

Don't miss the photographs of these four individuals at the end of this Sentinel.



*.....keeping watch on
the industry*

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Remembering Frac Sand Activists in Wisconsin



Over 14 years ago, discussions and concerns grew about frac sand mining, processing, and trans-load of the processed sand from the sandstone hills, ridges, and bluffs located in many Wisconsin counties and elsewhere. Minerals were being mined and transported to the hydraulic fracturing fields of Pennsylvania, Ohio, Texas, North Dakota and a multitude of other locations throughout the states, Canada, and foreign countries as the big demand for proppants grew. The fossil fuel industry barged its way into town halls, city government, county and state government with stories about how the regions would employ vast numbers of workers and become famed and rich: "the streets could be paved with gold" became the promise. Of course, it was also promised that this industry would not bring any environmental destruction to the air, water and land surrounding the sites where actions were to take place.

Many citizens took on leadership and activist roles throughout the area. In this year of 2022, we have lost at least four of those fearless and strong leaders who made a difference in educating others, capturing the interest of those who did not realize how they might be affected, and taking on responsibilities for protecting the environment and the health of people living in the areas where devastation would occur. This Frac Sand Sentinel is devoted to the four I have discovered who have passed away so far this year. Many others may also have played a role and I may not be aware of their passing nor the contributions they made to the effort to take activist roles in the fight against frac sand mines and all the related issues.

One day in the Fall of 2008, Russ Blair (Melvin Russell Blair) called me wondering what was going on. I did not know that he was a nearby neighbor, but he had seen my comment in the local newspaper about injustices being done to people living near a future processing plant in Chippewa Falls. I had been clipping articles about the plant on the northside of town so that same day met with his wife Jan and he over the matter. The next day he had a name: Concerned Chippewa Citizens and we planned, along with another neighbor, an upcoming meeting. History was made. We met every Sunday for 77 times at a nearby church and then more after that to learn and teach more, to keep the momentum going, and to help others about the impacts on the environment and the potential health issues created by this heavy industry located north of the city but in the City Limits. We joined forces with Loyalty to Our Land folks in the Town of Howard. Among his many many accomplishments, he organized the campaign to put out little green signs throughout the City. When one was stolen, another went up. He was also part of the t-shirt crew. He was truly a leader and having been in the military over many years, felt the need to continue to fight for the freedom of all people to speak. He and Jan moved from the city to be closer to family, but he will never be forgotten for the leadership role he took on for the benefit of all who lived in this city and beyond the city limits!

Melvin Russell "Russ" Blair, 80, died January 21, 2022 at Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center in Winston-Salem.

He was the youngest of fourteen children. Russ is survived by his loving wife of 57 years, Jan, to whom he married on June 12, 1964, at Our Saviors Lutheran Church in Louisville, KY. Also surviving is his son, David (wife Frances); daughter, Cindy (husband Glenn); grandchildren, Eleanor, Abigail and Frederick; brother, Stanley; sister, Edith; as well as many Blair descendants.

Russ grew up in Vine Grove, KY, graduated from Western Kentucky University and retired from the U.S. Army as Lt. Colonel after serving 20 years. While in the military, he was stationed at White Sands Missile Range,

Orleans France, Mannheim Germany, Vietnam (two tours), Fort Hood and the Pentagon. Upon leaving the Army, Russ was proud to work as an Analyst for Ross Perot at EDS (Electronic Data Systems) where he retired for the final time in the 1990's.

A true Kentucky boy, Russ was born with basketball and horse racing in his blood. In high school, everyone knew the Blairs and basketball went hand in hand – you couldn't say Blair without thinking basketball and Russ was a star player! His position was guard, and had he only been a few inches taller, his path could have been NBA instead of ROTC. He was that good! Whenever Derby Day rolls around, the fancy hats come out and the excitement begins in Kentucky and around the world. For Russ however, any day was a good day to watch a horse race! If Russ wasn't watching basketball or the horses, he was golfing with his buddies from church, volunteering at the church, going to Rockers games or to High Point University events.

