This week's community profile: New Franken

January 26, 1991

Burger and stein: Rich and Fay Kuchta, owners of the New Franken Stein tavern and grill for the past 14 years in New Franken, raise a toast with two of their specialties.

Thriving in the city's shadow

By Lisa Sumter
Press-Gazette

NEW FRANKEN — Many rural communities wilt in the shadow of larger cities, but not New Franken.

Residential growth is limited, but farming and small business thrive here.

New Franken started as a German and Belgian farming settlement. Large family farms still prosper, but many residents own small businesses or work five miles to the west in Green Bay. Many retirees also live here.

Press-Gazette photos by Ken Behrend

New Franken is where the towns of Scott, Green Bay and Humboldt meet. It also is home to a fire department that serves those areas. Children attend school in Green Bay and Luxemburg-Casco districts.

A sign along Wisconsin 54 pointed south, proclaiming, "Booyah Today." The sign led to New Franken Stein, 2379 New Franken Road.

Don't be fooled by the name. No monsters are at the end of the line, just a steaming hot cup of soup, a first-class hamburger and friendly conversation.

Rich and Fay Kuchta have owned the tavern for 14 years. They said 25 to 30 small businesses are in the area, peddling everything from car parts to haircuts.

Barry Basten, owner of Basten Farm Supply, 2290 N. New Franken Road, said even more businesses were here years ago, including three grocery stores and cattle yards. A passenger train stopped here until the 1920s. The depot operated until the 1960s, he said.

"When it first started as a farm community, people used the community for everything," he said. "But with cars you can go anywhere you want."

While businesses thrive, residential development is slow.

"There isn't much building here and there's no place (for new people) to live," Fay Kuchta said. "There aren't a lot of rentals and the old farmhouses get snapped up right away."

Residents turn to a variety of activities to occupy free time, the Kuchtas said. In winter, they travel area snowmobile trails. In summer, stock car races and ball games are held in nearby Luxemburg.

St. Killian Catholic Church, Route 1, New Franken, sponsors a Valentine's Day dance, booyah sale, cake sales and potluck suppers that many people attend.

New Franken does not have sewer service, making the area less attractive to developers, the Kuchtas said. There is talk of connecting to the Green Bay Metropolitan Sewerage District or a system at Royal Scot, a nearby residential development.

Jeff Le Captain, 3181 Carhoustie Way, was born in Green Bay, but has eased right into country living since moving to New Franken as postmaster in 1983.

"People who don't even know you wave to you driving down the street," he said. "Before you know it you're doing the same thing."

Andy Simons, 2407 New Franken Road, said easy access to fishing and hunting is just one plus of living in New Franken..

"It's a beautiful place to be," Simons said. "I wouldn't trade it for all the tea in China."

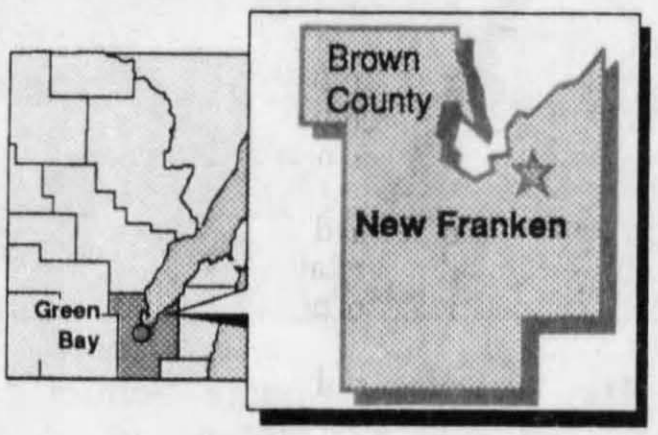
■ **Next week:** Little Sturgeon in Door County

The New Franken file

☐ **Population:** 75, estimates Postmaster Jeff Le Captain

☐ **Community landmark:** It is closed now, but A.L. Greiling General Merchandise is still the best-known establishment in New Franken. The store and its owner, Ethel Greiling, are subjects of great affection for many residents. The store was built around 1911 and Ethel and some of her brothers and sisters were born there, residents say.

☐ **Name game:** Lifelong resident Barry Basten says rumor has it the community's original residents came from Franken, Germany, and called the town New Franken.



For the birds: Andy Simons, New Franken's retired postmaster, fills a bird feeder outside his home after returning from a day of fishing.

Equipment check: Barry Basten, New Franken's assistant fire chief, looks over a new fire engine. Basten also owns a business in New Franken.