

MAYOR TELLS OF OLD-TIME FESTIVITIES

I wonder how many of us remember the old-fashioned donation parties that were held annually for the benefit of the ministers, the same as annual chicken pie suppers are now held for the benefit of the churches.

I think it was in 1855 that one was held in the home of Deacon Henderson, about two miles south of Evansville. He had just built a large frame house, which proved a good place for holding the donation party. A sleigh-load of young persons from here attended and all seemed to enjoy themselves. The donations did not always consist of money, but many things that the minister's family could use, such as a jar of nice butter, "like our mother used to make," a small cheese, a good-sized piece of fresh beef, fresh pork, a ham, a sack of potatoes, and if the minister kept a horse he frequently got a sack or two of oats or corn.

In 1856 Deacon Argalus Ballard built a large frame house on his place about two miles east of Evansville, now known as the Charles Decker farm.

The following winter the Baptists held a donation party there for the benefit of Rev. J. E. Davis. The night of the party six of us young men got a span of horses and a lumber wagon and drove out to the farm. When we got there we found that most of the company had arrived. The old folks occupied the lower rooms, where they visited to their hearts' content. The young folks occupied the second floor, it being in one room and making a fine place for them. They played all kinds of games, the old grab-bag being in evidence. This was a bag or sack, containing all sorts of trinkets. One paid five cents and put his hand in the sack and brought out whatever he got hold of first. This usually provoked much laughter, especially when a young man would bring out a baby doll. Everybody seemed to be happy at these affairs.

About ten o'clock our party got together and decided to go down and donate whatever we thought would be right. One of our boys proposed that

sack and brought out whatever he got hold of first. This usually provoked much laughter, especially when a young man would bring out a baby doll. Everybody seemed to be happy at these affairs.

About ten o'clock our party got together and decided to go down and donate whatever we thought would be right. One of our boys proposed that we give fifty cents each. Now, these were hard times; money was scarce and hard to get and fifty cents meant a day's work, providing you could get the work, but each went down in his pocket and dug up fifty cents, after which I don't think there was much left in any of our pockets. It was like taking the "widow's mite." We all went down to the kitchen where the donations were received. I can picture now, in my mind's eye, the three deacons of the church sitting in the kitchen receiving the gifts and giving credit to the donors. The names of the three deacons were Argalus Ballard, Jesse Allen and Peter Aller. One at a time we stepped up to the table and deposited our fifty cents. They

April 12, 1917, Evansville Review, p. 1, col. 2, Evansville, Wisconsin

Asa Allen has erected an addition to John Winston's wagon shop to accommodate a blacksmith department. We understand a co-partnership has been formed with Mr. Winston for the purpose of manufacturing carriages.

Mr. Winston doing the wood work and Mr. Allen the ironing. They are both counted among our first class work men, and Mr. Snow, occupying the 2nd floor can paint just as well as the next man. A whole team.

January 13, 1875, Evansville Review, p. 1, col. 3, Evansville, Wisconsin

Mr. Asa Allen has purchased the Dr. Lucas house on Main Street, paying therefore \$800.

March 24, 1875, Evansville Review, p. 1, Evansville, Wisconsin

Mr. A. Allen has purchased the lot just west of John T. Baker belonging to Reuben Palmer and is preparing to erect thereon a new house.

