

# Blossoms Forever

A Newsletter for Blooming Prairie School District Alumni & Friends • May, 2012



**At the Servicemen's Club, recognition plaques are awarded at the annual foundation banquet. Left to right are Jim Oleson, John Peterson, Sue Swenson, 'H' Peterson, and Sister Franchon.**

## IT'S GREAT TO BE A BLOSSOM!

The theme of the 1959 BPHS yearbook "Prairie Schooner" is "The Doorway". Senior Class Vice President Ann Ingvalson Student Council President Ron Beckman are pictured entering into the doorway of the high school at the beginning of their Senior Year and looking out of those same doors at the end of their final school year. Underneath that last picture it reads "Here it is! The last doorway in the book is the doorway which leads us out of the school and into the wide, wonderful world which lies ahead of us all." We know now that a wide wonderful world did lay ahead for at least one member of the graduating Class of '59.

On January 21, 2012, Blossoms and Friends gathered together at the Blooming Prairie Servicemen's Club to once again recognize and honor the lives of our classmates and teachers. A member of the **Class of '59, Dr. James Oleson**, was among those honored and it is easy to say that our friend Jim did embrace the wide wonderful world. Dr. Oleson's career highlights include a Doctorate in Physics from Johns Hopkins University, graduation from The University of Arizona Medical School, a profession as a Radiation Oncologist at Duke University and The University of Arizona, an affiliation and work with Harvard University in Scotland, Past Chair of the Medical Residency Training

Program at The University of Arizona and many years of caring for cancer patients. A great contributor to the wide wonderful world. Jim is now retired to a career of Furnituremaker. He and his wife have three children and a granddaughter. His furniture is advertised on his website [jro-furnituremaker.com](http://jro-furnituremaker.com).

Joining Dr. Oleson as fellow 2012 "Blossoms Forever" honorees were **Sister Franchon (Connie Pirk)** Class of '53, **John Peterson**, Class of '47, **Educator Harold 'H' Peterson**, and **posthumously Coach and Educator Jim Poole**. Sister Franchon, a Franciscan Nun, has served and is still serving all of us. Her career includes service as a teacher in Minnesota and other states, mission work in other countries, campus ministry and Associate Dean at St. Theresa College. Remember the person in your graduating class who had a leadership personality mixed with caring and compassion for everyone around them? That is the life of Sister Franchon. A woman who serves as she leads. Sister Franchon's good works continue as she now serves those in need of hospice care.

**John Peterson** certainly deserves recognition as a Blossom athlete. Not many have the talent to earn 10 athletic letters, five in football, four in basketball, and one in baseball during their time at BPHS. However, John further distinguished himself because he earned at least two of those letters after being honorably discharged from the United States Navy after service in WWII. From the Pacific Theatre, John returned to Blooming Prairie and BPHS in time to join an undefeated football team and again play basketball. He speaks well of Coaches and fellow athletes of the past and remains a Blossom follower and fan.

**Coach Jim Poole** was nominated for the BPHS Athletic Hall of Fame by more than one of his former athletes and many of them were present at the annual BP Education Foundation Banquet when he posthumously received the recognition that he so well deserved. Coach Poole's daughter Sue Swenson, Class of '72, received the award in behalf of the Poole Family. Sue shared with the audience her correct recollections of her Dad's intensity and his concern for the young men that he coached and taught. Our friend, teacher, and fellow coach LeMar Nelson also spoke in behalf of Coach Poole and shared insights as only a fellow coach could. We well remember the Coaching



**2012 Honorees Celebrated at BPHS Ball Game** Left to right are Sue Swenson, 'H' Peterson, Jim Oleson, John Peterson, and Sister Franchon.

duo of Jim Poole and “The General” LeMar. They were a great team for all of us. Coach Poole is best remembered for leading the 1966 Blossom boys’ basketball team to the 8 team Minnesota State Basketball Tournament. However, his teams consistently earned Gopher conference championships and were frequent Sub-District Tournament winners. He also coached football for several years and ended with a record of 39-5-4 with three conference championships. Distinct memories of Coach Poole are many. He was a positive influence on the lives of the many men he coached.

