



Pictured clockwise from upper left: Francis during WW II when he served in the Navy. At the Dubois County Museum, making moonshine for a special event. Young Master Francis, Sylvester “Syp” Fleig with Francis around 1962 during a bear hunt. In Sweetwater, Texas with his bounty following a rattlesnake hunt. Francis doing what he loved best, educating students about farming as it was done in the past.

(Continued from page 1)

Francis was a dairy farmer, as was his father, Otto and grandfather, Henry. Born on a farm near St. Henry, the Lindauers moved to the current farm northeast of Ferdinand (on East 23rd a/k/a the Ferdinand Forest Road), when he was a lad.

One of his new neighbors was Juliana Weyer, who was said her relatives had sold their farm because she would miss her good friend and cousin. Little did she know, the wandering boy wearing a big grin would be her life partner. The two had been married 66 years on May 7 of this year.

In the beginning Francis palled around with Juliana's brother, Ray Weyer, but that all changed after puberty struck.

Francis was named Dubois County Outstanding Young Farmer of the Year in 1956 by the Jasper and Huntingburg Jaycees. This was before Ferdinand had its own chapter. The award was presented by Louis Welch who was with the Dubois County Soil and Water Conservation Service. At the time Lindauer was on the Boy Scout committee (he laid all the blocks for the first clubhouse), a member of the American Legion firing squad, the Huntingburg Conservation Club and the Huntingburg VFW Post.

Francis was also instrumental in the advancement of Ferdinand through his membership with the Ferdinand Development Corporation. The investment group built a medical clinic, then brought

a doctor to town. They helped make Ferdinand's first library a reality in 1965 and developed Ferdinand's Industrial Park, among other accomplishments.

Both he and Juliana were honored with the Brute Award from the Catholic Diocese of Evansville on November 21, 1993, and at one time, Francis served as Ferdinand Township Trustee. He had to give that job up to accept a Ferdinand mail route, a job he held for 34 years. He took his lunch in a pail each day, always a thick bologna sandwich and a pickle with some kind of fruit for dessert. He followed the maxim— neither rain, nor snow, nor sleet would prevent him from finishing his rounds.

But his kids laugh, he also took a beater automobile and sometimes he'd have a flat tire or get stuck in mud or snow. One day he went through three cars in an effort to finish his route. Francis retired from the Postal Service in 1983.

In 1977, Francis became a dealer for SI feeder wagons. By 1989, he owned the largest unit sales dealership in the United States, Mexico and Canada.

For 26 years, the Lindauers invited fourth graders from Ferdinand Elementary, St. Anthony, Pine Ridge, Nancy Hanks, and occasionally Holy Family to visit the farm where he and like-minded friends would treat them to exhibitions using old time farm equipment and, because this was a dairy farm, an ice cream treat.

“When he welcomed them Dad wanted them to visualize how it would have been 150 or 175 years ago,” Mike explains, “to understand where our ancestors came from. They didn't care how much money they had. It was about making sure their families were well fed, warm and dry. They cared about survival.”

Joan, his sister adds, “He really wanted to remember the traditional ways of doing things — the way it all started — he really wanted to teach the children about the history of farming and how food really got to the table.”

“I always told him he should have lived in the stone age,” Juliana quips.

Mike explains this educational experience actually started when Ferdinand Elementary educator Delores Lueken, then teaching third grade, asked Francis and Albert Hass further to bring some tools of the trade and speak to the students for Pioneer Days. They did so and presented each of the students with a small sack of corn meal. When she called the following year and asked him to bring a steam engine, he suggested it might be better to bring the students to the farm and the annual event grew from there. Switching to fourth graders made sense because that's the year Indiana history is taught.

It was quite possibly due to his education of area youth and her support that Francis and Juliana Lindauer were named 2005 Grand Marshals of the Ferdinand HeimatFest Parade.

Francis and his family

also staged old time farm shows for 14 years, averaging around 4,000 visitors annually who admired the working equipment, much from the previous century. However, insurance issues called a halt to the shows.

So where did the old equipment come from?

“Dad was interested in early tractors,” says Mike. “If it had rubber tires or cushioned seats it was too new.”

He had acquired a couple of pieces, but back in 1989 he traded for his first Kitten Steam Engine with Paul Stowfolz of Pennsylvania. Built in 1923 with serial number 214, the Kitten was delivered on the same day as the St. Anthony Quasiquicentennial Parade. Mike says they missed the parade for that reason.

That was the start of an avocation that would lead in many directions. Because of the Lindauer family's efforts, the Dubois County Museum in Jasper features quite possibly the finest antique farm equipment display in the state, if not the nation, most of it donated and/or loaned by the family.

