



Finding love

Today's edition represents the final in our four-week series, "Building Fremont: Immigrants 1856-Present" highlighting Fremont's immigrants, past and present. Since the city was founded, European immigrants and their descendants have made Fremont home. Today, immigrants (4.4 percent of the population or 1,117 people in 2008) from Latin America and Asia are settling in Fremont.

The companion art exhibit, "Building Fremont: Immigrants 1856-Present," is on display at the Fremont Area Art Association until the end of March.

This is the story of love. Fremont residents Lu Ann Conrad and Christy Meyer are descendants of Scandinavian immigrants who arrived in Nebraska at the turn of the century. Each tell the story of their grandparents who fell in love with "hired hands" and created homes in Nebraska. The Garcias, originally from Texas and Mexico, also tell their story of falling and staying in love as they raise their children and create a home in Fremont.



Dean Jacobs, Fremont Tribune

Lu Ann Conrad's grandparents came to the United States in search of a better life. Conrad's grandparents also found each other while working on a farm east of Hooper.

Conrad's grandparents find love in America

Lu Ann Conrad:
Sweden (1911)

Lu Ann Conrad, who was born and raised in Fremont, is a second generation citizen. Both of her paternal grandparents made the journey from Sweden to the U.S. by steamship at the turn of the 20th century. They each came from Sweden looking for a better life and found each other and love while working on a farm just east of Hooper.

While in Sweden, Lu Ann's grandmother, Annie Elsie Feltwell Eckerson, lost her father in a coal mining accident and at the age of 10 had to work to support her family. Elsie began doing laundry on a washboard at a hotel and then had several jobs as a hotel maid. In 1911, Elsie did not think twice when she got the chance leave Sweden and go to the United States. An uncle, already living in the U.S., sponsored Elsie and her brother, George, so they did not have to enter through Ellis Island, which began processing immigrants in 1892.

When Elsie arrived in Nebraska, a job was waiting for her as a "hired girl" on a farm near Hooper. As the farm's "hired girl," Elsie soon met the "hired man," Sigfrid Akesson, who also came from Sweden. And like many Swedish immigrants at that time, Sigfrid was so proud to become an American he adopted an American name, Fred Eckerson.

The two married in 1912 after a long day of waiting at the pastor's house in Fremont. Fred wanted to be married by the Lutheran pastor, so they drove to the Sinai Lutheran Church parsonage on First Street. But when they arrived, they discovered the pastor had gone fishing. So the two waited on the pastor's front porch. When the pastor finally returned, the "hired girl" and "hired man" married; the pastor's wife was their witness. The Eckersons became active members of Sinai Lutheran Church for the rest of their lives.

Please see **Conrad**, A4



Courtesy Lu Ann Conrad

Fred and Elsie Eckerson's family in 1942. Back row: Sons Carl, Clifford and Clarence. Front row: Daughter Audrey and parents, Elsie and Fred.



Courtesy Kristen Ostrom

Christy Meyer's ancestors immigrated to the United States in 1890. Meyer still maintains some of their traditions.

Work brings Meyer's ancestors together

Christy Meyer:
Sweden/Denmark (1890)

Christy Meyer has lived in Fremont since 1988 and continues to keep some of her immigrant family's Danish traditions, making and selling "Elbskiver" at Fremont's Farmer's Market. The ball-like pancakes were a specialty of her grandparents and were made in the "Anderson Kitchen."

While maintaining some of her immigrant ancestors' traditions, Christy has also hosted 11 exchange students in her home from around the world. She finds that "families are enriched by exposure to people from many cultures."

In 1890, Christy's great-grandmother, Eva Gustav Anders Roselle, left her home in Denmark because of famine. She crossed the ocean alone with three small children including her son, Albert Andersen. On the ship, Eva got so seasick that she knew she would never be able to go home. Her determination to make the best of any situation became a family trait.

Twenty years later, Albert became a "hired hand" on a Nebraska farm home-stayed by a Swedish immigrant, Mr. Anderson. He had previously worked in Illinois coal mines and saved enough money to move his family to Nebraska, buying a section of land from the railroad. At the time, railroads actively marketed and sold

Please see **Meyer**, A4



Courtesy Christy Meyer

Emma and Albert Anderson on their wedding day.



Dean Jacobs, Fremont Tribune

Brenda, from Texas, and Francisco Garcia, from Mexico, met in Nebraska in 1998. They soon married and began a family.

Garcias build family in Nebraska

Brenda and Francisco Garcia: US/Mexico (1998)

Brenda and Francisco Garcia fell in love shortly after they met in Fremont. They, too, are teaching their children traditions as they integrate into a new culture in Nebraska.

