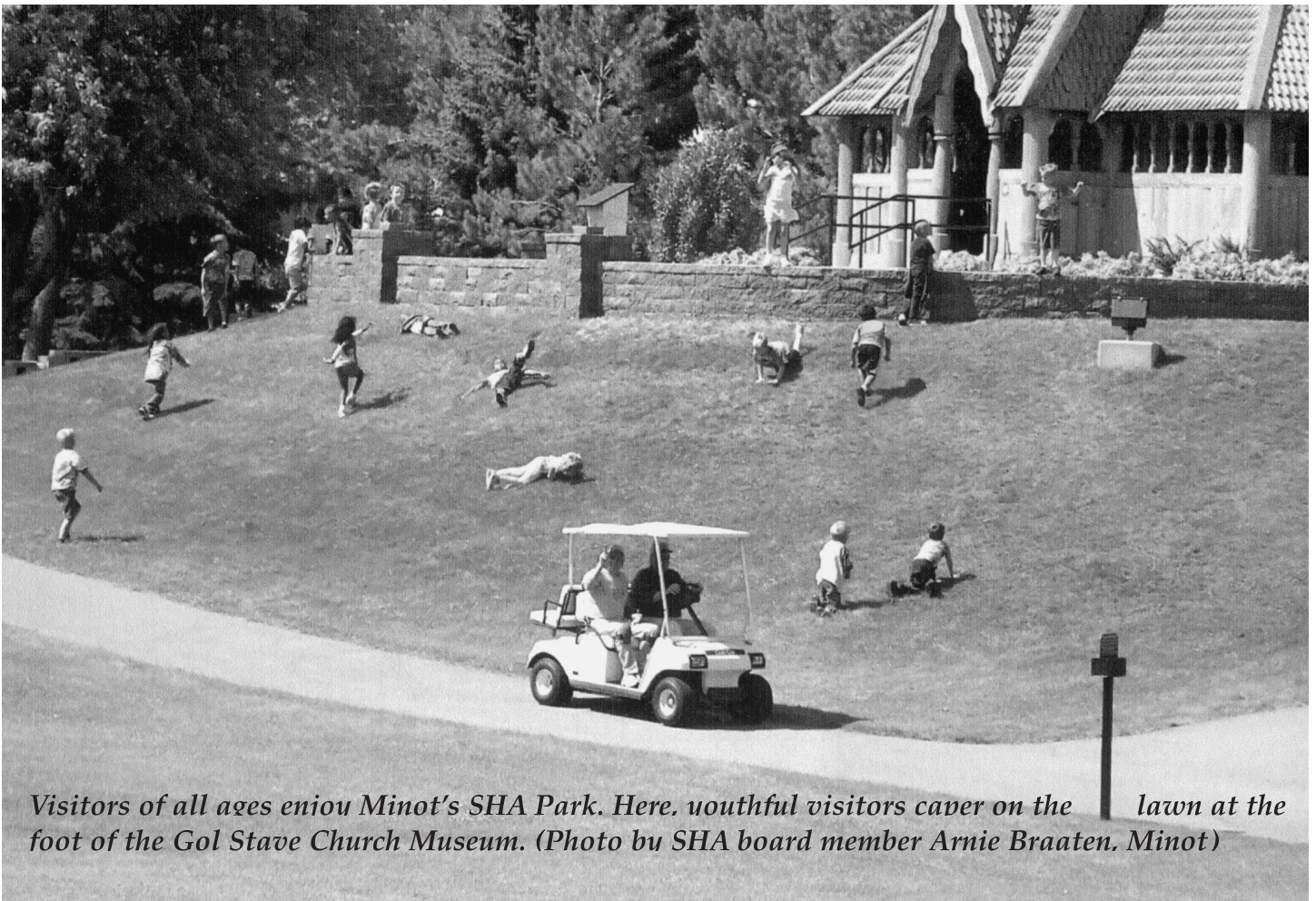


The Scandinavian Heritage NEWS



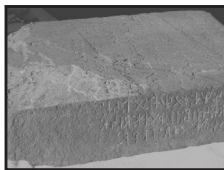
Published in the interest of North Americans of Scandinavian descent • P.O. Box 862 • Minot, ND 58702 • June 2007

