

Country Neighbor

Agriculture and Rural Living Quarterly



A special gift, Page 8

Twin sisters from Webster County made a return visit to the High Prairie farm they grew up on — now an event venue — to celebrate their 80th birthdays.



Preserving the farm, Page 3

Estes Farms in Nixa continues in its phases of historical renovation, with Cassidy Flower Co. part of the new additions.



No place like home, Page 4

Five generations of the Jenkins family have called their Polk farm home.



4-H, fairs and farming, Page 10

Longtime public servant Bill Bob Kallenbach discusses his memories of helping spur agricultural interest in Polk County.



Seed swap, Page 11

Green thumbs and aspiring gardeners gathered at the Cedar County Library to exchange seed packets and tips of the trade.

Also featured in this issue: Wonders of Wildlife has new locally named sea turtle rescues, and columns by Jim Hamilton and Slim Randles.

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Christian County Headliner News and The Marshfield Mail

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JIM HAMILTON • OZARKS RFD

He never let a thistle live

My dad never let a thistle live. No matter the kind — Canadian, Scotch, bull or that noxious and notorious musk thistle — Dad never walked past one without dispatching it.

I was reminded of Dad's casual diligence in eliminating the pests when I came across a musk thistle rosette while mowing my yard last weekend. Without hesitation, I shut down my push mower, dug my well-used Old Timer out of my pocket, stooped down and cut that bandit out as deep as my knife blade would allow — one more thistle that won't go to seed.

Later the same day I also came across a small garter snake. Dad was prone to eliminate snakes as quickly as he did thistles. I did not inherit that instinct. Actually, I go out of my way to avoid mowing over a harmless snake. It seems we don't have as many snakes here as we used to, and that says something about a decline in optimum prairie habitat.

Thistles are a different matter. I know some native thistles are good for birds and insects, but too many of any kind are unwelcome guests in pastures.

Foremost among that unwelcome company is that Eurasian invader, the musk thistle. I recall too well the vigorous campaign to eradicate them beginning in the latter decades of the 20th century. Biological (wasps), mechanical (cutting) and chemical (2,4-D, etc.) methods have all been employed with varied success.

As a farm journalist I visited with several farmers who had seen pastures overtaken by virtually impenetrable stands of the spiny pests with purple seed heads nodding in the summer breeze. Through diligent efforts, many of those pastures are free of the noxious pest, but it's still with us — rife along many county roads, in abandoned pastures and in disturbed soil, inviting the airborne seeds to take root.

My neighbors, like many landowners, have waged unceasing war on the thistle, steadily gaining ground through spot spraying of the rosettes. I know it's been a tedious task, but good results are evident.



Looking across the fence I see no rosettes as of yet, and none along the roadside, either. But, it's early.

I've been lucky with my 5 acres. A couple of years ago, I espied some purple blossoms and immediately cut and burned both the stalks and seed heads. Repeating that effort every time I saw another blossom, I was able to avoid a serious infestation. I've not had a musk thistle since, but with spots of drought-stressed pasture, I'll not drop my guard. Trouble could blow in unseen.

Dad had only 39 acres to police, and in later years didn't walk over them as much. We've since sold the farm, so I've no idea what the thistle status is today. In lieu of thistles, Dad let one thorny locust grow, which accomplished much the same as thistles on the windward side of that single; but, that's a different story, and not my worry now.

With warmer weather the concern now is thistles. Recalling Dad's diligence, I'm confident the best way to stop them is as Mayberry's Barney Fife preached: "Nip 'em in the bud," or in this case, the roots.

For research-based information on thistle control, a visit to University of Missouri Extension, either online or at a local center, is a better bet than taking my advice.

I've forgotten much of what I used to know about the matter, but I guarantee MU agronomists have not. Happy sticker hunting.

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SLIM RANGLES • HOME COUNTRY

Christmas-in-spring

Spring mornings are a lot like Christmas. Each day we get up and go out into the yard, or walk along the creek or visit the horses in the pasture. And each day, each morning, we find something new the sun has brought us.

Pinfeather leaves of an unbelievable green now start showing on cottonwoods that have stood like stark ghostly frames all through the cold winter. Hopeful blades of grass peek through clumps of brown left over from last summer's verdant pasture. Everywhere we look there is something new and different.

A lot of this Christmas-in-spring is kept just among us, because we might be accused of being ... well ... poetic if we told people why we were really carrying that coffee cup out into the yard. So we say lame things like "I think I'll get some of that fresh air this morning." What we really mean, of course, is "I want to see if Richardson's bay mare has had that foal yet."

Some of us have worked very hard last fall and winter to prepare for this spring. By grafting. OK, we have a Granny Smith apple tree. Let's see if we can't get a branch of Rome Beauties or Jonagolds to grow on it, too. And we understand completely that where we live no olive tree can survive the winter. That isn't supposed to stop us from trying, is it?

Nature pitches us a boatload of challenges each day that we're alive. This plant needs more water than



falls naturally here. That tree can't take the temperatures we get. This little tree needs soil with more organic matter in it.

And those challenges are the stuff winter dreams are made of. We do the best we can to cure the lack, the freeze, the drought, and then we wait for April. We wait impatiently until we can come out of the house some morning and check the grafts on the apple tree and see tiny green leaves coming on the grafted branch. We search the bare ground where we planted that new kind of seed that won't grow here — to see if it'll grow here.

It is a continuing feast of green, a triumph of anticipation. An April morning can make us want to sing.

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Country Neighbor

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Estes Farms

in Nixa continues phases of historical renovation



Cassidy Station at Estes Farms is at 5176 N. Fremont Road, Nixa.

By Leah Greenwood
leah@ccheadliner.com

Cassidy Station at Estes Farms in Nixa opened Cassidy Flower Co. on Friday, Feb. 10, just in time for Valentine's Day. The new flower shop features ready-to-go vase arrangements, a unique vase selection, wrapped bouquets and individual stems, so customers can create their own designs.

"We want to keep it really timeless and classic, but not gaudy," said Lauren Lindsay, manager and lead designer for Cassidy Flower Co. "We're going for more of a countryside cottage garden, with soft but rich colors. We're being really selective about the flowers that we use — we're going to buy as much as we can from local farmers."

Lindsay was previously a florist at Fleur Floral Studio in Springfield. She has a background in management and marketing and a notable portfolio full of creative designs.

Cassidy Flower Co. also offers a full-service floral menu, designing daily arrangements for deliveries, special events, weddings and more. Various workshops are also available.

"Every aspect of this project has been a result of attention to detail and extreme intentionality," Lindsay said. "I am honored to continue that legacy of intentionality through the designs and environment I create at Cassidy Flower Co."

Cassidy Station at Estes Farms is a historical renovation project designed to keep a meaningful piece of history alive by sharing it with the community. In 2022, to honor the 150-year anniversary of Estes Farms, Kyle



Cassidy Station at Estes Farms is a renovation project meant to preserve and share history with the community of Christian County.

Estes, along with his wife, Hollie, began the restoration. The land has been in the Estes family since 1872,

when the family moved to Cassidy 11 years before the railroad was built.

"The goal is, literally, to preserve the farm," Kyle said. "The (phases of Cassidy Station) are avenues to help that goal. I feel like we've done a good job around here repurposing just about everything. I'm trying to save everything I can; I'm very sentimental. It's not just my history; it's the community's history, too."

Cassidy Mercantile, which opened in December 2022, was phase one of the project. The store features a high-quality, curated collection of housewares, home decor, unique gifts, skin care, drink mixes, jams and jellies and other goods.

"We try to make sure (everything) is unique; that you can't just get it at any store," Lindsay said. "We also want to make sure it's something that adds value to somebody's life, so it's not really a lot of trinkets, it's a lot of useful stuff."



Hollie and Kyle Estes

Other phases will open throughout this year, including an Airbnb, event spaces and meat shop.

"(Our goal) is to share it all with the

community and keep the history alive," Estes said. "We're going to try to do a lot of community events and markets where we bring in vendors."

The end goal is for all phases to be completed by late spring/early summer 2023.

Cassidy Station at Estes Farms is at 5176 N. Fremont Road, Nixa. For more information, go to cassidystation.com.



A selection of unique goods available at Cassidy Mercantile.



