

It's CenterPointEnergy.com/retirees

Check Your PC for Retiree News

This is last issue of the *MARS News* and retirees are alerted to check the CNP website for current items of Minnesota retiree and MARS interest. That site is CenterPointEnergy.com/retirees



The *MARS News* has published since the beginning of the MARS organization in 1986. The CNP web site has been online for more than a year.

For retirees without a personal computer, the plan is to have news about MARS' events to be sent to them by regular mail.

Details about a regular schedule and content are being worked out.

Retirees wanting the mailings are asked to let the MARS office know, providing their name and address. The MARS Office phone number is 612-321-5376. Please leave a message if no one is there.

Copies of past issues of the *MARS News* are retained in the company's archives. Retirees wanting a copy of any past issue may call the MARS office.

See You There !

MARS Holiday Luncheon is Dec. 7

We're well into the fall season, can the MARS Holiday luncheon be far behind? You know the answer to that, MARS has always had a holiday luncheon party to greet retirees throughout its 32 years.



This year's bash is at noon Dec. 7 at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 1114 American Blvd, Bloomington. Your registration form and menu is on page 8. Social Hour is at 11 a.m.

As a volunteer gift for others this year---bring socks, all colors, for men and women, a popular item with the needy. Also, the wonderful folks who traditionally bring those cookies are much appreciated. Time to check your recipes.

MARS Supports MN United Way Campaign - Producing 200 Fleece Blankets

To support this year's United Way Campaign, 20 Minnesota retirees have met twice monthly to cut and tie 200 fleece blankets. The blankets were donated to a local United Way agency, Community Emergency Assistance Program (CEAP), which also received spice kits assembled by current employees as part of this year's campaign. (continued on page 2)



MARS Blanket Makers. Front row, l to r, Barb Olinger, Ginny Thurler, Ethelyn Beireis, and Clare Pilon. Standing l to r: John Olinger, Marion Kottke, Peggy Wally, Sinclair Beireis, Julie Johnson, Cindy Zachmeier, Carol Beal, Dianne Bohn and Rick Pilon. Other volunteers who have worked on the Fleece Blankets but not in the picture are: Alice Bray, Butch and Donna Gammon, Bev Maas, Austin Loeffler and Joan and Tom Loveday. Photo by Rachel Shields, CNP MARS Liaison

We're Still in Business; MARS will Keep You Posted

By Bev Maas, MARS president

By now you have read that this is the last issue of the *MARS News* going to retirees and senior employees.

I want you to know at MARS we will do our best to keep you current in the future with both company and MARS-related information items.

We will continue to have our same volunteer programs--- and looking for more---and social events as before, and they will be communicated online as explained in a story in this issue.

The *MARS News* has been a steady form of communication for us retirees. It has, in part, also been the keeper of the written history of the MARS organization, now in our 32nd year.

(continued on page 2)

What Happened to that A-frame Natural Gas Exhibit?

+The Minnesota State Fair for 2018 is long gone, but senior Minnesota CNP employees and retirees might remember the simple A-frame gas energy exhibit that was first featured on the east side of the fair grounds in the 1960s.

In 1968, a larger and more dramatic All Gas Energy home for fair visitors, now the Blue Flame Lodge, was built nearer the grandstand.

But what became of the the A-frame structure. CNP Minnesota employee Sherman Ford, Facilities Department, researched its demise online The



building was purchased and moved to Excelsior (photo above) in 1968 by Lake Fellowship Unitarian Universalist church in Excelsior, MN.

The church members improved the A-frame building and made it available for a variety of uses

including political caucuses, peace groups, seminars and, more recently, art exhibits.

At the fair, (left, 1967 photo) the building was called the all gas leisure home, and



featured the latest in gas appliances, including outdoor gaslights and grills while providing energy information. At the time, the home was sponsored by the Gas Industry of Minnesota, with our gas company a member.

MARS Board Set for 2019

Want to know what's going on at MARS, talk to a director. There are currently 13 members on the

MARS board of directors as the group heads into 2019.

They are: Carol Beal, Lowell Benson, Alice Bray, Elli Fisher, Don Follett, Patty Jensen, Austin



Loeffler, Bev Maas, Rick Pilon,

Bob Riley, Michael White, and Tom Somers, a recent appointee. Roger Henningsgaard and Joan Loveday recently left the board after long and productive service. The CNP liasons are Beth Brown and Rachel Shields. Retirees interested in serving on the board may contact Bev Maas.

