

Working Women 2005

The Goodland Star-News

May 13, 2005



Violet Phillips



Lynn Williams



Charlene Cole

**Three stars from
our community**

She's at home on the road

By Kathryn Burke

The Goodland Star-News

A loud hissing noise escapes from the brakes in Violet Phillips' tractor trailer as she parks to empty a load of fertilizer.

Her 4-11 blonde-topped frame hops down from her seat ready to help empty the truck.

As the air hopper on the truck opens, small white pellets of Urea fertilizer escape from the bottom of the trailer onto a conveyer-type system. Phillips heads to the back of the trailer where she uses a large pole attached to a black tarp to uncover the top of the truck.

The workers at the fertilizer lot help her, but this 25-year veteran of truck driving knows her way around the equipment.

Although some would expect a "rough and tumble" woman to take a trucking job, Phillips defies that stereotype.

From her coifed blonde hair down to her spring-colored violet nail polish, she's a girl at heart. On an average day in the truck, she dons a bright yellow button-up blouse layered over a white lace-lined tank top and a pair of blue jeans. On her feet are a pair of

chunky black shoes complete with a height enhancing heel.

Her dark purple truck is adorned with a salmon-colored dream catcher hanging inside and a seat cover embroidered with the word "sassy" and a pair of puckered bright red lips.

"There's a lot of women out there," she said adding she has run into some discrimination and some admiration for her profession.

Even sassy, Phillips is still the boss, managing her trucking company V & EXpress out of her home. V stands for Violet and E stands for Ed, her husband.

She is in charge of three trucks, driven by herself, Ed and her son-in-law, Jared Scheck.

The three-truck fleet in Phillips' company moves bulk commodities, that is anything from fertilizer to cookie dough in bulk.

"I'll haul anything but hazardous materials and household goods," she said adding she won't transport meat and bone material either because of regulations relating to disease.

When she changes loads, the truck is cleaned out with an air hose to make sure the corn or wheat doesn't get into the fertilizer and vice versa.

She hauls loads in Kansas, Colorado, Texas and Oklahoma. Recently she has almost worn a path from Denver to Tulsa, Okla., and back delivering fertilizer.

Harvest is a busy season for the company because they follow harvest from Texas north hauling wheat.

Phillips said she spends every other night at home and the rest of the week she's on the road. She does not, however, work weekends.

Drivers can only log 14 hours on duty and 11 hours in the driver's seat she said. After that, according to the Department of Transportation they have to rest, she said. That means she sometimes can't make it to a job and back home in one day, so she sleeps in the truck.

After spending so much time in it, the truck became a home away from home for Phillips.

The back portion has a wide bed up against the back wall where she spends nights away from home. When she sleeps, she covers up all windows on the truck to ensure complete privacy. She always picks a busy truck stop to sleep in and doesn't open

See PHILLIPS, Page 3



Violet Phillips spends weekends catching up on paperwork in her home office. She copies paperwork and uses computer databases to track her business, V&E Xpress.

Photos by Kathryn Burke/The Goodland Star-News

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PHILLIPS, from Page 2

the door for strangers.

"My husband always worries about me at truck stops," she said.

She is set up with a television and a VCR for winding down after a day on the road.

Behind the two bucket seats are closets on either side of the truck where Phillips said she keeps clothes and shoes.

The front part of the truck is lined with a wood-like finish. Directly behind the steering wheel the dash is covered in round gages. Phillips gets readouts on speed, gas, weight of her load, trip mileage, air pressure, temperature, brakes and more. She prefers the old type of read-outs compared to the newer digital models.

Just like at home, she has an air freshener set up on the dash that permeates the entire truck.

Phillips has a laptop computer she uses for business and tracking mileage in the truck.

"I do all of my business in the truck," she said, "because I'm never home."

Under the hood, she is driving a Detroit 500 horsepower, 13-speed transmission truck. The 2000 Peterbuilt has electric windows and mirrors and air-ride suspension.

She has had the truck for a little more than a year and said she will

probably drive it for a bit longer than normal.

Although she spends most of her time on the road, as manager she is responsible for a stack of paperwork.

She said all three of her drivers keep a log book to report all stops especially ones for fuel.

Fuel is a touchy subject, since the hike in gas prices has hit her company hard. She said last year alone the company spent roughly \$211,000 for fuel. To fill her truck at Presto in town before making a trip to Limon, Colo., she can drop up to \$500 in her gas tank.

