

HOMER



News & Views

A PUBLICATION OF THE HOMER COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Look What Rode Into Town

By Kate Boyer

Have you noticed the new addition to our downtown location? We have been honored to receive a donated caboose from Norfolk and Southern Railroad. The N&SR is involved with the program to donate decommissioned cabooses to towns for municipal use. The railroad contacted Homer last year and offered us the caboose, which we gladly accepted. In July it arrived on the siding near Ellen Street. The caboose was moved November 2nd to its permanent site across from the village hall on the corner of Main and First.

Many Miles Ago...

Cabooses have played an integral role in the history of the American Railroad.

The birth date of the caboose is unknown, but legend gives the credit to Nat Williams, a freight conductor on the Auburn & Syracuse Railroad during the mid 1800's. He would routinely sit on the last car of the train so that he could direct train's operations. After a while, they added a platform to the end of the train for this purpose. A shack was built on the platform to protect the crew from weather. Eventually it evolved into the traditional caboose that you see in Homer today. In the first days of railroading, each crew was assigned their own caboose and this was their residence for several days on end. They made this little caboose their home with personal items, cooking utensils, cook stove, a bed and sometimes even curtains. The modern marvels of refrigeration, plumbing, and electricity eventually found their way into the caboose as efforts were made to modernize the cars in the late 50's. Just think of how many miles our little caboose has gone and how many stories it could tell!

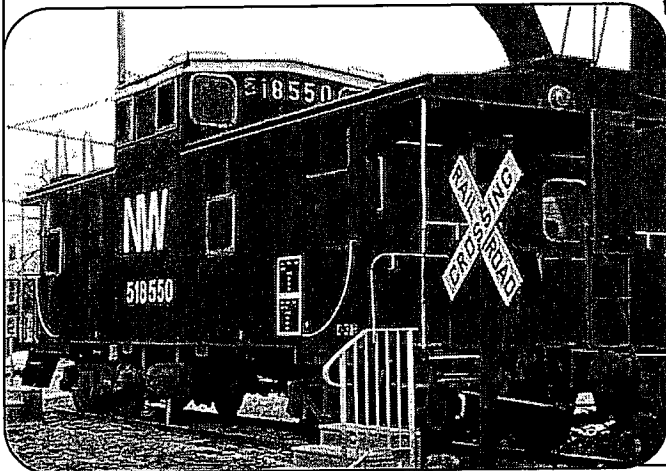
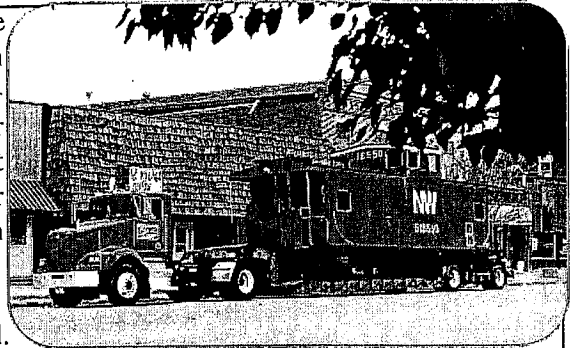
What Should We Do Now?

When we were informed of this addition to our town, we began to make plans for its final resting place. We decided to purchase a lot from Bill Smith on the corner of First and Main. Here, we would create a mini-park with the caboose as the focal point. But we are still unsure what should go inside of the caboose. Some ideas include: A Railway Historical Society, a coffee shop, a rental hall, or an internet station. The Village board is looking for your input. If you have a creative idea for

the caboose, please call the Village Office or mail your ideas to 101 N. Main.

Thank you to Bub Miller and Gary Smith for laying the tracks for the caboose. To Mayor Dave Lucas, who drove the spikes. And to Paul's Welding and Machine Shop of Villa Grove for the transportation of the 32,000 lb caboose, it took four men, one crane, two trucks, and three hours to complete the project! And, of course, to Norfolk and Southern Railroad for their generous donation to our town.

**Be sure to come visit our Caboose and Santa
December 8th!**



BOARD MEMBERS

BOARD MEMBERS

SOUTH HOMER TOWNSHIP BOARD

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

Don Morgan, Supervisor/Treas	896-2618
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

HOMER ZONING BOARD

Barb Gilhoas, President	896-2237
Chuck Benner, Secretary	896-2516
Ginny Dillon	896-2719
Mike Flickinger	896-2815
Gene Happ	896-2004
Elizabeth Walton	896-2687

HOMER HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD

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

Building

Becky Smith, President	896-2722
Ray Cunningham, Vice-President	896-2558
Charlotte Brown, Secretary	582-2056
Pat Butler, Treasurer	896-2657
Bill Butler	896-2657

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 here.

