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THURSDAY
June 12, 2014
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← NEIGHBORS IN THE NEWS THIS WEEK (see inside) →



IN MEMORIAM

JACK L.



STONER

1940-2014

FORMER PUBLISHER & SHAREHOLDER, NKC TRIBUNE

PRINTING HISTORY BUFFS may recognize this device. It is a "chase," part of an antique press, from long before the days of word processors and inkjet printers. In letterpress printing, a worker composes and locks movable type into the bed of a press, inks it, and presses paper against it to transfer the ink from the type which creates an *impression* on the paper. Jack Stoner was very familiar with these tools from the early days of his newspaper printing career. Like the letterpress, Jack too made quite the *impression* on the communities he served.

A Tribute

by Jana Stoner
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It's not been easy to sit here and compose this life story of a man I have known for over 47 years and worked along side in the publishing business nearly

my entire life. Yes, Jack Stoner was my father and my boss. Since his death last Thursday, a parade of memories of working together in the family business have been marching by.

Growing up I remember his guidance on learning new printing technology, business practices and taking drives to see what was going on in our community that was newsworthy. If you tagged along with him "for a minute" you would, more often than not, find yourself waiting while he engaged in a long conversation with people he knew or strangers asking for directions. Certain times of the day we knew we could find him at the local coffee shop talking with community members and often collecting story leads, advertising copy or money for subscription renewals.

I'm sure if you ever met Jack, he would leave you with a smile, laugh, handshake or thought about a current topic of discussion. He always used a copy of his newspaper as a business card to entice new readers and advertisers.

So, in my best efforts the past few days, thinking about what we should tell the world about him, we

present the following tribute. *It was partially compiled from a bio that he had personally written during his lifetime.*

1940 - 2014

Jackie Lee "Jack" Stoner, 74, of Cle Elum suddenly passed away at home on Thursday, June 5, 2014. He was born on March 5, 1940 to parents Elmer and Bonnie Stoner in Kansas City, Missouri. He was the elder sibling to sister Anne.

The Stoner family moved to Marshall, MO in 1941 where his father and uncle operated a Western Auto hardware store until World War II. Jack remembered taking daily walks with his grandfather Ed Stoner to the local downtown restaurant to eat pie.

On his third birthday, Jack moved to Kansas City via the train in a snowstorm with his mother and sister. They joined his father who was working at the Pratt & Whitney plant where they built B-29 bomber airplanes for WWII.

In the fall of 1945, his family moved to Beatrice, Nebraska where he continued kindergarten. During his first grade education, he went to three different schools in three different states (Beatrice, NE, Kansas City, KS and Peculiar, MO).

The family moved to Grandview, MO in 1947 where they owned and operated the Sinclair Gas Station on U.S. 71 that his grandfather Ed had built.

After selling the gas station in 1948, the family moved to an 80-acre farm near Louisburg, KS raising pigs, cattle and growing corn. This is where Jack and his sister Anne attended two years at the Pony Creek School one-

room schoolhouse.

When he was in the fifth grade, the family moved to Oskaloosa, KS where his parents owned and operated Stoner's Variety Store for the next 11 years.

Newspaper career begins

Jack got his first taste of the newspaper business when he was 12 years old with a newspaper route - delivering the *Topeka Daily Capital* for a few years.

In July, 1956 he went to work at the *Oskaloosa Independent* as a printer's apprentice - working after school and summers. He kept this job even into his college years at Kansas University in Lawrence, which was only 18 miles from his hometown. In high school, Jack got involved by playing drum in the school band, performing in plays, and was on the basketball and baseball teams. In 1957, he was a delegate to Boys State where he was elected to the House of Representatives.

He graduated Oskaloosa high school in 1958.

Wedding bells

While attending classes at K.U., Jack dated and got engaged to the love of his life, Jerri Tosh, a hometown girl.

Shortly after her high school graduation, on June 3, 1961, Jack and Jerri were married at the Methodist Church in Oskaloosa, Kansas where both of their families lived. The couple moved to Lawrence, KS and Jack worked at the *Lawrence Outlook* as a linotype operator and Jerri worked in an abstract office. A couple years later, in the fall of 1963, their first child Jeff was born.

In 1964, they moved to Cozad, Nebraska where they went into partnership with Jack's parents in a Ben

Franklin store. While living there, he worked parttime at the *Daily Telegraph-Bulletin* at North Platte.

Late in 1965, Jack, Jerri and Jeff moved to Colorado Springs, CO where Jack worked as a linotype operator for the *Daily Telegraph-Gazette*.

From 1966 until 1972, he was production manager at the *Daily Independent* in Gallup, New Mexico. Jack received an award from the Vocational Education program for his work with high school students in on-the-job training at the *Gallup Independent*.

Then in October, their daughter, a certain future publisher they named Jana, was born in Gallup in 1966, the day after her

brother's third birthday.

