

A PUBLICATION
FOR AND ABOUT
THE TOWN OF
NAPER,
NEBRASKA,
PUBLISHED BY
THE NAPER
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY.

The mission of the Naper Historical Society is to preserve, interpret, display, communicate, promote and honor the 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.

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Naper Paper

Volume 23 Issue 1

www.napernebraska.org

Spring, 2025

HIGH RISE BOUTIQUE IS NAPER'S NEWEST BUSINESS

Tara Ahlers wanted to have a store, Naper needed a store and thus came about High Rise Boutique, located just north of the Curl Up and Dye Salon on the south end of town.



The shop is something Tara has wanted to do for a long time.

Early in 2024, the plan took shape and a building site was developed. Tara purchased a building and then the work began. The exterior of the building was finished but the interior was blank.



Tara and Dan's son Blake was the carpenter and electrician. He hung and finished the dry wall, laid the flooring and was an all-around handy-man.



Opening day was November 2. What a surprise when Tara's neighbor Angie from Curl Up and Dye came in wearing the same sweater! Seems it was a popular choice at High Rise Boutique.



You can find many items besides sweaters—dresses, jackets, shirts, shackets, jeans, skirts and hats. The first day the hats were available, Tara sold three of them!



Tara bakes sour dough bread a couple of times a week and has several kinds available at the store. If you want to order a special flavor, call 402-340-4663.



WILD OLD DAYS

Those of us working on the Naper Paper are always looking for a good story idea. In fact, you may have been asked to submit a story or a picture to add to the “news” (which is generally not “new” but several weeks old) to be shared.

Recently, a reader sent a copy of a story from True West magazine (July/August, 1971).

“Spinning Windmill on the Prairie” by Erma Kulhavy is the story of her family, the Crosbys, who came to northern Nebraska in 1884.

They improved a quarter of land three miles west of Springview. Because they sold their farm in Iowa before moving, they had something most settlers had little or none of—MONEY!

Settlers needed money to buy cattle, obtain equipment and hire help. Where would they get money for their needs if not at a bank?

So, Rolandus LeGrand Crosby

opened a bank in Springview. While he was at the bank, his sons and hired men were busy at the farm. They built a fine six-room house, a barn, a tool shed and corrals.

When all was completed, a dance was held with the music furnished by the Crosby family band and other musicians who came by.

After about 10 years in the Springview area, the family moved to Naper where another Crosby bank was established.

An ad from a 1907 Naper Enterprise newspaper lists C. Guy Crosby, Rolandus LeGrand Crosby’s son, as cashier and T. E. Smith, as President of the Bank of Naper. “Banking in All Branches. Have a complete personal tax list of Basin Township. Pay your taxes here. Foreign and Domestic Exchange, Real Estate and Insurance.”

T. E. Smith was Marilyn Smith Sieh’s great-uncle. (A copy of the ad is printed in the Naper Paper, Summer, 2023, Volume 21, Issue 2, which can be viewed at napernebraska.org.)

REMEMBER WHEN?



PHOTO of Leo and Liz Blum when they were operating the L&L Café on Main Street in Naper. It was a gathering place for kids after school where those with money (not many of us) had a coke and a bag of peanuts. A bottle (no cans) of Coke was probably a dime and a bag of peanuts a nickel and if you were careful, you could stretch the wonderful taste and awesome fizzy feeling to at least 20 minutes.

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL BUSINESSES—KEEP NAPER STRONG!

A & M ENTERPRISES

Trenching, pump installations, backhoe work, plumbing
402-832-5388

M&L LAWN SERVICE

Mowing, trimming, fertilizing, tilling, seeding spraying
402-832-5422

CURL UP & DYE BEAUTY SHOP

Haircuts, styling, coloring, coffee bar
402-832-5573

ROTH SMALL ENGINE REPAIR

Small engine repair; lawn mowers and four-wheelers—buy, sell, trade
402-925-8814
402-832-5050

WHITE HORSE RANCH MUSEUM HERITAGE HALL

NAPER TRANSPORT

Sand and gravel hauling propane hauling
402-832-5955

BOB’S AUTO BODY

Auto body repair
402-832-5766

NAPER CAFÉ AND LOUNGE

Breakfast, dinner, supper, bar
402-832-5272

GRAMMY AND POP’S

HOLE-IN-THE-WALL MART
Something for everybody!
402-340-3231

U \$ POSTAL SERVICE

402-832-5977

NICK’S AUTO SERVICE

Oil changes, new tires, tire repair
402-832-5166

K&S MOBILE

Welding and equipment repair, on-site service
402-832-5125

DRUEKE TRUCKING

Local and long-distance hauling
402-832-5610

BENDIG CONSTRUCTION

Kelly 402-961-0445

AK MEATS

Full service butcher shop
Alex 402-340-7116

ANYONE FOR TRIVIA?

