

Brott family adjusts to new 'normal'

Written by Elizabeth Barrett
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Dogs lived in livestock business office

Life as they've known it has changed for Wendell, Kathy and Cooper Brott.

And also for their heeler-cross dogs, Sadie and Freckles, who lived in the office of Gothenburg Livestock that was destroyed by fire on Feb. 25.

The Brotts also spent most of their time at the sale barn where they also operate an auction service.

"We live here when we're not at home," Kathy said.

Last Friday, the dogs played in a parking area in front of the twisted blackened tin and wood remains of the building.

Although little was salvageable, the Brotts spent last week and the weekend sifting through what they could for insurance purposes.

"It's overwhelming," Kathy said, suggesting that people videotape what they have in their homes and businesses.

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Besides business equipment, the building contained personal belongings such as antique furniture pieces, Cooper's hunting gear, photographs and much more.

"We had it packed to the gills," she said.

But some things are non-replaceable, like a vinyl record recording of the 1965 World Champion Livestock Auctioneer Contest, that Wendell wishes he still had.

The winner of that contest, Glen Helberg, used to work for the Brotts.

"It's the little things that are more the heart breakers," Wendell said. "They are non-replaceable."

Like papers from fathers who are no longer living.

Kathy said her dad helped the Brotts remodel the building after the couple bought the property in 1991.

"He wrote down everything with a pencil on paper," Kathy said. "I kept those papers because they had my dad's handwriting."

As for the dogs, "they're lost," Kathy said.

Fortunately Sadie and Freckles escaped the blaze when an Eastside Animal Center employee opened the door of the office after seeing smoke seeping from the building.

Now the dogs are adjusting to sleeping in the Brott home south of town.

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