



## HOMER LIONS CLUB

— “WE SERVE” —

by Chris Reel

**M**any people give of their time, talents and money to make Homer a better place to live. They serve the community in different ways, yet all contribute to the quality of life in Homer.

Examples of ways the local Lions Club has served the community as a whole and individuals in the community include collecting used eyeglasses, sending a local resident to a Lions Club vision hospital for treatment and paying the transportation and hotel expenses for that trip, and donating to local youth organizations. In the past, the club has sponsored a scholarship for high school seniors and helped the library acquire furniture and software for the computers it received several years ago.

Four times a year, the Lions clean Route 49 from the north end of town to one mile south of town. Earlier this year, the Lions helped with the Connie Rogers benefit and brought a hearing screening van to Homer.

Major fund raisers for the Lions are the Fourth of July pork chop dinner and the annual calendar. Plans are underway to produce a community yearbook, called “The Homerian” after the old Homer High School yearbook. It will contain a wealth of information about Homer, the births, weddings and obituaries for the year, directories of businesses, churches and organizations, school calendar,

local sports scores, an almanac of local data and a map. Each Lion has been assigned a section of the yearbook to complete.

Before each meeting, the Lions enjoy a meal. They meet on the second Monday of each month at Dave’s Restaurant and on the fourth Monday at the United Methodist Church, at 6:45 p.m. Occasionally, they have guest speakers. The Lions are anxious to have other peo-

ple from the community join. Although there are no women members, the Lions would like to see women join. President Tim Kirby is the youngest member; he would like to see other young people in the club.

Other officers include K. C. Jones, Vice President; Jim Little, Secretary and Bob Davis, Treasurer. Previously, Tim Kirby was Vice President. Next year, K. C. Jones will be President, since each Vice President moves up the following year. Officers serve a

one year term in each position.

Lions Club is an international organization, with 1.4 millions members worldwide, in 180 countries and areas. “Liberty, Intelligence, Our Nation’s Safety,” an acrostic, is the club slogan. In 1925, Helen Keller challenged the Lions to become “knights of the blind in the crusade against darkness.” The Lions Club is now best known for sight related programs. ■



Homer Lions Club — (L to R) Front Row: Wayne Lutz, Don Morgan, Doug Driscoll, Norm Miller, Don Hodgson, Jim Little, and Tim Kirby. Back Row: Richard Freeman, Kenny Jones, Dale Wolf, Maurice Wienke, Don Clem, and Stan Smith.

Photo by James Alfred

# BOARD MEMBERS

## SOUTH HOMER TOWNSHIP BOARD

Meets the 1st Wednesday of each month at 202 S. Main St., Homer

- Don Morgan, Supervisor/Treas. . . 896-2197
- Katie Woodmansee, Clerk . . . . . 896-2006
- Kenneth MacInnes, Trustee . . . . . 896-2390
- Richard Freeman, Trustee
- Connie Messman, Trustee . . . . . 896-2100
- Cheryl Baird, Trustee . . . . . 896-2008
- Elbert Rogers,  
Road Commissioner . . . . . 896-2831

## HOMER VILLAGE BOARD

Meets the 1st & 3rd Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m.

- Dave Lucas, Mayor . . . . . 896-2618
- Cindy Pruitt, Treasurer . . . . . 896-2114
- JoAnn Wallace, Village Clerk . . . 896-2193
- David Burns, Trustee . . . . . 896-2797
- Joe Humphrey, Trustee . . . . . 896-2597
- Mike Johnson, Trustee . . . . . 896-2228
- Jim Lacey, Trustee . . . . . 896-2365
- Orlena Pruitt, Trustee . . . . . 896-2748
- Lauri Umbarger, Trustee . . . . . 896-2067

## HOMER CHURCHES COOPERATING BOARD

St. Charles, Church of Christ, Presbyterian, Methodist

- Rev. Steve Burwell, President . . . 896-2551
- Jim Swathwood, Vice President . . 896-2861
- Gene Ethridge, Treasurer . . . . . 896-2286
- Joan Lane, Secretary . . . . . 896-2717

## HERITAGE SCHOOL BOARD

Meets the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Homer School.

- Jim Fish, President . . . . . 896-2756
- Dave Bosch, Vice President . . . . 834-3443
- Charles Berry . . . . . 834-3361
- Bruce Block . . . . . 834-3090
- Dale Katterhenry . . . . . 896-2647
- John Lannon . . . . . 684-2728
- Kevin Wright . . . . . 896-2865

## HOMER HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD

Meets the 1st Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Homer Historical Building

- Marian Edwards, President . . . . . 896-2254
- Becky Smith, Vice President . . . . 896-2722
- Charlotte Brown, Secretary . . . . 582-2056
- Pat Butler, Treasurer . . . . . 896-2657
- Bill Butler . . . . . 896-2657
- Tim Kirby . . . . . 896-2323
- Helen Krukewitt . . . . . 896-2198
- Jim Mullis . . . . .
- Molly Shoaf . . . . . 896-2549

## HOMER YOUTH LEAGUE BOARD

- Mike Johnson, President . . . . . 896-2228
- Tom Wakefield, Vice President . . . 896-2347
- Stacy Johnson, Secretary . . . . . 896-2228
- Lisa Wakefield, Treasurer . . . . . 896-2347
- Ricki Latham,  
Director of Concessions . . . . . 896-2088
- Dale Katterhenry,  
Director of Equipment . . . . . 896-2647
- Kim Little,  
Director of Fundraising . . . . . 896-2849
- Jamie Bryan,  
Director of Public Relations . . . . 896-2388
- Daniel Gordon, Director-at-Large . . 896-2585
- Cindy Pruitt, Director-at-Large . . . 896-2114
- Jim Swathwood,  
Director-at-Large . . . . . 896-2861

## HOMER ZONING BOARD

- Barb Gilhaus, President . . . . . 896-2237
- Chuck Benner, Secretary . . . . . 896-2516
- Don Glenn, Zoning Admin. . . . . 896-2776
- Ginny Dillon . . . . . 896-2719
- Mike Flickinger . . . . . 896-2815
- Gene Happ . . . . . 896-2004

## HOMER HOME EXTENSION BOARD

Meets the 3rd Friday of each month at 12:30 p.m. in members' homes.