Cassidy Flower Co. opened Friday, Feb. 10. CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

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No place like home

By Andrew C. Jenkins
andrewj@buffaloreflex.com

I have had the honor of writing numerous articles about local farmers and ranchers these past eight years as editor of Country Neighbor. The stories often featured a mix of tragedy, drama and comedy — themes most all farm families can relate to, at least at some point throughout the generations. My family farm story is no different.

The July 2015 edition of Country Neighbor was the first issue with my name in the masthead as “editor,” and in July 2023, a new editor will take the helm, as I start a different chapter in my life. So now at the end of my time with Country Neighbor, I figured it is fitting to tell the beginning of my family farm story.

Some of my favorite articles to write and edit for Country Neighbor have been the Century Farm stories, about farms in one family’s continuous ownership for at least 100 years. A few of the stories told were sad tales involving premature deaths and families nearly losing their farms, but just as many were about the happy times the family shared together and the enjoyment they found in even the simplest of moments. All the stories were about perseverance, however easy or difficult that was for the family.

With so many rapid changes in the past 10 years — let alone the past 100 — when it comes to technology, society and business, it is comforting to know some things stay pretty much the same. Small family farms still dot the countryside, not just in the Ozarks, but throughout the U.S. and the world. And although the specific ways they harvest crops, raise livestock or market their products might have evolved in recent years, the overall goal remains the same — work the land, earn enough to get by and be a responsible steward of God’s earth for the next generation.

Many would call that a “simple” (read: boring) existence, but it is certainly not an unfulfilling life. Looking over old Jenkins family photos, everyone looks healthy and genuinely happy, more so than many people I come across today at the gas station or supermarket. Today, we have an explosion of diversions to absorb our attention, time and energy — TV, Internet, and various social media, most of which their function I am not even aware.

A former co-worker lovingly called me a Luddite because I still use an old-fashioned flip phone, instead of a smartphone. Some change is good, such as medical advances that make seemingly major illnesses or infections much more survivable, or even preventable, today than 100 years ago. Or automobiles that can take



From left, Frances holding Carolyn, Ernest, Bennie, James and Bessie Jenkins.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

us places in an hour that previously would have taken days. Or even air conditioning is a welcome invention during the hot summer months.

Call me old-fashioned, but I will never get on board with some of today’s “advancements,” such as the self-checkout lines at stores, which instead of paying a cashier to bag your items and take your payment, now expect the shoppers themselves to do it ... for free ... without a discount. Or the families from 5 years old to 55, all sitting together at a restaurant, all with their faces buried in a smartphone or tablet. It is no wonder the stores can’t find anyone to be a cashier. If family members cannot even talk to one another with more than grunts and a “yeah” here and a “yeah” there while glued to their phones, how can we expect someone to engage with strangers in line at a store?

As I said, some changes are good, but there are plenty of not so good ones, too. And that’s why the humble family farm — in all its unchanging glory — deserves to be recognized and honored. Most all of our ancestors were at some point in the past surviving in agrarian societies, so it is endearing to know that at least a few families still hold on to some of the traditional ways.

I sincerely hope Country Neighbor continues to share stories about all our rural neighbors — stories such as this one you’re about to read about my own family farm in Hickory County.

Deep roots and new growth

Through my paternal grandmother’s family, my Fugate and Kincaid ancestors have called Hickory County home since the 1800s. The family farm where I live, however, was first acquired by my paternal grandfather’s family in 1932.

Bessie and James Jenkins at the chicken house.



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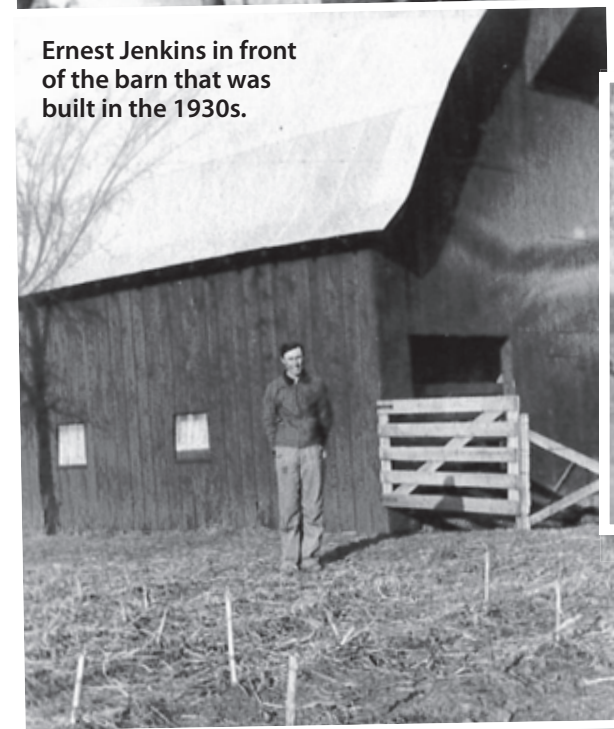
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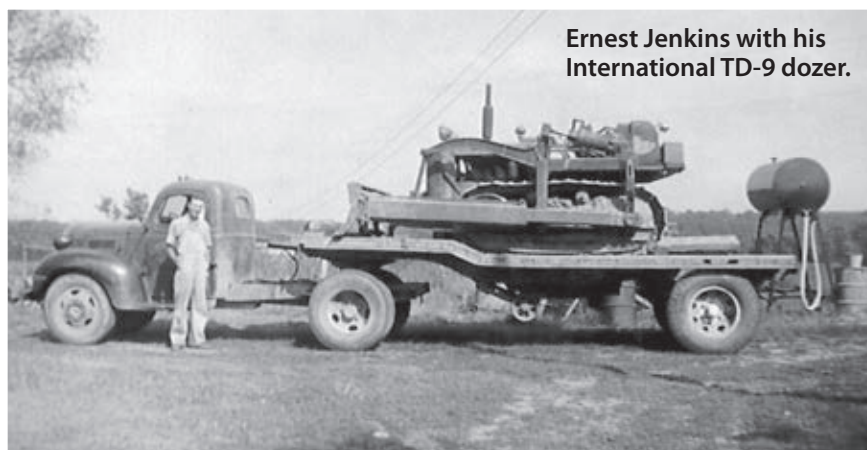
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Bessie and James Jenkins tending to their hogs.



Ernest Jenkins in front of the barn that was built in the 1930s.



Ernest Jenkins with his International TD-9 dozer.

My great-grandparents James and Bessie (White) Jenkins had earlier lived in Oklahoma, Arizona and New Mexico. The combined effects of the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl led them to move to Missouri after losing their Oklahoma farm. When many people of that generation moved west to California, they moved east to Missouri. James was from northern Missouri, so he would have had some roots in the state.

James and Bessie, along with their sons, Bennie and Ernest, chose 222 acres in southern Hickory County, north of Sentinel. In the World War I era, around 1917 to 1918, property in the area was selling for about \$100 per acre. After the Great Depression struck, James and Bessie were able to purchase the 222 acres for about \$9 an acre. Apparently a doctor from the Chicago area owned several acres in Hickory County, including the 222 acres my ancestors bought, and it was up for sale more or less for the taxes owed. The only structures on the farm at the time were an old Civil War-era house and a few outbuildings.

From Oklahoma with James, Bessie, Bennie and Ernest came their Hereford cattle, brought along the Route 66 corridor. They continued raising Herefords at their Missouri farm, and to this day, my family still raises Herefords on the farm.

James, Bessie and their sons had horses and mules that helped on the farm. The family grew corn and hay, and they put up loose hay in the loft of a big barn that they built in the '30s. Later they transitioned from loose hay to square bales.

Also in the '30s, they built a chicken house, and along with chickens, the family had hogs and some milk cows, too.

James had worked in construction, so erecting new buildings was nothing new to him.

Ernest, my grandfather, married Clara Frances Kincaid in 1941. Their children were all born in the Civil War house. My great-grandparents and grandparents have all passed on now, but my father, Garland, remembers his early years in the Civil War house, as well as some of the stories later told to him. He said he was delivered at the Civil War house by Doc Zumbrun, and the doctor charged \$40. Frances, my grandmother, had saved nickels in order to pay the fee.

My father also remembers how cold the Civil War house would get in the winters.

"If Mom brought a glass of water to us before bed, it would be frozen overnight," he said.

The house had a wood heat stove, as well as a cookstove. There was just one cold water faucet in the kitchen, but no other plumbing in the house.

The children's pet goldfish would freeze in its goldfish bowl in the winter, but my dad said as long as the fish was allowed to naturally thaw, the fish was never harmed.

