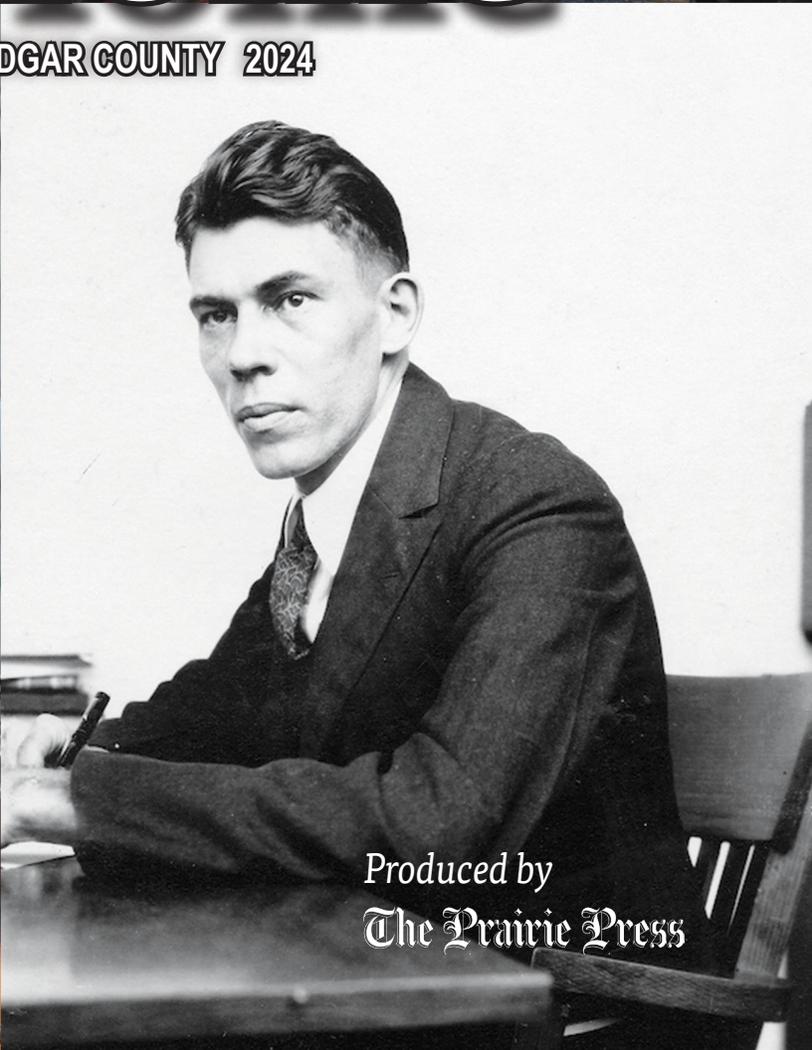




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THE MAGAZINE OF EDGAR COUNTY 2024



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OUR MISSION

The Edgar County Community Foundation seeks to raise the quality of life throughout Edgar County by developing and channeling philanthropy to meet the changing needs of its residents. Through collaboration and cooperation with community groups and individuals the foundation provides opportunity to both the donor and the recipient.

The foundation supports nonprofit organizations working in the arts and culture, civic affairs, historic preservation, education, youth activities, environmental affairs and health and human services. For more information, contact us by phone, mail, or email.

ECCF FACTS

The Edgar County Community Foundation came from a simple idea. It provides a conduit for our residents, families, and everyone with ties to Edgar County to support local charities, civic causes, health, educational scholarships, and school development. They are assured the money will be used in support of those groups, exclusively in Edgar County. It started in 1996 with a goal of improving life for the people of Edgar County. ECCF

is a **WORKING** Foundation, raising and dispersing over 6 million dollars since inception. Our Foundation has working funds of over \$2 million dollars this year. With the addition of our new permanent **Forever Fund**, everyone can rest assured donations will continue indefinitely used For Good, Forever, For Edgar County.

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Our Home MAGAZINE

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INTRODUCING OUR HOME: MADE IN EDGAR COUNTY

It can be easy to overlook a place like Edgar County – a rural area with roughly 16,400 residents spread between a spattering of small towns, villages and hamlets. From the outside looking in, someone might wonder if anything of significance has emerged from such humble beginnings.

In this year's edition of Our Home Magazine, we hope to answer that question with a resounding "yes". By highlight-

ing the people, products and events that trace their roots to our home, things *Made in Edgar County*, this year's publication pulls back the curtain on the innovation, culture and talent cultivated across our very own swathe of east central Illinois.

More importantly, our staff hopes this magazine serves as a celebration of the people who have shaped this community and the world, and those who keep pushing it toward a bright-

er tomorrow.

Like the people and places included in this magazine, The Prairie Press prides itself on its connection to Edgar County as a locally-owned and operated news outlet. Thank you for supporting The Prairie Press and investing in Edgar County. We hope to keep telling the local stories that matter most to our readers for years to come.

ROBBY TUCKER, PUBLISHER



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What is made in Edgar County?

BY ROBBY TUCKER
rtucker@prairiepress.net

Believe it or not, Edgar County exports more than corn, beans and grain.

In fact, products manufactured and assembled in Edgar County run a wide gamut, including headlights, renewable containers, grain storage, nutrition supplement ingredients and even aerospace engine components. Across the country and across various industries, it does not take too much effort to spot a product that got its start in Edgar County.

Manufacturers have grown to play a pivotal role in the county's economy, bringing traffic and business to the area, specifically Paris, while offering jobs to those in and around the community. For some, companies like North American Lighting (NAL) brought with them more than a job, but a place to learn, grow and make a living while staying close to home.

NAL

For anyone familiar with Paris, NAL is a household name. Since 2005, the company's headquarters have been located on the south side of town, but the company's roots in the area run deeper.

In 1983, a joint venture between Hella, Ichikoh and Koito Manufacturing turned into NAL. The company was first established in Flora, Ill. and expanded by building new facilities in Salem, Ill. and Detroit shortly after. In 2001, Koito acquired its partners' shares of the company, becoming NAL's sole parent organization.

Shortly after this, NAL's next location was selected: Paris, Ill. At first, the Paris facility served as a headlamp manufacturing facility – a function it still serves to this day, but later was selected to house the company's corporate headquarters in 2005.

Between the corporate offices and the manufacturing facility, NAL supports roughly 1,750 employees in Paris.



Photos provided by North American Lighting and GSI

Pictured are Brittany Clark (top, NAL), Phil Brown (left, GSI) and Dayton Bailey (right, NAL).

Few of those employees have been around the company as long as Brian Gosnell.

Gosnell was still in school when he first learned about NAL. After encountering North American Lighting during a job fair at Eastern Illinois University, he pursued the opportunity and was offered a position at the company shortly after the Paris facility opened its doors in 2002.

Over his 22 years with the company, Gosnell climbed the ranks, working in various positions before becoming the director of NAL's production control department.

According to Gosnell, his role is a mix of management and strategic planning – a game of metaphorical Tetris that requires him to make the most of his company's resources and facility space to meet demands in a rapidly shifting market.

"It's become more complicated than it ever was before, based

on labor availability... manufacturing space and several other variables that we have to watch closely to make sure we're making the best business decision," he explained.

For Gosnell, the challenges of his work make it exciting.

"(There's) never a slow day – no shortages of opportunities," he explained. "It just naturally pushes you every day to get better and learn."

The fruit of Gosnell's labor can be seen on nearly any road trip, commute or grocery store run. The headlamps constructed in Paris make their way into vehicles driven all over the country.

"If you see a Toyota, Honda, Nissan, Subaru, Ford or GM vehicle on the road, there is a good chance it has a NAL lamp on it," said Gosnell.

Perhaps even more impressive than NAL's long list of clients is its list of technological advancements and achievements. NAL

headlamps were used in the first-ever Lexus manufactured in North America. The lamps were steerable and used high-intensity discharge technology – the successor to traditional filament bulbs. In 2015, the Paris plant produced the first LED headlamps used in a non-luxury vehicle.

Today, NAL's eyes are still set on the horizon, as the automotive lighting industry prepares for the arrival of the next technological leap: adaptive driving beams (ADB). The technology can sense incoming light sources, whether another vehicle's headlights or a bright reflection from a road sign, and "carve" the light beam away from the object in real time, all while still providing ample coverage of the road ahead.

"It's unbelievable," said Gosnell.

For all of their designs, Gosnell

explained that safety, efficiency and maintaining their client's unique aesthetic voice are all priorities, with the former being the most important. Whether on the road or on the production line where the lamps are made, safety comes first.

"There are very few components on a car that have both an aesthetic design element and a functional safety element," he explained. "It's a very, very challenging product. But obviously safety is on the forefront, for everything we do... it (safety) is more than just a slogan around here."

In addition to the pace and scope of his work, Gosnell, a Paris native, cited NAL's various charitable efforts in the community and the close proximity to his family as some of the best benefits of his job.

"NAL has provided me with the opportunity to stay home in this great community near family and friends while having ex-

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ceptional career opportunities,” he explained.

GSI

For plant manager Phil Brown, two things have kept him coming back to work at Grain Systems (GSI) in Paris for 25 years.

“Customers and the people I will work with keep me coming back every day,” he explained. “We have a great team in Paris, and I work for a great company in AGCO/GSI that really cares about farmers and its employees.”

First established in 1972 by Craig Sloan, GSI has grown to become one of the largest producers of grain bins and grain storage equipment not just in the United States, but in the world.

