



A TRACTOR TRAILER overturned on highway 36 between St. Francis and Bird City. There were no injuries.

Times photo by Norma Martinez

Obituary

Randy Allen Hudson
Jan. 17, 1952 - Nov. 21, 2013

Randy Allen Hudson died on Thursday, Nov. 21, 2013, in Benkelman, Neb. He was born in McCook, Neb., on Jan. 17, 1952, to Delmer and Lylas (Norman) Hudson.



Hudson

The oldest of three children, he was raised in Benkelman, and attended the local schools. He graduated from Benkelman High School in 1971, and joined the Navy, where he served his country for four years. His time in the Navy took him around the world, from the west and east coasts to Spain and Greece, while gathering all the knowledge he could in the art of welding.

After returning home from his stint in the Navy, he started working for local building contractors for many years. Mastering his skill as a carpenter contractor, he became renowned. Randy started Hudson Construction in 2004, and found his niche in the town as the go-to man for anything and everything that needed fixed, tweaked or finagled. He was well known around the tri-state area for his construction expertise, and his willingness to help out anyone in need, no matter the time of day. He was very community minded, and was a member of the Knights of Columbus, American Legion, VFW, Chamber of Commerce, Jaycees, St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Lions Club and volunteer fire department. Randy never failed to help someone in their time of need. His life will live on as he chose to be a tissue donor.

Knights drive is successful

The Cheyenne County Knights of Columbus had another successful year selling Tootsie Rolls to raise money for the handicapped. This year they raised \$2,541.

They raised \$430.20 that went to help put the Special Olympics Basketball tournament on in Hays, and then the Cheylin and St. Francis special education programs will receive \$860.40 each. The remaining \$390 went to pay for the Tootsie Rolls they sold.

Their next major program will be their annual Pro-Life Baby Shower in January, where they will be collecting baby items and clothing for the Mary Elizabeth Maternity Home for unwed teenage mothers in Hays.

When Randy wasn't on the job or helping the community, he could be found at his favorite fishing hole with his son-in-law, or trapshooting with his girls and extended family. Many evenings he would be down at his shop working on honey-dos for his bride-wife, or getting roped into his daughters' projects. Camping trips defined his idea of relaxing with his family, his favorite portion being the early morning boat rides with Sally.

Randy was a gentle giant. While many could be intimidated by his imposing figure, deep voice and gruff exterior, those who were close to him knew that he was really just a big teddy bear. His soft heart was always apparent on the dance floor, as he thoroughly enjoyed twirling his girls around. Animals, and especially dogs, were always a big part of his life. Four-legged critters always knew they had a friend in Randy, especially his grandpuppy, Honey.

He married the love of his life, Sally Hickert, on June 13, 1981, at St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Bird City. They made their home in Benkelman, where they lived their entire married life. To this union were born two daughters, Emily Catherine and Eleanor Marie. Randy always told Sally, "our 'boys' will come later." When Dustin joined the family, he was more than a son-in-law, he became Randy's kid. A wonderful addition was the arrival of their granddaughter, Sara Marie, in 2012, a very bright light in Randy's life.

Preceding him in death were his parents.

Survivors include wife, Sally; daughters, Emily Hudson, Callaway, Neb., and Eleanor (Dustin) Jahay, Ellinwood, and granddaughter, Sara Marie Jahay; sister, Ronda (Gaylord) Vrbas, Stratton, Neb.; brother, Rick Hudson; and numerous nieces, nephews and extended family.

A funeral mass was held Nov. 26 at St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Benkelman. Casket bearers were Randall Raile, Brad Leach, Michael Downey, Shane Sis, Terry Martin and Bob Krutsinger. Honorary casket bearers were Dustin Jahay, Michael Todd, Brad Norman, Scott Norman, Steve Norman, Gaylord Vrbas, Tim Hickert, Dan Hickert, Lee Gallatin and Ken Henry.

Military services were performed by the American Legion Post 65, VFW Post 4178, Benkelman. Burial was in the Benkelman Cemetery.

Hospital board holds monthly meeting

By Amanda Miller
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The Cheyenne County Hospital Board held their monthly meeting on Nov. 25 to go over department head reports and financials for the hospital. The board also briefly discussed the most recent commissioners meeting that two hospital board members had attended.

