

1991 - 2001

FAA - Huron

- See Appendix II for stories and anecdotes from Huron AFSS -

Finally in 1991 Huron AFSS began to staff up to the AFSS model and I was selected as the Plans and Procedures Specialist (PPS). Other staff positions that were filled at this time were the Quality Assurance and Training positions and Larry Munson was the staff supervisor. The best part for me was that no one was really sure what all the responsibilities of the PPS were supposed to be. The job description was vague enough that aside from some obvious tasks I kind of got to create my own position. I processed statistical information, developed internal facility procedures to meet handbook requirements, maintained directives, developed and wrote some procedural handbooks and did some computer programming.

We had a heck of a time finding a house in Huron. Sue was working in Sioux Falls and, of course I was in Pierre. Because of our schedules we were having a hard time being in Huron at the same time so she'd look at some houses and then when I could get over there I'd look at them. We finally found one we both liked at 1135 Dakota Avenue South. It had been built in the late 1920s by a prominent lawyer and was



Home 1991-2001: 1135 Dakota Ave South, Huron, SD

consequently known as the "Churchill house". We were only the third family to live there in its entire 70 year history. It was a pretty neat house that really stood out.

The guy who built the house had been a lawyer for the Chicago Northwestern Railroad and travelled a lot. The workbench in the basement was still covered with Chicago newspapers from the 1930s. The house was very interesting. Vines grew over the entire front of the house and, while I thought they were kind of cool, Sue wasn't crazy about them. Besides that they would eventually find their way into the attic so about every 3 years I'd tear them down. Another interesting feature of the house was that there were bars on all the basement windows. I didn't

think about them much until one day we were told they'd been installed by the lawyer who in his later years suffered from some mental issues and believed there were lions outside trying to get into the house.

We had lots of trees. In the front there were two ash trees, a small maple and a big fir tree. In the back we had two apple trees, two plum trees, a huge weeping willow, a birch, a couple of small Junipers and a Russian olive tree. Worse yet in the neighbor's yard to the north there was a huge old cottonwood. I got so tired of raking leaves every fall that I don't think I'll ever want a yard with trees again.

About 1996 we had a pretty nasty thunderstorm and a fairly large branch fell from the cottonwood punching a hole in the roof of the garage. When the insurance adjustor looked at the damage he calculated that it only exceeded our deductible by a small amount. He then asked if we'd suffered any other damage. I told him no, not really. Then he saw some canvas on the garage floor and asked about it. It was from an awning tent that Sue had set up in the back yard and it had been torn. The adjustor asked how much it had cost and I told him we'd gotten it for something like \$10.00 at a garage sale. He said we needed to figure replacement value and a new one would probably cost \$99.98 (he actually used those numbers) so he would include that and I'd have enough to fix the roof of the garage!

The street we lived on, Dakota Avenue, was the main north-south street through Huron. It was 4 lanes with a center turn lane and while it was busy it wasn't a big problem. After Thanksgiving the city had a winter parade (down Dakota Ave) so for several years our house was the gathering place for friends who wanted a great place to watch the parade.

Sue always loved candles. Big candles, little candles, votive candles... it didn't really matter! It made it easy whenever it came time to buy a gift for her because you could never go wrong getting her a nice scented candle!

One night the power went out. It must have affected almost the entire town. Tom and I walked down the street to the corner to see if we could tell how extensive the outage was. By the time we got back to the house I thought the power must have come back on because the light from our dining room window was so bright. It turned out that Sue had all her candles lighted covering the dining room table. We even had neighbors who later asked how come our lights came back on before anyone else.

Sue worked for the State providing home health care to Social Services clients throughout Beadle County for several years. One of the clients she took a special interest in was a lady named Emily who lived in the small town of Alpena, population 300, about 20 miles south and west of Huron. Emily's husband had been dead for at least 30 years and she had no other family. Social Services asked Sue more than once to try, during her visits, to convince Emily to move into an assisted living setting in Huron, but Sue said every time she brought up the subject Emily would start crying and she just couldn't bring herself to push the issue. Emily had to take a lot of pills. She had a machine that would automatically dispense the proper pills at the appropriate time of day and it was Sue's job to fill the machine each week. The machine quit working at some point so Sue ordered a new one through the State. About a month after it was installed it quit

working too so Sue asked if I'd take a look at it. That was the first time I went to Emily's house. I discovered that the power outlet the machine was plugged into was dead. The machine had run on battery backup power as long as it could and then quit. As soon as we switched to a good outlet everything was fine. Emily was pretty independent and didn't want me to try and figure out why that one outlet didn't work, but during the conversation I also learned that Emily's water heater didn't work. It had quit about 10 years earlier and since she wasn't sure what to do she just did without - heating water on the stove to bathe or wash clothes. And she was OK with that too.

