This week's community profile: County Line

Bar talk: Having a community discussion in the Wrangler Inn Bar and Hall are, from left, owner Roger Krejcarek, Leonhard Fetterly and Wesley Borchert

Town is split, but not divided

By Terry Anderson
Press-Gazette

COUNTY LINE — On the edge of town a small marker notes the 45th parallel, the theoretical midpoint on the northern hemisphere.

The North Pole is 3,117.55 miles north, the Equator 3,097.39 miles south.

Press-Gazette photos by John Roemer

The latitude line is not the only division line that cuts through County Line. As the name implies, part of the community is in the town of Grover in Marinette County and part in the town of Little River in Oconto County.

"It can get confusing," says John Dumke, who with his brother, Richard, owns Dumke Brothers Farm Supply. The business has been in their family for more than 50 years.

Kids living on the south side of County Line Road go to school in Oconto, seven miles to the south. Kids on the north side attend Peshtigo schools, seven miles to the north.

The road also divides telephone area codes. So some homes on the north side of County Line have a 715 area code while those on the south are in the 414 area.

"It's just as easy to walk across the street (than telephone long distance)" Dumke says.

Invisible boundaries may split the community, but they don't divide it. County Line remains a friendly place where families still get together in the summer to enjoy an annual community picnic.

LeRoy and Audrey Cisar's family is among County Line's oldest. Their son, Richard, is the fourth generation to operate the farm at the south end of County Line.

Audrey has long been an officer of the Oconto County Historical Society, and is proud of their family's deep roots.

The Cisars, who this year will host the annual Oconto County Dairy Producer's Breakfast on the Farm, says agriculture and harvesting have always been the backbone of County Line.

County Line was among the first communities in the area to enjoy electricity. In January 1909, the lights went on and a dance was held at the County Line Hall, now known as the Wrangler Inn Bar and Hall.

The hall is now owned by Roger Krejcarek, a relative newcomer who has only lived in town 12 years.

The hall, which can accommodate wedding parties of more than 500, still jumps on weekends with mini-bowling, pool and dart leagues.

Old timers like to gather to tell stories and sip coffee, and maybe tug an occasional beer.

Wes Borchert, 66, 2160 Woodview Road, and Leonhard Fetterly 73, 5946 Oconto Highway WW, recall stories they heard as children.

Like the time the town of Little River went dry. Back then, the decision to allow alcohol sales was a local matter.

Responding to the laws of supply and demand, a local entrepreneur built a beer stand across the street in the town of Grover.

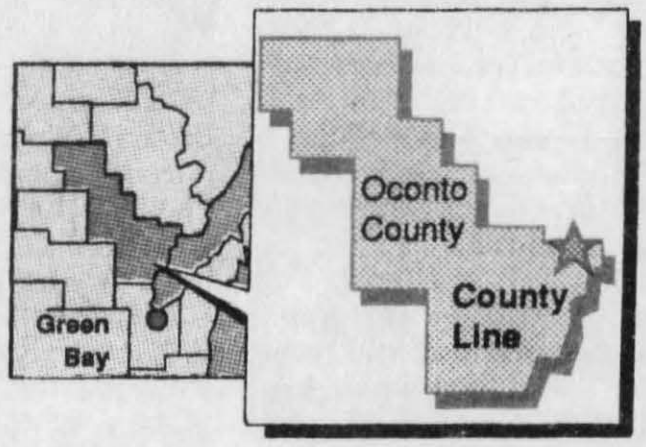
"Folks would fill up four-gallon pails with beer and walk back across the street to the hall," Borchart says.

Fetterly recalled the dances and some of the musical groups that performed. One of the best known was the County Line Brass Band that often performed at socials for the Western Bohemian Fraternal Association.

"I've been here all my life," Fetterly says, sipping a cup of coffee. "About 20 years ago we damn near became a village. That didn't happen, but we got on the map."

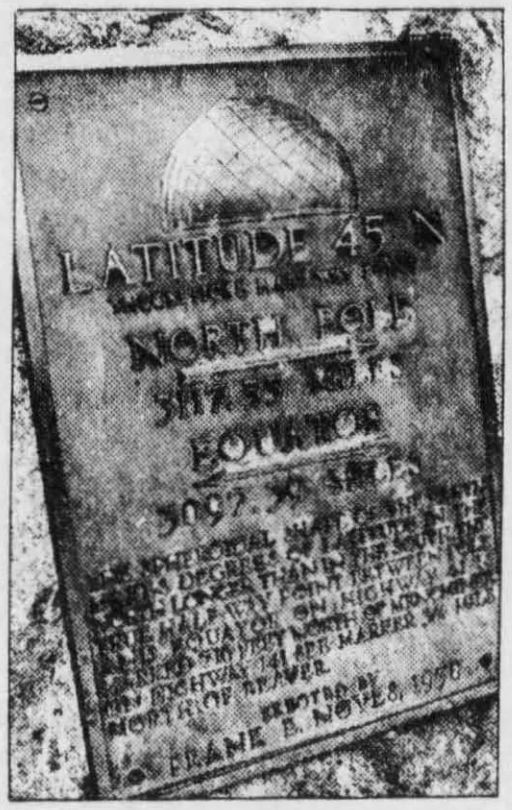
"I don't think I'd want to live in a big, crowded city like Green Bay," Fetterly adds. "This is just fine."

■ **Next week:** Rosiere in Door County



The County Line file

- **Population:** 40
- **Of note:** County Line straddles the Marinette-Oconto border and the 45th parallel.
- **Socializing:** In honor of its geography, the community once had a conservation and social group called the Haf-Wa-North Club.



Midpoint: Marker notes the 45th parallel.

Old homestead: Audrey and LeRoy Cisar show a photo of their home before it was moved in 1917.

Brotherly: John and Richard Dumke operate Dumke Brothers Farm Supply.