

HOMER



News & Views

A PUBLICATION OF THE HOMER COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BOARD

The Homer Community Development Board

*... Addressing
necessities and
feasibilities for
enhancing the
"quality of life"
in Homer.*

The Homer Community Development Board was established in May, 1996 by the Homer Village Board. Development Board members were selected on the basis of having a keen interest in the future of Homer, their background and ability to contribute to the board's agendas and activities, and their willingness to serve. Development Board members serve strictly in a volunteer capacity and without pay.

Development Board Chair Stan Cato summed up the board's primary mission when he said, "Simply put, we're here to find ways to enhance the quality of life for citizens of all ages within the community of Homer."

The Homer Community Development Board will be responsible and accountable to the Village Board in all aspects of its activities but is empowered to function independently in some areas. For example, if the board finds a consensus within the community that extension of the village limits is desirable to accommodate increased housing and population, it will report its findings to the Village Board with specific recommendations (ways and means). On the other hand, activities beneficial to the community that can be privately funded will simply be implemented.

While the Development Board's agenda is yet to be formalized, items and topics currently on the table include:

- Investigating the need and support for, and the funding of, a Homer Community Center which would house the village government. If such a center were to be developed, should it accommodate indoor basketball, volleyball, receptions and other private meetings, and two much-needed ball diamonds.
- Conducting a feasibility study for annexation of land adjacent to the village for residential and business growth.
- Investigating ways to improve the business climate within the community so as to strengthen the local economy and benefit Heritage School District through increased local tax revenues.
- Investigating the feasibility of, and funding sources for, renovation of the opera house located on the second floor of the city building.
- Investigating sources for funding private restorations of Homer's older buildings.
- Funding and placing benches along Main Street in the business district. (This project is proceeding through private funding.)
- Establishment of ongoing activities to welcome new residents to the community. (This also has already been implemented and is being handled by the Homer Homemakers Extension Unit.)
- Establishing a community communications newsletter. (See page 6.)
- Creating and printing informative brochures to be sent to realtors and others outside the community. ■

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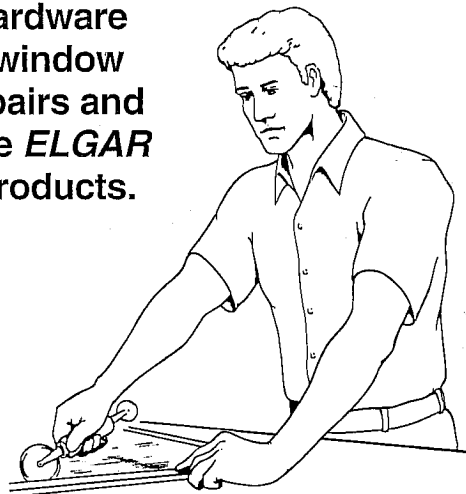
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KIM MATTHIS
SECRETARY/TREASURER

SPENCER ELY

DAVID LUCAS

DAVID MCCOY

TERRY WADLEY

JIM LITTLE
VILLAGE BOARD LIAISON

TREES, TOWNS

AND OTHER LIVING THINGS

BY TERRY WADLEY

I was either three or four years old at the time elderly Elmer, our next door neighbor chopped down a giant of a tree in his backyard. I helped. I always helped Elmer do everything because he was retired with plenty of time on his hands and his grand kids lived in some far away place so he adopted me. Or maybe I adopted him, but who cares? This story has more to do with his tree than our relationship. Because it was on that day my life-long love affair with trees began.

I said he chopped it down, but actually he cut it down. I remember the day being hot and when he had finally sawed through the trunk, his wife brought us glasses of cold lemonade and Elmer and I sat on the freshly cut trunk.

"Look at these rings," he exclaimed. "A tree produces one of these growth rings each year of its life." And then he began counting the rings. We could only discern sixty-three rings but he said there had to be seventy-two because his father had planted the tree the year he was born. I "helped" Elmer for days sawing logs and cleaning up. As we worked, he apparently saw my growing interest in trees and it seems as though he talked endlessly about them. "Yep, when they stop growing, they die," he said.

I was twelve when I encountered Mr. Hungerford, my sixth grade teacher. Mr. Hungerford was educated to teach botany, but was temporarily sidetracked while his wife finished her degree. So there he was trying to teach english and math, but all I remember getting out of the class was more information about trees and other plants. He confirmed what Elmer had told me, "When a tree ceases to grow, it dies."