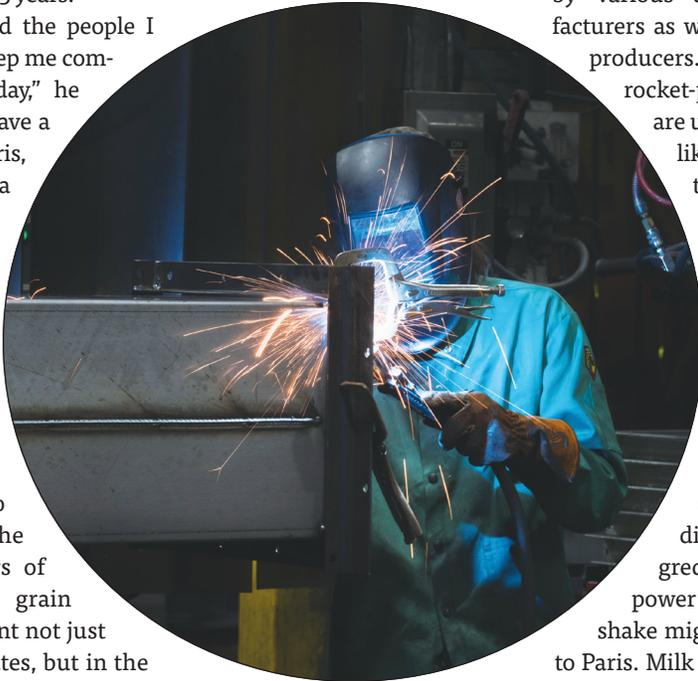
A little more than two decades later in 1996, GSI set up shop in Paris. Brown credited an increase in demand for GSI’s products as the motivation for the new facility.

Since then, the manufacturer has grown to own 40 acres of property complete with 300,000 square feet of manufacturing space.

The Paris plant, and the 240 employees that work there, specialize in developing and as-

sembling grain handling equipment and fertilizer. Their products can be seen in grain storage facilities across the county, state and even in other parts of the world.

Brown noted that the compa-



ny provides more than a product to its community. Competitive jobs, opportunities for workers to hone their fabrication skills and training opportunities for local students are a couple of the benefits Brown cited.

“Paris GSI holds a high reputation in the market for top-quality product(s),” said Brown.

Most of all, he believes GSI’s mission sets the company apart, not just its product.

“We contribute to feeding the world,” he explained.

AEROGEN-TEK

AeroGen-TEK, located on the southern edge of Paris, produces combustion components used by various aerospace manufacturers as well as gas turbine producers. The company’s rocket-powered products are used by companies like General Electric, Rolls Royce, Siemens and more.

MILK SPECIALTIES GLOBAL

For weightlifters and athletes, or anyone on a nutrient-rich diet, some of the ingredients in your next power bar or protein shake might be traced back to Paris. Milk Specialties Global is a producer of nutrition-minded ingredients used in a wide variety of products. The company employs more than 1000 employees across 12 different facilities, including one in Paris, and prioritizes clean, sustainable production habits.

SIMONTON WINDOWS

Located in Paris, Simonton Windows is one of the largest producers of windows and doors in the country. In 2023, both US News & World Digest and Ar-

chitectural Digest recognized Simonton products as the “Best Vinyl Window Replacement” of the year.

QUANEX

Quanex is a supplier of various building components commonly seen throughout the home and office. The manufacturer assembles cabinet doors, drawer fronts, lazy susan trays and much more.

PRETIUM PACKAGING

At its various locations across the world and its manufacturing plant in Paris, Pretium Packaging designs and produces renewable plastic containers and bottles for use across several industries, including healthcare, food and beverage, commercial chemicals and personal care products.

CADILLAC PRODUCTS PACKAGING COMPANY

Not to be confused with the automotive company of the same name, Cadillac Products Packaging Company’s Paris plant takes part in the organization’s production of packaging for clients in the medical, food and industrial fields. Most notably, Cadillac partners with the Department of Defense to produce packaging for MREs (Meal, Read-To-Eat): perishable rations meant to remain edible for extended periods. These rations are used by the United States Armed Forces and in disaster response.

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The little Shop on the Square

Community pharmacists are among the most accessible healthcare professionals to the public, they can provide personalized advice about both medication and health, without the red tape of setting up an appointment or visiting a hospital. Serving as a community backbone, pharmacies provide essential services like medication management and disease state management in an accessible setting.

BY BETHANY WAGONER
bwagoner@prairiepress.net

Few places in Edgar County are as well known for their commitment to patient care as a longstanding pharmacy at 116 West Court Street in Paris.

Pearman Pharmacy, a locally owned and operated drugstore has a long history of creating accessibility and comfort while promoting patient education. Steve Benefiel, co-owner of the business for nearly 50 years, says that commitment to community care has been a value the store has held from the start.

Benefiel says he learned how to serve his community from his predecessors, they were positive role models who taught him to live where he works and to put good back into his hometown.

"I've learned community services from all of these people and this long legacy is a legacy I am proud to be a part of and help carry on into the future," he said.

The legacy Benefiel belongs to began in 1869 when Paris resident James Binford asked his friend from the army, Eli Lilly, to join him and help establish a pharmacy in his hometown.

After serving as a captain in the Civil War, Lilly lost his wife to disease and was forced to file for bankruptcy. He had relocated to Texas, and then to Indianapolis, but was struggling to reestablish his life amid turmoil.

Lilly accepted Binford's proposal and Binford-Lilly's Red Front Store was born. The agreement between the two men was that Binford would put up the money and Lilly would run the pharmacy, the profits were to be divided equally.

Publicity for the store told Paris residents "In addition to drugs, paints, oils, varnishes, dye-stuffs and window glass, the store also sells patent medicines, veterinary medicines and medications such as 'Blood and con-

dition powder' manufactured only by Binford and Lilly."

For four years Lilly settled into life in Paris, running the pharmacy and eventually getting married. He and his family became active in the city, joining an Episcopal Church and purchasing a house on Wood Street - Lilly even attempted to run for mayor.

The pharmacist took great care to begin designing medicinal formulas during his tenure at the Red Front store. He was preparing to begin a small-scale manufacturing plant locally when in 1873, Lilly was offered a new partnership, this one with a friend from Indianapolis.

John Johnston suggested Lilly was capable of much larger things than making blood and condition powders in a small-town pharmacy. He proposed a large-scale partnership in the manufacturing of pharmaceuticals with Johnson offering to

supply most of the capital.

Lilly spoke with his current partner and invited Binford to come along to Indianapolis and join him, but Binford chose to stay in Paris with their local pharmacy operation. Eli Lilly and Company was born on Jan. 1, 1874, in Indianapolis.

Benefiel explains that Lilly was instrumental in streamlining medication dosage and formulas.

"In those days the way medications were created and dispensed was different, there wasn't a standard process or the same formulation for each medication," Benefiel said. "In many ways, he (Lilly) standardized the process."

Back home in Paris, Binford continued to run the Red Front store until his death in 1896.

The pharmacy, which had expanded to two locations around the Paris square, one on the east side and one on the south side,

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would change hands a few times over the next few years.

An 1891 pharmacy school graduate named Ross Mason was hired to step in and continue the running of the store after Binford's death. Little is known about Mason other than his graduation from Purdue University and his management at the pharmacy until 1908.

In 1908, J.H. Reed purchased the stores and changed their names to Reed's Drug Store. His son, Claude Reed joined him for a short time in partnership.

Twenty-nine years later, in 1937, Allen Pearman purchased the store and renamed the location on the east side of the square Pearman Pharmacy. In 1949, the store permanently moved to the south side of the square to 116 W. Court Street, where it still operates today.

Pearman passed in 1960 and one of his pharmacy techs worked with his estate to pur-

chase the store. Dick Hardy became the store's owner and enlisted the help of pharmacist Jim Kasumpas to run the pharmacy.

The two installed one of the first pharmacy drive-thru windows in the midwest and contin-

old.

"Cliff Benson was a neighbor to my folks and I used to mow his yard. One day he asked me, "Would you be interested in working at a pharmacy?" Benefiel recalls. "And then all of a

“
Our pharmacy IS ONE OF THOSE PLACES THAT HAS STOOD THE TEST OF TIME BECAUSE OF THE EMPHASIS WE HAVE PUT ON REMAINING LOCAL AND PROMOTING LOCAL.”

STEVE BENEFIEL
Pearman Pharmacy

ued to cultivate the pharmacy, maintaining its soda fountain services, catalog items and medications.

In 1966 Benefiel was hired at the pharmacy, he was 16 years

sudden I get a phone call from Dick saying you're supposed to be here this morning to work... Cliff had forgotten to tell me, but I had gotten the job."

When he started in the phar-

macy Benefiel began by washing dishes and working behind the counter as a soda jerk, but it was not long before his experiences changed him and his educational goals.

"I had wanted to go into engineering," Benefiel explained "After about six weeks or so, of being in the pharmacy, and working until around eight o'clock at night with Jack (Sorenson)... I got to know him really well and he started talking to me about the pharmacy. He's the one who taught me."

Pharmacist Jack Sorenson became a role model in Benefiel's life and career, but he would not be the only one.

In 1968, Charles Willis purchased the pharmacy from Hardy. Willis was hopeful that in the future his soon-to-be son-in-law would purchase the store from him. His dreams became a reality when just a short time later his daughter's new husband,

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Tom Hebermehl, took over the store's ownership.

Benefiel says he learned a lot from his time with Willis.

"He was an industrialist and cared a lot about the community," Benefiel said. "He would come up to me and ask my opinion on matters and I really developed a relationship with him."

