A publication for and about the town of Naper, Nebraska

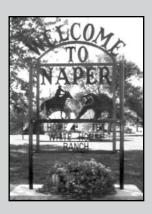
The Naper Historical Society

Our Mission:

The mission of the Naper Historical Society is to preserve, interpret, display, communicate, promote and honor history, original structures, special places and artifacts of the people and culture of Naper, Nebraska, and the surrounding area. The Naper Historical Society intends to accomplish this mission by operating a museum, publishing a newsletter, sponsoring events, and in other appropriate ways. The Naper Historical Society will initially focus on four themes: School Days, Life in Naper Through the Years, White Horse Ranch, and Naper 28 Plane Crash.

In This Issue:

Remembering the Lost Airmen
And More About Naper 28 1
The Circuit Rider 2
Where Your Donations Go 3
Naper Featured on 'Pure Nebraska,' KOLN-TV3
Just Horsin' Around 4
You Know You're Too Old to Trick-or-Treat When 4
Not Just a Cheap, Flashy Newspaper
Alumni Gather May 24 5
The Ol' Homesteader 6
Letters



Naper Paper

Volume 12, Issue 3

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Fall 2014

REMEMBERING THE LOST AIRMEN

S eventy years ago, about 8:30 pm on August 3, 1944, an Army C-47 crashed west of Naper killing all 28 servicemen on board, the worst military air disaster in Nebraska's history. Twenty six pilots, a flight surgeon, and an aircraft crew chief were en route from the air base near Bruning, NE, to Pierre, SD, where the pilots would complete their training before being shipped overseas. While traveling across Boyd County, the plane was likely struck by lightning which caused the crash although this is not known for sure. The plane struck a hill on the Con Sattler farm and then bounced and slid down an embankment, finally coming to rest in a gully about half a mile from the original point of impact.

A wooden cross was erected on the site in 1946 and replaced with a metal cross in 2001 to honor the memories of the men who perished.

In 2004, Loren Sieh was chairman of a Naper Historical Society committee which raised funds for a permanent memorial for the "Naper 28" at Knoll Crest Cemetery. Nearly 400 people including many family members and friends of the pilots attended the dedication held August 8. Jim Fagin, representing Senator Ben Nelson, and Major General Michael Symanski spoke of the patriotism and sacrifices of the pilots and their loved ones. A military drill team and a firing squad from Offutt Air Base performed.

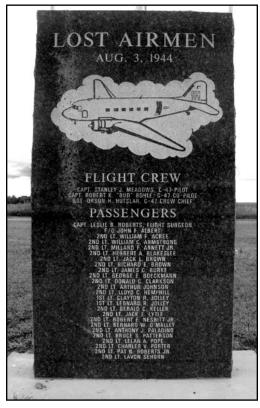
A United States flag, a state of Nebraska flag and a Naper 28 flag of original design fly over the memorial from May 1 until October 1 each year as well as other holidays. A granite stone engraved with the names of the lost airmen is located in the cemetery. The roadside marker is located next to the fence.

AND MORE ABOUT NAPER 28

By Nathalie Sattler Taranto

never cease to be surprised at how my Naper heritage evolves.

The American Association of University Women area branch reading and book discussion group, in which I participate, discussed the book *Unbroken: A WWII Story of Survival, Resilience* and *Redemption*, by Laura Hillenbrand, a biography of 93-year-old Louis Zamperini, who had been a Japanese prisoner of war. Toward the end of the program, conversation turned to personal memories, experiences and effects of WWII. (One member of this group





is 104 years old and had been a prisoner of war in the Philippines.) When it was my turn to speak, I noted that my most vivid memory was of a plane crash near my childhood home in 1944. To my astonishment, my statement generated a considerable uptake of interest. For the next meeting I was asked to enlarge on

Continued on page 2



The Circuit Rider

The Boucher Family: From bombers to bowling

At sundown a mysterious rider is seen drifting along the horizon. Old timers believe he's a Sandhills Ghost or Spirit who's trying to keep the Pioneer Spirit alive. His mission: To interview favorite long-time residents of Naper, in order to help us remember our noble past. No one can actually point to specifics, but all swear, "He's out there..."