When the Naper Historical Society was organized, money was a pressing need to enable the society to make repairs and buy needed supplies. Many fund raisers were organized—BINGO, hog raffles, sale of cups and t-shirts, lunch stands—you name it, it was probably one of the efforts used.

At a fundraiser in November, 2011, a trivia game was presented and soundly turned down by the crowd, in favor of BINGO. However, the trivia game lived on in the files of Naper Historical Society and is presented here to see how much you remember.

NEBRASKA

1. What year did Nebraska become a state?
2. Where was the first capital of Nebraska?
3. Most Nebraska exports are sent to: Japan China Mexico Canada
4. What is the state insect of Nebraska?
5. What is the state flower?

BOYD COUNTY

1. What rivers form two borders of Boyd County?
2. The narrowest place in Boyd County is at the "Point". To the closest mile, how wide is Boyd County there?
6 miles 7 miles 8 miles 10 miles
3. What year was Boyd County organized?
1890 1891 1892 1893
4. The peak population of Boyd County was 8,826 in
1900 1910 1930 1950
5. How long is Boyd County?
48 miles 56 miles 60 miles 68 miles

VILLAGE OF NAPER

1. How did Naper get its name?
2. Name two doctors who practiced in Naper.
3. What year was Naper founded?
1890 1891 1892 1893
3. Naper graduated seniors (12th grade) for the first time in:
1926 1928 1930 1932
4. Naper Attendance Center closed in May of:
2001 2002 2003 2004

SCIENCE

1. What insect holds its wings upright when at rest?
Cecropia moth bumblebee
horsefly butterfly
2. What caused the death of the animals found in the fossil bed north of Royal?
drought flood meteorite volcano
3. The distance to the moon is approximately how many times the circumference of the earth?
40 100 10 250
4. Cattle, deer, sheep and elk are all ungulates. What is an ungulate? They have hooves. They give milk. They have antlers. They chew cuds.
5. What animal skeleton was found south of Naper and now is in Morrill Hall in Lincoln?
Stegosaurus elephant
saber-tooth cat T. Rex

FAMOUS FOLKS

1. President, director of CIA, ambassador to UN
2. Hastings College graduate, US House of Representatives, AD at the University of Nebraska
3. Grand Ole Opry star, composer, singer, "Man in Black"
4. Talk show, actress, founder of book club, founder of magazine
5. Italian explorer, looked for Asia, Queen Isabella was his patron

Answers on page 7.



Vivian Schock Alexander and George "Bud" Alexander at the Naper Café—sorry, no date and no story about what's on the table in front of them. Can a reader help solve the mystery?

SAYIN' GOODBYE TO OLD FRIENDS

Linda Broekemeier Buettner, a 1966 graduate of Naper High School, died November 6. She had lived at Mission, South Dakota, for most of her adult life and worked in a bank there.

Iola Tech Frank, a 1952 graduate of Naper, died November 21. She had lived in Burke for many years.

Mark Zander died December 16 in Jordan, Minnesota. He was pastor at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Naper from 1985-1997. Their children, Timothy, Sarah, Jonathan, Katie and Rebekah, attended school in Naper.

Mary Carmen Meusch Bentzen died January 7 in Omaha. She grew up south of the Niobrara River and was married to Melvin Bentzen, NHS class of 1958.

Bryon Vogt died January 14. Bryon graduated from Naper High School in 1961. Both of his parents (Fritz and Joy Helenbolt Vogt), his in-laws (Jim and Mabel Riesselman Sattler), his wife (Sharon Sattler Vogt) and all three of his children (Heidi Vogt Melton, Ryon Vogt and Holly Vogt Drueke) are NHS graduates. He served the community in many roles—school board member, fire chief and chef at the Firemen's Steak Suppers among others.

Caleb "Bubba" Hoffard died January 14 in Sac City, Iowa. He was the 20-year-old son of Darrell and Darcy Neumiller Hoffard and had visited Naper many times. Darcy was a Naper High School graduate IN 1987.

Shirley Kibby Blum died January 20 in Carroll, Iowa. She grew up west of Naper and was married to Gerald Blum. They ran the café in Naper for several years before moving to Iowa.

Lori Bentz Koenig was killed in a traffic accident January 22 north of Herrick, South Dakota. She was the daughter of Don and Betty Stoltenberg Bentz (a 1952 Naper High School graduate).