- Mary Ann Rohl, Co-Chair . . . . . 896-2270
- Virginia Baird, Co-Chair . . . . . 896-2207
- Shirley Miller, Vice Chair . . . . . 896-2340
- Elvira Wakefield, Secretary . . . . . 896-2153
- Lois Hockersmith, Treasurer . . . . 896-2553

## HOMER LIBRARY BOARD

Meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Village Hall.

- Sara Essig, President . . . . . 896-2772  
896-2145
- Jeanine Bensken, Vice Pres. . . . . 896-2693
- Linda Pruitt, Secretary . . . . . 896-2742
- Marilyn Collins, Treasurer . . . . . 896-2282
- Gertrude Brown . . . . . 896-2049
- Cindy James . . . . . 896-3014
- Cathy Lance . . . . . 896-2086

## HOMER RECREATION BOARD

Meets the 2nd Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Village Hall.


- Danny Gordon, Chairperson . . . . . 896-2585
- Cindy Pruitt, Treasurer . . . . . 896-2114
- Bobbi Gordon . . . . . 896-2585
- Lynda Umbarger . . . . . 896-2540
- Tiffany Matthis . . . . . 896-2689
- Ryan Byerley . . . . . 896-2026

## HOMER COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Meets the 2nd Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Village Hall

- Greg Knott, President . . . . . 896-2348
- Ray Cunningham, Secretary . . . . 896-2558
- Don Glenn, Treasurer . . . . . 896-2776
- Becky Smith . . . . . 896-2722
- Kevin Knott . . . . . 896-3276
- Bobbi Gordon . . . . . 896-2585

Everyone is encouraged to attend any of the above meetings. If you would like to list your nonprofit organization members, contact any of the CDB Board Members listed above.



**HOMER News & Views**

Homer News & Views is YOUR newsletter. Its content and value depend upon each resident of the community. If you have anything you would like to contribute, please drop it off at the Homer Country Market or mail to the HCDB, P.O. Box 11, Homer, IL 61849.

Photography by James Alred  
Typesetting & Design by Andrew Shreeves

**NOTICE:** This newsletter is published by the Homer CDB to report items of interest to the citizens of Homer. The information included is intended to be accurate, but should not be relied upon for legal or official purposes. Opinions expressed within are the personal opinions or feelings of the writers and not to be taken as a criticism of anyone.

# FOCUSING ON HOMER'S BUSINESSES

— by Naomi Roberts

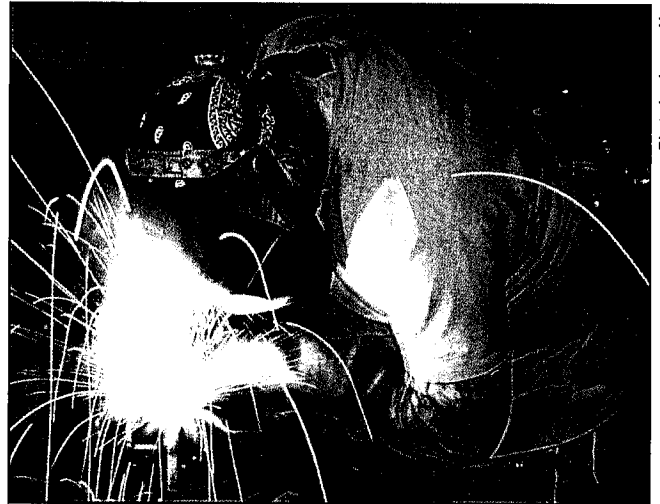
## B & G Welding

**B** & G Welding is a fairly new business in Homer. It is a partnership between a couple of very interesting young men — Bill Harrold and Gordon Weigan. They are both certified divers and underwater welders. They work as welders for Underwater Construction, a company based in Essex, Connecticut. Their work takes them all across this nation and into as many as twenty-two foreign countries. Harrold has been to Japan several times.

Harrold loves the work, because it is thrilling, dangerous, and always different. It doesn't seem to bother him that diving is rated as one of the top ten most hazardous jobs in the United States. To add more danger to the job of underwater welding, the welding Harrold does is on nuclear reactors. Harrold says, "You have to remember it is a job just like anything else. When you're under water working, everyone there is doing the same job." In other words, they are trained, skilled divers and welders, who are professional at what they do. Harrold has approximately 9,000 hours logged under water. He usually doesn't go more than 100 feet down, but sometimes he may be a half mile down inside a pipeline. He actually penetrates the pipe, which can be anywhere from nine feet to sixteen feet wide, or as small as thirty inches, and the only way out is the way he came in.

Harrold does not use air tanks; a compressor supplies his air. This method allows him to be under water for longer periods of time, sometimes as long as 10 hours. Even though Harrold's work takes him into and around nuclear reactors, he doesn't wear a special suit. He wears a dry suit. When he surfaces, however, he does take the normal precautionary showers to cleanse his body of any radiation residue. To Harrold, this is an acceptable level of risk, because he is always above the core of the nuclear reactor.

When Harrold and Weigan are not working for Underwater Construction, they do repair work on trailers, semi trailers, and farm equipment. Harrold has nine different welders, and is completely portable. If the job is too large to bring it to the shop (203 S. Main) Harrold can come to the job. He offers Tig, Mig, and Stick welding. He welds stainless steel and aluminum, which is rare, because most welders don't do stainless and aluminum. Harrold is not most welders, however. He can weld just about anything and does. His work in Homer is mainly repair work; work that most welders don't have time to do, but no job is too small for B & G Welding. Harrold has repaired lawn furniture, and lawn



Bill Harrold welding a snowplow attachment.

mower handles, and just about anything that is metal. Harrold always cautions people about repairs. Some people think a repair should make the item look brand new, but that is hardly possible when the metal has been bent, twisted, or broken. Harrold can make the old piece work again, but he can't make it new again. Harrold also does contract work for such items as snow blades, harrow carts, and trailers.