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 or e-mail to <bsmith@admin.housing.uiuc.edu>. Next newsletter deadline is Jan 10th 2002

HOMER HOME EXTENSION BOARD

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

Mary Ann Rohl, 1st Vice-Chairman	896-2270
Pat Butler, 2nd Vice-Chairman	896-2657
Elvira Wakefield, Secretary	896-2153
Lois Hockersmith, Treasurer	896-2553

HOMER COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BOARD

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

Ray Cunningham, President	896-2558
Greg Knott, Treasurer	896-2348
Becky Smith	896-2722
Kevin Knott	896-3276
Kevin Wright	896-2865
Bobbie Gordon	896-2585
Brett Barnhart	896-2112
Pat Butler	896-2657
Rob Boyer	896-3227

HOMERYOUTH LEAGUE BOARD

Dale Katterhenry, President	896-2647
Danny Gordon, Vice President	896-2585
Stephanie Beamer, Secretary	896-3800
Cindy Pruitt, Treasurer	896-2114

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
Tim Kirby	896-2323
Helen Krukeweitt	896-2198
Jim Mullin	
Molly Shoaf	896-2549

HOMER RECREATION BOARD

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

Jari Hilpipre - President-Secretary
Lynn Perry, Vice President
Becky Umstead, Treasurer
Jill Harshburger
Scott Hilpipre
Jeff Hashburger
Heather McCallister

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.

Homer Church News

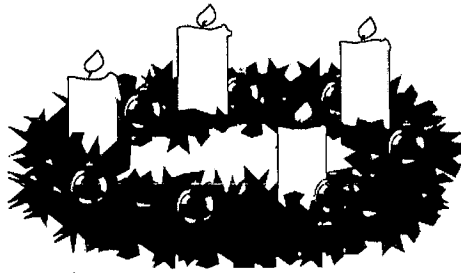
HOMER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

GOD BLESS AMERICA

GOD-Is God the God of your life, or just each day, or just at times of national crisis? IS God almighty? If so, He controls our lives. Does God have your faith, loyalty, and devotion? If so, do you honor Him with your time, abilities, and possessions? AMERICA NEEDS GOD!!

BLESS-Does this mean more wealth, and more things? Does it mean peace, freedom, protection, and guidance? Are you and I working to bring these to all people?

AMERICA-All Americans? To share our freedoms and blessings with ALL in need. The ideal of America is that all people everywhere are blessed by God. YES, GOD BLESS AMERICA!!



ADVENT

Advent...a time of expectation, anticipation, and spiritual preparation. Once again, Christians make a special effort to deepen their faith and spiritual progress. Even those who do not observe Advent probably engage in similar practices, i.e. increased attendance at worship, prayer, Bible study, learning of this One born to save the world...Advent begins Saturday, December 1 and ends on Christmas Day. The churches of Homer invite you to renew and/or discover God's gift of faith. Let us stress the Gift (of Christ) rather than just gifts at this time and season. May your Christmas see Christ at the center of your holiday!

Jim Swathwood, Lay Pastor ■

HOMER CHURCH OF CHRIST

As the Bible teaches, we are all ministers, and one of the best ways to minister to others is to introduce them to Jesus by inviting them to attend church activities with you. Decorating the church for Christmas is always a fun time of fellowship. There will be Christmas caroling later in the month. December is a very special time of year as we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. One such special event at the Homer Church of Christ is our children's Christmas program being presented on Sunday, December 9th at 6:00 p.m. December 24th we will have our special Christmas Eve candlelight communion service. Mark your calendars now and begin inviting your friends, relatives, neighbors, co-workers, etc. to attend all of these special services with you in December.

One such special event at the Homer Church of Christ is our children's Christmas program being presented on Sunday, December 9th at 6:00 p.m. December 24th we will have our special Christmas Eve candlelight communion service. Mark your calendars now and begin inviting your friends, relatives, neighbors, co-workers, etc. to attend all of these special services with you in December. ■



Homer Personalities



Gertrude Brown

By Chris Reel

Aside from several years when World War II took her away, Danville native Gertrude Bettag Brown, Army wife, bookkeeper, teacher, and mother, has been a resident of Homer since 1942.

She was born to John and Opal Bettag of Danville. Her father was a manager and buyer for Meis Brothers department store. Because of his job, he was able to obtain goods at cost, and so they weren't affected by the Depression as many were. Gertrude went to college at Illinois State University and earned a teaching degree, graduating in 1939. She met Art Brown there in 1937.

After Art graduated, they married secretly on May 30, 1941, so that Gertrude wouldn't lose her job. At that time, married women were not allowed to teach. Art was an agricultural education teacher in Woodlawn, Illinois, and because of that, he was given a deferment from the draft. Once he got the deferment, thinking that he would not be going into the service, Gertrude quit her job in Danville, announced their marriage, and moved to Woodlawn to be with Art. Art made \$1500 per year as a teacher. They paid \$25 per month rent for a four-room house and spent about \$20 per month on groceries. However, once he left Woodlawn to take a teaching job in Homer in 1942, he lost his deferment, and was drafted into the Army, entering the service on October 12, 1942. Ever since the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Gertrude had feared that Art would have to go in.

Art was sent to Fort Lewis, Washington, for

basic training, and was unable to go home for Christmas. Learning that Art had a college degree, the chaplain asked Art to tutor new recruits who had little education. The chaplain also asked Art if he knew of a wife who would like to come to the fort for Christmas. And so Gertrude was able to join her husband for the holidays. In order to stay, Gertrude needed a job. Art's major, Major Coats of Peoria, hired her to baby-sit for his little girl. He and Mrs. Coats felt badly for hiring a college graduate for a baby-sitting job, but Gertrude didn't mind at all. The major and his wife treated Art and Gertrude well, giving them a place to live in the lower level of their home, buying them steaks from the commissary, and giving Gertrude the freedom to go anywhere she wanted when the major and his wife were home.

