Fall is a time of change, and fall has arrived with a flourish. Since we last spoke...the NWSA reunion welcomed summer with friends and alumni; we welcomed back our current students with the start of class as the first snippet of fall tinged the campus air; we celebrated UMC homecoming with old friends (including Hersh Lysaker and a soaring bald eagle!) as we watched the campus palette change from green to our beloved maroon and gold.

Then the Maroon & Gold had a transition of its own. On October 20, 2004 Chancellor Velmer Burton Jr. announced his resignation as the Chancellor of UMC. Dr. Burton is looking forward to returning to academic life and, in particular, to reinvigorating his research agenda as a faculty member at the University of Minnesota. The change will also all him to spend more time with his two boys.

Dr. Joe Massey, whom many of you met at the reunion this summer, will add to his duties as Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and assume the CEO role of the university. In addition to Dr. Massey, we are also excited to have Robert Peterson join UMC as the Vice Chancellor for University Relations.

We wish Dr. Burton well in his future pursuits and look forward to working with Dr. Massey and Robert Peterson as UMC continues on its path of excellence.

We have had ninety-nine years of academic excellence on the Crookston campus. As the first flakes of snow begin to drift in the mall we are thinking of the excitement to come in the Centennial year...and the next ninety-nine as well.

Take care, and we will see you soon.

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**The Aggie**

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The Aggie
2900 University Avenue
University of Minnesota, Crookston
Crookston, MN 56716
Phone: 218-281-8439
Fax: 218-281-8433
Email: rucketh@umn.edu

**Vice Chancellor for University Relations:**
Robert Peterson, 218-281-8438

**Director of Development & Alumni Relations:**
Michael Meyer, 218-281-8434

**Assistant Director of Development and Editor:**
Elizabeth Tollefsen, 218-281-8432

**Support Staff:**
Rose Ulseth, 218-281-8439,
Email: rucketh@umn.edu

**Board of Directors**

Wilford Dostal '48 (Mary Lou)
11662 390th Ave NW
Angus, MN 56729-8941
218-745-5927 (H)

Harvey Pulkrabek '48 (Phyllis)
14209 Maple Inn Rd SE
M entor, MN 55736-9431
218-574-2203 (H)

Roger Odegard '60 (Gail)
29045 320th Ave SW
Crookston, MN 56716-8904
218-281-3297 (H)

Bob Kredel '53
431 Jackson Avenue
Crookston, MN 56716
218-281-1418 (H)

Harlene Overgaard Hogen '55
4227 Bristol Run
Shoreview, MN 55126
651-631-2784 (H)

Betsy Erikson Fianor '47
13407 380th St SW
Fertile, MN 56540-9571
218-574-2741 (H)

Lorraine Zipoy Love '54 (Allen)
2022 10th Street SE
East Grand Forks, MN 56721
218-773-1507 (H)

Arlene Thoreson Cymbaluk '47
601 4th Ave NE
Crookston, MN 56716
218-281-3083 (H)

Ray Dueck '57 (Terry)
4502 Radisson Road
Crookston, MN 56716
218-281-1835 (W)

Robert Peterson
218-281-1747 (fax)

Richard Wilbert '49 (Phyllis)
5025 Lavinia Road NE
Bemidji, MN 56601
218-759-9561 (H)

**EX OFFICIO MEMBERS**

Betne Nelson '42
423 Wooland, #107
Crookston, MN 56716
218-281-2838 (H)

Mike Meyer (Kaye Lynn)
816 Reeves Drive
Grand Forks, ND 58201
218-281-8434 (W)

Liz Tollefsen
2118 270th St SW
Crookston, MN 56716
218-281-8432 (W)

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Kiehle building framed in fall colors.
Cover photo by John Zak, University Relations.
Herschel Lysaker, renowned coach and supporter of the University of Minnesota, Crookston was honored for his work and dedication prior at the UMC football game held on September 18. Lysaker was on the sidelines as an honorary head coach as the Golden Eagles took on Augustana.

Lysaker began his coaching career at the Northwest School of Agriculture in 1944, where he was the basketball and football coach. When the School of Agriculture became UMC, he served as the first athletic director from 1966-1973. In 1977, Lysaker was inducted into the Minnesota Football Hall of Fame. He was later inducted into the Concordia College Hall of Fame in 1992. In 1982, the University of Minnesota Board of Regents named the new gymnasium on the UMC campus in his honor—Lysaker Gymnasium.

Lysaker is best known for his dedicated recruiting. He spent countless hours on the road, traveling to homes and communities to ensure that UMC had not only the best athletes but brightest students as well.

"Athletes learn to accept disappointment and handle glory. We live in a competitive world and I think athletes learn to keep on competing and make a success out of many areas of life."
- Herschel Lysaker
From the Alumni President

Ray Dusek

Greetings NWSA Alumni,

This issue of the Aggie is filled with reunion memories that I know you will enjoy. It was a beautiful weekend, and everyone relished the company of classmates and friends who came back to participate in reunion activities. Richard Kluzak’54 reminded us all during the program on Saturday that attending a boarding school is a unique privilege that not many people have. The NWSA was certainly like no other in our area. We received a quality education from quality instructors, and we established lifelong friendships. We are proud to be Aggies!

Have you thought about contributing a brick for the Donor Wall as part of the Centennial Park Project? You can inscribe your name and year of graduation or the name of your favorite instructor. Talk to Mike Meyer if you are interested in commemorating a brick by calling 218-281-8434 or call Rose at 218-281-8439.

Several of our alumni share in this issue about their service to our country during WWII. These stories are an example of the stories of so many young men and women who served our country during this time. We are proud of these alumni, and remember those who gave their lives for our country.

I hope that you will make plans to attend the social in Mesa, Arizona on Feb 25, 2005 from 11:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. It will be at the Terrace Green at the ViewPoint Resort. The cost is $10 per person.

One last thing. I would like to ask that you consider attending the all-school reunion next summer on June 24 and 25. It is the kick off of the centennial celebration of the campus. We are a part of a great history! There will be special events, and we would like to have the best turnout possible. In fact, we hope it will be the biggest reunion of the century! To alumni everywhere, please join us!

Until next time, enjoy the Aggie, and keep in touch!

Sincerely,

Ray Dusek
NWSA Alumni President

Promise of Tomorrow Excerpted from Legacy, Summer 2004

Nicole Adams attended law school at the tender age of eight. Or, rather, she accompanied her mother, a single parent enrolled in evening classes to obtain a J.D. "I would pretend I was in school, too," Adams remembers. "It was a tough time for my mom, but it helped me to realize that anything is possible."

Now, Adams, a biology major at the U, is getting her own opportunity to transform possibilities into realities—thanks to Ralph and Marguerite Bachman Scholarship. "Because of this scholarship, I can concentrate on my goals and academics," she says.

Adams is one of the 4,500 U of M students who currently receive privately funded scholarships. But Minnesota trails other Big Ten institutions in the number and size of scholarships it can offer incoming freshmen. Hoping to attract more talented students to the U, President Robert Bruininks recently announced a major drive to increase by 50 percent the number of students who receive scholarships.

"I want to make sure that all students with the desire and ability to succeed at the U have the opportunity to do so," he said.

This goal can be accomplished over the next several years by raising $150 million in new scholarship gifts. The drive will raise merit and need-based scholarships for undergraduate and professional students on all campuses. It has been named the

See "Promise" page 3

Banner announces October as Scholarship Month outside of the Sahlstrom Conference Center.
Thanks for the Memories

The combination of our fabulous alumni, special events, and near perfect weather made the Northwest School of Agriculture (NWSA) reunion an event to remember. The University of Minnesota, Crookston (UMC) was bustling with people and activities. It was a team effort of the NWSA Alumni Association Board, staff, and many others that created the highlights of this year’s reunion.

The weekend began with a new reunion event, a fish fry and social on Friday evening. Everyone gathered around tables under the big tent and reminisced around the good food with longtime friends. The walleye was delicious, and it looks like the fish fry could become a reunion tradition. Reuniting friends is such a special thing for everyone involved, and this year was certainly no exception.

Saturday we enjoyed another beautiful day and more reminiscing. Particularly fun was the video tribute to the NWSA and especially the class of 1954. Tom Sondreal, UMC Media Services, was responsible for this creative tribute to the past. The highlight however, had to be the Top Aggie Recognition on Saturday evening. Honoring Stan Alseth ’35, Evelyn Holy Bancroft ’54, Margaret Lerud Garr ’34, Bill Gatheridge ’64, Richard Holmgren ’33, and Wayne Odegaard ’64 was the best of all. No one will forget the moving tributes by each of the presenters and what better way to end the event than hearing Wayne Odegaard finish by saying what else, but “Go, Aggies!”

Think about attending next year; it will be a celebration of 100 years of education on this site. We would like to have all of you back along with alumni from every year! Our special honored classes next summer will be 1925, 1930, 1935, 1940, 1945, 1950, 1955, 1960, and 1965. Think about coming no matter what year you are; we would love to have you celebrate this milestone with us. Set aside June 24 & 25, 2005 to join us for the biggest celebration in history!

1954 Classmates David Viker, Grant Satre, and Dean Viker share a good time with each other at the evening social.

Betty Floan ’47 and Jo Stola, wife of Ray Stola ’47 enjoy a visit at the social on Friday evening.

"Promise" cont. from page 2
University of Minnesota Scholarship Drive: Promise of Tomorrow.

