

A Happy Man

By Sophy Churches

Our own happy man is Hap Hansen. His infinite happiness and good mood, together with his writings of happy and interesting subjects, has always touched me. I just had to ask him what makes him tick this way, radiating optimism and confidence.

Harlan 'Hap' Hansen was born in 1935 in Cushing, Nebraska, a small village which no longer even exists. He had four brothers and one sister. He helped look after hogs, milk cows, and raise chickens on his father's farm and had the pleasure of riding horses at an early age. There was a grade school in the village where he went. Unfortunately the farm went under and had to be sold and they moved to the nearby city where his father took on a personal assessor's job. Hap spent his high school years there and his talented and confident personality was soon proved. He first wanted to become a basketball coach and later in college became a radio announcer, working with Mr. Mahafy, who named him Hap.

His college was interrupted by the Korean War when he was drafted in 1953 at age 18. He was taken to Korea but fortunately did not have to fight on the front as the war was almost ending by then. He was a corporal working as a cleric and also had to call reveille on his bugle at 4:00 a.m. every morning. No wonder he retired 22 years ago, making up sleep for those early mornings! In Korea his brother-in-law was an air force man, having flown on 17 planes with 29 missions of bombardment. He returned back to USA alive. Hap's brothers were also called up and they were sent to Far East stations, but also returned alive. Not just a happy but a lucky family.

Hap returned to college, finished Business, and remained faithful to his dedication to school coaching. A busy man at this time, he got married after college and moved to Wyoming where his wife finished art school. Like most talented men, Hap held many jobs in his profession and ended up as CEO of a natural gas company. He has two sons, a daughter and seven grandchildren.

Hap's soft-side talents show in his hobbies. He writes Haiku-type poems and has published two books, one about the natural gas business and another titled *Political Outsider*. His present hobby is golf which he can practice locally. I asked him how he acquired his lovely sense of humor. He said, "Oh, when we were poor, in my family we had to have humor in order to cope."

The sad side of Hap's life was when his wife became an Alzheimer disease victim and Hap dutifully retired from his responsible jobs and nursed his wife for many years until her death. I asked him, "What did it teach you?" He answered in the nicest way, anyone can express: "It taught me how to live with an ill person and take care of someone you love."

Hap continued his leadership talents by having served on the Windsor Gardens Board of Directors, but now he is just a free man, able to play golf and write poetry. He still works all day but on things he really enjoys. Is there a more deserved retirement?