My dad was born in 1949, and by the early 1950s a new house was built nearby for James, Bessie and Bennie to live in. And about 1961, another new, modern house was built next to the Civil War house for Ernest, Frances and their children, before the Civil War house was then torn down.

James, my dad's grandpa, died in 1952, so he didn't get long to enjoy his new house.

My dad remembers going to Windsor to get chunk coal, which his Grandma Bessie, James' wife, burned in her house, the early 1950s house. The coal was kept in a pile in the basement.

Some of my dad's favorite memories growing up on the farm were cutting cedar trees for Christmas trees and putting them in 5-gallon buckets with gravel around them. He attended school at Polk before going to Bolivar for middle school and high school. He remembers coming home from

school and watching "Superman" and some cartoons on a Stewart-Warner black and white TV.

Dad also recalls the road in front of the farm, Mo. 64, when it was still just gravel, before it was paved in the '50s. When he was a young boy, he even found an 1853 half dime close to the pavement when he was picking up walnuts.

One thing he misses from his youth is the Black Diamond watermelons his Uncle Bennie would go pick up from the Missouri bootheel. Bennie would bring the watermelons back and sell them to people in the local area for a small profit. My dad said he remembers the Black Diamond watermelons back in his childhood being far superior to the watermelons of today.

My dad's birth certificate lists his town of birth as Sentinel, and we have several pieces of old correspondence that were mailed to our old Sentinel address. Dad said

he thought the store in Sentinel closed sometime in the '50s, but there is still a church at Sentinel today. Eventually, our farm's mailing address was changed to Polk, though the town of Polk hasn't had a post office or store for many years. So to sum it up, we live in Hickory County, the closest town is Sentinel in Polk County, the nearest post office is in Pittsburg in Hickory County, but we have a Polk mailing address — an odd circumstance shared by several people who live in areas near county borders. And on top of that, my dad and his siblings attended school at Polk until going to middle school and high school in Bolivar, my sister started school at Bolivar before continuing on at

Hermitage, and my brother and I attended Hermitage from kindergarten through 12th grade. We joke sometimes that we are in no man's land.

Sweat equity

The property my great-grandparents purchased had been farmed before they arrived, and some of the land was starting to get "worn out" and eroded. So my great-grandparents James and Bessie, my grandfather Ernest and my great-uncle Bennie worked hard to rehabilitate the land and fill in ditches.

In the early 1950s, Ernest added two ponds to the property with his dozer. He also used that dozer, an International TD-9, to dig ponds for fellow farmers. For the first few years, he didn't have a trailer to haul the dozer, so he drove the dozer itself to wherever the pond project was.

In the 1950s, in preparation for the creation of Pomme de Terre Lake, Ernest and others cut trees on the Pittsburg side of the lake. They used an elevation map to cut the timber, so that the trees would be removed from the future site of the lake. Ernest used a 1937 Farmall F-12 tractor with a 110-volt, belt-powered generator to run an electric chain saw. The tractor was purchased at Knight Hardware in Weaubleau. It was estimated Ernest cut about 1 million board feet of lumber, all with the electric chain saw.

Then with the TD-9 dozer's PTO, Ernest powered a sawmill. He sawed sycamore, ash and walnut, and most of the timber that went into building his family's new home in the early 1960s came from what he cut down for the lake.

Ernest also put in storm doors and windows for several people in Hickory and Polk counties. He picked the doors and windows up in Fort Scott, Kan. He also did some plumbing, putting in water wells, and wiring. For a time, he even built pallets for Harry Cooper Supply Co.

See **JENKINS**, Page 6



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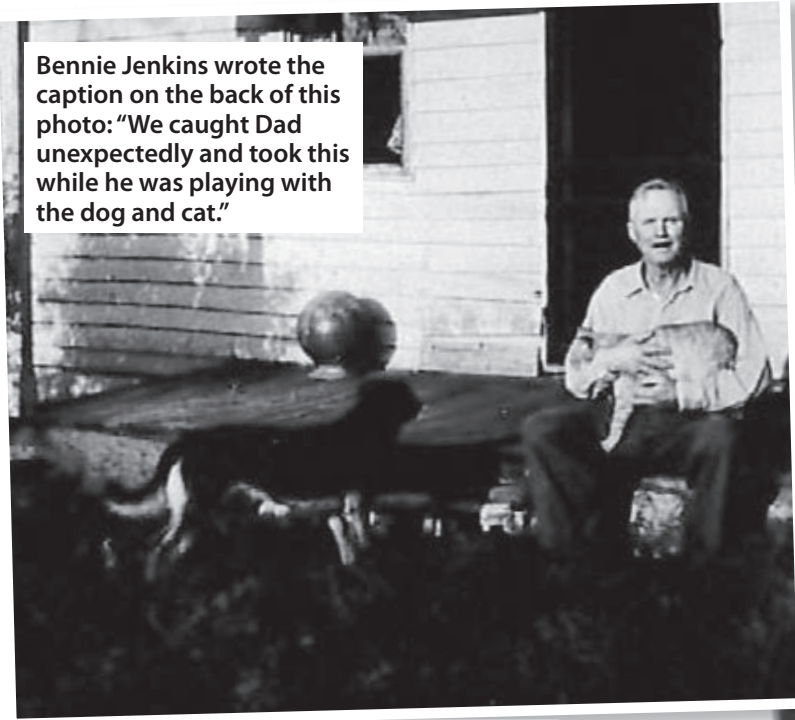
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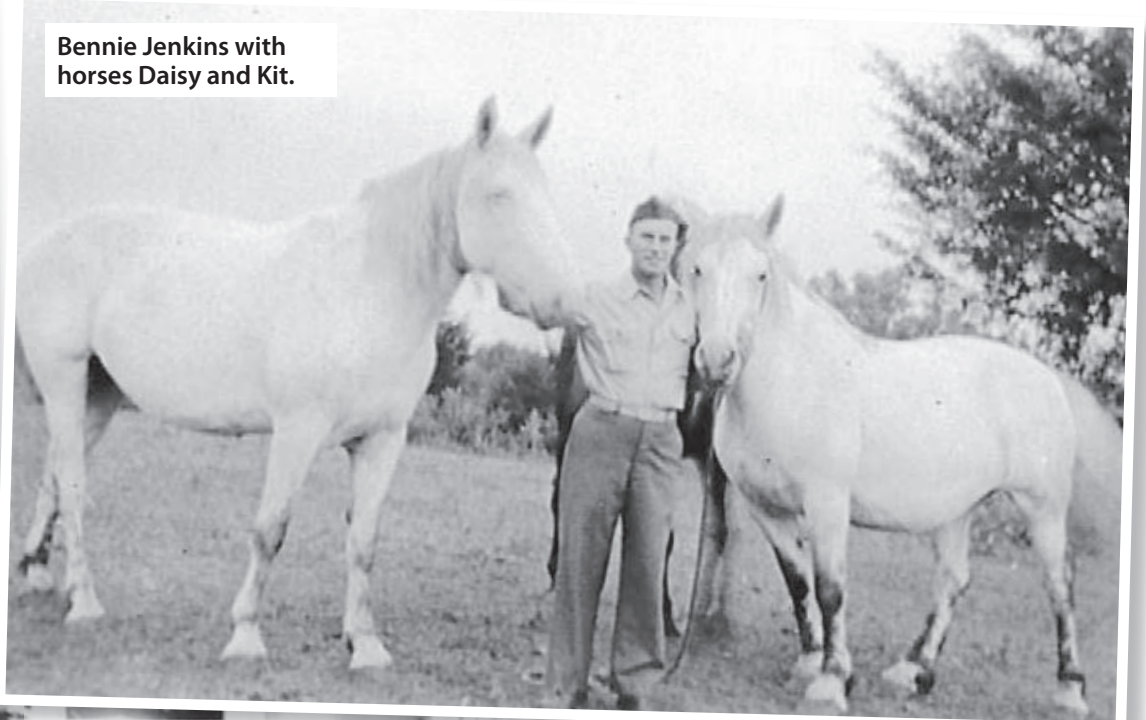
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Bennie Jenkins wrote the caption on the back of this photo: "We caught Dad unexpectedly and took this while he was playing with the dog and cat."



