

*A publication
for and about
the town of
Naper, Nebraska*

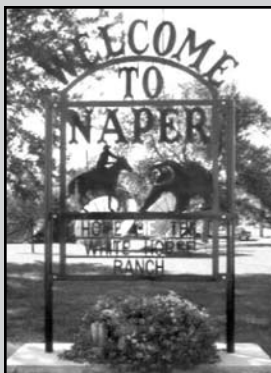
**The Naper
Historical Society**

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:

- Vietnam Wall Travels 1
- Meet Naper's Latest
Published Author 1
- Herman and Betty
Tell Some Stories 2
- The Circuit Rider 3
- Alumni Banquet
Photos 4-5
- The Ol' Homesteader 6
- Letters 7



Naper Paper

Volume 13, Issue 3

www.napernebraska.org

Fall 2015

VIETNAM WALL TRAVELS

By Marilyn Sieh

The Vietnam Memorial Traveling Wall came to Stuart, NE, June 19–22. A memorial ceremony was held Saturday afternoon at 2 p.m. The ceremony included the color guards of posts from the surrounding communities. Honor guards consist of two flag bearers and two guards with rifles. In this ceremony, the rifles were not carried. The Naper Post #8256 color guard included Tom Brauer (Vietnam veteran), Bob Schultz (Vietnam veteran), Larry Allyn (Vietnam veteran) and Duane Sieh (Korean veteran).

The traveling wall continues moving from town to town across the country. The Vietnam Wall is just that—MOVING! It is so impressive and also so sad because of all the lives that were lost. We are very fortunate to have the opportunity to have seen it in our area. ■

Top right: Duane, Bob, Larry and Tom behind the flag. Bottom right, beginning second from left: Duane, Tom, Bob and Larry.



Meet Naper's Latest Published Author

How do you decide to write a book and then become a published author? Ask Blair Vogt Kluckman and she'll say she was bored and started writing down some ideas. She really didn't have a plan and the words just started to flow. After she had about three-fourths of a story written, she couldn't think of a good ending. Sometime later, while she was a para-educator sitting in on Mr. Hiatt's English Lit class, she experienced inspiration and the ending almost

wrote itself.

After the book was completed, Blair submitted it to at least ten publishers over a two- to three-year period and was ready to shelve it for a while when she received notice from Mirror Publishing in Milwaukee that they had accepted her manuscript! *The Dust Bunny Brigade* was on its way!

If you go to pagesofwonder.com and click on authors, then click "K," you will read Blair's biography. Blair was a guest for a book signing at the Spencer Library during the Boyd County Fair.

You can check the book out at the Naper Library. You can buy the book by contacting Blair, at Barnes and Noble bookstores, or on Amazon. The *Naper Paper* would love to have you read it and send a review to us. It's a great book for young readers and older readers will appreciate information about how their houses get dirty. ■



Left: Blair Kluckman at the Naper Library with a copy of *The Dust Bunny Brigade*.

HERMAN AND BETTY TELL SOME STORIES

Herman Neumiller was born December 14, 1928, north of Fairfax. Clementine Wolf was the midwife called in to help and on July 1, 1950, Herman married Clementine's niece, Betty Odenbach. It had to be fate.

When Herman was a youngster, they lived near Gross, NE, and there was a dam close to the house. They milked 20 or more cows so one can imagine the condition of the water in the dam. The kids would go play in the dam and mother Lydia worried about their safety. One night after everyone had sat down for supper, she said to father Chris, "I don't want them playing in the dam. They'll drown!" Chris didn't look up and didn't reply immediately but finally said, "Well, if they do, we won't have to feed them anymore." Herman said his dad's answer scared them more than anything their mother had said and they didn't go into the dam anymore. Esther, Herman, Lester, Art and Paul walked cross-country to the rural school north of Gross. Many times the snow was so deep Art and Paul (Herman's twin brothers three years younger than he) had to be helped through the drifts. While they lived north of Gross, they got acquainted with Bernie Holmberg who started school the same years as Louise, Herman's youngest sister. Bernie's claim to fame was that he never needed to own a hankie.

