

Jack & Elaine Hutcheson

Having lived all his life in Northwest Arkansas, Tired Iron president Jack Charles Hutcheson has great claim to the region, as have many of his ancestors. He was born on September 23, 1945, in Bentonville, but from his birth until adulthood, he lived and grew up on Little Spavinaw Creek near Gravette. His dad, Jesse "Jack" Ashton Hutcheson was a sometimes deputy sheriff and, most of the time, a dairy farmer. Even though Jack had a half brother and half sister, they were much older and were soon gone from home after he was born. And too, the family farm was just far enough outside Gravette so that Jack spent most of his time roaming alone through the beautiful hills and valleys with his BB gun and dog and swimming in Little Spavinaw.

Jack's maternal family ties to Northwest Arkansas go back to well before the Civil War. His mother, Josie Francis Harris was born and raised at Pea Ridge. Her father, Charley Harris, was a farmer in the area, but it was her grandfather and Jack's great grandfather, John Wesley Harris who experienced and survived the Battle at Pea Ridge in, as he called it, The War of Northern Aggression. It was Jack's Great, Great Grandfather who brought the Harris clan from Bedford County, Tennessee, in the early 1800s, making Jack a 5th generation resident of Northwest Arkansas.

Jack wishes he could say that his school years were a favorite time in his life, but he said there was very little to be boastful about. He spent his first six years of school in Gravette and his last six in Bentonville. His favorite subject and the one he said was most useful in his work career was mechanical drawing. He was able to use skills he learned in that class in his later, long career working for the City of Bentonville.

Just out of high school, and at a very young age, Jack married. Work became an important issue for him. He first worked at a chicken plant in Bentonville but soon began working at a downtown Bentonville service station. With children arriving on the scene it became important to boost his income and the chance came when, in 1970, he was able to purchase the service station and operate it until 1976. It is an interesting side note that none other than Sam Walton was a regular customer. And, since one of the Walton sons, John, was a classmate of Jack's, he has lots of first-hand stories about the Walton family. John is the Walton son who was killed in 2005 in the crash of an experimental home-built aircraft in Jackson, Wyoming.

Jack sold the service station in 1976 and went to work for the City of Bentonville. Incidentally, Jack's station was located at the corner of West 2nd and A streets, which is the location of a downtown parking lot now being built on that site.

In 1976, Jack went to work for the Bentonville Water and Wastewater Department. He has many certificates detailing his expertise and many commendations for his service for that department. He can relate to us who are unaware of what the job entails just how difficult and even dangerous the work can be. He retired in 2008 after 31 years of employment with Bentonville.

Elaine, Jack's wife of 16 years, is also a native of Northwest Arkansas. She spent much of her youth in and around Gravette and even knew Jack when they were children. Her work career began with eight months unhappily spent at the Wal-Mart headquarters as an

assistant in the gold jewelry acquisitions department. She later worked in a civil service job on a military base. Her last several years of employment were at the Bentonville Library. She, too, retired in 2008. Elaine's hobby, at which she is very serious, is quilting. Between the two of them, they have nine children. She has twin daughters Shelly and Kelly. Jack has two sons, Jack and Joe, and five daughters, Brenda, Sherry, Jennifer, Rachael, and Peggy. Together, Jack and Elaine have thirty-six grandkids and great grandkids.

Jack became interested in Tired Iron of the Ozarks when he saw a television piece about club member Stanley Arrowsmith and his miniaturized, hand-built farming equipment, including a steam engine. Jack's abiding interest in old steam engines made it imperative that he see this exhibit first hand. In early 2000, he attended a show at the old club venue at Rose of Sharon on Highway 12 west of Gentry. He liked what he saw with the club and he and Elaine paid their dues to none other than Howard Hodson and became members of Tired Iron. For the next few years the Hutchesons were casual members. About four or five years ago, Jack decided to get more involved with the club when he saw our members with tractors and engines at a Gravette Days celebration. He was encouraged to get more involved by attending our meeting and shows. The important thing was that, when he came to the show grounds, he was put to work. He has used his skills from his work career to assist and better our club in many ways. The first sentence in this account identifies that Jack is currently serving as president of Tired Iron. We are grateful to Jack for his dedication to the club and to Elaine for her interest in and support for Tired Iron.

A serious hobby for Jack is woodworking with non-powered tools. He has a collection of planes and other woodworking tools that is quite impressive. The work he does is displayed in his home and in his shop. He is currently working on a shelf for one of his daughters.

Almost as a footnote, the important list of Jack's tractors also reveals his role in and interest in Tired Iron. He has a 1947 Farmall Cub, which he uses for mowing at his home and for powering the cut-off saw at the sawmill at our shows. He also has a restored 1948 Simplicity tractor, a 1946 Gibson A with implements, a 1967 Cub Cadet he also uses for mowing, and an unknown year Mighty Mite. Last but certainly not least, he has his father's 1947, 2N Ford tractor. He purchased this tractor from the man who bought it from his father years ago and is now in the process of restoring it. All this adds up to an awareness of the importance of such folks as Jack and Elaine.