A new matching program, launched earlier this year, is helping by doubling the impact of endowed scholarship gifts of at least $25,000. So far, gifts totaling nearly $7 million are eligible for the match.

Scholarships are key to attracting new students. They also help students take advantage of opportunities on campus and graduate on time. Maya Babu, a junior from Eagan, Minnesota is a good example. Recently named one of just 77 Truman Scholars nationally, Babu is an honors student in neuro-science and psychology and is active in volunteer organizations that support women and children.

"Having scholarships meant that I could focus on causes close to my heart, such as policy and delivery systems affecting children and youth,” says Babu, who plans to pursue a career in mental health policy. “Scholarships allowed me to focus on making a difference.”

For more information on how you can take advantage of the scholarship match and help students at UMC, please contact Mike by email at meyer243@umn.edu or by phone at 218-281-8434 or 1-800-232-6466, ext. 8434.
She grew up in Fisher, Minnesota and still has family there, but Long Beach, California is the place that Lorraine Anderson Nesland ‘47 calls home. She has lived in Long Beach most of her life, but she hasn’t forgotten her roots. She says, “The Northwest School was the greatest place in the world to receive a high school education.” She was an active student belonging to glee club, choir, band, class basketball, volleyball, field and swimming meets her first three years and her last year she added cheerleader. She roomed on third floor

of Robertson Hall with Beulah Stromstad, and her favorite teacher was Retta Bede. Lorraine also liked and respected her English teacher, Margaret Larsen. She remembered Berneil Nelson was an outstanding librarian, and Mrs. Ness as a very kind dorm mother.

The activities she enjoyed at the Northwest School of Agriculture prepared her for an active life. Following graduation, Lorraine attended Aaker’s Business College in Grand Forks, North Dakota. She worked for four years for Dr. O.C. Nord, a respected dentist in Grand Forks. When her mother needed help on the farm with cooking, she went home to help, and decided she would take her life in a different direction. Lorraine and a girlfriend decided to go to California. They boarded a bus and headed west. The girls stayed at the YWCA when they got to California and a friend that Lorraine knew picked them up and took them to look for apartments and hunt for jobs.

Jobs were not easy to find and Lorraine went to an agency to get help finding employment. She got a job, but half of her first month’s check had to go to the agency. She worked for a year and a half as assistant bookkeeper at a restaurant, and then went to work for Northrup Aircraft in their personnel and insurance department. She worked there for six and a half years.

Just when Lorraine decided she wanted a new adventure, “Prudential Insurance offered me a job,” she says, “and I worked there for the next twenty-nine years.” She served as a claim officer and when they opened a new office in Long Beach, Lorraine moved there to manage it. She was in charge of twelve to twenty girls in that Orange County office in Long Beach, and at one time, she had thirty-five girls under her direction. She did staff evaluations and interviews until retiring in 1987. She remains in contact to this day with some of the girls she managed.

Lorraine married Allan Nesland ‘46 on March 27, 1953. He worked for the United States Postal Service until retiring in 1986. Allan agrees with Lorraine’s ideas about the Northwest School. As they reminisce, they are

Lorraine's graduation photograph in 1946.

Allan Nesland ‘45 shares his wife’s feelings about attending NWSA.
Leon Flancher
From Teacher to Chancellor

In the fall of 1958, Leon Flancher ('58-'63) was hired to teach at the Northwest School of Agriculture (NWSA). A Crookston Central High School graduate, Leon was fresh out of Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota when he was hired by E.N. Reiersgord to teach English, serve as preceptor in Robertson Hall, and assist with the drama department at the NWSA. "Several of the students were older than I was," Leon recalls.

He fondly remembers other staff members with whom he enjoyed working: Charles Whiting, Bob Dornquist, Berneil Nelson, Tillie Gebhardt, Margaret Fylling, LeRoy Field, Myrtle Brown, Joe Grabanski, Jack Harris, Gene Miller, and others. He remembers students too, like Roger Odegard, Jane Stromstad, Jo Ann Gunderson, Ethelyn Brandli, Francis Ackerman, and Bette Hovet, all from the class of 1960. One of the unique things that Leon established was an English tutoring class using his very best English students as tutors for those who needed help. "As a reward the students who tutored were excused from exams," Leon said, "I remember that Jane Stromstad was one of those tutors, and I believe she went on to become an English teacher."

His favorite thing about teaching was the "interchange between student and teacher." He also enjoyed seeing students "understand something they didn't understand before." Leon found great rewards in teaching and his experiences as a preceptor.

Students came back to him and told him that they had an easy time in army boot camp after having him and Mr. Whiting as preceptors. Leon said, "I wasn't familiar with making a bed with military corners when I came to the Northwest School, but I learned how. Every morning we checked rooms to learn how to take care of things after living together in the dormitories, and if they didn't, they lost privileges.

At the time, one of the most cherished privileges was smoking. If your parents allowed you to smoke, you had use of the smoking room in the dorm. Robertson's smoking room was in the southwest corner of the building, and at times it was hard to make sure that those who had the permission from their parents were the only ones using enough to smoke. Parents determined that, and we did our best to enforce it."

Leon remembers going on regular duck hunting trips with Bob Dornquist on fall mornings before teaching class. One time he recalls that they were delayed, and he ended up teaching his first class in his hip boots! "We had some good times here," Leon reflects, "Those were good years at the Northwest School." In 1960, the new Hill Building opened, and he taught in Hill. "I still have my desk from my office on third floor of the old Hill Building," he says, "that desk has moved many times over the years."

In the summer of 1960, Leon received a scholarship to study in Norway. He attended the University of Oslo for a year, and following his study he hitchhiked all over Europe. He even attended the XVII Olympics in Rome, Italy in 1960 as part of that experience.

Following his years at the NWSA, he taught at Continued on page 6
"Several of the students were older than I was!" —Leon Flancher

Leon Flancher visited campus in August for his fiftieth class reunion from Crookston High School.

Crookston Central, Fisher High School, and Minnesota Tech. In 1969 he moved to La Junta, Colorado and served as the department chair of a community college. There, he developed the Title I reading program for the state of Colorado. He went on to become Dean of Urban and External Programs at Denver Metropolitan State College. Leon came back to Minnesota to serve as president of Worthington Community College, and later, went on to earn his doctorate at Colorado State University (CSU) in business.

He did for a time own his own business, but following completion of his doctorate, he found himself a teacher once again in the business department at CSU. His education and experience eventually led him to Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Daytona Beach, Florida where he served as Chancellor of the Extended Campus. This particular campus consisted of 120 mini-campuses with faculty and staff in the United States and Europe. There were 11,000 to 12,000 students when he came, and when he retired two years ago, there were 17,000 students. (Read more about Embry Riddle by visiting http://www.erau.edu/index.html)

Leon married his wife, Sylvia, in 1962, and they have five children: Jim, Philip, Karen, Daniel, and Joel. Both Daniel and Joel were born while they were living in Crookston. Leon's father, for whom he is named, was a medical doctor and director of Sunnyrest Sanitarium in Crookston. Leon started out thinking he, too, would study to become a medical doctor, but changed his mind. Through the influence of one of his instructors at Concordia, Leon discovered a passion for English and education. That passion is something he hopes he passed along to his students when he taught at the Northwest School. If you look back over your time at the NWSA, you probably have several teachers that you feel influenced you. If you would like to share a story about one of those instructors, including Leon Flancher, please contact Liz at the following address:
Liz Tollefson
Kiehle 215
2900 University Avenue
Crookston, MN 56716

Thank you to Harlene Hagen '55 for having the shade on the antique lamp in the Heritage Room restored. It is beautiful!
Clara Ness LaVoi, '28
Celebrates Seventy-five Year Class Reunion

Clara Ness LaVoi '28 joined reunion activities on Friday night with her son, Darie. Clara was celebrating her seventy-fifth class reunion on June 25 by attending the fish fry and social. She is ninety-six years old, but Clara has photos of the 1928 basketball team hanging in her motor home. She was captain of that team along with being a member of the Glee Club and the Sextette.

Clara was also a member of the Sanford Literary Society. The literary societies were one of the most popular activities for students at the Northwest School of Agriculture (NWSA). In the early years, the Agricultural Literary Society was the only way a student could be trained in public speaking. In 1912-13, public speaking became part of the school's course work. The Sanford Society formed when the Home Economics Club was divided in 1920. The Sanford Society was named after Maria Sanford. (See inset.)

Following her time at the Northwest School, Clara graduated from Bemidji High School. She and Lawrence LaVoi were married on November 24, 1929 and made their home in Fosston, Minnesota where they farmed their entire married life in Rosebud Township. They had two children, Connie and Darie. Lawrence died in 1966 of a heart attack.

Upon his death, Clara worked at the Fosston Hospital. She was a Sunday School teacher and president of her Faith Circle at Kingo Lutheran Church. She also served as a 4-H leader and den mother for the Cub Scouts. A highlight for Clara came in 1974 when she took a trip to Norway to visit her cousins.

Clara's brother-in-law was Delmer H. LaVoi. He was the football and basketball coach at the NWSA. He also worked in animal husbandry during his time here from 1923-29. Clara continues to live in her own home in Fosston with her son, Darie, who takes Clara to events like the Northwest School Reunion. We are glad that he does and that Clara was with us to celebrate her seventy-fifth reunion. It was an honor to have her with us.