After the family moved southwest of Naper, Herman attended school in Naper. Playground equipment was scarce and a fellow student brought a football to school! What fun! What a challenge! At recess time, it was football mania and the owner of the football took off across the playground, probably hoping for a touchdown, but was tackled by an even faster student. Bam! Face plant! The football went home after school that day and never reappeared.

When in high school, the Naper baseball team had a game scheduled in St. Charles and Mr. Fedderson, the superintendent, allowed Marvin Stoltenberg to drive his car to the game. It seems Marvin's driving didn't meet Mr. Fedderson's standards and Mr. F. was upset! Adamae Vaughn (Moody) was the catcher for the St. Charles team. No idea who won but the trip was worth it.

Betty Odenbach grew up north of Fairfax and rode her part-Shetland pony to school. Art Hertz was riding his bike and grabbed the pony's tail so it would pull him all the way to school—less than a half mile but I'm sure it seemed longer. And the pony's tail was probably longer after that experience too!

Herman and Betty were married in the



courthouse in Vermillion, SD. Their wedding picture was a snapshot of them embracing on the steps of the courthouse. Many years later, their son Dion took that snapshot and had an 8 x 10 print made and put it in their house without them knowing about it. When Herman finally noticed the picture, it's reported that he said, "Who are those people? Where are they? Who is that little woman anyhow?" Luckily Dion didn't get the snapshot returned to Herman and Betty so it survived the fire on December 16 and additional copies were made.

Herman and Betty started farming using horses. In 1952, the snow was so deep they couldn't get out their lane so he took off to the northeast, hoping to get to the section line (now Highway 12), but alas, he was totally stuck in a drift. He walked home through the deep snow, harnessed the team, drove them back to the pickup and hitched them to the front bumper. Herman was driving the pickup with his right hand, trying to steer the team with his left and hollered "Giddap!" The team gave a mighty heave and the pickup lurched forward. Whoops—the radiator fan hit the cowling and Herman's team, used to hearing the sound of rattlesnakes since they had grown up north of Monowi, really took off! Thanks to deep snow and good luck, he got the team stopped before he was dragged through the window like dough through a pasta maker. Enough is enough, he thought, and walked home, following the team, now unhitched from the pickup, and carrying the cream and eggs he had planned to sell in Naper.

On another occasion, they had the hayrack loaded and were heading out to feed cattle. Herman was driving the team when

one wheel of the hayrack dropped into a hole and the bed of the hayrack tipped. The hay slid out and there went Betty! She came crawling out from under the hay, none the worse for wear. Another time they had Dale in the baby buggy on the hayrack when they went to feed. Somehow too much hay got pitched off one side of the rack and sure enough—the hayrack tipped and out went the remaining hay, the buggy and Dale. Didn't hurt him either.

Hale appeared in the house one day when he was a tyke, sporting a knot on his head and blood streaming down his face. He'd been playing on the mower and fell. When Betty found out he'd been on a field mower, she told him he shouldn't have been on it—he could have been badly hurt. Hale said, "Well, it wasn't my fault. Paul parked it there."

In July, 1968, Betty was pregnant and having twins was a possibility—her father was a twin, her uncle Fred Wolf was a twin, Herman's brothers Art and Paul were twins, and his sister Esther and husband Lyle Fuhrer had two sets of twins born 11 months apart. So Betty took her friend Bertha Nagel with her when she went for an appointment with the doctor in Lynch hoping Bertha would drive home. One of the Sisters took an x-ray and said, "Oh, my." Betty was alarmed but the Sister assured her there was nothing amiss and sent her along to the doctor who told her she would be having twins. Herman jokes that Betty was so upset she forgot Bertha in Lynch and came home alone! Betty says that wasn't true. Herman was watering calves when Betty got home and the look on her face said it all. He said she never raked nor swept any more hay or rode the horse after the milk cows from then until the twins, Dion and Darcy, were born—the next week!

