

A view of the East Otter Tail sky June 17.

'I'M LOST'

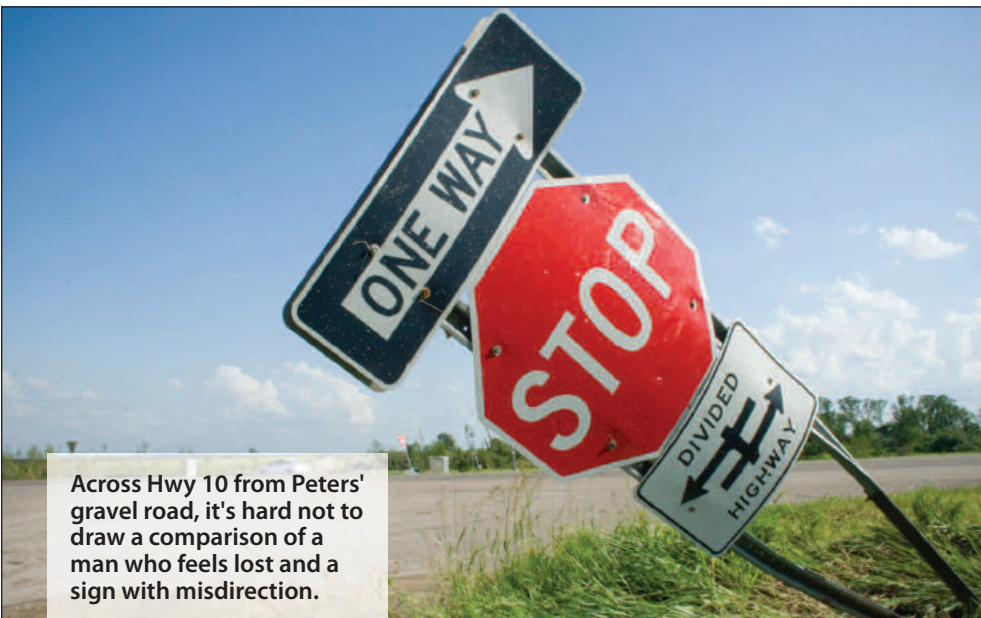
says Bluffton man who survives tornado

Photos & Story by Paul Gregersen

The remains of Jim Peters' home west of Bluffton. His parents farmed the 80-acre spread on the property for 47 years.



Across Hwy 10 from Peters' gravel road, it's hard not to draw a comparison of a man who feels lost and a sign with misdirection.



Storms lined the county.



Piles of debris and the remnants of a garage in Peters' backyard.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED as clean-up continues

Jim Peters' plan was to take cover in the basement immediately after closing the front door. At his age, moving quickly is easier said than done.

He had no idea a tornado was literally on his doorstep.

The winds ripped the front door off the hinges and the next thing Peters remembers is waking up leaning on the counter, people calling his name to check on him.

"I don't know how long I was there," Peters says. "They said they hollered at me seven times before I made it out the door."

His pick-up truck ended up on its roof down in the ditch by the mailbox.

"To tell you the truth, I probably wouldn't be alive if my house would have completely went."

"I think that's my camper in the bottom of that field way over there. I have a 26-foot camper and I think all is there are the axles. This stuff goes every direction. East, west, north, it don't make no difference," Peters said.

Peters has 80 acres of land west of Bluffton off Hwy. 10. His folks farmed the land for 47 years. He has been living here since 2000.

Peters says his parents probably lost 10 trees in 47 years. Between two wind storms a couple years ago and this, he has lost a thousand.

"I'll probably be able to see Mills now," he says tongue-in-cheek. "I can see them houses up there now that I never seen before."

Of seven structures on the property, all have been destroyed. His house is totaled.

"Everything is totaled," says Peters.

The only thing that remains of the 32' by 68' shed he built five years ago is the gravel slab where it once stood.

"I built 2"x8" over 2"x10" rafters. They (builders) said they wouldn't blow down in a hurricane. I wish I could bring them out and show them."

When asked where he goes from here, Peters replies, "I don't. I'm lost. I don't know. I just don't know."

All that remains on his property, other than the house, are piles of wood, tin, plastic and other materials.

Volunteers have been in and out helping to clean up but debris cannot be removed fast enough.

Peters says more volunteer help is needed, especially during the week when the landfill is open.

"All these people here are good neighbors. That's the good thing. We know each other. Been here for ages. Most of these people have the homesteads, we're pretty much all related," Peters says.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Local volunteers have been helping out the communities of Wadena and Bluffton since the tornadoes tore through the area.

Volunteers from the New York Mills Lions Club, New York Mills Babe Ruth, Hammer's Construction and many more have spent much time cleaning up.

Otter Tail and Wadena Counties are working together in a single program to provide relief in both counties.