Maria Louise Sanford

Maria Sanford came to the University in 1880, when the school had 300 students and 18 professors. She was the first woman professor, hired by President Folwell after a conversation that lasted just 30 minutes.

"The greatest thing I ever did for the University was to bring Maria Sanford here," Folwell said.

She taught composition, rhetoric, elocution, and oratory, packing lecture halls with young scholars enthusiastic about her innovative teaching style.

Once, after she heard a former student speak in public as a candidate for mayor, she rose earlier than usual the next day to hurry to his office and point out a mistake in grammar that had slipped into his speech.

She often welcomed students into her home, just minutes from campus, sometimes housing up to 16 students at a time. Generations of students called her "the best loved woman in Minnesota."

Known for her impressive oratory skills, Sanford traveled widely as a lecturer and advocate for education. A Minneapolis public school was named after her, as was Sanford Hall, the University's first residence.
Rosella Ecklund Moritz feels that she was fortunate to attend school the Northwest School of Agriculture (NWSA) and says that she speaks for her entire family. She is the second oldest in a family of six children and came to the NWSA just out of the eighth grade. She enjoyed her years as a student here tremendously. "We lived on the banks of the Red River a few miles from the Canadian border with North Dakota just across the river and really did not go to town much, then I got to go to Crookston and attend boarding school. It was scary and exciting."

Rosella remembers all the instructors as good, but points out that their class advisors, Mr. and Mrs. Rufus Christgau were wonderful people. She also recalls the wonderful care and attention the girls received from Miss Elsie Kingston (1929-1954), Miss Retta Bede (1925-1957), Miss Lydia Dahlen (1929-1938), and Miss FayeHughbanks (1926-1965). "They treated us like we were their own children," Rosella recalls.

Boys were not allowed in the dormitories except in the parlor. "My dad never saw my room," Rosella said. She remembers decorating it with things she made in 4-H. "There were pale green drapes and a dressing table made from orange crates—things I made as 4-H projects," she said, "They came in real Handy."

She remembers that she loved glee club and that one time the class was to put on a skit in the auditorium. "I played Miss Kingston," Rosella says, "I wore a skirt and pair of shoes that I borrowed from her." Later, in her yearbook, Miss Kingston wrote, "You made a better Miss Kingston than I do myself."

Rosella cannot forget her lavender banquet dress and the white graduation dress that she made for herself. She also fondly remembers decorating the gymnasium ceiling and walls with lovely crepe paper butterflies.

Rosella Ecklund, '36, and her friends Gladys Tangen and Cora Dallager in the coats they made in school.

She also recalls working for Miss Dahlen in the health center for her room and board. Her brother, Marvin '41, the oldest of the Ecklund children, worked for Mr. Pilkey and the poultry. The Ecklund family sent four children to the NWSA, along with Marvin and Rosella, there were sisters, Camilla and Anna Mae who attended. They also had an uncle, Herman, that attended as well, and whose name appears on the Sailors and Soldiers Memorial honoring those who gave their lives during WWI.

She says she never got into trouble. However, she did have to let a few girls that stayed out too late in through the fire escape on occasion. It was lights out at 10:00 at the NWSA because that is when room check was done. She recalls saying the Pledge of Allegiance at the
“...we had to go to the dining hall with icicles in our hair.” —Rosella Moritz

beginning of each assembly in the auditorium and closing with the Lord’s Prayer. Saddle shoes, skirts, and dresses were the appropriate attire—certainly no slacks, no matter how cold the day. They slept in trundle beds usually three to a room. She still keeps in touch with girlfriends, Betty McVeety, Myrtle Nisbet, and Gladys Tangen.

One of her favorite memories was gathering with the glee club in the music room early one morning shortly before Christmas to go caroling. “We went through all the rooms and around to the faculty,” Rosella says, “It was so much fun.” If she has a least favorite memory, it is probably swimming. “We had swimming right before the evening meal, we had to go to the dining hall with icicles in our hair,” Rosella remembers. She said that they had to wear school swimming suits too. “They were gray, no bright colors like now, some of the suits fit and some didn’t, but that is what we wore,” Rosella pointed out.

Rosella graduated in 1936. Following graduation, she worked for three years in Minneapolis for the vice-president of the Pillsbury Flour Company. She remembers these years fondly as she did a lot of “test baking” with their cereals and flours.

Perhaps she used some of that “test baking” to help win the heart of Orville Moritz, a farmer from Kennedy, Minnesota. On Thanksgiving Day in 1942, the two were married at the Hallock parsonage. and following, the newlyweds went back to Rosella’s home for a full Thanksgiving dinner with family and friends. The Moritz family moved to Liberty, Missouri in

1951 with their two small children, Darrell and Kathleen. Orville owned and operated the O.H. Moritz Construction Company for forty-two years. Orville battled throat cancer for two and half years passing away on January 28, 2001 after 58 years of marriage.

Rosella still makes her home in Liberty. She celebrated her eighty-fifth birthday on July 5, 2004. Rosella taught Sunday School and played for singing in the kindergarten department of the Liberty Christian Church for 43 years. She also did home care for homebound senior citizens long before the term “care givers” was known. Rosella remains busy. She still enjoys quilting, playing piano, cooking, antiques, and painting birdhouses. She has seven grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren (two more are expected before year’s end)!

Rosella on Senior Class Day in 1936 and today.

Rosella Ecklund (center) and her roommates, Arnie Eggen (left), and Gladys Tangen (right).

Rosella, Gladys and Arnie outside in March of 1937.
World War II
Remembering Aggies Who Served

This is a special issue of the Aggie because it contains a special World War II tribute. These stories are included to honor the men and women who served our country during this crucial time in history. Their stories speak of the bravery, loyalty, and friendship they experienced. One cannot help but realize that each one who served has their own unique story. The stories shared here represent the thousands and thousands of stories of those who served and those who gave their lives for our country.

The Northwest School Monthly carried news regarding Northwest School alumni and former students in the armed services throughout the war years. Following the war, special classes were offered at the Northwest School for veterans beginning in the winter of 1946. From 1947 until 1950, ninety-eight veterans enrolled in these classes.

In 1948, the alumni association of the NWSA voted to add a memorial plaque to the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial at the campus entrance. The plaque cost between $225 and $300 and was cast by the Flour City Ornamental Iron Company in Minneapolis. Gifts to the fund were accepted in amounts of $1 and up. There were many contributors and $611.48 was collected. The memorial plaque was unveiled on Veteran’s Day, November 11, 1949 at a special ceremony. The additional money was placed in a fund for a memorial electric organ.

Our special thanks go to Stan Alseth, Ben Bakkegaard, Lowell Bjella, Allan Magnuson, and Ray Dunham for sharing stories and contributing to this issue in such a special way.

Twenty-one Northwest School students and alumni lost their lives in World War II.

May we never forget...

Lest We Forget...
from the Roseau County Veterans’ Book of Honor

Following our request in the last issue of the Aggie for stories of the men and women who served in the armed forces during World War II, the Alumni office received the Roseau County Veterans’ Book of Honor from Allan “Buddy” Magnuson ’48, the Roseau County Veterans’ Service Officer. The book tells about three young men who gave their lives during the war. Their stories should not be forgotten, and so in their memory, here are the stories of three young men who gave their lives for our freedom.

Wesley Everett Battles attended 1941-42 was born April 22, 1924. He attended the Lee Lewis grade school in Clear River Township. For three years, Wesley attended the Northwest School of Agriculture, where he was a member of the debate team and earned a Red River Dairyman pin. He returned to Warroad for his senior year and graduated from Warroad High School in 1942. He entered the U.S. Navy in June 1942 and was trained at the Great Lake Naval training center in Illinois, then at Jacksonville, Florida, and finally, in San Diego, California. His active duty service in aviation ordnance attached to Patrol Squadron Eleven. Wesley flew patrol in southern and western Australia until September 1943. From that time until February of 1944, he was engaged in rescue work, search missions, and anti-shipping attacks against the enemy in the Japanese controlled area of the Bismarck Sea. This work earned a Presidential Citation for his unit.

On December 16, 1943, his unit was sent to drop food and supplies to Australian Commandos 250 miles behind Japanese lines along the Sepic River in New Guinea. On December 19, the squadron flew what Yank magazine called one of the most daring rescues of the war in the South Pacific. Load after load was lifted out with everyone racing against time as the Japanese
closed in. When Wesley’s plane returned for the last load, it developed engine trouble. They were forced to hide the plane as best they could and spend the night within five miles of Japanese headquarters. Another crew volunteered to fly repairs to them, enabling Wes’s team to fly out the last load of Australians.

A letter to Wesley’s parents from the Secretary of the Navy, dated February 7, 1946 reads in part:

Your son, Wesley Everett Battles, Aviation Ordnanceman Second Class, United States Navy, has been carried on the official records of the Navy Department in the status of missing in action as of 13 August, 1944, when the plane in which he was flying, attached to Patrol Squadron Eleven, failed to return from a night patrol flight in the vicinity Halmaheira, Wendi Lagoon, Schouten Islands.

The letter went on to say that the plane had not been heard from since it transmitted routine messages that morning. After the war, the War Department could not find Wesley’s name on any list of personnel liberated from Japanese prisoner of war camps, therefore he was officially declared deceased. A memorial service was held in Warroad in October 1946.

