

Published in the interest of  
North Americans of Scandinavian descent

# Scandinavian Heritage News

June 2011

## Midsummer Night in SHA Park

Friday, June 24, 2011

4 p.m.-dark

Food, fun, entertainment



## WHAT'S INSIDE

President's message . . . . .	2
From the office; calendar . . . . .	3
It's a small world—ya, you betcha! . . . .	4
Picture this: SHA Banquet . . . . .	5
Norwegian visitors present key . . . . .	6-7
The kindness of strangers . . . . .	8-10

The Scandinavian Heritage: Hans Egede: Apostle to Greenland. . .	11
Gift annuity/membership form. . . . .	12
Scandinavian Society reports . . . . .	13-15
Tracing Your Scandinavian Roots: Handle Ancestry.com with care. . . . .	16

## President's MESSAGE

# Midsummer Night is June 24

by Gail Peterson, president  
Scandinavian Heritage Association

We are now busy with getting all of the buildings ready for summer. I would like to thank all of the Minot Air Force Base volunteers who came to the park and helped clean the pond. We greatly appreciate their support. Please remember, we can always use volunteers.

We are getting ready for the Midsummer Night festival, which takes place on Friday, June 24. We're hoping the weather will cooperate. We have a fun-filled event planned, with something for everyone: good food and entertainment, plus our traditional bonfire in the park's pond. The celebration begins at 4 p.m. and winds up at dark. I hope to see you all there.

Thanks to all who attended our annual banquet, once again making it a wonderful success. The event was well attended despite the fact we were under a storm warning. The Holiday Inn staff provided an excellent tradi-

tional turkey dinner. I heard only good comments about the evening.

Our featured speaker was Melissa Gjellstad, Ph.D., daughter of SHA board member Liz Gjellstad of Minot. Melissa is assistant professor of languages at the University of North Dakota. Since her arrival at UND in 2008, she has directed the thriving program and designed all of the courses from scratch. In that time, the number of students majoring and minoring in Norwegian has doubled. Everyone was impressed with her knowledge, and she was excellent at answering questions throughout the evening. Liz has every right to be proud of her daughter.

Our silent auction brought in \$4,425, exceeding our last year's total by \$800. Thanks to everyone for their support.

Enjoy our park this summer. •



Gail Peterson

## Scandinavian Heritage News

Vol. 24, Issue 53 • June 2011

Published quarterly by  
The Scandinavian Heritage Assn.  
1020 South Broadway  
701/852-9161 • P.O. Box 862  
Minot, ND 58702  
e-mail: scandha@srt.com  
Website: scandinavianheritage.org

Newsletter Committee

Lois Matson, Chair  
Al Larson, Carroll Erickson  
Jo Ann Winistorfer, Editor

701/487-3312

genesis@westrivo.com

Al Larson, Publisher – 701/852-5552

### SCANDINAVIAN HERITAGE ASSOCIATION

1020 South Broadway • P.O. Box 862  
Minot, North Dakota 58702  
Phone 701/852-9161

#### 2011 OFFICERS

Gail Peterson	President
Peder Rice	Vice President
Marion Anderson	Secretary
Sue Weston	Treasurer

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*Three-year terms ending January 2014*

Jerome Jorgenson	Jim Maragos
Lois Matson	Peder Rice
Bob Sandø	Ernie Selland
Joan Varty	Neil Zimmerman

*Three-year terms ending January 2013*

Marion Anderson	Ron Bieri
Liz Gjellstad	Jana Hennix
Gail Peterson	Virgil Rude

*Three-year terms ending January 2012*

Myron Anderson	Eva Goodman
Erv Johnson	John Sinn
Doris Slaaten	Robert Whetter
Jo Ann Winistorfer	

*One-year appointees to January 2012*

Adelaide Johnson	Everett Olson
Les Stregge	Sue Weston
Bob Wheeler	

Verla Rostad, Office Manager

#### Ex-Officio Members

Carroll Erickson, Past President  
Bruce Christenson, Past President  
Allen O. Larson, Past President  
Roald Mattson, Past President  
George Officer, Past President  
Mark Anderson, Past President

#### Directors Emeritus

Marian Bergan, Director Emeritus  
Doralyn Brown, Director Emeritus  
Jeanne McNea, Director Emeritus  
Helen Haaland, Director Emeritus



## STOP FIDDLIN' AROUND!

# Join us for our annual Midsummer Night Celebration

**FRIDAY, JUNE 24, 2011 • 4 P.M.-DARK**  
**Scandinavian Heritage Park • Minot**

- Picnic-style meal (small charge)
- Flag ceremony • Entertainment
- Fun activities • Sauna • Bonfire



★ Bring the whole family!