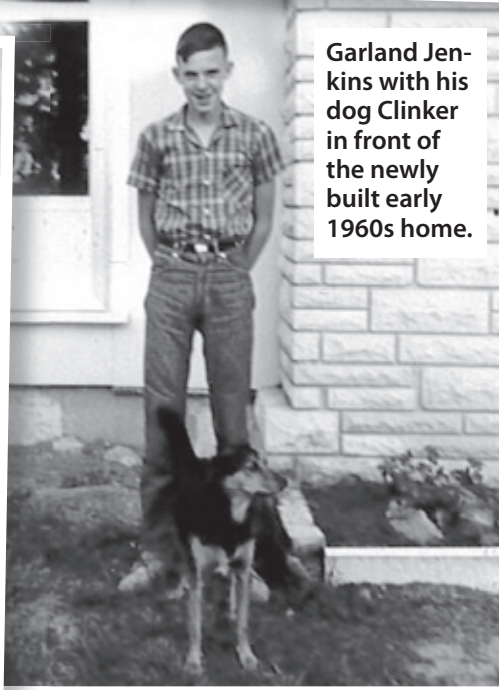
Bennie Jenkins with horses Daisy and Kit.



Frances Jenkins was a lifelong lover of cats, as seen here.



Carolyn Jenkins devours a watermelon as Curly the dog appears to search for scraps and Corky the cat heads toward the camera.



Garland Jenkins with his dog Clinker in front of the newly built early 1960s home.

take advantage of the farm's abundance — the nuts, fruits, deer, turkey and fish.

It is easy to take for granted all the comforts we think we are entitled to nowadays, but somewhere along the line, someone worked very hard to clear the land, or build a house, or start a business. For that, I am extremely thankful for my ancestors' toil and determination, and I hope to continue improving my surroundings, so future generations continue to benefit.

All in the family

My dad, Garland, possibly just barely remembers his Grandpa Jenkins (James). Dad was just a few years old when his grandpa died at the family farm. He remembers his Grandma Jenkins (Bessie) much better, as she lived to 95 years old before passing in 1979, also at the family farm. I didn't have the privilege of knowing either of them.

I do, though, fondly remember all the times spent with my grandparents Ernest and Frances and my great-uncle Bennie, who have all since passed on.

My Grandpa Jenkins was always quick to smile and laugh. He was also occasionally known for his antics, such as when he swatted our Appaloosa Freckles on the rear, while my sister, Erin, was riding. The horse darted off with Erin struggling to hang on. Grandpa also one time a little too eagerly trimmed some cockleburs out of our dog Rusty's fur, nearly taking one of Rusty's ears off in the process. But overall, he was an extremely hard worker. In fact, he was still working at Jenkins Building Materials up to the day he died at 83 years old in 1999. He came home for lunch, lay down for a nap and never woke up, passing peacefully in the house he built with timber from the lake project.

My Grandma Jenkins was the consummate housekeeper. I rarely remember her sitting, as she was always up and about, washing dishes, cleaning windows, doing laundry (with fabric softener and laundry powder I can still smell in my mind, anytime I think about her), ironing, vacuuming, dusting, deadheading plants, watering flowers, tending to the chickens and so on. I was fortunate enough that I grew up within walking distance of my grandparents' home, so I often visited.

My favorite chore I "helped" Grandma with was baking, as she always let me lick the spatulas and spoons clean. It seemed like she baked some sort of dessert every day of the week, and she was always sharing her pies, cakes, cookies and brownies — sometimes even with the dogs. I guess I come by my sweet tooth honestly. She also would let me (or maybe I just did it without her permission) throw the deadheaded marigolds onto the road in front of the house. For some reason at that young age, I was entertained by the cars running over the dead flowers.

Grandma and Grandpa kept a steady supply of ramen noodles in their pantry,

JENKINS

Continued from Page 5

His brother, Bennie, had worked in shipyards in the Northwestern United States, and when Bennie moved back to the farm, he and Ernest realized the need for a large shop building, which could accommodate various projects. With Bennie's welding experience from the shipyards, he knew that he and Ernest could build their own steel frames for the shop building. They completed the big shop building in 1964, and that act led to a family metal building business that is still in operation nearly 60 years later.

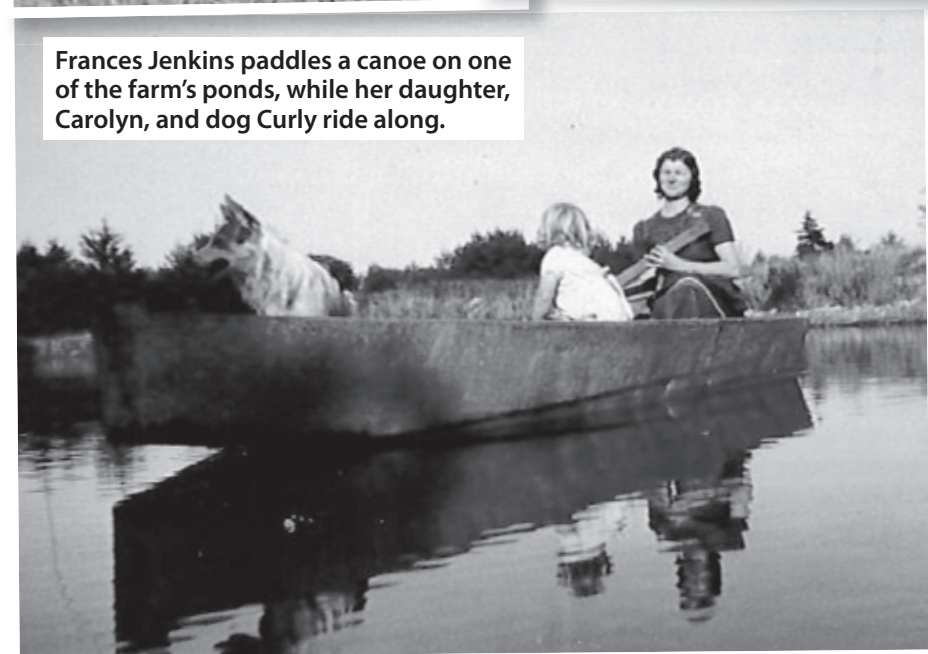
It all started when a man from Macks Creek came by the farm, saw the big shop building, and wanted Bennie and Ernest to build him three or four buildings. Thus started Jenkins Building Materials. Since then, the business has been a family affair. My dad, Garland, has been with Jenkins Building Materials his entire working life. The business began when he was about 15, and now in his mid-70s, he still works at it. My mom, Cheryl, and my brother, Christopher, also work there, as has my sister's husband, Nick Fusco, in the past.

Throughout the years, James and Bessie and their sons, daughter-in-law and grandchildren also worked hard growing food in their gardens. They grew tomatoes, green beans, okra, peppers, sweet potatoes, white potatoes, cucumbers and strawberries, as well as Guinea beans, to name a few. They also picked blackberries and gooseberries, and foraged for other edible plants.

Speaking of tomatoes, Bennie also for a time trucked tomatoes to canneries in Kansas City.

Frances taught school for a brief time before she married Ernest, but after marrying, she was a devoted homemaker and mother.

Later in life, Ernest and Frances had a small orchard with pears, apricots, pecans and walnuts, and took great pride in their extensive flower gardens. We still today



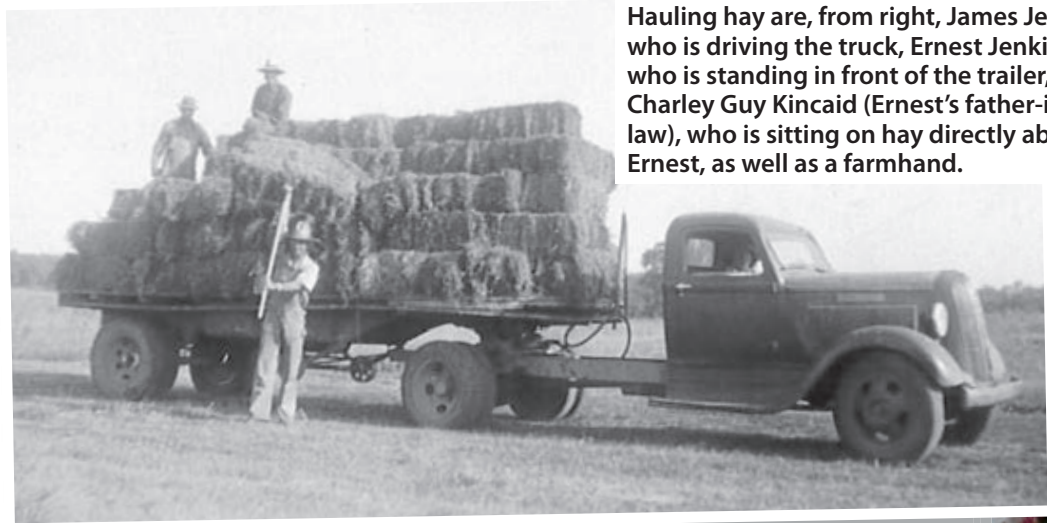
Frances Jenkins paddles a canoe on one of the farm's ponds, while her daughter, Carolyn, and dog Curly ride along.