Todd Mitchell, son of JoAnn Putnam Mitchell (Naper High School, 1955) died February 1. He was 62 years old.

Betty Stoltenberg Bentz, a Naper High School graduate, class of 1952, died February 5 in Mitchell, South Dakota. She and husband Don raised their family on a farm near Fairfax, South Dakota.

Gary Raymer died February 6. He and his wife Betsy Becker Raymer, Naper High School 1977, raised their family in the Atkinson area.

ANNUAL FISHING CONTEST NETS BIG FISH!

Fishermen registered at the Naper Café and Lounge the evening of February 7 for the annual ice fishing tournament. If ever there was a year for 'ice' fishing—2024 was it!

Some years the contest has been called off because the ice wasn't safe but this year, reports of 12 inches or more were pretty common.

There were 50 adults who entered and seven children, ages 12 and under, making this one of the largest groups participating to date. The contest started at 8 am on Saturday, February 8. There was an entrance fee and the winners received cash prizes.

Charlie Kellum won the kids' division.

Cole Ratterman won with the largest bass, largest crappie and greatest overall weight.

Bernie Ratterman had the largest blue gill.

Quentin Witt and Jeremy Wollman were tied with the largest perch.

.After all the fish were checked in, the fun began—the fish were cleaned and fried with the fish fry starting at 5 pm.

Dave Merkel provided live music at 8 pm.

+++++
Photo below from Elsie Wentz's collection. Mike Sieh and Dennis Camin in Wentz's Bar—anyone want to guess at a date?

Bob Wentz shared this photo, captioned: HART'S CORNER DEC. 21, 1947. Harry Fuhrer is the man in the center and to his left is Lyle Misner. Lyle Misner was an accomplished musician and played many instruments by ear. Can you identify any of the others? Do you know anything about Hart's Corner?



THE SMITH FAMILY CHAIN LETTER

By Marilyn Smith Sieh

My mother (Frances Smith) wrote the history of the family chain letter for the Naper Centennial book in 1992. It had already reached and passed a milestone—100 years!

“When the R. B. Smiths came to their homestead in 1884, his wife became lonely for her family in Iowa, so she started a round robin letter and sent it to her family. This letter grew in size as the families increased and now the letter has been in continuous circulation for 100 years.

The writers range in age from thirty years old to 96 years. The letters travel to nine states—Nebraska, Iowa, California, Oregon, Idaho, Washington, Alaska, Montana, North Dakota. It takes from three to four months to complete the round trip. It contains family news and events, pictures and newspaper clippings about the family.”

R. B. Smith, who was my great-grandfather, his wife Sarah and children lived on the south side of the Keya Paha River after crossing the old Smith Bridge, west of Oak Dale Cemetery.

My parents received the round robin letters and passed them on to me. At the time the chain letter began and through many years, there were improvements in communications but when I look back, this was so interesting because we heard from the families whom we would not have kept in touch with otherwise. When meeting the families, it felt as if we had always known them. This brings back many memories of us visiting them on our trips and many of them visiting my folks later.

In later years, I looked forward to finding the thick brown envelope in my mailbox. I'd take out my letter and anything else I had sent, added a new letter plus any additions, and sent it off.

In 1992, Naper experienced its centennial celebration and a tornado. The letter my mother wrote to the Smith chain letter follows.

“July 9, 1992

Dear relatives,

Since I wrote last, we have had our Centennial Celebration and we were narrowly missed by a tornado. The Centennial Celebration was a great success. The Alumni Banquet was held on one night of the celebration. Many alumni came back.

The total estimated crowd was 2000 people. This whole program was a lot of work and planning for quite a few people. When it was all over some of the workers were really tired.

A Naper Centennial book was published and that was really a lot of work but the book is just great. [It has] 450 family stories with a picture with most of the stories and a history of Naper. This includes the Smith families—R. B. Smiths with picture and story [followed by names of all the relatives in the book].

I wrote of the Smith family letter also. I think this letter is just great and hope it always continues to make its rounds. There were 500 centennial books published and we still have some to sell.

On June 16, we had tornado warnings so we were well aware that we might get a tornado. About 5:30, the “alert” radio said “Tornado on the Niobrara River heading toward Naper. All in Naper and vicinity, take cover.”

We went to our neighbor's cellar immediately after warning Marilyn. They went to the cellar too.

It grew dark as dusk. The wind was terrific and I never heard such a roaring storm. I thought our house would be blown away, but it was a straight wind in Naper with hail and driving rain.

The tornado itself went through from the Niobrara River to two miles south of Naper. There it completely demolished a farm home and machinery. Some livestock was killed.

The family of five were in the cellar so they weren't harmed.