Almost every year Sue would invite one or two of these older people who had no family to Thanksgiving dinner. One year she invited Emily and I drove down to pick her up. She also invited an old guy named David from somewhere in the country north of Huron. While we were eating dinner David and Emily got to talking and it turned out that David had worked on the farm for Emily and her husband during the 1940's. The two of them talked through dinner and for 2 or three hours afterwards remembering their younger days!

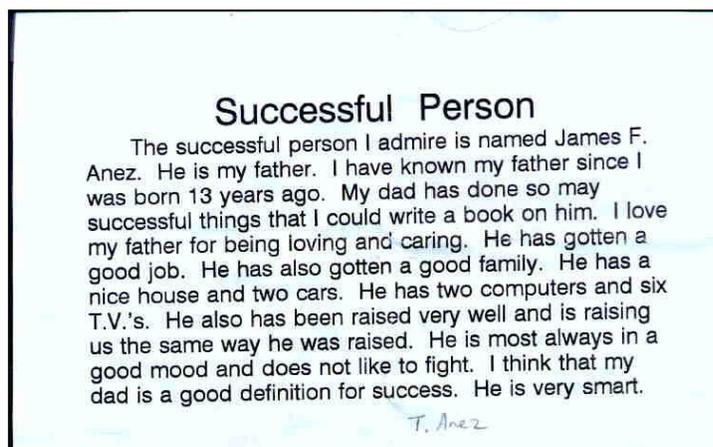
The winter following the Thanksgiving dinner was particularly hard and Emily finally agreed to move into Huron the following spring. I think I only saw her once after that when I went by to oil the wheels on her walker. She seemed really happy in the facility where she was living.

By 1997 we had a little GMC S-10 pickup in addition to a Dodge Intrepid and Mercury Grand Marquis. Our garage had 2 stalls but only one was really large enough for a modern car so I had a nice two car garage built along the alley in the back yard. The garage replaced one of the apple trees and one of the plum trees!

Dave later took the pickup to college. On one occasion his friend was driving on the interstate with the pickup in second gear for an extended period of time. Dave never mentioned this but the following summer, when Tommy was driving it in the country the engine blew. Dave ended up replacing the engine and I gave him the pickup. He drove the pickup for almost the entire time he was in college in Rapid City.



As I mentioned earlier there were a lot of politics involved with the consolidation and closure of the old flight service stations but in 1992 we finally starting to close the old facilities in South Dakota. Senator Tom Daschel, who I'd spoken with in 1984, was holding a meeting with pilots in Aberdeen, SD and my manager asked that I go with him to this meeting. I was there in my



From Tom - February 1994

capacity as a staff specialist and I never spoke but was available to provide factual information if requested.

Essentially the pilots in Aberdeen, Daschel's home town, were asking that he intervene to keep their facility open. After considerable discussion Senator Daschel got up and actually said that while he could intervene he wouldn't do it. He said that if the FAA was forced to keep the Aberdeen facility open they would have to close something else and that "something else" could easily be more important than the facility in Aberdeen. I was impressed that he actually took a stand and that he was considering more than just the home town "wants".

In 1993 I went to Rapid City, met with Air Force officials at Ellsworth Air Force Base to develop procedures and was the FAA representative at a number of meetings during the week we closed the Rapid City facility.