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Hauling hay are, from right, James Jenkins, who is driving the truck, Ernest Jenkins, who is standing in front of the trailer, and Charley Guy Kincaid (Ernest's father-in-law), who is sitting on hay directly above Ernest, as well as a farmhand.



Ernest and Frances Jenkins in the 1990s, pictured in their gazebo with their Mandevilla framing them.



Celebrating Christmas 2022 are, front row, from left: Erin (Jenkins) Fusco, Andrew Jenkins, Laura (Colwell) Jenkins, Nick Fusco, Marcus Fusco; back row: Cheryl (Wiget) Jenkins, Garland Jenkins, Allie Jenkins, Christopher Jenkins, Carolyn (Jenkins) Harrison and Gary Harrison. Three people in the back row, Garland, Allie and Carolyn, were born on the Jenkins family farm.

so my brother and I could eat them as a snack. Before we would open the orange plastic bag with the brick of ramen noodles inside, we would crush the noodles up on the counter. Sometimes the bag would pop and a few noodle bits would shoot out. Once the noodles were sufficiently pulverized, we would open the bag and pour the noodle fragments into a cereal bowl. Then we would open the little silver packet with the seasoning inside and sprinkle the yellow powder over the dry noodles. Voila! As an 8-year-old, that was a special snack that even I could “make.”

I don't remember what my brother and I would watch on our grandparents' TV, but I do remember Grandpa would watch “The Lawrence Welk Show,” and he had some 8-tracks of polka music, as well.

Grandpa “rescued” me one time, too, when I went to collect the eggs in the chicken house. Quickly walking through the door of the little room that housed the chickens, I didn't notice there was a giant blacksnake climbing the wall in the corner, right by the door. But I certainly noticed the snake as I started to leave. As I was just a child, that long snake was taller than I was, so needless to say, I was afraid of it and did not want to risk passing right by it on my way out. (I had probably seen “Anaconda” one too many times, too.) But Grandpa was an adept snake wrangler, and he managed to pick it up, I think with a pitchfork or rake, and remove it from the chicken house, eventually rehoming it elsewhere.

I did not inherit his relative comfortableness with snakes. I still am not a fan of them. I also did not inherit his love for canned mackerel, or watermelons, cantaloupes and most any other type of melons. I've never cared much for the taste or texture of melons, and to me, the sound watermelon makes when biting into it reminds me of cutting into Styrofoam. It's a fingernails-on-a-chalkboard sort of sound for me.

Uncle Bennie was like having another grandparent around. He was a constant presence at birthday parties and holi-

day gatherings. He was quiet but always friendly, often more at ease listening and observing from the sidelines than being right in the middle of the action. We could all learn a thing or two from him — to slow down, listen carefully and think before speaking, like the wise old owl of the nursery rhyme.

I received a double dose of the sweet tooth gene, as Bennie always had Hershey's assorted miniatures in a candy dish at his house — milk chocolate in the dark brown and silver paper, dark chocolate in the dark brown and gold paper, Mr. Goodbars in the yellow paper and Krackels in the red paper.

Like his brother, Bennie also was a very hard worker. He worked at Jenkins Building Materials up until shortly before his passing at age 88 in 1998, and most of his final days were spent on the family farm, too.

Besides the farm that was passed down from my great-grandparents' generation to my grandparents' generation to my parents' generation and now to my generation, another tradition that was passed from James, Bessie, Ernest, Frances and Bennie is my (and all my family's) love of animals. Looking back at old family photos, many of them show Grandma, Grandpa and Bennie (as well as James and Bessie) having fun with a multitude of dogs, cats, horses and other livestock. And we usually still have an assortment of dogs, cats, chickens, cattle and more on the farm today.

Spirit of the land


The farm has been the home of five generations of the Jenkins family — with my 23-year-old nephew, Marcus (my sister's son), and my 1-year-old niece, Allie (my brother's daughter), the newest additions. Marcus took his first steps on the farm. Allie was quite literally born on the farm, with a surprise delivery in my brother's basement in February 2022. She was born in the same house my Grandpa Jenkins died in, as my brother, Christopher, and his wife, Laura, live there now. My father and his siblings also were literally born on

the farm, in the old Civil War-era house. And in addition to Grandpa Jenkins, his parents (my great-grandparents) also died on the farm.

So all told, the Jenkins farm has seen a lot of family milestones in the past 90 years. I hope it continues to be a place of memories for my family throughout the


next 90 years.

Even though I never knew my great-grandparents, and even though I likely won't know the occupants of the farm in another 90 years down the road, I sincerely believe we will all meet one day. I don't know when that will be, but I do know where.

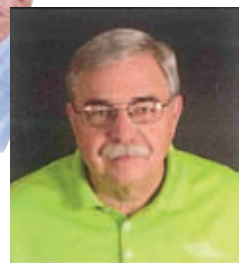


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Special surprise for 80-year-old sisters

A gift they won't soon forget

By **Shelby Atkison**
shelbya@marshfieldmail.com

A birthday gift money couldn't buy was the highlight of the decade for twin sisters from Webster County. When Karen Crom and Sharen Trammell (Evans) turned 80, Karen's daughter organized a surprise that brought the twins to tears.

"I grew up with my parents and two sisters on a farm out in High Prairie," said Karen. "I've always loved that property and the memories that I have from growing up there."

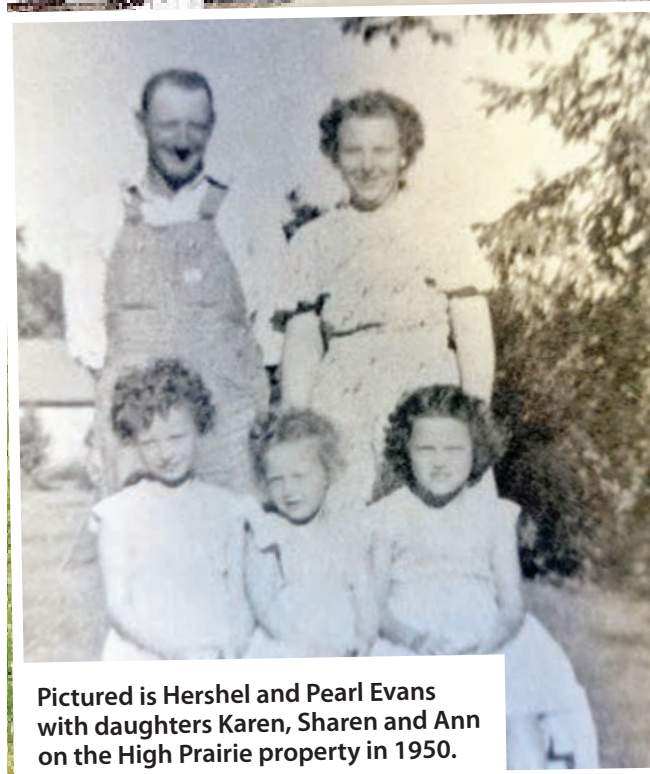
The twins and their other sister, along with parents Hershel and Pearl Evans, lived on the High Prairie property and even attended the old High Prairie School until the farm was sold to late Missouri state Sen. Dan Clemens in 1971. The women were able to visit the property when it was under Clemens' ownership but hadn't been back since. Now named The Venue at High Prairie, the property is used as an event venue and primarily hosts weddings. New owners Jim and Julie Massengale operate it as the venue, and an Airbnb.

"Since they hadn't seen the farm since it became a wedding venue, we thought it would be fun to take them out there, with permission from the owners, to look around," said Mary Kathryn Dyche, Karen's daughter. "We didn't realize just how emotional that day would be ... it was really incredible to see them return and relive those memories, and see that the place was well taken care of and still in use."

