

Badgerland Flooring
of Southwest WI, LLC
1475 US Hwy. 14 East • Richland Center
(608) 649-FLOR (3567)
www.BadgerlandFlooring.com



Hours: Mon. - Fri. 9:00 - 5:00; Sat. 9:00 - 12:00; or by appointment



VERNON COUNTY VIEW

POSTAL CUSTOMER
ECRWSS

PRSR STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
LA CROSSE, WI
PERMIT NO. 285

FRIDAY, MARCH 26, 2021 | vernoncountyview.com

MASTERS OF CUSTOM JEWELRY
WE NOW CARRY ECO-FRIENDLY LAB DIAMONDS
AND DRIFTLESS CHOCOLATES!




157 North Main Street • Richland Center, WI 53581
608.383.1240 | jjwjewelers.com

JJAY WALSH
Jewelers



AMY JANKOWSKI PHOTO

AN AGRICULTURAL SCENE

A dilapidated shed is surrounded by lush hills and fields along Jore Road near Coon Valley in this photo taken on a Sunday drive in 2011. The green landscape is a reminder of things to come. If you wish to share a photo for the front page of the Vernon County View, please visit us at <https://go.lacrossetribune.com/VernonCountyview>

GET LOST! IN VERNON COUNTY

Welcome to Bud

Editor's note: Christina Dollhausen, Vernon County's economic development coordinator, will be sharing with Vernon County View readers the adventures of Vernon S. Quatch a "resident" of the area who enjoys visiting and talking about some of the unique places that can be found in the county.

Hey. Hi. My friends call me Vern. Yeah, I am kind of a loner, so most friends don't call me at all. I hear there is a lot of social distancing happening out there these days, so maybe that's what is going on. Anyways, it's not so bad, I find ways to cope. Whenever I get really lonely, I like to visit this little small area known as Bud. I always thought it would be nice to be some-

one's Buddy, or Bud, so going there makes me feel a little better and less lonely.

If you've never heard of Bud, it's about six miles west of Viroqua on Hwy. 56. It may not seem like much today with only 3 exits, but if you believe me, at one time there was a lot going on. I've lived all around Vernon County for a very, very long time. I remember hiding outside The Bud Store, built around 1907, and watch neighbors buy things like nuts and bolts to fabric and spools of thread. I used to imagine these neighbors were my friends. There were two buildings I would peek in at night time behind the store, one housed the family cows. The cows were friendly to me, in fact most cows in Vernon County are nice to me! I remember the Bud Store had an upper story, where dances and other community events were held. Once a year the gypsies in wagons would come through Bud. I was always there to step in and scare them off if they decided to cause any mischief with my neighbor friends, but they never stole anything, just traded goods and were on their way. Sometimes later for fun I'd catch up to the Gypsies and move around some of their stuff at night while they were sleeping. It's always fun to watch them scramble in the morning. Bud also had a cheese factory and a sawmill there at one time. If only they knew how good I am at picking up trees.

When I'm in the Bud area, I like to go down Nottingham Road and make my way to Sidie Hollow Lake. I usually can always catch some good fish there to eat, especially at the spillway next to the dam which runs into the south fork of the Bad Axe River. Along the way, there's a group of some smapple trees, called a sugarbush. The sap is really flowing right now. Did you know that Vernon County area has some of the best maple syrup in the world? Well, now you do, but you'll have to taste it to believe it! I bet local maple syrup was also sold in the Bud store at one time. Maybe by the time you read this, the sap flow season will already be done as the window of opportunity for gathering sap is short. Come to think of it, we're kind of the same, sap flow season and myself. We're here, and then we're not.

I have a lot of good memories of Bud. Sometimes I would sit outside and watch the neighbors talk until real late at night, when most humans and critters go to bed. I would talk to people more, if only given the chance. But for now, just imagining that I have a friend in Bud seems to work for me. If you drive through, give a wave, and who knows, I might just be around to wave back.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Vernon S. Quatch visits Bud, which is about six miles west of Viroqua on Hwy. 56.

How ants made a broke GI rich



When Milton Levine returned from World War II, he had some common, but very pressing, problems.

He didn't have much money. Which was doubly urgent because he brought a lovely young war bride from France home with him.