NE Warehouse Group Plans Nov. 8 Luncheon

The annual Holiday season luncheon for former NE Warehouse employees is set for 11:30 a.m. Thursday, Nov. 8 at the Golden Corral restaurant in Maple Grove, Elm Creek Blvd. and Weaver Lake Rd.



It will be the 35th Anniversary of the closing of the old venerated warehouse, located in northeast Minneapolis and once the work site for scores of gas company employees.

Longtime coordinator of the luncheon, Lowell Benson, is looking for a successor for the event—which also invites “those who wished they had worked at the warehouse.” Former employees may bring a guest.

If you have questions, contact Lowell at 763-545-3668.

We will keep you posted---continued

But with like many other print publications, new technology has stepped in, replaced them and delivers information faster and more economically.

For those without personal computers, we will need your help if you want to keep abreast of MARS events. Please forward your name and address to the MARS Office, 700 W. Linden Ave, Minneapolis, Mn 55403 or Tel: 612-321-5376, so we can mail you any announcements of social events, new volunteer opportunities, and other information of interest to retirees.

Thanks for your understanding during this transition.

Blankets for CEAP---continued



Working in the former Linden Ave. garage (Bldg 800), blanket makers (left photo) John Olinger and Cindy Zachmeier do the final ties. In right photo, Carol Beal and Ginny Thurler prepare for blanket measuring. *Photos by Rachel Shields.*

These cozy fleece blankets will help keep children stay warm through the cold Minnesota winter and will be given to families who use CEAP's food shelf and other services. In total, MARS made 200 fleece blankets---800 pounds of warm snuggles for local kids. We're so grateful to all our retirees and the work they do to support our community. --- *Rachel Shields, CNP MARS Liaison*

Remembering the Old Days



Retiree Mike White, right, shows Daryl and Colleen Pearson looking at a miniature replica of gas company service truck, (a commemorative item of the company's 125th Anniversary in 1995) being sold at MARS' "garage sale" at the company's BBQ in September.

The MARS "garage sale" featuring memorabilia at the company's September BBQ netted more than \$600, with items going at modestly low prices

MARS sold the memorabilia items contributed by retirees and others over the years, raising money for the Don Jordan Scholarship whose funds are dedicated to CenterPoint employees' children.

Bob Riley, who coordinated the sale, and Mike White staffed the MARS booth loaded with a range of items--from monogrammed jackets to playing cards, from tie clips to 125th Anniversary items. Bob said "It seemed mostly young employees were buying a remembrance of 'Minnegasco.'" Whether there is another "garage sale" will be determined later.

An old outdoor sign that once was posted at the company's Golden Valley Research facility was among the more unique items. Customer Service retiree Bud Beireis contributed the sign he had since the late 1960s, holding on to it for nearly 50 years.

The reflective sign, with the Minnegasco symbol, was about 30 inches in length and had been posted on the fence along Douglas Ave., where propane railcars entered the grounds. The sign seemed headed for the trash bin when Bud intervened.

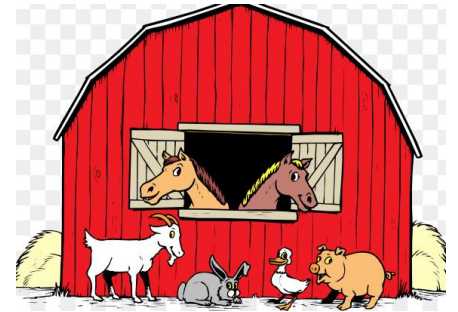
"I have a home workshop that was getting too crowded, and I saw where we could give the sign for a good cause," says Bud, who has held onto other Minnegasco materials with the logo.

"I joined the company in 1959, the same year the Minnegasco symbol was born," says Bud. "So when the symbol was phased but in the 1990s, that was a good time for me to retire, too".

'You Smell Barn' Church Basement Ladies' Latest Show

The Church Basement Ladies are still going strong.

MARS retirees interested in attending their current production--"You Smell Barn"---



may purchase tickets for performances at the Black Box Theater, Ames Center, Burnsville, through Feb.14, 2019.

There are no plans for an official MARS group attending, but maybe those retirees who have found the Church Basement Ladies their favorite will choose to get a few folks together and attend.

The show depicts those ladies living in rural communities where farm chores are part of their day. Plenty of songs and plenty of fun; this is the seventh Church Basement Ladies production.

Tickets are \$32-\$42 and shows are at:

- + 7:30 p.m. Thurs--Sat;
- + 1 p.m. Tues--Thurs;
- + 3 p.m. Sat; and
- + 2 p.m. Sun.