Owner/operator

Jack and Jerri purchased their first community weekly newspaper business in 1972 at Twisp, Washington - *The Methow Valley News*. During their four and half years there, Jack served as a Captain on the Volunteer Fire Dept. where the couple dedicated time as volunteer firefighters. He served as treasurer of the Twisp Kiwanis Club, was in the Chamber of Commerce and served on a special committee working with the Aspen Ski Corp. of Colorado which was planning a \$250 million destination ski resort near Twisp at that time.

See MEMORIAM..., page A5

WHAT'S INSIDE

- Calendar B4
- Classified Ads A8
- Comics & Puzzles B5
- Obituaries B3
 - Velma Patty (Morris) Clark
 - Audrey Favero-Ettles
 - Rose Marie Venera
 - Plus Jack Stoner (A1 & A5)
- Public Notices A6
- Sports B6-7
- Voices A4
- Weather A2

INSERTS

- Rite-Aid
- Safeway

NORTHERN KITTITAS COUNTY
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JACK 'TRAINING' in 1948 to be a newspaper delivery boy.



Circa 1943 - Jack was easy going and had a gift for gab.

IN MEMORIAM – JACK L. STONER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE A1



IN 1957, JACK BOUGHT THIS '56 CHEVROLET from his father who had just purchased a new '57 brown and yellow Ford Fairlane 500, 4 door sedan. His lifelong passion for wheels had blossomed the year before when he bought his very first car, a gray 1952 Chevrolet four door sedan, 3-speed manual. He chronicled the detailed timeline of his car ownership, sales and trades from these vehicles to a used '57 Fairlane, a new '59 Ford Galaxy 500 2-door hardtop (eventually nicknamed "Old Scratchy"), a new '67 Ford Galaxy 500 2-door hardtop, a used '60 half ton Dodge pickup, a new '76 Chevy Silverado 3/4 ton Camper Special pickup and a slide-in Wilderness camper, a used '67 Pontiac 2-door hardtop, a '72 Ford Torino station wagon, a used '66 Chevrolet Malibu sedan, a used '76 Chevy 4x4 pickup, a used red '78 Oldsmobile 98 2-door hardtop, a used blue '86 Oldsmobile 4-door sedan, a used '89 Dodge mini-van, a used '94 Mercury Grand Marquis 4-door sedan, a new '95 Ford Windstar van, a new '95 Buick LeSabre (for Jerri), a used '87 Chevrolet pickup, a new '03 Ford delivery van (for the company), a new '03 John Deere diesel compact tractor, a used '93 Ford delivery van, a used '69 Chevy half ton flatbed truck "Old Blue", as well as several Subarus in recent years. While most of the vehicles have faded into the past, his fond memories of them linger in his detailed records.

Their tiny newspaper office in Twisp housed a sheet fed letter press and two linotypes that were used to produce the weekly news. The small crew would assemble and fold all the newspapers by hand each week before distribution. The business also featured a retail office supply store and several small job printing letter presses in the back stop for custom printing envelopes, business cards, letterhead, invitations and posters.



CUSTOM PRINTING TIME. Jack running a small press in the back shop at the *Methow Valley News* in Twisp in 1973.

In 1976, the family sold the *Methow Valley News* and moved to Spearfish, South Dakota after a few months traveling on vacation. Jack became managing editor of the *Queen City Mail* at Spearfish. He was active in the Spearfish Chamber of Commerce and bowling league there. He helped re-organize the Lions Club of Spearfish and was awarded the "Outstanding First Year Lion" plaque for work on increasing the club's membership from 13 to 75 members in less than a year.

A year later, once again itching to own and operate his own community newspaper, Jack quit his job and moved the family east from the Black Hills to the prairie at Gettysburg, SD where they formed Oahe Publishing Corporation and purchased a three community newspaper chain including the *Potter County News* (Gettysburg), *Eagle Butte News* (Eagle Butte) and *West River Progress* (Dupree).

Oahe (oh-WAH'-hee) in the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe Lakota language means, "the meeting place". The Stoners wanted to name their publishing corporation after something significant in the area between their community newspapers and this turned out to be Lake Oahe which is a large reservoir behind the Oahe Dam on the Missouri River. Beginning in central South Dakota, north of the state capitol in Pierre, and continues north into North Dakota. By volume, it is the fourth-largest reservoir in the United States covering 370,000 acres with a maximum depth of 205 ft. which has become a popular "meeting place" for recreation and Tribal members.