Phillips keeps receipts of money spent on road tolls, too. She said each stop costs about \$5 and that adds up over a year.

When she picks up and drops off a load, she said, everyone requests a signature, making the paperwork mount.

At home in her office on the weekend, she takes all of the paperwork from a week on the road and makes copies.

Trucks follow complicated weight regulations, too. She said they can haul 80,000 pounds in Kansas and 85,000 in Colorado. She said their trailers are 43 feet long.

Along with gas and tolls, Phillips said she has to carry \$1 million liability on the trucks.

She keeps track of maintenance,



As soon as Violet Phillips opened the vents on her semi-truck, small, white pellets of Urea fertilizer spilled out onto a conveyer belt. It takes about an hour for Phillips to unload the entire truck.

making sure the trucks have oil changes, greased trailers and everyday fluid checks.

"You've got to do an inspection on your truck every morning," she said.

Phillips always rides alone in her truck, she said, but sometimes two or even all three of the companies trucks will head towards the same place.

To communicate on the long drives she uses a cell phone or her CB radio.

"They're pretty handy," she said.

She passes the hours listening to country music or talking to Ed or Scheck on the phone or by CB.

"I love driving truck," she said. "I like being out here by myself."

Although she loves her job, Phillips said if she is in Texas or Oklahoma, she can't get home on short notice. She sometimes worries about being there for her family.

"That's the only thing I don't like about trucking," she said adding she would do what she could to get back. "If anything every day I'd drop what I was doing and head back."

Phillips got her start in truck driving in 1980 when she went to work for Rick Farris, the Farris Brothers in Edson, on harvest. She drove truck for 15 years when she quit.

"I was head of trucks," she said.

After she stopped working there,

See PHILLIPS, Page 4



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PHILLIPS, from Page 3

she hauled grain for two different companies for five years before setting out on her own.

"I decided it was time to get my own deal," she said.

She opened her business and it grew from there. At one point, she said, they had more than 6 trucks in the fleet and she has helped up to 6 more find loads at the same. Phillips said she still helps drivers and other companies find loads occasionally.

With only three trucks now, she said, the business size is ideal.

She wouldn't mind adding trucks to the company, she said, but she wants only owner operators. She doesn't want to hire any drivers, just people who want to contract with her.

The companies trucks sit in a lot across the street from her home office.

Phillips shares the one-room office with her husband, his computer on one side and hers on the other. The room is complete with a copier, fax machine, scanner, printer and computers. Under a table on the north wall, Phillips has boxes full of receipts and paperwork she must keep for the business.

Her desk, along with the rest of her house, is covered in elephants she collects. All types of tubby, trunked trinkets fill her living room, dining

room and kitchen.

She advertises her company's services in the Farm & Ranch Magazine in the newspaper and on the radio. She said she has an ad in the Fiest and works with radio ads for Kids Against Drunk Driving.

Driving truck is unlike any other driving, Phillips said, adding when she sets out in her pickup truck she notices the difference.

From air cushioned seats to cruise control and power steering, she said the tractor-trailer is a whole different animal.

"I'd rather drive a truck," she said.

She even met Ed through truck driving. She said he was the foreman at Farris Brother when she started working there.

Her life isn't all trucking, Phillips loves spending time outdoors, too. She has turned her backyard into a haven complete with shade trees and a garden.

Off to the side of her porch is a large fish pond that she built with Ed. Phillips filled up her truck with rock to line the pond and set up the pump system herself.

The pond is alive with about 80 goldfish and coy. Behind the pond luscious greenery pokes up over the rocks and the pond is lined with fountains including an otter and an elephant.

Phillips and Ed plant vegetables in a garden across the street at Ed's mother's, Pauline Anspaugh, place.

She likes to go fishing and camping with her family when she isn't driving. Her daughter, Scheck's wife, Sumar, 26, lives in Hays and they have a 1-year-old daughter Mattyson.

Her son, Andy, 21, graduated from the Northwest Kansas Technical College in Diesel Mechanics and is working for Malsom Welding and Repair Service.

She likes spending time at home with her dogs, Lexi, a rat terrier, and Molly, a German shorthair.