**Harold ‘H’ Peterson** joined Bob Ackerwold while being honored as “Outstanding Educator”. ‘H’ could also earn honors as “Outstanding Citizen” as he is in his fourth term as Mayor of Blooming Prairie after serving 12 years on the City Council. At the January event, ‘H’ represented Outstanding Educators very well as he spoke of his teaching career beginning and ending in Blooming Prairie. His positive effect on students and citizens of Blooming Prairie is well remembered and widely respected.

Twenty-three people have now been honored under the headings that follow. We know that distinction exists among many other BPHS students and educators. Fill out the enclosed nomination sheet and send it to us. We are proud of our past and plan to continue to celebrate by honoring our alumni and educators.

## **Distinctive Service**

*Millie and Bud Hansen '36*

*LeMar Nelson*

*Marian Amundson Lehman '51*

*Bill Underwood '49*

*Roger Ingvalson '46*

*Janis Ingvalson Lueth '74*

*Chuck Halstenson '71*

*Kelly Magnuson '82*

*James Oleson '59*

*Sister Franchon (Connie Pirkel) '53*

## **Athletic Hall of Fame**

*Margaret Zwiener Hogan '34*

*Dean Brudwick '57*

*Allen Wold '43*

*Jeanne Kruckeberg Ide '86*

*Don Morrison '47*

*Roger 'Moose' Johnson '53*

*Dick Anderson '50*

*Tom Walsh '73*

*Coach Jim Poole*

*John Peterson '47*

## **Outstanding Educator**

*Robert 'Bob' Ackerwold*

*Harold 'H' Peterson*

## **BLOOMING PRAIRIE EDUCATION FOUNDATION**

We have often written about the encouragement and support given to each of us as we advanced through the grades of Blooming Prairie Public Schools. Many adults, including Teachers, Coaches, Business Owners, Pastors, and Scout Leaders provided experiences for us to mature and to grow as young Blossoms. That supportive spirit exists exponentially today and is personified among the many current and past members of the Blooming Prairie Education Foundation. The Foundation was created 8 or 10 years ago as a 501©(3) non-profit organization with the mission as stated in its By-Laws “to contribute to the development of innovative programs, fund special equipment needs and otherwise promote projects and programs to enhance learning opportunities for children”. The written mission states in black and white what the good people of

## WALL OF FAME

LeMar Nelson

When the local high school was remodeled two years ago, one of the changes included an expanded commons area of the building. With that improvement, Athletic Director John Worke hatched the notion that it would be interesting and important to recognize individuals or teams that had achieved success at the state level. Since that initial idea was broached, Worke has been collecting the accomplishments, which has already reached 25, and the “Wall of Fame” has been a focal point for visitors and students alike for which to observe and take note. For those who haven’t had the opportunity to visit the school since the extensive remodeling, a trip just to see the display is well worth the time and effort.

“When we got the added space with the new construction”, Worke remarked, “I just thought a special place for big accomplishments would be appropriate. I think it has worked out very well”.

The rules for inclusion of an individual or organization in the showing are very simple. Earning a spot on the wall comes from an individual state championship or participation in a state tournament by an organization. Thus, Patty Becker’s state title in Humorous Interpretation joins the 1966 basketball team’s achievement of reaching the state tournament as two of the examples included on the wall. Note that these are all modern records, as records before 1966 are either not available or not discovered.

Among the groups, four football teams are on display, the last two being semi-final losses in the semi-finals of the state playoffs. Those two, plus one previous year, mean that three of the five teams that have competed in the state playoffs were losses to the eventual state champions.