When considering the small town of Naper and its colorful history, one can't help but remember Boucher's Store on Main Street. For years the Boucher family supplied groceries and credit to patrons. Last issue, Alberta Boucher Breyer shared her story with us, and now we learn the story of the Boucher family.

Jake and Libby Boucher moved to Naper in 1934. They bought a grocery store from Mr. Ulrich. It was old, so Jake decided to build a new one. The whole family worked until it was ready to move into, plus moving all the counters and groceries. Jake had bought a meat cooler that operated by running a small gas motor so he could butcher and sell fresh beef and pork. Libby ordered the groceries. They were hauled in small trucks from Cash and Carry in Sioux City. My sisters Ella and Marjorie clerked and cleaned the store. There was no electricity or water system in Naper.

My next oldest sister Lelia helped, but she got a job helping a lady with arthritis who lived on a big ranch and she liked that better than store work. So the twins, Alfred and I, had to work in the store. I remember one job I got was washing that huge meat grinder every day.

Then World War II came along and some foods were rationed. Ration stamps had to be pasted in books in order to order foods like sugar and other groceries.

Robert, my oldest brother, couldn't pass the physical exam for the army because he had sight in only one eye. So he decided the only way he could help the war effort was to work in a manufacturing plant where they built bombers. He and several friends decided to go to California where he got a job in a converted Ford Motor Company plant that built bomber planes. He worked until the war was over and then they picked eight workers and sent them to Detroit where they were trained to service the new cars that were to arrive at Ford dealers. He loved his job and worked until he was in his 60s when he died of a massive heart attack.

Ella married Jack Bentzen. They ran a gas station on the southeast corner of Main Street and raised their four children there—Nina, Jackie, Melvin and Judy, all of whom graduated from Naper. Jack died

in 1990 and Ella in 2007.

Marjorie married Louis Kortmeyer and followed him during his military service until he went overseas. She came back and helped clerk in the store until Louis was discharged. They built a café with a bowling alley in the basement and owned it for several years. Then Louis decided to start building houses and Marj was his right-hand helper. They raised three girls—Marjorie LouAnn, Kathy and Carla.

Lelia worked at several farm homes when they needed a hired girl. She met George Higgins who was a rancher west of Naper. They married and after living on several places, they bought a huge ranch, built a new house and raised four children—Joan, Eddie, Mary and Lavern. George died in 2003 and Lelia lives in Silver Threads (assisted living) in Gregory. Lavern and his wife Brenda live on the ranch.

My twin brother Alfred and I graduated in 1946. Alfred (Butch) worked as a mechanic. He could fix so many things. He married Iona Meyer and they had two children, Vicki and Gayle. In 1952, Alfred got very sick and tests revealed leukemia. He died in 1953.

I taught one-room schools for two years and Everett Breyer, just home from military service, came and volunteered to play his accordion after our school program. I liked his playing, and that was the beginning of a courtship that resulted in a marriage that lasted 63 years. Everett died in 2011. We had four children—Marla, Gloria, Randy and Lynn.

My youngest brother, Jake Junior, graduated in 1950. Earl Moody was looking for young men to work with the REA in Boyd and Holt County. Jake took the job and REA trained them. He worked at electrical work his entire adult life. He and his wife raised two daughters. After several accidents, he has retired and they live in Boulder City, NV.

I remember once when I was watching the store so Jake could go home for lunch, some gypsies came to Naper and into the store. I was really afraid of them. I know they filled their big clothes and pockets full of stuff but Jack Bentzen had been warned that the gypsies were coming so he locked all of his stuff and came running to the store. Jake always had a billy club hanging near the cash register. Jack came behind the counter and said, "Don't worry, I'll get rid of them." He grabbed that billy club and ordered them to get out but they didn't move. He held the club up close to one's head and told them to get out or he'd use it and they finally left.