June 8, 1875, Evansville Journal, p. 5, Evansville, Wisconsin

N. Macomber to A. J. Allen, '76 lot \$1,200.

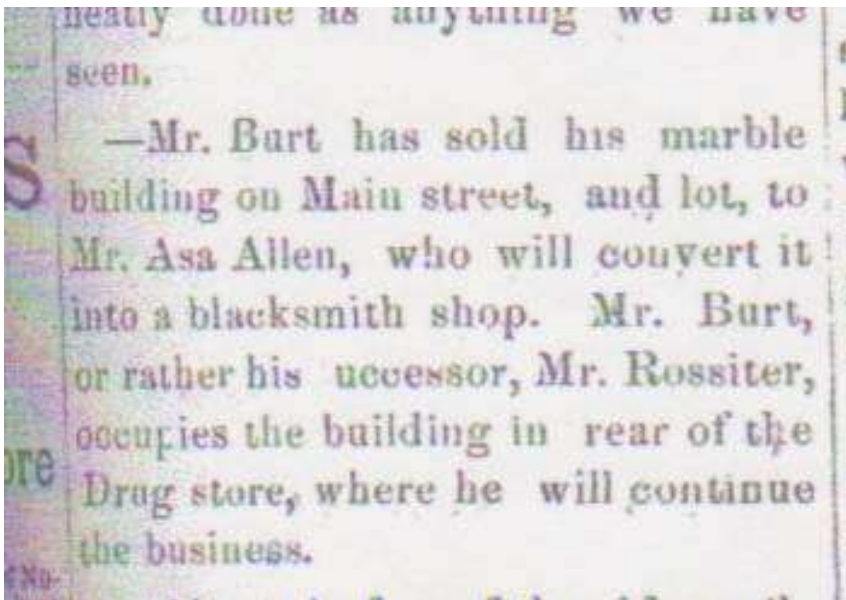
September 4, 1876, Rock County Recorder

R. Palmer to A. J. Allen, lot \$250.

August 16, 1875,

Frank Gibbs says his wife is going to have a new carriage. John Winston does the wood work, Mr. Asa Allen irons it, "Maj." does the painting, and is upholstered by Evander. [Note: John Winston was a carpenter; Asa Allen a blacksmith, Benjamin Snow, and Evander Blakeley was the upholsterer in the shop of John Winston

August 18, 1875, Evansville Review, p. 1, col. 2, Evansville, Wisconsin



January 31, 1877, Evansville Review, p. 3,

col.2, Evansville, Wisconsin

FREEDOM NOTICE.
I hereby give my minor son, Peter Henry Allen, his time to act and trade for himself, as though he was 21 years of age. I shall claim none of his earnings nor pay any debts of his contracting from this date.
PETER ALLEN.
Union, Feb. 11, 1878.

February 20, 1878, Evansville Review, p. 2, col. 6, Evansville, Wisconsin

Mr. John Evans has leased the wagon shop of Mr. Allen and will carry on the wagon and repairing business at the place.

January 15, 1879, Evansville Review, Evansville, Wisconsin

Mr. A. Everson can do a good job of repairing all kinds of farm wagons, buggies, etc. In the old shop of A. Allen, Main Street.

March 3, 1880, Evansville Review, Evansville, Wisconsin

—Tom. Rylatt, who lives a mile or so north of Union village, rushed into town Thursday with his clothes tattered and torn, his head and face covered with dirt and gore, demanding a warrant for the arrest of his neighbor, Peter Allen, whom he said had welted him and pelted him with a monkey wrench until he was nereby gone for, all because he had asked Allen to take care of his (Allen's) turkeys. John Evans took him into his father's office and after "sponging" him off, according to the (medical) code, commenced to repair him up. The deep cut over the left eye, made by the monkey wrench, was hauled up together and fastened with sundry plasters, the other minor wounds were simply treated with a little aqua pura, and Tom emerged from the doctor's shop looking like a different man that he was vide the torn and blood stained shirt he wore. In the mean time Dep. Sheriff Williams had brought in Pet Allen, the monkey wrench of the affair, and his daughter Kate, who had done the rocking portion of the fracas while her pater familias was dexterously wielding the monkey wrench. Counsel was looked up: Windsor was retained for the plaintiff and Ladd for the defedant, and here the matter rested until 10 o'clock Friday forenoon. The trial opened at the hour and six men were selected to hear the cause and decide the difference, Squire Mills wearing the judicial ermine all the while. The jury's verdict was no cause for action.

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July 29, 1882, Evansville Review, p. 3, col. 3,

Evansville, Wisconsin

BLACKSMITHING.

W. M. CLARK.

Having taken possession of the shop formerly owned by Asaph Allen, I am now prepared to do all kinds of

Blacksmithing & Repairing,

on Buggies and Farm Impliments, at low prices, and in a satisfactory manner.

Evansville, April 21, 1884.

August 15, 1884, Evansville Review, Evansville, Wisconsin

Mrs. Jake Allen is having a severe run of typhoid fever, and the chances for her recovery are thought to be very uncertain. Mrs. Allen has been away for the past year and only recently returned to be taken down with a severe typhoid.

September 9, 1890, Evansville Review, p. 1, col. 4, Evansville, Wisconsin

The remains of Mrs. Caroline Allen arrived here on the early Wednesday morning train accompanied by her daughter Mrs. J. C. Eldridge and husband. The interment took place at the Stone school-house cemetery on the prairie, where services were rendered by Rev. J. S. Davis. The funeral having been previously held at her Dakota home.