The girls’ basketball team earned a place with their state participation in 1998, and two consecutive softball teams (2010 and 2011) also have a spot. The 1984 girls’ track team won the state title, and Jeanne Kruckeberg set records in the 400 and 800 dashes, one of which still stands today. Two boys relay teams also hold state titles, but so far the school has been unable to find pictures of the teams.

Individual championships range from Becker’s 1979 title in speech to Lisi Ingvalson’s 300m hurdle title in 2002 to her triple AAA honor in 2003. Joining

Becker in speech is Theresa Hatteberg, who won a serious poetry title in 1996 and Justin Krell, who earned an All-State Farmer award in 2008.

Other athletic individual honors go to Lisa Meshke who won the state golf title in 2000, Elliot Herdina who set career pass reception record in 2007, and Luc Zellmer, who broke the record for touchdown passes in a career just last fall.

These are not all of the individuals or teams on display, but it is really quite an honor for all of those individuals and teams who have achieved the highest state accomplishment, and BPHS students will strive to continue that fine legacy and reach that ultimate goal. See you at the wall.

NOTE: The writing of our teacher and good friend, LeMar Nelson is very much appreciated. We believe that if a Number One Blossom should be named, LeMar would be the person chosen.



**John Worke** needs our help. He wrote, “We are still looking for a photo of the 880 Yard Relay team in 1973. They were state champions and they deserve to be on the wall. The members include: Jeff Jensen, Tom Walsh, Keith Brekke, and Pat Sheedy. The other photo we need is from the same year and the state champion was the mile Mile Relay team. These members include: Jeff Jensen, Paul Morrison, Keith Brekke, and Tom Walsh. If anyone can find us a picture of either relay team or both, we would really appreciate it.” John can be reached at BPHS via telephone, 507 583 4426 or email [jworke@blossoms.k12.mn.us](mailto:jworke@blossoms.k12.mn.us)



**Now a residence, was home for Elsie and family too.**



**Now a home. Remember the close-togetherness of the dance floor at Kernies?**

**Kernie's**, located on highway #30 near Ellendale, was somewhat equidistant from several towns and cities. Consequently, young men and women in attendance on Friday and Saturday night were face-to-face or elbow-to-elbow with one another in the dance area and particularly on the dance floor. Romance often sparked between, say a woman from Ellendale and a man from Blooming Prairie. The sparks that flew while normal and healthy sometimes resulted in a fire of passion that involved all the men present from the two small towns. Rivalries that began in athletic contests were often continued in the parking lot at Kernies.

**The Monterey**, located just south of Owatonna on County Road 45, was a secondary stop for many Blossoms on Saturday night. That is, if Zeiner's and Elsie's didn't provide enough suitable entertainment, it was on to the Monterey. Wedding dances of Blooming Prairie men and women were often held there so being present on those occasions was not a 2nd choice. We can't call the Monterey sophisticated, but it was a little more polished than the Bixby businesses. The Dance Hall is still in business today and comes alive for



**Still open. Can the past be recaptured?**

Wedding Dances and special events. Internet savvy? They advertise it as an affordable, elegant, historic ballroom. Banquet facilities for 500. Go to [www.montereyballroom.com/](http://www.montereyballroom.com/) for more information.

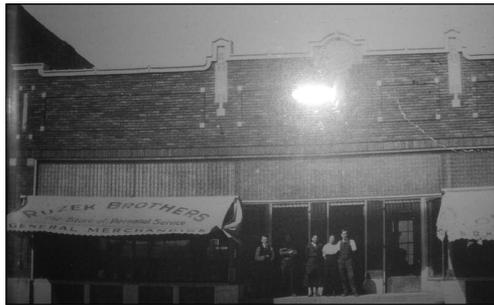


**Still open but no longer the Terp. Can you recall the "Big Band" Sound?**

The Terp, named we think because of the dance term Terpsichorean, is now back in business in Austin. It is now called El Parral Ballroom. The dance history of the Terp goes back to its origin in 1938. The building was destroyed by fire in 1945, was rebuilt and opened again in 1946. The Henry Charles Band received special notice as they played the night the building burned and also the night it reopened in '46. Closing as a dance hall in 1970, the building was used in variety of ways including service as a church. Featured big bands over the dance active time period included Guy Lombardo, Lawrence Welk, and Les Brown. We danced there in 1961 to the band of Les and Larry Elgart. The large circular dance floor provided plenty of space for those that were accomplished in the rhythms of the waltz and two-step.

