

Bennington, Nebraska

Artistic Rail Project

2008

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American Legion Post #266



The American Legion panel is filled with patriotic symbolism. Post #266 was chartered as Erickson Post #266 on June 8, 1930. It was re-chartered in 1946, the name was changed to Bennington Post #266, and the Post has been a very active organization ever since. The modern Woodmen of America Hall, now the American Legion Hall, has been home to Post #266 since its inception. Rumor has it that the building was donated to the Post for \$1. The American flag is the centerpiece of the panel. To the right and left of the flag are figures of a man and a woman. These figures symbolize the sacrificial service of the countless brave Americans who have served to protect America's freedom and liberty. A baseball flies through the panel representing the Post's financial support of Bennington's American Legion Baseball teams. Depicted below the baseball is a memorial that stands in front of the Legion Hall. This memorial displays the names of the Bennington area residents who served in America's armed forces during WWII. A star next to the name denotes those who were killed in action. The front door of the Legion hall, depicted to the right of the memorial, welcomes veterans and their families inside. Portrayed near the bottom right corner of the panel is Arlington National Cemetery. Taps sound out from the bugle in remembrance of the many service men and women who have given their lives for our country.

American Legion Auxiliary Unit #266



The Legion Auxiliary is made up of mothers, grandmothers, wives, daughters, and granddaughters of active service personnel who support the goals and projects of the American Legion. Bennington, Nebraska is named for the Battle of Bennington, an important battle in the Revolutionary War. This battle led by General Stark, took place near Bennington, Vermont in August 1777. A number of streets in town reference this battle: Stark and Molley Streets names for the victorious General and his wife Molly and also Vermont Street. To the right of the flag is the symbol of the Gold Star Mother, representing mothers and sisters who have had a child or sibling killed in action. The pen and scroll at center of the panel represent the college scholarship money the Auxiliary gives out each year. The Auxiliary assists the Post with a number of fund raising activities throughout the year. The firecrackers near the top right corner of the panel represent one of these events, the annual 4th of July fireworks sale. Below the firecrackers, representing our Nebraska veterans is a shape resembling the State of Nebraska and striped like the American flag. Poppy flowers are found along the bottom of the panel. The poppy is worn in honor of our American veterans. Depicted at the bottom of the panel is the Unit #266.

The Backhuus Family



The Backhuus family's panel memorializes their family farm located between State and Military and 156th & 168th Streets. The farm was sold and has since been developed into the area now called Hanover Falls. Pete was born and raised on the farm, which originally belonged to his parents. He and his wife, Addie, had four children who also grew up on the farm: Mark, Nancy, Mike , and Terry (deceased.) All four children and all ten grandchildren are graduates of Bennington High. The family farmstead is the focus of the panel. The large, distinctive barn in the center foreground of the panel holds many fond memories and is symbolic of the family farm. Other favorites include the corncrib, located at the far right edge of the panel; and the family home, depicted near the top center of the panel. Pete was a woodworker and made the bird feeder that still stands in Addie's back yard. Part of the thermometer, checked every morning by Pete, is in the upper right corner of the panel. Mike is a cattleman symbolized by the Holstein dairy cow looking out from the left corner of the panel. Mark is a farmer symbolized by the ears of corn floating in the panel. Addie and Nancy both like to sew. Nancy teaches Family and Consumer Science at Bennington High School.

Bennington Booster Club



The Booster Club is an organization of parents of Bennington's student athletes. The Booster Club works hard raising money to provide financial support for the many Bennington athletic programs and also to provide college scholarships. They run the concession stand which is central to their fund raising efforts. The concession stand at the old football field is featured in the center of their panel. A floating hotdog and kernel of popcorn represent two of the favorite food items sold in the concession stand. Money is also raised through the sale of spirit wear. The water tower and the Bennington school mascot "Tuffy the Badger" stand to the right of the concession stand. Bleachers occupy the left foreground of the panel. Each sport is depicted starting at the top right of the panel and moving left: a football, a wrestling pin, a baseball/softball, a volleyball, a basketball and hoop, and a golf club. A Bennington pennant symbolizing cross-country flies over two track hurdles. A wrestling mat is curling up in front of the concession stand.