In 1972, the newest owner of Pearman Pharmacy, Hebermehl, began remodeling and expanding the store. The counter that used to serve up snacks and drinks was transitioned to dispensing only medication. The storefront also started carrying less commercially available items and more medical supplies.

The pharmacy became one of the first regionally to accept assignment from Medicare and dispense durable medical equipment.

"Nobody around here carried anything," Benefiel said. "We were one of the first to start billing Medicare and not having customers pay upfront and that, professionally, was really interesting."

In 1973, after graduating from St. Louis College of Pharmacy, Benefiel came back to Paris to work at the store as a pharmacist. He says that originally he and his wife made a five-year deal to stay and work at the local shop before they made any major decisions.

"At the end of the five years, we really hadn't talked about it, and I had not thought about leaving," Benefiel said. "Tom (Hebermehl) came and approached me about a partnership."

In 1978 Benefiel bought in as an equal partner.

The partnership of Hebermehl and Benefiel saw the pharmacy blossom, establishing delivery services that expanded outside of Paris to Chrisman and Oakland.

Because of their partnership, both pharmacists were able to expand their involvement in the community while simultane-

ously working at the store.

"Tom taught me that you have to give back to your community," Benefiel said. "That's what we set out to do, because if your community isn't here, then your pharmacy is not here, there is no one to serve."

Hebermehl became instrumental in the Kiwanis club, the Link Art Gallery and Main Street USA programs, among others.

After joining the American Cancer Society and serving as their education director, Benefiel participated in school boards, became a founding member of the Paris Center of Fine Arts and took a position as vice president on the Rec Center's board of directors, among many other roles.

"I am honored, really and truly, to be among everyone from Lilly on up who has been a part of building up the community," Benefiel said. "Some of them were the Tom Hebermechs, some of them were Eli Lillys. These men are professionals and they have worked hard inside of the community, they built a store that I think is still successful today."

Benefiel says that pharmacies have been instrumental in places like Edgar County for years, where there used to be half a dozen apothecaries scattered around the square selling various odds and ends, he credits Pearman Pharmacy's endurance to carrying on the tradition of customer service and community involvement.

"We are big into customer service, a lot of these pharmacies from Hardy on down were focused on that," he said. "You wanted to do things for people, for your friends and your neighbors when they walked into the door... customer service comes from inside a person, you have to care for your fellow man."

Looking towards the future, Benefiel is still involved at the drugstore but has taken a step



Special to The Prairie Press
Steve Benefiel



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Dustin Melton



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Eli Lilly

back while Paris native Dustin Melton steps into a more prominent partner role.

Like Benefiel, Melton started at the local pharmacy in 1996 as a part-time delivery driver to put himself through Engineering school. His direction quickly shifted and he attended Pharmacy School at Wayne State University in Detroit. After school, the youngest of six brothers, returned to Paris and Pearman Pharmacy to serve as a staff pharmacist.

Melton has also taken on an active role in his community like the many men who came before him, he is active in the Paris Rotary Club, a supporter of several non-profit organizations and an enthusiast of sup-

porting the community that helped raise him.

"Our pharmacy is one of those places that has stood the test of time because of the emphasis we have put on remaining local and promoting local," Benefiel said. "But, our community has also continued to support us and returned the love and support. We take care of our employees and make an effort to be involved, that is a tradition I hope the pharmacy, and the people who support it, continue to carry for a long time."

Remembering a *Tiger legend*



BY NANCY ZEMAN
nzeman@prairiepress.net

It took one determined coach and his wife, hundreds of basketball fans and a promise to make the construction of Ernie Eveland Gym a reality.

When Coach Ernie Eveland came to Paris in 1935, boys basketball games were played in what is now known as the Community Room of Tiger Senior Apartments. To those Paris High School alumni who attended the former PHS building, it will always be the Girls Gym. But, to those who might have attended a game when Eveland first came to Paris, it was the gym where basketball was played, complete with a wood floor and seating in a balcony around the gym.

After a dismal 5-17 record the previous season, Eveland's Tiger team finished with an impressive 18-9 mark, winning the regional, sectional and making it to Huff Gym for the state tournament Sweet 16 quarterfinals.

After that success in the first season of the Eveland years, there were never enough seats in the old gym. Opponents jeered at the facility, calling it a crackerbox. Fans, meanwhile, arrived for games hours before tipoff to guarantee a seat.

Eveland, his wife and school board member Rodney Bell, as well as parents and basketball fans, hatched a plan to construct a new gym. To make a new gym a reality, the Paris Union School District 95 voters would have to pass a bond referendum to fund the work.

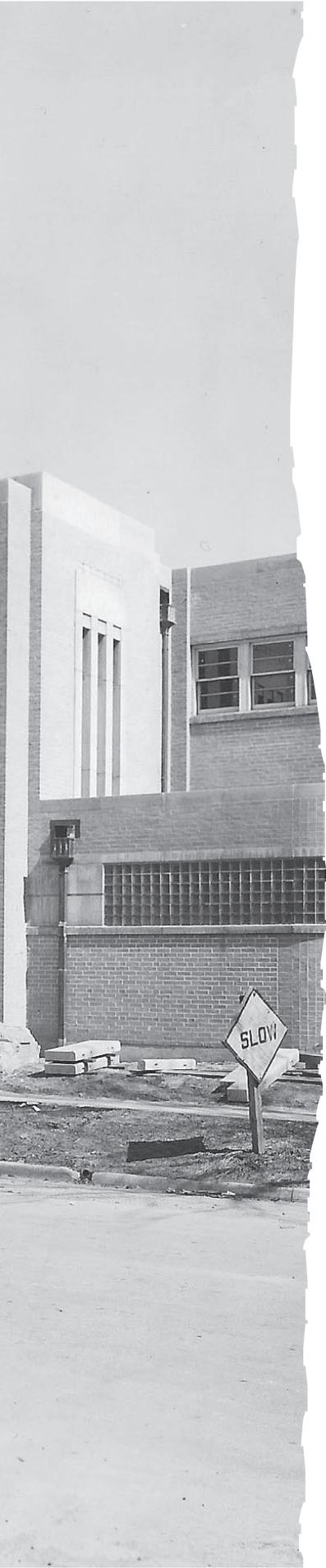
Paris was still in the midst of the Depression and passing a bond referendum was iffy at best. Eveland and the group working for the construction of the gym had an ace up their sleeve. To entice voters to support the project, a deal was struck. Voting yes for the project would mean no family in Paris 95 would ever have to pay to rent textbooks again.

The cost for textbooks seems minimal to residents now, but, at the time, every penny a family was able to save helped pay rent, mortgage, food, clothes and other necessities.

The site selected for the new gym was on the same block as Paris High School. A house located at the corner of Main and Madison had to be demolished or moved. As it turned out, the house was moved to

West Crawford by cutting it in two and then reassembling it at the new location. It became the Eveland family home.

Funded by the school district under the Works Progress Administration, which oversaw the work, there was cause for concern after Pearl Harbor and America's entry into World War II that the project might be stopped – or at the least experience problems getting ma-



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materials. This was not the case and after ground was broken in 1941, the new gym project was completed in time for the first game of the 1943-44 school year on Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 25, 1943.

The new gym held 3,000 persons and was packed for the monumental occasion. The Tigers took on Effingham in the first game in the gym, according to the 1944 PHS yearbook records. Paris won 26-21 before a standing-room-only crowd.

Eveland Gym was constructed as a venue for one reason – to play and watch basketball games. It was attached to the main school by a catwalk over the alley that ran between the two buildings. There were classrooms in the new gym. Above the east balcony were two large classrooms occupied by home economics classes. Below the north bleachers were a band room, practice rooms and a chorus room as well as storage for the music programs. The concession stand was located across the alley in the Rec Room.

While the gym was constructed during austere times, it was first class. A maple floor

was brightly shined with strict rules never to walk on it – not even the east end to cross to the band or chorus rooms. No one was allowed on the gym's floor without athletic shoes and definitely no one was allowed to walk on the bleacher seats. Such care is likely why the original gym floor lasted into the 1990s before it had to be replaced.

In 1977, the late Oliver “Stretch” Yates began a campaign to have the gym named for Ernie Eveland, who finished his tenure at PHS with a stellar record of 592-125 for a 826 winning percentage.

The Paris 95 school board approved the renaming and on Dec. 16, 1977, a capacity crowd was on hand to officially name the new gym in Eveland's honor. Many of Eveland's former players were present and introduced. PHS Athletic Director, the late John McNary, unveiled a plaque to be hung in the entryway of the gym – it still hangs there today.

Eveland Gym has been recognized as one of the top 20 best places to play basketball in Illinois. It was featured

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on National Public Radio as a shining example of small town, rural America and the pride a community like Paris demonstrated in its small-town values.

In 2014, the Paris Chamber of Commerce, the Prairie Press and Paris High School hosted the Eveland Extravaganza to honor the players and the building that had served the community for 61 years. To no one's surprise, the gym was stacked to the rafters with fans.

The gym, now owned by the city, still overwhelms those visiting for the first time. Former Paris Coach Gene Gourley, who later moved on to take the Danville High School job, fondly remembers his first time in the gym.

"I can remember walking into an empty gym right after we moved to town," Gourley said. "It was a Sunday night

and I was the only one there." The retired Danville High School coach who spent six years as the Tiger head man, recalls "just surveying that wonderful gym. I kept thinking of all the history in that gym. It was really surreal."