I was twenty when I was listening to a college marketing lecture and heard the professor say, "When businesses and industries can no longer grow, they die." He then cited far more examples than I needed to confirm his statement.

I have lived many years considering the "grow or die" concept. I've related it to many things including people's minds. I am convinced the grow or die phenomenon is a force to be reckoned with on many fronts.

Does the "grow or die" relate to communities? I suspect it does. While some have died when growth stopped, most towns cling to life but offer their residents increasingly less. People, trees, and businesses must all be constantly cared for and their health nurtured if they are to remain well. Why would communities be any different? I hope you will join with the Community Development Board and consider the state of our community's health. Regardless of how you see it, could Homer ever be so good that we wouldn't want it to be better? ■

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From the Archives

PRESENTED BY THE HOMER HISTORICAL SOCIETY
COORDINATED BY NONDUS WAKEFIELD AND MOLLY SHOAF

It has often been said that to be able to plan our futures, we must know from where we've come. With this in mind, we are pleased to present the following excerpts from a paper titled: "HISTORY OF HOMER" — Written for the Tuesday Club by a Homer lady, June 10, 1909.

We hope you can appreciate this treasure as much as we do — particularly the sentiments in the last paragraph. Enjoy!

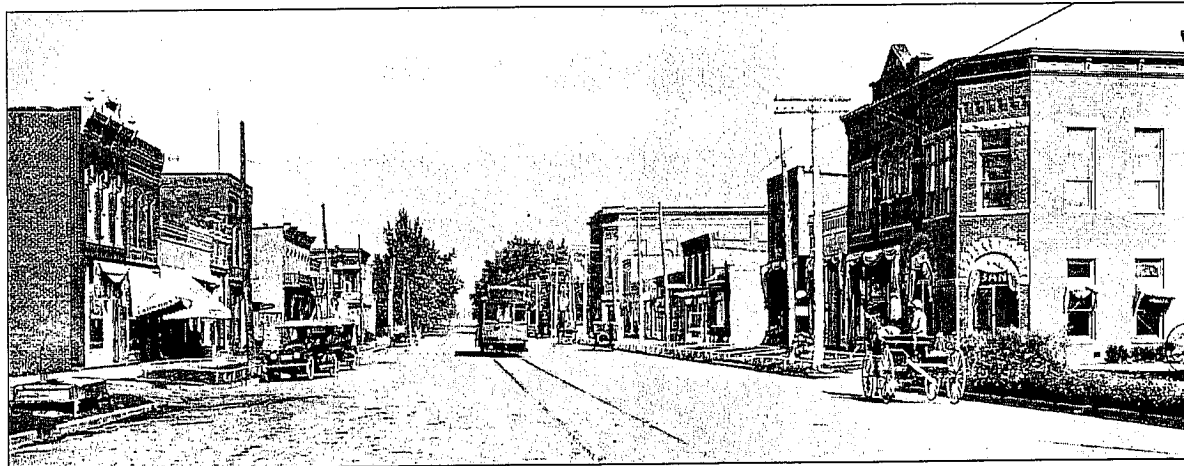
June 10, 1909

“Homer's birthplace was one and one-half miles north of its present site on the banks of the Salt Fork, a small stream emptying into the Vermilion River near Danville. This stream derived its name from the salt wells that were in use near its mouth at that time. Homer's birth was in 1832. Its first resident was Moses Thomas, grandfather of the present Moses Thomas. He settled there and started a mill on account of its water facilities. In those days all mills were run by water power, steam power not being known. A few friends and relatives soon came and formed a small town. Towns were mostly built near the timber for convenience of building material and shelter. The

mode of travel was by stage running from town to town and carrying the mail and passengers. The hack or stage ran from Danville to Urbana by way of Catlin (then called Butler's Point) to Homer and on to Old St. Joe and Urbana, the county seat. The old stage route is plainly traced in the pasture south of the present road.

Homer was moved to its present location in 1855 on account of the building of the Wabash railroad, making it more accessible. The road was then known as the Great Western. The house moving was done when the snow was on the ground in the month of March. Sleds constructed of long logs were used in the moving. Nothing was removed from the house, not even the family. They were brought and set down on the ground as the owners saw fit, regardless of foundations, which were not in use at that time. All houses were built on heavy pillars so strong they could stand the heavy prairie winds. The land was owned by Judge Thomas, father of Moses Thomas, and Coffeen and Groendike, his partners.