“Oh, the sun shines bright on my old Kentucky home, 'tis summer, the old folks are gay, well, the corn top's ripe and the meadows in the bloom, while the birds make music all the day! Weep no more, my lady, oh, weep no more, today we sing one song, for my old Kentucky home, for my old Kentucky home, far away.”

Funeral services were held on Saturday, February 5, at First United Methodist Church in High Point. You can find his obit at this address:

<https://www.tributearchive.com/obituaries/23786285/russell-russ-blair>

His picture is below.

Mary L. Hegnauer

Mary Lee Hegnauer (née Hayles) passed away peacefully at her farm, April 28, 2022. Mary was born February 17, 1943, in Alton, IL, a town along the Mississippi River, and lived much of her life not far from that river in Trempealeau County, Wisconsin. She grew up in Rochester, MN, making lifelong friends and graduating from John Marshall High School in 1961, then attending the University of Minnesota where she received her Bachelor of Arts Degree in 1965. She taught at a rural school before returning to the Twin Cities to begin her social work career in child protection care for Hennepin County. She married Keith Hegnauer, May 18, 1973, and they purchased an old farm in Trempealeau County, where they raised their three daughters. She also worked at Mississippi River Human Services Center and later for the Tri-County Memorial Hospital and Nursing Home where she served as the director of social services until her retirement in 2002.

Mary Lee lived her belief that all politics begin at the local level. She worked diligently for the Trempealeau Democratic Party. She fought frac sand mining and took an active role in Preserve

Trempealeau County and various political campaigns over the years. She was also a Girl Scout leader, an avid reader and book club member, a faithful participant in a Tai Chi class, and a proud supporter of Wisconsin Public Television and Radio. Mary Lee cared about people and with her husband earned the trust and respect of their rural community.

Mary Lee made close friends wherever she went. She was admired for her empathy, insight, generosity, loyalty, and humor—as well as for her homemade bread. She loved music and could sing along to every Elvis Presley and Ella Fitzgerald tune.

She is survived by three daughters: Celeste Jouanet (John), Josephine Cambambia (Rogelio) and Marilee Allsep. We all benefitted from her goodness of spirit and her commitment to making the world a better place.

Additional details are available:

<https://www.trempecountytimes.com/obituaries/mary-l-hegnauer>

See her picture below.

Kenneth E. Lestrud

Kenneth E. Lestrud of Menomonie, WI passed away on February 20, 2022 after a courageous seven month battle with cancer and heart failure.

Kenneth was born on July 7, 1943 in Menomonie, WI, the son of Elmore K. Lestrud and Ruby S. (Galstad) Lestrud. Kenny grew up on the family dairy farm in Tainter Township. He was a 4-H member and was very proud to have had the champion hog at the Wisconsin State Fair in 1956.

Kenny graduated from Colfax High School in 1961. He then attended Eau Claire State and later transferred to the University of Minnesota, Forestry School, St. Paul Campus. During this time, he also worked on the family farm.

In April of 1968 Kenny enlisted in the Army receiving basic training at Ft. Campbell, Kentucky and then on to further training in Ft. Sill, Lawton, Oklahoma. He was then assigned to HHB 8th Target Acquisition Battalion, 25th Artillery. In September, 1968, he was deployed to South Vietnam where he was stationed at several fire bases in the Delta. He was involved in many combat operations. Among the medals he received was the Silver Star. Kenny was honorably discharged April 17, 1971, and he returned home. His service in Vietnam resulted in post-traumatic stress disorder which impacted the rest of his life. In the fall of 1971, Kenny returned to the University of Minnesota, St. Paul campus to finish his degree. In March of 1974 he received his degree from the school of Forestry. June 22, 1974 Kenny married Mary Joy Peters. They lived on Nicollet Island in Minneapolis for several years which Kenny always said were some of the best years of his life and where many lifelong friends were made.

After graduating from the University of Minnesota, he worked for the city of Fridley, MN as a tree inspector and later as the building engineer for a twenty-story high rise apartment building in Dinkytown, Minneapolis. After moving to Menomonie, he worked for the Menomonie School District and retired on disability in 1990.