Those seeking to volunteer services should check in at the parking lot of the vacant Pamida building on Highway 71 about a half mile north of Hwy. 10 in Wadena, or they can call 211 from a land line or 1-800-543-7709 from a cell phone. Those who are still in need of volunteer services should call 218-640-3432.

The center cannot provide volunteers to work on or in private structures and cannot work in wood lots. Individuals with private wood lots should contact DNR Forestry at 218-846-8363. The center especially can use the help of organized groups of volunteers with their own leadership.

Property owners who sustained damage should document their loss and expenses. Photographs can be very helpful. This is necessary both for insurance claims, and if any individual relief becomes available through FEMA. Oftentimes, the only available relief for individuals are low interest loans through the Small Business Administration. For many disasters, FEMA only provides reimbursement to the costs incurred by local governments. Farmers sustaining loss to crops and livestock should report their losses to their local Farm Service Agency. The East Otter Tail number is 218-346-4260; the Wadena County number is 218-631-2876.

The two counties continue to accept storm debris at the old Wadena airport east of the city on Sunnybrook Road. This site is only for storm debris and cannot accept other items such as new construction debris. Debris should be presorted into tree waste, scrap metal, masonry debris and other construction debris. More information is available on the Wadena and Otter Tail County web sites, www.co.ottertail.mn.us and www.co.wadena.mn.us.

Property owners are responsible for bringing the debris to the center; the volunteers do not have the resources.

A request has been made through the Governor's Office to the Federal Emergency Management Administration for a disaster declaration. Long-term disaster relief planning continues.

FINAL FRAMES
Scenes from the 2010
Relay For Life held in
Perham. [page 12a](#)



SPORTS
All-Section standout
Taylor Doll. [page 1b](#)



Focus East Otter Tail

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NYM pools together for Wadena

NY Mills raises close to \$2,000 to share community pool with those affected by recent tornados

Paul Gregersen
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When tragedy strikes rural areas like Wadena or Bluffton, neighbors lend a helping hand.

"I'm not a contractor," said Amy Wallgren from Farmers and Merchants State Bank of New York Mills. "But I thought we could help in a different way."

The Wadena Community Pool was destroyed as a result of the June 17 tornados.

After losing community structures like a school building in Wadena, the pool could easily be an afterthought. But not for Wallgren and her coworkers at the bank.

"After doing a little checking, we heard that what the kids in Wadena might really like is a place to enjoy some summer swim time, since their pool was right in the path of the recent tornado," said F&M State Bank Executive Vice President, Al Berube. "We also wanted to provide the residents of New York Mills with a focused plan for any donations they might wish to make."

So, that's exactly what they did. Shortly after the tornados, they began collecting funds to provide a free place for Wadena and Bluffton kids to cool off during the hot July and August months.

With a megaphone in her hand, Wallgren and her coworkers marched with a big blue tarp, which represented water, during NY Mills' parade, collecting money along the way and raising close to \$800.

F&M matched \$500, as did the New York Mills Civic & Commerce Association. Combined with funds raised before the parade, the grand total is near \$2,000.

Kids from the Wadena area will be bussed to NY Mills on Wednesdays through August to swim free of charge. The first busload arrived Wednesday,



Wadena swimmer, Blu Lutze, takes a much-anticipated leap into the cool waters of the Legried Community Pool as Connor Walz, Jared Evans, and Madisyn Missling wait their turns.

Photo by Paul Gregersen/FOCUS

Kathryn Knuttilla wins Miss Minnesota Pagent

Megan Wutzke
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Kathryn Knuttilla has always been busy, but this summer she's gotten even busier.

"So far this summer is just crazy busy," says Knuttilla with a laugh. Since winning the Miss Minnesota crown on June 20, Knuttilla has traveled all across the state, working on her platform "Inspiring America: Crown the Good in your Neighborhood," meeting Miss America and working with the Children's Miracle Network.

Yet, with barely enough time to sleep, Knuttilla claims she is "excited to see all of my hard work pay off." This is the third time Knuttilla has tried for the coveted spot of Miss Minnesota.

"I knew I could do it, and I'm so glad that the judges thought I would be the best representative for Minnesota," says Knuttilla.

Knuttilla isn't the only one in her family to be Miss Minnesota. In 2001, her sister Kari Knuttilla Heisler also won the crown. This has only happened once before when sisters Barbara and Polly Peterson both won the Miss Minnesota title in 1976 and 1981.

Knuttilla grew up in Detroit Lakes, but considers Perham her "second community." Her grandparents, Lou and Rolly Knuttilla, live in Perham, while her parents, JoAnn and Steve own Knuttilla Financial. Her parents also own a lake cabin between Frazee and Perham.

Not only does she work hard on her platform, but she also works hard at her school, McNally Smith College of Music, where she is a composition major. Winning Miss



Submitted photo Kathryn Knuttilla being crowned Miss Minnesota

Minnesota gave her a \$20,000 scholarship, which "helps a lot," Knuttilla says.