**The Terp** attracted a more adult crowd than Zeiner's and the Monterey. However, Blossom young folks also were often present. When the Blooming Prairie Firemen's fund raising dance was held each

year, Blooming Prairie young and old were there. Women wore their best party dresses to the dance and the more sophisticated men dressed up in a coat and tie.



**An older picture of the pool hall, but many of us remember viewing the world from the same steps that are pictured.**

Located on Main Street in Blooming Prairie, **Ruzek's Pool Hall** was a place that entertained young boys as well as old men. The activities there probably provided many topics of discussion among Blooming Prairie women, particularly Mothers, but we never saw a girl or woman in the place. Think of it as a place where Huck Finn would have felt at home. Simply being present and listening to and viewing the conversations and activities of our older male friends and relatives provided background for the multitude of the lessons of life we learned there. In a practical sense, we learned to shoot pool with eight-ball as the predominant game. Snooker tables were available but didn't provide enough smack-the-ball action as regular pool. Men played cards with a house charge for each game played. Smokers and chewers were abundant. If you were a closet teenaged smoker, the pool hall aroma provided a readymade alibi at home. A parent's "were you smoking?" could be answered with "no, I was playing pool down at Ruzek's pool hall". In the spirit of good times, music was sometimes provided on Sunday afternoons by local amateur male musicians. A squeeze box was always a part of the ensemble and other instruments came and went according to the availability of the players. On at least one occasion a broom handle scraped rhythmically along the wood floor provided accompaniment. The building had a small bowling alley in the basement but it was not in use during the time that we were listening, viewing and learning all about life via Ruzek's Pool Hall. The building is now owned by Tamzen Johnson and Amy Doerhoefer in their public accounting business, Johnson and Doerhoefer PA. Tamzen and Amy kept

some interesting relics from the pool hall era and probably would be willing to show them to those interested. Caution is urged because some of the items provide graphic proof of past exploits.



**We'll always remember and appreciate Martha and "The Lark".**

Located just off Highway 218 in the south part of town, **The Lark/Martha's Supper Club** was another good BP business that tolerated the growing-up- goofiness that we were suffering at the time. Perhaps best known by young Blossoms as a gathering place after Friday night football and basketball games, Martha's provided another backdrop as we struggled to find ourselves. A positive attributed to owner Martha Wondra was the food served there. Among the teenagers, hamburgers and French fries prevailed. A cube steak dinner could be had for \$1.00. Many still-told stories of then young Blossoms start with, "We were at Marthas and then". Fill in the blanks with your own memories. Joyce (Dennis) Gubleman's memories of Martha's as shared in the November issue of "Blossom's Forever" provide another glimpse of the past. Joyce worked as a carhop and kitchen helper at Martha's in the '50's.

For the most senior of Blossoms, we mention **The Blue Hen**. Having only heard stories of Blue Hen events, we won't report further. Located close to the intersection of Highways 218 and 30, the club was certainly within the range of earlier Blossoms. Perhaps a reader will know the facts and send them to us to be printed in the next issue.

So, we weren't hard to entertain were we. However, our choices of away-from-school extracurricular activities were not always the best. We did

Blooming Prairie have been have been doing for the life time of the community.