The Illinois Basketball Hall

of Fame member describes himself as a "traditionalist" when it comes to basketball.

"I love the old gyms," he said. "There was only one reason Eveland Gym was built — to play basketball and to have fans watch it."

He said new schools have

gyms that are multi-purpose and many times include three or four courts so practice can be scheduled at one time. "It's like a marketplace or mall," he said.

Eveland Gym is unique with its concrete bleachers. "It was built only for fans to watch

“

Eveland Gym HAS BEEN
**RECOGNIZED AS ONE OF THE TOP
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and for teams to play varsity basketball," he said.

He mentioned similar gyms in Centralia, Pinkeyville, Alton and Mt. Vernon. "People don't appreciate the old gyms until they are gone," he said.

Tiger hall of famers Otho Tucker and Rick Gosnell loved

playing in Eveland Gym, especially when it was hot.

Every seat in the house was taken and the gym was always rocking.

"I loved playing in a hot gym," Tucker laughed. "It was a psychological tool."

Distracting the opposing team with a hot gym gave Paris an advantage.

There have been scores of exciting girls and boys basketball games played in Eveland Gym, including a four-overtime game, a win that broke Charleston's nine-game winning streak against Paris that ended with a last-minute shot by Tucker as well as Coach Punzelt's girls games against arch rival Teutopolis.

Eveland Gym stands today as a testament to one-man's determination to provide his players the best opportunities to succeed and a community's support of its youth.

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Springing into tradition

Gary Henry/Prairie Press File Photos

BY GRETCHEN STONE
gstone@prairiepress.net

BROCTON—Brocton might be a village of only 300 people, but its longstanding Springfest tradition garners a lot of attention from Edgar County residents and visitors from several states away.

The Brocton Springfest and Draft Horse Show began in 1988, because the community interest was there for a focus on horse pulls and creating interest among horse lovers, to watch workhorses compete in halter and hitch classes.

“Springfest has existed for probably at least 30 years,” said Brocton Council member Brianna Roberts.

P a r t of the show was the Red Barn,

where the stalls were used for horses who were at rest between shows. Those stalls are now used solely for the Vendors Market, because the horse show portion no longer exists.

Community interests have evolved and now are centered around fun with the kids, shopping, entertainment and food.

This year, the Council’s main focus is the Red Barn Market, and the antiques, crafts and collectibles that local residents prefer to see. At last year’s market, more than 50 vendors set up in the barn, with food trucks set up outside for all-day sales.

Roberts, a committee member for Springfest, said they are in initial planning stages for this year’s two-day event, and don’t yet have a tentative schedule.

The dates are set for Friday, May 31 and Saturday, June 1, with a parade at 10 a.m. Saturday.

“Anyone can enter the parade, the more the merrier,” Roberts said.

Sound City is playing Saturday night and there’s a beer tent, the huge vendor market, a large car show that this year includes semis and tractors.

The Red Barn Market ran



for more than 20 years as a standalone event earlier in the year, just before the start of spring, but has now been folded into Springfest, because the women who previously ran it have stepped away.

The event's committee still plans to hold the parade, inflatables for kids, ribeye sandwiches from Wild Willy's, the Firemen's Fish Fry, food vendors, face painting, a kiddie tractor pull and a small petting zoo.

Roberts has been in contact with the animal shelter and humane society about bringing adoptable pets in too. They are working with the National Guard and scheduling a K9/EMS tour for the kids, a water activity and a horse and buggy ride.

"That is still our goal, to fill our Red Barn," Roberts said. "We are still filling in a lot of the details."

Exhibitors in the past have traveled from as far away as Canada for the Red Barn Market, and from states including Ohio, Iowa, Indiana, Missouri, Michigan, Wisconsin, Tennessee and Kentucky.

Highlights from previous

Springfests included the Fireman's Jonah Fish Fry with 1,000 attendees in one evening, the parade, Antique Tractor Pull, horseshoes, Kiddie Tractor Pull, as well as children's and adult's games, including Adult Jenga.



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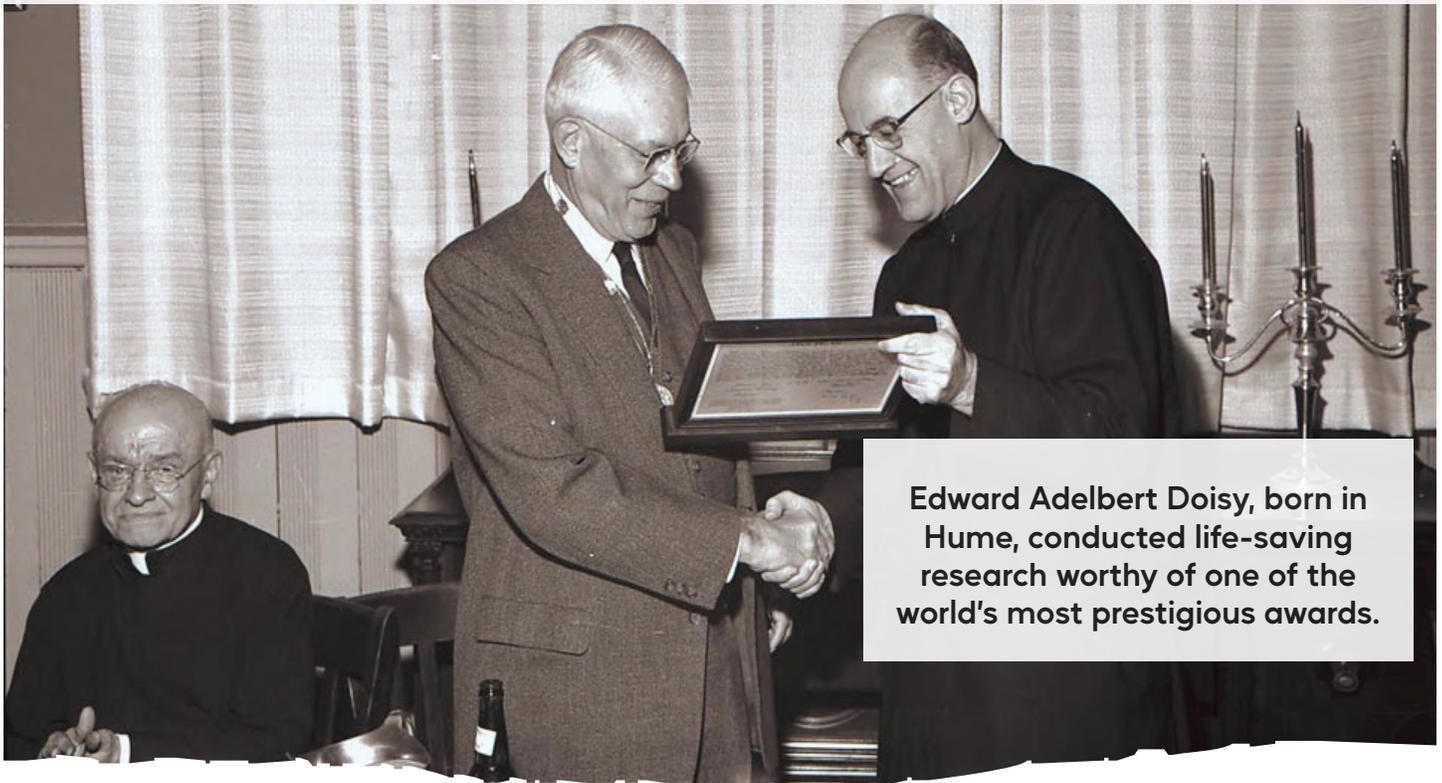
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The man who *stopped the bleeding*



Edward Adelbert Doisy, born in Hume, conducted life-saving research worthy of one of the world's most prestigious awards.

BY ROBBY TUCKER
rtucker@prairiepress.net

HUME – Until the 1930s, thousands of parents lived in fear of a phantom killer – one that could kill or harm a seemingly healthy newborn child with little to no warning.

One of the earliest documented instances of infant hemorrhaging was recorded in 1682 by French obstetrician François Mauriceau. Later, the term “Haemorrhagic disease of the newborn” was coined for what would eventually become known as vitamin K deficiency bleeding, or VKDB.

The condition, as the name suggests, stems from a lack of vitamin K, which is critical in the process of coagulation. Vitamin K is either consumed in certain greens (vitamin K1) or produced by gut bacteria (vitamin K2). For newborns with sterile stomachs, neither is an

option.

Without sufficient vitamin K, newborns are at risk of excessive bleeding and internal hemorrhaging. Approximately one in five babies diagnosed with VKDB dies.

Fortunately, VKDB is rare in today's United States thanks to vitamin K shots and the scientific advancements that made them possible – including one critical breakthrough that traces its origins to a modest farming community nestled in Edgar County.

Edward Adelbert Doisy was born on Nov. 13, 1893, and was raised in the village of Hume. His parents were Edward Perez Doisy and Ada Doisy.

Edward A. Doisy's inquisitive and sharp mind propelled him to the University of Illinois, where he completed a bachelor degree before earning a master of science in 1916. Next,

Photo Credits: Saint Louis University
SLU researcher Edward Doisy, Ph.D. (second from left) shows his Nobel Prize to University leaders including Alphonse Schwitalla, S.J. (far left).

Doisy went to Harvard, where he started working toward his Ph.D. in chemistry.

Like most young men in the early 20th century, Doisy's life was put on pause during the First World War. He joined the war effort against the Central Powers, serving in the Sanitary Corps of the United States Army.