Harrold began welding at a young age, because his father welded too. He grew up in welding, and like his dad, people just come to him because of the family name. People know that Harrold's work can be counted on to hold.

If you have need for welding repairs, or you have designed your own metal workbench, shelving, trailer, or artwork and need a professional welder to complete your project, call B & G Welding at 896-2512. Someone is always at the business, so stop by or call and leave a message. Harrold or Weigan will get back to you. ■

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## HOMER PEACE MEAL

**W**e are now working on our 2001 fund raiser. As some of you know, we are required to earn \$1250 in funds each year. We have done this in many different ways through the years. This year we are starting something new and hope to make it a yearly tradition. We will be having a Peace Meal Giving Tree this Holiday season. For a donation to our organization you will be able to place a dove on our tree that will be located in the Community Building. On these doves you will be able to write your name, in honor of, in memory of, your business name, etc. The doves come in three different colors, depending on the amount of the donation. We are accepting donations of \$5, \$10 and \$20. Your support would be greatly appreciated. We hope to have a successful fundraiser and a beautiful Christmas Giving Tree. Thank you in advance.

Peace meal has been doing very well the past few months. We have had some very good meals coming out of our Rantoul kitchen. Our attendance has been up, but as always there is room for improvement. We would love to see some new faces. We have our lunch at 11:30 every afternoon Monday - Friday. All that is required is that you be age 60+, and make a reservation one day in advance. It is a wonderful program that should be taken advantage of. We do still deliver meals to our homebound seniors in town. This gives a hot full course meal to some that may not be able to do for themselves. And also a chance to get a visit from a friendly face every afternoon. We are always looking for more volunteers for this service.

I would like to thank all of the volunteers that we do have now. They are what keeps this program running and I could not do it without each and every one of you. They are a great bunch of people.

We have lost a couple of very special people to this program in the past few months. I would like to recognize them. Norma Diel has moved back to her hometown in Indiana. She has been a wonderful volunteer to our program and will be greatly missed. Also Ernest Wienke Jr. was a daily participant for many years. Our daily lunch will not be the same without him. They are truly missed and will always be remembered in our hearts.

If you would like a reservation or are interested in our fundraiser or just have a question, please call Sharon Jeffers at 896-2121 or 896-2668. Note: Christmas party coming soon, keep an eye out for details. ■

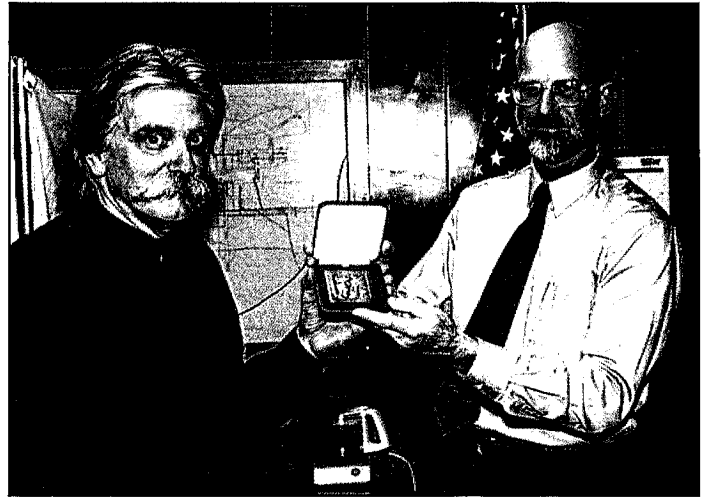
# VETTER RECEIVES HUMANITIES AWARD

by Dave Lucas

**B**ruce Vetter, a Homer businessman, entrepreneur, and manufacturer of leather motorcycle saddlebags for Harley Davidson motorcycles, is a recipient of the Studs Terkel Humanities Service Award 2000. As a member of the Homer Historical Society, Vetter became aware of a large collection of old photographic negatives that had been rescued from the landfill and donated to the society. A local druggist and amateur photographer had taken the photos at the turn of the last century. Recognizing the value of the photos through their ability to transfer not only the history but also the heritage and cultural tradition of the Village of Homer, Vetter set himself to the task of preserving and making the pictures available to everyone by converting them into a viewable format.

Vetter, through his own means, purchased computer equipment to scan and archive over 3,000 photos on one hundred CD's. He meticulously researched the technique to capture these images and developed a system for the Historical Society so the CD's can be publicly viewed. He cataloged the photos as to content and location, produced a viewers guide, and purchased a printer so people can get prints of meaningful images.

It is not uncommon to see Vetter on his motorcycle delivering freshly printed, turn-of-the-century photos of local buildings to the building's current owner. One can



Mayor David Lucas (right) present award to Bruce Vetter (left).

go to almost any store and find at least one historic photo displayed on the wall or counter.

Homer has been in a 30 year decline in population and businesses, with the loss of the high school several years ago, especially devastating. I believe these photos, that were so generously shared with the people of Homer by Mr. Vetter, have helped to rekindle the fire of civic pride.

Therefore I take pride in announcing Bruce Vetter as the Studs Terkel Humanities Service Award 2000 recipient. ■

## — THE HOMER COMMUNITY YEARBOOK —

Plans are to make the book an on-going year-to-year project for the Lions Club. The publication year will begin on June 1 of each year and end on the following May 31 — allowing for the inclusion of the full school year. Delivery will be in late June or early July.