September 14, 1894, Enterprise, p. 1, col. 7, Evansville, Wisconsin

Arthur Allen caught a fish called a buffalo with his hands in Lake Leota, Saturday, weighing 33 ½ pounds.

April 8, 1902, The Tribune, p. 3, col. 2, Evansville, Wisconsin

—The water has all been let out of Lake Leota and the boys and men have had great times catching fish, of which large quantities have been captured even with the hands in the low water, and everybody in town and the surrounding country are enjoying a nice mess of fresh fish; but it is a bad job for this city to lose this beautiful body of water, and the only one of any use in this vicinity.

April 11, 1902, Evansville Review, Evansville, Wisconsin

Arthur Allen is the fisherman of this country, he caught another one yesterday in Lake Leota that weighed 27½ pounds. The once beautiful lake will soon be a thing of the past, as the water is going rapidly toward the south pole and cattle will soon be grazing where once rested the beautiful and placid waters of Lake Leota.

April 13, 1902, Evansville Review, Evansville, Wisconsin

Geo. Wolfe has purchased the Williams farm, about one and one-fourth miles north of this city. Fred Allen and family will move on the farm.

January 18, 1907, Enterprise, p. 1, col. 5, Evansville, Wisconsin

Jacob Allen, Jr., and wife are located in the flat over Ballard's jewelry store.

September 14, 1910, Enterprise and Tribune, p. 1, col. 2, Evansville, Wisconsin

MARRIED

At the home of the groom in the town of Brooklyn today at high noon by Rev. H. J. Kohlhepp of this city, Mr. Earl Allen to Miss Barbara Elmer, both of the town of Brooklyn.

Mr. Allen is a son of Ethan Allen, a well-known and prosperous farmer of Brooklyn township, while the bride is the daughter of John Elmer, another farmer skilled in the products of the soil.

The rooms were tastily decorated for the happy occasion, and the impressive wedding ceremony with the ring service was conducted beneath a large, white wedding bell, Miss Hazel Ballard as bridesmaid and Paul Elmer as best man.

The bride was gowned in a blue messaline dress and carried white roses, and looked very handsome.

Mr. and Mrs. Allen left on the early afternoon train for Chicago, and will be at home to their friends on the Bert Lay farm after March 1.

Many friends will heartily wish

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ALLEN-VINKE WEDDING

The marriage of Mr. Harold Vinke and Miss Ruth Allen was solemnized in Beloit Saturday evening at 8 o'clock at the home of the bride's sister, Mrs. C. W. Avery. The ceremony was performed by the Rev. W. P. Leek of the First Methodist Episcopal church of Beloit.

The house was prettily decorated in pink and white for the occasion. The event was a quiet home affair and was witnessed by only the immediate relatives. The bride wore a traveling suit of broadcloth and carried a large bouquet of pink carnations.

Immediately after the wedding supper Mr. and Mrs. Vinke came to Evansville, where they expect to make their home at West Main street. The groom is employed on the compository staff of the Review. Formerly he was with the Beloit Daily News.

RACHEL ADAMS ALLEN

Rachel Adams Allen, daughter of George and Sarah Adams was born in Spring Valley, Wis., Feb. 26, 1847, and died at her home three miles east of this city, Saturday, Feb. 23, 1924.

She was married to Adelbert Allen December 20, 1867, to which union four children were born, Mrs. Jennie Lawler, Ethan Allen, Mrs. M. Weary and G. Allen; Mrs. Lawler and Ethan Allen having preceded their mother in death.

Mrs. Allen is survived by her husband, one daughter, Mrs. Mina Weary, one son, George, six grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

Funeral services were held at the home Tuesday at 2:30 p.m., Rev F. P. Hanaman, officiating. Interment was made in a near-by cemetery.

February 28, 1924, Evansville Review, p. 4, col. 5,

Evansville, Wisconsin

to pay tribute of love and esteem.

Delbert Allen

Delbert Allen was born at Hoosick Falls, New York, December 23, 1844 and died at his home, Saturday, April 12, 1924. He came to Wisconsin in 65. Settling near his home here. He was married to Rachel Adams, Dec. 10, 1867 in the town of Decatur. They have lived here over fifty years. He leaves two children, Mrs. Mima Weary of Madison and George at home and 6 grand children. He was 79 years 3 months and 18 days old at his death.

