

## *Easing Into Retirement*

By Bob Schmeichel

Quite often I smile realizing where I am at this point in my life with being retired and feeling like I'm still working as hard as when I was 40 some years younger. The thing that really hits me in the face is that doing something takes twice as long to do as I thought it should. That is caused because we become our own worst enemy with raising our standard and having to decide when it is good enough. I guess we just worked harder and pushed ourselves more when we were younger. My priorities now change by choice as I consider others in my life and on my own time instead of punching a time clock. Another profound thing I noticed is that many of us haven't ventured too far away from where we planted our feet when we

were young in our twenties. Jerry Miller, Lynn Kimball and I all worked at Duke Tufty Dodge at the same time in the mid 1970s. Jerry was a truck/auto mechanic, now a retired city police officer. I was the auto body painter, and Lynn was a bodyman in the same bodyshop all under the same roof. We all worked fast paced against the clock with what we did then while being friends, and after a few years eventually ventured off in our own directions to better our lives. Fast forward to today after 40 years, retirement and the love of cars has brought us all back together again in the Great Plains Street Rodders group with stronger friendships now than we had so long ago. Now we smile about the memories and the teasing and pointing starts all over again. If I had a chance, to go back, I don't think I would do anything different and still be OK with where I am at today even with the struggles in life that got me here.

As I was interviewing Lynn and Ann Kimball about their new 1972 MGB, I found that our lives were interesting and similar to get to this point in time. I think anyone who has been able to stay in the area, have a good career and get to retirement has been pretty lucky as I look back. The reason I say that is because South Dakota maintains a second from the bottom rating in the nation with minimum pay these days. Good paying jobs that can support a family are getting pretty scarce but all a parent can only wish and hope for is that our kids will do better than we did and have a happy meaningful life.

Lynn told me that he has always liked driving small cars and the feeling they gave him of being more in control and precise. He explained, "Too many big old cars kind of lumber along feeling like a boat in water." He and Ann had always talked about getting a smaller import car for fun but were reluctant to do so since they still had their last child in college. A few years went by with keeping their priorities in order and in the middle of remodeling their present house, they decided to take a day off and go check out the Automania car show in Brandon last year. It was something different to do, so for them it was a welcome distraction from remodeling. As they walked through the car show checking out the old cars, they spotted this 1972 MGB convertible that really stood out. The car was for sale at a reasonable price and in really nice shape as Lynn said, "With everything looking like it was new." But the main thing that really caught both their eyes first was the paint color and how it changed as they walked by, changing from a bright orange to a dark wine color depending where the sun was at the time. It has to be seen to understand how well it works on this little car. Lynn thought it was priced fairly, so they test drove it and soon owned it. Both Lynn and Ann smiled and laughed as they told me about a neighbor's comment when they first moved into their present house. He said, "Since they moved into a house where neighbors on each side of them had an old car convertible, they were required to have one too!" So I'm sure when they drove their new little convertible home going by the neighbor who made it a requirement jokingly to live there, I think he may have been a little surprised to see Lynn and Ann waving, smiling and laughing as they went by into their driveway. Today all three cruise together whenever the urge comes up. Lynn has been tinkering around with the car to improve everything and has hopes of putting an electronic ignition system on the car so it starts and runs better. Ann hasn't driven the car yet as she doesn't know how to drive a manual trans where a clutch and shifting are involved. Lynn told me he's going to take her to a big parking lot with lots of room and see if he can teach her how to drive this car so she can enjoy it more than just riding along as he drives. Every time they drive, no matter where they go, people are always honking and giving them thumbs up because of the color. What fun!! Lynn said he would like to take Ann and the car to the Black Hills and drive around with the top down. I told him get ready for a new experience when you do that, as it will feel like a whole different world without a roof over your head and heighten all your senses...