Call 1-800-982-2787 for tickets.

The Ames Center is at 12600 Nicollet Ave, Burnsville, just a short distance east off the inter-section I-35 and MN Hwy 13.

Volunteers Get Together for Luncheon



Many of MARS' Volunteers got together for a summertime potluck lunch, celebrating their good works at Feed My Starving Children, Bridging, and other sites and also posed for this group photo. They are: (Back row, l to r) Del Anderson, Ken Buhl, Bud Beireis, Butch Gammon, Dave Zachmeier, and Lowell Benson. (Third row, l to r) Rick Pilon, Peggy Wally, Marion Kottke, Julie Johnson, Dianne Bohn, Carol Beal, John Olinger, Pat McGrath, Eloise Graham, and Ginnie Thurler. (Second Row, l to r) Claire Pilon, Barbara Olinger, Donna Gammon, Austin Loeffler, and Jim McGrath. (Front row, l to r) Cindy Zachmeier, Bev Maas, Wayne Jensen, and Patty Jensen. *Photo by Ethelyn Beireis.*

Around The Company

+ CNP Files for Renewable Natural Gas Program in Minnesota

CenterPoint Energy (CNP) filed a proposal last quarter with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC) seeking approval to introduce a renewable natural gas green tariff pilot program to its Minnesota customers. If approved, CNP customers would be able to enroll in the program as early as spring 2019. CNP is one of the first natural gas providers in the U.S. to offer renewable natural gas (RNG) to customers.

The proposed program offers CNP customers in Minnesota the option to purchase RNG through their monthly bill. RNG is created by cleaning and refining methane produced from landfills, agriculture and waste water. If approved, the initial pilot program would be in place for five years, after which time CNP could request to continue, modify, or discontinue the program.

RNG is chemically nearly identical to conventional natural gas, but is sourced differently. Conventional natural gas is a fossil fuel obtained by drilling into underground rock formations. RNG is made of biogenic methane produced when organic waste breaks down in the absence of oxygen. plants and anaerobic digesters on farms Common sources include landfills, wastewater treatment or at food processing plants. Once processed, this biofuel can be injected directly into natural gas pipelines and used as a clean and reliable energy source for homes and businesses. (continued on page 7)

Five Minute Interview

Tom Chapman, Sharon Rohrbach Keeping Busy in Retirement

(Editor's note: *MARS News* checks in with a pair of retirees to see what's up their world; Tom and Sharon bring the total interviews to 101 and 102 since the series was launched in 2003.)

Tom Chapman---Raising Trees

Q: What area of the company did you work? I was hired in 1970 and worked for several years in Data Processing, with programming and duplicating functions and with the computer. Later, I transferred to the Engineering Department where I worked with engineers my last 10 years. I retired in 2006.

Q: Did you have experience in that field before coming to the gas company? Not really. I had worked in the labs of a retail photo company. I also had attended the University of Minnesota, majoring in Forestry for a couple of years before the draft board called my number.



Q: Where did you serve while in the U.S. Army? I wound up serving with Engineer units and spent a year in Vietnam operating heavy equipment. I had gone to Ft. Leonard Wood, MO., for basic training.

Q: Where were you born and raised? In Bayfield, WI., but my parents moved and I attended and graduated from Robbinsdale High School.

Q: Where did you meet your wife Barbara? It was in a keyboarding class at the University of Minnesota.

Q: What have been some of your special interests since retirement? We live on an acre of ground in Cedar, MN and raise for sale a small variety of trees, spruce and others. I also do some flower gardening. For awhile we were members of a sail boating club on Mille Lacs Lake and also enjoyed having family picnics there. I also enjoyed going to garage sales, talking with the folks. We travel some, especially to California where we have a son living in Fresno.

Q: Do you see other retirees? Not so many out here in Cedar, which is several miles north of Anoka.

Q: Are you a reader? I read Minnesota author Kent Kruger's books. He's a writer of crime novels and also writes about Ojibwe Native Americans and the state of Minnesota.

Q: Do you do any volunteering? In the past I have helped at Feed My Starving Children; also with the MARS News mailings. Locally, I helped a neighbor build a greenhouse for garden flowers.

Sharon Rohrbach---Job Memories

Q: Where were you born and raised? In Aberdeen, S.D. My parents were farmers and along with my brother I learned to milk cows, feed chickens, geese, and ducks, gather eggs and other farm chores. I attended Aberdeen High school.

Q: Did you visit the Black Hills? Yes, every summer for a weekend or so each time.