Phillips has ties to Goodland with her sisters Mona Carver, Gloria Douglas and Jo Ann Holton and her brother Bob Lamb all living here. Her mother Joan Lamb and grandmother Ada Taylor live in town, too. Her sister Rachel Taylor drives in from Denver every weekend to visit. She has a brother, Pat, who lives in St. Francis.

Violet Phillips (right) cleans the filter on her fish pond regularly. The pond is one of her favorite places to relax on the weekends. Phillips tends to the pond and gardens when she isn't behind the wheel of a tractor trailer truck.



We appreciate our women



(Back) Janeil Dilling, Sharmis Emig, Debra Wasse Miller, Ida Gottchalk, Mary Volk.

(Front) Ida Salinas, Jeana Roe, Amy Thornson, Leann Taylor, Shawna Johnson, Leslie Knitig.

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Lynn Williams installed a power box on the farm shop at Eric and Heather Purvis' farm south of Weskan last month. Lynn, her father, her husband and her son also installed lights in the shop and a pump on the farm's fuel tank.

Photos by Sharon Corcoran/The Goodland Star-News

She always wanted to be an electrician

By Sharon Corcoran

The Goodland Star-News

Many fathers want their sons to follow in their footsteps, but sometimes fathers forget their daughters could carry on their legacy.

Lynn Williams, owner of Legacy Electric, learned her trade from her father, Dave Walker. But she said it took some convincing to get him to take her to work. She said she was 10 when he finally relented, but her brother David started going to work with "Dad" when he was younger.

"Since I was a girl," she said, "I had to convince him. Then after a few times, he saw I wanted to do this."

Lynn said it was always what she wanted, mainly because it was what her dad did, adding that "children always want to be like their parents."

She took on another career when, at 17, she married Larry Williams and moved with him to a farm north of Brewster. She drove a tractor, fed cattle, hauled bales and even got a commercial drivers license to be able to haul cattle.

In their seven years on the farm, they raised cattle, grew wheat and alfalfa and raised corn for two years to feed the cattle.

"I really enjoyed farm work," Lynn said, "but it didn't pay."

Larry had been pulled into the family business, Lynn said, when he started helping her dad before they got married. Larry enjoys doing electrical work too, Lynn said; it wasn't hard pulling him in. And it made a good backup when money was scarce on the farm.

Lynn said they went to Fairplay, Colo., in the Breckenridge area to work with "Dad" to make money, so they could live on the farm. She said they moved back and forth to Fairplay a couple of times because it was hard for her to be away from her father and her mother, Nancy.

The Williamses started a partnership, Auxiliary Electric, with her dad in 1992 in Fairplay. Both families moved to Goodland in 1997 and worked together until her father's health problems prevented him from working regularly. He was so sick that she and Larry were doing all the work, but they were splitting the income with her parents.

About five years ago, she said, "Dad" decided to dissolve the partnership and collect disability benefits, so she and Larry could have their

See WILLIAMS, Page 6

Thank you to our working women

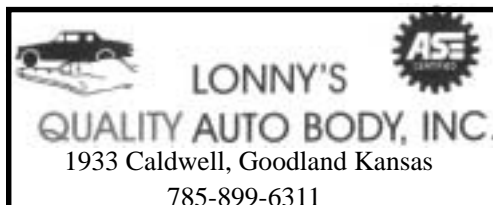


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WILLIAMS, from Page 5

own business and income.

"Every once in awhile, he still works with us," she said, adding her dad feels useful when he can work, though being on kidney dialysis while waiting for a transplant, he is not able to do what he used to.

But having a whole family of electricians has its benefits, and it keeps things interesting. Lynn said she and Larry work in Denver sometimes, where her brother has his business, Exclusive Electric. Sometimes they all go out to dinner, she said, and she and Larry are wearing shirts that say "Legacy Electric," her dad is wearing a shirt that says, "Auxiliary Electric," and David is wearing a shirt that says "Exclusive Electric."

She said they get some interesting looks because the shirts make them look like competitors. Or an electricians' convention.

But they aren't competitors — in fact, one benefit of having so many electricians in the family is they always have extra hands when they need them.

"Sometimes we call each other," Lynn said, "and say, 'I have a job over here. . . .'"

David has a job at a condominium, she said, where there are four units all hooked to the same power source. In order to do the work he needs to, she said, he will have to shut the power off on all of them. She and Larry will help with the job, so they can get it done all in one day.

