



# FARM WELL NEWSLETTER

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## THE LARSONVILLE SCHOOLHOUSE - FAMILY CONNECTIONS

WRITTEN BY PEGGY ARNESON MONSON

Our family farming roots go deep in this area and the nearby Larsonville Schoolhouse has also played an integral part in the Monson and Arneson family histories.

The property for the school was purchased on June 16, 1883 for \$5.00, conveying land from the Owen and Mary Williams farm to School District No. 10. My husband, Larry's, greatgrandfather, Martin Monson, later bought that farm in 1905.

The Arneson family history with the Larsonville Schoolhouse dates back to 1912, when my grandmother Naomi Evans, began teaching at the one room school after graduating from Dodgeville High School. As was customary at that time, the young, single schoolteacher stayed with a local family during the school year and Naomi lived with Larry's great-grandparents Martin and Sophia Monson.

While teaching at Larsonville she met her future husband, Ole Arneson, a farmer who lived a couple of miles down the road on the Arneson's Blue Ridge farm, homesteaded in 1875.

Ole and Naomi were married in 1916 and went on to have 7 children, one of whom was my father, William Arneson. Ole and Naomi farmed together during good times and bad. They lost a farm in the Great Depression and then worked and saved for many years until they were able to purchase another farm in 1945. When Ole passed away in 1949, Naomi continued to operate the dairy farm with her sons, Garfield and Robert. A newspaper article written at the time of Naomi's 80th birthday tells the story of her boarding a bus to Madison after the morning milking was done, on November 18, 1955. 100 dairy farmers gathered at the State Capital that day to discuss their problems with the Agricultural Committee of the U.S. Congress, the milk support price had just been cut from 90% to 75% of parity. She found seat #15 that her father, Tom Evans, had occupied when he was elected to the Assembly from Dodgeville in 1911. Naomi was one of the first who spoke on behalf of the dairy farmers. The problems of government influence, milk prices and the cost of production are a familiar lament to this day.



Naomi Evans Arneson on graduation day, May 1912.

DODGEVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

## You Should Know About - the [UW Extension Event Calendar](#)

The UW Extension calendar is packed with wonderful in-person and virtual learning opportunities related to a wide array of topics on agriculture, financial success, self-care, operator certifications, topic discussions, and vegetable gardening series (e.g. seed starting).



PRIOR TO WORLD WAR I

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### COMET:

- **Virtual- Tues, 12/7 6-8PM** [Link](#) to register.

### The Water We Swim In:

- **Virtual- Fri, 1/7 11:30AM** [Link](#) to register.



On the Monson side of the family, Larry's father Marvin and Marvin's sisters Joyce and Gladys attended the Larsonville school as children, ending with their graduation at eighth grade. Larry and his sisters Rebecca and Barbara also attended Larsonville and he tells of a mishap when the large stoneware water crock was tipped over and broken. It made a lasting impression on the young first grader!

Over its years of operation, the schoolhouse was the hub for neighborhood activities. A highlight every year was the annual Christmas program. The Larsonville School closed after the 1962-1963 school year when the Brigham Township consolidated the rural schools. The school building was offered for sale and was purchased by Robert Paddock of Madison on March 31, 1964. The Larsonville Mother's Club retained the kitchen appliances, folding chairs and tables plus some of the school property they had purchased for their community, 4-H and Homemakers meetings, which had become popular at the school.

Larry and I married in 1977 and while driving by the schoolhouse nearly everyday I didn't see the Paddock family using it very often. We purchased the schoolhouse from the Paddock's in 1991 and after years of neglect Larry's aunt Joyce and her husband Werner were instrumental in helping us with the repair and cleaning of the building, bringing it back to a usable condition. I have always thought that being able to purchase the schoolhouse was like my winning the lottery, I feel so fortunate to own this unique piece of our family histories. The Larsonville Schoolhouse sits high on a ridge north of Barneveld and offers panoramic views of the surrounding countryside and of the beautiful Blue Mounds to the east. We have used it for many family gatherings, including two family weddings, our daughter's wedding reception, numerous graduations parties, church groups, holiday gatherings and many family reunions. At the ripe old age of 138 years old this wonderful building continues to have a modern presence in our lives, as we make memories and add them to our family history.



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