

Price \$1



*We Remember  
We Celebrate  
We Believe*

# "IT'S ABOUT THE PEOPLE"

Together | Helpfulness | Friendliness

## Betsy Janssen, Machine Shed Reunion Co-founder, Passes

By Gene Medford

.....

**Save the Date**

.....

**Couillardville Park Social**

.....

*Saturday  
August 17  
See page 4 for details*



Betsy loved welcoming friends to an MSR

**Betsy Janssen, who co-founded the Machine Shed Reunion at Meadow Brook Farm** with her husband, Leon, in 2002, peacefully passed away in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin, on April 9, age 83.

Betsy was known and loved by everyone who knew her, especially the hundreds of present and former Couillardville residents and their families who attended the popular Machine Shed Reunions over the years. She was always on hand to

welcome guests to the Janssen family farm and for the annual event and see to their every comfort. Along with Leon, she was instrumental in creating a unique event that united everyone with a local connection in an atmosphere of remembering and celebrating "community."

Born in Ettrich, Wisconsin, Betsy grew up in a large family of seven siblings, the children of Francis and Thea Danielson. After graduating from Black River Falls High

School, she received her RN from St. Francis School of Nursing in LaCrosse, then became a surgical nurse at UW Madison. She and Leon were married there in 1963 and had their first child, daughter Jodi, the following year. When Leon was called to active duty in the U.S. Army, the family moved to Ft. Sill, Oklahoma, for a short while, then on to Munich, Germany, where son Jay was born in 1965.

Continued on page 2

# Betsy's Smile



With Nancy Carey Campbell



With daughter Jodi Jacobson



With Lorraine Konkel

Continued from page 1

Leon left active duty in 1967 and joined General Electric in Burlington, Vermont, where Betsy resumed her nursing career at the University of Vermont Medical Center and was an active community volunteer. She also found time to give birth to her second son, David.

In 1972, the Janssen family moved to Waukesha, their home for the next 52 years. Betsy continued her community volunteer work in a variety of roles, and also resumed her nursing career, serving as one of the Carroll College Health Center campus nurses for 19 years.

When the opportunity arose to repurchase the former Janssen family farm in Couillardville, in 2001, Betsy and Leon were quick to act,

bringing much of the historic property back into the family after an absence of 45 years. They immediately began making plans to share their good fortune with the community by inviting everyone to share in an annual "open house" on the property. Centered in the reconstructed machine shed, it soon became known as the Machine Shed Reunion and turned into a highly-anticipated annual event that continues to attract guests from near and far.

Though declining health limited Betsy's participation in recent years, she was always concerned for the care and comfort of the visitors to Meadow Brook Farm for this special event. Leon kept her fully apprised of Machine Shed Reunion plans and

activities and was quick to follow up on her suggestions. She also contributed in many ways to the 2014 publication of "Machine Shed Memories – A Chronical of Rural Life in Wisconsin," the 358-page remembrance of the people who made Couillardville such a very special place.

Betsy was interred in Waukesha on April 18, leaving behind Leon, her three children and seven grandchildren, numerous nieces and nephews, three surviving siblings, and hundreds of friends and acquaintances.

Gene Medford had a long career as an expert public relations professional. While co-authoring Machine Shed Memories, Gene became a well-informed advocate for all matters Couillardville.

# Tribute to “Elizabeth Ann”

*By her sister “Sharon Rae” Danielson Peterson*



Sharon and Betsy



L to R. Darlene, Arlan, Mary, Elizabeth (**Betsy**), Helmer and **Sharon**

Good afternoon, I’m Sharon, Betsy’s sister. Actually, I was Sharon Rae to her and she was Elizabeth Ann to me - we always greeted each other that way. And I am honored to stand here today and share some memories with you.

These past few years, I had a weekly FaceTime call with Betsy. And each time I began by singing the song “You Are My Sunshine” - she loved that. And it’s true, she really was a light in my life in so many ways. She was my sister and friend and a steadfast support throughout the years.

Betsy was three years older than me. We grew up in Black River Falls, Wisconsin. Our days were filled with hard work and simple pleasures. We walked to a one-room country

school, where at one point, seven of us siblings attended together. Those walks were filled with laughter and chatter, and sometimes, a bit of mischief.

Our farm life kept us busy year-round. We picked corn, strawberries and beans, and planted potatoes in the rich soil. Despite our young age, we were eager farmhands, learning the value of hard work and the satisfaction of seeing our crops grow.

After a long day's work, we'd often head to the nearby lake in Hatfield. It was our oasis, where we could unwind and enjoy some leisure time swimming and rollerskating. Those summer days were some of the happiest times of our youth.

As we grew older, our bond only strengthened. Betsy's adventurous spirit and courage inspired me, and I looked up to her in every way. In high school, she was even part of a group of senior mentors to me and other incoming freshmen. We often met up as a group at G's Cafe after football games for a bite to eat. And after high school I was proud to attend her capping ceremony on her way to becoming a registered nurse.

Even as life took us on different paths we continued to remain close and share the special moments of our lives as our families grew and our own children became friends. I have fond memories of our visits over the years:

Continued on page 4

Continued from page 3

Pool side fun and group games in Waukesha and a family trip to Disneyland when they came to see us in California.

Even after our children were grown, Leon and Betsy and Bob and I made sure to see each other at least once a year. We always had so much fun together whether it was boating at their lake in Waupaca, playing bridge at our house in Scottsdale, or taking road trips. I especially enjoyed the time we spent a Wisconsin super sport weekend seeing a Badger game one day and a Packer game the next.

There were difficult moments too and Betsy was always there. As I struggled with cancer she was my rock, and I am forever grateful for her unwavering support. I can only hope I provided some measure of comfort in return as she struggled these past few years.

Sister, I miss you dearly. But I'll hold onto the lifetime of memories we shared.

**Rest peacefully, Elizabeth Ann.  
You'll always be my sunshine.**



## Message from John Matravers

### 2024 Couillardville Park Social



### Saturday, August 17th

12-1 pm BYO Lunch

1-2 pm Meeting and Music  
by Jeanie Bickel

2-3 pm Bean Bag Games

### Questions or Suggestions?

### Contact John Matravers

920-604-3060