His brother, who provided this information for the Roseau County Book of Honor, reports that “Wesley never knew his youngest sister, Marie, as she was born after he left. My mother never stopped believing that somehow he would be found.”

Wesley Everett Battles, a midshipman in the United States Navy, was awarded several medals for his service during World War II.

Melvin Brastad moved with his parents when he was two years old from South Dakota to the Roseau, Minnesota. He attended school in Roseau, and then the Northwest School. He graduated in 1939. Melvin went to the North Dakota Agriculture College in Fargo in 1940.

Melvin liked farming and was in charge of the family farming operation before he went into the service. It was his desire to return to the land following the war. After Melvin volunteered and was inducted to the U.S. Army on January 20, 1944, he received his basic training at Camp Blanding, Florida. He was trained in communications with the infantry. After further training at Fort George Meade, Maryland, he was shipped overseas. Although he landed first in Scotland, he eventually was transferred to eight different camps in England and France. In France, he served with the famous Fourth Armored Division in

Continued on page 14
American troops on the Island of Corregidor were poorly prepared to defend themselves. With no line of supplies to reach them, they became demoralized. After a 28-day siege, they were near starvation. General MacArthur was whisked from Corregidor to Australia via PT boat before the island fell to the Japanese. Upon departure, he issued his famous “I shall return” promise. The Japanese rounded up the GIs at Corregidor and started them on the infamous Death March to prisoner camps some sixty miles away. Norman died of starvation on December 9, 1944 in Bilibid Japanese Prison Camp in Manila.

This information was provided for the Book of Honor by his sister Mrs. Alvin Wiese and Roseau Times-Region.

We would like to thank Allan Magnuson '48 for sending us the information about these three young service men who gave their lives in battle.

Corregidor is a small rocky island in the Philippines about 48 kilometers west of Manila which is strategically located at the entrance of Manila Bay. This island fortress stands as a memorial for the courage, valor, and heroism of its Filipino and American defenders who bravely held their ground against the overwhelming number of invading Japanese forces during World War II.

Also known as “the Rock,” it was a key bastion of the Allies during the war. When the Japanese invaded the Philippines in December 1941, the military force under the command of General Douglas MacArthur carried out a delaying action at Bataan. Corregidor became the headquarters of the Allied forces and also the seat of the Philippine Commonwealth government. It was from Corregidor that Philippine President Manuel Quezon and General MacArthur left for Australia in February 1942, leaving behind Lt. Gen. Jonathan M. Wainwright in command.

Although Bataan fell on April 9, 1942, the Philippine and American forces held out at Corregidor for 27 days against great odds. (Retrieved from http://corregidorsiland.com/)

Photos From the Roseau County Veteran's Book of Honor
Ray Dunham

I was drafted into the army in the summer of 1944, took basic training in Little Rock, Arkansas and was shipped overseas to Europe in late 1944. I was assigned to the 36th Infantry Division as an infantry replacement and joined them in Alsace. After the war ended in Europe, the division did something that to me was the strangest tactic the army had ever seen! The older men in the division had enough points to go home and be discharged. We younger fellows were to be transferred to similar divisions fighting in the Pacific. The 36th seemed to want to make life a little easier for its younger troops and offered to change the individual’s MOS (Military Occupational Status) from infantryman to whatever! Many of us jumped at the chance. I had been active in music at Crookston High School so tried out for the division band.

The Warrant Officer who led the band was a Mr. Paige Brook. An extremely good musician and wonderful man. The band was informally broken into two small jazz combos who played for division functions (particularly for the general), a big band swing band and of course, the marching band. By coincidence, the general of the division was a John Dahlquist of St. Paul. Because I hadn’t played for some time, I asked Mr. Brook for some practice books to get back in shape. He referred me to a fellow clarinetist named Spicer. Spicer was a man of 34 who had played clarinet since "studying" it under a Catholic nun in a Washington D.C. orphanage. He was compelled to practice “religiously” and it showed!

One of the jazz combo members was a man by the name of Erickson. Naturally, with that name, he was from Minnesota. Wrong. He played the accordion ala Art van Damm and was from Brooklyn!

Several of the reed players in the big band were from the Detroit area and all had played professionally. It was a 19 piece band. Their arranger was a bassist of prodigious talent. We roomed together and I watched in awe as he wrote arrangements the equal of the likes of Stan Kenton, Woody Herman and others.

Paige Brook became the principal flutist in the New York Philharmonic after discharge and held that position for many years. As you can readily see, a 19 year old with limited musical experience was in way over his head in this group!

The marching band played many reviews before the division went home. We also played at a memorial service for General Patton in Heidelberg. The streets were lined with GI’s—some weeping, some cheering!

After the division went home, with its veterans, I was transferred to a Special Service band, which was located in Mannheim. Our job was to accompany road shows that came overseas to entertain the troops. Mickey Rooney was there twice, Olson and Johnson were there a couple of times and even a small classical orchestra made up of American women toured with us. I was privileged to play clarinet with that orchestra! Again, there were many professionals in this group. A fellow clarinetist was Shannon Krupsky, who became head of music for the Chicago public schools. Paul Smith was our pianist. After his discharge he accompanied Ella Fitzgerald many times and played with Tommy Dorsey as well as being co-host with Giselle McKenzie on her TV show. As I left the band to come home, a young singer joined the group. Anthony Bennedeto, or Tony Bennett as he later called himself. Many of these people have come through Minneapolis in the war.

I have visited with Paul Smith who appeared with both Dorsey and Ella. Mr. Brook and I had coffee together when he was here with the NY orchestra. (It gave me a chance to thank him for sending me out of harms’ way.) About four years ago we were in Kansas City visiting our daughter and family. We were staying in a downtown hotel when Tony B. arrived in his limousine. I bragged so much to my wife about him, she forced me to confront him and renew acquaintances. I’m positive he did not remember the situation or me but he couldn’t have been more congenial. We stood and talked for 4-5 minutes, a great guy.

As time has gone on, changes have been made in all these lives. After Paige retired he moved to a retirement home in Texas.

An interesting musical aside: while still in the infantry, I was sent to a hospital in Paris. While there, I was fortunate enough to get into the show that featured the Glenn Miller Air Force band. This was in early 1945 and as the show began, Sergeant Ray McKinley came out in front of the band and proclaimed that he and Jerry Gray and Johnny Desmond would be leading the band. Glenn Miller had been reported missing over the English Channel. The resounding complete silence indicated the deep respect these GI’s had for Miller! His Moonlight Serenade theme song was probably the most heartfelt moment I have ever experienced in music.

It is easy to see that music and the 36th Division have been good to me.

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1. Alumni gather for "talking tour" about UMC gardens.

2. Bill Gatheridge '64 accepts his Top Aggie Award.

3. NWSA Alumni president, Ray Dusek '57 presents the Top Aggie Award to Bill Gatheridge '64.

4. Margaret Lerud Garr '34 accepts her Top Aggie Award.

5. Gerhard Ross and Mike Meyer look at the boulder that bears R.S. Dunham's name.

6. Richard Holmgren '33 accepts his award from Ray Dusek.

7. Evelyn Holy Bancroft '54 receives her award.
10. Dale Neppel speaks to a group about the UMC gardens.

8. Bill Wagar, Gerhard Ross '45 and Neal Bjornson '54 visit during registration in Kiehle Rotunda.

9. Harlene Hagen '55 visits with guests.

11. Mary (Benson) Wagar '54 and husband Bill.

12. Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Joe Massey, visits with guests at the Top Aggie banquet.

13. Members of Class of '54 enjoy the beautiful weather and visiting.
Reunion Class Photos

Summer 2004

Photo at right: Back row: Jim Stevenson, Phil Grage, Anton Kraft, Curtis Carlson; Front row: David Jenson, John Schol, Deane Radke, Ken Beauchane

Photo at left: Back row: Steve Pauluk, James Holm, Dorothy Finkenbinder Bergh, Jerome Ruich, Marlys Sargent Engelstad, Wilford Dostal.; Front row: Ruth Giese Lau, Margorie Ophus Mjelde, Marvie Vesledahl Stromstad, Diane Swenson Arnold, Beth Lapp

1954 Senior Class Prophecy

Taken from the March 24, 1954 issue of the Aggie Rouser

Irene Anderson - Raising trees and strawberries with the Bergeson’s.
Mary Lou Baird - Trying to teach her children good manners.
Raymond Beck - Game Warden at Sabin MN.
Paul Bergeson - Growing roses for Irene.
Neal Bjornson - Running for governor of the new oil state.
Keith Danks - Still trying to pass a social test.
Larry Driscoll - Trying to buy some land in North Dakota so he can make a living at farming.
Paul Eggebraaten - Teaching his little brother how to play basketball.
Carol Ewing - Home Economics teacher at the NWSA.
Jim Fischer - Running a sawmill along the Buffalo River near Georgetown.
David Gray - Changing his name from Gray to Purple.
Marshal Gunther - Owns a diamond mine in Africa.
Elmer Halstensgaard - Head waiter at the Moon Room in Beju.
Harvey Halstensgaard - Has his own welding shop in Gary.
Dale Hanson - Taking care of this little brothers Eldon and Glenn.
Shirley Hanson - Teaching school in Reynolds North Dakota.
Orlean Hauer - Selling Chevrolets in Gilby North Dakota.
Neil Hegg - Making his own hair oil.
Jean Hellerud - Busy raising little Estvolds.
George Hendrickson - Taking over his dad’s optometrist office.
Donald Hettervig - Selling John Deere machinery in Hillboro.
Robert Hoekstra - Still going with Verna Mae.
Albert Hoglund - Teaching bookkeeping at a business college.
Evelyn Holy - Head nurse at St. Michael’s Hospital in Grand Forks North Dakota.
Arlis Iwen - Taking Marilyn Monroe’s place in Hollywood.
Charles Jenson - Working for Franklyn Kainz.
Grand Johnson - Head preceptor in Stephens Hall.
Franklyn Kainz - Running a side-show in a carnival.
Timothy Kazmierczak - Trying to find something else to take the curls out of his hair.
Richard Kluzak - Revising the dictionary and adding larger words.
Bruce Kramer - Playing basketball with the Peoria Caterpillers.
Lawrence Kuznia - Supplying all the beets for the Crystal Sugar Company.
Adelle Larson - Engineering a private road from Moorhead to Twin Valley.
Gary Lindemoen - Going across the U. S. on his motorcycle for the third time.
Gerald Magsam - Still driving his 1954 Plymouth.
Harlan Miller - 7’3”, he has grown.