Bennington Community Foundation



The Bennington Community Foundation was founded to work for the betterment of the Bennington community. It is a philanthropic organization which helps other organizations complete their projects by providing financial and professional support. The Foundation serves both the rural community and the city of Bennington. Its logo depicts Bennington's future city buildings and the surrounding rolling hills. This is portrayed in the panel by the city buildings depicted at the center and the rolling farmlands off to the right. The electronic sign at the southern gateway to the community is depicted in the lower right corner of the panel and represents one of the Foundation's first projects. The foundation helped fund both the electronic sign at the city's entrance and also the electronic sign at the High School. The 18th hole, near the upper right corner of the panel, represents the Foundations' annual fund raising golf tournament. The Christmas tree represents the community Christmas tree and the tree lighting celebration sponsored by the Foundation, which have become annual traditions. The Foundation is striving to build a bright future for Bennington and its citizens, symbolized by the star at the top of the Christmas tree.

Bennington Jaycees



The Bennington Jaycees is a non-profit organization providing a variety of needs throughout the community. Helping hands represent the many fundraising activities and projects the Jaycees take part in that help and promote the community of Bennington. The Jaycees started and continue to be instrumental in the success of the Bennington Daze celebration and parade, symbolized by the candy floating in their panel. Children line the streets and love catching candy during the parade. The mug with floating bubbles at the middle top of the panel is a symbol of their refreshment stand at Bennington Days. The eggs in the lower left corner represent the annual Easter egg hunt sponsored by the Jaycees. A majority of their fundraising efforts each year come from 4th of July fireworks sales. The trailer in the center of the panel was the home for their fireworks stand for many years. Fireworks rocket throughout the panel.

Bennington Public Schools Foundation



The Foundation's panel features three Bennington school buildings. These buildings have housed education for the community since the 1800's. The first school, seen in the upper left corner of the panel, was built in 1892 and stood at the top of Standpipe Hill near the intersection of North 2nd and Stark Street. In 1940, a new and fireproof brick building was built and the school moved to its present day site. This grammar school is depicted in the upper right corner of the panel. A north wing was built in 1957 and in 1964, the gymnasium and 5 classrooms were added. The new High School building stretches across the foreground of the panel. Students gather behind the rail leading up to the school.

The Mission of the Bennington Public Schools is to provide educational opportunities in a safe, caring environment that will prepare all students to meet the challenges of the future. Test results regularly rank Bennington at or near the top of all school systems in Nebraska. The community actively supports its schools and related school activities. Other school symbols found in the panel include: crayons, scissors, a ruler, books, and athletic balls.

Bennington Volunteer Fire Department



In 1892, a group of volunteers came together and formed the Bennington Fire Department. The fire bell, hanging near the top center of the panel, once sat atop the original fire station and rang out the call for help. It is no longer used, but still stands in front of the present day station. Loudspeakers now broadcast the fire call throughout the community to notify the citizens of Bennington that emergency responders will soon be on their way. The current fire station is depicted on the left side of the panel behind the fire bell. Three fire fighters battling a fire at the bottom of the panel are the embodiment of the unity, courage, and sacrificial spirit of the many men and women who have faithfully served as members of this important organization. 35 volunteers currently serve on the BVFD, participating in both fire and rescue operations. Each member is fully trained in basic fire fighting techniques. Extension ladders, a fire hydrant and hose, and the old hose cart are found in the panel and represent various tools of the trade.

Bennington Volunteer Fire Department Auxiliary



The BVFD Auxiliary was established in 1966 and is made up of a dedicated group of individuals who support the volunteer fire department and rescue squad. They provide equipment, food, and moral support for the BFD volunteers. Their popular pancake breakfasts provide the major source of fundraising. The pancake grill, located near the bottom left side of the panel, was made especially for their breakfasts. Other symbols for the pancake breakfasts include the stack of cakes, cooking utensils, the chair, and the ever-present coffee pot. The hands surrounding the panel represent the many helping hands that are needed to make their support of the BVFD such a success. The Auxiliary also provides community service programs like the Child ID program.

Bennington Volunteer Rescue Squad



The rescue squad panel centers around the Star of Life medical symbol. The very first rescue squad, the old panel van, is located at the top right-hand corner of the panel. The new rescue squad is depicted at the top left corner and the water rescue boat is in the bottom left. Other rescue symbols found throughout the panel include the Jaws of Life, a fireman's axe, and the Red Cross insignia. The rescue squad is a volunteer organization in which all members must participate in both fire and rescue. All members are trained EMTs (Emergency Medical Technicians); a select few are also paramedics. There are over 30 men and women on the Bennington Rescue Squad, serving an estimated 46 square mile area and populace of over 6,000.