Funeral services were held at the home east of town Monday afternoon at 2:30, Rev. F. P. Hanaman officiating. Interment was made in the cemetery near the home.

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April 17, 1924, Evansville Review, Evansville,

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COMPLETE COURSE AT COUNTY NORMAL

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Four Evansville students will receive diplomas at the 22nd annual commencement exercises of the Rock County Rural Normal school to be held in the Cargill Memorial Methodist church, Janesville, at 3:30 p. m. Wednesday, June 7. They are Ruth Allen, Marion Long, Alice McCarthy, and Leona Norby.

The commencement exercises will open with a dinner at 12:30 followed by a program of the alumnae association at 1:30 and a business meeting at 2:30. The commencement address will be given by Supt. R. S. Smith, Jefferson, who will speak on, "What Price Education." The presentation of the diplomas will be made by Supt. G. T. Longbotham.

SCHOOL BOARD

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EVANSVILLE PAIR WED IN ROCKFORD

Miss Amy Tronnes, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Austen Tronnes, Union township, became the bride of Elmer Allen, son of Mrs. Barbara Allen, Union township, at a ceremony performed last week in the Methodist parsonage, Rockford, by the Rev. Mr. Goss. They were unattended.

The bride, who was graduated from the local high school in 1930, has been a member of the Evansville Blue Devils, all girls' kittenball and basketball team. The newly weds will make their home with the groom's mother on her farm west of the city.

They were guests Sunday at a family dinner attended by 80 relatives in the home of the groom's mother.

February 22, 1934, Evansville Review, p. 8, col. 1,

WILL PARTICIPATE IN ARMISTICE CEREMONY



Here is the American Legion firing squad which, under the leadership of Bernie Christensen, shown at the right, will participate in Evansville's Armistice day ceremonial at 11 a.m. next Saturday. Front rank, Bud Hyne, Vernon Hatlevig, Archie George, Robert Allen, and Bernie Christensen. Rear rank, Walter Hoffer, Phillip Roberts, Donald Weaver, and Robert Gillies.

November 9, 1939, Evansville Review, p. 1, Evansville, Wisconsin

Erstad Now Heard Here on Phonograph Records

Vic Wall, Bob Allen, and Gene Erstad, prominent Evansville musicians, and "Buck" Hauser, Beloit, were in Janesville Monday afternoon making phonograph recordings of two of the former's musical compositions.

The recordings, which were heard here late Monday afternoon on the electric phonograph in Doc's Tavern cafe and which drew loud applause from Evansville friends, are "The Laughing Song," sung by Vic Wall, himself, and "You're More Than an Angel," rendered by Allen and Erstad, vocalists, with accompaniment by Allen at the guitar and Hauser at the bass fiddle.

Allen and Hauser also furnished the accompaniment for Wall's laughing song recording which is a riot from start to finish.

December 21, 1929, p. 4, col. 1, Evansville Review, Evansville, Wisconsin

parents.
Evansville men whose names appear on the draft list ordered to appear in Milwaukee for examination on Saturday, February 13, are Martin Nelson, Asaph Allen, Lindle Apfel, Stanley Shipler, Wayne Hatlevig, James Johnson, Robert Kelly, Marvin Stenli, Allen Fritscher and Cecil Shipler.
... who has been

February 4, 1943, Evansville Review, p. 5, col. 4, Evansville, Wisconsin

The Evansville Review, I

William Allens Have 46th Anniversary

Evansville Couple Observed Event Today At Home On Mill Street

Mr. and Mrs. William Allen, Mill street, are today observing their 46th wedding anniversary. Mrs. Allen was formerly Miss Elsie Moore. The couple was married here in the home of the bride's parents, the late Mr. and Mrs. Charles Moore, June 23, 1903, and have spent the greater part of their married life in Evansville and vicinity. They farmed for several years and later Mr. Allen worked as a painter.

Mr. Allen is a member of the Odd Fellows lodge and Mrs. Allen belongs to the Royal Neighbors, Rebekahs and Woman's Relief corps. They have two sons, Alton and Robert, both of Evansville, three grandchildren and one great grandchild.