### ***This 40-page book will include:***

- a Homer telephone and address directory
- an on-going historical record of the community
- business listings and resources
- calendars of up-coming school events
- a repository of school and youth league sports records
- an almanac of crop, weather, and other statistical data
- a map of the community with street names
- directories of Homer organizations, churches and governmental bodies
- wedding and birth announcements and obituaries
- and much more!

### **SUBSCRIBE NOW**

... and receive a 25% pre-publication discount! Regularly priced at \$10, the community yearbook is just \$7.50 for inaugural subscribers. Offer good only until May 31, 2001.

### **PAY NOTHING NOW!**

Reserve your copy today by phoning any Lions Club representative. He'll sign you up, deliver your community yearbook in mid-June 2001, and collect at that time.

**AGAIN, THANK YOU! TOGETHER WE MAKE HOMER A BETTER PLACE IN WHICH TO LIVE.**

# HOMER'S GREATEST GENERATION

## PART IV — ERNEST "JUNIOR" WIENKE

— by Chris Reel —

**H**omer's former mayor, Ernest Wienke, known as Junior, served in the infantry in World War II. He experienced horrendous things in the war, things he probably would rather have forgotten if he could; but he did consent to sharing his wartime story as part of the Homer Historical Society's history project.

Junior was already in the military when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. At age 19, he had enlisted in the National Guard on March 5, 1941, because he could not find work at that time. Five other young men from this area joined with him — Ralph Bogan, Ralph Hennis, Bob Umbanhowar, Allan Tibbitts and Roy Tibbitts.

On December 7, 1941, he was at Camp Forrest, Tullahoma, Tennessee, where he trained as an infantry soldier. The training was rough, but that was necessary to prepare the men for the rigors of war. After the war was declared, he was sent to the Mojave Desert in California for three months of desert training. The desert was hot, windy and full of rattlesnakes. The men would carry wooden sticks like canes. If a rattler was spotted, the soldier would pin it down with the stick and take off the rattles.

From there, he went to Fort Lewis, Washington, where he spent about seven months training draftees.

Junior was sent from Fort Lewis to Hilo, Hawaii. Service there included patrolling the shore lines, controlling the civilian population and guarding the ammunition dump. Because of the

war, there was a black-out at night.

Even though he had trained in the Mojave in preparation for action in the African desert, he was sent to the South Pacific. He was a member of the Illinois 33rd Division, Company B,



130th Infantry, First Battalion as a Platoon Sergeant in charge of forty-four men. He saw his first combat at Finschhafen, New Guinea, where he was wounded, having got shrapnel in his leg. For that, he had a ten per cent disability. After New Guinea, he spent two weeks on the small island of Morotai, where strategic action took place in January, 1941.

While on Luzon, Philippines, the

Colonel put Junior in charge of two wounded Japanese prisoners, telling him to keep them alive. The other members of his company were not happy with those orders, but did nothing more than give them pricks with their bayonets. Then the Colonel told two mountain women who were assisting the Americans to put the Japanese prisoners on litters and carry them part way down the mountain. The women had loved ones who were tortured and killed by the Japanese; they carried the litters to the edge of a cliff and dumped them over. Junior had obeyed his orders, but apparently the women had no such orders.

From Luzon and Leyte in the Philippines, Junior went to Honshu, Japan, for the big invasion of that country. His company was in the spearhead group for the invasion, and casualties were expected to be at seventy-eight percent wounded and killed. Each company had only one medic, and the medic was limited in what types of medical aid he could offer. Junior was one of seven left in his company.

Following the surrender of Japan, the Americans found Japanese soldiers waiting for them, their uniforms off and their weapons all piled up in big mounds. However, it was necessary to stand guard duty because the Americans didn't know which of the Japanese could be trusted.

Junior was only in Japan for fifteen days before he shipped out from Kobe

for the States. Following a severe storm while crossing the Pacific and a trip of thirteen days, he arrived at Vancouver, Washington. The next day he went to Fort Lewis, Washington, where he was discharged on November 15, 1945, having achieved the rank of Tech Sergeant, Platoon Sergeant.

It was important for the soldiers to have some diversions in their free time, to help them cope with the horrors of the war. For Junior, it was boxing. Having been a Golden Gloves boxing champion in Danville before the war, he was in several tournaments in Hawaii and the Philippines and became the Southwest Pacific Heavy Weight Boxing Champion. The boxing tournaments were so popular, the Colonel would give him time

off to prepare for a fight. Junior brought home the little golden gloves to prove his achievement.

During the war, holidays were celebrated as possible. When he was in New Guinea, all the men had were rations. Thanks to the Navy, Junior and the company commander were able to get a couple of hindquarters of beef. The men had all the beef steak they could eat for Thanksgiving.

Junior agreed with the decision to drop the atomic bomb. He felt it saved his life, as well as that of many other Americans.

Following the war, Junior kept in touch with some of his fellow soldiers, and attended a Division convention every other year, with twenty-eight other veterans.

Junior went into the military because of the scarcity of civilian jobs. When he was discharged, there still was a shortage of jobs. It took awhile for the returning servicemen to find work. Junior first worked in construction and brick laying. In 1953, he joined the office of Illinois Secretary of State Charles Carpentier in the license bureau and later in investigations. He was an electrical worker and worked for the Champaign County Forest Preserve as construction supervisor. After retiring from there, he served as mayor of Homer for ten years. He was also a long time Homer village trustee.

Junior married Bonnie Ellis on April 18, 1946. He had three children and six grandchildren. He died on September 18, 2000. ■



Do you remember farming like this? Ahh the good ole days when life was easy. Do recognize any of these people. If so contact Greg Knott.

# HOMER CHURCH NEWS

## HOMER UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

*"Where Faith in God Makes a Difference"*

In November, we received a newsletter from another church that provided some real food for thought. My wife asked me what I thought of the pastor's closing words, "Have a happy Turkey Day." She found it a little disturbing that a minister would refer to Thanksgiving as "Turkey Day," and wondered if she might be overreacting.