Mike and Lisa Bliss Family



Corn, the theme of the Bliss family panel, represents Lisa's farming heritage and epitomizes the family's Christian worldview. The cornstalks prevalent in the foreground symbolize their spiritual journey. The stalks on the left side of the panel look healthy and fruitful on the outside and represent the righteous image a person presents to the world (Isaiah 64:6). The crows depict the sin eating away at each of us...follow the cornstalk as its fruit is gradually picked away and it becomes a cross. It is here, at the cross when we accept Jesus as our Savior, that an inner transformation takes root and we begin to produce the good fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 3:22); depicted by the cornstalks on the right side of the cross. The crown at the foot of the cross represents the family's desire to be a living sacrifice as each day; they lay their personal crowns at the feet of their King (John 3:30).

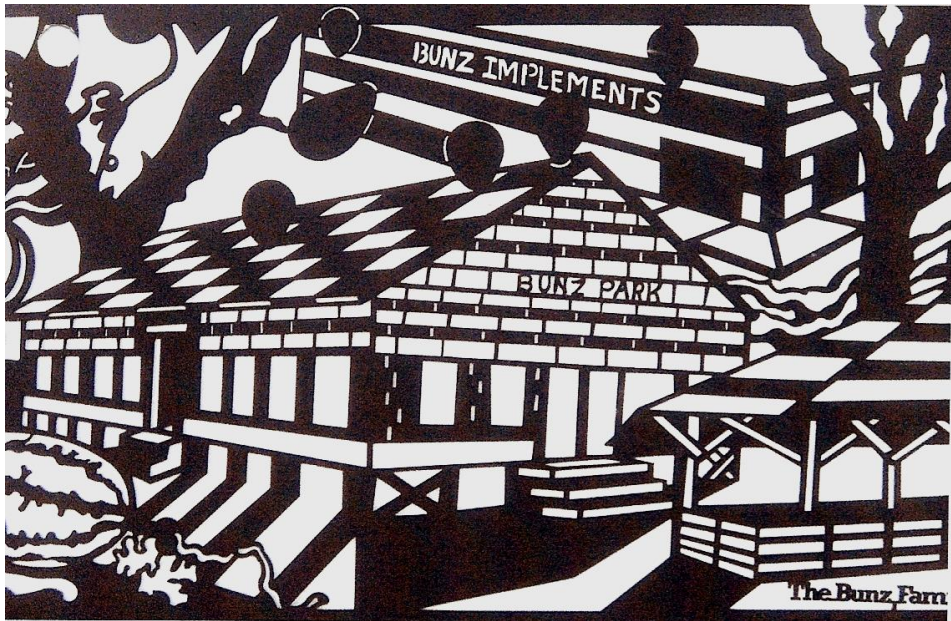
Symbols representing various family interests are scattered across the sky: Blind man's cane and eye (*Mike's life verse – John 9:25*); Dove (*Holy Spirit*); Stars (*Matthew 5:16*); Baseball bat (*sports*); Violin scroll (*love of music*); Dog and dog bone (*family pets*). The corn on the cob roof on the barn represents one of their favorite foods and also symbolizes their favorite sports team, the Nebraska Cornhuskers. Mike and Lisa have lived in Bennington for 14 years and have two sons, Jacob and Zachary..

Duane and Helen Braesch Family



Farming is the theme of the Braesch family panel. Duane and Helen and their five children—Vicki, Jackie, Julie, Dan, and Lori—are deeply rooted in their farming heritage. Farming is symbolized by the barn and tractor near the left side of the panel. Duane and his son Dan farm together at D&D Cattle Company located northeast of Bennington. Their cows drink from a pond in the lower right corner of the panel. Dan is a retired fireman represented in the panel by the cow in the foreground wearing a fire hat. Vicki and her husband Dwayne farm locally. The stork at the top left corner of the panel represents Jackie and her husband Bill. She is a nurse and he is an OB/BYN doctor. The sky is raining cats and dogs representing the entire family's love for their pets and especially Julie's love of cats. The two fish in the sky represent Duane's love for fishing. The stars in the sky represent their many beloved grandchildren.