Q: Did you ever envision living your adult life on a farm? No, I knew opportunities lay elsewhere and we moved to the Twin Cities. My husband Bob was from Aberdeen as well. and still works as a property manager.

Q: What work did you do when at the company? My 33 years of service was all in the call centers.

I started work in Customer Accounting, working with what was called "the tubs". I eventually became manager of two centers, one at the Linden Bldg. and another at headquarters. We handled inquires on appliance repair, credit, billing, etc,

Q: What did you like about your job? Never a dull moment! There was many system and policy changes. Also, once we wound up having a collector locked in a building.

Q: What are your thoughts looking back at your working career? You don't realize how much you miss your co-workers. Given there were so many employees in my department, there were a lot of stories.

Q: What occupies your time now? Sometimes I work with my daughter who operates a cleaning business.

Q: Do you have time to travel? Not so much, but we have been on several cruises, including to Mexico and Jamaica. In the summer we have enjoyed the north shore.

Q: How will you spend Thanksgiving? I will have the relatives over, about 10 people in all. I have been the family Thanksgiving holiday host for at least 10 years. We will have turkey and ham. I try to have different foods that I know the guests like.



A Bright Day on the St. Croix River. These folks were among a dozen MARS members who enjoyed an afternoon with a paddleboat ride in September. L to R, Barbara Olinger, John Olinger, Bev Maas, Claire Pilon, Dianne Bohn and Rick Pilon. The group traveled north and south of downtown Stillwater, enjoying a buffet lunch enroute. *Photo provided by Barbara Olinger.*



Mankato Area Retirees Gather

Several retirees from the Mankato area gathered this fall for some lunch and for renewing ongoing friendships.

The lunch is a recurring event for the retirees; in addition to those in the photos, attendees included Cheri Kortuem, Mavis Davis, Roger Mielke, Richard Swing, Connie Abrahamson, Elli Fisher, Judith Hanson, Gary Dunn, Connie Abrahamson, Judith Hanson, Larry Monke and Richard Swing.

On the volunteer front, Mankato retirees are getting ready to help with the area school backpack program later in November. The program provides carry home meals for needy children on weekends.

The community's Holiday Sharing Tree project sponsored by CNP has been a long-time volunteer project and will mean several volunteer opportunities this season.

Commencing Nov. 9 thru mid-December volunteers will pick up giving cards. On Dec.16 comes the sorting of nearly 3,000 gifts into large moving boxes. (continued on page 7)

Retirees (top photo l to r) Pat Ogle, Jack Sonnickson and Ray Felmlee, look over a 1969 issue of "The Front Burner", which printed employee service anniversary photos. Meanwhile, (bottom photo, l to r) Lisa Menne, Gail Robertson, Art Zuhlsdorf, and Jim Grabianowski, await their meal. **Photos and story by Elli Fisher.**



2018 Volunteer Rewards Schedule

Quarter	Deadline to enter hours	Points deposited into accounts
1 st Quarter	Mar 31, 2018	Apr 24, 2018
2 nd Quarter	June 30, 2018	July 24, 2018
3 rd Quarter	Sep 30, 2018	Oct 24, 2018
4 th Quarter	Jan 4, 2019	Jan 31, 2019

2018 GIVE Grant Schedule

Quarter	Application deadline	Grant awarded by
1 st Quarter	Mar 31, 2018	Apr 30, 2018
2 nd Quarter	June 30, 2018	July 31, 2018
3 rd Quarter	Sep 30, 2018	Oct 31, 2018
4 th Quarter	Jan 4, 2019	Jan 31, 2019

Around the Company----continued

+ Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton issued a proclamation in October announcing as Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) System Awareness Month in Minnesota. The proclamation is the initiative of the Minnesota Blue Flame Natural Gas Association

+ More than 100 CNP linemen, contractors and support personnel went to Florida to assist Gulf Power with anticipated power outages resulting from Hurricane Michael in October.

Crews were scheduled to work 12- to 16-hour days restoring power. "Our thoughts are with those in the path of Hurricane Michael," said Steve Greenley, vice president of Distribution Operations for CenterPoint Energy. "Once the storm has passed, our dedicated team will work to restore service as safely and quickly as possible."

+ CNP announced in September its competitive natural gas sales and services business, CenterPoint Energy Services (CES), has expanded its retail natural gas supply to residential customers and businesses of all sizes in Illinois. "CES has a proven track record, having served commercial and industrial custom-

6 Earn \$300 GIVE Grants in 3rd Quarter

Six Minnesota retirees earned GIVE Grants in the CNP volunteer program during the third quarter, bringing the year's total so far to 10.