I'd been fooling with computers since the early or mid-eighties when Texas Instrument first came out with the TI99-4A. I had toyed with the idea for a program to train specialists on lost aircraft orientation since I'd first gotten a computer but the memory and processing speeds just couldn't generate what I needed. Finally in Huron I had a state of the art computer at work and a decent computer at home and I was finally able to generate simulations that ran in real-time and were realistic. It had always been a training requirement for Flights Service specialists to maintain proficiency in Lost Aircraft Orientation either through actual or simulated orientations. In my days at Miles City and, to a certain extent at Jamestown, this had never been a problem because we had so many "actual" orientations that we rarely had to do simulated orientations. As pilots and aircraft equipment got better and radar and navigation equipment coverage improved we'd been forced to rely heavily on simulation. For years the primary means of training was either "canned" problems or "on-the-fly" problems. "Canned" problems only worked so long as everyone followed the "script" and it was difficult to maintain any realism or accuracy in "on-the-fly" problems. My program used real aircraft speed and positions generated by the program and calculated real lines of bearing to or from navigational aids. About the only thing it couldn't simulate was the sense of urgency that a real orientation evoked. Over the years I developed and distributed versions of the program for facilities from New York to Florida to California, but, outside of South Dakota, I only know for certain that the program was used in Michigan and Nebraska. I only later realized that the capabilities and sophistication of this program probably exceeded what we were using in the Navy at FAAWTC in 1970. So much for telling the guy at FAAWTC that I had no interest or use for computers!

I also developed a program that assisted the union rep and supervisors to maintain the watch schedule. We had 8 hour shifts and 10 hour shifts. Some shifts rotated days off and some had fixed days off. Some rotated start times and some were the same shift all the time. We had shifts that started a midnight, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 10 AM as well as 2, 4, 6 and 10 PM. Consequently it was a nightmare trying to manually ensure proper coverage from hour to hour and my program did the math and projected staffing based on proposed changes caused by shift trades, leave or illness.





News Article March 1997

Flight Service specialists had been included in the "early retirement" program during the 1980's so anyone with 20 years of "good time" could retire at the age of 50. The time spent in the staff position did not qualify for this so by 1994 I was 46 and had only 17 years of qualifying time. I didn't know what the future would bring and I thought it would be good to get more "good time" so I'd have the option for early retirement. So I requested reassignment to a line position and went back to shift work. As soon as it was known that I'd be moving back to the bargaining unit I was asked to join the union and run for election as the facility union rep. I'd never belonged to a union and based on my experience in Watertown didn't really trust them. After much soul searching and some good advice from friends I decided that I could help the facility and largely ignore the regional/national organization I joined and was elected as facility rep. I saw my responsibilities in this position as being almost identical to what they'd been as a supervisor - to look out for my co-workers. I had a really good relationship with management and during the 3 years I held that office we had no significant issues.

3 years later, having established eligibility for early retirement, management requested that I go back into the staff job. I was willing but in the 3 years away from staff a few things had changed. There was now no Quality Assurance specialist, there was no Training specialist and there was no staff supervisor. The entire "staff" now was one person and the title was now "Support Specialist" and there was a lot of work involved.



In this capacity in October 2000 the facility achieved one of the most satisfying accomplishments of my career when we received a perfect score on a facility evaluation. We had been operating with an acting manager and no operations manager from early in 1998 until the fall of 1999 so a great deal of the credit for this was directed towards the supervisors and support staff (me).

Until the 1990's facility evaluations were conducted every 2 years by staff from the Regional Office. My personal experience with these in Watertown and Pierre was that they were quick and fairly easy. In Watertown my evaluation took only half a day! By the '90s however an independent evaluations organization had been established and evaluation teams from one of three national offices would visit each facility. The team, consisting of 4 to 7 people, would spend a week at the facility and they left no stone unturned. It seemed like the better job your

facility was doing the deeper they would dig so to manage a perfect score was practically impossible.

Because the evaluation teams were rarely the same people my Aircraft Orientation program always made a big impression. Typically we'd get a "commendable" item rating for using it and that would help offset any areas that we fell down on. However, by 2000 most evaluators knew about the program because it was used by a number of facilities and our only "commendable" was for customer service based on 19 outside contacts praising our facility. Additionally all of the guys had performed flawlessly and all of paperwork was up to date and accurate.