## From the OFFICE

# Busy park season just ahead!

by Verla Rostad  
SHA office manager

The park opened on May 17. It was a sunny (but windy) day, with several visitors enjoying the park—thanks to Joan Varty, who worked hard making contacts with folks to fill the schedule.

This year we have teams who will be volunteering to keep the park buildings open during evening hours, Monday through Friday. That is one more evening each week than we had last year! Our teams of four to eight volunteers share a shift and work out a schedule so two of them are here each evening. That way, each volunteer should expect to work once every two to four weeks.

The Rotary Club of Minot is providing volunteers for Wednesday evenings, and the Swedish and Danish societies are providing volunteers for Friday evenings. Our weekend shifts (Saturday morning, Saturday afternoon and Sunday afternoon) are also covered by teams this year.

Most of our volunteers are returning to work the park this year. However, we are always recruiting new volunteers! If you would like to volunteer as a park greeter, please call the office at (701) 852-9161. The requirement is a willingness to greet visitors as they come to the park. No expertise is required!

We have been fortunate to have members of the 17 MUNS (17th Munitions Squadron) at Minot Air Force Base seeking volunteer opportunities at the Scandinavian Heritage Park. Treavor Abrams helped the Sons of Norway make potato klub earlier this winter, and returned in May with Brandyn Ball and Austin Vandembulcke just in time to help clean the streams and ponds! Brandyn came another day with Cody King. Each of them has been here multiple times, and their youthful strength and energy is very, very welcome! Brandyn and Austin are also on a Saturday afternoon team to be park greeters. They are looking for other volunteers to be on a team with them, and their responsibilities with the Air Force may



Verla Rostad

laide Johnson (all retired from the business department at Minot State University) were honored by Minot State University as recipients of the Distinguished Lifetime Educator Award. According to the MSU Public Information Office, each recipient, a retired faculty member selected by faculty peers, provided students with a strong and engaging academic experience that allowed them to develop sound skills for success in their future careers and endeavors. We are proud of each of you! Other retired faculty members were honored as well.

We have a number of public events planned for the park this summer, some organized by other groups:

- Each Wednesday in June, July & August, at noon: **Sack Lunch in the Park.** Bring your own lunch and gather at the Nordic Pavilion picnic shelter; hear about one of the park displays.
- Monday, June 13, 6:30 p.m.: **Rolf Stang, actor/interpreter/entertainer.** Rolf will perform at a special Sons of Norway event; everyone is welcome.
- Friday, June 24, 4 p.m.-dark: **Midsummer Night Festival.** Picnic supper (small charge), entertainment, craft demonstrations, language lessons, sauna, bonfire
- Friday, June 24: **Opening of Casper Oimoen masonry photo display.** Photos of homes, fireplaces, patios and public buildings featuring masonry by Minot's Olympic Ski Jumper Casper Oimoen
- Sunday, July 17, 10 a.m.: **Minot Park District Centennial Motorcycle**

prevent them from being able to be here every week.

We are proud to offer congratulations to three members of our Scandinavian Heritage Association board of directors. Doris Slaaten, Bob Sando and Ade-

## CALENDAR

SUMMER 2011



- **Midsummer Night Celebration,** Friday, June 24, 2011, starting at 4 p.m.; SHA Park, Minot
- **Norsk Høstfest,** Wednesday thru Saturday, Sept. 28-Oct. 1; opening concert on Tuesday, Sept. 27, at 7:30 p.m. For details and ticket information, visit [hostfest.com](http://hostfest.com)

### NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE:

Copy and pictures—Aug. 15, 2011  
Printing date—Sept. 1, 2011

**Ride.** Riders will tour the city and area parks and return to the Scandinavian Heritage Park for a meal.

• Wednesday, Aug. 10, evening:  
**Dakota Cruisers Classic Cars,** in the parking lot.

