



Vahsholtz Cousins

March 2017

www.vahsholtz.com

Greetings from Northeastern Wisconsin!

WE ARE STILL IN THE EARLY STAGES of planning for the 2018 Vahsholtz family reunion in Milwaukee. We are still working on what we are planning to do when you are here. There are some great things to do. There is a boat that offers a meal and a trip down part of the Milwaukee River and out into Lake Michigan. I have heard lots of great things about this experience. We were also thinking of a trip to Sprecker's Brewery. They not only brew beer, but also some really great sodas. Nothing is set in stone yet, so if there is something you would like to do while you are here, please don't hesitate to put in a request. We would be willing to accommodate your request if at all possible. Just send a message to sharon_powless@yahoo.com Thank you.



A Note from your Editors:

Wisconsin is highlighted in the middle of the map above. See those red dots on the shores of Lake Michigan? Those are Vahsholtz Cousins on the current mailing list for this newsletter. The top red dot (Green Bay) is the Powless family. They were in Idaho where Sharon was “encouraged” to get things rolling in Wisconsin for 2018. The bottom red dot (just across the line in Illinois) is Barbara Patterson; another of the Wisconsin movers and shakers. Those two are leading the charge, preparing for 2018. At right is a bunch of V’s planning the event which is to be in the Milwaukee vicinity where the cluster of Vahsholtz relatives reside.

Long Trip? Well, not so bad. There’s Kansas in the lower left corner of the map, and Milwaukee is just 750 miles from Wichita. Just a couple of hundred miles further than our Colorado Reunions. About half as far as Idaho. You can count on an Idaho contingent making the 1,700 mile jaunt, and if the Good Lord’s Willing and the Creek Don’t Rise, we’ll be there too! ■



Backyard Koi Ponds

By Wanda Hartman

ONCE AN IDEA CATCHES ON I'm likely to give it a try. I got the idea of a garden pond from a magazine that warned—ponds can be addictive in nature. The article was right because the garden pond has been here three years and has been changed three times. I think I'm addicted! That's the first version above.

That first year I experimented with aquatic plants and was impressed with the way the plants quickly grew. They were planted in the shallow part of the pond (10 inches deep) and gravel was used for the planting medium. The gravel area was also used as a bog filter for the pond water. I got the water filtration figured out and the water was clear. I bought three Koi fish ranging 5-6 inches in length. All was good!

Then fall arrived! The pond was only twenty inches deep in the deepest part, so I was visualizing solid water with the coming Nebraska winter. Okay simple—buy a tank and put the Koi in the shed with aeration and controlled temperature.

Then I learned of the eating habits of Koi. Once water temperatures reach 50 degrees for five consecutive days they quit eating and cling to the warmer water at the bottom of the pond. They start eating in the spring when water temperatures exceed 50 degrees and they're hungry too! They grew a lot that summer, to 7-8 inches.

Another task to do for winter preparation—the

plants. Pump out the water and I would be done, right? Well no! Cut the tops off and put them in a tub in the shed? Not exactly! They were so root bound I couldn't even cut them loose with a butcher knife.

Have you tried to cut through root bound gravel? I finally pulled them out of the pond in massive chunks. Those plants took the fight out of me for that day. Next day I pulled them out and put about a fourth of the plants in a tub in the shed with water. Guess what? They lived through the winter.

What I learned that first year should have earned me a degree in something; maybe patience!

Year Two just had to go better and it did. I learned to restrict the root growth by planting them in pots in the gravel. That helped but, I couldn't leave well enough alone. I added another Koi to the group, but he wanted to be a flying fish and jumped out—twice. The second time I didn't find him soon enough. In the heat of July, algae came for an uninvited visit. There's a wide variety of mixtures to control algae on the market while keeping the water safe for plants, fish, birds and cats that drink from the pond. Finding the "right" magic mixture proved difficult.

That same year I added a water feature.



I installed an old well pump supplied by a submersible water pump. Now, how cute was that idea? It makes a good visual image but doesn't work quite like that. The spout was too short to reach over the pond. I

tried several fixes before finding a good solution.

That winter the plants came out easily and the three fish and plants survived the winter again. I'm not a quitter!

