

Contented as they come

Written by Elizabeth Barrett

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Jim Hudson learns to adjust to stages of life.

“We should all do what, in the long run, gives us joy, even if it is only picking grapes or sorting the laundry.”—E.B. White

Jim Hudson walks the three acres of property he owns with wife Dee like a contented man.

Red and white grapes glisten in the warm October sunlight and bulbous orange pumpkins lie tangled in vines alongside watermelon and squash.

The Hudson’s tomatoes and other vegetables and fruit have been harvested and eaten, canned or turned into salsa.

Because they’re retired, neither Jim or Dee rush off to a job in the morning. Instead, they can spend their time reading, gardening or drinking coffee together on the spacious deck of their log home southeast of town.

Often, the couple can be spotted at school activities watching two granddaughters and a grandson.

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“In philosophical terms, I’m passionate about living happily and healthy and being active,” said Jim who celebrated his 68th birthday about a month ago.

To stay in healthy physical shape, Jim wheels out his road bike for highway jaunts or joins friend Bob Mann—who was featured in The Times a year ago—for a mountain bike ride in the south hills.

During the winter, he works out in a gym and swims laps in the indoor pool in Eustis.

Year round, Jim is a woodworker who practices his craft in a large shop next to his home. He also does minor construction jobs for friends and family.

A late-summer-into-fall project this year is repairing an original Pony Express Station on 96 ranch south of Gothenburg.

Once that’s completed, the former teacher, construction company owner and insurance salesman might think about building a kayak under the tutelage of Mann who is also a woodworker.

Part of Jim’s recipe for contentment as he grows older is to approach life in a positive way.

“I don’t think of myself as old but realize I have to make certain adjustments,” Jim said. “There are things I don’t do as well or as quickly as I used to.”

For example, Jim now takes the time to make sure ladders are properly grounded instead of “scampering up” like in the past.

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The Hudsons were in their 50s when they embarked on an adventure most others their age probably would not.

After selling insurance in Gothenburg for several years, Jim decided he wanted to return to teaching. The couple moved to Bakersfield, CA, where son Jonas and his family live.

Jim had taught English for Gothenburg Public Schools for eight years before starting a construction business and later working for what is now All Points Cooperative and Nebraska Salt & Grain.

“I’d been out of teaching for 22 years,” he said.

Dee left her job of 23 years at Brady Public Schools where she had taught mostly fifth graders.

In Bakersfield, Dee taught second, fourth and fifth graders while Jim was a high school English teacher and later a guidance counselor.

Living and working in California was a wonderful experience, they said. However after 10 years,

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