Francisco Garcia was born in Matamoros in the Mexican state of Tamaulipas. The city of Matamoros is located on the Gulf of Mexico along the Rio Grande River and considered "The Great Door to Mexico." In 1991, Francisco moved to Nebraska with his sister and brother-in-law where he worked in the fields, picking corn and beans during the summer. He recalls his sister and brother-in-law were the only other Hispanics living in the small Nebraska town at the time.

In 1992, he moved to Grand Island and then later to Schuyler, working on the kill floor as a "cutter" or "pansero." Francisco gut the innards of cows as they moved through the production area. It is hard work and hard on our body.

He relocated to Fremont in 1998 and continued his role as a "cutter" for Hormel. But as he became older he became increasingly lonely and began to pray daily, "Please God, give me a good housewife, a mother to my children." That year, he met Brenda, who had moved to Fremont from Texas.

Brenda Garcia was born in El Paso, Texas, and after graduating from high school in 1998, she decided to move to Fremont, where her cousin was living. Her first impression of Fremont was not great, but Brenda was excited about her job possibilities and planned to go to college while she worked.

There were a small number of Hispanics living in Fremont and she figured her bilingual skills were an asset. She

Please see **Garcia**, A2



Dean Jacobs, Fremont Tribune

Brenda and Francisco Garcia met in Nebraska in 1998. After marrying the Garcias eventually had two sons and two daughters.

1890: Christy Meyer's great-grandmother, Eva Gustav Anders Roselle, arrives in Nebraska from Denmark.

1911: LuAnn Conrad's grandmother, Annie Elsie Feltwell Eckerson, arrives in Nebraska from Sweden.

1998: Francisco Garcia, originally from Mexico, moves to Fremont. He later marries Brenda, a Texas native.

1856 1870 1890 1910 1930 1950 1970 1990 2010

Periods of large immigrant arrivals throughout Fremont's history. ■ 1856-1890: Mostly northern Europeans; ■ 1900-1920: Mostly southern Europeans; ■ 1990-present: Mostly Latin American, Asians, Europeans.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

"Building Fremont: Immigrants 1856 to present" is a special four-week project of the Fremont Tribune, Fremont Area Art Association, United Food and Commercial Workers Union Local 22 and Nebraska Is Home Fremont. It features photography by Dean Jacobs. Personal stories were compiled by Nebraska Is Home Fremont.

New officers elected

The Fremont Rural Fire Department recently elected new officers.

Gary Ogden will serve as chief and Wade McPherson will be the assistant chief. Bob Turner was elected captain, Carl Nielsen the safety officer and Jason Meyer the training officer.

Department officers also were chosen, with Nielsen elected president and Blake Woodcock vice president. Meyer was named secretary/treasurer and Greta Ogden, Jim Snyder and Gene Vyhldal were elected to the executive board.

Art workshops are planned

The 43rd Autumn Art Workshop Inc. will be held in September at Nebraska National Forest at Halsey.

There will be a five-day workshop Sept. 18-22 and a three-day workshop Sept. 24-26.

Instructors are Jeff Hepworth, oil; Morgan Samuel Price, watercolor; Lana Grow, mixed media; and Bonnie Casey, pastel.

For more information, write or call Louise Milby, registrar, 1703 S. Ingalls St., Grand Island, NE 68803, (308) 384-2244.

POLICE BEAT

Woman treated after accident

Tribune staff

A 79-year-old woman was taken to Fremont Area Medical Center following a two-vehicle accident Thursday morning, Fremont Police reported.

Deputy Chief Jeff Elliott said Hazel Clark of Fremont was driving a 2003 Mercury Marquis and turning left from 23rd Street onto Milton Road when she was struck by a 1996 Dodge Neon that was traveling west on 23rd Street. The Neon was driven by a 15-year-old male.

Clark was treated and released at FAMC. Her vehicle sustained \$4,000 damage in the accident.

Damage to the 15-year-old's vehicle was unknown.

Teen cited for damages

Tribune staff

A teenager was cited by Fremont Police Thursday afternoon for damaging furniture inside a home.

Deputy Chief Jeff Elliott said 18-year-old Brandon Hauck was charged with criminal mischief after he was accused of punching a chest of drawers several times at the residence in the 400 block of Jefferson Road. The damage was estimated at \$300.

Woman charged with assault

Tribune staff

A 44-year-old woman accused of injuring her boyfriend with a knife during a Thursday night argument remained in Dodge County Jail this morning.