She said they work in Pagosa Springs, Colo., with a friend of her dad's trained in the business 25 years ago. He used to be one of David's employees, she said.

Larry earned his master electrician's license in 2000, Lynn said, and she earned hers six months later, the next time she was allowed to take the test.

"It was a difficult, 4 1/2-hour test," Larry said; "no one else in Colorado earned a license between when I did and when she did."

You only get 4 1/2 hours to do it, he said, and then you're done whether you want to be or not.

"He got his masters before I did," Lynn said, "but he worked more regularly. I stayed home with the kids."

Lynn said the job allows them to home school their kids, Tyler, 15, and Lexi, 10. She said they can earn a living in three days a week and take the kids with them when they both work, and the kids can do their school work in the evenings and on the road to Denver.

And setting your own hours allows time to do what you want. Lynn said she and Larry volunteered for two weeks in March at the Brooklyn branch of Jehovah's Witnesses. They did electrical work in the laundry department.

"It was a lot of fun," she said. "Larry and I want to do it again; we just have to get the money."

It wasn't really expensive, she said, but it takes money for the plane tickets, to eat out and for odds and ends.

Whether working for pay or volunteering, the Williamses spend a lot of time together.

"It's a combined group effort," Larry said. "We're together all the time."

Lynn is the owner on paper because she was

See WILLIAMS, Page 7



Larry Williams had a view from above as he fed cables into the farm shop at Purvis Farms last month. His wife Lynn was installing a power box in the shop.

We recognize our working women



Wilma Pfannensteil, Judy Finley, Reta Smith, Linda Rummel, Barb Abbott and Roberta Normandin.
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Back: Rita Rall, Rhonda Lovins, Michelle Haines, Jessica Colby, Pat Graves, Tammy Freeman, Barb Eisenbart, Rebecca Koel. Front: Jean Johnson, Jeanne Stasser, Donna Swager, Renee Goodman and Maureen Brown.



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WILLIAMS, from Page 6

the one who filled out and signed the papers for the business, but everyone has a role.

"I'm the brains behind the operation," Larry joked.

Sometimes Tyler is, Lynn said jokingly, adding they didn't think their scaffold was going to reach high enough for a job, but Tyler showed them how to adjust it, and sure enough, it reached. He has good common sense, she said.

Lynn was born at Brighton, Colo., but grew up in Montana until she was 10, then lived at Greeley, Colo., and then back at Brighton. Larry grew up in Sharon Springs, the son of Buckley and Jo Williams, now of Goodland.

Dave Walker, (left photo) father of Lynn Williams, worked with his daughter and son-in-law, helping to install a pump on the fuel tank at Eric Purvis' farm last month. Heather Purvis (right photo) talked with Lynn Williams when she was working at Purvis Farms last month. The Purvis' daughter Josie eyed Lynn's tool belt.



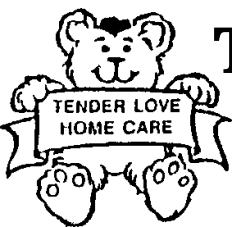
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Facing challenges with courage

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News

The day President John F. Kennedy was shot, Nov. 22, 1963, she was student teaching at Bellevue High in Omaha, and remembers watching them lower the flag to half mast outside her classroom window as the announcement was made that he had died.

Charlene Cole, owner of Cole Real Estate, remembers that day because Nov. 22 is her birthday.

A Goodland resident for the past 29 years, she can be found most mornings about 9 a.m. having coffee with friends at the Daylight Donut shop, which is around the corner from her real estate office.

She has been a licensed real estate agent in Colorado since 1971, and in Kansas since 1977. She handles listings of houses and commercial property in Goodland, Kanorado and Burlington.

"I think I've been in most of the houses in Goodland over the past 29

years," she said.

Looking at the changes in the real estate business she said the biggest change has been the increase in the financing through the Internet.

"Some of the Internet loans have higher closing costs than going through a local lender," she said. "The credit score sort of rules your life today.

"Identity theft is a new and pretty scary thing, and has happened even in Goodland.

"Of course, prices have gone up. What you could buy for \$30,000 years ago now costs \$80,000."

Cole believes the housing market in Goodland is about normal with about 125 properties listed for sale.

"I don't think that is any more than usual," she said. "Approximately 125 is about normal. The market was pretty flat early this year, but it picked up in March.