My first inclination was to think that she might be, but now I don't think so. Thanksgiving began solely for the purpose of giving thanks to God for a harvest bountiful enough to carry a rag-tag band of pioneers through a treacherous, soon to arrive, New England winter. It was not meant to be a day dedicated to overindulgence or

football. It was meant to give thanks to God. Still, this certainly doesn't mean that we cannot enjoy a game that day, or pack away that extra piece of pumpkin pie, because we can. It is a day for thanks, but it's also a day to be enjoyed with our families. Our concern is that by failing to refer to it as Thanksgiving Day, we are trivializing the fact that it is a decidedly religious holiday.

We are so concerned with being politically correct these days, that we are allowing some of our greatest strengths to be lost. In the name of political correctness, we cannot have Christmas plays, or close our schools for Christmas or Easter. Instead, we celebrate a "Winter Holiday," whatever that may mean, which happens to coincide with Christmas. We close for "Spring Break" too, which luckily falls at Easter time each year. I'm sure it's only a matter of time before the schools must refer to the fourth Thursday and Friday of November as the "Turkey Day Break."

If you would like to have God and Christ back in your religious holidays, I urge you to start attending the church of your choice this month. December 3 is the first Sunday of Advent, which lasts until Christmas, another decidedly religious holiday. During that time, most area churches will be decorated for Christmas and our choir will be performing a Christmas Cantata on the 17th at 10:15 a.m. There will be a children's Christmas program on the 24th at 10:15 a.m., and a Christmas Eve candlelight service will be held at 11:00 p.m. We invite you to attend any or all of our special services, as well as our regular services throughout the year. Spend some time this month, and every month, in a politically incorrect place, the church, where we know that your children's "Winter Holiday" really means Christmas Break. ■

## "Would We Have Dared?"

If I had been a shepherd boy  
On that first Christmas Eve,  
Would I have heard the angels song  
Would I have dared believe?  
Would I have trusted to the star  
And let it guide me too,  
Until I reached the stable low.  
Would I have dared, would you?

If I have been a mighty king  
In far off Eastern land,  
Would I have read the signs aright  
And left my palace grand  
To journey far to see a child,  
And make my dreams come true.  
Would I have dared to be that brave  
Would I have dared, would you?

Even today we must be brave  
If we would find our king.  
We do not dare to lose our way,  
Not hear the angels sing.  
Sometimes it's hard to find the things  
That we are meant to do,  
But we can serve as best we can.  
I'm going to try, will you?

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# HOMER CHURCH NEWS

## FROM THE CHURCHES COOPERATING

The Board members of the Homer Churches Cooperating met in November and new officers were elected. They are President — Rev. Steve Burwell, Vice-President — Jim Swathwood, Treasurer — Gene Ethridge and Secretary — Joan Lane. The board also accepted the resignations of long time members Betty Taylor and Norma Diel. Both were thanked for their many years of faithful service to Homer Churches Cooperating. Virginia Baird was welcomed to the board.

Homer Churches Cooperating sponsored a joint Thanksgiving Service on November 19th at St. Bornerro Catholic Church. A collection was taken at the service. The proceeds will be used to fund the Christmas baskets that are given around Christmas time to members of the community. If you could not attend the service but would like to make a donation to the Christmas Basket Fund, do so by contacting any of the officers or any of the Homer church offices. ■

# HERITAGE ATHLETICS

## BOYS BASKETBALL SCHEDULE

Dec. 1 ..... St. Joseph-Ogden ..... Home  
 Dec. 2 ..... Georgetown ..... Away  
 Dec. 8 ..... Judah Christian ..... Away  
 Dec. 28-30 ..... Heritage Christmas Tourney ..... Home

## GIRLS BASKETBALL SCHEDULE

Dec. 7 ..... Tuscola ..... Home  
 Dec. 9 ..... Chrisman ..... Home  
 Dec. 11 ..... Atwood-Hammond ..... Away  
 Dec. 14 ..... Villa Grove ..... Home  
 Dec. 18 ..... Cerro Gordo ..... Away  
 Dec. 26, 27, 29 ..... Salt Fork Tourney ..... Away

**LORI'S HAIRDESIGN**

606 E. First St.  
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*Family Hair Care*

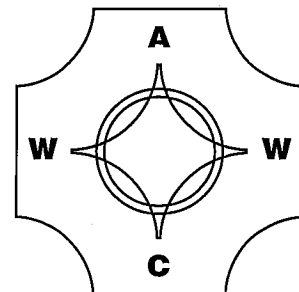
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# HOMER HOMEMAKERS EXTENSION NEWS

The Homer Homemakers Extension Unit membership reaches far beyond our local unit each October by giving to "Pennies for Friendship," to help support a worldwide organization called Associated Country Women of the World.



Our unit is one of 24 which combine to form Champaign County Homemakers Extension Association. In turn, the county units all over the state of Illinois combine to form the Illinois Association for Homer, Community and Education. This organization then becomes a part of the international organization, Associated Country Women of the World, with headquarters in London.

There are more than 9 million members of rural women's organizations in 70 countries. The aims of the Association are: to promote international goodwill, friendship, and understanding between the country women and homemakers of the world; to raise the standard of living of rural women all over the world; to further international understanding and friendship; and to be a voice for country women in international affairs.

ACWW was been granted consultive status to the United Nations, speaking both for country women of the UN and to country women of UN projects.

The emblem represents the 4 points of the compass linked together through ACWW by a circle of friendship against a background of green which symbolizes the earth's green carpet.

The pennies collected may provide goats for milk in some countries, food for children in another, or water, bread for 10 or 25¢ a loaf, or educators. Many needs are met for a small gift on our part.

