



Ray Eisenbeis stands by the sign he built for the Peace Cemetery Association

Keeper of the past

Beulah man beautifies rural cemetery

By Karlene Hill

In loving memory to his parents and family members, a Beulah man is working to beautify a rural cemetery.

Through the years, Ray Eisenbeis has worked to maintain Peace Cemetery, located 16 miles northwest of Beulah. The cemetery is all that remains of Peace Lutheran Church, where Ray was baptized and confirmed. Ray and his wife, Esther, were also members of the church before it closed.

Ray's father, John, was a charter member of the church that was built in 1910.

He was also the person who in 1930 surveyed and platted the two-acre cemetery.

When Peace Lutheran Church closed in 1968, the name of the cemetery was changed to Peace Cemetery Association.

Ray's father and mother Lena are buried at Peace Cemetery. As well as his brothers, Walter and Arthur, and a brother that died at birth.

As the resting place for so many members of his family, Ray has taken time through the years to try and maintain the property.

"Something had to be done," said Ray. "It (the cemetery) was a disgrace. It was like a jungle."

Ray didn't stop at mowing the property. Using maps drawn by his father many years ago, Ray re-plat-

ted the cemetery. To allow for present day burials, he changed the plot's dimensions from 6-by-10 feet to 6-by-12. He also changed the areas between the graves from four feet to 12 feet.

As many of the wooden crosses that marked several graves became worn, Ray would replace each one.

This past year he took on the biggest change by building a sign for the cemetery.

"Last year I said, 'OK, I'm doing it,'" Ray said.

As a base for the sign, he used a cast-iron fence that was surrounding a grave. Ray attached three iron crosses to the fence and a sign reading Peace Cemetery Association. He worked on the project in his spare time.

The Peace Cemetery Association is trying to reform. However, Ray said the group is waiting for his son, Clyde, to translate the records from German to English.

There are currently three people who serve as volunteer trustees for the association. The group includes Ray, Gilbert Ost of Beulah, Glen Renner of Zap and Marlene Schreifer of Golden Valley.

Schreifer's grandfather originally owned the land where the cemetery now sits.

"We have family members there," said Ray. "That's why we organized."