They camped near the school house for several days. My sister told me she remembered Grandma Maertin coming to get Libby to go with her to the gypsies' camp where they delivered a baby in one of the covered wagons.

Jake and Libby sold the store in 1946 and moved to Butte to be closer to a doctor. The building later became Naper Gas and Electric and a home for Spec and Dorothy Whitley and family. Alan Nicolaus' A&M is now in that location.

AND MORE ABOUT NAPER 28

Continued from page 1

the happening. So I put together all the info I had on hand about the crash and Naper—pictures, old and new; newspaper articles; essays I pulled from the internet; copies of the Naper Paper dealing with the crash, ceremonies and Naper history; the Naper -1976 book; the farm; maps (when I moved to Connecticut in 1956, I was so insulted when coworkers would ask whether Nebraska was east or west of the Mississippi River. Crimeny! They weren't even knowledgeable about the state, let alone Naper); and lastly, my laptop to pull

up the Naper website.

This small group of interesting people (teachers, librarians, scientists, politicians, professors, business owners and such) now know more about Naper than they ever imagined was knowable. Of course I took with me the book Nuclear Nebraska giving me another "in" to further enlarge on Naper and Naperites.

So you see, even away from the immediate community, Naper and my hometown heritage continues to somehow stand out. My best to the Naper of the Past, the Present, and the To Be!

WHERE YOUR DONATIONS GO

The Historical Society deeply appreciates the donations we receive throughout the year. We strive to do projects that enhance, preserve and protect the history and memories of Naper and the surrounding area. We thought you would like to know where your donations have gone.

Our latest project was siding of Heritage Hall. Roger Witt, Witt Construction of Bonesteel, began work on the museum last fall. As of July 1, the cost of renovation has been \$24,364.67. The original church structure had two windows removed, two doors replaced and interior walls repaired where windows and doors were changed. The exterior has new "smart" siding as well as metal soffits and trim. It looks amazing! The south wing of the museum (formerly the parish hall) has yet to be done.

In 2010, Heritage Hall was reshingled, costing about \$10,000. We have purchased and erected two large signs on Highway 12 advertising Naper museums (about \$750). We purchased (\$2,667) and installed signs in front of the two museums and the Naper Jail. We renovated the White Horse Museum at a cost of \$18,143. After the drought of 2012 and the resulting wild fires across the area, we held a fundraiser and donated the proceeds (\$6,075) to the volunteer fire department. As we said a couple of issues ago, the income we receive is used to print and mail the *Naper Paper*, buy flags for the cemetery and memorial, pay the electrical bill (sizeable in the summer because of dehumidifiers running in the museums and lights at the memorial), and repair the buildings. Your generosity is incredible and we feel the money has been spent wisely. Thank you.

If you have a few extra dollars that you could again share with Naper Historical Society and our museum renovation project, we would be most grateful. We appreciate your support in all ways.



Naper Featured on 'Pure Nebraska,' KOLN-TV

Jon and Taryn VanderFord and their children visited Naper May 29. Their program, "Pure Nebraska," highlights Nebraska communities and our biggest industry, agriculture. Jon interviewed the mayor, Vern Goodman, who told them what made Naper unique and worth a visit. Taryn interviewed Ann Anderson who gave a brief history of the White Horse Ranch. They were very impressed with the Naper Café and the pie Tara Ahlers served to them!

Both interviews have aired on Channel 10/11, but you can access them by typing 1011now.com/ purenebraska into your browser and then clicking on the story you'd like to see. ■

Left: Children from the Summer Reading Program in Naper visited Drueke Trucking and learned about the business.

