



Gurule

**Name:** Sam Gurule  
**Age:** 81  
**Hometown:** Longmont  
**Occupation:** Retired. Worked in construction and served in U.S. Army during World War II.  
**What do you like about living in the area?** My wife and I raised our kids in that house over there (near Roosevelt Park). She passed away, and I'm still here. ... I have this whole park in my view. I remember when they used to have football games and carnivals in the park. It was nice when they had that here.  
**When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grow up?** Mostly, what we had to look forward to was going into the service. We didn't have a big future ahead of us.  
**What adult had the most influence on your life when you were growing up and why?** Your parents, you know? Everybody appreciated their parents in those days. You respected them.  
**What's your biggest pet peeve?** The gas situation, naturally. I can't understand why it rose so high. There doesn't seem to be a reason for it.  
**Dog person or cat person?** Tell you what. I enjoy animals, pets, but I don't want to own them. I don't like going around picking up after their mess. I



George Kolinski, 85, right, takes a break from weeding the garden while talking with a resident of Cinnamon Park in Longmont.

Richard M. Hackett/Times-Call

## 'An inspiration'

### Retiree works at senior housing facility as gardener

Longmont Times-Call

**L**ONGMONT — The average age of a resident at Cinnamon Park Assisted Living Residence is 83. But one of the senior housing facility's own workers — a part-time gardener who also is Cinnamon Park's longest-serving employee — is two years older than that.

**"Many times, I'm mistaken for one of the residents,"** said George Kolinski, 85, a retired electrical engineer who cares for the 35,000-square-foot property, which has a vegetable garden and walking path. "It's OK. I can live with that."

**"I like to keep active and interact with people. It's good exercise."**

— George Kolinski, 85, a retired electrical engineer turned gardener

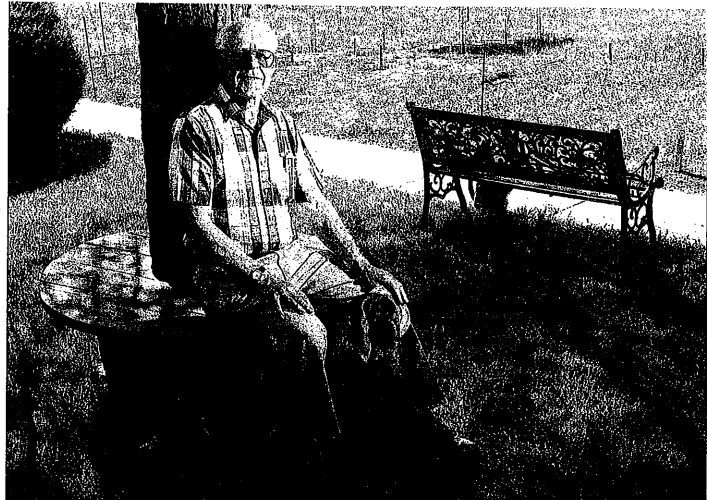
"We absolutely love this guy," administrator Debbie Setlock said. "He's an inspiration to everybody. He's a hard worker. He doesn't complain. He's steadfast and humble. The residents enjoy him."

Kolinski was hired for part-time work on the grounds about 18 years ago, he said.

He and his wife, Elaine, whom he met at the University of Colorado at Boulder, recently celebrated their 60th anniversary. The couple lived in Steamboat Springs for a time but resided in the Midwest until they came to Longmont in 1988. An avid fisherman, Kolinski learned of the job from a college friend.

"I like to keep active and interact with people," he said. "It's good exercise."

Situated in a residential neighbor-



hood, the facility was built in 1989 by local physicians who wanted to offer seniors more options for housing.

"They wanted the grounds to be park-like," Setlock explained.

And they are. Setlock said birds, garden snakes and squirrels are frequent visitors to the grounds. In the garden, Cinnamon Park residents can pick peas to snap, beets for pickling and salad greens for dinner.

Kolinski plants a variety of vegeta-

bles, including peppers, carrots, radishes, snow peas, zucchini and green beans.

In flower beds, he plants the leftover bulbs from Easter lilies brought to Cinnamon Park residents. He grows Indian corn, gourds and pumpkins for the fall decor.

He mows the lawn. (Setlock said Kolinski declined her offer to purchase a riding lawn mower.) He repairs the sprinkler system. He re-

places any dying plants.

"(The residents) sit and watch him a lot," Setlock said. "They want to know what's growing. They're interested in it."

"It makes me feel good," Kolinski said of his work. "It feels good to watch something grow and develop, however insignificant it may be."

Melanie M. Sidwell can be reached at 303-684-5274 or msidwell@times-call.com



Gary Disney



Tom Disney

Gary Disney and his son Tom have experienced both the giving and receiving ends of the CHAMPS mentoring program at Loma Linda Elementary. CHAMPS (Children Having A More Positive Self-concept) is a volunteer mentor project associated with the St. Vrain Education Foundation. Eight years ago, after his mother's death, Tom was recommended for the CHAMPS program to help him through the difficult time. The resulting bond gradually grew into that of an extended family. In fact, Tom's mentor and her