This background in music helped with her service to the Children's Miracle Network. She has recorded 12 original compositions to raise money for the organization. She also holds "Night of Inspiration" concerts to raise money for her platform and to recognize those who have been inspired to help out in the community. These concerts are one of Knuttilla's favorite events.

"When you see someone who sings and you hear their stories, it moves you, and inspires you to get off your butt and do something," she explains.

The service portion of the Miss Minnesota contest is one of the best parts for Knuttilla. In fact, one of the reasons she loves the Miss America pro-

MISS MINNESOTA
continued on 5a

POOL
continued on 5a



The only known photo from the first East Otter Tail County Fair in 1910 shows area residents and their livestock converged on the streets of Perham.

Submitted photo

100th East Otter Tail Fair

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July 21-25 marks the official 100th anniversary of the East Otter Tail County Fair.

Though there were fair like events held prior to 1910 in Perham, 1910 marks the first fair on record sponsored by an official organization, the East Otter Tail County Agricultural Society. The same group oversees the fair to this day.

The year 1910 saw King George of England take the throne after the death of his father Edward VII, William Howard Taft began his second year as the 27th U.S. president, electric streetcars of Austria-Hungary, France, Germany and Great Britain carried 6.7 million riders per year and Henry Ford sold 10,000 automobiles.

The headline of the Oct. 6, 1910 edition of the Perham Enterprise read "Market Day

and Fair on Saturday was a hummer! Attendance largest in history of Perham. Everybody pleased."

In typical Minnesota fashion, the weather dictated the planning and turnout of the first organized fair. The news article reads, "One of the most successful and largest attended fairs that has ever been held in Perham, was the one of Saturday last. Owing to the weather conditions of the past season, it was not thought that a fair this year would create very much enthusiasm, and consequently no action was taken until a couple of weeks before the day finally agreed upon. However, the fair was thoroughly advertised, cash premiums were offered and an extensive premium list arranged."

EOT FAIR
continued on 9a

St. Paul's School celebrates centennial July 24-25

Heidi Kratzke
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There are 80 and 90-year-olds living in Perham who fondly recall their elementary days at St. Paul's. Now marking 100 years of providing a Christian education for area children, St. Paul's Lutheran School will celebrate its centennial on July 24-25.

The two-day celebration is open to the public, with a school open house from 3 - 9 p.m. on Saturday, July 24 and 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. on Sunday, July 25.

The school's mission is to "touch lives forever spiritually, academically, physically, and emotionally with the love of Jesus." This mission has impacted countless Perham area children over the past century.

Bonnie Stohs, the current St. Paul's principal, says, "I would guess over the years we've had 1,500 students in the school." The school is open to children in preschool through 6th grade.

Former St. Paul's students and their families are encouraged to attend the weekend celebration, along with the general public. According to Stohs, several former St. Paul's teachers will be in attendance at the centennial event.

On Saturday, July 24, a 5 p.m. worship service is planned. Rev. Orville Walz, Rev. Del Stohs, and Rev. Carl



The original St. Paul's Lutheran School in Perham. St. Paul's School celebrates 100 years of educating area students on July 24-25.

Submitted photo

Noble will each take part in the special service. Rev. Walz and Rev. Stohs both have the distinction of having served as former principals at St. Paul's School.

After the service food will be served at 6:30 p.m., with a free will offering taken up for the meal. The night will also include fellowship, games for kids, and music in the church parking lot. Some of the evening highlights include a live band and inflatables for the children. In case of rain the event will be held in the school gymnasium.

The following day, Sun-

day, July 25, the school's centennial celebration will officially start with a 9 a.m. worship service with Rev. Orville Walz and Rev. Carl Noble. Rolls and coffee will be served after the service. Tours of the school will be offered during both days of the St. Paul's open house.

Letters of congratulations, donations, or questions may be sent to the school at 500 6th Avenue SW, Perham, MN 56573 or may be e-mailed to stpauls@eot.com.

ST. PAUL'S CENTENNIAL
continued on 5a

Continuing the hometown newspaper traditions of the Perham Enterprise Bulletin and New York Mills Herald.

ENTERPRISE BULLETIN
HERALD

- QUOTE OF THE WEEK -
"Nothing makes a fish bigger than almost being caught." ~Author Unknown

INSIDE
Crowds flock to Dent Daze 3a

Pool

continued from Front

July 7.

The number of operational school busses in Wadena is limited, so arrangements are possible for NY Mills school busses to be utilized for transportation if necessary, Wallgren said.

