

# Lifestyle

April 27, 1986

Sunday Post-Crescent Appleton-Neenah-Menasha, Wis. C-1

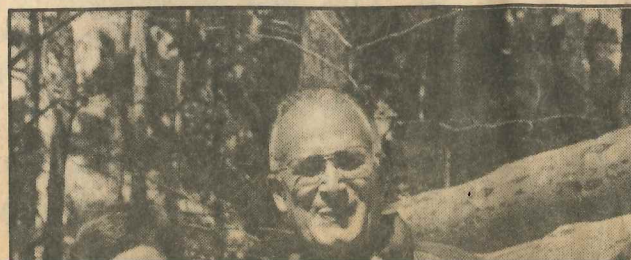
History tales  
Speaking in public  
Ever Wonder

C-3  
C-6  
C-6



Post-Crescent photos by Bob Boeten

*Framed by the jutting logs of the cabin under construction is Neenah's resident environmentalist Leo Nickash.*

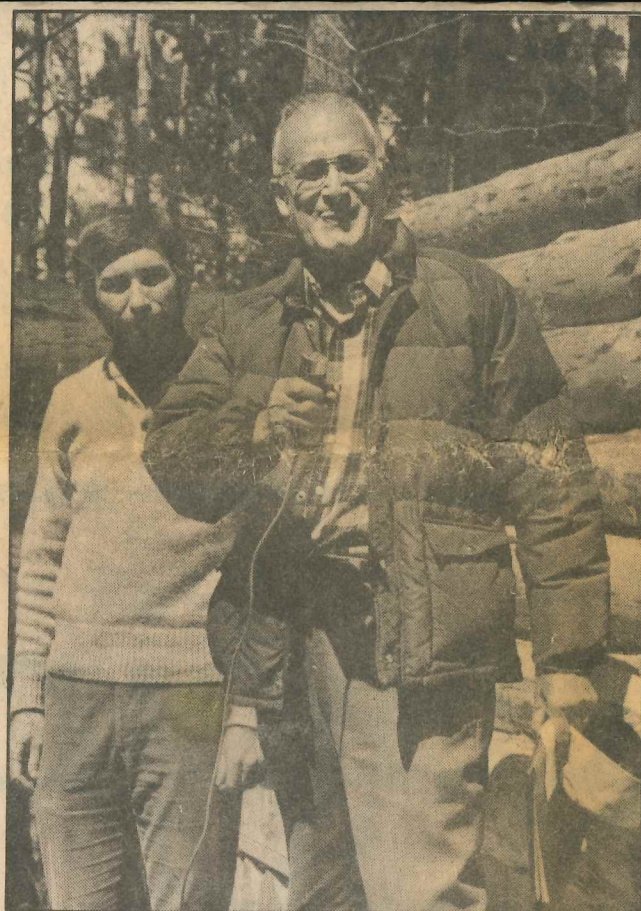


## Building will stand as tribute at nature center

By Kathy Coopman Voigt  
Post-Crescent staff writer



# Cabin on the bluff



Ray Feit, right, acknowledges the cabin project.



Karin Arnold and Tammy Krueger examine an artifact.

## At the station: people, ponds and projects

By Kathy Coopman Voigt  
Post-Crescent staff writer

AMHERST — Young voices popped and crackled in the crisp spring air, sending jays swooping and chipmunks scuttling. Fifth graders had taken over the banks of the small lake in search of Nature.

Nature, meanwhile, hightailed it off the trails and open patches of ground. The students would have to be more cunning.

Graduate students from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point settled into spots on the rising bank, directing their fifth-grade charges to net and scoop up samples of pond life.

Salamanders, newts, leeches and polliwogs were plopped into enameled pans and plastic containers to be studied, ogled and explained.

And when they'd had their fill of waterbugs and weeds, they traded turf with oth-

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Bobbi Jo Trader met up with a spunky salamander.

# Building will star tribute at nature

By Kathy Coopman Voigt  
Post-Crescent staff writer

AMHERST — Selected stands of red pine are felled at the Central Wisconsin Environmental Station just outside of town.

The timbers will be raised again, though. This time they will stand staunchly in the form of a cabin as a tribute to a man who is "an environmental educator, naturalist, and teacher of youth."

The cabin, rising log by log on a bluff above a lake, was dedicated this week by people who have grown to appreciate the efforts of that special environmentalist and educator from Menasha, Ray Feit.

A one-year retiree from the city's school district where he ended his administrative career as principal of Jefferson and Banta elementary schools, Feit continued to show his enthusiasm for ecology by the students he has served so long and so personally by joining fifth graders from Gegan School during a 2½-day stay at the center.

And the 48 students joined in the fun of surprising Feit at the dedication ceremony, a secret which he had kept right on through the tomato soup and crackers lunch in Sunset Lodge.