Following the war, Doisy returned to Harvard and earned his doctorate in 1920. With his new Ph.D. and voluminous knowledge accrued during his journey through academia, Doisy quickly ascended the ranks of the scientific community.

For four years, Doisy taught at Washington University before joining Saint Louis University's biochemistry depart-

ment in 1923. Doisy served as the department's first chair – an office he carried until his retirement in 1965.

During his time at Harvard and into the mid-1930s, the subjects of Doisy's research varied from insulin to blood buffers to sex hormones, specifically the task of isolating estrone, estradiol and estriol.

While significant, this research was not the crowning achievement of the Edgar County native's scientific contributions.

In 1936, another scientist caught Doisy's attention. Carl Peter Henrik Dam was born in Copenhagen, Denmark, far from the wide-open prairies surrounding Hume.

Dam, a professor of agricul-



Photo Credits: Saint Louis University
Edward A. Doisy, Ph.D. (center) showcases his Nobel Prize diploma and medal to SLU Jesuits including **Alphonse Schwitalla, S.J.**, a storied leader in the history of the School of Medicine (right).



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ture and veterinary medicine, found himself engrossed in his research on baby chickens, and specifically, a mysterious condition causing them to hemorrhage unexpectedly and bleed for abnormally long periods.

After careful observation, Dam hypothesized the condition stemmed from a deficiency in a mystery nutrient he dubbed “Koagulation vitamin” – koagulation being the Danish word for coagulation. Later abbreviated to vitamin K, the elusive vitamin held the key to combating the illness facing the young chicks Dam observed.

Through studious experimentation, Dam discovered that the vitamin was present in some greens and was fat-soluble. Later, it was traced to alfalfa, but the slippery supplement still could not be isolated or analyzed.

Enter Doisy. Along with a

supporting cast of fellow scientists, he joined forces with Dam and built on his years of research. In 1939, Doisy had his breakthrough, identifying vitamin K’s chemical structure and isolating it for further analysis.

The momentum of Doisy’s momentous discovery carried his work forward, as he identified both natural forms of vitamin K before successfully creating a synthetic version of it.

Vitamin K was soon being used by doctors around the world as a coagulant. Today, vitamin K shots administered to infants have drastically decreased the likelihood of babies developing VKBD and the damage the condition can cause.

For their efforts, Doisy and Dam both received the 1943 Nobel Prize in Physiology and Medicine. Interestingly, they received the award in 1944, as the previous year did not yield any nominees that met all the

prestigious accolade’s stringent criteria.

The Nobel Prize was arguably Doisy’s greatest achievement, but it was far from his only accolade. By the end of his life, he amassed an impressive collection of awards including the American Pharmaceutical Award, the Gold Medal from the St. Louis Medical Society, the Phillip A. Conne Medal of the Chemical Club of New York and more. The awards paired nicely with honorary degrees from a selection of elite universities, including the University of Chicago, Yale, the University of Paris and St. Louis University.

Perhaps the most enduring marker of Doisy’s success can be found on the campus where he once taught. Today, the Edward A. Doisy Research Center at St. Louis University is providing the next generation of students with opportunities to

make discoveries of their own. The facility was made possible by a \$30 million donation from the Doisy family in 2007, 21 years after he died in 1987.

While some may find it insignificant, one of the most remarkable aspects of Doisy’s story was where he came from. The modest, quaint village Doisy called home was known for agriculture if it was known at all.

Still, it was from this place that a hero emerged, one who went on to change the world and save countless lives. Doisy provides proof of a recurring theme in science: solutions often come from the most unassuming places. For residents of Edgar County, he stands as an example – a testament to the power of curiosity, the necessity of determination and the brilliance that can sprout in the communities we call home.



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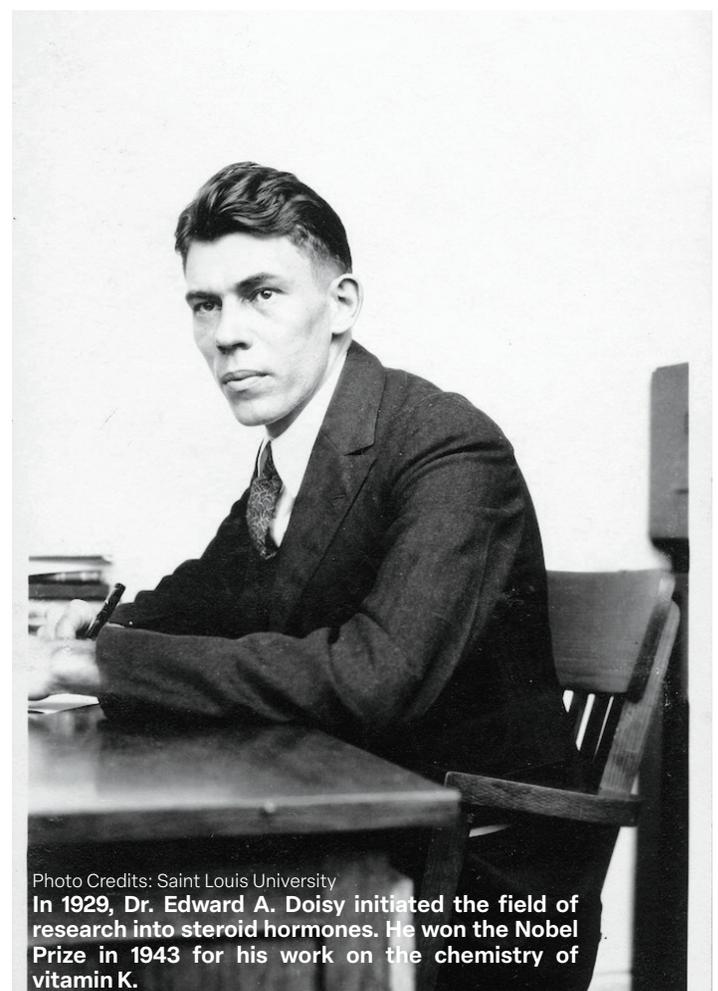


Photo Credits: Saint Louis University
In 1929, Dr. Edward A. Doisy initiated the field of research into steroid hormones. He won the Nobel Prize in 1943 for his work on the chemistry of vitamin K.



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Raised on *Root Beer*

BY LINDA LANE
lanefamily1992@gmail.com

CHRISMAN —Where can you go for a fresh, homemade mug of root beer? Go to the Frostop located at 314 N Pennsylvania St. in Chrisman, it can be seen on the north side of Route One.

Sue and David Lawlyes are co-owners of the restaurant. Due to health issues, Sue Lawlyes manages and oversees the business.

When the Frostop was first opened, it was under a franchise. Today there are approximately 15 remaining Frostops, all are now privately owned.

The Frostop in Chrisman was built in 1954, Elza Tate was the first owner. Tate sold the business to another buyer, but the owner decided to resell it after a few short months.

In 1961, Robert and Rena Riggen purchased the business and kept it for many years.

Rena Riggen, Sue Lawlyes' mother, worked at the restaurant and decided to lease the business until she could purchase it outright.

After her parents passed, Sue Lawlyes and her husband acquired the business, operating it at its original location. Two major fires destroyed the original building, leaving only a few remaining bricks visible in the foundation, according to Lawlyes.

The new building has kept its business traditional and full of familiar practices, including carry-out and car hops on location.

"It is a nostalgic feature of our business," said Lawlyes. "We have both girl and boy car hops and they are mostly high school students that work for us during the seasonal operation. For most of the kids, this is their first job."

"With the new minimum wage laws now, it cuts into our profits, but we love giving them jobs and



we just make it work," she said. "We have been forced to hire fewer workers and they tend to have to work harder. Thankfully, they do it willingly."

The Frostop menu contains many homemade items. Lawyles comes in early each day and prepares most of the food.

"We are, of course, known for our homemade root beer. We make our own on-site and our motto is, 'We sell it by the mug or by the jug,'" Lawyles said. "It is by far our biggest seller."

Other popular, timeless items are barbeque and coney dogs.

Lawyles has fond memories of being raised at the Frostop and her mom coming to work each day, regardless of weather or illness. She describes her mother as a "little white-haired lady who sat behind the cash register." Her mother worked until she was 90 years old.

"I recall when my mother broke her hip, she had to go to

Pleasant Meadows for rehab," Lawyles said. "When she was done with her daily treatment, she would have me drive her to the Frostop to go to work. She never missed a day. She was the backbone of the business and it was her baby."

Over the years there were several times the business faced challenges, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Most of the business was carry-out orders.

"The Board of Health required us to stop using the glass mugs due to health concerns," Lawyles said. "Everything had to be hand washed. My husband passed away from a bout with COVID, so it was a challenging time."

Lawyles has 11 grandchildren and they have all worked at the restaurant, some as carhops and some as kitchen help. Her youngest grandson, Carter Cochran, will be starting his employment this season.

"He is excited to get to work

here as his first job," she said. "He told me, 'Grandma, let's open up early.' I had to tell him we must wait until the weather breaks, and we have warmer days."

A friend of her grandson, Skylar Sweet, also calls her grandma and is looking forward to returning to work again this summer.

The Frostop hosts car shows frequently with old cars and motorcycles. Many look forward to this each year and it brings in visitors and people who have participated in the past.

Those who have grown up in Chrisman and frequented the Frostop still come back to visit the restaurant too.

"I spend a lot of time (at Frostop) and can be seen working there every day," said Lawyles. "In fact, I tell people if you are looking for me, go to the Frostop."

The co-owner of the local spot says it is difficult for most small businesses these days, but she feels fortunate to have all of the support of Chrisman and the surrounding area.



