

# Kick comes from tradition of service

by Cindy Rolain

Many people like guns, hunting and believe in the right to bear arms, but they wouldn't open their property to over 50 novice hunters every year.

A lot of people like stone houses, but they wouldn't attempt to build one themselves.

Few people would look at a walnut log and decide to turn it into a spinning wheel or a gun stock.

A confirmed do-it-yourselfer and a man who lives what he believes, Harold Kick has done all of those things and more.

Pine City's Citizen of the Year comes from a long line of community leaders, a family that has called Pine City home since 1872. Harold's grandfather, Johann George Kick, operated a meat market and served as village treasurer for 23 years. His father, George E. Kick, helped organize the Farmers Exchange, now Pine City Cooperative Feed Mill. He served on the co-op creamery board of directors and was a leader in Zion Lutheran Church.

"It's just kind of a family feeling that if you live here, you're taking things, you should give something back," Harold said in an interview last week.

"My grandparents appreciated this country so much after leaving Germany with its wars and all."

Sitting at the dining room table in he and Phyllis' home just west of town, Harold talked about growing up in the woods around Pine City, the third from the youngest in a close-knit family of 10 kids.

"We had to make our own fun. We had the beautiful river

and other kids nearby so we were on the river fishing and hunting and trapping in the fall. Trapping was a source of income for a boy. There's no money in furs now, but then you got two and a half dollars for one muskrat, and people were working for 50 cents an hour."

The Kick family home, where Don and Verlys Stoffel live today, was the centerpiece of the 200 acre farm. Harold and Phyllis live on 80 acres of the original farmstead.

"Being in a farm family, both of our parents were right there working with us kids," Harold said. "If there were things to be done, you were working with your dad and your neighbors. It was just a completely different lifestyle than today."

He graduated from Pine City High School in 1942, knowing he was destined to serve in WWII.

"Several of our older brothers were in the service...you could see the war coming, and it was almost inevitable that boys would be in it. It's all we talked about."

The autumn after graduation, Harold, Don Doran and Gerald Michael drove down to Minneapolis to enlist in the Army Air Force. Thirty of the 33 boys in Harold's class served in the war. Pine City supplied 29 pilots for the U.S. military effort; Harold Kick was one.

He served as a fighter pilot with the 15th Air Force in Italy and flew 50 missions over Europe.

"Our mission was to fly above the bombers and watch for German fighters and drive

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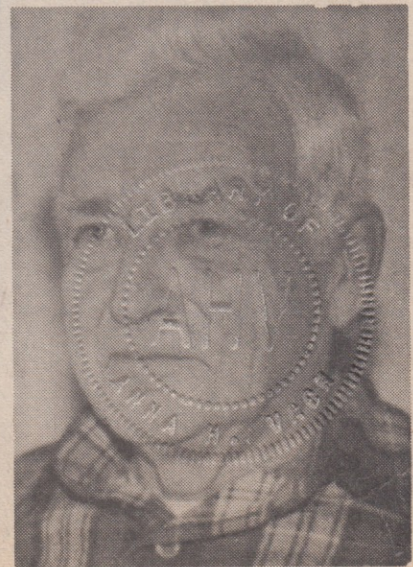


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post he held for 23 years. He also operated the meat market pictured in the photo above.



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**HAROLD KICK** was honored by friends and family Saturday night as Pine City Citizen of the Year for 1993. A dedicated conservationist, he devotes hours of his time to helping youngsters and adults appreciate natural resources and work to preserve them.