at a Standard Oil factory, he took it so he could be closer to home.

Keith and Doris’ first daughter, Pamela, was born in 1951. Their second, Katherine, was born in Kansas in 1953. It was Katherine’s early life that eventually forced the family to return to Nebraska.

“We lived there until 1955,” Keith said. “I was a farm boy, and when she was born, she had terrible problems with the dust and there were bad dust storms back then. It got to the point where we had to keep her in an oxygen tent.”

The dust storms were so bad, Keith recalled, one night when he was working the graveyard shift at the plant, he had to wrap wet rags around his head and through the dust. “We had flashlights pointed at the ground and had to walk real low to see our way around the plant.”

Eventually, a doctor at the hospital where Katherine was staying took Keith aside. “He told me I’d better get her out of here because he didn’t know how long she would last,” Keith said.

Before they left, Gary, the couple’s third and final child, was born in 1954.

The burgeoning family stayed with Keith’s parents for a few months while Keith tried to find another job.

He worked for a few months at the All Aluminum Window Co. in Lincoln, then after he was laid off that winter, spent the next three years delivering groceries for another Lincoln business.

In 1962, he started working for a publisher in Lincoln, but after years of working the graveyard shift, decided he had enough of that. So in 1977, he went back to working for Burlington Northern Railroad and stayed there until he retired in 1990.

If that wasn’t enough, Keith and his brother Harlan, took over the family farm in 1959.

Keith examined an old tube that injected oil into the giant burners that produced steam that powered WWII era Navy vessels.

He started working with Keith’s parents for a few months while Keith tried to find another job.

Keith’s parents had enough of that. So in 1977, he went back to working for Burlington Northern Railroad and stayed there until he retired in 1990.

If that wasn’t enough, Keith and his brother Harlan, took over the family farm in 1959.

“Dad’s health got bad and he stopped farming, so Harlan and I took over,” Keith said. “When dad passed in 1963, we bought the farm from mom and continued operating it.”

Today, Keith still grows some hay, but crop rents most of his land. Even after suffering a heart attack about 10 years ago, he still finds ways to keep busy, including building the family farm after the 2004 tornado destroyed or damaged many of the buildings on his prop-

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Chiropractic for the Whole Family

“Before I started treatment with Dr. Brian I saw a chiropractor twice a week for a year over my low back pain. As long as I went, I felt fine, but if I missed an appointment I felt bad. I decided to start. After just a few treatments with Dr. Brian I am now completely out of pain and stand for long periods of time without having to sit. Dr. Brian does a great job of explaining everything before starting with treatment.”

Sandy Rosecrans, Martell

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