SUPPORT OUR LOCAL MERCHANTS

123 Main Photography Studio

Works by local artisans 832-5137

A&M Enterprises

Trenching, pump installations, backhoe work, plumbing 832-5388

Bob's Auto Body

Auto body repair 832-5766, Box 223

Curl Up & Dye Beauty Shop

Haircuts, styling, coloring **832-5573**

Drueke Trucking

Local and long-distance grain hauling 832-5610

Grammy and Pop's Hole-in-the-Wall Mart

New items each week 832-5018

K&S Mobile

Welding and equipment repair, on-site service 832-5125

Lynn's Upholstery

Covering chairs, couches and other furniture 832-5461

M&L Lawn Service

Mowing, trimming, fertilizing, tilling, seeding, spraying 832-5422

Naper Café and Lounge

Breakfast, dinner, supper, bar 832-5272

Naper Transport

Sand and gravel hauling 832-5955

Nick's Auto Sales

Used cars, oil changes, parts, tire repair, new tires **832-5166**

U.S. Postal Service 832-5977

JUST HORSIN' AROUND

By Marilyn Sieh

y grandfather Earl Smith owned Percheron horses back in the early 1900s. He and his family lived on a ranch southwest of Naper along the south side of the Keya Paha River near the Smith Bridge. I have heard stories of him taking his Percheron stallion, a beautiful animal, around the country to breed mares for the farmers. He'd ride in the cart behind the stallion when traveling from farm to farm (see photo at right). I decided it was time to learn more about this breed of horses.

Percheron: LePerche District of France; any breed of large, fast trotting horses. The Percheorn is a breed of draft horses, well-muscled and known for their intelligence and willingness to work. Originally they were bred for use as war horses, later for pulling stage coaches and later still for agriculture and hauling heavy loads. In the late 18th and 19th centuries, Arabian blood was added to the breed. Exports from France to the United States in the 1900s rose rapidly until Percherons were 70% of the draft horse population, but after World War II when tractors started replacing horses, the breed declined as fast as it rose.

Percherons generally stand between 16.2 and 17.3 hands (66–71 inches) and average 1,900 lbs. They are generally black or gray and may have white markings on their head and legs. The feet and legs are clean and heavily muscled, showing power and ruggedness. In the 19th century, they were known to travel up to 37 miles a day at a trot. What a horse! ■

You Know You're Too Old to Trick-or-Treat When...

- You get winded from knocking on the door.
- You have to have another kid chew the candy for you.
- You ask for high fiber candy only.
- When someone drops a candy bar in your bag, you lose your balance and fall over.
- People say, "Great Boris Karloff mask!" and you're not wearing a mask.

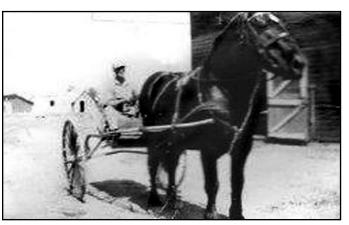
■ The door opens, you yell "Trick or..." and can't remember the rest.

■ By the end of the night you have a bag full of restraining orders.

 You have to carefully choose a costume that won't dislodge your hairpiece.

You're the only Power Ranger in the neighborhood with a walker.







NOT JUST A CHEAP, FLASHY NEWSPAPER

We always hope to provide our readers with some educational information which will enhance their lives. In this issue, we offer medical information, gleaned from the *Norwegian Medical Dictionary* and the *Redneck Medical Dictionary*, both of which were provided by our loyal readers. We hope this will be helpful in understanding your doctor on your next visit.

