

Congratulations Ron!



Ron VanLoenen, pressman from May 1958 to May 2006.

Join us for a reception for Ron VanLoenen from 2-4 p.m. on Friday at *The Goodland Star-News* office, 1205 Main.

A career spanning six decades comes to an end on Friday when Ron VanLoenen retires as a darkroom technician and pressman at *The Goodland Star-News*. A reception will be held from 2-4 p.m. at the newspaper office, 1205 Main. VanLoenen began working at *The Goodland Daily News* in 1958, just out of Goodland High School. When he retires it will end his 48th year with the newspaper. His first job, he said, was working in the back shop running the Goss press and handling lots of hot lead. He poured the melted lead into casting molds and matrices to make ads and photos for the paper. In 1963, he went to the Army. He was supposed to be photo lab technician, but ended up working in personnel. He returned to Goodland in 1966, and went back to the back shop, spending some time in the commercial print shop. He made the transition to the darkroom and offset printing, which was called cold type to separate it from the hot-lead letterpress days, when the paper changed in 1969.

“Ron really liked working for Robert and Rink (Raymond) McCants,” said Jim Bowker, manager of Nor’West Press, which operates the back shop, who has worked with VanLoenen since 1961. “We all liked working for the McCants family. “Ron is a very hard worker and dependable. We are going to miss him. “After working with someone that many years, you knew he was going to be there.” VanLoenen was born in 1940 in Norton, but his family moved to Goodland in 1942 after the start of World War II. In 1971, he married Linda Stroman, who has been a Goodland High School teacher for 36 years. She taught for a year at Parsons High School before moving to Goodland, where she met VanLoenen. The couple has two sons, Michael born in 1975, and Steven, born in 1979. Today there is a grandson and a granddaughter. Scarlett, 1, is the daughter of Steven and Laura. Andrew, 10 months, is the son of Michael and Stacey. Over the years, VanLoenen has

seen a lot of changes in the newspaper, including three changes in ownership and two locations. The newspaper office was next to Garrett’s Liquor until about 1965, when it moved to the present building next to the Sherman Theatre. The old Goss flatbed press, which would print eight pages, was replaced in 1969 with a three-unit Harris offset press that would print a total of 12 pages. That was expanded in 1999 with the addition of three more Harris units, which allow the paper to do full color photos and ads “Ron is a nice guy, decent and as honest as they come,” said Tom Dreiling former Daily News editor, and now publisher of a sister paper, *The Norton Telegram*. The McCantses sold the newspaper to the Seaton family in 1986, and the Seaton family sold the paper to what became U.S. Media Group in 1989. Nor’West Newspapers, owned by Steve and Cynthia Haynes, purchased the newspaper and the *Colby Free Press* in January 1997. “I have known Ron for over eight years, and he is a hard worker,” said

Editor Tom Betz. “He has always been interested in sports, especially wrestling. “He is usually a quiet man, but he does have a good sense of humor. Over the years, Ron took wrestling photos for the paper and developed film until that ended with the switch to digital photography.” His wife Linda remembered a story she said illustrates Ron’s kindness to others that she sees. “This happened in June 1995,” she said. “After working at the newspaper until 7 p.m. one night he responded to a call from their son Michael. Michael’s car had stopped running and he was stuck at the rest area near WaKeeney. Ron left in the 1971 Ford pickup with a battery and towrope to go get him. Michael said his lights didn’t work and his alternator wasn’t working. “Ron followed him home stopping to charge the battery when needed. Several hours later they made it home. “That pretty much is what he does. Puts everybody’s needs ahead of his own.” The VanLoenens are members of the Church of the Nazarene.

We’ll miss you! Enjoy your retirement!

Sixty-five years of Ron’s life



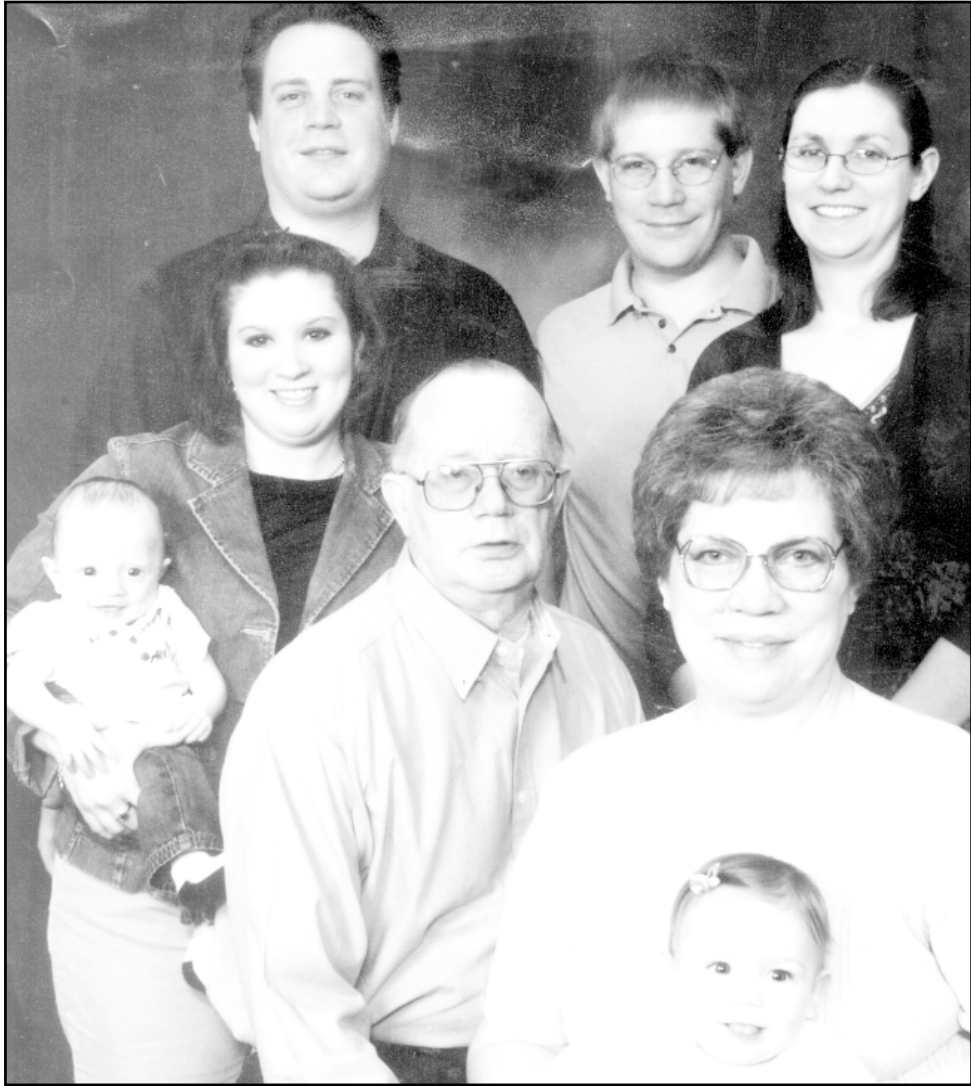
1942



1958



1963



Ron and Linda VanLoenen in 2005 with sons Michael (back left) with wife Stacey and grandson Andrew, Steven with wife Laura and granddaughter Scarlett (in grandmother’s lap).



Married Linda Stroman in 1971



Ron and Linda VanLoenen in 1984 with sons Steven (left) and Michael.