When Art got orders to go to the Mojave Desert for more training, Gertrude made plans to go to southern California, where Art's sister lived. She stayed with the sister for two weeks while looking for a place to live. She found a job at the Federal Reserve Bank, where she was interviewed for the job by the vice-president. Finding out that she had a college degree, he immediately increased her salary, even before she started working. She began as a check sorter, progressed to the adding machine for government checks, where accuracy to the penny was required, and then trained as a bookkeeper. She had a hard time catching on to the bookkeeping machine, and almost quit until a different person took over the training. Her first train-

er had left out some important steps. Once Gertrude learned those steps, everything quickly fell into place.

Gertrude eventually got a room in a private home, sharing it with another military wife from the bank. Later, Gertrude and Lucille Ranta got a small apartment with a murphy bed. Gertrude had traveled to California by train, and once there, she didn't travel very far, since the trains were filled with military people. Everywhere she went, she had to go by streetcar or on foot. While he was stationed in the Mojave Desert, Art managed to get in to see Gertrude every weekend. But for civilians, travel was difficult.

Still, Gertrude and the other military wives had fun. They spent time in an exercise gym. They went to the beach on the weekends, to movies (other than war movies), and ate out on Sundays. The bank had a cafeteria, which provided a full meal at lunch for sixty cents. They did little cooking; other meals were light.

For Christmas, Gertrude and Lou invited the other military wives that they socialized with to a turkey dinner. In spite of rationing and a lack of cooking experience, they managed to put together a nice meal, with turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, gravy and a fruit salad.

Despite having little money, and in spite of rationing, they lived well. They had food stamps and shoe stamps. Gertrude was so tan, she didn't need hosiery anyway, and she wore her hair simply, straight and long. Hollywood was a good place to buy the clothing they needed. From the bank, they could get all the cigarettes they wanted. She and Lou tried smoking to keep from gaining weight. But she said, "It was a lost cause." So they quit trying. In all, other than the fact that their husbands were away at war, Gertrude and the other military wives had a good life in southern California.

Even though they lived on the west coast, they had no fear of enemy invasion. There was no air raid warning system, and there were no black curtains in the windows at night. They had no radio and didn't buy newspapers, so they weren't able to follow the war closely.

Once V-J Day occurred, Gertrude knew that Art and the other men would be coming home soon, so she and Lou quit their jobs, spent a month on the beach, and then returned home. Art arrived about two months after her return to Illinois.

During the war Mr. Meis had asked the Bettag family to provide a home for a German-Jew teenage boy whose father was in a concentration camp and

whose mother was being held in Germany. He was a well trained and bright young man, who later went into the intelligence department. When the father, a former millionaire, was released by the Allied troops, he recovered some of his money and came to this country, where he and his family lived for a time in Westville. In the years following the war, Gertrude bore two children, Pat in 1947, and Meg in 1948. She began teaching in 1958, and taught high school English and French until retiring in 1978. Gertrude says she really enjoyed teaching, even though she spent a lot of time outside of school making up lesson plans and grading papers.

In 1963, Art was in a train accident which almost took his life. He had been in the hospital for several weeks recovering when President Kennedy was assassinated. Gertrude stayed with him day and night while he was critical. In mid-December, in time for Christmas, Art came home on crutches from the hospital.

In 1970, Gertrude and Lorraine Mohr from Broadlands spent a summer in Angers, France, as part of a summer school program through the University of Iowa, to improve their ability in speaking French. Gertrude stayed with a French couple in their modern high-rise apartment, which was much like apartments in this country. However, she envied Lorraine, who stayed with a couple in their apartment in an old building. Even so, she kept in touch with her hosts for many years.

Gertrude's daughter, Pat, works in New York City's garment district as a sales representative for Ellen Figg, and keeps her mother supplied with fashionable clothing. Meg lives in Oak Park, Illinois, and works as an organizational skills coach to hospitals and churches and as a career counselor. Meg and her husband have three children, Meridian, Ariel and Nate.

Since the mid-1980's, Gertrude has served on the Board of Trustees of the Homer Library. She is one of the two longest serving members and is an avid user of the library. She still lives in the home that she and Art had built for themselves in the early 1950's. Her two cats, Lucky, a black cat, and Lovey, a black and gray tabby, keep her company and provide entertainment. She also enjoys playing bridge. ■

Thanks to Nondus Wakefield and the Homer Historical Society for the interview and transcript of the interview with Gertrude Brown.



Holiday Greetings From Homer Cooperative Preschool!

The holidays have begun for our preschoolers. They enjoyed trick-or-treating at some of our local businesses on Halloween. Currently, they are practicing for Thanksgiving and Christmas programs. Our director, Rashell Booth, has done a great job with field trips this fall. We toured some local businesses to learn how they worked and took a fun trip to Curtis Orchard. Fundraising efforts are underway as well. Look for our cookbooks soon. They would make great Christmas gifts! Thanks for supporting our kids. They are our future generation and we are trying to prepare for their needs.