Kenny moved back home to Menomonie in 1977 where he and Mary built a log home and had two children, Amanda and Andrew.

Kenny became very active in and was one of the early members of the Vietnam Veterans of America, Mike Voth Memorial Chapter #5 in Eau Claire serving as their secretary for many years. He was also very active in the fight against sand mines in the area serving as treasurer for Save the Hills Alliance for a number of years. He faithfully attended meetings and took on the leadership of visiting with many about the drawbacks of this heavy industry and the impacts on lives.

Kenny is survived by his wife, Mary, of 47 years, daughter and son-in-law Amanda and Shane Kassa, granddaughters Bria and McKenna Kassa, son Andrew Lestrud, sister Karolynn Lestrud, niece Sarah Steinberg, several dear cousins, and many friends. A memorial service was held at 11:00 a.m. on Friday, February 25, 2022, at Olson Funeral Home in Menomonie, WI with military honors.

Additional details are available at this site:

<https://www.olsonfuneral.com/obituaries/Kenneth-Lestrud/#!/Obituary>

See his picture below.

O'DONAHUE, Terrence H., 80, of Fairchild died Tuesday, Feb. 1, 2022, at Marshfield Medical Center, Eau Claire. Cremation Society of Wisconsin, Altoona, handled arrangements.

A Celebration of Life was held at the home of Mary Ann and Terrence O'Donahue on June 11, 2022. Another Memorial Celebration for Veterans was held Aug. 15 at the Osseo Park with proper recognition ceremonies for Terry. No obituaries were printed in the media but there was plenty of testimony regarding Terry and his many talents and his commitment to finding out more about frac sand mining and related issues regarding safety and health as related to the industry, particularly in the Augusta, Fairchild area of the state.

Terry is survived by his wife Mary Ann and two step daughters (Amanda Croft and Miriam Piede) both from Atlanta, Ga, along with many nieces, nephews and great nieces and nephews. Terry is preceded in death by both parents and six brothers and one sister. Terry was greatly loved (and sometimes times tolerated) by all of his family and friends. He was an avid outdoorsman throughout his life with fishing being his passion, a Veteran of the United States Air Force, a former Police officer for Madison, Wi, a great artist and a storyteller like none other.

According to V. N., a friend, "Terry was one of a kind and touched the lives of many. He was a great friend and I many enjoyed his never ending stories and talents as a storyteller!! I am sorely going to miss being around my favorite curmudgeon of all time! But he will never be forgotten since I have so many wonderful memories to glean from - from our initial meeting at a frac sand meeting and endless conversations about so many life adventures and stories, enjoying his famous fish fries, and new year feasts at my house, to fishing trips to Lake Eau Claire and one trip to my cabin where the infamous photograph of Terry posing by a sign that read "Dumbbell Lake." was taken (he insisted it must have been named after him)! He was a truly caring friend and will always be a part of me. Rest in peace, my friend."

M.M wrote: "I really would have loved to have been able to make it to Terry's Celebration of Life. Such a unique, talented and beautiful soul."

Terry was a unique individual, interested in so many things. He did woodcuts of his favorite oak tree and made prints. He graciously helped out with displays and contributed his easels for displays. Many letters to the editor were contributed and printed regarding frac sand mining and the industry and questionable practices. His kindness and generocity and interest in all things was genuine. What a delightful activist and contributor to the fight!

Take a look at Terry's picture below.

Blessings to all! May all of our leaders who have gone before us rest in peace and delight in the fact that they were successful contributors to the cause.

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Welcome to the Frac Sand Sentinel, a newsletter highlighting resource links, news media accounts, blog posts, correspondence, observations and opinions gathered regarding local actions on, and impacts of, the developing frac sand mining and processing industries.

The content of this newsletter is for informational purposes only. The editor of the Frac Sand Sentinel does not accept any responsibility or liability for the use or misuse of the content of this newsletter or reliance by any persons on the newsletter's contents.







CHECK OUT THE WEBSITE: wisair.wordpress.com and for additional information, [click here](#) for panoramic aerial views of frac sand mines, processing plants, and trans-load facilities. FracTracker.org is also an excellent source of information and a picture source.