June 23, 1949, Evansville REview, p. 1, col. 3, Evansville, Wisconsin

Barn Goes Down in Heavy Winds

Thousands of Dollars
Damage in Area as
Heavy Winds Strike

Heavy damages were reported throughout the Evansville area last Thursday, following gale winds which blew Wednesday night, May 20. Trees, power lines, and small buildings were hard hit, with at least two large buildings going down under the force of the abnormal blow.

A modern 30 x 90 foot barn on the Elmer Allen farm northwest of town was almost completely demolished, and a tobacco shed on the Floyd Steele farm also went down under the heavy winds.

A group of Allen's neighbors in the Pleasant Prairie area pitched in Saturday afternoon to help clean up the damage and bale up the hay which was uncovered when the barn went down. The Pleasant Prairie club served meals to the workers, and by the end of the day the cooperative group had done a lot toward cleaning up the mess that the barn's destruction has caused.

Hundreds of trees went down in the storm, which caused millions of dollars worth of damage throughout the central part of the United States with several days of abnormally strong winds reported from the Gulf of Mexico to Lake Superior.

City utility crews, and commercial power company and telephone company crews were busy for a number of days after the big wind repairing damage, and carpenters and electricians were at a premium with power off and roofs gone at points for miles around Evansville.

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May 28, 1953, Evansville Review, Evansville, Wisconsin



This 30 x 90 foot barn on the Elmer Allen farm was almost completely destroyed by the gale winds that swept through this area causing heavy damage the night of May 20.

May 28, 1953, Evansville Review, p. 1, col. 2-3, Evansville, Wisconsin

Larry Allen Completes Navy Recruit Training

Larry D. Allen, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ace Allen of 230 S. First st., Evansville, graduated from recruit training Nov. 3 at the naval training center, Great Lakes, Ill.

The nine weeks of "boot camp" included drill and instruction in seamanship, gunnery, life saving, sea survival, boat handling and use of small arms.

Following two weeks leave, graduates report to shipboard duties or service schools depending on the qualifications each has demonstrated.

November 15, 1956, Evansville Review, p. 1, col. 4, Evansville, Wisconsin

Janet Allen Weds John Schneider

Janet Barbara Allen was married to John Junior Schneider of Brodhead, Saturday, Aug. 2, at 2:30 p.m. in the Evansville Methodist Church. Rev. John Walker officiated.

Janet is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Allen, route 1, Evansville, and John is the son of Mr. and Mrs. John Schneider of Brodhead.

The bridal couple were attended by Joanne Allen, sister of the bride, and Neil Bliss of Brodhead. A wedding dinner for sixteen guests was served at Sperry's restaurant following the ceremony.

Mr. and Mrs. Schneider will be at home in Brodhead.

August 14, 1958, Evansville Review, p. 1, col. 4, Evansville, Wisconsin

Volume LXXXVII

Elmer Allens To Hold Silver Anniversary Open House Feb. 15

Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Allen will celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary with open house from 2 to 5 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 15, in the home of their son and daughter-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Donald Allen, route 1, Evansville.

All relatives, friends and neighbors are invited.

Mr. and Mrs. Allen were married Feb. 13, 1934, by the Rev. Charles R. Goff in the Methodist church, Rockford. They have five children: Donald, on the home farm; Mrs. John J. Schneider, Brodhead; Earl at Whitewater State college; Joanne and James at home; and two grandsons.

February 5, 1959, Evansville Review, p. 1, col. 2,

Evansville, Wisconsin

Evansville, Wisconsin, Thursday, February 12, 1959



Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Allen will celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary Sunday, Feb. 15, with open house from 2 to 5 p.m. at the home of their son and daughter-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Donald Allen, route 1, Evansville. All relatives, friends and neighbors are invited.

—Kaltenborn photo

February 12, 1959, Evansville Review,

p. 1, Evansville, Wisconsin

PLEASANT PRAIRIE CLUB NOTES 50 YEARS



The Pleasant Prairie Community Club met last week at the Methodist Church in Evansville. Shown here (left to right) are six charter members of the club who were on hand for the event: Mrs. Hazel Miles, Wittenberg, Wis.; Mrs. Grace Brunsell, Evansville; Mrs. Emma George, Evansville; Mrs. Mabel Robinson, Rte. 1, Evansville; Mrs. Barbara Allen, Evansville, and Mrs. Margorie Porter, Evansville.

