

Senior Stars: Ken Bateman

By Karen Miller

The year was 1965: average rent was \$118 a month; gasoline was 31 cents a gallon; average income in the U.S. was \$6500 a year. Australia joined the Viet Nam War; Pope Paul became the first Pope to visit the U.S; Malcolm X was shot in New York; cigarette ads were banned on TV in Britain; the Beatles released their movie and album "Help!"; President Lyndon Johnson announced his project to create Medicare... and in Vernonia, Ken Bateman made it through twelve years of school and graduated from Vernonia High School with the class of '65!

Books may not have been on Ken's agenda in high school, but quiet, laid back Ken went on to Corvallis that fall, graduating four years later from Oregon State in 1969.

Ken's dad, Tom arrived here in Oregon from Covington, Oklahoma, a result of his brother heading west in the 20's. Upon arrival Tom went to work for the Vernonia Post Office. Ken's brother Steve was a wartime baby, born in 1942. Tom returned from service in the Philippines and New Guinea in 1945 and Ken was born in 1947.

Tom retired after forty years with the Postal Service in Vernonia, working his way up from sorter, all the way to postmaster. The old Post Office, Ken recalls, was first located on Madison, moved to the building where the

pharmacy and dental office is now located. It moved to its current location in the 1950's. Several names Ken remembers as mail carriers from his dad's post office days: Jerry Russell and Dick Aldrich.

Ken has lots of memories about growing up in Vernonia. "You didn't have as much to worry about back then as we do now," says Ken. "You never locked your doors."

When he was a kid, Ken remembers running on logging roads, grouse

now stands, also only cost twenty-five cents.

Ken has memories of the filming of "Ring of Fire"--his mother was in the film running for the train and brother Steve was in the WOEC office scene, being sworn in as a deputy.

Ken remembers eight gas stations (8?!), lots of Ma and Pa grocery stores, and hanging out at the now torn down Pine Cone. He remembers his Dad had a 60's Chevy Bel Air that Ken inherited in 1967—which we won't see at the yearly Jamboree car show, as Ken sold it in 1970. He then purchased a cute, yellow VW Bug for \$1800, but traded it in for a Dasher station wagon after his marriage to accommodate his growing family. Yep, having kids changes things!

Another memory of growing up in Vernonia: picking strawberries after third grade. His mom was a field checker in Banks and Ken got paid fifty cents a flat and made \$105 in his first season. He proudly admits picking thirty-eight flats and making \$19 in one day. Although he didn't spend it all on candy, he paid for half his school clothes and he purchased a \$25

savings bond each year. Could that have been an early sign of Ken's good business sense?

Some school memories: May Pole dances; Pee Wee Baseball behind the high school; playing basketball and golf for the school teams all four years, and doing as little school work as possible. Ken's favorite teacher was Harold McEntire, his math teacher at VHS. Harold was Ken's dad Tom's fishing buddy and Ken's mentor.

Ken's memory of Graduation night: the "secret" senior party on Keasey Road.

Many long time Vernonia residents remember Ken's sweet mother, Ina Bateman, who at times could make people's hair stand on end... as the local hairdresser that is. Ina was raised in Laurel on the back roads near Gaston, where her parents owned a Ma and Pa grocery store and raised filberts. Ina moved to Vernonia with a friend after graduation from high school in Hillsboro in 1933 and at-

tending beauty school in Portland. She opened her beauty shop in the JCPenney building on the corner of Madison and Bridge. Ken's family lived at 158 North Street in Vernonia, which never flooded until 1996. Ken's father Tom passed away in 1968; Ina passed away in 2005.

Hitting the books in college paid off for Ken, as he landed a job at Dunn and Bradstreet in 1969, the same year man first landed on the moon. A worldwide commercial credit and information gathering firm, Ken stayed at Dunn and Bradstreet through 1988. The job required a lot of travel out of state. He left that job and purchased Vernonia Realty and Insurance, selling the Insurance agency five years ago and continuing to operate the realty office with wife Helen.

Ken, married to Helen, a Banks High School grad, still reside in the same 1250 square foot house they raised four children in, and are happily expecting their tenth grandchild.

Ken's favorite vacation memory: the one week fishing trip he took to Vancouver Island in 1991.

One last story Ken wanted to share—his beginner's luck hunting story: "I was a freshman in high school and my dad and his buddy, Cecil Johnson, took me on a hunting trip to teach me the ropes. They had me sit on a tree stump that overlooked a fifty foot cliff, and walked away in separate directions to scout the area. I was quietly sitting there, rifle in hand, when a forked deer walked right in front of me. Well I guess I should do what I am here to be taught, so BAM, off went the rifle and down went the deer over the cliff. After a few moments, still sitting on the stump, I turned to the right and there was another three point buck. Well, what was I to do, so BAM went the rifle and down went the buck over the cliff. Right after that moment, to my left, there came another three pointer, running out from behind me. I swung around and BAM, off went the rifle and down went the deer over the cliff."

"My dad and Cecil came running back. 'We heard shots!' they exclaimed. 'Did you get him?' I told them I shot three deer and they said I must have shot the same one three times and I said, nope each one went over the cliff."

Talk about beginners luck—three shots, three dead deer, three tags filled.

Thanks Ken for sharing your memories with our Vernonia's Voice readers.



Ken Bateman, age 12, with Chinook Salmon caught in the Columbia River 3/6/60.

hunting. Things back then were more care free. Ken remembers when he was in grade school that people could just go out and cut down a Christmas tree and no one cared.

Ken's favorite thing to do as a boy—fishing! You never saw Ken "cruising the gut" up and down Bridge Street, unless he was a tag a long, as Ken never owned a car, but instead filled his time baiting a hook.

Ken's first memory of the Friendship Jamboree was at the age of eight or nine and throwing darts at the POPular Balloon Booth, and the large crowds watching.

The Joy Theater only cost twenty-five cents and haircuts by "Barber Bricle", where Bear Creek Pub

"Like" Your Vote for the Next Miss Rodeo America Vote for Vernonia's Mackenzie Carr, 2011 Miss Rodeo Oregon



During the 2012 Miss Rodeo America Pageant which will be held at the MGM Grand Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas, NV, December 3 through December 10, 2011 the "People's Choice Award" will be presented to the contestant who receives the most "likes" on their picture that will be posted on the

Miss Rodeo America Facebook page.

Vernonia's own Mackenzie Carr, 2011 Miss Rodeo Oregon, will be a contestant in the Pageant.

The People's Choice voting will start Monday, October 31, beginning at noon and ending Thursday, December 8, at noon. The 2012 Miss Rodeo America Pageant People's Choice Award winner will be announced Friday, December 9, at the Miss Rodeo America Scholarship Foundation Auction that takes place at Cowboy Christmas in the Las Vegas Convention Center. The winner will receive a beautiful Montana Silversmiths Sculpture.

Voting is simple and FREE!! If you wish to vote for your favorite contestant all you have to do is become a fan of the Miss Rodeo America Facebook page. To see photos of contestants and additional pageant information please visit www.missrodeoamerica.com.

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