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Valentine winners announced

By Karen Krien

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For the last three weeks, a ballot has appeared in The Saint Francis Herald allowing people to vote for their favorite married couple. At first, the ballots came in slowly but, when the contest came to an end Monday noon, there were around 125 ballots in the boxes.

Winners were Gus and Martha Zwegardt and Jim and Ruth Milliken, both couples are from St. Francis. Each couple received a bouquet of roses and other flowers from Goodell Greenhouse and Floral and a story about their married life.

Gus and Martha Zwegardt

Gus and Martha Zwegardt were married April 20, 1939, — at the end of the Dirty 30s, Mrs. Zwegardt said. Gus was almost 27 years old and Martha was 23.

The wedding took place in the basement of the Missouri Lutheran Church in Jaqua Township. However, the church to be built on the basement never materialized.

Following the wedding, they delivered wedding cake to some people who were unable to attend, then they went home. Home was a house with two bedrooms, kitchen and living room.

Mr. Zwegardt bought the farm with 400 acres for \$4,000. Later, they bought 80 acres of pasture for \$500 and then more for \$17 an acre. We just bought land as we could afford it, Mrs. Zwegardt said. We never went into debt.

When harvest rolled around, Mr. Zwegardt went with his dad's threshing operation. He said he left early Monday morning and returned Saturday evening. He harvested with the Zwegardt crew for 12 years. During that time, he became the "engineer," taking care of the tractor, a big "Twin City."

While he was gone, Mrs. Zwegardt used her spare time in the house to quilt. She was in charge of taking care of the 14 work horses used for farming, milking five cows and the chickens. (Some of their wedding presents were laying hens and baby chicks.)

She said she wasn't afraid of the horses, that they were "smarter than me!"

Gus said he started farming when he was 8 years old. Walking behind the harrow, he drove the horses which pulled the equipment.

When he was 12, he was hired See ZWEYGARDT on Page 8

This is the first year for the Valentine contest. There were 10 businesses participating: Goodell Greenhouse and Floral, Hilltop General Store, L & L Liquor, Owens True Value, Video Connection, Krien Pharmacy, Stuart's Jewelry, Donna's Gift Palace, Video Kingdom, and The Saint Francis Herald.

"I thought the contest generated a lot of interest and people had fun submitting the names of their favorite couple," said Casey McCormick, ad manager. He added that the contest would not have been possible if it were not for the businesses who helped sponsor it.

out to neighbors who needed help in the wheat fields. He drove the header box and made \$1 a day. Days were long, working from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. with an hour off for lunch. Harvest generally only lasted for 12 days. He also worked for Jake Ringo during harvest time.

For two seasons, Gus, Clayton Gienger and Lawrence Knodel went to Colorado to pick peaches after they saw an ad in the newspaper. Gus said there was a big-



PULLING OUT THE WINNER of the valentine's contest were Jude Faulkender, left, and Austin Patton, above. Austin placed first in the Cheyenne County Spelling Bee and Jude was a contestant. Herald staff photos by Casey McCormick



Gus and Martha Zwegardt — April 20, 1939

Jim and Ruth Milliken

Jim and Ruth Milliken were married on Aug. 14, 1965, at the First Presbyterian Church in Olathe. Mrs. Milliken said, by today's standards, it wasn't large but it was a nice-sized wedding with friends and relatives.

Standing up with them were Jim's brother, Larry, and Ruth's friend, Sherry Wachter. Also in the wedding party was Louanne Isernhagen, who recently moved to St. Francis with her husband Glenn. Louanne and Ruth had become acquainted through the church and 4-H activities. When she went to K-State, Louanne was her pledge mother.

Following the wedding, the couple set out for Ely, Minn., where Jim was to attend an ag law seminar. The first night, their clothes were stolen out of their car. Needless to say, Mrs. Milliken said, we didn't do a lot because of a limited wardrobe. They stopped to buy a few clothes and, they picked wild blueberries. Last summer, they went back to Minnesota and found the little cottage they had stayed in.

Their first home was a little



Jim and Ruth Milliken — Aug. 14, 1965

bungalow at 1315 Plass in Topeka. Mrs. Milliken taught home economics at Northern Hills High School while Jim finished under-

graduate school at Washburn University. He then went on to graduate from law school at Washburn. See Milliken on Page 8

Couple celebrates 75th

By Karen Krien

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On Feb. 12, 1934, Alvin and Beulah Cox said "I do" at the courthouse in St. Francis. That was 75 years ago. Alvin was 20 years old and Beulah was only 15. Today, they are both living together at the Good Samaritan Village.

Standing up with them were E.E. Cox, Alvin's brother, and Etta M. Raue, Beulah's mother.

They didn't go on a honeymoon. After being married by the judge, they went back to live with Mr. Cox's parents near Beecher Island and back to the farm work. Farming was always their way of life.

They later moved to their own home on the prairie near Beecher Island, then to the Idalia area to their two-story farmhouse. The house was big by standards in those days. It had a kitchen/dining room, living room and three bedrooms on the main floor. There was room for several bedrooms on the second floor but they used the second floor only for storage.

Their son, Arrie, said in the early years, there were cracks in the walls that let in the daylight as well as the heat and cold. The house was heated with propane heaters but the main rooms were the only rooms heated. The bedrooms were cold and he said he often scurried straight from bed to the living room where it was



Alvin and Beulah Cox

warmer to get dressed. In 1959, they had central heat installed. Later, they had the two-story house bricked.

The couple went through the tough 30s and 50s when the earth dried up and the wind blew.

"In the 50s, my mother hung blankets over the windows to try to keep some of the dirt from getting in," Arrie said.

But the couple survived. In

the early 1950s, the Coxes went from lanterns to electricity. People formed a coop which brought electricity to the farms in the area. There was no plumbing in the house until about 1959.

Dry conditions were not the only troubles the couple saw. They were living in a little house near Beecher in 1935 when it began to rain and the

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DELIVERING ICE was something Lester did for 13 years. He is pictured holding the block of ice. Wife, Mattie, and daughter, Arlene, are standing in the background. The man sitting on the pickup is not known.

100 years old and counting

By Karen Krien

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On Feb. 13, 1909, a tiny cry was heard in the two-room sod house west of St. Francis. Earl and Zora Confer were the proud parents of a baby boy, naming him Lester Mihlo Confer.

On Friday, Lester will turn 100. He lives by himself in one of the Good Samaritan Village apartments.

When Lester was 8 years old, his father started building a new house, making all the blocks out of sand and straw which were formed in a home-made mold. Lester hauled the sand out of the pasture south of the house with a

horse and wagon. It took one and a half year to finish the house. The house still stands west of Kip and Deone Wiese, 7 miles west and 2 miles south.

As a young boy, he did a lot of the farming behind horse-driven machinery. In 1932, his dad died with pneumonia leaving Lester, at the age of 23, to carry the load. His older sisters had married and left home as well his brother, Argye.

Lester found some leisure time. At the age of 16, he bought his first Model T.

He played on the Sainty baseball team from the time he was



Lester Confer when he was either 4 or 5 years old. See 100 YEARS on Page 8