SHA Park season opens



Visitors of all ages enjoy Minot's SHA Park. Here, youthful visitors cover on the lawn at the foot of the Gol Stave Church Museum. (Photo by SHA board member Arnie Braaten, Minot)

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President's MESSAGE

Summer is a great time to celebrate heritage

by Mark Anderson, president
Scandinavian Heritage Association

As a boy, living in the Twin Cities. One of my favorite times of the year was summer. Not just because it was a time of vacation from school (although that, too, was a big reason), but because it was the time of year that my grandmother would make her annual pilgrimage to Minnesota from her home in Arizona. She would arrive in mid-June, just in time to take me to the annual Svenskarnas Dag celebration.

Svenskarnas Dag is held on the last Sunday in June at Minnehaha Park in Minneapolis. The day offers many activities, including a morning church service, the raising of the Midsommar Pole, various singing and dancing performances by local and visiting Scandinavian groups, and the crowning of the Midsummer Queen. Authentic Swedish foods and handicrafts are also available for purchase.

As we would walk the park near the beautiful Minnehaha Falls, the air would be filled with the smells of Scandinavian foods and the sounds of Swedish music. Men and women in traditional dress would also be walking the grounds, visiting with interested people or performing their craft. It was always a grand day, made even more so by the presence of my grandmother enjoying every minute of the

day's events.

Fortunately for those of us living in North Dakota, there are similar summer events to share with our children and grandchildren. The annual Svttende Mai (17th of May) event celebrates the beginning of Norway's constitutional government in 1814, and is regarded as a celebration of freedom. This year's event in Scandinavian Heritage Park featured a ceremonial flag display and parade.



Mark Anderson

SHA Park's salute to summer

On June 28, SHA will again be hosting its annual Midsummer Night celebration. Midsummer Night is the most popular festival in Scandinavia, next to Christmas. It ushers in the summer solstice, the longest day of the year. The celebration dates back to pre-Christian times, with rituals believed to bring a good harvest in the fall.

Once again, the Minot City Band will be the featured entertainment. The event is free and open to the public. A picnic dinner will be available for purchase.

The new Heritage House Museum will also be opening this summer. Located on the southwest corner of Scandinavian Heritage Park, the museum will feature items that tell the story of our Scandinavian ancestors and their settlement of this area. Please make it a point to stop in the next time you are visiting the park.

Making memories

The grass is green, the park looks beautiful, and the sounds of summer are all around. Make a special memory for a child or grandchild of yours by bringing them to the park to share your history and create a special memory for them. And while you're at it, why don't you consider giving a gift of a membership in the Scandinavian Heritage Association? The good works that SHA is doing today will ensure that our common history will be preserved for generations to come. •

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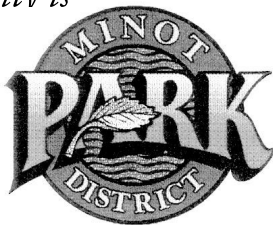
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From the OFFICE

History lesson: How SHA was born

by *Jeannie McNea*
SHA office manager

Next year the Scandinavian Heritage Association, Inc. will celebrate its 20th anniversary. The Certificate of Incorporation was issued April 18, 1988, and the Articles of Incorporation were signed by Russell Anderson, Gary Holum and Allen O. Larson as the directors. Allen Larson is the only one of those three who is still very active in the organization. As we approach this anniversary, I will be reviewing a part of the history and telling about some of the people who have really worked to make our park the beautiful place that it is.

The idea of building a stave church was the inspiration for the organization, and several people started meeting in the community rooms of some Minot restaurants to share ideas and start planning. The land where a little A-frame building for a visitor's center stood had been donated to the city years before but not really developed, except for the original building and two statues—Sondre Norheim and Casper Oimoen.