As this tornado cut from southwest to northeast across the country, it did much damage. Many trees were uprooted, irrigation systems wrecked, buildings blown down or damaged. Many windows were broken out by the hail.

We think there must have been at least three tornados at work because the swath of damage was so wide and so long, from north of Newport, Nebraska, through Fairfax, South Dakota.

I guess this is all for now.
Frances and Everett”

The Smith family letter no longer exists. The last letter I wrote was dated 2007, celebrating the birth of our first great-granddaughter.

ALUMNI
BANQUET
MAY 24, 2025
SOCIAL HOUR
6 pm
MEAL SERVED
AT 7 pm
CLASSES WHO
GRADUATED IN
YEARS ENDING
IN “5” ARE
HONORED

RED



The Ol' Homesteader keeps lookin' for news about Naper!

The Naper Paper is your paper. We rely on you, our readers, for support, both financial and "a pat on the back". We count on you for stories and ideas about what we need to write, print, explore, photograph. We appreciate you and want to say "Thanks!"

LOOKIN' AT THE KIDS' ACTIVITIES—

Grayson Vogt and Hadley Vogt (children of Ryon and Emma Vogt, grand-children of Sharon Sattler Vogt, great-grandchildren of Mabel Riesselman Sattler) were recognized at the Boyd County 4-H Jamboree for their accomplishments and life skill development.

Jaylee Lechtenberg (daughter of Shane and Beth Nelson Lechtenberg, grand-daughter of Ivan and Nancy Wentz Nelson, great-granddaughter of Bob Wentz) and Kyla McCarthy (daughter of Darrin and Connie McCarthy, granddaughter of LeRoy and Maxine Windmeyer McCarthy) are playing basketball for Boyd County.

Evan and Preston Brewer are playing on the boys' basketball team for Boyd County. They are the sons of Kip and Rachel Heermann Brewer, grandsons of Jerry and Dorothy Dummer Heermann.

Cassidy Heermann (daughter of Casey and Jill Heermann, granddaughter of Jerry and Dorothy Dummer Heermann), Emerson Higgins (daughter of Skye and Allison Higgins, granddaughter of LaVern and Brenda Klein Higgins, great-granddaughter of Margaret Vogt Schmitz) and Kinsley Cadwallader (daughter of Lee and Stephanie Whitley Cadwallader, grand-daughter of Tim and Bonnie Fuhrer Whitley) are playing on the junior high team.

CONGRATULATIONS TO BOYD COUNTY SCHOOLS!

In the 2024 State of Schools Report, Boyd County Schools were highly rated.

District enrollment was 322 in 2023-2024, down from the high of 357 in 2019. The attendance rate is 94.4%, as compared with the statewide average of 92.6%.

ACT, the college entrance exam, is required of all Nebraska 11th graders, whether or not they plan to attend college. (Some states require only those students who are college bound to take the class.) The class average composite scores are 18.9 for Boyd County Schools and 18.7 for state average.

AQUESTT (Accountability for Quality Education System Today and Tomorrow) district-wide results shows a rating of 2 (Good) in 2018 and 3 (Great) in 2024. Ratings can be 1, 2, 3, or 4.

NSCAS is a state-wide testing program administered every spring for third through eighth grades. Boyd County average in language arts was 60%, compared to state-wide of 59%; math was 67%, compared to state-wide of 58%; science was 76%, as compared to state-wide of 75%.

MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) is a world-wide testing program, not just the United States or Nebraska. Students are tested both spring and fall in reading, math and science. Our schools are doing very well!

CONGRATULATIONS!

Norma Keller VanderBeek celebrated her 90th birthday and her retirement from the Butte Library January 17.

Allison Higgins received a pin and certificate recognizing her two years as a 4-H leader.

The Knights of Columbus had their annual Boyd County free throw contest January 4. Evelyn and Lucas Alford (children of Marcus and Candace Alford, grandchildren of Jim and Becky Alford, great-grandchildren of Lois Alford) were the winners, Evelyn for nine-year-old girls and Lucas for 12-year-old boys.

Evelyn Alford was a winner in the district competition and will compete in Norfolk on March 16.

Have you looked at the Naper Historical Society website? (napernebraska.org)

You'll find every issue of the Naper Paper (photos in color on the website!), photos of all the classes from Naper High School, stories of Naper history, the White Horse Ranch, businesses, cemeteries, and historical photos.

If you need to contact the historical society, you may:

call 402-832-5471,

mail to Naper Historical Society Box 72

Naper, NE 68755

e-mail at papabear@threeriver.net

LETTERS and more . . .

Happy New Year to all the hard workers on the Naper Paper! I enjoy every article in every issue—my husband does also.