There were about 150 inhabitants in Old Homer when it was removed. The land here was raw prairie and was bought in 40-acre farms at \$1.50 an acre or \$50 per 40 acres.



“Business District” of Homer, IL circa 1920 looking north on Main Street in the days when the horse and buggy, (right,) the inter-urban electric train, (center) and the early motor cars (left) were the choices of transportation. The passenger train stopped just west of where this camera stood. The building in the foreground, right, then a bank, houses our Post Office today.

When I came to Homer in 1865 the town was almost a mud hole. The walks were two boards running lengthwise about two feet apart on cross ties and were covered with water in many places when it rained. There was no such thing as tiling the ground. It took from four to six horses to take a load anywhere in bad weather. It was common to see a load in mud up to the wagon hubs.

When I came to Illinois in 1859 it was called a western state. There was but two houses between Homer and the Heppe farm, five miles south, then owned by my father. It was nothing to see deer leaping over the high grass and to see the long-legged stork bird walking through the high grass, hear the wolf at night, etc. Farming was done by oxen, the sod being too heavy for horses to turn. Snakes were too numerous to mention. You can see this has been a progressive half cen-

tury for our little town and country. There isn't a more beautiful or accessible town along the Wabash railway line than Homer, with its many shade trees, beautiful lawns, wide streets, fine concrete walks, electric lights, good telephone system, three good churches, a good school, fine park, only twenty miles from the county-seat, and the state university where, on account of electric line advantages, we can educate our children and have them with us every week. Yes, times change and we all change with the times, but really what place could you name where you would rather live than in your pretty home town of Homer?

Mrs. M. C. Thomas

”

About the HOMER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Homer Historical Society is a not-for-profit organization started in 1977 as a "lasting project" of the 1976 Homer Bi-Centennial Committee. The purpose of the society is to establish and maintain a museum and to collect and preserve any available historical material connected with the history of Homer and the surrounding area.

Four members of the Bi-Centennial committee were appointed by the chairman to look into whether there was enough interest in the community to make an historical society a success. Preliminary meetings were held in a private home to decide how to begin. It was decided to place booths on two street corners during Krazy Daze of 1977. People who were in favor of an historical society were asked to sign a sheet. From those names and with public notice, the official meeting was held and a committee was formed to establish by-laws and write a constitution. The Homer Historical Society became a reality on March 10, 1977.



The Homer Historical Society, 105 North Main Street, as it appeared in 1977.

The Society is governed by a board of nine elected members. It meets the first Tuesday of each month except August and January with all meetings having interesting and informative programs and open to the public. Membership currently numbers around 60 members and is open to anyone interested in preserving the history of the Homer area.

A "School Connection" committee helps bring historical information to local classrooms as well as to Homer Scout troops.

The Homer Historical Society Museum (pictured bottom left) opened in 1978 and is housed in the historic old township building which is owned by the Village of Homer and leased to the Society. The archives and exhibits are maintained by volunteer members

of the organization. The museum is open to the public on Memorial Day, July Fourth, as well as the third Saturday in September in connection with the Krazy Daze celebration. It is also open one afternoon per week in the summer when the archive committee is working and by appointment. ■

Homer News & Views

The establishment of *Homer News & Views* has been unanimously endorsed by members of the Homer Community Development Board. It is envisioned that this newsletter will:

- Inform citizens of Homer in a timely manner about activities and decisions of the Village Board and the Community Development Board.
- Provide a forum for citizens' views regarding Homer to be aired by inviting "Letters to the Editor."
- Help all citizens stay abreast of community — organization, youth, church and school — activities by publishing a calendar of events for the month.
- Inform residents about Homer area history through contributions by the Homer Historical Society.
- And much more. Remember, this will be a distinctively *HOMER* publication. It just might get people thinking more about their "hometown," talking to each other, and unite the community again.

Let's make News & Views a regular feature in Homer starting in August!

You are holding a prototype of *Homer News & Views* which presents the newsletter's format. This issue is lacking in terms of content because systems were simply not in place to collect much of the intended future content.