"We need jobs and rain to bring

See COLE, Page 9



Charlene Cole wasn't sure what Gordon Becker was talking about at Daylight Donut last week. She can be found drinking coffee and eating donuts most mornings before opening the office around the corner.

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Charlene Cole's office is around the corner from Daylight Donut, and is open Monday through Friday unless posted on the door. She does close for lunch.

COLE, from Page 8

people to Goodland. The interest rates help, but we need people to sell homes and to have new businesses open."

She feels Goodland will rebound as it always has over the years and expects to continue selling real estate for many years.

"My favorite part of real estate is closing the transaction as that is my background," she said. "I like to put numbers together and of course that is when you get your commission, sometimes they are few are far between."

Cole manages a number of rental properties, and said the drop in students at the Northwest Kansas Technical College has hurt the rental market.

She has seen some people moving from Denver because they don't want to live in the city. Some of these have been older couples who want to retire, but be close to the city. Others are young couples who want to raise their children away from the madness of the city.

Her husband of 22 years, Curtis Cole, died in 1998, and in 2000 she was diagnosed with two kinds of cancer. She had surgery for kidney cancer and chemo therapy for lymphoma.

"I really got through it pretty good," she said. She had two kidney operations for cancer at the Cleveland Clinic in 2001, and was fine until October when another surgery took her adrenal gland. Now there is a new spot on a kidney.

See COLE, Page 10

We Salute Our Working Women



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(Left) Tammy Kallestad, Patty Mills, Tammy Geigle, Tina Roe. Not pictured Jennifer Franklin, Jeannie Malone, Shanail Stewart, Anna Martinez, Rachel Bustillos, Sonia Sigala, Ivonne Martinez, Maricella Castillo, Rosalinda Castillo-Rodriguez

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Lori Phillips (5 years), Pam Parsons (19 years) and Laurie Carmichael (1 year)

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(Back) Jo Ann Matthews, Shirley Raile, Kristi M. Shoff. (Front) Dereth Claycamp, Gorda Adelgren

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Back row: Bev Baldwin, Carol Jarrett, Pam Parsons, Jeanette Jones, Rosemary Schuster, Marcia Sitton, Lana Ginn. Front Row: Cinda Hatcher, Karen Ginther, and Lonnie Newell.



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COLE, from Page 9

ney, and she is not sure what that means for the future.

"I've learned to live with it," Cole said. "I just take it one day at a time. The community has been supportive, and my church has been wonderful to me. Without friends and family I wouldn't make it. I enjoy going to work everyday selling and listing real estate, and just deal with the problems as they come.

"You've got to keep up the fight, and have to have a positive attitude."

She said one key is to find the best doctors, and learn about the disease so you know what the options are.

Being a one woman real estate shop, Cole admits it is a struggle sometimes. Diana Spinney sells with her part-time, and Gordon Becker and Larry Harper help with the repair work on the rentals.

"Lots of people helped after Curt died," she said. "That is an advantage of a small town."

She has been a member of Nancy Kear's Angels team for the Relay for Life cancer walk held annually in August.

"Seeing all those luminaries gets to you," she said. "That there are so many who have had cancer from this community.

Cole is one of those who, as a sur-

vivor of cancer, have the honor each year of walking the first lap. The large number of survivors who participate is another reminder that cancer can strike anyone at any time, and you are one of the lucky ones to survive.

She got into doing auctions with her husband part time in 1977 and full time in 1982 when they opened Cole Auction and Real Estate.

"The first six months were a bit skimpy," she said. "We learned a lot with our first farm auction, and we had some friends in the auction business help."

She has two daughters, Cristin, who works as a senior labor manager at Epcot Center at Walt Disney World in Orlando, Fla., and Cynthia who is an adoption social worker in Topeka. Curt had two daughters from a previous marriage, Melissa, who died of cancer, and Jacquelyn of Vona, Colo.

Cynthia got her bachelor degree from Baylor University and masters degrees from Kansas University, and Cristin graduated from Cornell University of Ithaca, New York in hospitality management.

Charlene was born in Red Oak, Iowa where she graduated from high school in 1960. Her parents, Clarence and Frances Munson are deceased. Her dad was a farmer and

did custom farm work. Her mother was a homemaker.

She says Red Oak is a small town like Goodland about 50 miles from Omaha.