The Sondre Norheim statue was put up by the Norsk Høstfest and Minot's sister city of Skien, Norway. The Minot Chamber of Commerce was responsible for the Casper Oimoen statue.

The members of the newly formed Scandinavian Heritage Association met with the Minot Park District to develop a Scandinavian Center, and people began to get interested and involved.

The log, grass-topped stabbur (Norwegian storage building) was constructed in the fall of 1990, with some help from Norsk Høstfest. Larry Anderson was the main contributor.

In 1991 the log house that was built about 1771 in Sigdal, Norway, and which had been lived in until about the 1930s, was brought over from Norway and reconstructed here.

By the spring of 1991, a regular board had been established, and meetings were held every week.

To have a center for communication and a place to meet, an office was established. We had space but not much of anything else. There were two



Jeannie McNea

desks and two or three chairs that were donated by a bank. Bethany Lutheran Church donated some old tables for the room we used for board meetings, and the Ward County Historical Society loaned some folding chairs.

Clute's Office Supply donated a typewriter, and the office was established. That's when I came in! The office volunteers purchased supplies such as file folders, pens, pencils and scratch pads as we found a need.

That is the history lesson for this time and for the next few issues. I hope to have some information on the early volunteers in the next few issues.

Park tour season is here

Now, back to the current business of the office. During the last two weeks in May before school was out, several grade- and middle-school students in the area and from as far away as Devils Lake included the park in their field trips.

Tour guides have been on duty since May 17. The weather hasn't been the best (lots of rain!), so they haven't been very busy as of this writing (early June). Hours have been extended this year for people who come to the park as early as 9 a.m. We are trying to get enough volunteers to keep the buildings open from 4 to 7 p.m. This could happen soon.

There have been three stave church weddings with several more scheduled, the gift shop has been restocked, and Midsummer Night celebration is coming on Thursday, June 28, with food, fun, the City Band and other entertainment, as well as the fired-up sauna. Family reunions, church and other organization picnics have been scheduled.

It looks like another busy year. We hope to see many of you this summer. •

CALENDAR



2007

June 24 • Thor Lodge 100th anniversary celebration, Grand International Inn, Minot. Social hour 5 p.m., dinner at 6 p.m.

June 28 • Midsummer Night Celebration, starting at 5 p.m., Scandinavian Heritage Park, Minot

Aug. 4 • Ahola Cemetery Centennial Observance, 3:30 p.m., at the cemetery, 8 miles south and 1/2 mile west of Wing

Aug. 4 • Wing annual steak frv, 5 to 8:30 p.m., Finn Hall, Wing. RSVP for steak frv by July 15 by calling Dave Liuska at 701-943-2421.

Oct. 9 • SHA time capsule ceremony, afternoon, SHA Park.

Oct. 10-13 • Norsk Høstfest celebrates its 30th year!

Oct 9, 7 p.m.—Opening night concert starring Tony Orlando and Ann-Margret

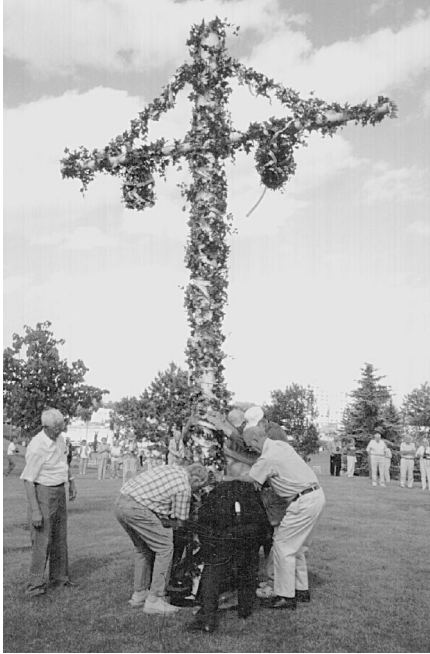
Oct. 10-13, 7:30 a.m.-9 p.m. Entertainment:

