

Come Rain or Shine

Fred Pepple retires after nearly 43 years of dedication to the American Angus Association mailroom.

by *Corinne Patterson*

After showing up for his first day of work Sept. 29, 1959, at the American Angus Association mailroom, Fred Pepple didn't return for three days. But it wasn't because he had no desire to come back.

"I remember that date because I was sick for three days afterward," Fred recalls. "My dad took me to the doctor, and he said I had the measles. The guys that work here didn't think I'd ever be back."

Only 19 years old when he began, Fred soon made a career out of working in the mailroom, come rain or shine, and gave nearly 43 years of service before retiring in June 2004. After years of standing on the concrete floor in the basement of the Association, it was a doctor who again told him it was time to stay home. He had to get off his feet to help his back.

While Fred looks forward to retiring to spend time fishing and pursuing other desires, he says he will miss the people.

"I worked with Fred most of his years with the Association, and he was always a *true* friend and co-worker," says Dean Hurlbut, former Association director of activities.

Fred found friends for life in many of his Association co-workers. He even found his wife, Mary, who also worked at the Association. They've been married for 10 years, and she has worked at the Association on and off since about the same time Fred started.

Gloria Hurlbut, supervisor of Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR), was working for Angus when Fred started and says he has been a dear friend, even someone she'd call "brother," for many years. "Fred was always there when I needed him," Gloria says.

It was the relaxed atmosphere that kept the job fun for all those years, Fred says. He remembers snowball fights in 18-inch snowfall, maintaining a garden on Association property with John Crouch, and manning the Angus booth at the American Royal and FFA convention in Kansas City, Mo., as some of the highlights.

"Fred was dedicated to his job and always had fun with his co-workers. He was the only man that took break and lunch with all of us women. He was the life of the party," Gloria says. "Fred always treats everyone equally and is dedicated to his friendships."

"I think that says a lot for the culture and for the attitude of the organization," Crouch, executive vice president, says of Fred's tenure

with Angus and the many other longtime employees on staff. "That says to me that it is a good place to work — an organization that treats its employees well and provides a family atmosphere and camaraderie or a team spirit that one doesn't find in a lot of organizations."

Dean says most of the Association membership may not realize the responsibilities that go with Fred's position as director of mail services.

"I can remember when Fred had to take all of the Association staff to the Kansas City airport and pick them up on their return, in addition to all of his regular responsibilities in the mailroom," Dean says. "Another one of his responsibilities was to pick up and return the Board of Directors to the airport when there was a directors' meeting. His mode of transportation was the 'Old Blue Goose,' a Ford van. He was always on time both ways, and it didn't matter what time of day or night, you could always depend on Fred."

His job has changed as technology has progressed. The people for whom he has worked have changed as well — he's worked for six executive officers, including Frank Richards, Glen Bratcher, Lloyd Miller, C.K. Allen, Richard Spader and John Crouch.

A first-class stamp to send a 1-ounce letter



► Fred Pepple looks forward to spending time fishing and pursuing other hobbies.

cost 4¢ when Fred began weighing each envelope individually before it was sent on its way. Today, the mailroom is equipped with a postage meter, and letters are sent through the machine for postage at 37¢ per ounce for a first-class letter.

Fred did much more than send mail; he was in charge of ordering office supplies, handling breeders' requests for Angus materials, keeping the soda machine full, and even changing light bulbs.

"Fred never said no to anyone, and it was always, 'Sure, what can I do to help you,'" Dean says.