The concrete stepping stones you see around the pond were made by the grandchildren. Each stone has the grandchild's handprint and name on it. It is amazing what you can do with Quick Crete and a foil roasting pan!

By then I was bored with the preformed pond and the water pump problems and wanted to try a little bigger pond using a liner, plus a waterfall and a backdrop. The fish had grown to about 13-14 inches long. I spent a lot of time that winter researching about liners and installing them. It seemed like quite an undertaking and sometimes I question my own abilities. Not to mention the challenge of fitting all this around the busy time here on the farm when planting season opens up. I knew I couldn't expect much help.

But one early spring morning my son offered to help me dig my new pond (I never turn down good help and free advice!). He got out his backhoe and in no time, I had a pond! I figured the pond size to be about 1200 gallons. The liner I'd bought was not quite big enough but I finally figured out that I could overlap the piece trimmed off where I cut out for a curve.

There were forty-two 75 lb. wall blocks that I finally asked my son to move closer to the pond site

One lifetime is never enough to accomplish one's horticultural goals. If a garden is a site for the imagination, how can we be very far from the beginning?

Francis Cabot Lowell

about 7:00 a.m. one spring morning. He was a good sport about the whole thing and told me I would probably have a heart attack building that wall. I assured him I would be fine and if it was too much, I wouldn't do it. (Three days later I reminded him I didn't have that heart attack doing my project like he said.)

I've got to love that boy! He keeps me determined and motivated no matter how nonsensical my task may be. He is so like his father, Gerald Hartman, who liked to claim, "He never won an argument with me". (just a tactful way of telling someone they are bullheaded and stubborn!)

This is such a lovely, peaceful setting—leaning back in a chair of an evening just listening to the birds sing and waterfall run. I love my garden pond now and future changes will mostly have to do with plants. My two remaining Koi are about 16 inches long, named "Speckie" and "Goldfins" by granddaughters. "Got Milk," who had a white band around his mouth, met his fate last summer.

The stones/rocks came from the Hartman homestead where Frederick and Sophie Hartman lived north of Seneca, Kansas. Is it any wonder there is a lot of pasture on that farm? Gerald and I actually got high centered on a stone driving around the pasture with the pickup checking our cattle one time. What fun that was. ■



Cousin Wanda has a strong creative streak along with a great work ethic. Watch this newsletter for more!

A tradition in our branch is the “porch committee.” You can see some of us convened at the right on the porch of Ruth and Ron’s log home in Idaho. Sometimes “Grannies” who help Ruth come too. Merrily & Bill Mosman, for example.

Granny’s Christmas

By Ruth Richter

THE WEEK BEFORE CHRISTMAS I got a call at the Senior Center from a lady who owns property here in Garden Valley who has an old guy staying in the house there. She wanted to know if there was any means in Garden Valley to get food to him because he’d hurt his back and wasn’t able to walk into town as he usually did to shop. I assured her we’d be happy to get food together and take it to him. Besides, I was very curious about that falling down historic farmhouse. Looking at it you’d be sure no one was living there.

We got about \$50 of groceries, had meals prepared from our December Senior Center dinner, and Merrily got a big box of groceries from the food pantry they have at their church. Not knowing what we might be getting into, we “invited” our husbands to join us and off we went on some rather slick roads.

Bill and Merrily followed us and on arrival we pulled to the side of the road because we were in a blind curve coming and going with a fair amount of traffic. The four of us got out of our vehicles and looked in dismay at a berm that was over my head from plowing the road, and the lengthy driveway had not been plowed, either. We were all scratching our heads about what we were going to do when

... I spied a rig coming down the road with a snow blade on it and waved the handsome young man down, explained our situation, and asked if it might be possible for him to just plow out the berm for us, thinking we could wade through the snow the rest of the way.

With a big old grin, he said, “Sure, I can do that for you.” And he started working on that berm lickety split. I was just about to walk over and tell him he’d done it good enough and we could take it from there when I saw him shoot down the driveway with snow spraying every which way and he plowed out a path down the driveway for us. We thanked him profusely, I asked his name, and off he went with that big smile.

We all grabbed our bags and boxes of groceries and walked the driveway ... with the old guy standing out there watching the whole process and waiting for us.

He led us into the house and, *whoo-ee*, it was in *bad* shape, but toasty warm. Into the kitchen we went and fastidious Merrily wasn’t sure what she was willing to



touch or where she wanted to set anything down.