Katie Edwards of Fremont was charged with use of a weapon to commit a felony and second-degree domestic assault. Her bond had not been set as of press time.

Fremont Police Deputy Chief Jeff Elliott said officers were called shortly before 11 p.m. to a residence in the 500 block of West Fifth Street on a report of a stabbing.

Elliott said a 53-year-old man was bleeding from a laceration to his neck. The man was transported to Fremont Area Medical Center, where he was treated and released.

Lakers differs with Heineman on prenatal bill

By Don Walton
Lincoln Journal Star

Democratic gubernatorial candidate Mark Lakers said Thursday he supports legislation to provide prenatal assistance for all low-income pregnant women, including illegal immigrants.

"I think it's responsible both from a financial and policy point of view," Lakers said in a phone interview.

His support for the bill places him in direct conflict with Republican Gov. Dave Heineman, who opposes the legislation because it provides benefits for illegal immigrants.

The disagreement brings a pair

of contentious and high-stakes political factors into play.

Nebraska Right to Life supports the legislation and has identified it as a pro-life issue that will be considered when the statewide organization makes its coveted candidate endorsements.

Heineman has framed the issue in the context of providing taxpayer benefits for illegal immigrants. In 2006, Heineman hammered Tom Osborne in the Republican gubernatorial primary race for Osborne's support of state legislation granting resident college tuition rates to the children of illegal immigrants who have settled in Nebraska.

The Legislature enacted the

2006 tuition bill over Heineman's veto.

Lakers said he believes "it's responsible to take care of unborn children," including the children of illegal immigrants who automatically will become U.S. citizens upon birth.

Supporters of the legislation have argued it would be far more costly for the state to care for those babies after they have been born if they have not received adequate prenatal care.

Lakers said the pending bill, LB1110, essentially restores benefits that have been available for all low-income pregnant women.

"It is Dave Heineman who is

trying to change the law," he said.

"In all candor, I am uneasy that this is just a political diversion from the central issue in this campaign," Lakers said. That issue is job creation, he said.

"I believe there is a politician in this race and I am very uneasy about his motivation," Lakers said.

"Illegal immigration is a hot issue."

But Nebraskans "need to be thoughtful about the consequences" of denying prenatal care to those children, Lakers said.

"The financial consequences are worse," he said, "and we're talking about an unborn child."

Questioned about his views on other pro-life issues, Lakers said he's "personally opposed to nearly all abortions, but I do respect the fact (that) the highest court has ruled on the abortion issue."

Lakers said he believes members of the University of Nebraska Board of Regents "were thoughtful (and) probably had sound reasons" for expanding embryonic stem cell research at the Medical Center.

The expansion conforms with new federal guidelines approved by the Obama administration.

"I think the state needs to be reasonably consistent with the federal rules," Lakers said.

COUNTY COURT

Tribune staff

Cases resolved this week in Dodge County Court included:

■ Makayla Adams, 18, of Fremont was fined \$250 for minor in possession, a Class III misdemeanor.

■ Katie Baumann, 26, of Fremont was fined \$75 for driving under suspension, a Class III misdemeanor.

■ Dustin Bjorklund, 22, of Fremont was sentenced to 30 days in jail for theft by shoplifting, a Class II misdemeanor.

■ Levi Bruner, 19, of Fremont was sentenced to 5 days in jail for obstructing a government operation, a Class I misdemeanor.

■ Thomas Dobberstine, 19, of Fremont was sentenced to 11 days in jail for carrying a concealed weapon, a Class I misdemeanor.

■ Shawn Dolezal, 36, of Fremont was fined \$75 for driving under suspension, a Class III misdemeanor.

■ Matthew Goeden, 19, of Omaha was sentenced to 7 days in jail and fined \$400 for DUI-first offense, a Class W misdemeanor, and minor in possession, a Class III misdemeanor. His driver's license also was revoked for six months and an ignition interlock device was approved.

■ Colby Hartman, 20, of Chadron was fined \$384 and ordered to pay \$184 in restitution for minor in possession and disturbing the peace, both Class III misdemeanors.

■ Stanley Heiden, 58, of Fremont was sentenced to 30 days in jail and 18 months of probation for DUI-second offense greater than 0.15 blood alcohol content, a Class I misdemeanor. His driver's license also was revoked for 2 years and an ignition interlock device was approved.

■ Wesley Kendall, 21, of Omaha was sentenced to six months of probation and had his driver's license revoked for 60 days for DUI-first offense, a Class W misdemeanor. An ignition interlock device also was approved.