Appropriately, Feit's longtime environmental comrade, Neenah's Leo Nickash, slowly climbed the bluff with the parade of young people to dedicate the log cabin to his friend. Together the men had worked to bring a firsthand study of the environment into the school systems in their respective cities, and together they nurtured the programs into this, the sixth year of sending students to the Central Wisconsin Environmental Station.

Center Director Rick Wilke and assistant director Mary Durista were on hand for the ceremony, and work crews from the Civilian Conservation Corps took time out from their work on a nearby cabin to list in. The corps and a host of other ecology-minded organizations have banded together to develop the grounds of the center, which is funded and operated under the auspices of the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.

Many of the buildings on the grounds have surpassed their half-century anniversaries, and new buildings are needed to accommodate increasing numbers of groups and families who wish to come to the center to study and enjoy.

Fundraising efforts have been under way for several years, with the most prominent evidence of their success being the new earth shelter dormitory which juts upward at the end of the main driveway. Organizations such as the CCC and groups of serious citizens have contributed hours of volunteer time to complete landscape and construction projects.

Locally, Nickash and Feit and others have been tapping the bushes for contributions from industry, the Chamber of Commerce, the Neenah-Menasha Local Council and other agencies to pay the way for Twin Cities youngsters to be among the 18,000 people who participate in programs at the station each year.

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April 27, 1986

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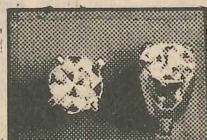
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## Building will stand as tribute at center. . .

Continued from page 1  
ers of their classmates, some of whom were exploring the environs of a beaver colony, and others who were prodding the ruins of a minister's cabin.

Before they would return to their hometown classrooms, they would have played the role of the stalker. And that of the prey. They would have imagined soaring with eagles. And they would have grovelled into the soft earth for creatures of that environment.

A 2½-day stay and they would be exhausted and exhilarated, all at the same time. Another group of 48 would tumble off the bus, eager to begin; and they would drag their gear on board and slump into the still-warm seats to ride home.

That is the cycle at the Central Wisconsin Environmental Station near here. Elementary students from around the state come here for an intensive, firsthand study of nature and the ecological chain. Industry, civic groups, parents' organizations and others contribute annually to make their short course possible.

Students from Neenah and Menasha have just completed their sixth annual trek to the station, dividing up a three-week time slot in the center's slate of programs. As many as 48 fifth graders at a time pack into the solar-heated dormitory for their stay. Teachers and parents chaperone and lead some of the classes.

The camp has rules, and everyone in turn sets or clears the table, straightens bunks or vacuums the conversation pit, or shoulders latrine duty. But once those chores are out of the way, full energy is poured into outdoor activities.

After settling in Monday, a group of students from Menasha's Gegan School lashed themselves to a guide rope for a night hike. In and out of the woods they wound, trying as best city

tions and tune up their remaining senses to gain a new perspective on the world at night.

For a while they lay quietly on the ground, listening. Adjusting to the darkness, their eyes saw movement that surely would have been missed had the young people been on the move.

Back in a circle with the entire group, the leaders doled out winter-green flavored mints, with instructions to crunch them up with mouths open.

Giggles shot out as the chemical reaction created sparks visible in the darkness.

Up early in the morning, they began daylong studies, keeping notebooks of information, joining in discussions and problem solving exercises. Refueled on a healthy lunch, they reconvened in the clearing for games under a billowing parachute, stretching high and crouching low.

This year's outing was special, for this crop of pupils participated in the dedication of a new cabin in honor of retired Menasha school principal Ray Feit. His remarks, his thanks were directed to them, the students who have benefited from his commitment to the concept of having young people study nature firsthand.

Scrawled in chalk across a board in the Sunset Lodge dining hall, is this equation for learning.

"You learn...

10% of what you hear;  
30% of what you read;  
50% of what you see, and  
90% of what you do."

In the short time they attend the environmental station program, the students use all of these means to absorb as much as they can.

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## Fox Valley Perinatal Association



Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), sleep apnea, and the use of apnea monitors will be the subject of a program on Wednesday, April 30, at 7:00 P.M. at the Holiday Inn of Appleton.

Featured speakers will be:

**Connie Guist, R.N.**

Coordinator, Wisconsin SIDS Center

**C. C. MacDonald, M.D.**

Neonatologist, Nicolet Clinic

Director, Intensive Care Nursery

Theda Clark Regional Medical Center

The meeting is free and open to the public. Pre-registration would be appreciated. For more information, please call Carol Sykes:

**729-2079**

A service of the Fox Valley Perinatal Association



## Station. . .

Continued from page 1

Then last year, Twin Citians turned the tables on Feit in particular, as these same agencies, school parent organizations and individuals contributed to the Ray Feit Memorial fund to help raise money for a cabin in recognition of his commitment.