The Bunz Family



The Bunz family owned much of the land that is home to the present day City of Bennington (once referred to as Bunzville.) Peter Bunz donated the land dedicated as streets and alleys and sold the remaining parcels to the railroad for \$50 an acre. The Pioneer Township Company owned by the railroad, platted the streets and named the place Bennington. Bennington was incorporated on April 12, 1892. In addition to the streets and alleys, Peter gave the growing community 28 acres of land on the southeast edge of town.

This area known as Bunz Park had many uses, but the annual Harvest Festival was the largest, attracting thousands of area residents. A street leading back into this area was recently names Harvest Lane, reminiscent of the Festival. The Festival grounds included a ball field, dance pavilion, refreshment stand, and a food exhibit stand. Similar to a county fair, competitors from around the area exhibited their prize produce for judging. A dancing radish and a watermelon seeds floating in the sky represent this annual competition. A watermelon (with the vine attached) recalls a story about a prize-winning watermelon that was subsequently identified as having been purchased from a local grocer. From that point forward, each entry was required to have a length of vine attached to it. Two important Festival buildings are depicted in the panel: the refreshment stand at the bottom right and the dance pavilion in the center. Windows and doors on all sides of the pavilion were opened to help keep the building cool. The Bunz Implement building stands behind the dance pavilion.

In the 1920's, Bunz Implement was started by Peter's sons, Gus and Charles. Gus served as mayor of Bennington for many years. Lee Bunz, Peter's great grandson, began working at the store in 1953 and then purchased the business in 1969. In 1978, he moved the store just north of town along Hwy 36. Lee operated the business until 1991, when it was sold and renamed Bennington Implement.

City Guardians



The City of Bennington sponsored this panel to pay tribute to the many individuals who are involved with the five city departments and who work hard to guard the safety and well being of the citizens of Bennington. This panel depicts a number of the historic buildings that line the south side of main street. The Bennington State Bank building, at the far right, has been restored to its original condition and is listed on the The National Register of Historic Places. The Oft building, in the center of the panel, was once a dance hall and a restaurant. The building at the far left, originally owned by the Oft family, was the home of Paulsen's Bar and John Petersen's Dry Goods and Shoes. Five symbols in the panel represent each of the five city departments. Starting in the sky at the top left are: the globe of a street light representing the City Public Works department; a key to the City representing the City Administration office; a fireman's hat representing the Fire Department; and a police badge representing the Police Department. The fifth symbol, the universal library symbol is found in the window of the bank and represents the Public Library.

City Volunteers



The City of Bennington sponsored this panel to honor the countless Individuals who voluntarily serve the Bennington Community. Symbols representing many of the volunteer organizations involved in the community can be seen throughout the panel. A collage of various historic buildings along the north side of main street occupies the majority of the panel. The Mangold and Glandt Bank building, with its striking column and windows, is depicted at the far right. It later became the original home of the Bank of Bennington. Sportsman's Bar stands in the middle of the panel and at the far left is a 1915 house that sits at the top of the hill just east of the American Legion Hall. The grain elevator, built in 1889, originally sat next to the railroad on the southern edge of town. In the panel, the top of the grain elevator is visible just behind the bank building.

Symbols representing many of the community's volunteer organizations are spread out across the sky. Depicted from right to left are: an athletic shoe representing those involved with the many sports programs offered in the community; the gavel representing Bennington's all volunteer governing body –mayor, city council, planning commission, and library board; the Red Cross blood drop representing the volunteers who run the blood drives; a tree representing the Tree Board; helping hands symbolizing all the organizations who lend a helping hand; and a book representing the volunteer organizations involved with the library.

Dave and Dee Clark Family



The community of Bennington has been and continues to be the beneficiary of the volunteering spirit and civic involvement and leadership of the Clark family. They are actively involved with St. John's Lutheran Church, the Jaycees, the Lion's Club, the Community Foundation, and the Library. Dave served as mayor of Bennington for two terms. During his 8 years as mayor, he endeavored to set the stage for future growth. Three of his many accomplishments are depicted in the panel: 1) The walking trail connecting the two schools symbolized by the trail that winds throughout the panel. 2) Development of the Bennington Athletic League baseball complex symbolized by the baseballs. 3) Lighting for the Legion baseball field symbolized by light poles and the outfield fence. At Christmas the family makes and delivers cookies and candies to friends and neighbors. The baseball fence in the panel is filled with their goodies and represents their Christmas spirit. Dee has worked in the library for many years and both she and Dave love to read, symbolized by the books tucked into the panel. A tomato plant represents the family garden and the "18th hole" flag represents the entire family's love for golf. Dave and Dee have lived in Bennington since 1977 and have two children, Tim and Jenny.