Karen still lives in the Marshfield area, but Sharen lives near Kansas City. Mary Kathryn's cousin picked up Sharen and drove her to the farm, where the rest of their family met. As soon as they pulled in the driveway, they were shocked and moved to tears.

"We did have a few tears when we arrived at the property," Karen explained. "It's just so beautiful, and it made us overwhelmingly happy to see the place we grew up become a venue that will continue to bring so many people joy."

"My mom didn't know that my aunt was coming, and neither of them knew that they'd be visiting the farm," Mary Kathryn added. "My mom had talked for years about wanting to go back out there ... they kept it really rustic, and I had them pull out old pictures from their childhood on the farm to bring with them ... but it was a surprise all around."



Pictured is Hershel and Pearl Evans with daughters Karen, Sharen and Ann on the High Prairie property in 1950.



Twin sisters Karen and Sharen (Evans) pose for a photo on the porch of their childhood home in celebration of their 80th birthday.



The twins were all smiles as they walked through their childhood home.

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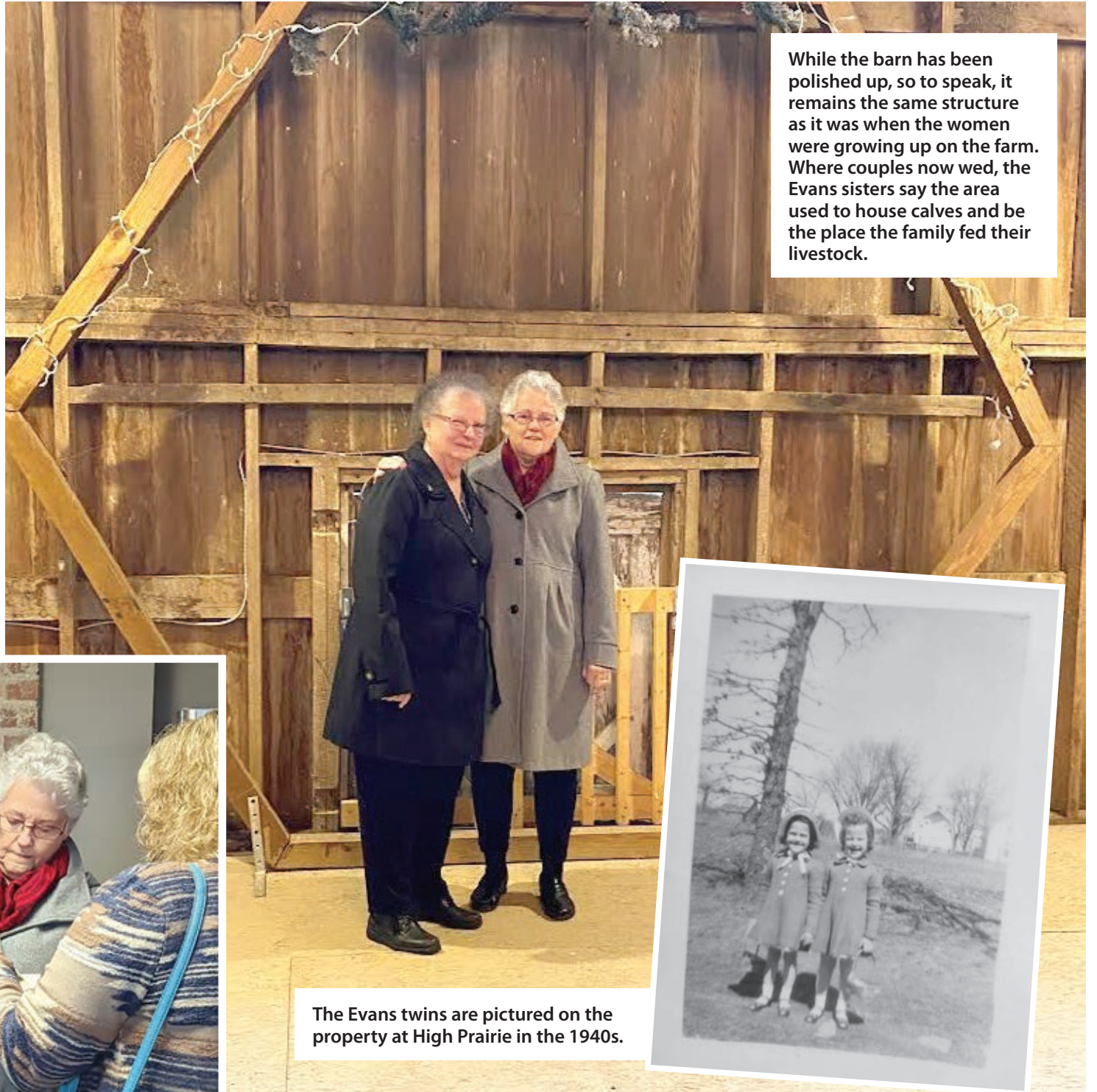
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The Massengales unlocked the barn, loft and the home that the Evanses used to live in for the family to explore. According to Mary Kathryn, the women were ecstatic to walk through the memories of their childhood. For the most part, the house remains the same as it was when the farm belonged to the Evanses.

“It wasn’t as big of a deal when they visited back when Dan (Clemens) owned the property, because it was exactly the same then,” she added. “This is the first time they’d seen it since it’d been changed into the venue ... and it was just so fun to watch them relive their history.”

“I loved seeing that they’ve taken care of the place and that it’s still in use,” Karen reiterated. “We have many Evans relatives still in the area, but it’s something special to go back to the place where you were raised. We were very thankful that the new owners so graciously allowed us to walk back through those memories.”

The Venue at High Prairie is at 358 Bluestem Road in Niangua and can be reached at 417-207-4913 or thevenueathighprairie@gmail.com.



While the barn has been polished up, so to speak, it remains the same structure as it was when the women were growing up on the farm. Where couples now wed, the Evans sisters say the area used to house calves and be the place the family fed their livestock.

The Evans twins are pictured on the property at High Prairie in the 1940s.



The twins share memories while looking back at old photographs from their childhood years spent on the Evans family farm.



Karen (Evans) poses for a photo in what used to be her childhood bedroom in celebration of her 80th birthday.



Pictured are Paul and Karen (Evans) Crom, right, Charles and Sharen (Evans) Trammell, left, and their younger sister with her husband, Gary and Ann (Evans) Kinser, middle.

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Memories of 4-H, fairs and farming

By Quincy Young
quincy@bolivarmonews.com

From his activity in the Kiwanis to his time as a public servant in the county clerk's office, among his many other roles, Bill Bob Kallenbach has been known far and wide throughout Polk County and the surrounding area.

Perhaps some of his greatest accomplishments, however, have arguably been in the agricultural community, as one of the leaders of the Polk County Youth Fair and Junior Livestock Show and his influence among Polk County 4-H.

Getting started in 4-H

Back in 1941, Kallenbach's family came to Polk County, where his father began serving as an agent for the local extension center and held that role for 22 years. In this role, his father served as a supervisor of all 4-H clubs in the county and offered farming and economic programs through the extension office.

"Right after WWII, people were very receptive to different types of helps being offered, because they wanted to get back on the farm and get things rolling. And it really was a very opportune time for the extension to do some positive things," Kallenbach says. "It was the most opportune time to make it effective. That doesn't take anything from (my dad's) ability and what he did, but, I'm telling you, people absolutely were really receptive to the help that the extension gave them."

He also says that, at the time, there were about 34 4-H clubs in Polk County, many that had a tie to the nearby rural schools in the county. A number of the clubs were named synchronously with the schools' names, and the teacher of those rural schools might even be the community



Nick Seiner of Bolivar Rotary Club delivers a donation to Bill Bob Kallenbach for the Polk County Junior Livestock Show in March 2019.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ROTARY CLUB OF BOLIVAR

leader of the 4-H club.

"It was really a great thing, and it involved a lot of people. I remember once going to the Recognition Night down at the Christian church, and there were 800 4-H club members down there," he says, recalling that there was scarcely enough room for everyone in the building.

Kallenbach remembers tagging alongside his dad to 4-H club meetings at local schools at a time when electricity was just coming to the rural schools. His dad would take pictures of the 4-H kids with their projects and develop them into slides. A few months later, he would bring the slides to the schools, and people from all over the county would come to see them.

"The schoolhouses would be so full, people would be standing outside looking through the windows. I was the one that was running the projector," Kallenbach recalls. "I was meeting people then. And all those

kids, I'd see them at 4-H camp. I used to have a good time at 4-H camp."

