

# Norfolk Insider

City of Norfolk, NE

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## “Summer Speaker Series begins with story of Vietnam War hero”



Jan Einspahr and her father, J. Paul McIntosh, speak at the first session of the Norfolk Public Library's Summer Speaker Series.

J. Paul McIntosh's recent presentation about Claude Van Anandel was the first in the Summer Speaker Series scheduled to celebrate Norfolk's 150th.

McIntosh told a group of about 36 at the Norfolk Public Library last week about the Norfolk native who died in the Vietnam War and was the inspiration for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall of Remembrance in Washington D.C built in 1982.

McIntosh's daughter, Jan Einspahr, was a good friend of Van Anandel's. Both she and Van Anandel had graduated from Norfolk High School in the 1960's and Van Anandel attended what was then Norfolk Junior College for one year before joining the army in May 1968.

Van Anandel had told Einspahr that he wouldn't die without saying good-bye to her. As she studied in

her dorm room one evening in May 1969, a vision of Van Anandel appeared to her and told her good-bye. At that time, Einspahr only told her father and some close friends of the experience. McIntosh reassured her it was only a dream and he even contacted the parents asking how Van Anandel was doing. At the time, they said he was doing fine. Days later they were informed of his death. His remains were returned to Norfolk where he was buried.

Years later, when reading about the Wall in the May 1985 edition of the National Geographic magazine, Einspahr saw mention of the book - "To Heal a Nation"- by Jan Scruggs that told of the task of putting up the Wall to recognize those who had died in the War.

She read the book and noticed the mention of a Claude from Iowa who had died in another soldier's place. Knowing that the date of his death was about the same as Van Anandel's, she contacted Scruggs who confirmed that it was Van Anandel who had died and that Van Anandel's heroism had inspired him to put up the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial Wall. Scruggs told how Van Anandel had taken another soldier's position in the jungle and after walking just a hundred more yards, had tripped a wire that set off an explosion and killed him.

After talking more with Scruggs, Einspahr discovered that Van Anandel's death coincided with the time of the appearance of him saying good-bye to her all those years before.

She and McIntosh have since talked to the man whose place Van Andel took that day. Because of Van Andel's sacrifice, that man, Charlie Fink, went into the priesthood and now serves as a Monsignor in New York.

"In the Bible it says that "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for his friends." Van Andel had dedicated his life to serving others and we were privileged to know him," McIntosh said.

Other Norfolk 150<sup>th</sup> summer speakers include a talk on "Karl Stefan: Telegraph Man" at the Elkhorn Valley Museum June 8 at 6:30 pm; "The History of Norfolk" by Sheryl Schmeckpepper at the Norfolk Public Library June 22 at 6:30 pm; "See Norfolk: Norfolk in 150 Images" at the Elkhorn Valley Museum July 13, 2016 at 6:30 pm; and "The History of Medicine in Norfolk" by Dr. John Huscher at the Norfolk Public Library July 27, 2016 at 6:30 pm.

For more information contact the library at 402-844-2100 or go to [www.ci.norfolk.ne.us/library](http://www.ci.norfolk.ne.us/library).