Olson: The mayor, Glen Gissing:

October 22, 1970,



Mrs. Barbara Allen

June 1975, Evansville Review, p. 3, col. 4-5, Evansville, Wisconsin

Mrs. Barbara Allen

Many of you may be acquainted with Mrs. Barbara Allen. In fact she may have been a neighborhood friend. Barbara is our celebrity this week at Continental Manor Nursing Home.

She has lived most of her adult life in the vicinity of Evansville. She and her husband, Earl, farmed east of town for a year or two before purchasing a farm on Emery Road in about 1914. Her husband passed away there in about 1927 but Barbara continued to run the 200 acre farm several more years with her six children.

Working on the farm did not occupy all of her time as she found time to organize the Pleasant Prairie Community Club which met once a month and helped both the people in the school and the community. In

1970 they celebrated their Golden Anniversary with six charter members present.

She also worked in the United Methodist Church for many years and enjoyed going to local ball games; attending many baseball, softball and basketball games. A heart block in 1966 stopped many of these activities, but after having a pacemaker installed she continued with her normal pace of life, living alone at 32 W. Main St., doing her own work, crocheting, embroidering and sewing.

A stroke in 1971 sent her to the hospital and then to Continental Manor where she has lived since that time. Barbara attends nearly all our special programs and parties. She is also a regular in our exercise group every week and enjoys it very much.

June 1975, Evansville Review, p. 3, col. 4-5, Evansville, Wisconsin



ROBERT M. ALLEN

Robert M. Allen, 59, of Tucson, Arizona, died unexpectedly Tuesday, Dec. 11, 1979 in the University Hospitals, Tucson.

He was born April 28, 1920, the son of William H. and Elsie Moore Allen.

He married Billie Burt on July 2, 1939. Allen was a musician and played in several Evansville area dance bands. A World War II veteran, he was a member of the VFW.

Surviving are his wife; a daughter, Bonnie Smith of Tucson; and two grandchildren. Also a niece, Beverly Wagner, Tucson, Arizona and a nephew Dean Allen, Cambridge, MN, and a sister-in-law, Berneeta Allen, Cambridge, MN, formerly of Evansville.

Services were held at 1:30 pm. Monday at the Allen Funeral Home in Evansville, with Rev. Tim Kehl officiating. There was no visitation. Burial was in Maple Hill Cemetery.

December 20, 1979, Evansville Review, p. 2, col. 5, Evansville, Wisconsin

ACE ALLEN, JR.

Ace H. Allen, Jr. of West Bend, Wis. died Monday, Nov. 1, 1993 at his residence at the age of 65 years.

He was born on July 15, 1928 in Evansville, WI to the late Ace H., Sr. and Cora L. (Renwick) Allen.

After graduating from Evansville High School in 1946 with outstanding athletic achievement, he served with the 32nd Division of the National Guard from 1946 to 1947. On Feb. 26, 1949, he was united in marriage to Alice Main of Evansville. In 1950, Ace graduated from the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse and then taught and coached in Frederic, WI until 1953.

After teaching for five years in Janesville, they moved to West Bend in 1958. He spent 30 years as an educator with the West Bend School District, including 23 years as a guidance counselor at Silverbrook Middle School, after having completed his Masters Degree in Counseling at UW-Madison.

During his years in West Bend, he organized and directed the West Bend Youth Activity Center (YAC) in the late 50's and early 60's. It was recognized as one of the best youth programs in the Midwest. In addition, he was one of the original organizers of the West Bend Little League Program.

He was a member of numerous professional organizations, was one of the first recipients of the Robert H. Rolfs Foundation Award for Exceptional Teaching Ability, and recently was honored by having the Silverbrook faculty arrange for a student award to be given annually in his name.

At the time of his death, he and his daughter, Jane, operated Ace Allen & Associates, an independent insurance and securities brokerage firm in West Bend.

Survivors include his wife, Alice; two children, Jane (Melvin) Esselman of West Bend, and Jerry (Terri) Allen of Stanley, WI; four grandchildren, Erin and Michael Esselman of West Bend, and Rebecca and Robert Allen, of Stanley; three brothers, Rollie (Faye) and David (Nina), both of Evansville, and Phillip (Laurie) of Janesville; a sister, Connie (Loren) Grefsheim of Stoughton, WI; other relatives and friends. Preceding him in death were his parents, his step-mother, Beulah Allen, and one brother, Larry Allen.