Mila Bandel, public health nurse for the county health department, reviewed the 2013 yearly report for the department. The county health department has taken over the immunization program this year and stayed very busy. There is more on what county health has been doing in the Nov. 28 issue of The Herald.

Jackie Ritchey, health information manager, then briefly went over the change in coding that will take place next year. The department has also been busy scanning all health information from patient folders this year into the computer system.

Shawna Blanka handed out information regarding critical access hospitals. Hospitals in this category across the country are currently dealing with funding difficulties. Look for more information in the related article in this issue of The Herald.

During the meeting, the board also discussed the last commissioner's meeting. Board members said that they will continue to go and educate the commissioners. They expressed frustration that they have gone two times now with an agenda, that was sent prior to the commissioners meeting, and the commissioners did not follow it. They felt the commissioners were not interested in the financials, but said they would continue to go to the meetings and have a presence.

Les Lacy, area director for

Great Plains Health Alliance, said that the mill levy comparison to other hospitals is like "comparing cars based on their color." Every hospital is so different, and things are not always what they seem.

When looking at the funded depreciation account, it may look like a lot of money, but it is an emergency fund. The hospital board decides when the funded depreciation will be used. The board is a type of checks and balances between the county and the hospital. Some other hospitals do not have this emergency fund.

The financials of the hospital are extremely complicated. The auditors for the county and hospital are going to come together to review things. Cheyenne County Hospital is a leased hospital, not a managed hospital like many others in the Great Plains Health Alliance. Rawlins County Health Center is a managed care hospital.

Mike Bandel, board member, asked how the commissioners get the Rawlins county information? Les Lacy said he did not know. As the area director for Great Plains Health Alliance, he is also director of the Rawlins County Health Center. However, Les stated that has given very limited information to the commissioners.

Les Lacy told the board that he felt very positive about the commissioner's interaction and communication that is taking place. He said transparency is best.

"We all want the best thing for the community and the hospital," Les said. He went on to say that we are all reasonable people. We just need to help with the commissioner's understanding.

The hospital board voted to give employees a Christmas bonus this year that reflects last

year's. Full time employees will receive \$100; part time employees \$50. In addition, they received a "premium holiday" because the amount paid out for health insurance was less than expected. The hospital and employees both get a month off from paying their December monthly premium.

Moving on to the budget, it was stated that the MRI machine that parks on the west side of the hospital is making a sinkhole, so that must be repaired before it causes problems with the water main. JR Landenberger, city superintendent, will be asking if the city will pay half of the expense.

Judy Rockwood, hospital administrator, said that the board is going to have to start thinking

about forgiving the hospital for the debt that they have borrowed. If the hospital paid back the funded depreciation account, it would owe about \$864,000. The only real option is to not replenish that account.

A budget was prepared for 2014. Les commented that they had done a nice job trying to get a conservative budget done. While they want to get the budget for next year approved, because the board just received the information they opted to table the budget approval to the next meeting. This gives the board members more time to review the budget.

The next hospital board meeting will be held Dec. 16 at 3 p.m. in the basement of the clinic.

American Legion to hold Christmas party

For the Christmas party, the American Legion Auxiliary will be treating members to lunch at the Skyline Grill in Benkelman. We will meet in front of the

Legion Hall on Friday, Dec. 13th at 11:30 a.m., and will car pool from there to Benkelman. There will be no gift exchange.

Book Review

A Sister's Secret
By Wanda E. Brunstetter

Putting her rumschprunge (running-around years) behind her, Grace Hostettler returns to Holmes County, Ohio, joins the Amish church, and begins a new life with a new romance. The next four years are nearly idyllic for the oldest Hostettler child - except

for the hidden pain of a carefully harbored secret. Then her peaceful world is shattered the day she runs into Gary Walker - an Englisher who knows enough about her past to destroy her future. And his arrival coincides with a series of startling attacks against the Amish community.

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Walz Girls Farm, Seller

For more information, contact listing agent:
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Christmas Memories
Presented by
The Community Chorus of Cheyenne County

Sunday, Dec. 15 • 2 p.m.
Peace Lutheran Church
St. Francis

Featuring: 60 voice chorus, vocal and instrumental soloists and small groups along with some surprises. Refreshments will follow.

Bring 2 items for Food Pantry