Artery: the study of paintings

Bacteria: the back door to the cafeteria

Barium: what happens if the treatment fails and the patient dies

Benign: what you are after you be eight **Caesarean section:** a neighborhood in Rome

Cat scan: searching for a lost kitty

Cauterize: made eye contact with a female

Colic: a sheep dog, often named "Lassie"

Dilate: to live a long time

Fester: quicker than someone else

Hangnail: coat hook Impotent: distinguished Labor pain: an injury at work

Medical staff: doctor's cane **Morbid:** a higher offer

Nitrates: cheaper than day rates **Outpatient:** client who has fainted

Scar: rolled tobacco leaf **Secretion:** hiding something

Tumor: an extra pair

Upper GI series: tall soldiers' ball game

Urine: opposite of "you're out!"
Varicose: located nearby



ALUMNI GATHER MAY 24

R ay Bentzen, class of 1974, was MC at this year's event. It was particularly interesting to note Virginia Schonebaum Ahlers graduated in 1954; her daughter Marion in 1974; her son Daniel in 1984 and Dan's daughter Macy in 2014, and all of them were in attendance at the banquet! About 90 in all attended this year's banquet, the theme of which was "It Takes a Village." See you all next year! (Photos courtesy of Kevin Waring.) ■



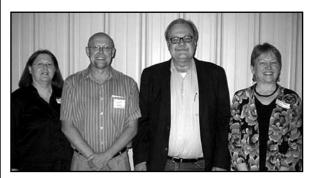
Class of 1954: Carol Peterson Helenbolt, Lavern Tech, Marjorie Stahlecker Zauner, Norman Davis, Russell Whitley and Virginia Schonebaum Ahlers



Class of 2014: Macy Ahlers



Class of 1964: Jerry Heermann, Elaine Vogt Ellwanger, Alma Bendig Tiernan, Joan Higgins Waring, Georgia Hamling Serr, Dorothy Dummer Heermann and Jackie Farr



Class of 1974: DeAnne Fuhrer Nielsen, Dwight Fuhrer, Ray Bentzen and Marion Ortmeyer



Class of 1984: Keith Mayer, Dan Ahlers, Lisa Fuhrer Eide, Sharon Sattler Vogt, Cindy Bendig Klinger and Michelle Camin Janssen



The Ol' Homesteader

Ol' Homesteader returns with another heap of news and happenings from in and around our fair town...

The Ol' Homesteader tryin' to keep you inthe-know on local folks:

THE YOUNGUNS:

Hannah and Justin Drueke (daughter and son of Tony and Beth Goodman Drueke, grandchildren of Vern and Linda Goodman), Jesse Cline (son of Hoyt and Julie, grandson of Marvin and Judy Hoyt Cline) and Colby Hansen won the 6-8 grade division of the Buckets for Cancer 3-on-3 Co-ed basketball tournament in Bonesteel.

Justin and Jesse musta picked up a buncha pointers at their Mid-America Basketball Camp they attended in June.

Jesse Cline, Kelli Mashino (daughter of Dustin and Tammy Mitchell Mashino), Amber Bendig (daughter of Kelly and Monica, granddaughter of Herman and Grace Faatz Bendig), Jamie Mashino (daughter of Dustin and Tammy), Dylan Reiman and Evan Reiman (sons of Casey and Lisa Ahlers Reiman, grandsons of Jack and Jean Reiman and Wayne and Virginia Schonebaum Ahlers), Janet Ahlers (daughter of Dean and Roxie), and Austin Koenig (son of Kevin and Staci Zink Koenig, grandson of Jeff and Rindy Zink) were named to West Boyd Honor Roll.

Evan Reiman, Ridge Higgins (son of LaVern and Brenda Kline Higgins, grandson of Lelia Boucher Higgins and Margaret Vogt Schmitz), Jesse Cline, Austin Cadwallader (son of Lee and Stephanie Whitley Cadwallader, grandson of Tim and Bonnie Fuhrer Whitley, great-grandson of Lyle Fuhrer), Wyatt Heermann (son of Casey and Jill Heermann, grandson of Jerry and Dorothy Dummer Heermann), Natasha Zeisler (daughter of Jesse and Kimberly Zeisler, granddaughter of Richard and Sheryl Zeisler), Camden Brewer (son of Kip and Rachel Heerman Brewer, grandson of Jerry and Dorothy Heermann), Kaci Mashino (daughter of Dustin and Tammy), Dylan Reiman, and Daydra Zeisler (daughter of Mark and Tiffany Zeisler, granddaughter of Richard and Sheryl) had perfect attendance. Maybe you've heard about the Ol' Homesteader's name on the list back in the day ...

