



1300 Avenue D • Plattsmouth, NE 68048 • (402) 296-7300

*Sands through*

# *The Hour-Glass*



Vol. 19 No. 1 • April 2014

[www.thenebraskamasonichome.org](http://www.thenebraskamasonichome.org)

## *New Surroundings*

On behalf of all the residents and employees it is such a pleasure to let you know how much we continue to enjoy our beautiful new surroundings here at The Masonic Home.



The building/renovation project has certainly been a dream come true. Our residents and employees definitely enjoy the more spacious dining rooms for mealtime and activities.



Not only did we concentrate on improving all areas necessary inside our facility during the building/renovation project, but we also set our goals to include

doing some attractive improvements outside of the building.



Another long-standing project that was on our radar was to adding additional resident walking paths to the east lawn of our facility. Heartfelt thanks go out to one of our generous repeat donors for making another dream come true.



Those who enjoy the out-of-doors and going for a walk are impressed with the addition of 600 feet of walking path that was added from the south sidewalk of Avenue D north around and past the existing gazebo. For the history lovers, another integral part of this project was installing five antique lamp posts that years ago graced The Masonic Home grounds. Many years ago the lamp posts were gas. This time around the old lamp posts were beautifully restored

to the original shiny black and converted to LED. They are so inviting as they light the new walking path to the gazebo and beyond.

Also added to this beautiful area are new antique-looking park benches and a lighted retaining wall which adds a Norman Rockwell look to the landscape. Who knew the construction of the gazebo several years ago would lead to what we have now?

The area is definitely inviting to residents, guests, and

employees throughout the seasons. The residents are thoroughly enjoying this area as a place to bask in the beautiful weather while improving their health and mobility.



*Mary C. Stapp*

Mary C. Stapp  
Executive Director

## *Happenings Around The Home*



*St. Patrick's Day T-shirts under construction.*



*Ken and Bruce going that extra mile in the new exercise room.*



*Therapy dog Coco sharing smiles.*



*Our Olympic Champions, Dean, LaVerne and Betty.*

## *Administrative Notes*



With the many changes that have happened here at The Home, there is one change that you will not visibly notice. When the apartments were renovated, we felt it was a good time to increase our Assisted Living bed count through the State of Nebraska.

In October of 2013, we increased the bed count for our Assisted Living license from 56 to 76. By increasing this number most of our apartments are available for double occupancy. Come see our apartments—we have one that will suit you!

Mary Vrbka  
Administrator

## Meet Karen Edmonds . . . Our Employee of the Year



“It’s a small world,” as they say, and the life of Karen Edmonds, The Nebraska Masonic Home’s Employee of the Year for 2013, is proof of that. She was born in Plattsmouth, and her family lived on Avenue C, just a little over a block south of The Home. At the present time, she lives next door to that childhood home.

An interesting side note is that the house Karen lives in used to be the residence for the Superintendent of our Home, and used to sit next to our administrative building on Avenue D. When the decision was made to provide more modern and larger housing for the Superintendent in the late 1950’s, the old house was moved to Avenue C and set into place on that street without even turning it around.

The back of the house faces the street, and the front of the house opens to the backyard!

Karen attended St. John’s School and Plattsmouth High School, graduating in the Class of 1978. She married her high school sweetheart and they took off for the oil fields of Wyoming where her husband got a job in an oil refinery.

During their 13 years in the Rawlins area, Karen worked in a drugstore and then in a day care service.

The couple had two children, a boy and a girl, born in the early 1980’s. To her children were eventually born Karen’s three grandchildren, the delights of her life. The grandchildren live in Omaha and Kansas City, and Karen doesn’t mind a single mile in her visits to see the grandchildren.

Returning to Plattsmouth, Karen worked briefly for The Nebraska Masonic Home in the Housekeeping Department, and then helped her mother for 10 years in their antique store on Main Street. She worked in two other jobs before joining the staff of The Home for good in 2006.

After a year in Housekeeping she decided to move to the Nursing Department to work more closely with our residents. Karen took her training in Omaha to be a Certified Nursing Assistant. Now she enjoys working in the Nursing Care area and the Special Care Unit.

“I love talking with our residents and hearing the wonderful stories about their lives and the places they’ve been,” she says.

Three years ago when Karen had a health issue of her own, which kept her out of work for three months, she truly appreciated the understanding, personal concern and support she received from The Home in her time of need.

Last October Karen was honored as Employee of the Month by a vote of her peers. That honor included use of the very favorably placed Employee of the Month parking stall, of dubious value to Karen as she lives so close she walks to work every day.

Then, at the annual Employee Recognition Event, Karen was thrilled to be named Employee of the Year.

Congratulations to Karen Edmonds, a caring member of our nursing staff for this much-deserved recognition of her value and dedication to The Nebraska Masonic Home. 🏠

### The Nebraska Masonic Home Board of Trustees

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# Meet Cullen Pilker . . . “Racing the Motor”



Cullen Pilker would yell, “I’ll be racing the motor,” to his wife Ardith, anxious to get out and going. “Just don’t start moving until I get in and close the door,” Ardith would answer. He never did, but it might have been close.

The life of this anxious traveler, this man on the move, began in 1929 on the Lower Brule

Reservation in South Dakota, close to the town of Reliance. His father farmed on the reservation and when it came time to expand the living quarters for the growing family, a new frame house was built. A chicken coop was moved onto the foundation and converted into a bedroom. It was in this bedroom that Cullen was born, with a Lakota woman performing mid-wife duties.