Herman and Betty have four children (Dale, Hale, Dion and Darcy), six grandchildren, and eight great-grandchildren. They lived on the farm where they moved when they were married until fire destroyed their home, which they had built themselves, last December 16.

They celebrated their 65th anniversary with an open house at the VFW on July 5 (pictured above). Lots of folks came to greet them and congratulate them. The inscription on the cake was: "Sometimes in an ordinary life, love gives you a fairy tale... and they lived happily ever after." What more could you ask for?

You'll find them now in the Good Samaritan Center in Atkinson, and they'd love to have a visit with you. ■



The Circuit Rider

RAMONA BENTZEN: 61 years of Naper memories

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..."

Ramona Bentzen shares. . .

I am a transplant in the Naper area, but after living here for 61 years, I feel well-rooted among all you fine folks. I was born at home at Hayward, MN, on March 23, 1932, to Thorvald and Valborg Westland, the second oldest in a family of six. I attended school through the 8th grade at Hayward and high school at Albert Lea, MN, graduating in 1950. I then attended Austin, MN, teachers college and taught in a rural school for three years. A neighbor friend of mine was serving in the army in Germany, met Raymond Bentzen, sent me his address and asked me to write to him. We corresponded for eight or nine months. He was discharged in December 1953 and came to Minnesota to see me. The rest is history, as they say. We were married June 6, 1954.

That is really when my Naper history began. Swede and Eva Hansen and Clint and Ioan Reber were my first neighbors, but I had met Merv and Helen Higgins and Ray and Grace Sieh, who came to Minnesota for our wedding. Otto Bentzen, the Jack Bentzen family, Jake and Libby Boucher, Joe and Bertha Schmitz, the Vances and Nicolauses all became part of my life as well as many other dear ones through the years.

I remember mostly listening when in a group because I didn't know who was related to whom. Many changes have taken place. The road down from St. Charles would be sets of ruts in wet weather as well as Naper's Main Street. Highway 12 was a gravel, winding road. I went to Butte for a new linoleum from Honke Hardware. Ray was cultivating so I went alone. I was so worried I wouldn't find my way back to Naper.

Wednesday and Saturday nights were town nights and you went early if you wanted to park on Main Street. There were grocery stores, bars, cafes, cream stations, gas stations, hardware stores and even a theater.

Ray and I lived on the family farm one mile east and one-fourth mile north of Naper (pictured above). Ray's father, Otto, purchased the farm in 1926, and Ray was born here in 1928. He lived his entire life here with the exception of two

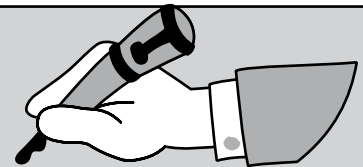


years in the army. Here we raised our five children: Laurie, R.C., Mike, John and Karen. All went K-12 in the Naper Public School. Many young families were getting started in the mid- 50s. Those were dry years; crops didn't do well. I recall farmers putting up fire weed for hay. A common saying in those years was "the only thing that grew were kids and cockleburbs." Case in point — the Wayne Ahlers, Ray Bentzen and Lyle Fuhrer families nearly filled a school bus on this two-and-a-half-mile stretch.

We raised corn, milo, oats, wheat and alfalfa, a lot of hogs and cattle. I have to give my kids credit here for raising a half acre of cucumbers four years in a row. Ray did a lot of custom combining with his prized Massey 26. No room-temperature cabs in those days! But life was good and the memories great. I now have 13 grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren to share them with.

Ray's mother Hannah was known for her good Swedish cooking and baking. She passed away in 1951, so I didn't have the privilege of knowing her. Ray's father Otto was a very kind, helpful and well-read man. He served as Boyd County's representative in the last two-house Nebraska legislature. He passed away in 1969. Raymond served as supervisor of District 5 for 16 years, was on the Boyd County Extension Board, served on the Northeast Nebraska Mental Health Board and was a lifetime member of Naper VFW Post 8256. He passed away in September 2005.

We were members of the United Church of Christ, which I still attend. I still live in our farm home by the side of the road. Stop in for coffee and a chat. ■



THIS IS YOUR PAPER!