- Oct. 10—Bill Cosby, 1 & 7 p.m.
 - Oct. 11—Charley Pride 1 p.m., Lorrie Morgan & Ronnie Milsap, 7 p.m.
 - Oct. 12—Ronnie Milsap & Lorrie Morgan, 1 p.m.; Charley Pride, 7 p.m.
 - Oct. 13—Norwegian singing sensation Sissel, 1 & 7 p.m.
- Call (701) 852-2368 for information

Next newsletter deadline:
Copy and pictures—Aug. 15, 2007
Printing date—Sept. 1, 2007

You're invited to Scandinavian Heritage Park for..

Midsummer Family Fun!



These days, Midsummer Night is a family affair. These pictures from past Midsummer Nights at Scandinavian Heritage Park show the raising of the Maistång (Mauvole) and the picnic supper served in the Nordic Pavilion in the heart of the park.

In medieval times, Midsummer Night was a time of revelry and excess (see article on page 5), in which our Scandinavian ancestors welcomed the summer solstice (longest day of the year). The celebration dates back to pre-Christian times, with rituals believed to bring a good harvest in the fall. The festival was later Christianized as the day of St. John the Baptist.

A little closer to home, this traditional holiday with its ancient roots will be celebrated North Dakota-style at Scandinavian Heritage Park in Minot. The party begins at 5 p.m. on Thursday, June 28. Only this time, it's a family affair—no revelling, no excess (unless you eat too much!). Here's what's on the agenda:

- Calliope music for kids of all ages

(courtesy of the Minot Shriners Club)

- Old-fashioned picnic served in SHA Park's Nordic Pavilion Picnic Shelter (bring your lawn chairs). On the menu: fresh-off-the-grill hotdogs and brats; coleslaw; chips; beverage and dessert. Cost is \$5 per person (\$3 for children under 12). Serving takes place between 5:30 and 6:30 p.m.

- Traditional flag ceremony and Swedish Maistång-raising event—7 p.m.; Scandinavian national anthems sung by area singers

- Entertainment by Minot City Band
- All buildings open for tours
- Sauna steambaths available (bring your swimming suit and a towel)
- Bonfire in the pond (fired up by Bruce Carlson of Velva, N.D.)

Don't miss this community celebration of summer—on Thursday, June 28, the place to be is the Scandinavian Heritage Park for a taste of food as well as Nordic culture.

Bring the kids, bring your parents—but be there!•

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Midsummer

European Midsummer-related holidays, traditions and celebrations, many of which pre-date Christianity, are particularly important in Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland and the Baltic countries.

When Scandinavia was Christianized, the pagan holiday was named after John the Baptist, St. Hans (*Sankthans*), to lend a Christian meaning to the pagan holiday. Despite the new name, Midsummer Night still retains some of the old pagan traditions as well as the revelry for which it is noted.

Medieval Midsummer Night celebrations centered around June 24, the longest day of the year according to the old Julian calendar (which over the years didn't keep pace with the actual date of the solstice). Thus the calendar had to be moved forward about three days every four centuries to correspond with the actual solstice. In 1582, Pope Gregory XIII changed the calendar, bringing the solstice to around 21 June. In the Gregorian calendar, the solstice moves about one day in 3,000 years.



Today, Midsummer is typically celebrated between June 20 and 26, often on a Saturday. In Finnish it is called *juhannus*. Before 1316, the summer solstice was known as *Ukon juhla*, after an old Finnish god Ukko. In Norway and Denmark, it is called

Sankthansaften (St. John's Evening), or *lonsok* (John's Wake). In Sweden, it is called *Midsommar*, where it is arguably the most important holiday of the year.

The origins of the solstice celebration are steeped in custom, superstition and folk magic, most dealing with weather, wealth and future life partners. Falling as it does at the beginning of summer, it's also closely connected to fertility rites and various kinds of mischief and mayhem.