• Saturday, Sept. 24 - Sunday, Oct. 2:  
**Special Høstfest week activities.**

*THE HEART of a  
community is  
reflected  
in the  
quality  
of its  
parks.*



MINOT PARK DISTRICT  
420 Third Avenue SW • 857-4136

# It's a small world—ya, you betcha!

by Verla Rostad

**H**ave you ever had an “it’s-a-small-world” moment? We all feel the world shrinking, thanks to 24-hour news programming, the internet, e-mail, Skype, Facebook, Twitter—you name it. It is easier than ever before in history to stay in touch with friends and family all over the world.

I often think about the many young immigrants who left their homelands, often striking out on a new adventure while leaving parents and siblings behind, with the hope finding a better life, a chance to own land or to follow a loved one who left home earlier. My thoughts quickly turn to how difficult it must have been—on both sides of the ocean—to never again see the face or hear the familiar voice of a loved one!

For me, “it’s-a-small-world” moments usually start with a conversation and end with the realization that I’ve found a connection with a person with whom I would least expect to have anything in common.

On Sunday, May 15, while checking my e-mail and Facebook accounts, I checked the Scandinavian Heritage Association e-mail account, too. I opened the following message:

*“Hello, my name is Ashley Spoklie, and my father’s great-grandfather was Ole T. Spoklie ... he moved to the Minot area from Minnesota by way of Salerdahl (not sure on the spelling), Norway. He was one of the first six settlers in the area back in 1882 and built a homestead log cabin west of Minot*

*‘up the valley’ from Velva, N.D.*

*“Can you and your team of historians please find me any and all information regarding the homestead or any more information that may be available for my dad, James Carrol Spoklie, son of Carrol James Spoklie, who is the son of Knute Spoklie. He is really anxious to know a little more about his family and their heritage.*

*“We are coming back to ND for a reunion this summer in Makoti, and we would really love to have the opportunity to meet with someone who can tell us a little more about our heritage.”*

In most cases, I would have responded politely by explaining that we really don’t have a team of historians, but we do have some limited resource materials for genealogists and referred her to the Ward County Historical Society. But her request caught my eye, because she mentioned that her great-great-grandfather was one of the first six settlers in the area.

You see, my husband Jim and I live on the original Henry Gasmann family homestead site. Gasmann’s great-grandson, Chuck Gasmann, has shared a great deal of history of the family and homestead, as Gasmann was also one of the first settlers in the area. Henry Gasmann’s son Charles O. was born in October of 1882 and is acknowledged to have been the first white child born in Ward County.

Mrs. Henry Gasmann did a great deal of journaling, which has proven to be a valuable resource to folks who wish to read about the life of the early Ward

County settlers. In the Aug. 19, 1961, edition of the *Minot Daily News*, several stories featured accounts from Mrs.

Gasmann’s journals in observance of Ward County’s 75th Anniversary. Knowing those stories contain mention of other early settlers, I turned to them to see if I could find the name of Ole Spoklie.

**BINGO!** Not only did I find Spoklies’ name, but I learned that the Gasmanns and Spoklies had met on their way west and had traveled together over much of the trail to the Mouse River.

I had been puzzled by the reference to Velva, but that became clearer, too, after I read in the 1961 newspaper:

*“The first notable in-coming of settlers occurred in 1882. ... By the end of the year there was a thin string of squatters, which extended from near Black Butte, northeast of the site of Velva, up river as far as what came to be know as Gasmann Coulee, west of the site of Minot.”*

Reading further, I discovered that *“in 1882 the Ole Spoklies established their home just west of the site of Minot. A part of their claim is within the present (1961) city limits.”*

Another article mentioned their home as being near “Spoklie’s Crossing.”

So did I feel like it’s a small, small world? You betcha! The fact that I opened the e-mail and had in my possession the articles about the early settlers was pure coincidence.

I have been back in contact with Ashley and shared the source of the information I have. I am asking our “team of historians” (that’s you, our members and friends!) if anyone remembers Spoklie’s Crossing. It must be somewhere west of the original Minot townsite. •



- 176 Spacious Rooms
- Indoor Heated Pool
- Two Whirlpools
- Sauna
- Game Room

- Beauty Salon
- Pavilion Restaurant
- Ground Round Bar & Grill
- Minot’s Largest Convention Center

- Minot’s Finest Corporate Club
- Oasis Lounge & Casino
- Gift Shop

2200 Burdick Expressway East, Box 2228, Minot, ND 58702  
Phone (701) 852-2504 • Fax (701) 852-2630  
Toll Free 1-800-468-9968