The *Naper Paper* is a reader-produced publication. Your stories—and your donations—keep this paper going. We thank all our readers who have helped us out in some way.

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:

The Naper Paper
c/o The Naper Historical Society
PO Box 72
Naper, NE 68755

ALUMNI BANQUET PHOTOS...

About 100 alumni and guests attended the 63rd annual banquet in Naper on May 23 with Mike Bentzen (class of 1975) serving as MC.

Amber Bendig received the Naper Alumni Scholarship. She will be attending University of Nebraska at Kearney.

The first class to graduate, which was then tenth grade, was in 1915 and in those 100 years, 719 men and women have graduated. Wilma Rockholm Butler, Hesperia, CA (class of 1934), is the oldest

living graduate. George Kramer, class of 1941, was the oldest alumni attending the banquet. Charles Small traveled 1600 miles to join his 1965 classmates. Jim (1960) and Mabel Riesselman (1962) Sattler were the only alumni who have attended every banquet since they graduated. Two father-daughter combinations were in the honored classes.

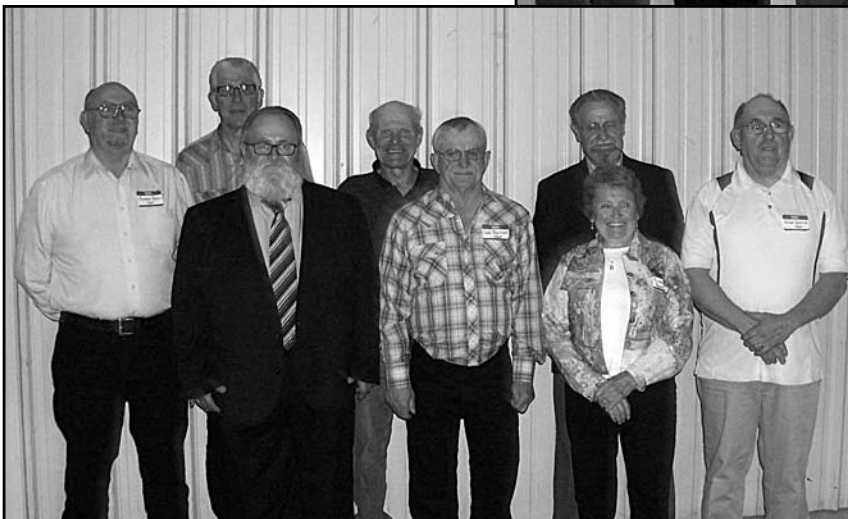
Put the alumni banquet on your calendar—May 29, 2016. All the sixes will be honored. You know who you are... ■



CLASS OF 1955: Anna Bohnet (widow of Wilmer Bohnet), JoAnn Putnam Mitchell, Myrna Gosch Beauchamp, Nola Dummer Ulmer



CLASS OF 1960: Karen Gentele Williams, Barbara Stoltenberg Wentz, Grace Faatz Bendig, Jim Sattler, Judy Small Schmitz, Mary Jane Riesselman Katzer, Ralph Kulm, Doris Goodman Moses, Jerry Goodman (Bernice Stahlecker Spitzenberger "rounded up" her class for a mid-honor-year reunion but illness prevented her from attending.)



CLASS OF 1965: Norman Beem, Clyde Vogt, Charles Small, Ernie Broekemeier, Dale Nicolaus, Stanley Stahlecker, Myrna Muller Payne, Vernon Goodman

... WE ALL STILL LOOK GOOD!

CLASS OF 1975: Vernon Vogt, Jeff Zink, Mike Bentzen, Tim Whitley, Alan Nicolaus, Lee Fuhrer, Margaret Ludemann, Cindy Keller Schroetlin



CLASS OF 1985: Kara Kapsa Vogt, Shellie Sattler Sieh, Hoyt Cline, Clark Fuhrer, Andrea Schock Abbenhaus

CLASS OF 1995: Beth Goodman Drueke, Rachel Heerman Brewer, Jennifer Whitley Conroy



HONORED GENERATIONS: Tim Whitley, Class of 1975, and his daughter, Jennifer Whitley Conroy, Class of 1995; Beth Goodman Drueke, class of 1995, daughter of Vernon Goodman, Class of 1965



The Ol' Homesteader

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

The Ol' Homesteader's tryin' to keep up with the goin's on around here...