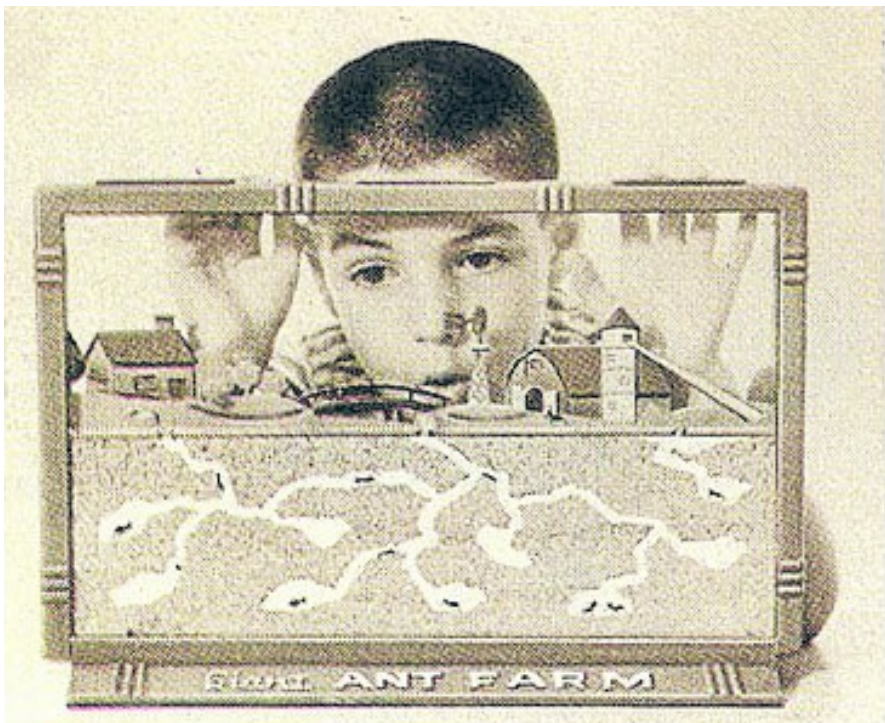
Second, he didn't have a job. With 15 million service members returning to civilian ranks and the economy shifting from wartime to peacetime footing, there just wasn't enough work for everyone.

Rather than wasting time searching for a non-existent position, Milton went into business for himself. He read somewhere that the best fields for ex-GIs were toys or bobby pins.

There's no record of how the bobby pins turned out, but toys were a brilliant suggestion. Millions of veterans were marrying and starting families. Overnight, America had a Baby Boom. As kids grew, they wanted toys.

Milton partnered with his brother-in-law and started a mail-order plastic toy business. They placed ads in comic books offering "100 Toy Soldiers for \$1." They sold imitation shrunken heads to hang on car rearview mirrors. And they also sold the Spud Gun. You stuck the gun barrel into a raw potato, then fired the chunk as a projectile. (This was the time before lawyers filed lawsuits at the drop of a hat.) It turned out there was a post-war potato glut, and the partners sold two million in just six months.

Milton was doing OK. He wasn't get-



The ant observation toy.

ting rich, but he was paying the bills.

Then a pool party changed everything.

Inspiration often strikes at the unlikeliest of times. When Milton's sister threw a Fourth of July picnic at her southern California home in 1956, she had no way of knowing it would revolutionize the toy industry.

Families were relaxing poolside. Milton spotted a mound of ants and bent over to watch them. He remembered visiting his uncle's farm as a boy where he dug up ant colonies, put them in Mason jars, and stared in fascination as they built tunnels and crawled around.

Then it hit him: why not build an ant observation toy? With that, he suddenly had a new product unlike anything else. He was already sketching ideas when the fireworks started.

Milton realized buying the ant farm would be a two-step process. He designed a six-by-nine-inch plastic display. It came with a coupon for 25-30

ants, which would then be sent to the buyer. He also discovered permission was needed from each state to send ants via mail. (Hawaii still bans shipping them, by the way.)

The next problem: where do you get ants? It turned out to be surprisingly simple. Ads were placed in local newspapers saying, "Ants Wanted!" and offering a penny per. Soon Milton was deluged with jars full of industrious insects. One guy showed up with an enormous container and demanded \$50. When Milton asked how he knew there were 5,000 ants inside, the man dumped them on Milton's desk and shouted, "You count them!" as he stomped out.

The ant farm went on sale for \$1.98. And Baby Boomers immediately went crazy for it, Parents and teachers gave it their blessing for being "educational."

The fad coincided with the Golden

Please see **HOLY COW**, Page A2

ON THE WEB

For regular updates, go to the View's website and Facebook page.

KIDNEWS

A7