The adult support of Blooming Prairie Public School students is perhaps best demonstrated in late March each year as the Education Foundation stages what is advertised as “The Best Party in Blooming Prairie”. With the support of literally hundreds of Blooming Prairie Area citizens and Business People, the Foundation hosts an auction to raise money in support of students. A success by any measure, a total of more than \$431,000 since 2004 has been gained to assist in achieving the mission. The 2012 event brought in \$69,735. Obviously, children are still highly valued in Blooming Prairie. Of course, also obvious is that Blooming Prairie residents still appreciate a “party”.

Specific 2011-2012 examples of enhanced learning opportunities paid for with money raised include an Artist in Residence, Preschool and Prekindergarten transportation, Special “Smartboards” for elementary school classrooms, Field Trips, support for the local Boy’s and Girl’s Club, and many other special events and items. Superintendent Barry Olson is vocal in thanking everyone for their support. He said, “The support for our schools through this auction is fantastic. It shows how our community believes in public education and what our school accomplishes”.

We know that past support of students of Blooming Prairie Public School students has “paid off”. Consider that our “Blossoms Forever” group has in the last few years honored more than 20 graduates who have contributed greatly to the lives of people across the world. Blessed by the everlasting contributions of the collective spirit of the community of Blooming Prairie, there are no limits for current children.

## **EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

We rather aged Blossoms remember well and fondly the many activities available to us in addition to BPHS graduation requirements. Athletic teams and events, music groups and competitions, various clubs, plays, etc. Volunteers in town also worked to keep us busy and engaged in activities such as church groups and scouts.

However, many of us managed to spend time learning in ways that were definitely not academic and while perhaps can be characterized as extracurricular did not earn us any positive recognition at school or at

home. Think about the **Blue Hen, Zeiners’ Terrace/Ballroom, Elsie’s, Kernies’, The Monterey, the Terp, Ruzek’s Pool Hall, and the Lark/Martha’s Supper Club**. Casting no aspersions on any of the business establishments, what goes through your mind as you remember Friday or Saturday night at one or more these “places of entertainment”? Following is a brief recollection of what we remember of those mentioned.



**The Ballroom is gone.  
The sign and the memories remain.**

**Zeiner’s Terrace/Ballroom** in Bixby tops the list because we know that so many of us were present there at Wedding Dances and special events. Our guess is that many “firsts” of growing up took place at or because of attendance at a Zeiner’s Terrace Dance. Our family lived for a short time in the house that still exists on the Bixby site so we are aware of events going back as far as the ‘40’s. Zeiner’s Terrace is closed and the building is gone. However, the memories remain. Especially we remember Ma and Pa Zeiner.

When we tired of dancing at Zeiner’s, or perhaps could not find a way to sneak in, **Elsie’s** was close by. Describing Elsie’s as an intimate setting is probably not correct. However, after a certain amount of time and a certain amount of drink, intimacy became much easier to envision. Elsie and Herb Huss owned and operated the “club”. With certainty, we can tell readers that Elsie was in charge and took no back talk from anyone. Remember her broom? We can report directly that when Elsie saw us entering she would say “It’s only another one of those blankety-blank Myers boys. Elsie and Herb have passed away and the business is closed.

learn from observing adult behavior and listening to adult conversations that took place during events at the various venues and in many instances figured out what-not-to do. Personally, and I know from listening to classmates and friends that also visited the fun places mentioned, our parents, teachers, and Blooming Prairie adults knew all about us and our activities. They readily forgave our transgressions and they still liked us.

## 2012 BLOSSOM CLASS REUNIONS

**Class of '39** meets every year at noon on the first Friday in August at Jerry's Other Place in Austin. Contact Merten Hansen for further information.

**Class of '43** will have a Class Reunion on Saturday, May 19, 11:30 a.m., at the Kernel Restaurant, 1011 Hoffman Drive in Owatonna. (Next to Ford Garage) Contact Gladys Pechacek for more information. 507-451-3570

**Class of '44** meets every year at the Pizza Cellar on the first Friday in October. Esther Hansen is the class contact.