NEW FACES

Sophie Irene arrived June 26 and is being loved by her brothers Anthony and Nash and her parents Tom and Sandra Bernt Hansen in Wayne. Bill and Linda Schultz and Ron and Joyce Bernt are grandparents.

Aaron and Landon Melton are excited to have a sister, Jameson Hazel, born July 13. Shelby and Heidi Vogt Melton are parents; Bryon and Sharon Sattler Vogt and Sterling and Sheila Melton are grandparents; Jim and Mabel Riesselman Sattler are great-grandparents.

Savannah McGuire was born July 15 to Ryan and Tarra Sieh McGuire. Loren Sieh is proud grandpa and Eddie is the big brother.

Joe and Kelsey Zink Schochenmaier welcomed Sophie Kay, born July 20. Jeff and Rindy Zink are grandpa and grandma and Louise Neumiller Zink is great-grandma. Gage is the big brother.

A NEW COUPLE

Casey and Lisa Ahlers Reiman's daughter Brooke married Tad Kruger August 8 in Naper. They are living in Grand Island.

CRUISIN'

June 4, the 2015 Tractor Relay Across Nebraska stopped in Naper for an afternoon



A few of the cars parked on the street west of Main during Cruise Night.

break. The ride supports Operation Comfort Warriors, sponsored by the American Legion, which raises funds to purchase comfort items for disabled veterans.

Cassidy and Wyatt Heermann (children of Casey and Jill Heermann, grandchildren of Jerry and Dorothy Dummer Heermann) and Preston Brewer (son of Kip and Rachel Heermann Brewer, grandson of Jerry and Dorothy) were winners in events at Spencer's car show in May.

Naper's Cruise Night June 13 saw lots of folks enjoying the car show, listening and singing along with the karaoke band, slurping up those root beer floats, and visiting friends in the beer garden south of the lounge. A record number of vehicles were displayed and later cruised Main Street—just like in the old days!

Those ambitious historical folks picked up roadside trash along 4 miles of Highway 12 on April 16.

Rob Johnson found some more old license plates and gifted them to the museum—we now have 1923 and 1950 plates! Who

knew they had license plates in 1923?

The local book club ladies (by the way, they'd welcome some men who like to read) meet at 2 p.m. on the last Thursday of every month. They have the library open on Wednesday afternoons from 1–4. The library continues to get more books and weed out unused books as there is limited shelf space. Stop in sometime and look through the "giveaway" books—you might find one you can't live without!

SAYIN' GOODBYE

Kathryn Katzer Tokarz died May 15, 2015. She graduated from NHS in 1940 and worked for the Social Security Administration in Washington, D.C. She traveled extensively after retirement.

Virginia Florence Klein Kinifick was born September 7, 1924, in Naper and passed away in Albuquerque, NM, April 24, 2015. She graduated from NHS in 1942, worked at SAC in Offut AFB, married an Air Force officer and had three children. She retired from civil service after 38 years.

Bob Fuhrer, whose 95th birthday was reported in the last *Naper Paper*, died April 10. His wife, Lucille Martin Fuhrer, died April 21 at the age of 80. They both grew up in Naper and had lived in Blair for many years.

Walt Ahlers, age 91, died July 14. Walt and Betty lived east of Naper and their children all graduated from NHS. Walt and Betty retired to Arizona a few years ago. ■



Above: A line-up of the tractors during the break.

Right: This tractor-driver on the ride was 88 years young.





Keep those cards and letters comin'

Send your cards and letters to:

The Naper Paper, c/o The Naper Historical Society,
PO Box 72, Naper, NE 68755

Thanks for all the work you do! We enjoy the *Naper Paper*.