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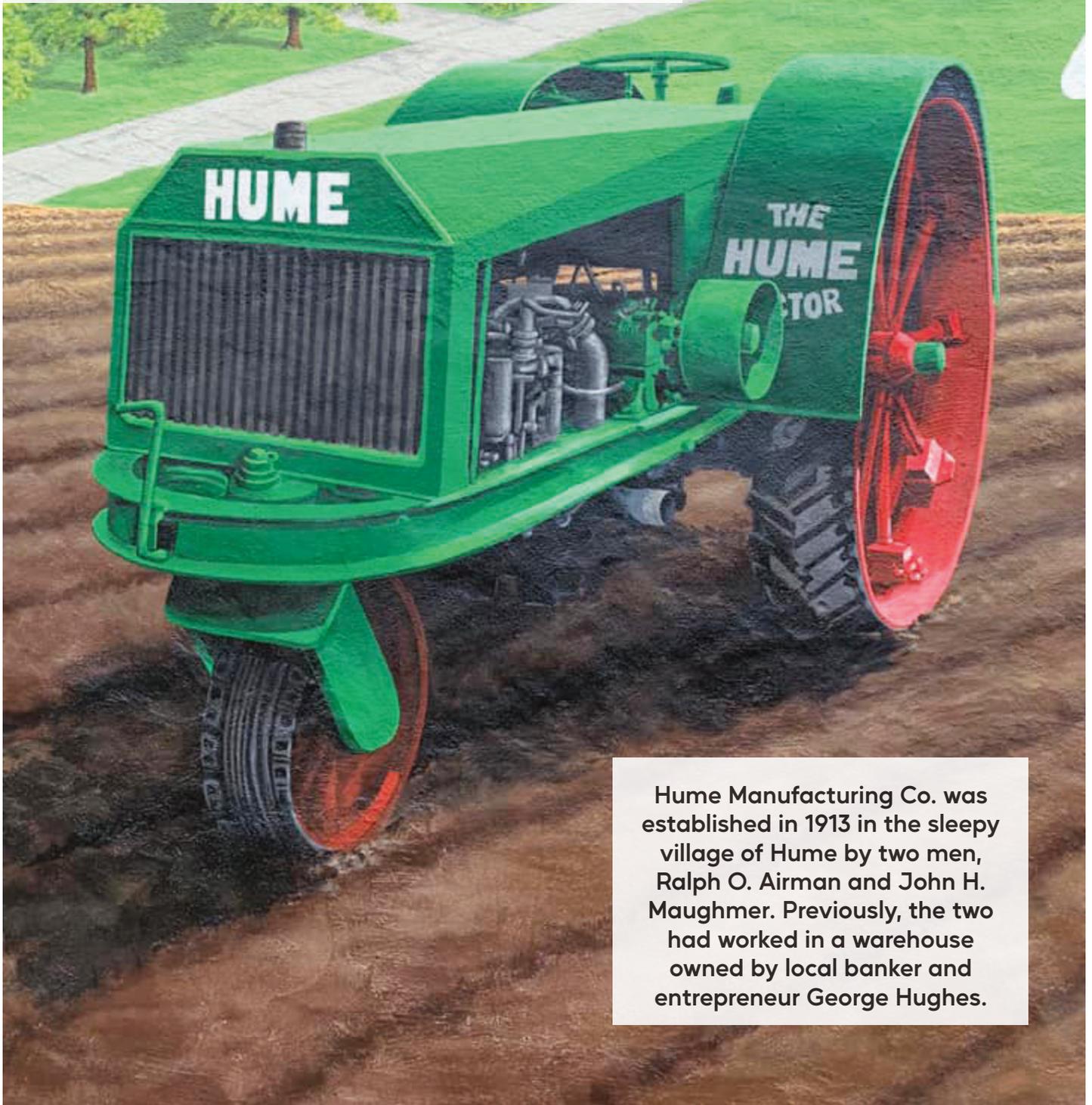


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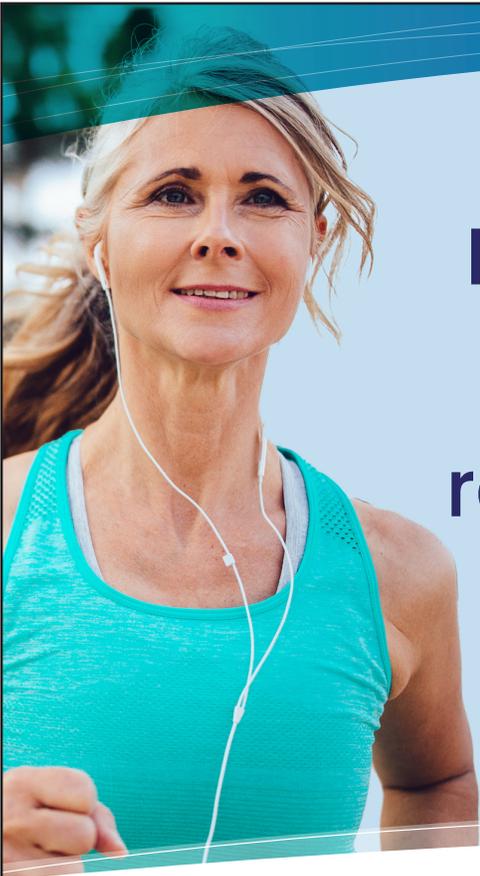
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HUME— Aikman was a mechanic and Maughmer was an engineer. The gents' previous employer became their main source of funding when the trio came together to start their own company. Stocks were sold and a factory was erected quickly, but business was slow from the start.

An extra pair of hands was hired on in the form of Leigh St. John, he worked for the company as a salesman and mechanic.

The company primarily produced two models of tractors, the Hume 20-30 hp and the Hume Jr. 12-18 hp. From 1913 to 1917, the firm built only 35 tractors.

Of all of the tractors on the market at the time, the Hume Tractor had the most drawbar pull for its weight. A drawbar pull is a function of velocity, it is the difference between tractive effort available and

tractive effort required to overcome resistance at a specified speed.

Each Hume tractor was required to develop 4,000 pounds of pull on its drawbar for several hours before it was allowed to leave the factory.

Advertisements from the time of the tractor's production called it a "handy tractor at a price within reach of every farmer."

"It won't pack the earth, pulls without difficulty over soft ground; high drive wheels and light weight make this possible. Turns square corners-a saving of time and a big convenience. Running expense exceedingly low. All parts accessible; doesn't require expert attention," assorted advertisements declared.

The tractor parts for Hume tractors were made to be interchangeable by the use of jigs and special fixtures. Parts could be easily interchanged without requiring special

tools. All repair parts could be replaced at a very low cost, making the \$1,750 price tag appealing to farmers struggling with tight budgets.

A farmer could buy individual parts and pieces for a Hume tractor bit by bit for the exact same price he paid for the original, complete machine. To help a farmer continue to save money, the tractor could plow an acre of ground on two to three gallons of kerosene, depending on the depth and condition of the soil.

St. John was often quoted saying the tractor "lived up to expectations." It was guaranteed one year against defects in material and workmanship. Any defective parts could be returned, freight prepaid, to the factory to be replaced for free.

One of the tractor's more unique features, a feature Aikman and Maughmer patented, was a cooling system on top of the cap. Eaves on the roof collected the water and cooled the

tractor's motor.

The tractor could be handled in small spaces, could be stored in a buggy shed and could go through a narrow gauge gate like a wagon. It was more maneuverable in the field than two horses.

Around 1917, one of the largest stockholders in the company sold his stock and the others began to follow suit. Slowly, the company disassembled itself from the inside out.

In Indianapolis, three brothers, George, James and William Lyons, had bought the defunct Atlas Engine Works, a long-time maker of steam, gas and diesel engines. They organized the Lyons-Atlas Company.

Hume Manufacturing was taken over by the Lyons-Atlas Co. in late 1917. Lyons-Atlas made the Hume tractor that year, but the next year, they made the same tractor and called it the 'Atlas.'

The Atlas was identical to the old Hume tractor, even down



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to the Waukesha engines. Lyons-Atlas offered the 12-18, now listed as weighing 4,600 pounds and costing \$1,150, while the old Hume 20-30 was downgraded to 12-20 HP, weighing 7,200 pounds and costing \$1,745.

The new company was short-lived and in early 1918 they merged with the Midwest Engine Company and the Hill Pump Company, both of Indianapolis.

When the company left Hume, St. John went to Indianapolis with the franchise and became a salesman for the company. When he returned to Hume after only a short time away he said there was no place like home.

In July 2002, the Hume tractor also made its return to the village. A summer edition of the Beacon News carried the exciting news that after nearly a century, a rare Hume tractor had been located.

"The only known tractor still in existence that was made in Hume will be on display from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. July 13 in the village's Grafton Park," the paper read.

Hume resident Mike Grafton is credited with the tractor's discovery and safe return.

Grafton made it his personal mission to locate a tractor, according to the article. His hopes had been to find a tractor for the village's 125th anniversary in 1998 but he had been unsuccessful. The tractor he eventually tracked down was owned by auctioneer Sherwood Hume, who lived in Mil-

ton, Ontario.

Grafton had gotten in contact with Sherwood Hume and explained his connection to the village and plan to showcase the tractor. The auctioneer graciously and readily volunteered to make a trip with the tractor while en route to an antique tractor event.

Soon after, in the summer of 2002, Sherwood Hume drove his Hume tractor down a main thoroughway of the village of Hume.