Following are some Midsummer Night customs:

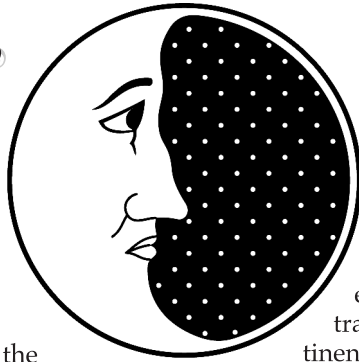
Bonfire

In most places in Denmark and Norway, the main event is the burning of a large fire. In Karelia, Finland, people had many bonfires side by side, the biggest of which was called *Ukko-kokko* (the bonfire of Ukko).

During the 19th century, superstitions were the most essential part of festivities. It was believed that demons and witches moved about at Midsummer, and people made noise and built bonfires to drive them away. Over the centuries, fires burned all over Europe: in Russia, Scandinavia, the Alpine countries and Ireland. Presently Finland is one of only a few countries that still hold to this tradition.

Maistången (Mavpole)

In Sweden and in the coastal areas of Finland (with its strong Swedish traditions), bonfires were replaced by mavpoles in the 19th century. Raising and dancing around a huge (*maistången* or *midsommarstången*) was an important Midsummer Night tradition. Some argue that some form of Midsummer pole in Sweden was used as a fertility symbol



Night Magic

during pre-Christian times.

Dressed in traditional folk costumes, men and women danced around the greenery-decked pole. To decorate with greens was called *att maia* (May) and is perhaps the origin of the word *maistång*. In earlier times, small spires were wrapped in greens, a tradition believed by many to have come from the continent in the Middle Ages. Greenery placed over houses and barns was believed to bring good fortune and health to people and livestock.

The tradition was carried to such an extent that in 1734, using branches or young trees for decorations was forbidden because it was thought to be a threat to the forests in Finland. Later, this order was repealed.

Magic and mysticism

- Midsummer was considered to be a night of magic and witchcraft. Will-o'-the-wisps could be seen on Midsummer night.

Magic was strongest on that night, and rituals were performed to see into the future. In ancient times, predicting weather was a big part of Midsummer. Farmers tried to find signs of the forthcoming harvest.

Fertility, marriage, baby carriage

Fertility is naturally linked to the time of year, and Midsummer Night was thought to be a favorable time to find a partner. This resulted in an increase in childbirths in March. Sexual inhibitions were put aside during the festivities, and thus the saying: "Midsummer Night is not long, but it sets many a cradle rocking."



It was also a good night to see your future husband's face in a dream. This was accomplished by picking nine different flowers and putting them under your pillow.

During those early times, people weren't as conscientious about keeping their houses or clothes clean. But before the big celebrations of Christmas and Midsummer, they tidied up their homes and washed themselves. In Finland, going to sauna was a Midsummer Night tradition.

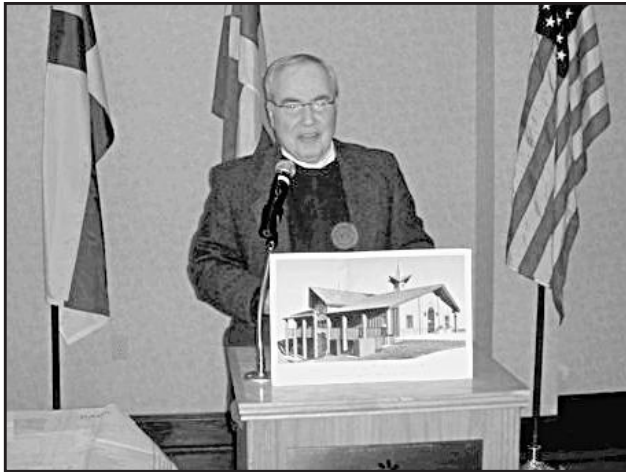
In parts of Norway, mock marriages were arranged both between adults and between children. The weddings stood for the blossoming of new life. Such weddings are known to have taken place as late as the 1800s.

Drinking and revelry

"The night of the shortest moon" is noted for revelry and drunkenness. It's a good excuse for summertime parties.