Lester and Janiece Coe



The Coe children are surprising their mother with an art panel that honors her and their late father. The panel is filled with symbols representing the couple's interests over the 50 years they have lived in Bennington. Starting at the top with the Bennington Elementary School where Janiece taught for over 30 years. Moving down to the license plate on her car LV2READ and the tree symbolizing the many years she spent researching her family genealogy. The popcorn pan, seen in the middle of the panel, is always on at their house and ready to be enjoyed by anyone who drops in for a visit. The 3 popcorn kernels represent their 3 sons: Mick, Greg, and Lee. The bench near his garden where Lester, who was an avid gardener, liked to sit. A hobbyhorse and a birdhouse, representing Lester's skill as a master woodworker. A man of good humor, Lester substituted in a ladies bridge group as needed. The entire family loves to play cards and have enjoyed many a competitive game together. There are 9 playing cards in the panel, one for each grandchild.

Fellowship of Christian Athletes Sponsored by O'Connell Family



The largest sports organization in America, the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, is the focus of the O'Connell family panel. Bill and Tracey are committed supporters of FCA and its mission to equip, empower, and encourage Bennington's Christian athletes to make a difference for Christ. Bennington High School is shown in the background of the panel with various sports symbols floating in the air in front of it. Uplifted hands represent Christian worship around the school flagpole. The American flag and the Christian flag are seen flying on the pole. Valentine cookies floating in the sky represent one of the many fundraisers FCA has organized to raise money for school and community projects. They recently donated to the Jakson House project. The heart shape of the cookie is a symbol of the two greatest commandments: to love God above all else and to love your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22: 37-38). The stars represent Bennington's Christian athletes who shine like stars before men and bring glory and honor to God in all that they do (Matthew 5:16).

Bill and Pam Fleming Family



The Flemings moved to the Bennington area to live in the nearby Newport Landing lake development. Bill is president of the Homeowners Association. The Association puts on a wonderful fireworks display every July 4th that is enjoyed by the entire community of Bennington. The lake with its scenic bridge is the focal point of the panel. The Fleming family enjoys boating, and jet skiing. The family has two Labrador retrievers one is being pulled by the speedboat and the other is watching from the shore. The Newport Landing logo is depicted on the sail of the sailboat. Pam likes tropical flowers and her two favorites, the Bird of Paradise and Lobster Claw Haliconia, are depicted near the bottom right corner of the pane. .

Friends of the Library & GFWC Bennington Woman's Club:



The Bennington Women's Club started the Bennington Public Library in 1948. The first library was located in a cold, solitary room, up a long flight of stairs in what is now the American Legion Hall. A picture of the hall as it once looked sits inside a library lampshade. Rays of light shine out from the lamp and books float through the air symbolic of the illumination of the mind through reading. B.A.T.S. (Bennington Advisory Teen Scene) a library program for teens, is symbolized by the bat flying around near the top of the lampshade. A computer station, depicted under the art book, represents the wealth of information now available at the library through the use of technology. The Christmas tree in the foreground is a symbol of the Festival of Trees, an event the Friends of the Library and Women's Club organize each year to raise money for the library's building fund. Thanks in great part to the support of both of these organizations, the citizens of Bennington enjoy a full service library with a hometown atmosphere.