"We would like to thank the Mills Pool and anyone who made this possible for our kids," said Wadena-Deer Creek Kids Club instructor Jackie Becker, who traveled with the first group of Wadena kids to their newly adopted pool. "Kids Club went to the Wadena Pool everyday and now we are getting the chance to swim every Wednesday at the Mills Pool. The kids had a great time and we are looking forward to come again next Wednesday. We feel so fortunate that people care enough to get the kids to the pool one day a week." She said.

"We're happy we could help a little," said Wallgren. "It's the least we could do. Especially with the summer heat. It's just what neighbors do."



Amy Wallgren, above, takes the cause to the streets during New York Mills' parade on the 4th of July weekend.



Luke Ayers, right, said, "Swimming is my favorite part of summer. This is so fun."

Photos by Paul Gregersen/FOCUS

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St. Paul's Centennial

continued from Front

Although St. Paul's Lutheran School is nearing its centennial, the church itself is 40 years older. "The first teacher was called in 1910," says Principal Stohs.

Three years ago, St. Paul's School moved from its former location by the Perham Police Department to its present location attached to St. Paul's Church. The church has been at the 6th Ave. SW location since 1970.

In a time when there are fewer and fewer Lutheran schools, St. Paul's continues to remain strong. Principal Stohs reported that there are only nine Lutheran schools still operating in Minnesota North (a region that includes the entire northern portion of the state.)

Stohs believes it's the sense of ownership the St. Paul's congregation has in the school that has helped the institution maintain its vitality. She says church members take pride in the fact that St. Paul's School is owned by St. Paul's Lutheran Church. It is rare that a single church is able to support an entire school. Most Lutheran schools are the result of a combined effort of area churches.

According to information compiled on the history of St. Paul's Church, at first, the local pastors taught the Christian day school, but in 1910 Mr. Richard Matwich, a seminary graduate from Addison, IL, was called as a regular teacher.

He was installed in September 1910 and began school with 42 pupils in eight grades. Under his administration the number of pupils increased. Mr. Matwich served as teacher faithfully until the fall

of 1918 when he was drafted into the army in World War I.

A portable classroom was constructed in the summer of 1977 at a cost of \$11,000 to serve as a third classroom. One of the former classrooms was converted to a library.

A preschool and kindergarten was started in 1987 in the Fellowship Hall. In an effort to save money, the congregation voted in 1989 to drop the seventh and eighth grades. Another building project was begun in 1991 when it was decided to add a 40 x 60 addition to the fellowship hall for the preschool and kindergarten—which at that time had an enrollment of between 70 and 80 students.

In 2001, St. Paul's School became accredited by the National Lutheran School Accreditation. In 1970, when the new St. Paul's Church was built, plans were also drawn up to build a school onto the new church. In 2007, this dream became a reality.

In April 2006, the congregation voted to build a \$2.1 million addition onto the church. A \$350,000 memorial had been given to the school years before for the purpose of a school.

Other donations had come in over the years. The congregational vote said that the building could be started when \$500,000 more had been raised. The donations came in and the building was started in October. The new building houses offices for the church, five classrooms, a library, a computer lab, school offices, and a multipurpose room.

Principals who have served St. Paul's

- Richard Matwich, 1910-1918
- H.C. Brase, 1920-1946
- John Robinson, 1946
- Helen Bauck, 1946
- A. Stahlke, 1947
- Delbert Mey, 1947-1948
- Stuart Firnhaber, 1948-1952
- Richard Grunze, 1952-1959
- Elaine Sieling/Helen Bauck, 1959-1960
- Robert Krajewski, 1960-1961
- Orville Walz, 1961-1966
- Raymond Flesch, 1966-1969
- Richard Homann, 1969-1972
- Roger Matz, 1972-1973
- Dennis Werner, 1973-1975
- Roger Matz, 1975
- Delton Stohs, 1975-1995
- John Gottschalk, 1995-1997
- Judy Frasz/Martin Brutlag, 1997-1998
- Bonnie Stohs, 1998-present

In April 2007, St. Paul's School was reaccredited and in June 2007 the school was moved to its new location. St. Paul's School currently has five full-time teachers, two part-time teachers, and two paraprofessionals.

Pancake Breakfast Benefit for Bill Anderson

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Miss Minnesota

continued from Front



Submitted photo

Kathryn Knuttila and her sister Kari, age 12 and 19. This photo was taken when Kathryn won her first pageant as Princess Altona.

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gram is because of the service portion, as compared to the Miss USA program, which does not have a service portion, and "is mainly a beauty contest, with little to no talent involved," claims Knuttila.

Knuttila also likes the Miss America program because during the three years she has competed for Miss Minnesota she has learned much about herself. "The first year I had no idea what I was doing," explains Knuttila, "but the last two years I was growing as a person."

While a busy woman, Knuttila still takes the time to be with her family in Detroit Lakes and Perham, and is hoping that she will have a "Night of Inspiration" concert in the area soon.

For more information about these concerts, check out www.whohasinspiredyou.com.



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