**Velkommen Til Norsk Høstfest!**



**Holiday Inn**  
RIVERSIDE



Just across the street from Scandinavian Park  
Town & Country Center • 1015 South Broadway

For a “Fast Lunch” or “To Go” call ahead 839-4433



*Our reputation shines as brightly as our diamonds.*

**Fred, Jr. & Sheri Lien** 107 South Main Street  
701-838-5151 Minot, ND 58701



## PICTURE THIS!

# Language instructor speaks at SHA Banquet



Photos by  
Al Larson

*The Scandinavian Heritage Association's annual banquet was a fascinating learning experience for all in attendance, thanks to guest speaker Melissa Gjellstad, Ph.D. (pictured at left), who is assistant professor of languages at the University of North Dakota (UND). An expert in the Norse language, she also happens to be the daughter of SHA board member Liz Gjellstad of Minot! The combination banquet/silent auction was held the evening of April 2, 2011, at Holiday Inn Riverside in Minot. It was co-chaired by SHA board members Doris Slaaten and Liz Gjellstad. The event was well attended, despite storm warnings issued for that day. The menu included a traditional turkey dinner. The silent auction, which consisted of items donated by businesses and members of SHA, brought in \$4,425, exceeding last year's total by \$800. A big thank you goes out to all who donated and/or helped make the SHA banquet a success. •*

BELOW: Prospective bidders check out auction items.

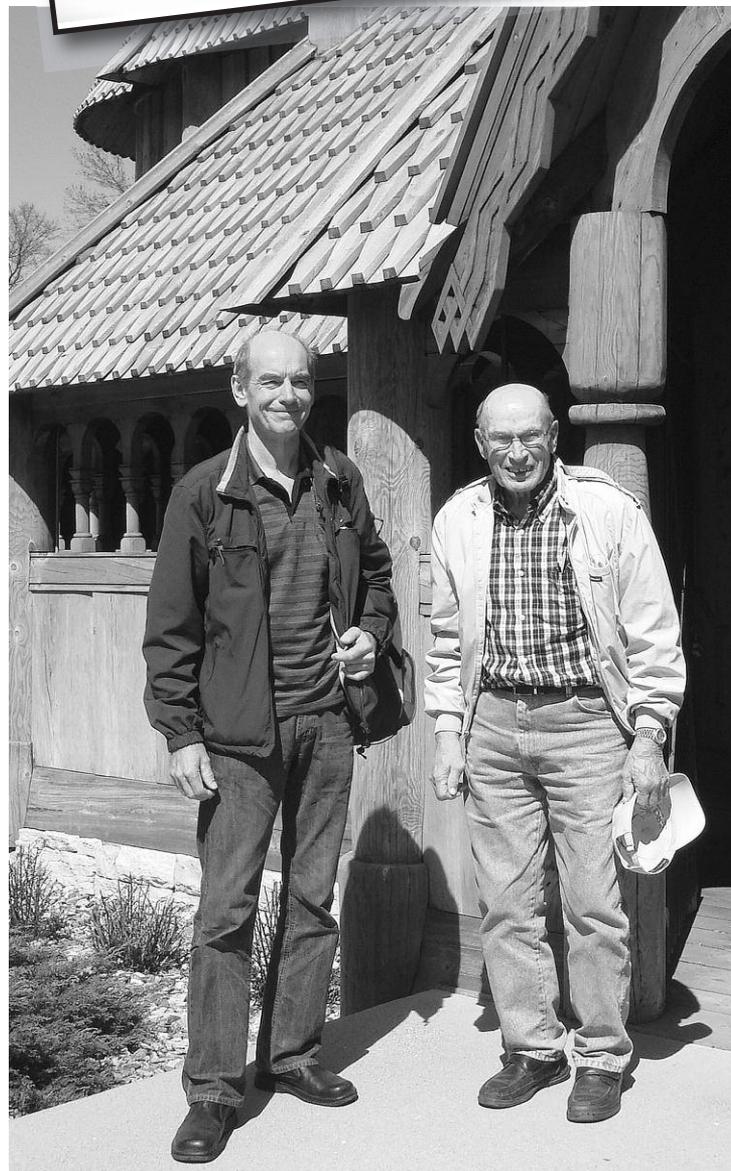
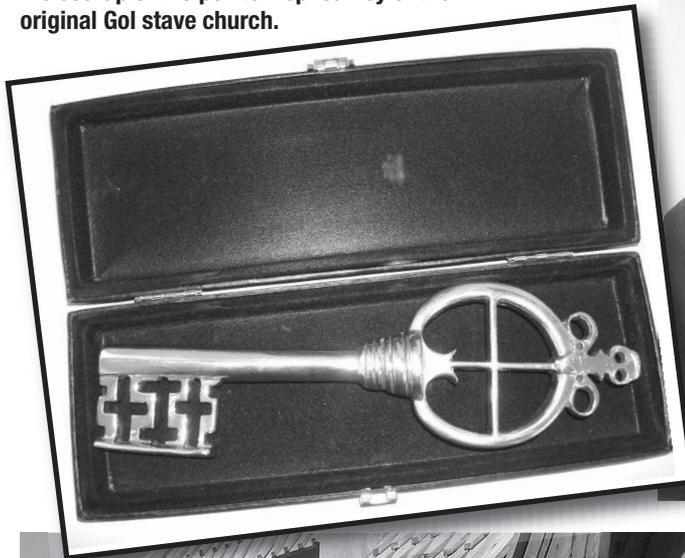