Jack's outgoing personality and interest in community news found him covering council meetings, fundraisers, events like Zucchini Days, fishing tournaments, pow wows, and local 4-H to accidents, fires and breaking news. Being a journalist, he had opportunities to meet or interview former U.S. Presidents, celebrities, future leaders of the community, people making the trek across the U.S. on bicycles, horseback, or walking for a cause. He would rarely pass up an opportunity to jump in the truck (or airplane) with someone wanting to give him an "exclusive story". He once had the rare opportunity to fly in a military cargo plane for a first-hand view during an Airforce jet refueling mission at Ellsworth AFB located in Rapid City, SD to which he wrote about.

Active volunteer

During their 22 years residing in South Dakota, Jack was active in many local, county and state organizations. He was a member and past-president of the Rotary Club. He was president of the Gettysburg Chamber of Commerce and active on the board of directors and club projects.

He was a member of a special Gettysburg community committee that worked to save the Chicago-Northwestern rail line taking him on his first trip to Washington, D.C.

He participated in the Gettysburg Centennial Committee in 1983 to organize the community celebration including a parade, community BBQ and street dance.

Jack enjoyed local history, so it was only natural he got involved and help build the Dakota Sunset Museum in Gettysburg. He served as president and vice president of the board for several years.

He was appointed in 1987 by the City Council as Chairman of the Gettysburg Committee for the South Dakota Centennial. During the "Great Faces, Great Places" 100th year celebration, Jack helped organize the local community events during year-long statewide celebration. Following that event, he was honored by S.D. Governor George Mickelson and the Aid Association for Lutherans with a distinguished gold medallion recognizing his work on the State's Centennial project.

In the 80s, he was named *Citizen of the Year* by the

Gettysburg Chamber at their annual banquet.

Jack served on the Governor's Fisheries Advisory Committee which worked with the Department of Game, Fish & Parks during South Dakota Gov. Bill Janklow's administration.

He was a member of the Potter County Emergency Disaster Team, National Newspaper Association, South Dakota Museum Association and was active with a Gettysburg Doctor Search Committee, and Chamber of Commerce business development task force.

As a special adviser, he assisted in developing a plan for a journalism program at the Cheyenne River Community College in Eagle Butte.

As president of the District Six Press Assn. he held an active membership in the South Dakota Newspaper Association making some long-lasting friendships of his peers. One year he volunteered his time on the SDNA convention committee.

Accolades

Jack won several awards for journalism and in 1988 was presented a plaque for having written the *Best News Story of the Year* among weekly newspapers in South Dakota for his story about the first patient ever flown out of Gettysburg via air ambulance. He was honored to be awarded a *Non-Legionnaire of the Year* award by the Ralph-Lieu Post of the American Legion in Gettysburg and in 1986, he was given a Potter County "Friend of 4-H" Award.

Moving back to WA

After selling the three newspapers in South Dakota, Jack and Jerri took a seven week, 14-state trip – a long overdue vacation to visit family and friends.

Looking for something to do in his "retirement", Jack decided it was time to find a special new place to explore and on Feb. 1, 1999 he, Jerri and Jana purchased the *Northern Kittitas County Tribune* and the office supply store in Cle Elum from the Walt Larson family. The same family who purchased the *Tribune* two hours before the Stoners made an offer 23 years earlier from founder Willard Chase.

During the past 15 years Jack was a member of the Roslyn Kiwanis, Cle Elum-Roslyn Chamber of Commerce, Phoenix Group (Kittitas County Economic Development), Cle Elum Downtown Association (CEDA), Life Support, Draft Horse Pull committee, Upper Kittitas County Senior Center and Board of Directors, Roslyn-Ronald-Cle Elum Heritage Club and several coffee clubs around town.

He and Jerri settled on a three-acre homestead overlooking Cle Elum and the Yakima River Valley where they often watch Bald Eagles soar, Mule Deer appear from the John Wayne Pioneer Trail below and Quail race across their yard. On occasion he would put on his bib overalls and, hailing back to his childhood farm roots, go out and ride around in his John Deere utility tractor mowing, moving gravel around or plowing the driveway clear of winter snows.

His multiple "retirement" years here in Cle Elum found Jack slowing down from health issues preventing him from chasing the news day-to-day. He was able to fly back to Missouri and take care of his ailing 85 year old father Elmer before his passing in 2003. He also attend his 50th and 55th High School class reunions in Okaloosa which he really enjoyed.

Finding time on his hands, Jack put out a bird feeder. He became so fascinated with all the variety of species - including some four legged ones - that came to visit his feeder, that soon a second feeder appeared. Before we knew it, a wild menagerie came calling to sample the goodies. He also loved rescue cats; many who adopted him at the office when he would let them in out of the cold and feed them part of his lunch. Eventually these furry friends followed him home and became part of the family – Whiskers, Patches, Muffin, Maggie and Happy. During his first stroke, Happy encouraged him to get up and get moving each day to get back into a routine. In recent years, Precious, whom he rescued from an animal shelter, was his homebound companion watching tv, reading the newspaper or watching the backyard wildlife.

