

The town of West Concord held their big Christmas celebration on Saturday, December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018. At the end of the day it certainly looked a lot like Christmas what with all the snow that came that afternoon and evening. It was certainly an enjoyable day though with donuts at the Methodist Church to lunch at the craft fair at the Historical Society gym to a libation at the 'Muni'. I understand the 'Bloody Mary' happy hour was a big success. So successful they made it two hours. Some places a drink like that is an entire meal. Other places the drink contains your maximum daily allowance for vegetables and you have to order the beef jerky as a sidedish. And a Methodist donut for dessert tops it all off.

I had the chance to stop at Boe Jeep and visit with Pete and Signora. Signora had made



Pete and Signora Boe pictured at the West Concord All School Reunion which was held in Owatonna on June 24th, 2018

Christmas cookies so it's good I saved room for a couple. Pete was regaling me in stories from his early days as a fireman. He had a picture of the first rescue vehicle the city had. He did say they weren't really trained or equipped to handle medical emergencies at that time but they did the best they could. They did have band-aids in the vehicle. He then brought out an old 4 page Fire Safety brochure that was published in 1967 by long time Kenyonite and Post Bulletin writer Harold Severson.

On the front cover was a picture which can be seen if you scroll all the way down on this page. 19 of the 22 volunteer firemen from 1967 in the picture. Pete said with the recent passing of Dave Vrieze and Roger Espenson, he is the lone survivor. *\*NOTE\* I wrote this column in December of 2018. Peter passed away on August 12<sup>th</sup>, 2019.* The picture I believe has the men standing in front of the aforementioned rescue vehicle. It brings back a lot of memories when you look at the picture and the names of the firemen. Pete was the fire chief that year, Harry, better known as Curly Lulf was assistant chief, my uncle Nels Johnny Ryg was 2<sup>nd</sup> assistant chief. Lavern 'Butch' Maricle was captain of the rescue squad and Arlo Boe was lieutenant. The others pictured include: Burt Boe, Clayton Bishop, Roger Espenson, Robert Doyle, Dave Vrieze, Delmer Bartholomew, Burt Frederick, Ralph Bishop, Tom Flicek, Clifford Ferguson,

Pete Wilson, Louis Leach, Haven Wheeler and Lawrence Hughes. The three who were not there for the picture that day were Maynard Flaaen, Ken Maricle and Schuyler Kent.

What I found just as interesting as the group picture was the list of business that sponsored it. Not only was Harold Severson a great writer and reporter, he was the consummate salesman. There is a complete page showing a close up picture of most of the fireman with the sponsors name and logo shown. I'm sure some of these 'mug shots' were pinned to a bulletin board in post offices around the area.

The list of these West Concord businesses brings back a flood of memories as much as the picture of the firemen does. Here's the list of sponsoring businesses: Boe Repair Shop; Blaisdell Motors (complete with the 1950's Ford logo); Wilson Elevators; First National Bank; West Concord Butter & Cheese Association; LeRoy Tengwall, attorney; O'Brien Store and Locker; B.N Stone Feed Store; Mathias Dairy Cattle Exchange, Franklin D Mathias, Owner; Mobil Bulk Plant; West Concord Nursery, Arlo and Lois Boe, owners; Frederick's Super Valu; Boe Sand & Gravel; Dodge County Service Company; Bucher Implement (with International Harvester logo); Flicek Builders Supply; Gamble Store, Clarence and LuVerna Barwald; Ferguson Funeral Home and Dr. J.W. Heley.

After reading the names of the firemen and the sponsors, you just have to wax nostalgic. I'm sure, like many of you, we lived through that era and didn't realize at the time that they were the 'good old days'. Days when we had a lumber yard, hardware stores, 5 or 6 gas stations, two banks, 3 grocery stores, 4 restaurants, 2 Speeken's stores, 2 schools with 12 bus routes and a partridge in a pear tree. Well maybe not that last one but certainly the others and a lot more. This 4 page brochure is on display at the West Concord Historical Society museum.

I was at a family get together this past summer where I was catching bits and pieces of my brother in law Jim Raddatz reminiscing about the 'old days' with my cousin's husband Mike Krier. I have to get my audio recorder out and get those two 'town kids' talking again. They had a lot of stories of which most were suitable for print. I also think the statute of limitations is up now so we can tell some of the other stories about sneaking in and out of certain buildings and things like that.

I have one story of my own that comes to mind. 'Cruising the main drag' was a real thing. You know what I'm talking about. You'd drive up and down not only Main Street but all the other streets in town. Well there was one night I was doing this with some friends when we decided that we had seen everything there was to see from the streets so we decided that we would 'cruise' the alleys. Well the village constable on duty that night was LeRoy Bahr. He did not think too highly of this idea and he told us so in not so many words. We happened to be in the alley right about where Renner's Hardware used to be. He stopped us and pulled up next to my driver's window and asked what we were doing. We proceeded to tell him that we had cruised

all the streets and decided that we would cruise the alleys. He stated and succinctly I might add: 'That's a good way to pick bb's out of your ass'. He added the words 'go home' and without having him tell us twice, we did. I think I'll stick to cruising Memory Lane.



Here are the West Concord Volunteer Firemen, always ready to answer your call for help at any time of the day or night, on Sundays or holidays as well as week days. Seated, left to right: Arlo Boe, lieutenant, rescue squad; Harry (Curly) Luff, assistant chief; Peter Boe, chief; John Ryg, second assistant chief, and Luvern (Butch) Maricle, captain, rescue squad. Standing, Burt Boe, Roger Espenson, Clayton Bishop, Robert Doyle, David Vrieze, Delmer Bartholomew, Burton Frederick, secretary; Ralph Bishop, Tom Flicek, Clifford Ferguson, Pete Wilson, Louis Leach, Haven Wheeler and Lawrence Hughes. Missing from the picture: Maynard Flaaen, Kenneth Maricle and Schuyler Kent.