She attended the University of Omaha and graduated in 1964 with a bachelor of science degree in business administration specializing in real estate and a secondary teaching degree.

She student taught at Bellevue Air Force Base, and North High in Omaha. She was offered a teaching job in California after graduation, but decided to move to Denver.

She went to work for Western Securities Company which was a mortgage banking firm located across the street from the Molly Brown house. For 13 years she flew around the country doing loan closings and enjoying the single life.

In 1976 she married Curtis Cole at Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Denver and the reception was held at the Lakewood Country Club. After a honeymoon in Hawaii, she moved to small town living in Goodland.

When she moved to Goodland her first job was at the First National Bank. She started as a teller and worked up to Assistant Trust Officer in her six years at the bank.

See COLE, Page 11



Charlene Cole spends lots of time on the phone as she talks to prospective buyers and clients who are trying to sell their property.



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Thank You Ladies

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(Standing) Linda Jeffery, Nichole Buskirk, Jena McCall, Colleen Smith, Kathy Jackson, Rita Fisher. (Sitting) C.C. Huffman, Crystal Crandall, Becky Linnell, Gloria Smith

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***These are just a few of the hard
working women at the Goodland
Regional Medical Center***



Back row: Katrinia Duraso, Amy Gillmring, Sarah Linton, Cheryl Kraft, Dianna Briney, Mary Ann Elliott, Marie Sandoval, Janice DeGood. 4th Row: Terry Twombly, Wendy Fritz, Karen Nelson, Rosa McCord, Rhonda Skrdlandt, Virginia Terry, Bobbie Rehor, Glenda Morris, Diane Littrell, Shelli Stephens. 3rd Row: Mona Marrs, Patsy Van Vleet, Myra Wilson, Diana Slough, Jane Hamilton, Jan McClelland, Kerri Vasquez, Anna Carter, Debbie George, JoAn Hatfield, Irma Flores, Jackie Jorgensen, Tanya Jarrett. 2nd Row: Lora Lake, Frankie Thomas, Bev Fiegel, Joanne Petracich, Karen Daise, Kathy Erickson, Jody Engel, Jackie Battistoni, LeAnn Haarberg. Kneeling: Amy Virtudazo, Gigi Curz, Marjorie Brunidor and Kami Pianalto.



220 W. 2nd, Goodland, Kan. 67735
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COLE, from Page 10

She had her real estate license and started selling part-time in 1977. At that time Curtis was selling seed corn for Horizon Seed Company of Lincoln, Neb.

In 1977 he went to auction school. He had worked around the sale barns all his life and wanted to be an auctioneer.

They went full time in the auction business in 1982. She said they rented buildings like the Veterans of Foreign Wars, but then bought the building at 1405 Main, and that made the sales better and easier. They did lots of household auctions, consignment auctions, real estate auctions and farm sales.

Her office moved three years ago to the building at 112 W. 13th, which she owns. It has six apartments upstairs and one next to her office. There is a beauty shop and the donut shop plus an empty space on the corner which used to be a video store.

Over the years she and her husband were involved in Kansas Auction Association the state auction association and Kansas Association of Realtors.

She said after he died she kept going to the conventions, and feels the auction people are more open and family friendly. She is president of

the Goodland Board of Realtors and a member of the Kansas Association of Realtors, and the National Association of Realtors.

She is a member of the Board of Directors for the state realtors association. She awards an annual "new auctioneer" scholarship in Curt's memory each year at the auction convention.

Her daughter, Cynthia, is interested in going to auction school to learn to do auctions for her social work career.

She is active in her church Emmanuel Lutheran, and serves as the treasurer. She works with Mary Porterfield for American Field Services, and is treasurer for the adult chapter of AFS. She remembers when her family hosted a foreign exchange student from Norway.

She is a member of Thetis Club in Goodland, and an active Stephen Minister in her church.

For hobbies she loves flowers. She said Lou Spinney, master gardener and neighbor, plants her garden, and she does the flowers.

She is a Broncos fan. Loves to travel, reading, playing on the Internet and playing with her dog Molly. She enjoys collecting and auctions, and the company of family and friends.



Charlene Cole and Gordon Becker checked out the screen door that leads up to the apartments. A recent high wind sprung the door, and Becker was taking the glass pieces out so no one would be cut.

Photos by Tom Betz / The Goodland Star-News

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