It is interesting to think what may be accomplished in this way on the far side of the world. A few pennies from each of our members added together with pennies from hundreds of other members from the state and nation, connects us with homemakers all over the world to help find ways for the betterment of our homes and families. ■

# FOCUSING ON HOMER'S BUSINESSES

— by Naomi Roberts

## Wilson Tree Farms

Every year, Wilson Tree Farms puts Christ back in Christmas. This is a must for Charlie and Teresa Wilson, and it can be seen in the large letters in their signs advertising CHRISTmas Trees, as well as in their loving attitude towards their customers and employees. Charlie and Teresa have enjoyed their tree farm for the past 10 to 12 years and plan on many more years of enjoyment to come.

Charlie says he looks forward to seeing the children run up and down the row of trees in search of the perfect one for Christmas. He says, "No one yells at them. They just laugh and run and jump and have a good time." They also get a chance to see nature and wildlife, such as deer, rabbits, or pheasants, up close. Of course the kittens are always a favorite.

Charlie is a family man with vision. His business is family owned and operated with the help of his children and grandchildren. Years ago, because of his love and concern for his own family, Charlie was able to see the needs single parents faced during the holidays.

Originally, Wilson Tree Farms opened the weekend after Thanksgiving, but that changed after a single-parent came the weekend before Thanksgiving wanting desperately to buy a Christmas tree so his children could also have Christmas while they were visiting him for Thanksgiving. He didn't want to miss Christmas with them, but it wasn't his turn to have them at Christmas. Charlie not only helped him, but he changed his time schedule in order to help other single-parents with the same need.

Beginning Saturday, November 18th, until Christmas Day, Wilson Tree Farms will be open 9-6 every Saturday, and Noon to 6:00 p.m. on Sundays. Tree shoppers can go to the patch and cut your own, or you can buy a pre-cut tree, or you can dig up a tree if you prefer to plant it in

your own yard. Charlie provides the cutting and digging tools. He also provides a deer drag to haul the tree out of the nursery. He also shakes the dead needles from the tree and bails it so there is no mess in your vehicle.

On Wilson's 26 acres, there are more than 35,000 trees in various stages of growth. A tree can't really be sold as a Christmas tree until it is six to seven years old. When the Scotch Pines get to be 12 to 14 years old, Charlie cuts them down and uses them for greenery in wreaths, swags, and table decorations. Some people don't understand why Charlie would cut down trees to use for

greenery, but it is part of the process of tree farming. Since the life of the tree is pretty much over at that age, it is better to utilize the greenery than to let it die and never be used. Trees are a crop to Charlie just like corn and beans are crops to farmers.

Like farmers, Charlie must tend to his crop too. It isn't a plant the trees and let God do the rest situation. Charlie's trees are top grade, because of his continuing education in the care of trees. Every year, Charlie and Teresa

attend a Christmas Tree convention, which keeps him abreast of the latest tree care technology. Charlie complies with all government regulations; and his trees are inspected every year by the University of Illinois Entomology department. He has never had a problem with insects.

Every summer the trees must be sheered in order to shape them into a Christmas tree. Of course the tree's shape depends on the ideal tree the sheerer has in mind. What is one person's idea of a perfect Christmas tree is something else for another person. Charlie always asks his customers if they chose the perfect tree, and their answer is always, "Yes," but Charlie sometimes wonders why they chose the one they did. The answer of course is a difference in vision.



Photo by James Alford

Vision is what makes Wilson Tree Farms a successful business. Charlie has vision in regards to his customer's need, as well as vision in regards to his workers. Each year he employs approximately a dozen people. Some are family members, but some are women who have small children in school and can only work during those hours. The women sort of set their own hours.

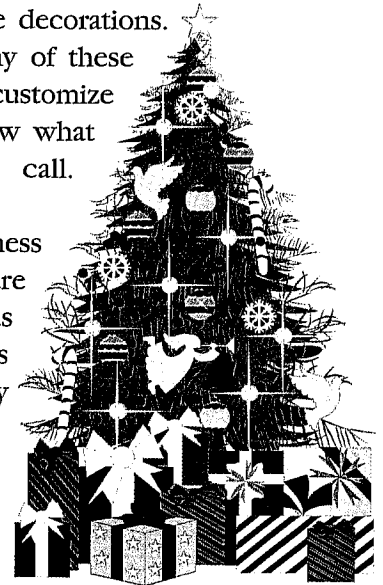
Charlie is also good about seeing who does what job best and enjoys doing it. One of his employees likes to do nothing but cut greenery. It works for the employee and Charlie. Another employee, Roxy Pruitt, makes all of the wreaths. Roxy began making wreaths after she made one for herself. Charlie always allow his employees to take home a tree, or a wreath, but they have to make their own wreath. When Charlie saw the talent Roxy has, he suggested she make all of the wreaths. Again, Charlie's ability to see the talent and skill in one of his workers proved to be profitable as well as enjoyable. Roxy makes all sizes of wreaths, from 8 to 36 inches. This, of course is

the ring size. The actual wreath extends out approximately four inches more.

Teresa makes all the bows for the wreaths, swags, grave blankets, and table decorations.

Customers can order any of these items in advance, and customize them. Just let them know what you want when you call. (896-2160)

If you want to do business with people who care about their product as well as their workers an customers, stop by Wilson Tree Farms some Saturday for a cup of hot cider and all your Christmas decorating needs. ■



## HOMER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Homer Historical Society is starting a very important project, an effort to help Homer citizens trace their ancestral lines, or at least make a record of what they know, for their children. Have you ever said, "when I get more time, I am going to start a genealogy record of my family so that my children will know who they are and where they came from. Or perhaps it has been more of a lament that, "I wish I had asked more questions of mom and dad about their families while I could!". In either case, the Homer Historical Society is ready and eager to help you get the project underway. The society would like for every family in the community to stop in the museum and pick up a starter form to fill in. The museum is open every Thursdays 2-330 in the afternoon. The society would also be grateful to receive copies of any family research that you have already completed. We can use this to build a larger genealogy resource for those in the future.