■ Zachery Kuhl, 20, of Fremont was fined \$250 for minor in possession, a Class III misdemeanor.

■ John Marvin, 22, of Fremont was fined \$150 for theft by shoplifting, a Class II misdemeanor.

■ Justin Stewart, 30, of Tobias was sentenced to 10 days in jail and had his driver's license revoked for 2 years for driving during revocation, a Class II misdemeanor.

■ Jonathan Taylor, 21, of Fremont was fined \$200 for driving during revocation, a Class II misdemeanor.

CONRAD: Finding love

Continued from A3

LuAnn's grandparents Elsie and Fred raised five children on a rented farm southeast of Fremont. The family included four boys and one girl; Elsie would say, "I had to keep having babies until I got my girl!" Even while they embraced their new American culture, Elsie and Fred con-

tinued many Swedish traditions with their children. Elsie always served a Swedish smorgasbord to the family on Christmas Eve. End even after Fred's death, Elsie continued this tradition in honor of her husband and to ensure that their children and grandchildren would know and appreciate their Swedish heritage.

MEYER: Together

Continued from A3

land to immigrants. This land had been given to the railroads by the federal government to encourage the railroads' development across the country.

As luck would have it for the "hired hand" Andersen, farmer Anderson had daughters. Albert was allowed to spend the night at the Anderson's farmhouse, but there was a lock on the outside of Albert's bedroom door, locking

him in each night. But the door's lock did not stop the romance between Albert and one of the daughters. Albert fell in love with Emma Anderson and the two married.

From their union, several generations have inherited their values of hard work, making the best of situations, and a love for people and good food. This love was the beginning of the "Anderson Kitchen" which passed down Danish delights like Elbskiver.

GARCIA: Building family

Continued from A3

got a job at the old 1/2 Price Store, now Gordman's, and a second job at the Oriental Trading Company.

One day while working at the 1/2 Price store, a young man quietly asked her if she spoke Spanish. She said that she did and asked how she could help. With a smile, Brenda recalls, "I helped him find white Nikes with a red stripe and two pairs of Levis."

They married in 2003. Francisco and Brenda had a daughter and two boys.

It hasn't always been easy. They also ran into cultural differences as they sorted out roles in the family, traditional and

modern. But Brenda and Francisco worked hard to stay in love, finding hope and a way through with the care of friends and a new faith in God.

When the Garcia's youngest daughter was born in 2008, Brenda and Francisco gave her the special name "Genesys" and thank God for their love and the new beginning their daughter's life represents. The Garcias bought a home through Habitat for Humanity, Francisco earned his permanent legal status after waiting seven years, making it possible to become a U.S. citizen in another three years, and their daughter was born.

GUARD: Families prepare for overseas deployment

Continued from A1

what's going on," he said. "Sometimes, we as soldiers don't really tell our families as much as we should. Rather than having to pry information out of the soldier, they have the chain of command from the top telling them what the reality is. It also doesn't get lost in the translation when they hear it from the leadership directly."

Of utmost interest to families, he said, are making sure the soldiers are prepared, staying connected while they're gone and learning about available benefits and services.

"For instance, they get tax-free dollars when they're in theater," he said. "They get combat pay, hazardous duty pay, additional pays they wouldn't get if they were back here in the states. The family members whose soldiers are not full-time get Tri-Care Medical. There's a bunch of things they get, if

we don't tell them what they get they may not find out."

Other benefits range from free YMCA memberships to several hours a week of daycare at no charge.

Families met "rear detachment" personnel who will stay behind and can provide a link between the families and their soldiers, answer questions for family members, or inform them about support programs that include events geared toward youth and teens, and an upcoming "girls' night out" for wives, mothers, daughters and fiancés.

Command Sgt. Maj. Philip Parrone explained Social Security numbers and other information could be used by the Red Cross to make contact with soldiers in an emergency.

Wills and powers of attorney are important, too, he said, pointing out Army lawyers will write them at

no charge.

Communication is important, Parrone said, but he cautioned against too much contact with soldiers who must focus on their surroundings.

"The bottom line is it's really hard to try to get back into that mental attitude when there are problems at home. That can tear a soldier up," he said.

Stemple added regular mail is a good option.

"If my wife sends me a post card, I can stick that in my desk drawer and when I need cheering up a couple days later, I can take it out and look at it," he said.

Families used the meeting as a chance to swap ideas, get acquainted and pick up informational handouts.

Family members who were unable to attend and have questions can contact family readiness support assistant Deb Engler, 1-800-432-6778.

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