I said, “some of this food needs to be refrigerated or put in the freezer, do you have space for it?” He opened up the side by side refrigerator and there was not one item in the whole thing. Merrily scoped out the whole kitchen and later said the only food she saw anywhere was a jar with about a quarter cup of rice in it. The poor old guy was literally starving to death.

This house is not a fixer-upper or anything else. We plan to take more food to him, but when I called him on Wednesday, he said he was still good for food and we’d brought him a lot!

I’m not sure why the lady who lives in Boise doesn’t come up here and take care of things herself but she did send us a thank you note and a check for \$75 to cover the cost of the food, and she’s tracking down the kid who did the plowing to pay for that as well.

Meanwhile, once I heard the kid’s name I called his grandma, who I know quite well, and told her he was really a good kid to help us out. I sent a letter to the editor of the newspaper as well.

Merrily and Bill were just quite overwhelmed with the whole thing. Bill said he’d surely been leading an interesting life since he met me! Ron just generally felt really good about doing that for the old guy. I’d hoped to get some of the kids, Mark, Jay, Bruce, to go out there with more food but we didn’t get that worked out.

Now the road is all covered up with a berm again and the driveway needs to be plowed, so not sure what will happen on our next escapade to deliver more food!

And there you have it. ■



The Footstool

By Bob V.



YES, THAT'S ME ABOVE, with Marge on our patio one sunny day when the kids were there to celebrate and photograph the historic occasion of the skinning of the footstool.

My inheritance.

Well, there was other stuff, but Mom insisted I must have this footstool, a prized possession from my earliest memories.

The Great Depression was on and we were poor. The four of us had three chairs. I had this little stool that Mom made out of an old packing crate. Whenever we'd move, she'd "redecorate." If there was no money for anything else, she'd recover the stool.

I rode that little stool a million miles; my best toy and only seat. My family's history was revealed as the layers were peeled away. At right are all the nails removed and above it you can see Mom's housekeeping secrets revealed by the dirt on my lap.

Removal of the last layer re-



(Continued on page 6)



vealed just what Mom always told me; it's a box that had been sent to the Case store in Herington, full of plow parts, C.O.D.

Our daughter Kim took the tattered needlepoint home and reupholstered it onto a new lid. What had been the bottom became a frame for the opening photo of this article. Turn the stool upside down and the old Herington address remains clearly visible.

I'm too old to ride this footstool these days, and our twin recliner next to it has its own footrests. But I see that old footstool every day, with a little tingle of pride in our parents. ■

Children are educated by what the grown-up is and not by his talk.

Carl Jung

Dear Marge and Bob,

Thanks for another well-put newsletter. I was surprised to see another Vasholz living in Augusta, Georgia. I will have to follow through. Sparta, Georgia isn't far either and I have a good friend who was raised in Rome, Georgia. I will check to see if he knew the Vasholz descendants there. It's a small world after all.

Bob Vasholz, Augusta Branch

EDITORS NOTE:

This issue is a bit late. We were at the eye of the "Storm of '17" and without power for more than four days. Also a big tree fell across our driveway and we couldn't get out. And by the way, we had house guests from Indiana. Sorry for the delay! Bob & Marge

Oh, and also by the way, our branch is storytellers; I'm sure yours is too. But we can't print your stories if we don't hear them, so we just keep dredging up stuff from our branch ... and Wanda Hartman!

A little variety would be nice. Let us hear from you!



Those who attended Vahsholtz Cousin Reunions in Missouri and Colorado will probably remember Dan Werner, Jenny's husband? Jenny is Les Vahsholtz' daughter. Dan and Jenny wed in November, 2012. Dan, a funeral director, spent his life helping others process and cope with the grief and loss of loved ones, and guide them through what is an incredibly difficult process. Dan was unique in his amazing, selfless ability to listen and comfort others. He was called home unexpectedly January 27, 2017. Together, Dan and Jenny shared and loved seven children. Now more than ever, Jenny needs family support.



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If you'd like to make a donation, contact Treasurer Tony Vahsholtz avahsholtz@gmail.com or mail to: 12419 S. Downing Way, Nampa, Idaho 83686.

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE; October 15, 2017 ■