Work at the museum continues with members becoming involved in the hands on experience of museum duties, from cataloguing recent donations to acting as hosts when

visitors come. The board and archives committee sincerely thank all members who have been taking turns helping at the museum. Your help is deeply appreciated.

After a very successful spring sale of hanging floral baskets, it was decided to sell poinsettias for the holidays. Your order can be picked up at the Historical Society Museum, 107 N. Main on Saturday December 9 from 8am-4pm. We sincerely thank all our friends for their interest in this endeavor and hope you will keep us in mind next year.

Our annual Christmas party was held December 5th at the City Building. As usual, we held a "Trash and Treasure" auction. Each person brought 2 gaily wrapped gifts to be auctioned off to the highest bidder. One being a nice gift and one a trash or gag gift. Lots of fun was had by all.

New board of directors are Tim Kirby, Jim Mullis and Bill Butler were all elected to 3 year terms. Those retained on the board are, Marion Edwards, President; Becky Smith, Vice President; Charlotte Brown, Secretary; Pat Butler, Treasurer; and board members Helen Krukewitt and Molly Shoaf.

Future plans are being made for dinner out and a visit to the newly opened War Museum in Danville in January. Details will be announced at a later time. ■

# HERITAGE WINS SCHOOL SEARCH AWARD

Ever since the 1986-87 Homer School strike, the Homer school district, which is now Heritage CUSD #8, has received less than favorable reviews in regards to the quality of education it produces. Erroneously, some people viewed the strike as a result of poor educators, when in actuality it had nothing to do with poor quality education, but was merely an employee-employer dispute.

The view of Heritage CUSD #8 is about to change, however. Heritage CUSD #8 has just won the 2000 Bright A+ Award. This award comes from SchoolSearch, a Kansas City based firm that works with major companies worldwide to provide information for their employees' families who are relocating.

This year the award is given to 65 Illinois School districts statewide. The criterion for the award is based on scholastic scores. At the elementary level SchoolSearch looks at the ISAT scores and in the secondary level they look at the ACT score. SchoolSearch awards school districts whose students' academic performance ranks in the top 5% of all the 895 districts in Illinois.

In order to win this prestigious award, it takes three things working together in harmony. According to school superintendent, Dr. Allen Hall, a school does well because of "Bright students; teachers, who are able to get the curriculum across to the students; and parents who care about their children." Dr. Hall says of these three things, the most important is caring parents. If parents don't establish a loving home environment that shows a child love and

encourages him or her to be the best they can be, then the basic foundation of what makes a good student is not there. The shaky foundation can sometimes be repaired and shorn up by good teachers and curriculum, but if the parents don't do their part, the foundation will crumble. Evidently, parents are doing their part and the teachers at Heritage are building on that foundation.



Photo by James Alfred

Dr. Allen Hall, Heritage Superintendent

Heritage is a small school; and while it may be true small schools have less elective classes and less sports, the plus side for smaller schools is higher quality education. The smaller class size actually works to an advantage for the teachers and students. There is more time for one on one teaching, and more time for students who might be having difficulty in the class. It helps to have award winning teachers too.

In the past few years, several teachers have won the Golden Apple Teaching Award. From the grade school, the winners have been Barb Fuller, Jim Farney, and Kathy Layden. From the high school,

the past winner was Richard McCleary, and this year Bobbi Roy won the distinguished Golden Apple Teacher's Award. In January, Barb Fuller was also nominated for a Who's Who award.

These award winning teachers have been nominated by some of their past students, a fact that speaks highly about the impact these teachers are making in the lives of their students. Parents, teachers, and students from the Heritage CUSD #8 should be proud, because something is definitely working. ■

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# HOMER OPERA HOUSE

## — AN HISTORIC TREASURE —

by Chris Reel

**M**he Jurgensmeyer building was built in 1902 by William Jurgensmeyer and his son Louis. Now housing Homer village offices, community organizations, and the public library, the building has served many functions through the years.

The second floor opera house was the setting for cultural and other activities, including concerts, plays, dances, lectures, roller skating, high school basketball games and boxing. It truly was a focal point of the community.

For ten years, Homer High School was located on the second floor, with the last class graduating in 1927. Ray Satterfield, who graduated in 1927, remembers a concrete tile factory in the basement at that time.

After the high school moved out, the east end of the second floor was converted into apartments. Charlie Smith, who was related to the Jurgensmeyers, lived there into the 30's. In 1939, Dr. Humphrey lived in the building and had his office there. Much later, Bob Hudson and his parents lived in one of the upstairs apartments in the early and mid 1950's. At that time, there were two apartments upstairs and one apartment downstairs, as well as several rented rooms. All the apartments, upstairs and down, were located at the east end of the building. A high school student at the time, Bob worked in the Grab-It grocery downstairs. Lester Ray, meat department manager at Grab-It, also lived in the building, as did Mrs. Moorehead and Charlie Barker. Mrs. Laura Walker lived in the downstairs apartment. Benton Barnes lived in the basement and took care of the furnace. The Hudsons and Ray were the last renters in the building.

Through the years the downstairs held several businesses, including Lyons and Palmer and Grab-It-Here grocery stores, a music store, photography studios, doctors' offices, a millinery shop and the First National Bank of Homer. A large cement square in the floor near where the library door is now, was the location of the bank vault. For a time,

the power company occupied half of the first floor until Grab-It took over the whole floor.

Neva Crabtree worked at the Grab-It from 1954 until it closed in 1969. The managers were Eddie and Alma Moore and employees included local residents Bonnie Wienke, Marie O'Neil, Mary Buck, Doyle Grissom, Norma and Laura Henderson, Bob Jones, Carrie McCoy and Gordon White. In 1969, employees were asked to join a union. Gordon White warned them against it, but they didn't heed him. As soon as the store became part of the union, the union closed it down.