In attempting to do just that, we are looking for some community support. We need some community members to volunteer to join us and plan for our future. We are trying to create a core group that will remain the same through the years while some preschool parents will fade in and out. This would be a perfect opportunity for local business owners/operators to support local business and bring more people into our community. If you would like more information, please contact Tricia at 896-3022. If you would like your preschooler to join our program, please call Tricia. Thank you and enjoy your holiday! Homer Cooperative Pre-School. ■

CHAMPAIGN COUNTY FOREST PRÉSERVE DISTRICT

Wintertime Wind Up

*Sponsored by Environmental Education
Association of Illinois*

Calling all classroom, nature center, and non-formal educators of East Central Illinois to a teacher resource workshop. Network with other teachers and discover valuable teaching resources available in the East Central Region. The function will be held at the Douglas-Hart Nature Center in Mattoon from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on December 12, 2001. Lunch is provided. You do not need to be a member of the Environmental Education Association of Illinois to attend – all are welcome! Sign up for this FREE program by December 5th by calling 217-235-4644. ■



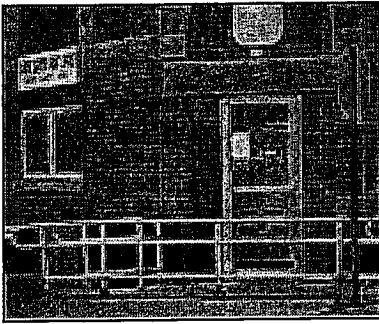
Homer Youth League

Officers for the Homer Youth League are as follows:

President	Dale Katterhenry
Vice President	Kevin Sanderson
Secretary	Stephanie Beamer
Treasurer	Cindy Pruitt

We are looking for members who would like to get involved with the youth in Homer. The more members we get the easier it is for everyone involved. We are looking into a throwing program for baseball and softball players. This program will teach the proper way to throw so that kids do not injure their arms. This program is through an outside source, but will be taught by the coaches. We are also doing the same type of training for hitting. We are in hopes of teaching the ball players these fundamentals so that it will improve their abilities throughout their ball-playing years. Even if you do not want to be on the board, please let us know if you can help in any way. Thank you, Dale Katterhenry (896-2647) ■





United States Post Office

By Naomi Roberts

For many years employees of the U.S. Post Office at Homer have served the community well. During the war, the Post Office served as a lifeline between mothers and sons, wives and husbands, and sisters and brothers, and to all those who served in the military overseas. The daily delivery of mail was not just a welcome sight, but for some an answered prayer letting them know a loved one was safe.

Timely delivery of the mail is and was essential. Rural carriers always adhered to the old adage, "Neither rain, nor snow, nor dark of night will keep the mail carrier from his appointed rounds." Not even in 1902, when Thomas G. Maxwell drove a team of horses over a 24 mile route, could the elements keep him from his duty. He waded through mud rutted roads, softened by spring thaws, and trudged through deep snow to ensure prompt delivery. When the roads became impassable Maxwell sometimes took refuge in the home of one of the people on his route. Maxwell cared about his job and took pride in his work, as did James P. McPherren.

In 1919, when the federal government decided Homer was too small a community to continue the carrier mail system, Postmaster McPherren wrote a letter to the Postal Department on behalf of the widows and old maids in the town. McPherren used the census of the time to show that out of the 1,086 citizens of Homer, 108 were widows and 95 old maids, and that these women would be adversely affected by the change in the system. So even though Homer was too small to continue the carrier mail system, it was allowed to do so in order to help the women.

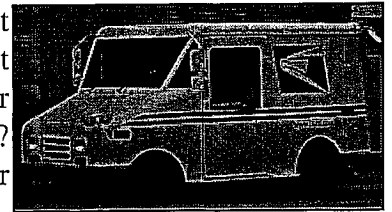
Through the years there have been many changes in the Homer Post Office, changes that have helped both the employees and the patrons of the Post Office. For example, in 1958, the use of spittoons was discontinued in order to promote employee morale with improved working conditions. (excerpt from Dear Edna) A few years after that, rural mailboxes had to meet official specifications for traffic safety. The mailbox had to be waterproof with a properly working signal flag, and it had to be installed on the right side of the road.

The last big change for the small community of Homer came in 1978 when residents had to begin using street addresses on their mail. Just the name of the person was no longer enough. Is it because people are more mobile today? Gone are the life long citizens of small, rural communities. People come and go, almost as fast as a swinging barnyard gate, blowing back and forth in the wind. Therefore, the street address is a must.

What changes are coming in the future for the Post Office employees and its patrons? Since the terrorist attacks in September, and the subsequent anthrax letters which killed postal workers and patrons, Post Offices across America have become, for the first time, a cause for concern. Already the Post Office has sent out a post card explaining, "What should make me suspect a piece of mail?" and "What should I do with a suspicious piece of mail?" Employees are now wearing latex gloves and face masks to protect themselves as they sort and deliver mail. The Postal department has also begun a nation wide bleaching of all Post Offices.