Getting drunk during Midsummer has a long tradition. In earlier times, drinking alcohol was supposed to help produce a good harvest. Alcohol is one of the things people most generally associate with Midsummer.

According to statistics from Sweden, five times more alcohol is sold during the day before Midsummer Eve than any other day. Statistics also show that the number of people drowned and killed in accidents, as well as the number of assaults, peaks around the Midsummer celebration. •



SHA director Jim Maragos was recognized for his outstanding service as chairman of the Scandinavian Heritage Association headquarters building/visitor's center project, which was completed 10 years ago.



Retiring SHA board member Christine Campbell displays the certificate of appreciation she received, as Arnie Braaten looks on. Others receiving certificates included Robert Knudson, Glen Hasbu, Terri Aldrich and Terri Peterson. (Photos furnished by Arnie Braaten)

Friday the 13th a lucky day for SHA Banquet attendees!

The 14th annual Scandinavian Heritage Association Banquet was held Friday evening, April 13, at the Holiday Inn Riverside in Minot. The event, which included a social hour, dinner and silent auction, was attended by 119 members and guests. Live provided entertainment for the affair.

Don't let the date "Friday the 13th" fool you! Some lucky folks turned in top bids on silent auction items, taking home some great prizes. What's more, the Heritage House Museum in Scandinavian Heritage Park benefited from funds raised from the auction.

The following people and businesses donated items for the silent auction:

- Helen Haaland—four general-admission tickets for Hostfest
- Grand International Inn—one night stay
- Arnie Braaten—Valentine collectors plate
- Marilyn Gollv—rosemaled plate
- Jerome's Collision Center—certificate for car wash, vacuum, buff, wax
- Harry's Tire—\$25 gift certificate
- Gooseneck Implement—\$50 certificate
- Lowe's Floral—\$25 certificate
- Minot Chrysler—\$50 certificate
- Table waterfall—Terry Torgenson
- Homesteader Restaurant—two \$20 certificates
- Marketplace Foods—\$20 certificate
- 4-Bears—\$140 package

- Marian Bergan—Teddy Roosevelt bear on a bench and an Elizabeth Barrett Browning poetry book (antique)
- Minot's Finest Collision Center—bag of car products
- Ron Bieri—shelf in shape of a boat
- Lois Matson—vase with flowers and a 1989 Christmas collector's plate from Norway
- Carroll Erickson—dry-land sled
- Jo Ann Winistorfer—"Tracing your Dakota Roots" book
- Brekke Tours—two promotion packages for a Norway tour
- Allen O. Larson—Norwegian cheese slicer
- Gate City Bank—two garment bags
- Duane Aase—American flag
- George and Jeanice Officer—wooden tray, Lauraine Snelling book
- Mark Anderson—golf balls, golf wind shirt and duffel bag
- John Sinn—ice cream maker
- Gail Peterson—Norwegian sweater
- Lorna Van de Streek—bracelet, pendant and earrings
- I. Keating's Furniture Store—wine carrier
- Fisher Motors—two certificates for an oil change
- Jeanne McNea—Norwegian kransekaka (wedding cake)
- Everett Debertin—hand-carved clock
- Marion Anderson—hand-painted glass mugs
- Roald Mattson—bottle opener

- Bob Whetter—wind chimes
- The Scandinavian Heritage Association gift shop also donated items.

Altogether, the auction brought in \$1,979. Profit (after expenses) from the banquet and auction totaled approximately \$2,145.

A big "thank you" goes to all the businesses and SHA folks who donated prizes for the raffle.

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Left to right: Bob Whetter, Carroll Erickson and Erv Johnson clean last year's accumulation of debris from the ponds in SHA Park this spring. (Photo by Arnie Braaten)

It's all about maintenance!

When visitors tour the park, what they see are the beautiful grounds and landscaping, the waterfall cascading into a pond, the statuary, the buildings representing the five Scandinavian countries, the Map Plaza near the SHA visitor's center, and much more.