Nancy Miller - Still single and trying to catch a man.
Helen Mistic - Head matron of the dining hall at the NWSA.
Wayne Mosher - Farming Polk County.
Marlyn Nelson - Doing an impersonation act on radio and t.v.
Dale Nesland - Erecting a monument to the potatoes on his 40,000 acre potato farm.
Norma Nielson - Superintendent of Schools at Hackensack.
Thomas Nesbet - Still his same, quiet self.
Diven Opeim - Police chief on narcotics.
Wendell Owens - Still a private in the National Guard.
Allen Peterson - Public relations man for Don Hettervig’s Implement Co.
Jim Plutoski - Cashing in on his smile by letting Colgate us it in their ads.
Ronald Ricard - Teaching French at the University of Minnesota.
Dolores Risser - Captain of a ferry boat in the vicinity of Angle Inlet.
Burdell Rude - Operating a dude ranch in California.
Daryll Salisbury - He is now an oil millionaire.
Grant Satre - Lost while deer hunting near Grygla.
Frank Schmaltz - Taking Joe McCarthy’s place in Washington D.C.
Beverly Schroeder - Remodeling the library at the NWSA.
Thomas Szczepanski - In Reno with Horgen.
Frank Shimpa - Manager of the Brooks cheese factory.
Loren Skaar - Running a theatre in Crookston.
Dean Skjervan - He was last seen in the library trying to make up his social science.
Robert Swanson - Wrestling coach as N.W.S.A.
Merlin Skretvedt - A surgeon in St. Paul (He always did like to cut you up.)
Gordon Syverson - Teaching geometry at the N.W.S.A.
Ernest Taus - Operating the Eagles Hall in East Grand Forks.
Jerome Turgeon - Building a dance hall in Oklee.
Lester Vad - Still following Opheim.
Dean Viker - Going to Africa to hunt heads.
David Viker - Acclaimed as the “greatest since Mikan” with Minneapolis Lakers.
Andrew Wichterman - Designing airplanes with the Boeing Aircraft Corporation.
Shirley Willett - Writing poetry in her spare time and raising little Norlands.
James Winkler - Still with Gunther, he’s really in the rocks now.
Neil Wogslan - Agent for the American Tobacco Company.
Harlan Wold - Working with the government in charge of free cigarettes for the army.
Marvin Zak - Undertaker in East Grand Forks.
Lorraine Zipoy - She has taken over Arthur Murray’s dance studio in New York.
2004 Honors

Stan Alseth '35

presented by Liz Tollefson

When Stan Alseth was a student at the Northwest School, Coach R.J. Christgau wrote in his yearbook, "Keep concentrating on your special abilities... That is what Stan did. Growing up in an orphanage, Stan learned to play basketball in a corner of the barn at the children's home. Playing basketball became the passion of Stan's young life. When he was sent to his uncles in Roseau at age thirteen, he was allowed to attend the NWSA. He worked in the dairy barn during the summers to help pay for school. He earned the Rutteiell Sweater Award and the Arthur Widseth Athletic Memorial Scholarship. The latter represented excellence in both athletics and academics. "I knew," Stan relates, "that in order to win that Widseth-LaVo medal, I would have to buckle down with determination and discipline."

Following his graduation, Stan worked for FEMCO Farms in Minnesota. He attended the University of Minnesota graduating with a bachelor of science. From there, he went to Lincoln, Nebraska where he studied at the Lincoln Aeronautical Institute completing 640 hours in aircraft inspection. With the training completed, he went to work for Martin Aircraft Company. Stan served in Scotland, England, France, Belgium, and Germany during WWII and in 1945 returned to Minnesota to study at the University. He transferred to the University of Denver where he completed his major in Light Construction Industry with a minor in Real Estate.

Stan returned to work at Martin Aircraft in Baltimore where he worked for sixteen years, before taking a job for the city of Baltimore for their Health Department focusing on air pollution control. He considers his work for the city of Baltimore to be the most rewarding of his life. Stan retired in 1978. He and his wife, Hanorah or Pat, as she is called, have enjoyed traveling around the country and abroad. Stan has written a number of journals during his life and these early memories contain reminiscences of the time he spent at the Northwest School. He carries these memories clearly with him to this day.

Evelyn Holy Bancroft '54

presented by Lorraine Zipoy Love '54

An active member of the NWSA campus, Evelyn Holy Bancroft, continued that tradition after graduation and throughout her life. While a student Evelyn was involved in Newman Club, Girl's Glee Club, choir, Aggie staff, Rouser staff, class officer, junior class play, and much more. She was the Homecoming Queen when she was a senior. Evelyn credits the faculty at the Northwest School for encouraging her to participate. She says, "I found when I graduated from the NWSA, I received a tremendous educational background, both in the classroom and out. The social skills that I learned enabled me to succeed in life."

A stay in the health service with nurses Mrs. McGrea and Ms. Pesch piqued an interest in nursing that became Evelyn's career. She went on to the Sister's of St. Joseph School of Nursing at the University of North Dakota where she received her R.N. degree in 1957. She worked at St. Michael's Hospital in Grand Forks and then moved to Chicago to work at Illinois Research Hospital. It was there that Evelyn met and married her husband, Burton. She went on to work at Mother Cabrini Hospital in Chicago followed by pediatrics clinics and Presbyterian/St. Luke's.

"In order to win the Widseth-LaVo medal, I would have to buckle down with determination and discipline."

--- Stan Alseth

Our 2004 Top Aggies are pictured together on the evening of the Top Aggie Recognition: Back row: Chancellor Velmer S. Burton, Jr.; Margaret Lerud Garr '34; Evelyn Holy Bancroft '54; Wayne Odegaard '64; Mike Meyer, Development Director; Front row: Richard Holmgren '33; and Bill Gatheridge '64. [Not pictured: Stan Alseth '35]

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2004 Top Aggies Continued...

Hospital. For many years, she worked at her husband’s clinic as office manager and nurse.

Throughout those years and the ones that followed, Evelyn has actively volunteered in her community, church, and non-profit organizations tirelessly leading and participating in a variety of projects. Evelyn believes that “variety is the spice life” and that is how she has spent her life, involving herself in work and play focused on comforting, educating, and caring for people. Evelyn and Burton have been married 45 years and have three children and four grandchildren.

Margaret Lerud Garr ‘34

*presented by her daughter,*

Debbie Russell

Her two years at the Northwest School influenced the career choice of Margaret Lerud Garr as a home economist. She went on to the University of Minnesota well prepared by the foundation built at the NWSA. Margaret enjoyed the extra curricular activities in music and drama. As part of the mixed chorus, glee club, and 4-H club, the Aggie yearbook from 1934 concluded by saying, “We could always depend on Margaret making the honor roll, but somehow she always found time to enter into every other activity with the same enthusiasm.”

Following graduation from the University of Minnesota in 1939, Margaret taught home economics at Elk River, Minnesota and Winnemucca, Nevada followed by three years as a communication officer in Seattle, Washington. She then spent the next twelve years as home extension agent in Wadena, Minnesota. In 1949, Margaret married Wayne Garr. They adopted two children and have seven grandchildren and fourteen great grandchildren.

Since 1963, Margaret and Wayne have lived in the Grand Forks, North Dakota area. She is involved in a number of community and church activities. One outstanding effort involved Lutheran World Relief. Margaret spent countless hours at her sewing machine involved in the making and the shipping of 9,000 to 10,000 quilts over the past 36 years. Margaret has volunteered with the Salvation Army’s flood relief, Red Cross, and Motor Corps, and others also.

Bill Gatheridge ‘64

*presented by Claudia Hanson Deery ’64*

Bill Gatheridge lived all four years of high school on the NWSA campus, which afforded him the opportunity to participate in many activities, and he took full advantage of those opportunities. He was a member of the Headwaters Club, Student Council, Mixed Chorus, basketball and cross-country teams, and served on the Aggie Rouser.

Top Aggie Banquet 2004 brought many alumni together to visit.

“Living on campus with your classmates made you grow together as a family and prepared me to perform my job in the parts field to a higher degree,” Bill says.