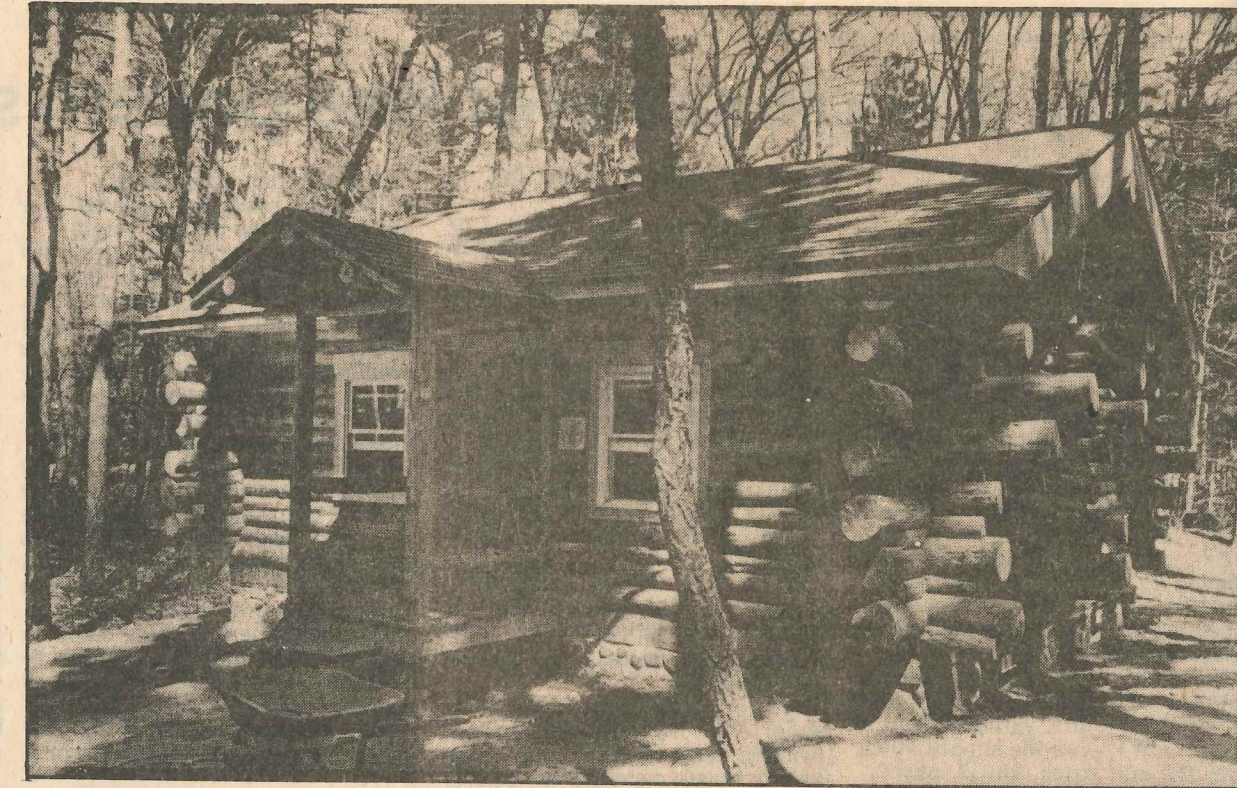
Contributions ranging from \$1 to \$200 compounded into \$1,200 in time for this week's dedication, just about enough to build the cabin from foundation to roof.

The names of nearly 70 contributors were compiled into a booklet as a keepsake for Feit, along with a volume of personal letters and thank-yous from folks who have known him through the years. Many of the parents of present grade schoolers who contributed to the fund had themselves been Feit's pupils. One of the student interns who taught a session for the Gegan pupils this week was once one of his charges in Menasha.

The station's program is twofold. First, it is to teach about the environment to people of all ages who are concerned about the balance of nature and the world around them; and second, it is to offer hands-on experience to students pursuing careers in natural resources and resource management in Wisconsin. Primarily, these students study at UW-Stevens Point and the environmental station is a laboratory for them to test their knowledge and skill.

Under the direction of Durista, the graduate students, graduate assistants and interns prepare units of study for attending groups. Experiences are related into reports, projects and tales to remember.

The station offers programs for families to come as a group, for Scouts, for school children, and stu-



Workers are finishing this new log cabin at the environmental station. The walls of a second cabin are rising on a nearby bluff, dedicated to retired Menasha school principal Ray Feit. April 27, 1986

Post-Crescent photo by Bob Baeten

dents through college competence. Most reserve space in programs at least a year in advance, according to Wilke.

"We like to get them to come in the school group, come back for a little longer when they are older, and then keep coming back as advanced students or parents of their own families," he says.

Programs in addition to those supported by the schools include Nature Adventure Camp held in June for 9-14-year-olds; Timber Top, a two-week session for special education students, and Natural Resources Careers Workshop for college students considering environmental vocations.

Feit will be remembered.

"This memorial will be standing at least 100 years from now," Wilke added in tribute to Feit. "Without people like Ray, Leo and the teachers this would not be possible."

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