Yet even with the threat of death from Anthrax, our Postal employees in Homer and across this great land continue to serve this nation. This is beyond the elements of nature, and in some cases maybe beyond the call of duty. Granted the threat in Homer is not as severe as in some major cities, but the threat is still there for the employees. Although few clerks in the Homer Post Office and surrounding communities feel scared. They feel the carrier is in greater danger, because the carrier handles mail from everywhere. So, what can we do? It is time to give back. Next time you see the Postmaster, or one of the clerks, or one of the town or route carriers,

tell them how much you appreciate their continued effort to serve this nation. Tell them how much you appreciate receiving your daily mail. Give them a kind word, and let them know you care. ■



CHRISTMAS IN OUR TOWN

December 8, 2001

Lane of Christmas Trees

The women of the Presbyterian Church are sponsoring the Lane of Christmas Trees lining the hallway of the Homer Village Hall. The trees were put up the week of December 1 - 8 and will remain through the month of December. The name card is furnished by the sponsor. The tree decorations pertain to the business or organizations' interests.

The Peace Meal tree is decorated with white doves, which indicate cash donation amounts. The money raised will go toward annual costs incurred by his program.

The Presbyterian Church tree is decorated with white Chrismons and gold trims.

The Home Extension tree features handmade yo-yo angels made by members of the Homer unit of HEA. At the time of this writing, other trees are decorated by Driscoll Pharmacy, White's Ace Hardware, Uncle Boonie's Bait Shop, Renaissance Studios, IZP and the American Legion Auxiliary.

We hope this effort will bring a bit of beauty and joy to the Homer community this season.

Cookie and candy sale by the Presbyterian women will take place in the village hall on Saturday, beginning at 9:00 a.m. to fund the trees and other projects.

The Champaign County Department of Public Health prohibits the sale of custard (pumpkin and sweet potato) and cream pies. The women will take special orders for these and other pies, and will deliver them. For further information, call Betty Lacey at 896-2365.

Santa comes to town Come visit Santa at the Village Caboose from 9 a.m. - 11 a.m. Sponsored by the Homer Recreation Board.

Poinsettia Flower Sales - Historical Society Building, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Village Hall open from 9am until 4pm

Specials at these stores:

The Village Sampler

Homer County Market

Countryside Christmas Trees Farm (10 a.m. - dusk)

Hidden Acres Nursery

Wilson's Trees Farm (9 a.m. - 5 p.m.)



Village Season Sampler Coupon
redeem at 109 S. Main St. Homer on Dec. 8 only
1lb. bag of Superior Gourmet Coffee Beans
(regular price-\$13.93/sale price-\$6.00)
@ 1b bag Cappuccino
(regular price-\$7.95/sale price-\$6.00)

SEWER PROJECT

On Oct. 22 there was a town meeting to discuss the proposed new sewer system for the village. Those in attendance heard Andy Keiser (Sodemann and Associates, Village Engineer), present preliminary information on the type, cost, and time frame for the construction of a city wide sewer system. Also in attendance was Tony Grilo, Mayor of Thomasboro, Il. Thomasboro is in the middle of sewerage their town and Mayor Grilo was gracious enough to attend our meeting and share his experiences of a project of this type. There was a lengthy time of questions from the audience and current Board members got the opportunity to speak to the crowd.

There are currently many homes using substandard septic systems in our community. This poses a serious health threat to everyone but especially our village employees that are called to work on storm sewers that contain waste products. We are also dumping untreated waste into the Salt Fork River. It is because of these conditions, and the need to have a proper waste system in town to promote commercial and residential growth, that the board is behind this project.

The consensus of Village Board members is that the time has come to move ahead with this project. The village is not being forced by the State EPA to do this project. It is the Board's desire to plan for the Village's future growth that is driving this project.

The cost for sewerage the town is going to be very high. As I said in the News Gazette article, the 1977 decision not to proceed with this project was a missed opportunity. The task now falls to us with its higher cost and less State and Federal assistance.

Listed below are the cost projections and revenue sources based upon the Thomasboro project which represents current pricing.

Summary of Total Project Cost

Total Project Cost	\$5,612,093
Funding	
Village cash	\$35,000
CDAP Grant	\$400,000
Legislative Grant	\$250,000
Farmer's Home Admin. Grant	\$1,000,000
Farmer's Home Admin. Loan	\$3,927,093
Total	\$5,612,093

Debt Service	
Annual Principal and Interest	\$221,100
Annual Operating Expenses	\$322,000

The user fees for each household for the sewer will be based upon two separate costs. The first cost, the monthly minimum cost, represents debt service, or the amount of money the Village must raise every year to pay back the 4 million dollars borrowed from Farmers Home Administration. As you can see from the table that amount is \$221,100 per year or \$18,425 per month. Divide this number by the number of users, or 550 households, and we get a figure of \$33.50 per month per household as a minimum fee. If you use below the minimum of 1,000 gallons of water per month, your combined cost for sewer and water would be \$33.50 plus \$7.00 or \$40.50. This represents about 110 of our current 550 water customers.

The second component of the user fee is the per gallon rate which is used to pay for the operation and maintenance of the plant. Again from the table you can see that we will need to generate \$322,000 per year.

This works out to about \$3.16 per 1,000 gallons of water. These two components represents the amount each home will pay for sewer service.

