

'Stan the man' Woinoski

• Sheridan native, 22 year military veteran — now bus driver makes big difference in lives of many District 2 children

By Caitlin Addlesperger

Youth reporter

Stan "the Man" Woinoski: bus driver, photographer, philanthropist.

For the past 12 years, Woinoski has driven school buses for Sheridan County School District 2. Mention "Stan the Man" to any student ever to ride his bus, and instantly the student's face brightens and he begins to smile.

Born and raised in Sheridan, Woinoski has always enjoyed this small town. After he graduated from Sheridan High School, Woinoski joined the Marine Corps.

Woinoski led a life full of adventures over the next 22-and-a-half years in the Corps.

He started out as a private operating a machine gun, and through his career in the Marines was stationed many different places, including Vietnam, Japan, California, North Carolina and Kansas.

At one point, he decided to go to Officer Candidate School. He became an officer and gradually began to work his way up in rank.

"As an officer," Woinoski said, "you have all sorts of duties. I was a military magistrate, so people who were in trouble had to come before me and explain ... it was interesting."

When Woinoski decided to get his college degree, he attended night school and took college courses while still performing his duties in the Marines. It took almost nine years for him to finally get his degree from Chapman University College in California.

Throughout his time in the Marines, Woinoski did many diverse jobs.

For a while, he handled electronics and communications with machines. At another



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Woinoski said he altered his bus's "watch your step" message to a more positive message.

time, he was in charge of handling the Hawk Missiles in California. He even attended Mess Management School to learn how to run a club system at a base.

However, times could be difficult.

"I suppose one of the low points was in between my tours of Vietnam," Woinoski said. "I was what they called the Inspector Staff in North Carolina, and I conducted military funerals. It was horrible and sad."

By the time he retired, Woinoski was a major.

After retirement, he and his wife, Karen,

built a house in Big Horn. In 1984, Woinoski began driving school buses in School District 1.

Woinoski made the switch to Sheridan School District 2 in 1993 and has been there ever since.

Aside from his regular route around Woodland Park Elementary School, Woinoski drives pupils for field trips and school activities.

He has always been an exceptional bus driver, according to his fans.

Senior Josh Mortensen, an alumnus of Woodland Park School, recalled, "Every year on my birthday, Stan would give me candy. He never forgot."

But what sets Woinoski apart are his famous photo collages of his students. When Woinoski drives kids for an activity or field trip, he takes photos of whatever they're doing and makes a poster.

Woinoski gives a poster to the class or team. If students or parents want their own individual copy, he sells them.

"I like to think of it as a memento they can keep forever," Woinoski said.

"The collages are amazing!" junior Leah Tenney said. "He does a really good job on them."

When his photos are sports-related, Woinoski submits them to The Sheridan Press. If they are published in the paper, he makes a poster of the clipping, "tweaks" it with words "Congratulations on being 'Pressed,'" and presents it to the student featured.

"Stan always knows about you and how you're doing," tennis player Eden Andrews, a senior, said.

Senior Alyse Springer added, "He



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Sheridan School District 2 bus driver Stan Woinoski laughs with school children at a stop Tuesday. Nine-year-old Jacquelyn Wells, left, said Woinoski "is the best bus driver I ever had."

takes the time to learn people's names for golf. He is actually out on the course taking pictures and wishing us good luck."

Recently, Woinoski had a photography exhibit in the mezzanine of the Sheridan Fulmer Public Library. "Photography is sort of a hobby," Woinoski explained. His photos were of the streets and alleys of Sheridan.

Woinoski clearly loves his job.

"Some people look down at being a bus-driver, but I like doing it and driving," he said. "I really truly enjoy associating with the students."

Students enjoy Woinoski as well.

"Stan has a good heart and takes time

to drive everyone. He actually came back early from a vacation to drive us on a trip," said senior Mike Marshall enthuses.

Freshman Jordan Kahl said of Woinoski, "Stan is just a lot of fun. He can talk to you about anything!"

Added Mortensen, "Stan's always curious on what's going on in your life. He really goes the extra mile."

Senior Alyssa Hornay said, "Stan loves his job and just has a brightness in him."

What else can be said about Stan Woinoski.

As Marshall concluded, "Stan is the Man!"