In the early 1970's, the village bought the building from the Grab-It-Here owners and refurbished it for use as a municipal building. It was dedicated on April 2, 1972 and village offices and the newly organized public library moved in. The building has served the village well for many years.

But as the library has grown, it has become overcrowded; beginning with one room and a small donated collection, it has expanded into two rooms and over 11,000 books. Storage and staff work space are extremely limited. The building itself sees only twenty per cent of its potential use. Heating, air conditioning and electrical service to the entire building need to be updated. The building is not accessible to the handicapped. However, a study done several years ago showed the building to be structurally sound, with only minor changes needed. Considering its historic significance, it is not only worth saving, but also has potential to become an historic gem.

Through the years, the library trustees have had a vision for an improved facility, one that would be accessible, provide adequate space for the collection and for programs, and be comfortable and inviting to the public. Thanks to donations from a local resident and careful fiscal policies of the trustees, the library has money to put towards the project.



Photo by James Alford

## HOMER OPERA HOUSE *(cont'd from page 13)*

Village board members voted unanimously to hire Champaign architect Gary Olsen of Olsen and Associates to draw up building plans. Olsen is experienced in historic preservation projects, library building projects, and in working with organizations. He was recommended by Dr. Fred Schlipf of the Urbana Free Library, who also works as a library building consultant. Dr. Schlipf had already spent a lot of time with the village and library boards to draw up a building program. Mr. Olsen presented a cost comparison between renovating the entire existing building and putting up a new building on the same lot. The cost of razing the building and putting up a new one story building on the same lot, to replace the first floor facilities only, would be about the same as renovating the existing building. However, to replace the second floor would require a second one story building, making the total cost to build almost double the cost of renovation; and the new buildings would lack the historical significance and potential drawing power of a restored opera house.

At the October 2, 2000, village board meeting, Olsen and Mayor Lucas discussed the many grants that are available for such a project, from State Library grants, to historic preservation grants and Illinois First funds. There are also low interest loans available. The project will be done in two phases as funding is secured, but the first floor renovation will allow for all necessary accommodations for the second floor work to take place.

Presently, there are only a handful of renovated and functioning opera houses dating from the same time period in Illinois. Very few others are intact; Homer's is one of them. The architectural details on the outside of the building will be restored; the inside will be modernized. Olsen and Lucas believe a restored opera house could once again become a community focal point, providing the setting for many events and activities, and drawing people to Homer from all over. ■



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## HOMER LIBRARY NEWS

**O**ur ability to serve the people of Homer is not limited to the materials we have in this library. Through the interlibrary loan process, we can provide most books that our patrons need or want. The Lincoln Trail database is searchable by the general public. Find the book you want and we will place a hold for you. It's not necessary to go to Champaign or Urbana to get most materials. The URL is: [www.ltls.org/home](http://www.ltls.org/home). Follow the catalogs link and go to Linc. If you choose to search by worldwide web, you won't need to log in. If you choose the Telnet option, log-in as "visitor." Normally, older books arrive by delivery system in a few days. New bestsellers could take much longer, but we purchase most bestsellers and other books by favorite authors; check with us first to see what we have.

Chris' Quick Pick: *The Real James Herriott* by Jim Wight. If you enjoyed James Herriott's stories of his life as a veterinarian in Yorkshire, you will enjoy his biography, written by his son. In fact, you may want to read Herriott's books all over again. Alf Wight, the veterinarian, practiced during a time period that saw major changes in his profession, not only in the way medicine was practiced, but also in the types of animals that made up the majority of veterinary patients. As with most changes, it brought both good and bad. ■

— H O M E R —

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# HOMER HOUSEHOLD

## MASON JAR COOKIES

1 quart Mason jar with lid

*Combine in a bowl:*

1 cup all purpose flour  
 ½ tsp. baking powder  
 ½ tsp. salt



*Sift together and pour into jar:*

*Carefully add on top of the flour mixture in layers:*

½ cup brown sugar	½ cup of any of the following
1 cup quick oats	M & M's, butterscotch chips,
½ cup white sugar	chocolate chips, raisins, etc.
½ cup broken nut meats	

*Place lid on jar, (decorate with calico if desired) and tie with ribbon with these instructions attached:*

Stir in 1/2 cup or 1 stick of oleo, 1 tsp. vanilla, and 1 beaten egg. Mix well and shape into 1" balls. Place 2" apart on a lightly greased cookie sheet. Bake at 350° for 8-10 min.

## CHOCOLATE SPOONS

*These make a great gift with a fancy coffee mix. You'll see these in gourmet coffee shops for several dollars, but you can make them for pennies.*

12 oz. semisweet chocolate chips  
 24 sturdy plastic spoons

Melt the chocolate. Stir in any optional flavors if desired. Dip the bowl of each spoon in the melted chocolate so the bowl is covered and full of chocolate. Allow excess to drip off. Set spoons on a cookie sheet lined with wax paper, with the handles resting on the edge of the cookie sheet to level. Allow to cool. Decorate by drizzling white or dark chocolate over them in a pattern or randomly. Wrap individually in clear or colored plastic wrap and tie with a ribbon. Makes 24 spoons.

## CAPPUCCINO MIX

Mix together 1 cup powdered non-dairy creamer, ¾ cup instant coffee, 1 cup chocolate-flavored drink mix, ½ cup sugar, ½ tsp. cinnamon, and ¼ tsp. nutmeg. Place in a pretty air-tight container, in a basket along cappuccino cups, demitasse spoons, and a bar of imported chocolate to shave over the top of each cup. *Directions for gift card:* To serve, place 1 Tbl. plus 1 tsp. of mix in cup and add 1 cup boiling water, and stir. Great served with a scoop of ice cream or whipped topping and shaved chocolate.

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