The family eventually moved to Rapid City and then to Custer, South Dakota where Cullen graduated from high school in 1947. It was at Custer High School that Cullen met Ardith. They were married in 1949 and had two children. Cullen worked in the lumber business in Custer and then took up trucking out of Rapid City in 1956. He became a member of the Teamsters’ Union, and this man on the move clocked in 3.25 million miles in his years on the road.

In 1963 a supervisor at his freight company gave him a petition to answer his questions about Masonry, and he became a member of Mt. Rushmore Lodge No. 220 later that year.

Three years later Cullen was transferred to Papillion, Nebraska where he continued trucking. He retired in 1991 on his union pension and Social Security.

He transferred his Masonic allegiance to Papillion Lodge No. 39 in 1977 and expanded his travels in Masonry by joining the Scottish Rite, Royal Arch and the Tangier Temple of the Shrine in the mid 1980’s. He served as

Master of his Lodge in 1996, where he sometimes “stirred the water” by wearing his black cowboy hat instead of the more traditional black top hat. “Just to keep them thinking,” he says.

Ardith, who had been in the Order of the Eastern Star since right out of high school, wanted to rejoin in the Papillion area, so Cullen and Ardith became members of Papillion Chapter No. 114. It was a wonderful experience for both, and Cullen was Worthy Patron on three different occasions.

In addition to his local Masonic affiliations, Cullen and his son, Thomas, became charter members of the Masonic Lodge at the International Peace Garden in North Dakota. Cullen and Ardith were proud of their son’s rise in Masonry; he was a Minneapolis Area Deputy Masonic leader at the time of his early death at age 52 in 2002. Thankfully, their daughter Gerilyn lives in nearby Springfield, Nebraska, working at an allergy clinic.

Cullen and Ardith traveled often. Most memorable were a trip to Washington State and Canada, which they traversed on the Queen’s Highway, and a trip to England, which included a visit to a session of the Grand Lodge of England and many other tourist stops.

Last year Cullen and Ardith made the decision to move to The Nebraska Masonic Home. Shortly after moving here, unfortunately, Ardith’s illness caught up to her and she passed away in November of 2013. They were married 64 years. Just three months earlier Cullen had received his 50-year Masonic pin in ceremonies at The Masonic Home.

Cullen Pilker, after a life of “racing the motor,” is now settled comfortably in his newly remodeled apartment at The Home. “This Home is astounding,” he says. “It’s like living at a resort!”

Thank you to Cullen Pilker for sharing his wonderful life story.



Spring Greetings to all our readers!

A big **THANK YOU** goes out **to all our caring donors** who have so graciously remembered the residents of The Nebraska Masonic Home this year. **Your kind gifts** make it possible for us to continue providing dignified and quality care to each of our 90 residents in very comfortable surroundings. **Thank you for your help!**

You know that **your donations help** with many residents' everyday expenses at The Nebraska Masonic Home, but perhaps you are curious about **what else your money does**. Today, I would like to share one extraordinary **example of your donations at work** . . .



Leland Willett and his late wife, Betty Lu, had been residents of The Home for six years when she passed away last fall. Not long after, Leland had a medical event that affected the left side of his body. Faced with **two life-altering events**--having lost the woman who was the love of his life, Leland now also had to cope with his lack of mobility.

Prior to this medical event, Leland was using a traditional wheelchair to get from place to place. He was able to propel the chair on his own, using both hands, which gave him a certain amount of **freedom**. After this occurrence, Leland **lost that freedom**. He was no longer able to propel his own wheelchair. He had to rely on a caregiver to get everywhere in his wheelchair.

Medicare **declined our staff's request** for an **adaptive single-drive wheel chair**. That specialized chair would make it possible for Leland to single-handedly steer and propel his own wheelchair wherever he wanted to go. Without it, Leland was facing an **unfortunate loss of freedom**.

**Because of generous gifts from donors like YOU**, The Home was able to procure that very much needed **chair for Leland!**

Today, using that specialized chair, Leland has been able to maintain some of his independence and increase his mobility. **Your gifts added quality to Leland's life.**

This is just one example of the **special things that your gifts** to The Nebraska Masonic Home **can make happen!** I hope you will keep Leland's story in mind as you consider your next gift to The Home . . .

Wishing you a Blessed Easter Holiday,

*To Peters*

Foundation Director



P.S. **Your gift could bring freedom and independence** to another Masonic family member in need!



*Randy Dunn and Diann Toler  
Pender, Nebraska*

## ***A Caring Testimonial . . .***

I had just joined the Brotherhood a little over 10 years ago when our aunt and uncle needed to come to The Masonic Home. The first thing that impressed us was the extremely high quality of care, and the love they received every day.

We believe because of that care, Lewis and Catherine had many more years together than they would have had anywhere else. As time went by, Catherine became more involved in the activities at The Home, and we saw how much it enriched her life.

We appreciate how much The Home has encouraged her growing independence as a person. We love that the employees of The Home become extended family members not only for the residents but also the families involved in their care.

Someday we want to receive the same quality of love and care we have seen them get on a daily basis, and we believe it is our responsibility to all of our Masonic family to encourage and support whatever The Home may need. We would hope that all brethren would contribute to keep this circle of life going.



*Happy Hour is a fun and enjoyable time for the residents.*



*The Home's version of the luge.*

## ***Address Corrections***



Please contact The Foundation office at (402) 296-7336 with corrections or updates to your mailing address. With your help we can be reassured that our Masonic Home friends receive our newsletter.

## ***2014 Caring Club Donor Recognition Event***

The 2014 Caring Club Donor Recognition Event will be held Sunday, September 28 at 1:30 p.m. for those donors who have donated a cumulative total of \$500 or more to The Nebraska Masonic Home from September 1, 2013 thru August 31, 2014.