Jim and Darlene Doyle

Great job to the *Naper Paper* staff. You always come up with great stories about the people of the Naper area. It's even great to hear about the happenings in Naper. It is a real treat to see the *Naper Paper* in the mail.

I need to let you know of an address change and to send along a check. Thanks again.

Lois Kibby Chittim

Always have a great time at the alumni banquet. My class was one of the honored classes this year, 1965, 50 years!

My roots will always be at Naper—a lot of fond memories.

Thanks for all your hard work. Enclosing some cash to help keep the paper coming.

Stan Stahlecker

It was so unbelievable to receive your letter [*Naper Paper*] and proud that you remember this old man.

My wife and I got married in 1972 and lived in a town outside of Gainesville, FL, Orange Lake, which was on a 22,000 acre lake. In 1981, we moved to North Pole, AK. We had gone there on vacation and liked it so we moved there and stayed 10 years. We moved back in 1991 to Gainesville because parents got sick.

In 1972 I started my own business selling and repairing Johnson and Evinrude outboard motors. Later on I changed to repairing trolling motors (Minn-Kota and Motorguide) which are much smaller and easier to handle. I learned repair work when I was in the Air Force. My wife is a school nurse.

Time is passing and there are many things we still would like to do on my bucket list. We have a Gold Wing Tri which is a lot of fun for passing the time and meeting a lot of people. Illness has me moving slowly with not much riding.

From the article in the paper, I had three friends from the past who got in touch with me and a teacher. Who would

have known that would happen? Thank you very much for doing the article.

Roy Gossard

ED NOTE: While visiting with Duke Stahlecker, we learned of one of Roy's fine cars, a 1934 blue Chevy named "Mabel" that used to cruise the roads around Naper. How about it, Roy? Does that bring back memories?



Anna Meyer

The rolling Irish hillside was the backdrop as Anna Meyer posed for this picture (above) in her Naper Centennial sweatshirt. Anna toured Ireland, Wales, London and Paris with a group from Atkinson this summer. She said her Naper sweatshirt is one of her favorites. Anna is the daughter of Fred and Sandra Schmitz Meyer and granddaughter of Inez Schmitz.

Nancy Schmitz

ED NOTE: Thank you for sharing the photo and your comment, "Anna is wearing the Naper Centennial sweatshirt I gave her ... I'm sure that sweatshirt is the closest I will ever get to Europe."

Enclosed find a donation and some memories of visiting family in Naper.

Growing up, my parents, Oscar and Edith Frasch, and my sister Helen visited my uncles and aunts—namely Ed and Freda Nicolaus and Albert and Louise Faatz.

The greatest memory of Aunt Freda was her delicious KOCAN. She always had them baked and frozen. I loved them. Note: the recipe for kocan is on page 122 in the *Naper Centennial Cookbook*.

Uncle Albert raised the best watermelons. He stored them in his oats bin and we enjoyed them in the fall and winter.

I always look forward to the next issue of the *Naper Paper*, it is a great paper. Keep up the good work and thank you to all who work so hard to keep it coming.

Mary Schumann

ED NOTE: The cookbooks Mary refers to were a huge success during the centennial celebration and are in the third reprinting! They are for sale—\$10 plus \$2.50 for postage. Send orders to the Naper Historical Society and we will channel the request to the right folks.

Enclosed is a check for the *Naper Paper* for me and Janice Engelbart. We both enjoy it.

Barbara Camin Schochenmaier



E-MAIL CONTACT:

If you need to contact Naper Historical Society, you can e-mail papabear@threeriver.net.

Check out the website napernebraska.org and see what we've got!



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IN THIS ISSUE...

- Vietnam Wall Travels
- Meet Naper's Latest Published Author
- Herman and Betty Tell Some Stories
- Circuit Rider: Ramona Bentzen
- Alumni Banquet Photos
- Plus: The Ol' Homesteader, Letters

... AND MUCH MORE!



Well, would you look at what landed in our e-mail! Merle Riesselman is on Maylon Kern's shoulders. Front: Mabel Riesselman, Margo Kern, Mary Jane Riesselman. Photo taken about 1950.