**BOTTOM LEFT:** SHA office manager Verla Rostad (left) and co-chair of the banquet Liz Gjellstad greet attendees and take tickets.

**BOTTOM RIGHT:** Proud mama (right) Liz Gjellstad poses with her daughter Melissa, speaker at the SHA banquet, and (left) SHA president Gail Peterson.



A close-up of the pewter replica key of the original Gol stave church.



John Lager (left) and SHA board member John Sinn take a break after visiting about maintenance issues regarding the Stave Church.

## Norwegian visitors present token stavkirke key to SHA

On Monday, May 16, we had two very special visitors at the Scandinavian Heritage Park. Leif Anker and John Lager, who work for Riksantikvaren (the Norwegian Directorate of Cultural Heritage) were our guests.

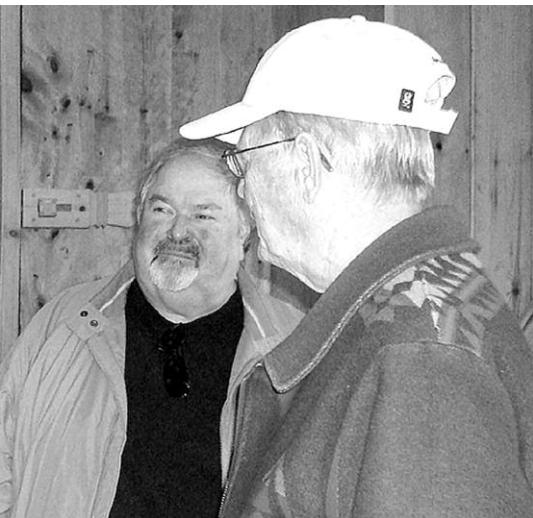
The Directorate of Cultural Heritage researches and works to preserve historic churches and government buildings in Norway. Leif Anker is the author of "The Norwegian Stave Churches" and an expert on the subject. John Lager is a master builder. Lager offered some expertise regarding maintenance of the buildings.

In the United States to do some consultation with the Chapel in the Hills in Rapid City, S.D., the two men wanted to visit the Gol Stave Church Museum here in Minot, as well as the full-scale replica of the Hopperstad Church in Vik, Norway, which is located at the Hjemkomst Center in Moorhead, Minn. Leif Anker made presentations to our board of directors and to our volunteer greeters. We all learned some things about stave churches and dispelled some myths and misinformation as well!

John Lager presented the Scandinavian Heritage Association with a cast pewter replica of the key to the original Gol Stave Church. The information inserted in the package says:

*"Copy of the key from Gol stavkirke. The church that originally is from around 1200 was in 1880 moved to King Oscar's collection at Bygdøy (the Norwegian Folkmuseum). The story goes that when the farmer sold the church to the king, he wanted a little bit extra for the money, so he kept the lock and key. The original [key] is privately owned."*

John Lager's uncle owns Askvoll Brug AS, the company that made the key. More information about the company can be found at [www.askvoll-brug.no](http://www.askvoll-brug.no). •



Center picture: John Lager (left) presented a pewter replica key of the original Gol stave church to Stave Church Committee chairperson, George Officer.

