

**NOJOSHING**  
**A ST. FRANCIS HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER**  
**PUBLISHED BIMONTHLY**  
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**What's New**



The St. Francis Historical Society will have eight 6' x 10' cabinets placed around the rotunda of the new Civic Center. We will be explaining what will go into each cabinet. This first cabinet will hold a tool chest donated by Frank Calteux. It belonged to Anton Calteux who came to America from Luxembourg. Anton's picture is in the stained glass window at Henni Hall. We will have a Town of Lake map, shelves for Native American artifacts, and pictures of St. Francis Orphanage, Seminary and St. John's School for the Deaf. We will also include land grants and abstracts.

If you feel you have something that will fit into one of these categories, and would be willing to donate/loan it, please call Bill Drehfal at 481-6511.

**Save the Date**

The annual Christmas party for the St. Francis Historical Society will be on December 5. Please mark it on your calendar.

## **An Interview with a former Mayor**

*Interview of Milton Vretenar by Jim Goodwin on November 13, 2000, as part of the St. Francis Historical Society History Project.*

**J.G.** When did you move into St. Francis?

**M.V.** We moved into the community in 1937, and at that time I was nine years old. We came here from the old country, Czechoslovakia, and I did not know a word of English. We are in the same area, living in the same home. Now I live one house away, next door to the old homestead. Our homestead is where we moved in 1937, and in supposedly one of the oldest homes in the community. I guess what I can say is that things changed quite a bit.

I have a picture here that I am showing Jim of the property, of the barn and everything else. In the foreground you can see the chimneys of Lakeside Power Plant. When we lived here in the Town of Lake, there were very few homes. Most of it was vacant land. From Packard Avenue to what we call our city limits on Lunham Avenue, there was only one home on Lunham, which is where Black Bear soda is located.

We didn't have any electricity on Packard Avenue, there were no sewers and we had outside toilets and well water. We'd go outside to the bathroom and our electricity came from Black Bear because there were no electric lines in front of our home or anything on Packard Avenue at that time.

**J.G.** Did you ever go back to Czechoslovakia?

**M.V.** I have not, my brothers have, and my mom and dad went back, but I was too busy all the time. I didn't want to come here in the first place. I told my mother before we left in 1937, "just leave me a couple sacks of potatoes and a couple of my shirts and I'll stay here with my friends". They forced me to come.

**J.G.** You'd like to go back some day?

**M.V.** Well, one of these days.

**J.G.** When it was Town of Lake, were you ever involved in politics?

**M.V.** Not really. At that time we were busy trying to survive, like I said. Jobs were hard to come by. We had this little place here, which was a little bit of a farm, and we had cows. From Packard Avenue all the way to KK, we used to farm that. We used to make hay there, and pasture our cows there. Our life was busy, we had our family, had an operation where my dad had a job at Ladish, and to help support us, we had cows and pigs and everything else. Our duties were to maintain all that stuff. So I mean, as far as our involvement in Town of Lake, we were not really involved.

**J.G.** Where did you go to grade school?

**M.V.** I went up to third grade in Europe. My dad felt kind of bad and he said, "there's a school only two blocks away", which was Lincoln School, which was right up the block. But it was in Cudahy, so he had to pay for us to go there. He said, "well, I'm going to let you do that so you don't have to walk the distance", because there were no real roads and everything was wide open in wintertime. You'd freeze your butt off going there. So we went to Cudahy Lincoln School and it was a blessing for us because that year when we first came here there was a quarantine for measles. The kindergarten, first and second grades weren't operating. So those teachers helped my brothers and me one-on-one as far as learning English. But then, as kids will be kids, we got kind of rambunctious when we got home from school. We'd fool around and jump around and get in trouble. My dad said, "well, seeing you guys have so much energy, you'd better go to Thompson School". So the following year we went to Thompson School.

*(...to be continued)*

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**Do You Know...???** *(answers from the questions in the July newsletter)*

1. In which hand does the Statue of Liberty hold her torch? **Right**
2. How many spikes are on the crown of the Statue of Liberty and what do they symbolize? **7 spikes, representing the seven seas and seven continents of the world**
3. On the American flag, is the top stripe red or white? **Red**
4. How many states are in the U.S.A? **50**
5. What two numbers on the telephone dial don't have letters on them? **0 and 1**