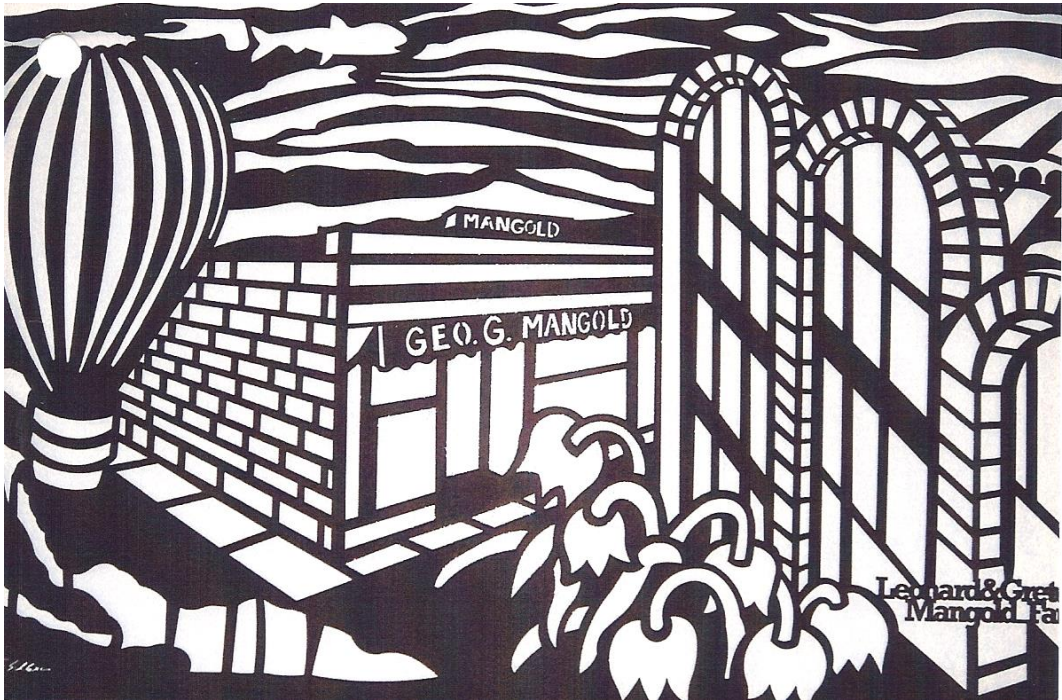
Terry & Carol Loptin Family



Terry and Carol wanted their panel to represent some of the history of Bennington and asked that the old train depot be featured. It is the central focus of their panel. To the left of the depot, representing Terry's interest in John Deere collectibles, is a deer jumping over the Bennington Railroad tracks. These tracks ran east to west along the southern edge of town. The railroad was instrumental in establishing Bennington as a market for area farmers. The fire hoses winding through the panel represent Terry's 30 years of service on the Bennington volunteer fire department. He was fire chief for 6 of those years. Terry has also served for many years as a volunteer member of the Bennington city council.

Carol has worked at the Bennington Elementary School for 32 years. Her emphasis has been in Special Education working with 5th and 6th grade students. Terry and Carol have two children, Rob and Sherri, both live in Bennington with their families. The six apples floating throughout the panel represent their six grandchildren and the strong value the family places on education. Like their mother, Rob and Sherri also work for the Bennington Public School system; Sherri teaches 3rd grade and Rob is in charge of maintenance at the new Pine Creek Elementary School south of town. The tree hanging over the roof of the train depot is a symbol of their many family camping trips.

Leonard and Gretchen Mangold Family



The Mangold family was one of the original families living in Bennington when the town was formed. In the early 1900s Leonard's father, George G. Mangold, together with the Glandt family, owned the Mangold and Glandt bank. The Mangold grocery store, established in 1898, is the centerpiece of their panel. Leonard took over and operated the store for more than four decades. He later served as Postmaster in town. Gretchen worked part-time in the grocery store and as a substitute clerk in the post office. She taught 9th grade English in Omaha and was instrumental in starting the Bennington Library. Leonard and Gretchen were both civic minded and involved in many community activities. In 1930, George Mangold had their brick house built as a wedding present for Leonard and his new bride Gretchen. She loved the distinctive rounded windows of their new home. These windows are depicted on the right side of the panel. Leonard and Gretchen had three children: Marilyn, Sharon and Stephen.

In the final season of her life Gretchen had two unique experiences. As she approached her 86th birthday, she was in California with her daughter Sharon and experienced, for the first time, a major earthquake. She told the Bennington Woman's Club of the earthquake and commented that she had always wanted to feel an earthquake. Now that she had felt an earthquake, there was only one other experience left unfulfilled and that was to ride in a hot air balloon. And so, for her 86th birthday, the Bennington Woman's Club gifted her with a once in a lifetime hot air balloon ride. The hot air balloon is depicted on the left side of the panel; below the balloon, the earth is quaking and opening. A plane flying off the panel above the windows represents their passion for adventure and traveling. Gretchen's favorite flowers, the lilies of the valley, grow in front of her windows.