Near left: Leif Anker (left) visits with volunteers Cordell Bugbee (center) and SHA board member Virgil Rude after his presentation to SHA greeters.



**Verendrye Electric Cooperative**  
 Minot - Velva  
 A Touchstone Energy<sup>SM</sup> Partner Cooperative  
*The power of human connections*

701.852.0406 & 1.800.472.2141

**10**  
**NORTH MAIN**

*“Good Food,  
 Nice Drinks”*

for Reservations,  
 call 701-837-1010

Walk-Ins Welcome

10 North Main St.  
 Minot, ND 58703

Open Tuesday–Saturday  
 4:00 pm – Close

**GOL STAVKIRKE—  
 Bygdøy Park, Oslo, Norway**



**GOL STAVE CHURCH—  
 SHA Park, Minot**



**GRAND International**

1505 N. Broadway  
 Minot, ND  
 852-3161

Call Toll Free for Reservations:  
 1-800-735-4493  
[www.grandinternational.com](http://www.grandinternational.com)

“Where the REST is Easy”

- 10” Sensus Memory Foam Mattresses
- Minot’s Largest Indoor Pool and Jacuzzi
- Primo Dining Room and Coffee Shop
- Sunday Brunch Served from 9:30 am - 1:30 pm
- Lobby Lounge
- Fitness Center
- Business Center
- High Speed Internet
- HBO

**IRET**

creating shareholder value since 1970

**IRET Corporate Plaza**

3015 16th St. SW Suite 100  
 701.837.4738 | [iret.com](http://iret.com)

# *The kindness of strangers*

## How thousands of Danes—and one brave German—helped rescue Denmark's Jews

by Duane Schultz

"I know what I have to do," the man wrote in his diary. But even the prospect of what Georg Ferdinand Duckwitz had to do that day, Sept. 28, 1943, would have left many lesser men petrified with fear. For Duckwitz, a high-level staff member of the German embassy in Copenhagen and a member of the Nazi Party, was about to betray his country—and risk execution—to try to save the lives of nearly 8,000 Danish Jews.

He knew that in two days' time Denmark's Jews were to be rounded up and shipped off to internment camps. Eight days earlier, already sure of his course, and aware that he was suspected by the Gestapo of being untrustworthy, he had taken an enormous risk by traveling secretly to Sweden and persuading the still-neutral Swedish government to take in all the Danish Jews who could get out of Denmark in time.

But now his mission verged on the suicidal. After a brisk walk to 22 Roemer Street in downtown Copenhagen, he slipped inside to meet with a leading Danish politician. That man, Hans Hedtoft, remembered that Duckwitz looked "white with indignation and shame." The reason for that became clear over the next few minutes as Duckwitz outlined precisely what his Nazi brethren had in store for the Danish Jews, and when.

What followed directly from that meeting was the miraculous rescue of almost the entire Jewish population of Denmark. And while Duckwitz's brave warning sparked the operation, it was the Danish people themselves who then rapidly and selflessly carried it out—hiding and caring for their Jewish compatriots, transporting them to boats on the coast, and then ensuring the vast majority made it safely to Sweden.

When the Germans came to get

them on Oct. 1, very few Jews could be found. They had already packed small bags, put on as many layers of clothing as they could, and fled. The decency and compassion of one German and an entire occupied nation literally saved their lives.

• • •

The Jews of Denmark knew what had been happening in the rest of Europe—how the Germans had rounded up millions of Jews in every country they occupied and shipped them to the East, where some said they were all being put to death. But in Denmark, Jews were still living in their homes in 1943, three years after the Germans invaded. Their children attended regular schools like everyone else's, and no one was forced to wear yellow stars. Their businesses ran unchallenged, and they were allowed to keep their jobs. In fact, there had been no restrictions on Danish Jews. So far, they had been lucky.

And so had all the Danes, ever since April 9, 1940, the day the Germans overwhelmed the small Danish army in just two hours. Hitler felt an affinity for the Danes, considering them fellow Aryans. He permitted the Danes to keep their government and king, and to fly their own flag. Very little changed in their daily lives at first, except for one thing. They were a conquered people ruled by a foreign power. They felt fear, but also a growing resentment and rage.