Following graduation, he attended NDSU in the mechanized ag program for a year, and then, he went on to the auto mechanics program at Dunwoody Institute of Minneapolis. He feels that his degree in auto mechanics helped him become a good parts man and manager of two Ford dealerships and assistant of another in the Twin Cities. He earned the Silver Medallion Award for parts management in 1976 and 1977 and the Bronze Award in 1975. He “retired” from Ford parts to small engine/power tractor parts with Service Pro of Crookston.

Bill is a member of the Crookston Classic Cruiser’s Club, and he restored his...
1939 Chevrolet in 1978. He is active in his church, sings in the choir, and has served on a number of boards and as treasurer. Bill served for six years on the NWSA board, and three of those years, he was president. Bill has been very active in Masons, Shriner’s, and the Rotary and has been the recipient of many awards. His service to the community is unprecedented and his activities are numerous. He and his wife, Verna, share eight children, four grandchildren, and a great grandson.

Richard Holmgren ‘33
presented by Margaret Lerud Garr ’34

One thing about Richard Holmgren, he is dedicated. His regular attendance at our NWSA reunions is a record in itself. In the seventy years since his graduation, he has attended sixty-three reunions. He says, “Living and working with other students and faculty at the NWSA taught me the value of people. I learned a lot about how to work with them under different situations and that carried out through my lifetime.”

Richard was an active member of the campus and a dedicated student. He graduated valedictorian of the class of 1933 and served as editor of the Aggie yearbook, participated in debate, grain and livestock judging, and the Aggie board. After graduation, he went on to the University of Minnesota. Although an illness in the family prevented him from completing the program, Richard has traveled and met outstanding people in all walks of life including Franklin Roosevelt and Ronald Reagan.

He farmed thirty-five years and was a certified potato and grass seed producer for ten years. Richard also was involved in timber transportation. During the largest project, he was responsible for loading and hauling timber out of the Northwest Angle for twenty-five years. Richard was also a member of the Lion’s Club, Hayes Lake Development Project in Roseau, and for thirty years has been a member of both Zion Lutheran Church in Warroad and First Lutheran in Baudette.

Richard and his wife, Eleanor have been married sixty-three years and have two children who are both involved in education. He received the Farmer-Sportsman Award in Lake of the Woods County and the 1967 Valley Farmer Home Award.

Wayne Odegaard ‘64
presented by Gary Pedersen ’64

Currently, Wayne Odegaard says he lives the life of a “gentleman farmer,” but Wayne’s life has been deeply involved in agriculture across the country and in Central America. It was through the encouragement of Dr. Ed Fredericks at the Northwest School that Wayne went on for his bachelor’s (1969) and master’s (1975) degrees in dairy science from the University of Minnesota. Dr. Fredericks was an instructor in livestock and coached the dairy judging team at the NWSA. Wayne has worked for the Co-op Extension Service for thirty years in Minnesota, Florida, and for the U.S. Agency for International Development in Belize Central America. Wayne’s life has been dedicated to helping others in the field of agriculture.

Wayne enjoyed dorm life, the Aggie Inn, extra curricular activities and says they “have all had a positive influence on my life.” He has been involved in numerous organizations including Rotary International in Florida, as well as the Mayo Rotary Club where he served as president. He is a board member and volunteer with Camp E HowKee, which is a training program for troubled teens sponsored by the Eckard Foundation in Brooksville, Florida.

As a volunteer with Heifer International—a non-profit organization providing food and income to families in developing countries, Wayne and his wife, Susan, worked for a year in Tanzania, Africa. He also routinely conducts education programs and fund raising efforts on behalf of Heifer International. Although he is now retired, he still volunteers time to this special organization.
The Greatest Generation

Lowell Bjella grew up five miles east of Bemidji, Minnesota. Lowell skied the two miles to the one room schoolhouse. When it came time for high school, Lowell attended Bemidji and then when his parents went to Phoenix for the winter, he went to Phoenix Union High School before coming to Crookston. Lowell considers the opportunity to attend the Northwest School of Agriculture (NWSA) as "one of the best things that ever happened" to him. "It was so helpful in adapting and adjusting to real life," Lowell says. He had many good friends, enjoyed wrestling, and lettered in football. "I had opportunities I would never have had in Bemidji," Lowell recalls, "I just didn't have access to transportation and the NWSA had so much to offer."

As a member of the 503rd Parachute Regiment and Combat Team, Lowell E. Bjella served in the Philippines. He was stationed on Los Negro's Island. He entered the service May 7, 1944 at Fort Snelling, Minnesota. Here is his story:

The first week in May 1944, I was inducted into the army. I was thankful that I had the opportunity to complete high school; many of my friends who did not attend the NWSA were not able to finish before being inducted into the service.

In May of 1945, our demolition team was given orders to escort a supply train of about forty Filipino civilians over the mountains on the Negro's Island. We cut cards to see who would stay back at camp. Col. Jones of the 503rd directed us to space ourselves so that everyone was protected. Halfway up the mountain, we were ambushed by the Japanese, as the farther they retreated back in the mountains, the more scarce food became and many of them were starving.

Colonel Jones directed someone to remove the bodies of Americans along the trail who had been deceased for some period of time. We arrived over the mountain and down in the valley where a major was stationed at an outpost. After a short discussion our colonel advised us that we would return after leaving the rations, but the Filipinos would stay with one armed guard, in case it was necessary to carry back any wounded.

Sgt. Bronman held in his hand six straws and whoever drew the shortest straw would stay until the major advised us to return. Yours truly drew the shortest straw.

A patrol did not return, but the major, after a few hours, advised us to go back to camp and we were told the war in Europe had ended. Now, if only the Japanese would surrender.

We had fought the Japanese in the mountains of the northern Philippine Islands. When the war ended, I weighed just 108 pounds, but I put 40 pounds back on within four months.

It was the first week in September 1945 when I was advised by my company commander, Lt. Sullivan that I was to escort 36 Japanese prisoners by air transport from Los Negro's Island to Tacloban on the island of Leyte. The Japanese were sending ships to pick up troops that had surrendered and Tacloban was the only place close that had a stockade and port facilities.

The Japanese prisoners were all very humble and polite, and they bowed frequently. They looked emaciated, but overall I think they were fairly healthy. After the prisoners were on the plane and in flight, I recall they were advised, in not very friendly terms by some of the American soldiers, that if any of them became ill they would be asked to exit.

While flying over Leyte, we could see armored equipment and supplies of every description as far as the eye could see. It had been stockpiled for the planned invasion of Japan, which was no longer necessary because of the atomic bomb.

Upon landing, when every prisoner was finally off the plane, I ordered them to follow me, and I heard the words "non ge deska" which means "do not understand." When I said we were all going to dinner, they followed me like sheep. They understood me when I told them it was time to eat.

After the Philippines, I was eventually sent to northern Japan where another paratrooper and I volunteered to be ski instructors near Moryoka. I was finally discharged in May 11, 1946.

Lowell spent 1 year 2 months and 23 days serving in the southern Philippines as a demolition specialist. He received the army occupation ribbon (Japan) Asiatic-Pacific Theater Service Medal, Good Conduct Medal, and the Philippine Liberation Ribbon with a bronze star and seven parachute jumps in flight. Total service: 2 years, 4 days, 14 hours, and 12 minutes.
Ben Bakkegard

When I found myself deep in the jungles of New Guinea during WWII, I was terribly disheartened. What had I done or failed to do that I should end up in this God-forsaken part of the world. Certainly, I would have been in more comfortable circumstances had I joined the Navy, the Air Force, or the Coast Guard. In the jungle, I would have no bed, no mattress, no sheets, no pillow, no running water, no toilet paper and no family other than a company of men, most as bewildered as I. Too late now! We had nothing to do, but face reality and hope for the best.

With the passing of time, my feelings regarding those days and nights have moderated, and I have come to think of them in gentler ways. How? Most important, I survived. There were times I wasn't certain I would, but I did. Thank God! There were too many of my comrades that did not come back home alive.

New Guinea as and probably still is the most uncivilized place in the world. If I had not been sent there, I certainly would not otherwise ever have gone there. After having lived among the people I feel that I acquired a certain curiosity about society in general that I might not otherwise have recognized. To a large extent, environment dictates how people must live. The tropical climate permitted the simplest of clothing and dwelling; the bountiful jungle required little cultivated agriculture and no need to develop a system of transportation; communal living required no reason to develop a system of written communication. They continued to live the simple life that they had led for centuries.

Even though they led a simple life, I found them curious about the life style of the strange visitors who had so recently come to their land. We found them very helpful as supply and litter bearers. During a rest stop one day, one of the bearers seemed to take a special interest in my fatigue jacket. The thing that fascinated him was the way it was buttoned. I let him button and unbutton it several times. When his curiosity was satisfied, he smiled his approval.

On another occasion, one of the adult natives came to me and motioned as if brushing his teeth. It was obvious that he wanted a toothbrush so I took one of my two toothbrushes from my backpack and gave it to him. He looked at it briefly and returned it. He then went directly to another soldier continuing with the same tooth brushing motion. The native gladly accepted this soldier's toothbrush. He looked at it briefly, broke off the brush section, and dropped it in the underbrush. Then, he opened an Army tobacco can fastened to his g-string and put the handle in the can. We observed that in the can were red plastic beads.