Don and Jerry Miles Family



Standing in the center of the panel, is the Miles Lumber Company. Jerry's grandfather, Harry Miles and his father, Don Miles, established the business in 1937. Their lumberyard, located along the railroad tracks on the southern edge of town is an important part of Bennington's economic history. A number of the tools of the trade are depicted in the panel: the claw of a hammer, a nail, and a carpenter's pencil (held in the hand of the artist as he draws a fish.) Nail aprons from the old lumberyard were worn for years at the food stand at the Douglas County Fair and other money raising events around town. Miles Lumber Company closed in 1982 and Jerry opened and for 25 years operated Apollo Concrete, a mobile concrete business, symbolized by the concrete truck in the lower left of the panel. The lumber company building was eventually razed and Jerry built the Apollo Storage units along Warehouse Street. They are shown in the top left of the panel with a giant padlock securing the roof. The horizontal wooden grade stake at the top of the panel symbolizes the many stakes that have been made by Jerry and family members over the years.

Lowell and Nancy Neumeyer Family

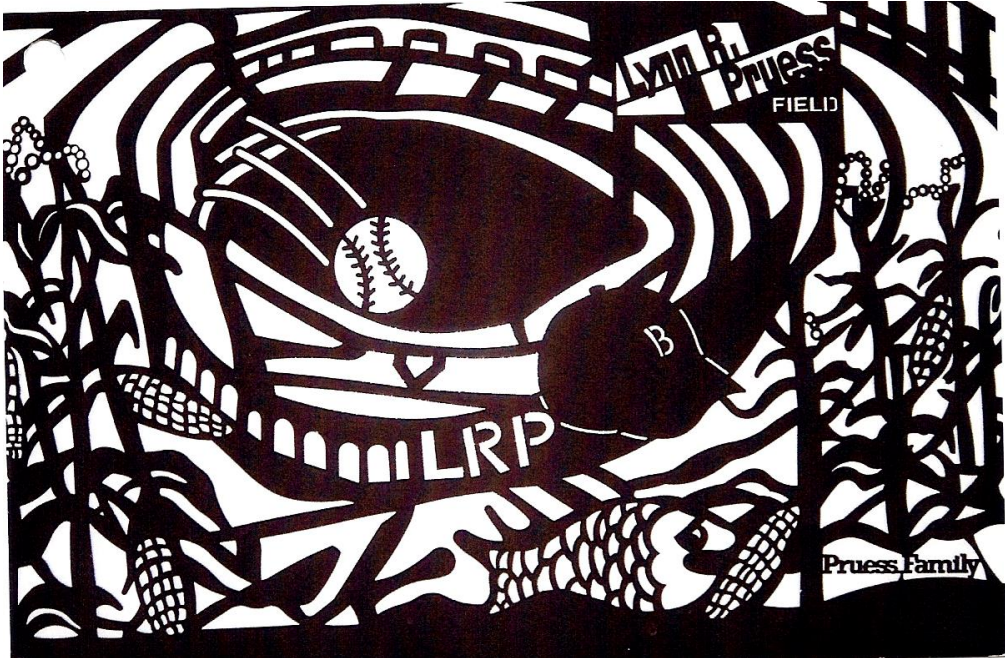


The Neumeyer panel displays many well-known aspects of Bennington's agricultural and business history. The family's agricultural heritage is symbolized by the 1952 Allis Chalmers tractor depicted at the bottom left of the panel. After earning a degree in agronomy from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 1953, Lowell returned to Bennington and was a successful farmer for as long as he lived. He loved raising a large cow-calf herd of Limousin cattle. In recent years, Nancy has served on the executive board of the Ak-Sar-Ben Buyer's Club Purple Ribbon Auction. Their children and grandchildren have been actively involved in 4-H, showing their livestock at both county and state fairs.

Hans Neumeyer, Lowell's father, owned the ice house which stood for decades just south of the Papio Creek on the west side of 156th Street. Giant ice tongs grip the building. Blocks of ice were cut, packed with straw for insulation, and stored for use throughout the year. Prior to the invention of the refrigerator, people used these blocks of ice in their home iceboxes. Hans also started the Bennington Transfer Company, with a fleet of drivers hauling milk and other products. Milk was picked up from area farmers in metal dairy cans and delivered to Roberts Dairy in Omaha. One of the transfer trucks is depicted on the right-hand side of the panel and is fondly remembered by many in town. Ice blocks and the metal dairy cans are floating in the panel. The building shown behind the transfer truck housed the Bennington Transfer Company, located east of 156th Street on the north side of Warehouse Street.