The cost for debt service can be lowered by borrowing less money. To do this the Board is actively seeking grant money from both State and Federal sources. We are presenting these figures assuming no other grants are available and are presenting the worst case scenario.

Listed below are some sewer rates so you can see how these rates compare to surrounding communities.

Water and Sewer Rates for Selected Communities

City / Village (Population)	Monthly Water Charge	Monthly Sewer Charge	Combined Monthly Charge	Rank Out of 74
Arcola (2652)	\$46.53	\$27.74	\$74.27	1
Atwood (1290)	\$18.20	\$14.80	\$33.00	44
Christman (1318)	\$20.00	\$24.50	\$44.50	22
Fisher (1647)	\$15.05	\$15.05	\$30.10	48
Gifford (815)	\$20.40	\$26.90	\$47.30	19
Lovington (1222)	\$54.00	\$17.50	\$71.50	2
Mahomet (4877)	\$15.82	\$22.57	\$38.39	35
Oakland (996)	\$30.40	\$19.50	\$49.90	16
Ogden (743)	\$9.47	\$9.46	\$18.93	53
St. Joseph (2912)	\$22.58	\$14.00	\$36.58	38
Tolono (2700)	\$17.50	\$24.80	\$42.30	26
Mean	\$24.27	\$20.17	\$44.08	
Median	\$23.43	\$19.50	\$42.27	
Homer (550 users)	\$24.88	\$52.62	\$77.50	1
Homer (610 users)	\$21.30	\$48.08	\$69.38	4

Table compares water and sewer charges based on water usage of 7,000 gallons per month

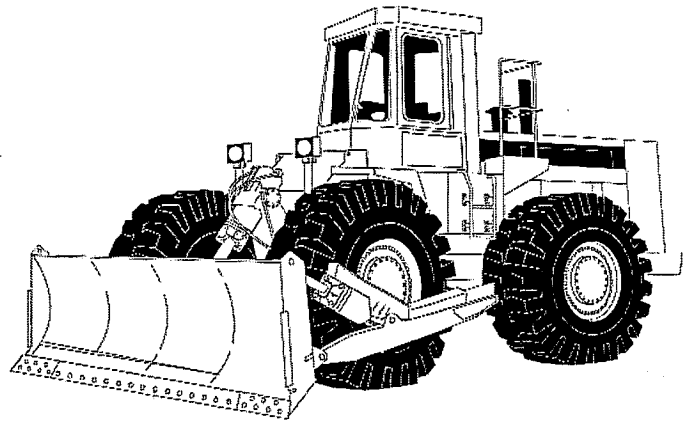
These make the \$26.00 per month average bill of 1977 look very attractive. That, however, is water under the bridge. One very important thing to remember is that these numbers are average bills based on 7,000 gallons of water usage. The minimum billing will be \$33.50 per month.

Time line for the project:

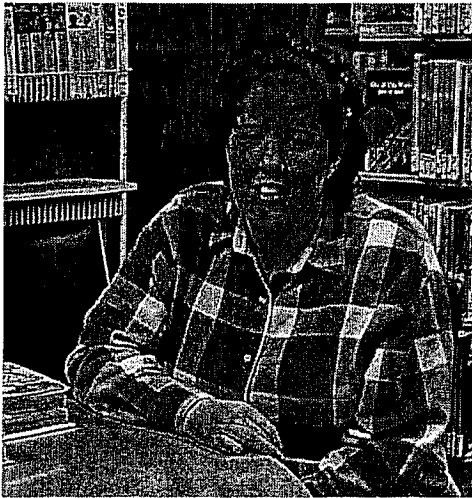
Feb. 2002	Second Town Meeting on Sewer Project (This will be another informational meeting)
March 19, 2002	Advisory Referendum on Ballot
April 1, 2002	Board Vote on Sewer Project (The Village Board will review the referendum information and make a decision on whether to continue with the project)
July 2002	(if approved by Board) Project Let for Bid
Fall 2002	Begin construction of Sewer System
Summer 2003	Conclude construction Project
Fall of 2003	First Flush!

As you can see this is going to be a very costly and disruptive project for the community. However, I feel very strongly that this move is a must if we as a Village are ever going to move ahead and grow into a better place to live and raise our families. The school system needs more students in its seats (and has the room.) The stores we still have need more customers through the doors, and we all need some property tax relief that will only come from expanding the tax base.

I recently talked to a residential developer about starting a new subdivision. His first question was, 'Does the village have city sewer?' He said it is a must for a successful new subdivision. I also know of commercial projects that are 'on hold' until the question is decided. When the project was taken off the table in 1977, the village missed a great opportunity to position itself for the future. Let's not let another opportunity pass us by. Let's decide to move ahead with what is admittedly a tough decision, and lay the ground work for our future. ■



HOMER LIBRARY NEWS



Please welcome Cheryl Hire!

She is our new library assistant. She replaces Ariel Compton, who resigned because of school. Ariel has been a capable assistant and we will miss her. Cheryl was chosen from among several very good candidates.

Chris' Quick Pick: Sanctuary by Beverly and David Lewis. Beverly Lewis writes books about the Pennsylvania Amish. This one, co-written by her husband, David, takes her main character to one of those families, as she seeks sanctuary. Her husband back in Connecticut is left wondering who he really married. She, on the other hand, learns of his duplicity. Who are they really, and what side are they one? Twists in the plot keep the reader guessing.