What they don't see is all the behind-the-scenes work that goes into keeping the park buildings and grounds in good order.

Spring cleaning at the park this year included removing debris from the pond—a job that required a group of hard-working, dedicated SHA members.

When the sidewalk and curb in front of the Heritage House needed fixing, another volunteer SHA crew showed up.

Flower plantings were supervised by new board member Erv Johnson, who is currently taking a master gardening course. Be sure to stop by the park later this summer when the flowers are in bloom. Five separate flower beds have been planted to represent each of the five Scandinavian flags. •

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The Scandinavian Heritage Assn.

Guides, greeters help make park tour a great learning experience



Visitors who are drawn to Scandinavian Heritage Park in Minot may choose to view the park's many features in solitude, or perhaps with just their family. While they can enjoy the park on a self-guided tour, there's a better way!

Meet Verla Rostad, volunteer coordinator who organizes the park's guides and greeters. It's not that Verla, who lives in Minot with her husband, Jim, doesn't have enough to do. In fact, she is office manager of the business she and her husband, Jim, own and run together—Minot's Finest Collision Center. She also serves as a volunteer in her church, college alumni association and the Red Cross.

Two years ago, Verla added Scandinavian Heritage Park to her volunteer-organization list, joining a crew of members who already guided visitors through the park. Although she had been a member for a while, that was the first time she got active in SHA. "I paid my dues every year and read the newsletter," she says. "I noticed an appeal for tour guides and started volunteering. Before that, I was a Minoter who drove past but never visited the park."

Verla became an SHA board member this past fall, and at a spring board meeting was named tour guide coordinator. She's assisted by Ioan Vartv (who puts the schedules together for the greeters)—and, of course, scores of volunteer guides (scheduled by Verla).

"We have 26 people who have com-

mitted to a regularly scheduled shift," says Verla. "Another 15 serve as substitutes."

Two people work each of two shifts a day, Monday through Friday. Four volunteers handle Saturday tours; two work on Sunday. Hours are 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday through Friday; 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday, and 1 to 4 p.m. Sunday.

"Right now we're working on getting new volunteers so we can extend our Monday-through-Friday hours to 7 p.m.," she says.

Training sessions for guides

Greeters and guides don't just "wing it." They first must go through a two-hour orientation session, taught by Verla. "We provide guides and greeters with a packet of information about all the monuments and buildings in the park. We discuss what is expected of them, what is involved and how to work with people...keeping in mind things like handicapped accessibility."

Guides and greeters are easy to spot. Just look for the friendly folks sporting a big, colorful "Volunteer" button.

Al Larson, an incorporating board member and owner of Minot's Creative Media, furnished the printing for the buttons; the Minot Vocational Adjustment Workshop assembled them. Both the printing and assembly were done on a volunteer basis.

The summer season has just begun, and already hundreds of people have gone through the park. Verla runs

through a list of school groups who toured this spring: Berthold, Bowbells, Bishop Rvan High School in Minot, Glenburn, Lake Region Junior College of Devils Lake, Little Flower Elementary School in Rugby, and a summer school group of K-6 graders from Williston. Besides the students, recent visitors have included folks from the Wellington Assisted Living facility in Minot.

International visitors also enjoy the park. In early June, a group of Swedish tourists, guests of North Dakota Tourism, were escorted around the park. In the middle of June, board member Ken Holand, president of the Icelandic Heritage Association, showed members of an Icelandic choir around the park. Virgil Rude, also an SHA board member, guided a group of Finlanders past the park's attractions, while George Officer, also on the board, has accommodated guests from Norway.

One of the busiest seasons at the park is during the Norsk Høstfest, held annually in early fall at the All-Seasons Arena of the North Dakota State Fairgrounds in Minot. "We get all kinds of Scandinavian visitors during Høstfest," Verla says.

The park's 2007 agenda is already filling up fast. Bruce Carlson, manager of Verendrv Electric Cooperative of Velva, has invited statewide REC directors to come in July for a picnic in the shelter and a tour of the park. Minot

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