As the war progressed, we received more and better equipment. Soon after we landed on the Philippine Island of Leyte, our company acquired a refrigerator, which was mounted on the chassis of a wrecked Jeep. One day as the mess sergeant defrosted the refrigerator, he tossed the icicles to the ground. A number of children gathered, but obviously did not understand what was going on. I picked up one of the icicles, put it to my mouth, and motioned for the children to do likewise. I shall forever remember the expression on their faces as they experienced for the first time in their lives something that was frozen. Since then, I have come to realize that many things we temperate zone dwellers take for granted, many of the people of the earth have never experienced. The Army apparently had a regulation that the troops would be paid each month even though there was no place one could spend his earnings. The natives had no trading posts nor was the Army able to maintain a post exchange in the jungle. Over seas we were paid in local currency. The natives had no known currency.

Continued on page 24
The Greatest Generation

(except perhaps seashells) so we were paid in the Australian currency, since New Guinea at the time was a colony of Australia. There was nothing one could buy, so what did we do with our pay? We used it as play money since it had no intrinsic value where we were. The paper money (the pound) we used in gambling—mostly poker. The silver coins (the shilling and the florin) some of the men tried to fashion into crude jewelry. The Australian penny, which was over an inch in diameter, we would “skip” across a near-by body of water. We observed that the Australian money seemed to “go” a lot further than American money.

For the first time in my life, I learned the true value of money. And, what is that? Try spending money where there is nothing to buy.

I shall always remember the men with whom I served. We were together twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, month after month, campaign after campaign. We learned to trust each other and to look out for each other. And, so it was throughout the New Guinea campaign, the Philippine Island liberation, and the initial occupation of Japan. I have never known men that are more trustworthy. Most of them are no longer with us.

Ben Bakkegard continued...

Ben Bakkegard was honorably discharged on December 23, 1945 after serving 44 months and ten days, much of that time over seas. He recalls it as one of the most memorable days of his life. “We left Yokohama on December 1, hoping, but not expecting to get home for Christmas. We did make it! My wife Ardelle (Hamlette), a former member of the NWSA faculty, was awaiting my return at Hudson, Wisconsin railroad station at 10:31 p.m.” Ben and Ardelle were married for 55 years, until she passed away in 1997.

A Kindness Remembered
from Stan Alseth

The most impressive act I remember during WW II is a kindly gesture performed by a member of our unit. It would have been easier and a lot more comfortable not to do it, but it shows how long remembered acts of kindness are.

I was a member of the 129th Evacuation Hospital stationed in Camp Carson, Colorado. We had gone south (Kentucky, perhaps) to set up bivouac in a cow pasture. It had been raining for days and was muddy-and cold. We probably had 2’x12’ wooden planks laid down in the center of the tent. A wood burning stove in the center provided some heat. The men who were serving as nurses (our regular nurses had not yet arrived) were busy helping those with various stages of a cold or other ailment. I was suffering from a severe earache, and though I called for help, I received no helpful response from them.

All personnel were positioned by bunk location as we were back in Camp Carson. Soldier number one had the first bed to the left as one entered the tent. He had a slovenly reputation and often wet the bed at night. While I had all but given up, this soldier had dressed and come to my bunk to help me get dressed and get to the emergency tent. My temperature was 103 degrees, and the doctor gave me some medication that at first gave me a feeling of euphoria before passing out. When I woke up, I was in General Hospital in Atlanta, Georgia, I believe. My head was all bandaged and the doctor was at the foot of the bed telling me about the mastoidectomy he had just performed.

It would be three months before I would be able to go back. My Unit (129th) had shipped overseas along with soldier number one. I later joined another Evac Hospital and shipped over seas-ending with the famous “Battle of the Bulge.” That night soldier number one was my angel. He still is.

Stan served in Scotland, Belgium, France, England, and Germany. Victory papers were signed on May 7, 1945, Stan’s birthday.

The 1933 basketball team. Stan Alseth is in the second row the sixth from the left.
I was one of the three dozen or so campus kids until I left in the summer of 1935 for the Naval Academy. My father, Orville Kiser, was the animal husband of the Northwest School of Agriculture and Experiment Station. After thirty years on campus, he retired in 1952 and moved to Crookston. His picture is on the wall of the hippodrome (Winter Shows Building) along with Thomas McCall and other Red River Valley pioneers.

Looking back at the twenties and thirties, I can say that I grew up in the best of places at the best of times. We campus kids were a privileged bunch. We had all the advantages of country life-clean air and wide open spaces and none of the hard life of farmers-dawn to dusk chores. When I got older, I helped Dad in our garden, mowed lawns for two-bits a lawn, and worked in the Northwest School farm fields for twenty cents an hour. On one project, we were paid by checks from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. One check for four dollars, I put in a drawer and forgot about it.

About a month later, I got a letter from the Department of Agriculture telling me to cash the check. For this Washington could balance its bills.

The faculty houses were on a quarter circle running from west to east to south. On the west end was the “flat” with four families; the south end had a duplex. In between were six houses. My house was due north of the horse barn and in between was the campus green. Each house had a garden in the back. In the spring, one of the farm hands would hitch the team to a three-bottom plow and turn over the soil. Next came the manure spreader and the harrow so we didn’t have to do much to prepare our gardens. People competed to see who could get the first vegetables. Next door was Tom McCall, the horticulturist, and he usually surprised people by having potato shoots coming up in a day or two. The soil of the Red River Valley was deep, black, and fertile, which combined with the long hours of sunlight meant that seeds sprouted and grew rapidly. Radishes were on our table after a week or so.

There were no fences and one year Dad and Mr. Pilkey got in to a playful squabble over a patch of horseradish. Sort of silly as there was more than enough of the stuff for the whole campus. Dad always had a bank of sweet peas for Ma. In addition to the usual vegetables, we always had sweet corn and popcorn. In the winter, Dad would let the furnace fire die down to coals and then using a wire basket, pop a big pan full of white popcorn. Melted butter and spread it around and that was our Sunday night supper along with a sandwich and milk.

We had no television or computers; some families did not even have a radio. Our radio was a bulky gadget with a face covered with dials. Three were for tuning and the others handled various jobs. A log was kept of the setting of the dials when a station was found. Several big batteries were required. At first, we only had earphones before getting a loud speaker that was a miniature of a coal-burning ship’s ventilating scoop. People vied with one another to see who could pull in the most distant station-KFJM, Grand Forks, WCCO, Minneapolis, etc. Boys experimented with crystal sets; two-bits bought a crystal and then one had to scrounge for wire to make a tuning coil, earphones, and a long length of wire for an antenna. Grand Forks was the only station I could get. There were many short radio serials, and I used to listen to Little Orphan Annie, Buck Rogers in the 25th Century, and Tarzan.

Crookston had two theaters-the Grand and the Lyric and going to them was a rare treat. Some kids got allowances, but there were more interesting things to buy than movie tickets. During the school year at the A.C., a film or two was shown that we could see for free; silent pictures up until 1935 when the A.C. got talkies. During the summer months, short courses were held and two-reeler comedies were shown. We kids saw these over and over.

We all went to school in Crookston by bus, starting out at Lincoln Grade School and then next door to the Crookston High School for junior high and high school both of these buildings have disappeared. Andy was our...
Campus Kids continued...

driver, and if you missed the 16:30 bus, you walked home about a mile or went to Wallace’s Drug Store and called home for a ride.

What did we do for amusement without any of the modern time-wasting inventions like T.V., games, etc? Golly, we had so much to do that boredom was a word we never knew. I hated school because it took up valuable time that I could have used for any number of more interesting projects. We played all sorts of games-kitten ball, one-o-cat, kick the can, football, races, pole-vaulting, gype stick, and hoop rolling. On the second floor of the Kiehle building was gymnasium for basketball games. There was an exercise “horse” and four rings for swinging on. We had the whole hundreds of acres for our playground.

Usually we were outdoors during most of the daylight hours. Naturally, I got my share of bumps, bruises, and cuts. I fell out of trees and off roofs. The closest I came to a serious injury occurred when I was about five years old. My sister, Joy, and I were down by the cow barn looking for something to do. A truck came by with a calf on it. The mother cow, following that truck going at a slow speed, saw us and decided that we were a menace to her baby. She bellowed and charged for us. There was a thicket nearby, and we fled to it while screaming. I was on the outside of the thicket, not because I was a gentleman, but because Joy was a faster runner than I was. (Twelve years later when I went to the Naval Academy, I became an officer and “a gentleman by an act of Congress.”) So I got my pants torn and a scratch on my leg. People came from all over and chased that old mooley cow away before it could work its way into the bushes. Dad gave the farmer a good talking to that day.

In 1930, a new gymnasium was erected with an indoor swimming pool. We thought it was so much fun to go swimming in the winter and walk home in sub-zero weather with our hair freezing. A concrete tennis court was laid to the west of the gym. I didn’t have enough money for a tennis racket so I made one out of the end of an apple box by nailing on a handle. When yo-yo’s became popular, I made mine from the end of thread spools.

We had the barns to play in, jumping and sliding in the hayloft, climbing the rafters and helping with the feeding of livestock. When the herdsman, Alfred Lund, was absent, I helped Dad with the milking. This was done with milking machines and each cow’s out put was carefully weighed. The milk was taken to the dairy building across the way. Campus people got their milk and cream here by leaving a bucket or a pail with tickets. Getting the milk was one of my little chores.