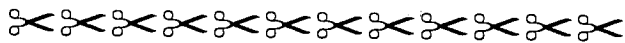
The success of this newsletter will require interest, support and commitment from all factions within the community — residents, organizations, churches and businesses alike:

1. **Residents** should express their views on this newsletter by contacting any Development Board member listed on Page 3. Also we need volunteers. Anyone within the community that feels they could contribute to the production to this publication should contact Candis or Terry Wadley. Anyone with thoughts about the direction of either the newsletter or the Development Board's agendas should contact a board member
2. **Organizations, churches and schools** should select a responsible individual to report their organization's news and calendars. Because production of the newsletter is provided on a part-time basis by volunteers, deadlines stated below will be strictly adhered to.
3. **Businesses** within the community should be encouraged to commit their financial support. While volunteerism may be alive and well in Homer to create each issue, there are certain out-of-pocket costs related to a publication such as this that must be paid. This publication must be self-sustaining.

Please bear in mind the following when submitting information for publication. This newsletter is not intended to be a newspaper. All news items and "Letters to the Editor" should be Homer-specific. **Deadline for all content is the 12th of the month preceeding publication date.** Deadline for August will be *July 12, 1996*. Send your information to:

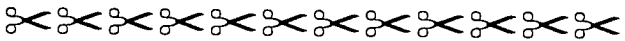
Homer Community Development Board
c/o Terry Wadley, Editor
1650 Catlin-Homer Road
Homer, Illinois 61849

Many thanks to Terry Wadley, Candis Kelly-Wadley and Jim Alred for the preparation and printing of this issue, and to Printec Press in Champaign for the use of their equipment and facilities. ■



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FOCUS ON ORGANIZATIONS

Homemakers . . . Enhancing Life in Homer

Homer Homemakers Extension Unit is one of 29 Home Extension Units which together form Champaign County Homemakers Extension. Homemakers Extension is an organization geared to helping women improve homemaking skills with the latest educational information. As an extension of the University of Illinois, homemaker lessons are prepared by a staff at the U of I, and presented by members of each unit at their monthly meetings.

Homemaker Aim: TO HAVE THE HOME — Economically Sound
 • Mechanically Convenient • Physically Healthful • Morally Wholesome
 • Mentally Stimulating • Artistically Satisfying • Socially Responsible
 • Spiritually Inspiring • Founded upon Mutual Affection and Respect.

Homer Unit meets on the third Friday of each month, except August, in members' homes. Officers are:

Mary Ann Rohl & Virginia Baird	Co-Chairs
Pat Varvel	1st Vice Chair
Teresa Wilson	2nd Vice Chair
Norma Vineyard	Secretary
Lois Hockersmith	Treasurer
Norma Diel	Community Outreach
Elvira Wakefield	International
Betty Lacey	Family Living
Ila Patel	Young Family Issues
Linda Krukewitt	Public Relations
Shirley Miller	Cultural Enrichment

Lessons being presented this year are: Exercise for Everyone; Understanding Local Property Tax; Vegetable and Plant Centered Meals; Study of Egypt — Message from Cairo; Nutrition and Menopause; Care for the Caregiver; Gardening with Annuals; Many Faces of Mental Health; The Eyes Have It — Learning Channels.

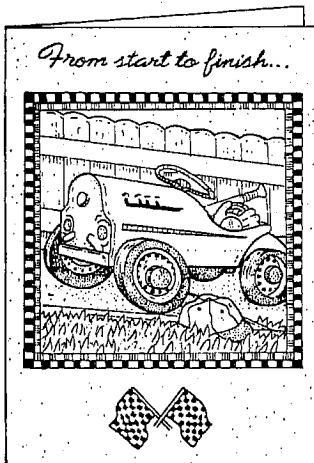
In addition to lessons during the year, members enjoy having a craft day, studying about another country, then having a luncheon, serving foods of that country — this year was Egypt. Other activities may include trips to shopping or tourist areas, or a tour of Kraft Foods. A summer picnic is always planned, this year at Walnut Point, Oakland.

Homer Homemakers enjoy community activities and strive toward community betterment. Each Fourth of July, members place 60 flags along Main Street, and sponsor a "Pie by the Slice" sale at the celebration at the Village Park. Proceeds go toward the cost of planting flowers in barrels in the business district, in May, and also planting flowers at the north 49 "Welcome to Homer" sign, which the unit purchased several years ago. During the summer the members maintain these two areas. The Unit also sponsored a Mini-Fair at Krazy Daze last fall. In addition, members are responsible for visiting and welcoming newcomers to our community on behalf of the Homer Community Development Board's Welcome Wagon.

The Homer Homemakers Unit is very busy and active and would welcome new members at any time (minimum 18 years old). Just contact any member to join.

Beyond our local unit, on a county level, members have access to Homemaker Camps, bus trips, county educational meetings, and many other activities. Dues are \$10.00 per year. ■

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