The Neumeyer family is passionate about building civic pride and improving the community through horticulture, using both flowers and trees. Lowell was a founding member of Bennington's Tree Board and planted the beautiful trees along 156th Street. Nancy continues his legacy and serves on the current Tree Board and on the Bennington Community Foundation. She and her family are making an impact that will last for generations to come.

Pruess Family



Jeff Pruess sponsored a panel as a tribute to his late father, Lynn R. Pruess. Lynn was civic minded, served on the Bennington City Council and played an important role in the development of the Legion baseball field, which now bears his name. Jeff asked Tom to include a Yankee baseball cap in the panel to symbolize the family's Yankee spirit. Because the NY Yankee logo cannot be reproduced without permission, a "B" for Bennington takes it's place. The Pruess family has a strong farming background in the Bennington community depicted by the terraced cornfields winding around the baseball diamond like stadium seating. Jeff's great grandfather, Fred Pruess, farmed near 142nd & Ida.

In Memory of Harold E. Roe



The Bank of Bennington panel honors the memory of Harold E. Roe. Harold and his wife, Eva, moved to Bennington in 1928 and opened the bank that same year. Harold served as managing officer and later as Chairman of the Board and President. Their original place of business was the former Mangold and Glandt Bank building located on Bennington's main street. In 1975, the bank moved to its present location at 12212 North 156th Street. They also have a branch office in Omaha near the corner of 156th and Maple Streets. The present day bank building stretches across the foreground of the panel with the original building standing slightly behind and on the right side of the panel. The flagpole depicted in front of the bank was located at the center of the intersection at Stark and Main Street, just southwest of the original bank building. The bank's logo is depicted in the upper left corner of the panel.

Tom and Ann Schlosser Family



The Schlosser panel is a picture book that tells the story of their family. A page in the book is dedicated to each of Tom and Ann's three children: Michael, Amy, and Sarah. Sarah's page includes a mask representing the many masks she has collected and designed, an ice cream cone, which is one of her favorite foods, and a dog representing the family dogs. Sarah designed the railing at the bottom of her page. It represents the artistic contributions all three children made as they helped their father with the panel designs for the Bennington Rail Project. The picture frame and artist brush on Amy's page symbolize her vocation as a high school art teacher. The wagon, flag, and rocket commemorate her 4th of July birthday and the many block parties and parades that were held to celebrate. Michael and his father not only share a love of art, but also a love for sports and for fishing and hunting. Symbols on and above Michael's page represent these interests: a basketball for sports, a fish for fishing, and a duck above his page for hunting. The remainder of the panel displays five paper dolls representing the five family members, a piece of pie for Ann's holiday dinners, a reading light for their shared interest in reading, flowers for their interest in gardening, and a grapevine for Tom and Ann's interest in fine wines.

St. John's Lutheran Church



“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16

St. John's Lutheran Church was established in 1898. The first pastor arrived by train from Kansas and preached his first sermon for a total of four parishioners. He and his wife lived in the rooms above, what is now, Sportsman Bar until a parish house was built. The first church and parsonage were located on the corner at Bennington Road and Molley Street. The parsonage stands to this day. In 1962, the church moved to its present location. The local framing community has been and continues to be a big influence on the church. The church building with its high cross is surrounded by wheat to represent the interconnectivity of the church and the farming community. The trees and shrubs that are part of the church grounds are also part of the prairie environment. The loaves of bread and fish floating in the sky represent Jesus' miraculous feeding of the 5,000 and His Great Commission to the church.

Malvin and Elaine Witt Family



Malvin and Elaine's children purchased a panel honoring their parents, who both grew up on farms in the Bennington area. Their son Jim and his family still live on Witt family property. The focal points of their panel are the windmill and a buckboard wagon that are found on Malvin and Elaine's homestead. The sky, full of food and cooking utensils, is reflective of Elaine's passion for cooking. Malvin enjoys gardening and taking care of his yard which is symbolized by the flowers and the carrot that are found near the bottom of the panel. Malvin and Elaine recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. They have four children: Judy, Joyce, Jackie, and Jim. The 8 on the side of the buckboard represents their 8 grandchildren. The sun rising behind the buckboard was lifted from a picture drawn for Tom by the Witt's granddaughter, Katie.