When the auctioneer originally found the tractor he said it was sitting in a field at the end of the road with its engine sitting atop a nearby stone fence. The motor, he believed, had been removed at one point to power a saw mill.

Sherwood Hume and his wife, Gladys Hume, consulted many reference books in an attempt to identify the beast of a tractor that had endured countless Canadian winters, it was then they discovered their unique shared name.

"Then, and only then, did we realize that it was a Hume," an old edition of the Beacon-News quotes Sherwood Hume as saying. It took from 1992 until 2002 for the couple to get the tractor running and restored, several of the tractor's parts had to be recast or otherwise fabricated by welding.

Today, art work depicting the Hume tractor can be seen on the village's entrance signs and in an Edgar County mural painted on Main Street in Paris.



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Linking
art to the community



BY GRETCHEN STONE
gstone@prairiepress.net

The Link Art Gallery is a center for art in the region and in Edgar County, an inviting space tailored to small, local art shows and locally crafted quilts, pottery and juried shows.

Its history reaches back to the forefathers of Paris, but its name is a modern addition.

In 2018, the BACM (Bicentennial Art Center & Museum) received its new name, The Link Art Gallery, in honor of the Paxson Link family, who in kindness donated the Alexander house to the art community, in memory of Louise Cole Link.

The art center was created through grant money in 1975 as part of the U.S. Bicentennial.

The formative organizations that were precursors to this history were the Paris Woman's Club in the 1940s, then the Paris Art Guild, which became the Paris Art League in 1952.

Current staff and volunteers are active in focusing on bringing local artists in for talks and shows, in a variety of mediums and to create constant motion in the art community, tying the art gallery into nearby towns and cities, creating an art circuit.

A few key individuals are involved. They bring local and regional art to the gallery, providing a venue for Edgar County residents to showcase and sell their



Gretchen Stone/The Prairie Press
Tiffany Gale (left) and Charlotte England (right)
at the "Fertile Inspirations" reception and opening, at the Link Art Gallery, on Friday, Jan. 12.

works.

Gallery Executive Director Tiffany Gale now heads up planning art exhibits in conjunction with arts councils in the region.

On hand for a recent Pollinators showing was Charlotte England, president of the Coles Co. Arts Council (CCAC), who worked to bring together pieces from 14 art-

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Gretchen Stone/The Prairie Press
Link Art Gallery Executive Director Tiffany Gale (left) chats with Dave Egan before his opening reception lecture at the showing of his "Perception" installation of pencil drawings, Friday, Feb. 23.

ists in the local area.

One original goal of that project was to showcase works as a welcome to gardening season, with a grand focus on pollinators and native plants.

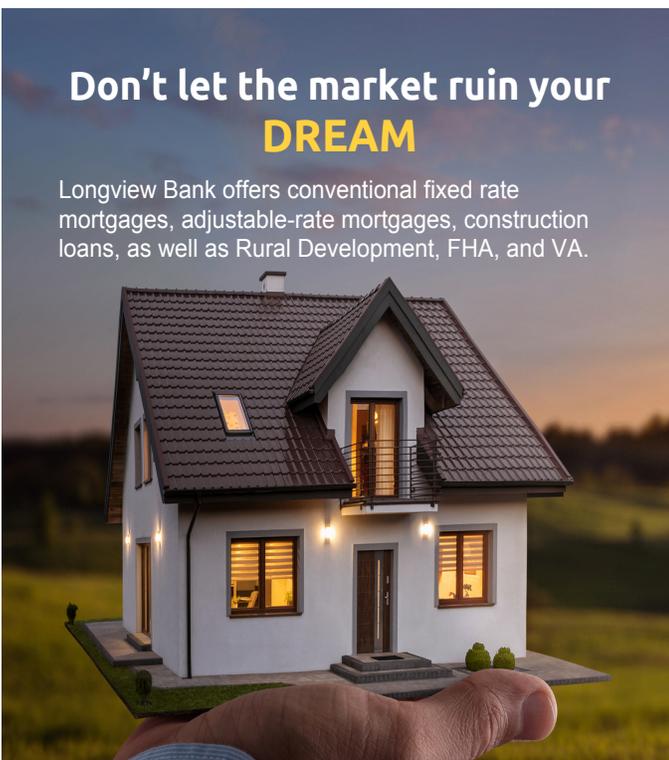
"The community art project grew from a desire to include artists of various talent levels and types, and ages, that started with a call for works of art," England said.

"Our youngest artist was 17 and our oldest is 95," she said, at the time of the show.

The non-juried member's show included work from each person who responded. All in all, the CCAC has about 25 visual artists among its membership, and many performance artists and musicians.

In another recent show, a retired local farmer decided to dust off his art supplies and re-engage with art, an interest he'd put aside for 40 years.

The opening reception for



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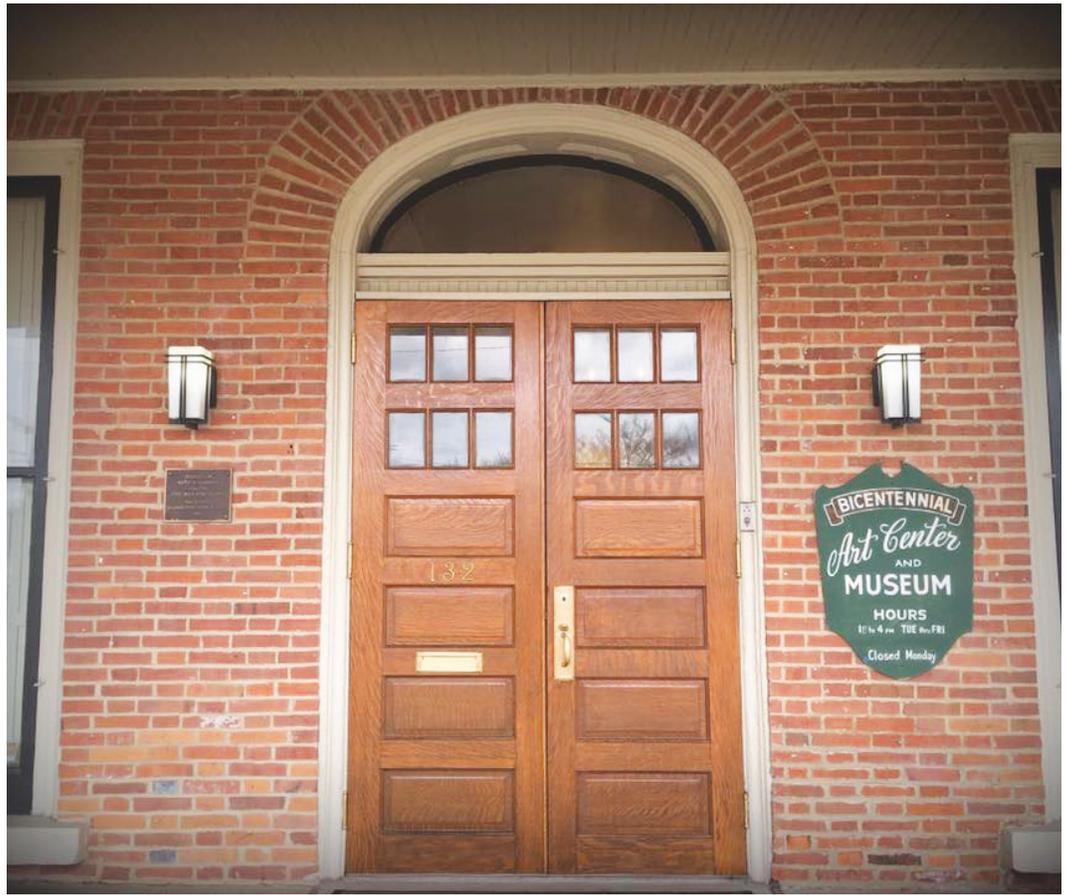
“Perception,” a show of pencil drawings by Dave Egan, happened in late February, with a healthy attendance of about 40 people for a discussion of his artwork and his conception of creating based upon the world around him.

He does work in gray pencil drawings, such as the portrait of his son at a young age.

Egan’s mom bought him modeling clay as a child, and he made cowboys, horses and farm animals, a formative experience that grew his love of art, though he later focused on line drawings.

That kind of local story, tied in with a community of artists from surrounding counties, is what makes the gallery so special to a wide cross-section of the local population.

The Link Art Gallery continues to provide art classes to all ages of the community today, in addition to its exhibitions, workshops and scholarships for talented youth.



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The boy who
charmed the nation

BY BETHANY WAGONER
 bwagoner@prairiepress.net

When Gladys Shanks gave birth to a son at 111 West Edgar Street, in 1927, she had no idea what his future would hold. Her newborn baby boy would one day be the talk of the town, and eventually the nation.

Carl Dean Switzer was born in Paris in August of 1927. As children, he and his older brother, Harold, went around town play-

ing and performing songs and dances on the corners of streets and around the Edgar County courthouse square for pennies.

Like so many children growing up during the great depression, the Switzer brothers' childhood was marked by a need to create entertainment. The brothers were full of imagination and lively, mischievous personalities, characteristics that often got them in trou-

ble while attending Redmond School.

It wasn't long before the duo's performances were a hot topic of conversation between neighbors, over the dinner tables and in waiting rooms across the county.

Mark Killion reminisces there was not a lot to live on during that era, but his father and his friends always found a way to have fun, often causing trouble.