Through 4-H, Kallenbach created many fond memories of learning from his peers and working with local youth.

The legacy of the fair and livestock show

The Polk County Youth Fair and Junior Livestock Show takes place annually in mid-June, and ever since the start of the fair, Kallenbach has attended the event almost every year, missing only two years — in 1962 and 1963 when he was in the service.

This year marks the 76th year of the fair. Kallenbach still helps organize the event, serving as the treasurer of the Youth Fair board. As treasurer, he contributes his time by helping raise money to operate the livestock show.

"Over the years, this has been a really great thing for the agricultural youth here in our county. And it's not only in our county. This thing is now open to all youth any place who want to come here," Kallenbach states. "That's a good thing, because we have 4-H club leaders that work in Dallas County, Hickory County, Polk County, and they all work together. And there's other kids from other counties that can come here."

In the beginning years of the fair, the event was sponsored by the Kiwanis Club. The organization raised the money to make the show a success, and eventually, community participation in the fair grew over time. And as Kallenbach says, "the more people involved, the better fair you're going to have."

For 33 years, Kallenbach has been an active member in Kiwanis, saying that there currently is only one other person who has been in the local club longer than he has.

Now, the fair and livestock show has been passed on to interested parties and individuals in the community, primarily those in the business and agribusiness sectors. However, Kallenbach says the Kiwanis still contribute to the fair by sponsoring the kids games, and the fair continues to maintain a very good amount of participation among area youth.

Kallenbach's responsibilities as a member of the board are to plan and organize the fair, determine the classes and competition brackets, and perform the maintenance of fairgrounds.

"I worked at the county commission to get them to lease to our association the acreage on the Polk County farm that we have developed into our fairgrounds. I was instrumental in getting that to happen, and we've worked to develop that," Kallenbach explains. "We've got the Youth Activities Building ... on the fairgrounds that's used 130 times a year. And five different structures on there, and we're still building, trying to find out about making an improvement to our arena."



Bill Bob Kallenbach made a name for himself in Polk County as county clerk along with his hand in the agricultural community.

PHOTO BY QUINCY YOUNG

A recently organized community event called Missouri Beef Days has also brought about participation in local agricultural activities. The Polk County Fairgrounds is used for Beef Days rodeo.

When scheduling the fair, Kallenbach notes that it's also important to keep in mind other activities in southwestern Missouri that might take attention away from the event in Polk County.

"It's coordinated with fairs in the area. Once you get out of sync on those things, it's pretty hard to give everybody a chance to go to the different fairs. And we really need to synchronize it that way, so we can have more participation. We don't want to be in competition with another county fair during ours," he says.

Farming and hobbies

Describing himself as always having been "tied to the soil," Kallenbach lived much of his life as a farmer. He would work the hayfields and would even sell dairy cattle.

Aside from his farm life, he had a hobby of raising and selling bird dogs. His friends would go hunting with him and ended up arranging a side gig, where they would find certain types of trained dogs, and Kallenbach would resell them, clarifying that he did not train the dogs himself.

"It takes two years to train them, so you can't do any great big volume, because it takes too much work to have them where they are marketable," he says.

Although he never made a big profit from the bird dogs, it was a hobby that paid for itself. He enjoyed it enough that he continued to keep up with the hobby for over 50 years. Through the help of the other hunters, he sold 1,500 dogs, and he hasn't been without a dog at his place for 40 years.

Kallenbach loved to hunt, as it was a hobby that worked well with his schedule during his time working in county government. During his 20-year career as Polk County clerk, he would farm and hunt after work hours, saying that his friends would often help him around the farm so they would all have time to hunt later in the day.

Over the years, Kallenbach has witnessed many changes in the 4-H program and in the agriculture industry, and while he does still have a hay farm, he is taking life more slowly now, moving closer to town and passing along his knowledge to further the agricultural education of the area youth.

"Polk County is a great place to live. Great people here. And if you have something going on from a community point of view, you can show the people that there's a need, they'll respond to it," he says.

Even as he gained influence in agriculture and county government, he remains humble by remembering that he "never did this by himself." There were always people to encourage and support him through it all, and he continues to be grateful to his family, friends and neighbors in Polk County.

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SWAP TILL YOU DROP

National Seed Swap at Cedar County Library

By Alana Hindman
news@cedarrepublican.com

Many in Cedar County love getting their hands in the dirt and gardening in general, which led them to celebrate National Seed Swap Day on Saturday, Jan. 28. The Cedar County Library hosted a midmorning event with 15 in attendance. There was a range of kids, adults, beginners and expert growers. All came together to share growth tips, swap seed packets and watch a “winter sowing” demonstration by local gardener enthusiast Pam Guthrie.

The basic definition of a seed swap is sharing seeds. They might come from having an excess of purchased seeds, or they might have been saved from other plants or passed down from previous generations. Heirloom seeds are true seeds that haven’t been genetically modified, and when the seeds are saved from the fruit, they produce plants and fruit that are true to kind. At each swap there is always a variety of seeds, such as vegetables, herbs, perennials, annual flowers and wildflowers.

Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds donated 260 seed packets specially for the event. Garden World also donated, and club members brought seeds to exchange with one another and those who attended the event. There was no charge for seeds or to attend.

“It’s interesting to learn the background of each seed that is saved ... My favorite seeds to exchange are tomatoes. There are so many varieties ... I also like herbs, like toothache, marshmallow and wormwood, all of which have medicinal purposes,” shared seed swapper Pam Guthrie.

Pam encouraged those at the seed swap to practice winter sowing, as well as gave a demonstration. Created by Trudi Davidoff, this U.S. Department of Agriculture-approved garden method works with nature to help prepare seeds for growth. It gives the right conditions for germination and is essentially a mini greenhouse for seed starters.

The items needed to start this type of sowing are seeds, potting mix/soil and recycled plastic containers, such as milk jugs. Make sure to cut or drill holes in the bottom of the container to allow water an exit. Most people will cut the milk jug in half, leaving one small area to act as a hinge so that the top can open and close. After filling part way with soil, add enough water so it’s soaked through, almost dripping. Seeds can then be pressed into the wet soil, and the jug should be taped back together with the cap area left open to add water as needed. These jugs can be set outside to absorb light, sometimes even in snow-type settings, which allows them to grow toward that future harvest.

“I had up to 120 winter sowing jugs going at one time; the milk jug method is my favorite,” revealed Guthrie.

Some gardeners will label their jug with the name of seeds that are inside, or they will use a numbering system that allows them to reuse containers. Keeping records of when seeds start to sprout will help determine when transplant time occurs. It is common to have moss growth or a white type of covering on the soil inside the jugs.

More information can be found on YouTube regarding the winter sowing method. Freeheirloomseed.org will sometimes send free packets of seeds, and for a donation extra seed packets can be sent. There are certain directions to follow when making requests from that site. Myfrugalhome.com is another place that provides help and methods of gardening organization.

The Cedar County Gardening group formed from those attending the swap events. Anyone is invited to join, novice or expert. Pam Guthrie and Beth Brownberry manage the gardening group and events. Together they have many years of gardening experience. The group meets every fourth Saturday at the library in Stockton, from 10 a.m. to noon.

Garden, flower, houseplants, succulents, cactus, flower bulbs, trees and even sourdough starters have been exchanged throughout past meetings. They usually brainstorm ideas, weed through favored techniques and give general support to one another through the garden seasons.



Donated seeds from Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds. PHOTOS BY ALANA HINDMAN



Attendants look over, share and discuss what seeds have been brought.



Pam Guthrie demonstrates the winter sow method.

Box of organized seeds for swapping.