Henry Ahlers (son of Dean and Roxie) was named to the Dean's list at Wayne State College.

Sixteen youngsters took advantage of the summer reading program at the library—thanks, Linda, Kathy, Theresa,

Mandy, Rindy, all the moms and all the kids! (See the photo on page 3.)

CONGRATULATIONS TO:

Jessica Vogt Boettcher and Joe Ciserella, whose daughter, Chelsea Dawn Ciserella, was born May 9. That means Deb and Vern Vogt have another grandchild to enjoy!

Jim and Mabel Sattler, who celebrated their 50th anniversary July 11. Those years have a way of flyin' by.



Janet Cerny Sattler

Janet Cerny Sattler, who celebrated her 104th birthday April 26. She was born on the farm where Leonard and Thelma Schmitz live, the youngest of ten children of Frank and Anna Cerny. She taught about 25 years including six years

in Naper and six years in Spencer. She has lived in Gregory for many years. The Rockholm descendants, who gathered July 4 and 5, and the Stahleckers on July 13. Always lotsa food, fun and family at these gettin' togethers.

GET YER MOTOR RUNNIN'!

Ben Klinger (son of Randy and Cindy Bendig Klinger, grandson of Herman and Grace), Kylie Bendig (son of Kenny and Beth Bendig, grandson of Herman and Grace), Kevin McCarthy, and Kendall McCarthy (son of Kevin and Angie McCarthy, grandson of LeRoy and Maxine Windmeyer McCarthy) were winners at the 2014 Butte Tractor Pull.

The fifth annual Cruise Night saw 36 entries from Wyoming, South Dakota and Nebraska. Free root beer floats were available in front of 123 Photography Studio. Hats and t-shirts were for sale. Karoke was moved inside after storm clouds threatened the festivities.

OUR LOSSES:

Grace Schultz, age 97, passed away in Phoenix, AZ, June 2. Her stepson and daughter-in-law, Sterling and Isabel Schultz, live east of Naper.

Les Vraspir who lived west of Naper died May 23, 2014. Wilma Higgins Audiss and Lelia Higgins are his aunts.

The life of Hannah Doyle who grew up west of Naper and lived in Papillion was celebrated last August 15.

Violet Sieh Stahlecker passed away June 11 at the age of 92. She had been a teacher, an artist, a genealogist, and an able assistant to Ruth Thompson in the White Horse Ranch office.

Gertrude Honke, age 94, died June 26. All six of Gertie and Paul's children graduated from Naper High School. Gertie and her son Bud moved to Atlantic, IA, several years ago.

Ed Vogt, age 86, passed away July 3. He had lived west of Naper his entire live until moving to Tyndall, SD, in 2011. ■



Four-generation photo: Gertie Honke of Atlantic, IA; Carolyn Honke Swanda; Michelle Swanda Swanson; and daughter Sloane Swanson, all of Des Moines, IA.



Keep Those Letters Comin'!

Send your cards and letters to: The Naper Paper, c/o The Naper Historical Society, PO Box 72, Naper, NE 68755

Thanks to everyone who makes the *Naper Paper*. I always enjoy the memories. My sister and I enjoy the talks of the movie days and sitting on the wall in front of the drug store. Memories are great. Thanks again.

Adella Klien Mausbach

Even tho I don't know many of the people in Naper, it is still "hometown." I am 92—live alone and enjoy living. Enjoy the "Paper" very much. Enclosed is a contribution.

Ruth Kibby Horn

My mother, Alberta Breyer, tells me she has written an article for the paper. I trust the enclosed will ensure that I don't miss that special issue. The paper is always enjoyable reading. Thank you for your work.