In the diary building were classrooms for butchering classes. I watched the slaughtering and listened while Dad demonstrated how to cut up an animal. Campus people could also buy their meat here. I helped Dad with the processing on our winter’s supply of pork, mutton, and beef. My job was mainly of cutting slabs of pork into cubes for lard rendering. Ma had a big kettle for this purpose. The hot oil was poured through cheesecloth into big china jars and stored in the basement. I enjoyed munching on the cracklings. Dad and Ma also made our hams, sausages, and bacon. These were hung on the back porch where they froze. During the summer months, we lived on vegetables from our garden.

At one time, Dad kept Rhode Island Red chickens in a small house in the back. I collected the eggs and Mother put these into a china crock and covered them with water glass, which preserved them for many months. Sundays we usually had a big chicken dinner after returning from church. Dad would grab one of his chickens and chop its head off with an axe. The chicken ran around the yard for a while before expiring. Then it was put in hot water and the feathers removed. Mother

"Golly, we had so much to do that boredom was a word we never knew."
“Getting the milk was one of my little chores.” —Loren Kiser

cleaned it and cooked the gizzard just for me.

After Dad sold off his chickens, we got our eggs from the poultry barn located just south of the cow barn. I was surprised to find out that these eggs were white. I staked out a claim for the chicken coup. After cleaning it, I began making it into my museum. All my treasures were there including bird’s nests and eggs, pieces of wood shaped like guns, toys, and a hank of rope donated by Mrs. Avery along with other odds and ends.

The A.C. had a nice library, and we made good use of it when nothing else beckoned. We boys always went through the National Geographic looking for pictures of native girls. Also, Popular Mechanics and Popular Science were scanned so that we could keep up with the rapid advancement of aviation, cars, and the like. We could check out books and so developed a habit of reading. During the summer, I

made a platform high in a willow tree and read there by the hour with peanut butter sandwiches for nourishment. My father could not find me to do some chores either.

Our house was a reading house. We subscribed to Women’s Home Companion, American Magazine, Saturday Evening Post, dairy magazines, Atlantic Monthly, and Boy’s Life, as well as the Crookston Times and Minneapolis Journal. On Christmas and birthdays we always got books. Mother gave me Jim Davis by John Mansfield in 1928. Reading it gave me a little nostalgic pleasure.

While in grade school, Bob Larsen and I had fun

riding the sheep and pigs. Dad fenced in part of the windbreak for an experiment raising sheep. Bob and I would put some grass in a trough and when the sheep were eating, we jumped on their backs, grabbed a handful of wool, and had a wild ride through the woods. Sometimes Dad had Bob and me drive the pigs back to the barn after a livestock judging class. It was harder to keep one’s seat on a pig because they were slippery and there was nothing to hang on to.

While in the fifth grade, the Larsen family moved away—a sad day for me.

When we got older, we began riding horses. Most of these were black aside from Ida and Daisy, brown horses with silver manes. Although they were just draft animals, it was fun to ride around the campus. Stopping in the shade of a tree we let the horses browse while we lay on their backs and talked of our future. The machine shed had a buggy and one summer we got a team out, hitched up, and took the dining hall girls for an evening ride. In the winter, it was harder to get Daisy out hitched to the cutter. She didn’t seem to think running through the snow was fun.

Smoking was quite common although everyone knew it was bad for one’s “wind.” Lighting up a cigarette was “driving another nail into one’s coffin.” In high school, the athletic coach said, “If I catch any one of my athletes smoking, I will kick you off the squad.” Naturally, Bob Larsen and I experimented with smoking. Dried corn silks made fine cigarettes. We also burned grape vines and dried leaves. On warm days, we took our lunch down to the park at noon. By collecting pennies, we could buy a can of Prince Albert Pipe Tobacco or a sack of Bull Durham Tobacco. One of us would write a note, “Please give the kid a sack of Bull Durham.” For me it was play, and like Clinton, “I never inhaled.” One of the bunch, Roland Marcoux, used to get angry with me because I didn’t inhale, which was a good thing, as I never acquired the habit. If we had no money for tobacco, we picked up butts. Swimming in the river or lake was a treat. During the summer months, we welcomed the cloud bursts that filled up the ditches. Then we put on bathing suits and paddled around. To the east of the campus was a pasture with a stock tank and a windmill. On hot days, we hiked out there, stripped, and splashed in the tank.

Each year on midsummer’s day, the entire campus went on a picnic to a nearby lake. I brought along my ship models; one was equipped with a canon made from thirty caliber rifle cartridge cases obtained after the Armistice
Day salute was fired over the World War monument. These I loaded with small firecrackers. When lit, they made a nice sound. In the basement of our house, I had a workbench. Dad gave me real tools-chisels, saws, plane, and hammer. The year I got a copying saw was memorable. Now I could saw curves in wood. Yes, I cut myself too, but that was part of growing up. I also made many ship airplane models.

In another corner of the basement, I set up a small chemistry lab. Much of the stuff came from the A.C.'s chemistry room. One thing I became quite good at was making hydrogen-sulfide water. A small vile of this when poured on the sloping theater floor caused some consternation among the girls who were having a good sob at the site of Evangeline paddling downstream on one side of an island just missing her sweetheart, Gabriel, who was stemmng the current on the other side of the island. Another experiment was the making of hydrogen gas. I got a one-gallon paint can and upended it over my generator. When I figured I had enough hydrogen, I tied a match to a stick, lighted it, and touched off the hydrogen. There was a nice bang, which startled Mother upstairs.

In winter, we had skating, sliding, and hitching our sleds to the manure sleigh as it carried a load out to dump east of the campus. One Christmas, I got a Flexible Flyer. This sled had a crossbar and could be steered. The only hill on the campus was the root cellar about six feet high, but this provided us with a lot of exercise and fun. I also had skis, but these were used more for transportation over the deep snow. Occasionally, one of the parents would take a full car of kids to the Golf Links west of town where there was a real hill. Riding down hill in a toboggan full of kids, we ran into a tree where I received a cut lip and a broken incisor.

We made snow houses and Dad complained that I worked harder at this than I did at keeping our sidewalks clear. Snow fell quite deep in winter and rooms were made by tunneling into snow banks. In January, there was usually a thaw and then a freeze. Skating ponds were everywhere. I used a set of clamp on skates that I had found in the basement. These were hard to keep on even with straps. There was a school rink to the west of the chicken houses.

However, when the heavy snows came, it was impossible to keep it cleared for skating.

I liked visiting Mr. Avery, the botanist, in his greenhouse. The mingled odors of damp soil and flowers were spiced with the smoke form his meerschaum pipe. He smoked Old English Curve Cut Tobacco that came in a flat can that was curved to fit a hip pocket. The tobacco was in thin sheets and Mr. Avery crumbled it before stuffing his pipe; he used the cans for his seeds. There were two or three banana plants and maybe I got a small banana.

Another place that was nice to drop in during the winter was the boiler house. Martin Rud worked here during the winter months. The chuffling and clicking sounds of the circulating pumps and the nice smell of smoke and steam was pleasant after a run around in the cold. In between shoveling coal into the fireboxes, Martin worked on crossword puzzles. I don’t know if he ever finished the Minneapolis Journal’s Sunday puzzle, which covered an entire page.

Guns were a part of our lives. In sixth grade, I got a King air rifle. The most popular air gun was Daisy, but I liked King better. I thought it had more power and looked more like a real rifle. With this, I tried out my marksmanship on sparrows and pigeons. There were many of these around the barns. The fields were full of gophers, and these made exciting targets as they moved very fast. The cow barn cats were happy to see me when I brought in the bag of the day. This practice stood me in good stead, as I was able to win an expert marksmanship medal at the Naval Academy.

Later on, I got a 22 rifle. Russ Sundet and I made a little cabin in the woods. We stayed out there for a few days at a time. For food, we shot pigeons. These were eviscerated, wrapped in mud, and put into the campfire. We swiped corn and potatoes from fields and cooked these in the same way. All we needed was a bit of salt and pepper. Dessert was vinegar candy made by Russ. At a recent all-class reunion, I asked him for the recipe, but he had forgotten it.

To be continued. The remainder of this article will appear in a future issue of The Aggie.
Class Notes

Chuck and Bonnie (Vesledahl) Holmquist ’52
Crookston, MN
Chuck & Bonnie (Vesledahl) Holmquist ’52, Crookston, MN were recognized by the Crookston Kiwanis as Outstanding Supporters for Arts and Academics.

James Wodahl ’41
Hill City, SD
Email correction. Email James at maestra@hills.net.

In Memory

Edna Ross Hanson ’29
Alexandria, MN
September 29, 2004

Arnold L. Hanson ’30
Alexandria, MN
August 10, 2004

Ann (Thoreson) Anderson ’31
Auburn, CA
December 25, 2003

Kenneth Lantz ’37
Mariposa, CA
March 2004

Herbert A. Johnson ’41
Ramona, CA
November 2002

Calmer Johnson ’45
Moorhead, MN
July 8, 2004

Theresa Gruhot ’52
Crookston, MN
December 15, 2003

Harlan Altepeter, Sr. attended ’54-’55
Thief River Falls, MN
June 9, 2004

Frank Mager attended ’55-’56
Burnsville, MN
July 23, 2004
Arizona Social

February 25, 2005
11:30am-3:00pm
Terrace Green at the ViewPoint Resort in Mesa, Arizona
$10 per person

NWSA Alumni Association
University of Minnesota, Crookston
2900 University Avenue
Crookston, MN 56716-5001

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