"Dad and his brother Carl used to join in play wars and they would use slingshots and the other kids' BB guns," Killion commented. "Lots of these play wars were with (Carl Switzer)... one kid he played with went home with four BB's stuck in his forehead. Dad and Carl's jackets were torn from BB's."

Switzer's childhood jacket is currently housed at The Edgar County Historical Society and

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Killion explains the history of its wear and tear as escapades his father was mixed up in. "...there is some history with it," he said.

The granddaughter of Switzer's childhood neighbor, Donna Blair Jones, also remembers her grandfather telling stories of playing with the brothers.

"My grandpa passed years ago, but he would have stories," she said. "He (Switzer) was so spirited."

It is Switzer's mischievous personality that made his vivacious performances on the street corners captivating. But, Switzer would soon capture even more than just local attention with his spirit.

In the middle of the great depression, the family found themselves in California, their trip took them sightseeing in Hollywood, complete with a trip to Hal Roach's studios.

The brothers had some difficulty getting onto the studio

grounds without a pass. So, instead, they stood outside the commissary, amidst the midday lunch crowd, and started singing and putting on one of their familiar performances.

Harold Switzer, then eight years old and Carl Switzer, then six, caused a commotion and caught the attention of Roach himself with their performance. Some say the duo was forced to perform by their parents, others say the brothers began the recital of their own accord.

Local historians like David Dick claim the brothers were hired on the spot by Roach for \$100 a week.

The brothers joined a cast of talented children in Roach's Our Gang series. Harold Switzer was given two nicknames, "Slim" and "Deadpan", while Carl Switzer was dubbed "Alfalpa".

Their first episode was filmed in 1935, it was called "Beginners Luck." In the episode, the two brothers participated in a talent

show, with Carl Switzer's character singing and his brother playing an instrument.

As Alfalfa, Carl Switzer was an instant, overnight success. From 1935 until 1940 Switzer played the leading role of Alfalfa as his brother's characters were relegated to the background.

Alfalpa became a favorite of audiences for his freckled face and cowlick hair. Switzer was an experienced singer and musician, but his character Alfalfa was known more as "the king of pruning" singing off-key renditions of popular songs for comic effect.

A combination of personality and talent saw Switzer gain

fame quickly. His country roots influenced his first appearances in Our Gang films, but within a few filmings his persona evolved and he became a wise-cracking kid with a necktie and hat. His singing style evolved, as well. He strayed away from country tunes and filled the role of crooner.

Neither of Switzer's parents were employed and the brothers became the family breadwinners, with Carl Switzer taking the lead in hunting down both fame and fortune.

Documentaries made about the behind-the-scenes of The Our Gang Series uncover aspects of Switzer's personality off-camera that were less en-



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Special to The Prairie Press
Carl Switzer, right, converses with George Bailey, played by James Stewart, in "It's a Wonderful Life".

dearing and more concerning.

Switzer's former co-stars tell stories of him stepping on feet, losing his temper, poking kids with long nails and being abrasive on set. He developed a reputation as a mean prankster.

Stories from cast members recount times Switzer put an open switchblade in his pocket and told a co-star he had a Crackerjack ring for her in his pants. The young starlet nearly lost her fingers.

He once decided to relieve himself on the thousand-watt bulbs, the urination caused the bulbs to explode and filled the studio with a tremendous stench. The prank forced the set to be cleared.

As he became a teenager, Switzer outgrew the role of Alfalfa. After a total of 61 episodes, he made his final appearance in a short called Kiddie Kure in 1940.

His first role after leaving the series was as a Boy Scout in I Love You Again. Hollywood, as an industry, was hesitant to

think of Switzer as anything other than a boy who sang off-key.

Switzer struggled to find work and a persona outside of his freckle-faced alter ego, only landing a few small roles in films like "State of the Union" and "Pat and Mike", both with Spencer Tracy and Katharine Hepburn and "My Favorite Blonde" with Bob Hope.

His difficult reputation and typecasting as Alfalfa made it difficult for him to make progress in Hollywood as a celebrity.

His beloved Alfalfa character, the slick kid with sour vocals, made a short reprise in PRC's "Gas House Kids" comedies in 1946 and 1947. In 1946 he also made a guest appearance in the beginning of the classic Christmas film "It's a Wonderful Life" as Donna Reed's date at a high school dance.

Still, Switzer could never eclipse the shadow of "Our Gang" and his role as Alfalfa. As he grew older he began to need to supplement his occasional

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acting jobs by tending bars and serving as a hunting and fishing guide in Northern California.

When Switzer turned 26, the Paris Beacon Newspaper ran an article about him trading in his Hollywood career to pursue hunting.

“What does this mean to Paris?” the paper questioned. The article recounted his escapades and his current whereabouts. At the time, Switzer was said to be living with Stuart Hamblin, a recent candidate for the United States presidency.

The 26-year-old was quoted as saying “I had some of my own hounds, and I became acquainted with Roy Rogers at various dog workouts. He staked me to a set of hounds so I could go in business as a bear hunter.”

Switzer’s new career, as a bear hunter, led him to another short relapse in films. A hunting buddy and film director “Wild Bill” Wellman recognized Switzer

from his starring days in Our Gang and invited him to take a role in the film “Islands in the Sky.” The film featured John Wayne.

When the paper asked him about his role he is quoted as saying “I wouldn’t mind doing more pictures, but I’d like to keep up my other business too. I don’t say I make a lot of money, but it’s a good living and I’m booked up for nearly all the time.”

Switzer went on to co-star in two additional Willman films, “The High and the Mighty” and “Track of the Cat”. He also made six guest appearances on “The Roy Rogers Show”.

In early 1954, Switzer went on a blind date with Diantha Collingwood, she was an heiress to the grain elevator empire Collingwood Grain. Within a few months, Switzer and Collingsworth married in a Las Vegas ceremony.

Collingsworth was pregnant



Special to The Prairie Press
Carl Switzer, age 20.

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in 1956 when the couple took up residence on a farm near Pretty Prairie, Kansas. A son named Justin was born that year, but the union did not last and the couple divorced in 1957.

Switzer's former co-star, George McFarland, has gone on record as seeing Switzer in 1957 and saying "He told me he was helping to run the farm, but he finally had to put a radio on the tractor while he was out there plowing. Knowing Carl, I knew that wasn't going to last. He may have come from Paris, Illinois, but he wasn't a farmer."

According to McFarland, Switzer still appeared the same he did back in the days of filming *Our Gang*, kind of cocky, a little antsy—and still talking big.

January of 1958 brought another turn of events for Switzer. He was shot and wounded by an unknown assailant when he was getting into his car in front of a bar in Studio City. The shooter was never caught and Switzer was struck in the upper right arm.

Switzer's final film role was in the 1958 drama "The Defiant Ones", although he had no idea the film would be his last.

A year after his first shooting encounter, on Jan. 21, 1959, Switzer was shot to death by Moses Samuel "Bud" Stiltz. The 10400 Columbus Avenue slaying was ruled a justifiable homicide since it was alleged that Switzer had threatened the other man with a knife.

Switzer had been training Stiltz's dog as a hunting dog. The dog ran off to chase after a bear and Stiltz had demanded that Switzer either return his dog or pay him the equivalent of the dog's value.

Switzer took out ads in newspapers and put up fliers. He offered a reward for the safe return of the dog and the animal was eventually located and brought to the bar where Switzer was working. Switzer made good on the reward money and tipped the dog finder with \$15 dollars in drinks.

According to the official court records of the case, Switzer and a photographer friend, Jack Piott, decided that Stiltz should reimburse Switzer the finder's fee. The two men went to Stiltz's home in Mission Hills to demand money.

Stiltz's account of the event was one of self-defense, he testified that Switzer had banged on his front door, yelling "Let me in, or I'll kick in the door." The threat was followed by a struggle that began with one of the men, Switzer or Piott, striking Stiltz with a clock. The events prompted Stiltz to retrieve his firearm.

The gun discharged accidentally, almost shooting Stiltz's wife. Switzer then, according to Stiltz, threatened him with a knife and yelled, "I'm going to kill you!"

Stiltz fired and shot Switzer, the bullet hit an artery that caused internal bleeding. Switzer was pronounced dead upon his arrival at Valley Receiving Hospital. He was just 31 years old.

Stiltz died in 1983 at the age of 62, he never served any time for shooting Switzer and in January 2001, Tom Corrigan told reporters the event was not self-defense and "It was more like murder."

In 1959, Corrigan was 14 years old and was living at Stiltz's house with his mother, Stiltz's wife, Rita Corrigan.

Tom Corrigan recounts the story saying he heard the knock on the front door, and Switzer said "Western Union for Bud Stiltz." His mother opened the door to find a drunk Switzer, complaining about a perceived month-old debt and demanding repayment.

The two men entered the house and an impaired Switzer said he was going to beat up Stiltz. According to Corrigan, Stiltz confronted Switzer with a revolver in his hand. Corrigan does not claim to witness the shooting but he does say he was present and heard the events unfold.

From outside the front door, Corrigan says he heard but did not witness a shot. He saw Switzer sliding down the wall with a surprised look on his face after his stepfather shot him. He also says he saw a closed penknife at Switzer's side.

Corrigan said his stepfather lied in his account of the event before the coroner's jury. Los Angeles Police Department detectives who interviewed him in

2001 asked Corrigan if he would testify before the judge and he agreed to do so, but he was never called before the court.

Switzer's gravestone at the Hollywood Forever Cemetery in California features the square and compasses of Freemasonry and an image of a hunting dog. His death received little press in comparison to Cecil B. DeMille, who died on the same day of heart ailment.



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