Family and friends

He is survived by his wife Jerri of 53 years, children Jeff and Bob (Denver, CO), Jana and Terry (South Cle Elum, WA); sister Anne (Bob) Lowe of Winona, KS; brother-in-laws Ed (Muriel) Tosh of Graham, WA and Mike (Teri) Tosh of Sun City, AZ; numerous cousins, nieces and nephews. Jack is also survived by his devoted *Tribune* newspaper family, coffee companions, and one spoiled rescue cat named Precious. He cherished all "his kids" that worked at the newspaper offices over the years after school and in the summer. Many who continued their career in journalism all over the country. He considered everyone who ever worked with him to be part of his family as well.

He is preceded in death by his parents Bonnie and Elmer; numerous aunts, uncles and cousins.

In closing

Out of respect for Jack's wishes, there will be no formal services at this time. A celebration of his life will be organized at a future date. In the meantime, we would love to read any fond memories you would like to send (*NKC Tribune*, PO Box 308, Cle Elum, WA 98922 or e-mail tribune@nkctribune.com).

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations made in his name to either Life Support, an organization he heartily endorsed (www.lifesupporti90.org/content/donate-now) or towards scholarships to journalism students provided by the Washington Newspaper Publishers Assoc. Foundation (www.wnpa.com/foundation) as fitting tributes.

Cascade Funeral Home, Cle Elum was in charge of arrangements.

As you can see, there are millions of stories we can recall about this renaissance man, but there is not enough time or ink and paper this week to complete that. So, to end this full story of a newspaper man's life, it seems only fitting to close this edition on Jack's biography with the news industry's ending shorthand ...

-30-



FAMILY, 1967 (l. to r.): Jerri, Jana, Jack and Jeff.



70TH BIRTHDAY typewriter cake.



JACK, in the 1980s.

EDITORIAL

Remembering Jack's Happier Days

by Terry Hamberg, Co-publisher

Jack Stoner lived his life on his own terms.

When he wanted to get something done, nothing could stand in the way of his goals. While running the press in Gallup, New Mexico, he dreamed of one day owning his own newspaper. Buying the weekly paper in Twisp, Washington in the early 70s launched that dream into reality, and moved him along the path to eventually owning four other newspapers in two states, including the *Northern Kittitas County Tribune*. (Read more of his journey through life starting on the front page.)

Ask anyone who watched Jack "try" to retire ... "many times," they'll tell you with a knowing smile and a chuckle ... how much he loved this community news business. As a publisher myself, I can tell you, it's easy to get addicted to the intense community connection, the privilege of telling the stories of people's lives and events in the part of the world that's closest to them, the sense of doing something important and the responsibility to make sure that duty gets done and done well.

Jack was also a very social person. From his heyday snapping pictures and writing up every event with gusto, to his active role in building a museum in South Dakota, to his long chats over coffee in his golden years, Jack always approached people with a warm smile, a handshake, and a cheerful "Hey!" People could clearly see how much he genuinely cared about them. It's easy to see how he made an impact in so many people's lives, and generated fond memories of himself.

Then the strokes came.

A stroke is never good, and although some thought him "lucky" to survive and be only partially debilitated, it's still particularly cruel to affect the speech and language centers for a lifelong "word guy." And while the progressive string of four strokes, and many "mini-strokes" over the last ten years didn't immediately take his life, they steadily eroded his quality of life. Added together, physical and mental tolls took Jack's ability to communicate and his independence, the very qualities of life that this entrepreneur valued so highly – eventually leading to the tragic ending last Thursday, June 5. (For more insight into the difficulties coping with the physical, emotional and behavioral challenges, including depression, that many stroke victims face, and advice for both the affected person and their families, please visit www.strokeassociation.org and click on *Life After Stroke*.)

It's the memories of his happier days – our own and those people are sharing with us – that are helping to ease the pain of Jack leaving us behind. Freed from the shackles of a body and mind that suffered the ravages of multiple strokes and ailments, Jack's memories can once again focus on the man he was – the man he always wanted to be.

- A family man.
- A businessman.
- A newspaper man.
- A community advocate.
- A friend.

So thank you to everyone who has reached out to us with condolences, gifts, offers of help, and just sharing those all-important heartfelt memories. You've helped make this difficult time a bit easier for us. As hard as it was for him to let go of his active roles at the *Tribune*, we are thankful to Jack for showing us what it takes to be good stewards of a community's newspaper, and for entrusting that mantle to his daughter Jana, wife Jerri and I a decade ago. We strive to continue his legacy and put out an engaging community newspaper that does his memory justice and keeps on making him proud as he watches over us and circles our typos with that darned red ink pen of his.

~ MEMORIAL DONATIONS ~

Life Support

PO Box 264, South Cle Elum, WA 98943
www.lifesupporti90.org/content/donate-now

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