Gloria B. Breyer Sims

Ed. Note: You'll also enjoy this issue's story about your grandparents, Jake and Libby Boucher.

Thanks for sending me the *Naper Paper*. I like reading about people that I got to know and Naper history. I have a new address. I'm sending a small donation for the siding project or wherever it is needed. Will be in the area Memorial Day weekend.

Anna Bohnet

I want to say "thank you" to each one who works on publishing the *Naper Paper*. I'm not aware of too many smaller towns that manage to get this done (and maybe few larger towns, either!).

It was great news to me to see that the Naper school building is being refurbished and reused. It has always been a building of an interesting design to me. After my earlier school years being spent at the Goodman country school (just across the border into South Dakota), I went to "town" school for my eighth grade. That was quite a new and exciting experience for me! Freshman initiation upon entrance to high school was a little challenging, but high school days were overall good. I enjoyed working on the school paper, writing notes FAST in Shorthand class, plowing through Algebra, but loving

smooth sailing in Geometry, and enjoying overnight visits with new school friends. Mr. Robert Titus was the star of the show for instructors—when he used his voice with authority in the study hall, things quieted down quickly!

Again, keep up the good work!

Clarice Ahlers Alons

I enjoy your paper very much. Please continue to send me one.

Mary E. Vogt

Here's a little check to help keep the paper going.

Dan Duffy

Ed. Note: Lots of Dan's former students stopped by the Naper Café one day this summer to enjoy a cup of coffee and a chat with him.

I am sending you a check to continue sending the *Naper Paper* to myself and my sister Claudia Vaughn. I always enjoy the paper and keeping up with what is going on in Naper, and the enjoyable articles about the past. Please continue your work. Thank you.

Marsha Sparks Fyler

I enjoyed reading your 2013-14 paper. I'd love to continue receiving it. I have many happy memories of Naper and so many special people there.

Carole Cline Wegener

Thank you so much for your hard work in getting the *Naper Paper* out to all of us. I love reading it. Blessings to all!

Marlene Forsch Nathan

Enclosed a check once again to order the *Naper Paper* for me and sister Janice Engelbart-we both enjoy reading it. Keep up the good work.

Barbara Camin Schochenmaier

Thanks so much for all the work you do for the historical society and the *Naper Paper*. I look forward to reading it from cover to cover! I have lived in Kearney much longer than I lived in Naper but I still consider it home—it's "where I'm from." Enclosed is a check to help with expenses. Keep up the good work.

Ethel Alexander White

Enclosed is a check. I'd like to be put on the mailing list to receive the *Naper Paper*. I have no idea what it costs, but if you'd let me know, I would send you more. I think this is really unique. Thank you.

Roy Vogt

Ed. Note: Thank you for your kind words and check. There is no subscription fee, but we gratefully accept any donation you'd like to send.



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Your stories—and your donations— keep this paper going.
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If you would like to make a gift to the paper, or would like to share your story-telling talents, please write to us at:

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Naper Paper

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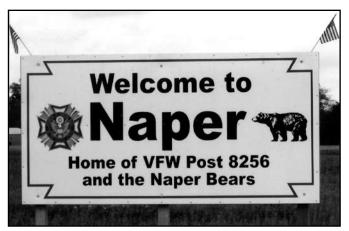
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In This Issue...

- **■** Circuit Rider: The Boucher Family
- **■** Where Your Donations Go
- Naper Featured on 'Pure Nebraska,' KOLN-TV
- **■** Just Horsin' Around
- Alumni Gather May 24
- **■** Plus: The Ol' Homesteader, Letters

... AND MUCH MORE!



UPDATES TO OUR TOWN, THANKS TO VFW POST 8256 Have you noticed the new flags on Main Street? VFW Post 8256 purchased them with memorial money. They are displayed several times a year (Memorial Day, Flag Day, Fourth of July, for example) and look very impressive. Thanks! The VFW Post members also erected a new Welcome to Naper sign located at the Highway 12 intersection.