R. J. Reynolds has sent us a packet of information to help parents help their children make the right choices. This packet includes a video, Right Decisions, Right Now, and three brochures. These items may be checked out. Also available are an audiotape and a CD of the WDWS/WHMS program for teens, Straight Talk. We have the first program, "September 11 Aftermath." The audiotape and CD may be checked out.

Next year, we will have the Wall Street Journal available for our patrons. ■



Over the last few months, our country has faced extreme challenges. When the threat of terrorism was at its highest, most of us took comfort in the fact that Homer, Illinois was not a likely target of terrorism. Yet, we sympathized with our fellow Americans whose communities were devastated. As a pastor, I was asked many hard questions such as, "Are these events a sign of God's anger over the evil in America?" "Are these events a sign of prophecy being fulfilled and Christ's soon return?"

Several religious leaders believed the attacks were a result of God's anger against abortion clinics, porn shops and other evils in our land. As a pastor for over 20 years, I understand God hates evil. "The LORD examines the righteous, but the wicked and those who love violence his soul hates" (Psalm 11:5). I don't pretend to understand God completely, however, the events of 9/11 were the acts of evil. Where was God when it all happened? The same place He was when His Son was killed - on the throne.

The neat thing about God is that even though He's King of Kings and Lord of Lords, He still cares for each of us. Even though He's on the throne, He's also in the hearts of all who believe and trust in Him as their personal Lord and Savior.

Maybe you asked this question when it happened. "Why do bad things happen to good people?" The reason that question is hard for us is because we use our own definition of good and evil. The truth of the matter is, compared to God, none of us are good. "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). As we learn to live for Jesus, we become more like Christ. Yet, as we live for Christ we still must endure the adversity of this life on earth. We may or may not be delivered by God from every bad thing that comes along.

I was reading from Hebrews, chapter eleven, about the faith of the great men and women who gave their lives for Christ. Around verse 33, the writer of Hebrews gives up giving us names, but gives us specific deeds the people accomplished through faith. They shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, escaped the edge of the sword, routed foreign armies, they were powerful in battle, and women received back their dead. Others were tortured but refused to be released. Others faced jeers and floggings, while others were chained and put in prison. They were stoned, sawed in two, put to death by the sword... "These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised. God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect" (Hebrews 11:39-40).

These great men and women of faith, like us today, are now made perfect through the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ. In other words, even though they had faith, many of them did not receive any instant victory over their earthly circumstances, not until death.

They were good people who had to face bad things. Yet, for them as well as for us, Christ will be with us. Christ is with us!

This month's publication of the Pastor's Page is by Pastor David Burns of the Homer Church of Christ



A B B E Y F I E L D H O U S E S

"Abbeyfield has always seen independence as the foundation of good care and support for older people. By providing a level of support to meet the needs of each individual resident, Abbeyfield can help older people maintain their quality of life." Abbeyfield Supporter Newsletter, Spring, 1998

Until recently in the United States, senior citizens who were tired of living alone and cooking for one had few options open to them. They could stay in a house that was getting to be too big for them to manage or move to a small duplex or apartment where they had less space, but they were still alone. The only other alternative was to move away from their hometown to an Assisted Living complex where the emphasis was on healthcare and dependence rather than health and independence. If the senior became ill or frail, the only choice was a nursing home.

Since mid-summer, discussions have been taking place concerning developing an Abbeyfield House in Homer. Abbeyfield Houses are built through community support to provide affordable housing within a social model for middle-income seniors. Since 1959, over 1000 Abbeyfield Houses have been built in communities like Homer in 11 countries. A support network called Abbeyfield International, based in Great Britain, provides advice and encouragement to communities interested in starting an Abbeyfield House.

The primary function of an Abbeyfield House is to provide companionship for lonely older persons by providing a supportive family type atmosphere. Through the efforts of a corps of volunteers in each community and private fundraising, Abbeyfield houses are able to maintain a reasonably priced housing option for seniors.

