

making a difference

A Morning Walk with OP Resident Ed Kasper

By Reagan "Buddy" Putty

Back in mid-January, I received a text message from Overton West resident, Janet Kasper. "My husband, Ed, takes an early morning walk almost every day. During these walks, he picks up litter," her message said. "It's not uncommon for him to bring home a sack, sometimes two, full of litter. People honk and wave – and some even stop and thank him. I think it would make for a great story."

A few days later, I had a very enjoyable conversation with Ed Kasper as he shared a little personal background on both himself and his morning walks ... both of which I found fascinating. So fascinating in fact, that a couple of days after our phone call, I decided that the best way to tell this story, was to experience it firsthand. I contacted Janet to run the idea by her. "Ed would love to have you join him," Janet replied back. "He said to be here at our house on Boulder Run at 6:15 tomorrow morning." Turns out, the firsthand experience gets an early start.

Despite not being one who is much for early mornings, I arrived at the Kaspers' home on Boulder Run right on time. After Janet welcomed me inside, I heard a voice beckon me from the kitchen. "Buddy, come on in here – the first thing we do is stretch." And so we did. *In for a penny, in for a pound, right?*

Ed Kasper, who is 76-years old, has been walking three to five miles a morning, five times a week since 2012. Ed took up walking because he decided to retire from jogging, which had been a daily exercise ritual of his since 1968. "I still had two good knees and I wanted to keep it that way," he told me. *Hard to argue with that.*

As we started on our way, Ed shared that our morning route would cover a little over two miles, which I knew was shorter than the three to five miles he normally walks each day. I'm not sure if that was his plan all along, or a decision he made after hearing my knees snap, crackle and pop during our stretching session. Either way, I wasn't going to argue with him. While our walk may have covered a



"Doing my part to ensure that our neighborhood remains the best in town."

Boomer and Hook 'Em



Ed speculates that on average, he accumulates a bag of litter for every two miles walked.



Janet and Ed Kasper will celebrate 55 years of marriage this September.

minimal distance, our conversation covered ground going back over a half-century.

Ed Kasper grew up in Austin, graduating from McCallum High School where he was a star shortstop on the Knights baseball team. He then attended the University of Texas on a baseball scholarship, playing third-base for legendary Longhorn head coach Bibb Falk. Ed achieved recognition as an All-Conference and Honorable Mention All-American performer. It was during his time at UT that Ed went on a blind date with Janet Socha, who was a student and cheerleader at nearby Concordia University. "I knew when I met her that she was the one, but Coach Falk had a very strict rule that prohibited players from being married or even engaged. Since I couldn't afford to lose my scholarship, we had to wait until after graduation to get married," Ed explained. Well, as the saying goes, 'good things come to those who wait', as Ed and Janet will celebrate their 55th wedding anniversary this coming September.

Ed Kasper founded Kasper & Associates in 1984 which is a merger and acquisition advisory firm. His son, Layne, is now its managing partner. Formerly, Ed has been owner and chief executive officer of various manufacturing companies, primarily in the metals industry. He is a well-known North Texas business leader who has served on numerous business, civic and church boards, and is frequently quoted in publications. In 2005, he was recognized by the Fort Worth Business Press for his influence in the lives and careers of others by offering guidance and support. Also in the past, Ed and Janet spent many years teaching a young married couples class at their church, St. Paul Lutheran.

As advertised, we did indeed pick up litter as we walked and talked, though Ed said it was a smaller haul than usual. While that might be true, it wasn't due to lack of looking, as more than once we left the beaten path to ensure a nearby area was litter free. When pressed for a reason as to why his morning walks include such a vigilant patrol for others litter, "Picking up litter not only keeps the neighborhood clean, it also allows me to get my squats in while I walk," Ed said with a smile.

Further discussion revealed that the most litter accumulated in one walk was three bags of litter – but on average, he gathers about a bag full every 2 miles. The most valuable thing Ed has uncovered on

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When Ed saw this chair on Ranch View Road, he said, "Don't think my bag is big enough to pick up that piece of litter."

his morning paces? "I found a five-pack of beer one time," he said with a smile. *Hey, now you got my attention!*

As we trudged back up the steep hill that led back to his home, I thanked Ed for all he did for the neighborhood and then asked him if there was anything else that he'd like to share. He was quiet for a few steps as if contemplating, then he said, "Since 1968, I've walked and run over a combined 47,000 miles, which is nearly twice around our planet earth." Then after pausing for effect, he added, "*The hardest part has been walking on water.*" I



This thing is legendary! When it's stock show time, it's stock show tie time. A tradition Ed Kasper started 40 years ago.

would've laughed harder, ***but I wasn't totally convinced he was kidding.***

Thank you, Ed, for letting me tag along and for all you do in the community. And a special thank you to Janet Kasper. Janet, you were right - it did make for a great story ... one that I was honored to be a part of, even if it was a Longhorn who was the star of the show!



Do you know a resident who is making a difference in the community? For more info on having that resident featured in a future issue of *Overton Life*, email to reagan.putty@n2pub.com.