

## Rodney Friend

Where would Tired Iron of the Ozarks be without “Friends”? I don’t know if everyone realizes the fact or not but we have, or have had, lots of Friends in our club. They include Boyd, Jerry, Joe, and Rodney (all brothers), and their sisters Glenda Hodson and Arliss Wells and their parents Holly and Vera Friend. Rodney is the featured Friend for this issue.

Rodney was born in Custer City, Oklahoma, in 1948 at home with a neighbor as a mid-wife. The doctor showed up after Rodney did. He moved with his parents to Arkansas when he was about five years old and has lived in and near Springdale ever since, now at Tontitown. His memories of Oklahoma as a child are of weeds including the dreaded devil’s claws, goat heads, and cockleburs.

Growing up he worked for several farmers. He paid his dues. His first job was hauling hay for a half cent per bale. He cleaned chicken houses, hauled hay, built fence, and cut brush and weeds. In his junior year of high school, he got a job vaccinating chickens. In his senior year he worked at Daisy Air Rifle. After graduating from high school at Bentonville, he attended one year at Arkansas Valley Vo-Tech at Ozark, Arkansas (August 1967-August 1968). While there he worked nights at Dodgen’s Turkey Plant.

Rodney’s experience and education prepared him for a very successful career in the refrigeration trade. He returned to Daisy for the winter of 1968 and spring of 1969. In 1969 he was hired by Rogers Sheet Metal as an air condition serviceman. After working there for a few months, he went to work at Ray’s Refrigeration in Springdale for seven years and then at Shelton Sales and Service in Fayetteville for seven years. In 1984 he started, and continues to run Hi-Tech Services, a commercial refrigeration company located in Springdale.

Rodney became actively interested in antiques about 1992 when he and his wife Helen started collecting old toys. Presently the collection includes any type antique toy but features metal cars and trucks. They have accumulated about eight to ten thousand items. A nice selection of the toys can be seen on display at Rick’s Iron Skillet Restaurant in Fayetteville.

In 1997 Howard Hodson, his brother-in-law, talked him into stopping by the EDGE&TA regional tractor show at Rose of Sharon when Tired Iron was located just west of Gentry on Highway 12. He was hooked. He got interested in old tractors and engines and has been collecting them ever since. His first tractor was an Oliver 60 and next a John Deere MT. He joined Tired Iron that year, and he and Helen have been very active since that time. Helen even rode as a passenger on the two tractor drives to Ozark, Arkansas. The two of them serve, or have served, on the land and grounds committee, and Rodney has been vice-president for a few years. As chairman of the land and grounds committee, Rodney has led in and helped in most of the improvements made on Tired Iron land since its purchase in February 2003.

Rodney and several other Tired Iron members and friends have a tradition of meeting someplace nearly every Tuesday and Thursday to work on implements, engines, and tractors, mostly at Rodney’s John Deere green and yellow shop on Carley Road in Springdale. One of the most impressive restorations by the crew is a 1923 Reid oilfield engine. It required many months of attention before it was operable. It can now be seen, and heard, puffing away at Tired Iron shows.

It would be impossible to list all of Rodney and Helen’s collection. There are over 100 one and two cylinder engines and many implements, tools, and smaller items of all types. A very short list includes the following larger items:

1 – 1935 John Deere A  
1 – 1947 John Deere D  
1 – 1949 JD MT  
1 – 1936 JD D  
1- 1945 JD GM  
1- 1949 Ford 9N  
1 – 1952 Ford 8N  
1 – 1939 AC B  
1 – 1968 Petibone All-terrain  
Carry-All fork lift  
1 – 1942 Oliver 60

2 – Gibsons  
3 – David Bradleys  
1 – AC B10  
1 – Air Capitol lawn mower  
1 – Eshalman lawn mower  
Many Wheel Horses  
Many walk-behinds

1 – Reid 20 HP oilfield engine  
1 – 35 HP Superior engine  
1 – 4 HP International  
2 – 3 HP Friend engines  
1 – 1 ½ HP Witte  
1 – 6 HP Fairbanks  
2 – Novos (4 & 2 HP)  
2 – Monitor engines  
1 – Cushman Binder engine  
5 – Cushman 3-wheel units  
2 – Cushman 2-wheel units



*Rodney and his 1923 Reid Oilfield Engine*



*Rodney's Potato Plow after restoration by a Crew at Dale Crawford's shop*