A resistance developed, slowly at first, without violence. As the war continued, strikes, mass demonstrations and open acts of sabotage pro-

**'That small country caused us more difficulties than anything else.'**

—Adolph Eichmann

liferated. By 1943, Hitler had become outraged by the disrespect for their Aryan brothers. It was time to rule Denmark with an iron hand, and that included getting rid of all the Jews.

The orders to round up the Jews came in two telegrams on Sept. 22—one from Gen. Alfred Jodl in Berlin to the German army commander in Copenhagen, and the other from Hitler's foreign minister, Joachim von Ribbentrop, to Werner Best, Germany's governor of Denmark. It was Best who told his friend Duckwitz what was about to happen; it is very likely he knew what Duckwitz would do with that information.

The roundup had been thoroughly planned. Beginning on Aug. 31, armed men had broken into the offices of leaders of Copenhagen's Jewish community and stolen files containing the names and addresses of Denmark's Jews. By the time two German cargo ships docked in Copenhagen harbor on Wednesday, Sept. 29, newly arrived Gestapo and other German police were prepared to carry out raids on Jewish homes.

What happened next was a miracle of compassion, decency and courage not seen on such a scale in any other country in occupied Europe. First, George Duckwitz acted. Duckwitz had worked for a German company in Copenhagen before the war and was fluent in Danish. Returning with his wife to Denmark's capital after Germany invaded, he had become friendly with many Danes. Still, those friendships hardly explain the enormity of his decision to try to save Denmark's Jewish population, and he said very little about it then or after the war.

After Duckwitz brought his alarming message to Hans Hedtoft, the Danish politician swiftly spread word to the Jewish community, and it was instantly passed on to Jews and non-Jews alike. Duckwitz's act of courage was multiplied thousands of times over by individual Danes who quickly sounded the alarm throughout the country—by phone and word of mouth—and took whatever action was necessary to hide Jews from the Nazis and spirit them out of the country to Sweden.

Most Danish Jews knew they had

to get away, but where could they go? Who would hide them? Most Jewish Danes did not have non-Jewish friends or business associates they could turn to for help.

One Jewish girl and her family, burdened by layers of clothes, bags and suitcases, headed for the central railroad station in Copenhagen and found thousands of others who seemed just as lost and afraid. “Finally,” she wrote, “we reach our destination, a small town, at the end of the line, at the open sea, enveloped by endless darkness. Hundreds and hundred seem to have summoned each other to this place. Unhappy, tortured people. From the small railway station they seep in all directions, cautiously they are being taken into the lowly fishermen’s cabins, stuffed together like sheep in their enclosure, ignorant about their fate.”

As discomfiting as the upheaval was, their fate was life rather than death, and help awaited at every turn.

Mendel Katlev was a 36-year-old factory foreman with a wife and two children. When he heard the news, he rushed home to prepare his family to flee, but he had no idea where they would go. On the tram ride home, he saw the same conductor who had been punching his ticket every day for many years.

“How come you’re going home so early today?” the conductor asked. “Are you sick?”

Katlev told the man the Germans planned to round up all the Jews.

“That’s awful,” the conductor said. “What are you going to do?”

“I don’t know. We’ll have to find a place to hide.”

“Come to my house,” insisted the conductor. “Get your wife and your children and bring them all to my house.”

Katlev was stunned. “But you don’t know me,” he said. “You don’t even know my name, and I don’t know yours.”

The conductor held out his hand and introduced himself. Mendel Katlev was no longer alone.

Similar selfless acts occurred throughout Denmark in the weeks following Duckwitz’s warning. A prominent Jewish physician remembered that a woman he had never met

## ‘Looking back, I saw two people kneeling on the sand. ... Their hands were lifted toward heaven.’

—Herbert Pundik

approached him, introduced herself and said calmly, “This is my address and here is the key to my house if you should ever need it.”

Ellen Nielsen, a widow with six children, worked as a fishmonger on the docks. One day two young brothers who worked in the flower market next door asked if she knew any fishermen who would take them to Sweden. They said they needed to escape the Germans who were coming for the Jews.

“But if the Germans are arresting the Jews,” she asked, “what are you boys doing walking around here? Shouldn’t you be in hiding?”

“Yes, but we don’t know where to hide.”

“You can stay at my house,” she said without hesitation.

She arranged for their successful escape and went on to help many others, none of whom she had known before. Over the next several weeks more than 100 Jews passed through her tiny house and on to Sweden.