Funeral services were held

brother, Larry Allen.

Funeral services were held Nov. 4 at 10 am. at Fifth Ave. United Methodist Church in West Bend, with Rev. T. Edmond White officiating. Interment followed at Washington County Memorial Park, West Bend.

Visitation was at the church on Wednesday from 4 to 8 pm. and on Thursday from 9 am. to time of service.

The family suggests memorials to St. Joseph's Community Hospital, West Bend, or to the Leukemia Society of America, which may be sent to the family in care of the Schmidt Funeral Home, 629 Cedar Street, West Bend, WI 53095.



Kyle Allen paints the gills of a big northern pike he caught on Lake Mendota in January.

Ted Peck

March 20, 1911, Janesville Gazette, p 8b, Janesville, Wisconsin

Nature's artist

Evansville's Allen makes trophy catches worthy of hanging on the wall

Kyle Allen, 45, has never considered himself an artist although he has been a sculptor—of sorts—for more than 20 years.

This Evansville man is well known throughout the area for masterpieces in concrete as owner of Allen Custom Flatwork.

Although Allen's work with bull floats and mag trowels is not in the same genre as work by Rodan or Frederick Remington, every driveway and run of curb and gutter is the work of a craftsman's hands.



TED PECK

Modern cement finishers have the benefit of laser levels to establish grade to effectively shed water. But they still need a keen eye to make it work. Concrete is heavy stuff. Moving it as little as possible once it comes out of the

chute is the difference between work and lots of work.

Knowing just when and how to bring the butter up and work the finish to gray plate glass is a talent. Those who don't know this have simply never worked a slab.

Allen's real passion is in the outdoors. His expertise with bow and fishing rod are on a par with his "honest" job. But it isn't easy making a living from the outdoors in mostly suburban Rock County. Taxidermy may be the exception.

Allen has caught and admired tens of thousands of fish since he was a kid. Everything from muskies to walleyes to trout. He knows exactly what they should look like when these trophies are preserved through the art of taxidermy.

“ ”

Most folks look at a largemouth bass and see a green critter with a white belly and a black line down its side. Getting such a fish to the point where it looks like you just pulled it out of the lake actually takes 12 different colors.

Kyle Allen

“Most folks look at a largemouth bass and see a green critter with a white belly and a black line down its side,” Allen said. “Getting such a fish to the point where it looks like you just pulled it out of the lake actually takes 12 different colors.”

The first step in taxidermy is carefully skinning the trophy. Bass are easier to skin than fish with very small scales like trout. The fish skin is placed over a foam form that is sculpted to the exact dimensions of the trophy fish and allowed to dry.

Painting is done with an airbrush, with each color delicately wafted into exact placement to create that “just caught” look.

“There is a little more to it than that,” Allen grins. “If you know what you want to see, and the process of getting to this point, it's really pretty easy.”

That is easy for Allen to say. Most folks don't have his critical eye or patience honed from waiting motionless for hours in a tree for a big buck to come down the trail.

Allen estimates it takes him three to four hours to mount a 16-inch fish.

“You have to allow time for the skin to dry, so the actual time required is about a week,” he said. “But the actual skinning, preparation and painting only takes a few hours.”

Finding a few hours to create a finned masterpiece isn't easy during warmer months. Concrete work is tougher during the winter. Many people who work in the trades can tell you December through March can be tough for finding meaningful work, especially in these tough economic times.

Many tradesmen spend the winter ice fishing. Allen's expertise with the fishing rod quickly filled his freezer with whopping big northern pike and crappies and perch.

His wife, Lori, mentioned the space might be better served with ice cream, pizza and frozen veggies.

“I guess you could get quite a few flavors of ice cream into the freezer space required for a 41-inch northern pike,” the wiry artisan said with a smile. “I caught a beauty up on Lake Mendota at first ice.”

“The pike used to take up space next to those whopper crappies and perch I caught over on the Mississippi last year. They are going on a stringer mount with a couple of real nice saugers.”

“I got this idea after completing a stringer mount with five brook trout. Some folks think the brookie is the most beautiful fish that swims.”

The rural home that Kyle and Lori Allen share now has plenty of space in the deep freeze. Wall space is a different issue.

Ted Peck, a certified Merchant Marine captain, is an outdoors columnist for The Janesville Gazette. E-mail him at tedpeck@acegroup.cc.