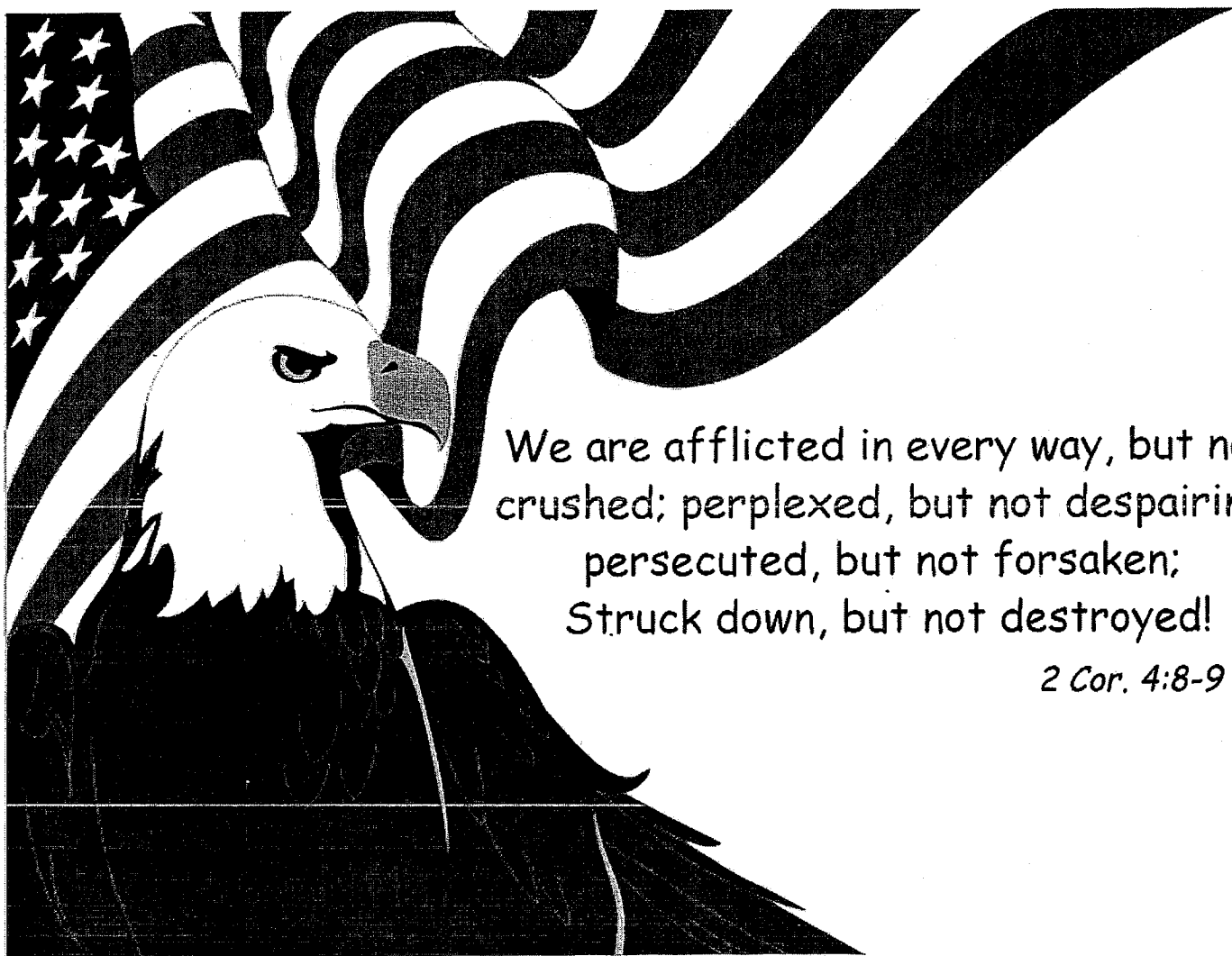
The traditional Abbeyfield House provides a home to 6 to 12 elderly people and a live-in manager or housekeeper. Abbeyfield Houses have individual private spaces (apartments) for each senior resident, large shared areas including a dining room, and at least one lounge area. The private apartments of the residents are furnished with their own belongings and furniture. The housekeeper makes sure there are two hot meals a day, cleans the shared areas of the house, and generally offers companionship and support to the residents. Easily accessible emergency alarm systems throughout the building provide the security that the housekeeper can be easily summoned in the case of a fall or sudden illness. The housekeeper is not a healthcare provider.

If the senior resident is not able to perform some daily tasks such as laundry and cleaning their private space, these tasks can be contracted to staff other than the housekeeper off a menu of available services. Health care needs of the senior residents are contracted to local home health care agencies. These needs include hygiene needs, supervision of medications, and physical therapy. The goal of the menu of services is to allow the senior resident to maintain as much independence as possible for as long as possible.

Many Assisted Living complexes have sprung up in this area in the last 5 years. All of the Assisted Living complexes are in the larger communities of Champaign-Urbana, Danville and Rantoul, usually located on the very outside edges of these towns. An Abbeyfield House, by definition, is located in a neighborhood of a small hometown; the ideal location is within easy walking distance to the downtown area. Many elderly do not want to leave their hometowns, where they have always lived near family and friends, their church and

their familiar merchants. A small Abbeyfield house gives them this opportunity to "stay home". Older people still have an important role to play in the lives of their families, friends, and communities. Abbeyfield Houses give back to the community by allowing the elderly to maintain a presence in their hometown where they have lived all their lives, rather than sending them away to a larger community.

Abbeyfield Houses are not built by large developers who have no interest in the community of Homer. Enthusiastic volunteers in Homer who are willing to donate time to locate funding and make the project happen build Abbeyfield Houses. The more money raised up front through donations and grants, the smaller the mortgage, the lower the monthly rent for the Abbeyfield House resident. Homer already has a core group of volunteers forming the Abbeyfield Society of Homer. The Abbeyfield House project is just getting started. If you have any ideas or suggestions contact any member of the Village Board. There is a planning and informational meeting planned for 7:00 pm on Tuesday, January 15, 2002 at the Town Hall. See you there. ■



We are afflicted in every way, but not
crushed; perplexed, but not despairing;
persecuted, but not forsaken;
Struck down, but not destroyed!

2 Cor. 4:8-9

God Bless America