When he wasn't working or hunting, Francis loved to walk the Back 40. He would check the trees and know instinctively if one was dying. He always told his children he would provide the lumber for whatever they needed. Janice and her husband, Larry Hochgesang's home is built from Lindauer farm lumber. So are Joan's barn and chicken house and Sue's barn. In fact all the Lindauer progeny can point to something that was built

with timber from the farm.

Francis didn't just watch a tree die, he replaced it.

He researched the various species and determined what kind of tree to purchase. A couple years ago he contacted Stark Bros. Nursery and ordered a Butternut tree. When it didn't go ahead, he contacted the nursery for a replacement. The woman at the other end said it would take 50-60 years for the tree to bear fruit (in this case nuts).

“Well I don't care,” Francis told her. “If I die tomorrow I'd still plant a tree today.”

“I think you're a farmer,” the woman at the nursery opined.

The family notes the second one died as well, so as a memorial to their father they will plant another Butternut tree, but in a different spot.

Toward the end of his life, when Parkinson's, arterial fibrillation, heart disease and

COPD slowed him down, Francis Lindauer still wanted to be outdoors watching the squirrels. “He was such a go-getter,” notes Joan. “But even at the end, when he could no longer use his hands or feet, he wanted to try.”

She continues, “A week before he died he told me, ‘I've got so many projects to do.’”

Daughter Sharon, who could not attend this interview, texted her thoughts: “I was always proud to say Francis Lindauer was my father.”

Francis Lindauer was buried on October 12, National Farmers Day, something that could not have been more fitting.

“I never heard him speak ill of anyone,” Joan says. “What better example for a family? What better example of a citizen?”

And what better person to receive the Ferdinand Community Service Award?

A family mystery

When Francis Lindauer's family entered Becher Funeral Home for visitation, they saw all sorts of lovely mementos sent out of honor and respect for a kind and generous man.

One item floored them, however.

There, amongst the floral arrangements and gifts, was a box wrapped in the Sunday comics and red bailer twine.

According to son Mike, every Christmas for the family exchange, Francis wrapped his gift in the Sunday comics and red bailer twine.

Mike went to Becher employee John Fleig and asked who had put the package there. John said he had no idea. No one else seemed to know either.

So the family took it home, with plans to open the package on Christmas as they would have were Francis still with them. And in many ways, he is.

Francis's letter to his grandchildren

Jan. 19, 2003

I was born January 19, 1928 at St. Henry and we moved to a farm at Ferdinand when I was five years old. Living on a farm we always had plenty of chores to do, like strawing the cows every evening, feeding the pigs and chickens. We did not have electricity in the country till I was 11 years old so we had to do our homework in the kitchen by the light of a coal oil or kerosene lamp and it was hard to see. When we worked and milked in the barn we used a kerosene lantern for light.

I walked to a one room country school about two miles from home every day. After about the 4th grade I had the job to start the fire in our school every morning when we needed to have it warm. We had one big pot belly stove in the middle of the classroom with desks all around and the teacher and her desk were in the front on a low platform. All eight grades were in one room and the total children

were usually about 40 kids. Our school was close to a woods and a lot of times we played in the woods, climbing trees and hiding in the brush. Our teacher did not like this but we did. We also played games like ball, marbles, dare base and piggy in the hole.

For starting the fire in the stove and getting the wood and coal in from the wood shed my teacher gave me a silver dollar at Christmas and at the end of the year. This was a lot of money and I still have them [the coins] today.

I cannot say any special day that I met my girlfriend Juliana which is your grandma now, since we were neighbors all our life and she also went to the same country school so I always knew her.

In 1945 I joined the Navy during World War II and got out in 1946 after the war was over. The ship that I was on was the USS Suisun ANP-53, which was a sea plane tender and repair ship.

We got married in 1949 and then along with working on the farm with my father I was a rural mail carrier out of the Ferdinand Post Office for 34 years.

I have always enjoyed farming, watching crops grow, harvesting and being around livestock and working outdoors. I always loved the outdoors and did a lot of hunting and fishing when I was younger. I hunted big game in a lot of states out west and in all of the provinces of Canada except Newfoundland and the Yukon.

My last hunt was in 1985 in the Northwest Territories, hunting for caribou and seal and I got one of each. We hunted about 400 miles SE of the magnetic North Pole. About 20 years ago I started collecting and restoring old tractors and steam engines. Now we have about 20 of these along with helping some on the farm. I keep busy. Today is my birthday and I am 75 years old.

Grandpa



Francis and his beloved wife, Juliana.