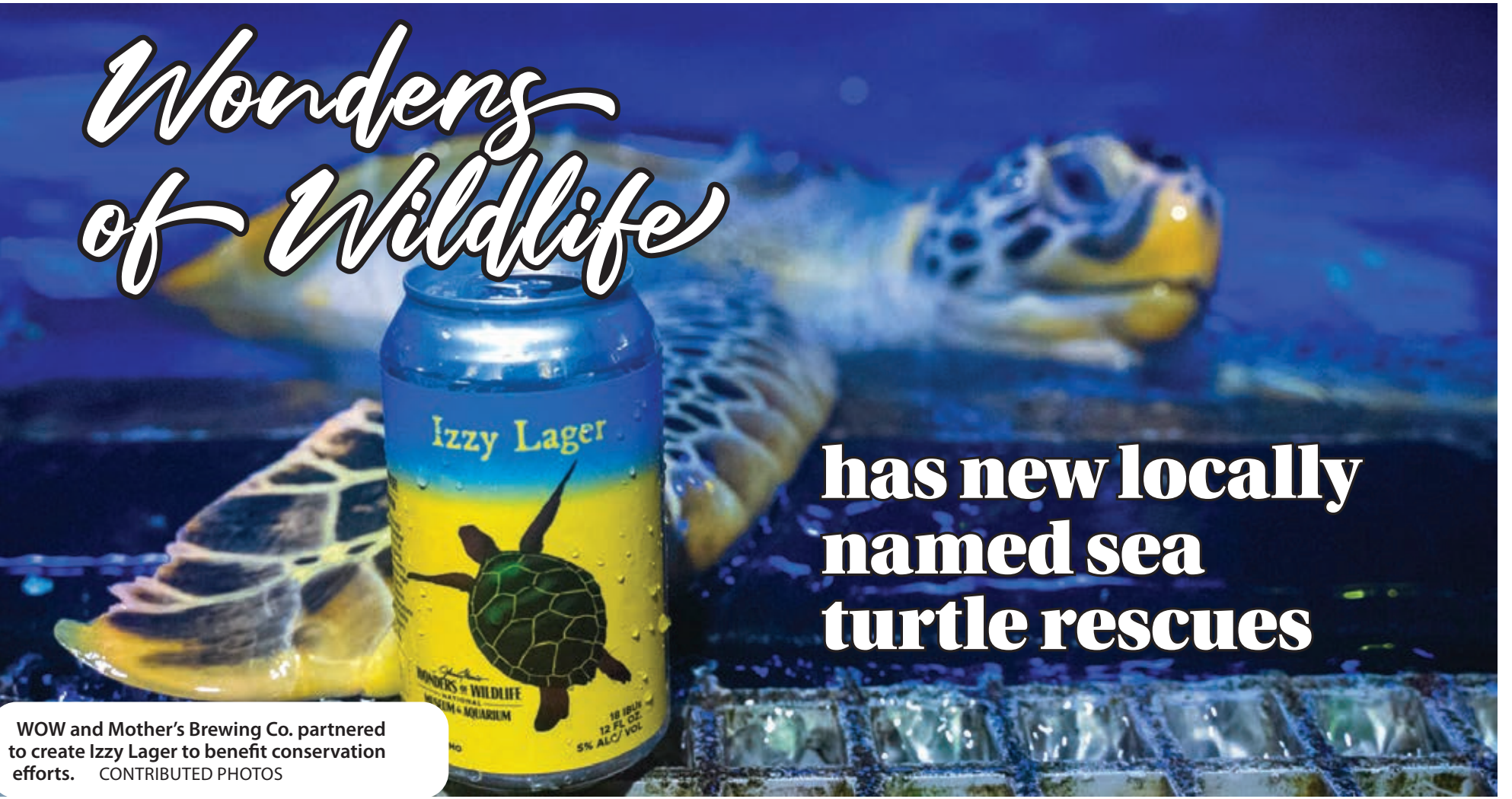
Another attendant’s organized seeds for swapping.

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Wonders of Wildlife

has new locally named sea turtle rescues

WOW and Mother's Brewing Co. partnered to create Izzy Lager to benefit conservation efforts. CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

By Headliner News Staff
news@ccheadliner.com

Earlier this year, Johnny Morris' Wonders of Wildlife National Museum and Aquarium opened its doors — and waters — to its third group of loggerhead sea turtles facing life-threatening conditions.

The 10 cold-stunned turtles arrived Jan. 2 by private aircraft on a rescue flight coordinated by the nonprofit organization Turtles Fly Too, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The rescued loggerheads flew from the New England Aquarium in Massachusetts to Springfield, where they were met by an expert animal care team from WOW and transported to the Aquarium's Sea Turtle Center.

To thank the community for its support of Wonders of Wildlife and its conservation initiatives, each of the turtles this year are named after local cities and towns in the Springfield area. The 10 cold-stunned loggerhead sea turtles' names are Queenie (Springfield), Joplin, Branson, Leb (Lebanon), Nixa, Ozark, Marsh (Marshfield), Neosho, Lampe and Ava.

The loggerhead sea turtles were stranded on the coast near Cape Cod after experiencing "cold stunning." This condition occurs when water temperatures rapidly decline, and sea turtles are unable to move to warmer waters. Because loggerheads are cold-blooded reptiles that depend on their surroundings to maintain body temperature, this dramatic change causes them to suffer from a form of hypothermia called cold stunning. Leaving the turtles lethar-



gic and unable to secure food and fend for themselves, cold stunning is fatal if the animals are not rescued. This season, the Northeast has already seen almost 1,000 cold stuns wash ashore needing help — making it the third largest number of sea turtles found stranded on record out of the Northeastern United States.

Named America's Best Aquarium by the readers of USA Today for a fifth time in 2023, and recently accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums, Wonders of Wildlife will provide the loggerhead turtles with critical medical care and long-term rehabilitation before releasing them back into their natural habitats.

The cold-stunned sea turtle's length of stay at their temporary home depends on their eating behaviors and activity, but typically will be released back to the ocean about 12 weeks. All seven sea turtle species are on the endangered species list, including loggerheads — making WOW's

commitment to rehabilitation even more important. With the complexity of their life cycle, only 1 in 1,000 hatchlings that make it to the ocean will survive to adulthood. It is vital to the future of their species to return as many sea turtles as possible back to the wild population. They are an essential part of marine ecosystems worldwide and are at great risk due to a variety of environmental factors.

"WOW is honored to once again be helping cold stunned sea turtles," said Mike Daniel, director of animal care at Wonders of Wildlife. "Sea turtles are a keystone species in the ocean and are vital to the long-term health of that ecosystem. Turtles have many jobs in the wild — from gardeners that tend the seagrass beds and prevent overgrowth, caretakers of coral reefs eating sponges that could harm corals, and are vehicles for dozens of species like barnacles, crabs and algae that travel on their backs to different parts of the world where they breed and thrive. Sea turtles are also pivotal to the health of beaches and sea oats that utilize the nutrients from old nests to grow and prevent erosion."

Due to their size, loggerheads are harder to place, and WOW is one of the few facilities that has enough space to care for them. This makes Wonders of Wildlife the only rescue, rehabilitation and release center in the Midwest, and allows WOW to educate guests about these endangered animals and the importance of protecting them. These rescue sea turtles are not open for public display. However, guests can visit the two resident green sea turtles on display in the Open Ocean exhibit at WOW.

WOW's life sciences and veterinary teams immediately began their work by developing care and treatment plans that are customized for each turtle based on its particular needs. Each animal is monitored around the clock and carefully fed, measured and assessed. Key components include gradually warming the animals

back to a stable body temperature and ensuring they can eat and swim normally. Care is administered with the goal that each of the turtles will make a full recovery and be safely released back into the wild. For the caretakers at WOW Sea Turtle Rescue Center, the sense of excitement and responsibility are at an all-time high.

"For our team to have a hand in the rehabilitation and future release back into the wild of these animals means so much to us," Daniel said. "We want to do everything we can to make sure that we don't lose these amazing animals from the world's oceans."

Local partnership brews conservation efforts

To further generate awareness for endangered sea turtle populations, WOW has partnered with local Springfield brewery Mother's Brewing Co. to create a lager that benefits conservation efforts. The Izzy Lager is fondly named after one of WOW's green sea turtles who suffered injuries in the wild and has been rehabilitated at the aquarium. Proceeds from the exclusive brew will be donated to conservation efforts. Izzy Lager is now available for purchase at the following properties: Wonders of Wildlife National Museum and Aquarium, Dogwood Canyon Nature Park, Top of the Rock's Lost Canyon Cave and Nature Trail, Mother's Brewing Co., Big Cedar Lodge, Finley Farms, Hemingway's Blue Water Cafe and White River Fish House.

"By partnering with one of our favorite local breweries to introduce the Izzy Lager, we are working to inform and educate the public of our conservation efforts and the unique challenges sea turtles face. With each of our key wildlife initiatives, our goal is to inspire future conservationists," said Bryan Nadeau, vice president of The Johnny Morris Foundation.

For more information and to keep updated on the 10 loggerhead sea turtles, go to wondersofwildlife.org/sea-turtles.