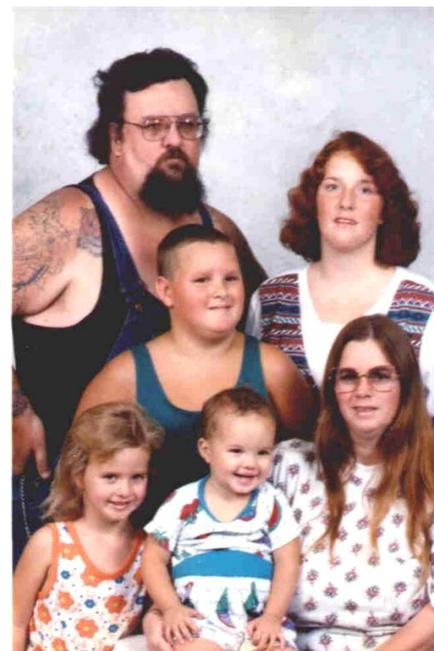
I'd started getting into Genealogy in the late 1980s while we were in Pierre partly to make use of the computer. I got some really good information on my maternal grandparent's families from my mother. My cousin Melva Jean and aunt Ira Mae put me in touch with Catherine Smith who had excellent information on the McGoldrick family (my paternal grandmother). No one seemed to know much about the Anez family though. I knew that my grandfather had 4 brothers who'd all stayed in Minnesota and that was about it. There were stories that the name had been changed from Angus or Agnes probably because we had an ancestor who deserted the British army and that was about all I knew.

I had a CD with names and addresses from the entire United States and I sent letters to about 30 people named Anez. I got a few responses that led to more contacts mainly in the Stillwater Minnesota area. A few that proved to be dead ends. One guy named Bruce Anez from Rhode Island said his dad had emigrated from Poland just prior to WWII and picked the name out of thin air.

I eventually discovered that the family name was originally Agness and from at least the 1700s they'd been famers on the Isle of Jersey in the Channel Islands off the coast of France. Our direct ancestor had been a tailor and settled in the town of Paspebiac, Quebec during the 1830s. The spelling of the name was changed simply because of the pronunciation and translation from French to English. Most of his children and, after he died, his widow moved to Stillwater Minnesota in the 1870s. It turned out there were Anez family relatives all through Minnesota that none of us knew about.

Perhaps the most colorful contact that I established through the early research was Ray Anez (we called him "Cousin Ray"). He was the son of my dad's first cousin, Howard, and owned a biker shop in Tennessee. In 1994 when we went to Kentucky on vacation he and his family drove to Fancy Farm so we could meet. He was a really nice guy but apparently he'd had problems with the law since he'd been a teenager and gave the impression that he was still not strictly legitimate.

One of the most interesting and rewarding experiences



associated with researching the Anez family involved another James Anez. In the early 1990's my sister, Cathe, forwarded a letter she'd received from James E Anez in La Porte, Indiana. She said when she first saw the return address she thought it was from me and that I'd moved again! I contacted James and we exchanged letters over the years and I got to meet him in 2000 when I was passing through La Porte. Unfortunately he knew very little about his ancestry. His dad, Donald, had been born in Stillwater so I was reasonably sure that we were somehow related but, because Donald wouldn't talk about his family we couldn't figure out the exact connection. As more and more information became available on the internet I was eventually able to make a reasonably good guess of how he was connected but still had problems with information not quite matching. Then I got an email from a guy in Minneapolis who told me that his grandmother had been married to a Donald Anez in the 1940s. In 1944 she got a phone call from a woman in Chicago who said she, "I am pregnant with your husband's child and I want you to give him a divorce." That child was James and that piece of information cleared up all the inconsistencies I'd been trying to figure out. I called James and told him I had some information - if he wanted to hear it. He did and as a subsequently made contact with the family in Minnesota. He discovered that he had two half-sisters that he'd never known about and they were all able meet.



Around Thanksgiving in 1997 Kasi came to Huron and spent a few weeks with us. She was living in Wenatchee and was pregnant. She and Sue got along pretty well so Sue made plans to be with her when the baby was born. That didn't work out, but Sue went to Wenatchee right after Haley was born in January. In March Kasi asked us to take Haley for a while so she could "get her life in order" which we did until May when Sue took the baby back to Wenatchee. I don't think I know everything that transpired that summer but it seemed that someone needed to look out for Haley and after Christmas, at the end of 1998, Sue moved to Wenatchee for a year.

About March of 1999 I learned that Sue didn't intend to return to Huron and she later filed for divorce. We kept in touch and by 2001 we'd decided to try to work things out if I retired and moved to Wenatchee. I retired in November of 2001 and moved to Wenatchee that month.