**Class of '45** meets at the Pizza Cellar at 11:30 a.m. on each first Friday after the 4th of July. Contact Gerry Oswald for more information.

**Class of '47** meets annually at the Blooming Prairie Pizza Cellar on the second Saturday of August.

**Class of '50** will meet the first Saturday in July at "Torey's", 685 Bridge St. in Owatonna at 11:15 a.m. RSVP to Barbara Kading Wesely at 507-451-6355.

**Classes of '52 and '53** will meet for a buffet meal at BP's Pizza Cellar on July 3rd, 5:00 p.m. Classmates are asked to remind each about this yearly event. Same place, same time, every year.

**Class of '54** will be together at the Pizza Cellar on the first Saturday of August each year. Contact Dick Miller at 507-437-1600 for more information.

**Class of '55** plans to meet at the Pizza Cellar on the first Saturday in August at 4:00 p.m. each year. Marilyn Robinson Tollefson will provide more information. 507-753-7553

**Class of '57** will meet annually on the 2nd Saturday in August at the Pizza Cellar. Contact Margaret and Bill Noble for more information. 507-583-2992

**Class of '60** will meet on Saturday, October 13, 4:00 p.m. at the Pizza Cellar. Contact Elaine Hillson Trotman at 507-583-2704 for more information.

**Class of '61** is scheduled to meet on Saturday, October 6, 5:00 p.m. at the Pizza Cellar. Carol Knutson Kruckeberg is the contact. 507-582-2122

**Class of '62** will celebrate with a 50th reunion on July 28, 2012 at the BP Servicemen's Club. Contact Jean Haubenschild at 507-583-2526 for more information.

We would like to advertise your class reunions. Contact Doug Myers at 507-433-6262 or e-mail [dmyers3@charter.net](mailto:dmyers3@charter.net)

For information about the Blooming Prairie Education Foundation go to [blossoms.k12.mn.us](http://blossoms.k12.mn.us) or to Facebook page.

[www.bloomingprairie.com](http://www.bloomingprairie.com) contains current information about the City of Blooming Prairie.



# **BLOSSOM FOREVER NEWSLETTERS- NOVEMBER 2007 TO NOVEMBER 2011**

We have been mailing “Blossom Forever” newsletters to everyone for whom we had current mailing addresses since November 2007 to now. We know that not everyone received every issue because readers told us so. Consequently, in this technological world, we have put past issues on the internet. **Paul Tollefson** has generously donated the talent and time needed to make this happen. His instructions for gaining access are as follows:

Enter the Blooming Prairie Public Schools website at [www.blossoms.k12.mn.us](http://www.blossoms.k12.mn.us) Click on the District tab at the top of the page, move the selection arrow down to the bottom of the list, highlighting “Blooming Prairie Education Foundation”, then click the BP Ed Foundation link. Once the page loads, click on the Ed Foundation Newsletter link. (Fourth down on the left side).

# **BLOOMING PRAIRIE JULY 4TH CELEBRATION**

Blossoms and Friends are invited and encouraged to gather in the park on the 4th of July. The “Blossoms Forever” tent is always located in the Northeast corner of the park and provides a meeting and resting place for old and new friends. Blossom memorabilia from the past will be displayed. This year’s Blossom honorees, Jim Oleson, Sister Franchon (Connie Pirk), John Peterson, Sue Swenson representing her Dad, Jim Poole, and Harold ‘H’ Peterson will be invited to ride in the parade.

## **CORRECTIONS**

We apologize to Diane Osby Peterson and Ken Trom for errors made in the November issue. Diane was reported as being Diane Olson Peterson and in addition, we said that she had donated her book “Bathed in Light” to the BPHS library. Actually, she gave a copy of the book to the Library at the First Lutheran Church. We wrote that Ken Trom’s family included a granddaughter. That is not correct.



Blooming Prairie Education Foundation  
PO Box 521  
Blooming Prairie, MN 55917