The retirees each recorded 40 hours or more with their individual organizations.

The awardees and their organizations are:



Jim McGrath: Anoka County Medlink; Peggy Wally, VIP Robbinsdale; Mike White, CEAP; Bob Riley, VEAP; Dean Senne, Habitat for Humanity; and Susan Day, Friends of Pequot Lakes Library.

Individual GIVE Grant awards were raised from \$200 to \$300, effective last quarter.

Last year retirees recorded 20 GIVE Grants, with 28 in 2013 being the most in a year. Since the program started in 2006, the total number of GIVE Grants awarded to Minnesota retirees has gone over the 200 mark. Last year retirees totaled 6,400 hours in volunteer time, mostly for projects that took less than the 40 hour GIVE Grant standard.

In all, some 40 agencies have been the benefactors of the CNP GIVE Grants in Minnesota, and about 45 retirees are multiple awardees.

Mankato volunteer activities---continued

The final sort and distribution is on Dec. 18. Gifts are sorted by family and bagged. Families with an identification card pick up gifts at the Mankato Armory.

From Nov. 30 to Dec. 24, the Holiday Sharing Tree has a Gift Wrap Center at the River Hills Mall, where volunteers staff the booth and wrap gifts for shoppers. On Nov. 27 is the Kiwanis Holiday Lights. Volunteers welcome visitors and accept cash or food donations for area food shelves and help direct traffic through Sibley Park. Website for this event is kiwanisholidaylights.com. Nov. 27 is also the day Holiday Sharing Tree will provide volunteers. CNP is also a sponsor for this event.

ers in Illinois for more than 30 years," said Joe Vortherms, senior vice president, CES, and former vice president, Minnesota Region Operations.

CES currently has more than 6,000 commercial and industrial customers in the state.

MARS CALENDAR OF EVENTS

+ MARS BOARD MEETINGS

-- 9:30 a.m. Jan 20-- Linden Bldg.

+ +

Volunteer Opportunities with other retirees

+ Feed My Starving Children-

9:30 a.m. First Wednesday, at Coon Rapids site; Third Wednesday at Eagan site

+ **Bridging, Inc. Fourth Tuesday afternoon** at Bloomington and Roseville sites.

+ **Robbinsdale School District Volunteers in Partnership** — See Cindy Zachmeier for projects.

Social Activities

+ **Holiday Luncheon —Dec 7 noon—K.C. Hall, 1114 American Blvd, Bloomington, MN**



Jul- Catherine Bell, 38 yrs.

Aug- Gene Coppins, 34 yrs; Christine Lewandowski, 41 yrs; and Ed Schneider, 40 yrs.

+Thanksgiving Was a Big Day+

Back in the 1920s, prior to the coming of natural gas, Thanksgiving was the big day for sendout from the company's gas manufacturing plant. It also was before gas space heating was popular.

All system gas holders were filled. Extra help was scheduled for all shifts. Top management came to the plant to see how things went.

Workers at the plant could tell when the turkeys went into the ovens around town (around 10 a.m. peak demand) and when the peak was over at around 2 p.m.). It was a day when the company's six steam boilers were pushed to the limit.

In Memoriam

July---Myles Brooks, Ralph Johnson, Steve Luegge, and Roy Mattson.

Aug—Carol Heinz, Stuart Beattie, and Roger Fisher.

Sep—Gerald Schmidt.

MARS NEWS is a publication of the Minnesota Active Retiree Service (MARS) organization, printed quarterly for



CenterPoint Energy Minnesota Operations retirees and Friends of MARS. Inquiries directed to DonFollett: dhfcvf29@comcast.net ; the MARS Office Tel: 612-321-5376; Fax 612-321-5442; or write to MARS at CenterPoint Energy, 700 W. Linden Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55403. This is the last issue of the publication, having started in 1986. Future communications with retirees will be online on the CNP website.

MARS/ Retiree Holiday Luncheon Dec 7, 2018

I'm coming to the Holiday Luncheon:

Name _____

Guest (s) _____

Telephone _____

My entree' choice(s)---

+ Chicken Kiev \$16.29 x # of meals = _____

+ Tilapia \$16.29 x # of meals = _____

+ Prime Rib \$18.79 x # of meals = _____

Total----- \$ _____

Prices include taxes and tips



Make checks payable to MARS and mail to:

Bev Maas
6308 Douglas Drive
Brooklyn Park, MN 55429

Reservation deadline is Nov 26.
Sorry, no refunds after Nov 26.

Questions? Call Bev Maas: 763-504-93