Keep up the good work.

I'm enclosing a few bucks for you to put where needed.

Thanks,

Lorna Sieh Dillon

I'm enclosing a long-overdue check in appreciation of the *Naper Paper*. Thank you for your hard work and time, excellent articles and editing. Loved the photo of young Ann in the last edition.

I am blessed to be the grandmother of three young "Naper descendants" who were born too late to meet their great-grandmother, Marie Rockholm Bunch.

Blessings,

Camille Bunch

I am glad the paper is still coming. Linda and I are always excited to see it in the mail! And you are still doing a great job!

Ralph Kulm

Paper Crew—

I enjoy the paper very much.

Keep up the excellent work.

Enclosed is a check to help with the expenses.

Gary L. Cline

I ran across this [1948 Farm Ownership Map of Boyd County] going through some things. I thought maybe you could use it.

Also is enclosed a little money for the Naper Paper. My husband (not a former Naper resident) and I love reading it.

LouAnn (Ahlers) Pribil

Thank you for what you do!

Greg Stahlecker

Please find enclosed a donation for the Naper Paper. So enjoy every issue and look forward to all the news about past and present happenings.

It was fun to see all you gals at the "women's table" in the winter issue, 2024. Read it from cover to cover.

Gaylene Mitchell

Just a little to help with the cost of the Naper Paper. Bill and I enjoy reading it.

Have a wonderful and blessed holiday season.

Mom sure looks forward to the Naper Paper!

Mom will be 96 this coming June—feel free to drop her a note.

Virginia Walton

Room #410

Tiffany Square

3119 West Faidley Ave.

Grand Island, NE 68803

Laurel Walton

Always look forward to each paper and the interesting stories. So proud of what you do.

Many memories, so precious.

Wish I could visit in person, but at "101", home is best. So I close my eyes and join you.

Life in California is good for me but Nebraska is still home.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Frieda Ahlers Voll

Look forward to the Naper Paper. Enjoy the old stories and the new stories.

Enclosed is a little something to help with expense.

Lavonne Boes

I have enjoyed the paper, but wish to cancel my mailing. It seems like I no longer know anyone.

Thank you.

Debbie Higgins

Ed Note: We received a Christmas card from Tennessee (below)

Dear Fellow Americans:

CELEBRATE!

Raised in Naperville, Illinois, home of Joseph Naper, grandfather of your Naper founder, Ralph R. Naper. God bless you all
REAL GOOD!

R. Michael Landis

THE REST OF THE STORY

By Andrea Sieh Hendry

I recently enjoyed the article about "The Santa Tradition" in the Naper Paper and would like to add a personal note. While the article mentions that local MEN have traditionally filled the boots of Santa, I wanted to share an interesting experience from the 1980s.

One year, I attended the Santa event in the Auditorium and spent the entire event wondering where my mother was. It wasn't until I returned home that I learned the surprising truth: My mother (Linda Sieh) had been Santa that year!

The secret was kept between Linda and Bob Wentz. My father (Loren Sieh) didn't know who was dressed as Santa until Santa gave him the bird!

It's a memory that still makes me smile and I wanted to ensure this fun twist to the tradition was included.

I also want to thank everyone for the hard work they put into the Naper Paper. I truly enjoy reading and sharing the stories with my coworkers!

Answers to TRIVIA found on page 3

NEBRASKA	SCIENCE
March 1, 1867	butterfly
Omaha	volcano
Canada	10
Honeybee	hooves
Goldenrod	elephant

BOYD COUNTY

Missouri and Niobrara

7 miles

1891

1910

48 miles

NAPER

Ralph Naper donated 40 acres of land

Zimmerman, Frazier, Seasongood

1892

1928

2003

FAMOUS FOLKS

George W. Bush

Tom Osborne

Johnny Cash

Oprah Winfrey

Columbus

NAPER PAPER

Naper Historical Society

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Upper Grade Room, 1951-1952

Back row: Nina Bentzen, Patty Small, Ann Ludemann, Jackie Bentzen, Earl Stahlecker, Donald Swallow, Bobby Cline, Neil Windmeyer, Ronald Schonebaum, Marjo Schonebaum

Middle row: Carol Bechtold, Mardell Maertin, Lois Kibby, Duane Kibby, Elmer Sattler, Melvin Bentzen, Bobby Wentz, Sandra Putnam, Shirley Bechtold, teacher Enid Galbraith

Front row: Rollen Hart, Dennis Cline, John Schmitz, Lyle Karnes, Milo Stahlecker, Ronald Whitley, Marilee Neiman, Jean Cline, Donna Windmeyer.