As word spread about these events, more and more Danes stepped in to help. More than 2,000 Jews found safe haven in a hospital while the staff arranged for their escape to Sweden. The Scandinavian Bookstore, directly across the street from Copenhagen’s Gestapo headquarters, was used as a gathering place to shelter Jews while plans were made for boats to take them to Sweden. Whenever a book by a certain poet was displayed in the window, that was a signal that it was safe to come inside. As many as 600 Jews hid in the store, sometimes for days, before being transported to freedom. This went on for several weeks; the Gestapo never caught on.

Four days elapsed from the time 16-year-old Herbert Pundik and his family left Copenhagen until they

reached Sweden. Two dozen people had helped them directly, or at least knew about their flight—and did not turn them in to German authorities.

“The last I remember of Denmark on that October night was the faint sound of the boat cutting through the water as the fisherman poled away from the shore toward the open sea,” he recalled. “Looking back, I saw two people kneeling on the sand. One was our host, a friend of my father’s; the other was the wife of the fisherman who was going to smuggle us through the German lines from occupied Denmark to neutral Sweden. Their hands were lifted toward heaven.”

Jews who had not been warned, who had not believed the warning or who were too old and sick to leave were captured. A few others had found the warning credible but viewed their capture as inevitable.

The prisoners were too few to fill even one of the two ships the Germans had waiting in the harbor. But those unfortunates had been dragged from their homes and shoved into police vans. At the Jewish Home for the Aged, next door to a synagogue, 150 German police stormed the building and seized everyone there. The Gestapo brutally interrogated all of the elderly, and hit and kicked them when they said they did not know anything about the Danish underground and its operations. The Germans then took everything of value from the synagogue and relieved themselves inside the sanctuary, to openly demonstrate their contempt.

Yet part of the unprecedented success of the rescue must be attributed to the Germans themselves. While the special police and some soldiers treated their prisoners brutally, many German soldiers simply turned a blind eye to the exodus.

By German standards—judged by the string of successes in rounding up Jews in every other country—the attempt in Denmark was a failure. Of the 7,800 Jews in Denmark at the time, 7,220 escaped to Sweden, along with 686 non-Jewish spouses. Only 464 Jews were taken prisoner and transported to Theresienstadt in Czechoslovakia. Thirty people died attempting to escape; some drowned, others committed suicide rather than

risk capture. Up to 100 hid out in the countryside until the war ended. Estimates of the number of non-Jewish Danes who helped in the massive escape range as high as 10,000.

Still, there were no recriminations or reprisals for the escape of Danish Jews against anyone, German or Danish, because the German governor of Denmark, Werner Best, could report to Hitler and Himmler that he carried out his orders, that Denmark was *Judenrein*—cleansed of Jews.

But what of the nearly 500 Jews shipped off to Theresienstadt? The Danes had another miracle in the works. From the moment of the Danish Jews' transport to the camp, the government and the king maintained a flow of inquiries to German headquarters to lobby for their humane treatment. Meanwhile, Danish officials visited the homes of people who had been arrested, to select clothing they might need in the camps. These items were sent, along with a stream of packages containing vitamins and food, to the Danish prisoners.

The Danes, aware of how the German bureaucracy functioned, forwarded their packages with a receipt that had to be signed and returned to the sender. The Germans dutifully followed the rules, signing for the packages and delivering them immediately. All records were maintained in proper German order.

The aid and pressure worked. While thousands of prisoners at Theresienstadt from other countries were routinely sent on to death camps at Auschwitz and elsewhere, the Danish Jews were spared. The few

**'By saving Jews, we saved ourselves. We kept our integrity and honor.'**

—Danish housewife

who perished were ill or old.

A month before the end of the war, the Danish government, working closely with Swedish diplomats, arranged for a convoy of 36 white buses with red crosses painted on the tops and sides to drive the 600 miles from Denmark to Theresienstadt. There they collected the Danish prisoners and drove them through war-torn Germany to Sweden. No other nation was able to spring its citizens from the camps before the war ended.

It was when the Jews returned to Denmark from Sweden and elsewhere in the summer of 1945 that the last of the Danish miracles transpired. They were greeted by cheering crowds, garlands of flowers and signs that proclaimed, "Welcome to Denmark."

As Rabbi Marcus Melchior wrote, "It is Denmark's undying honor, the truly great deed, that the repatriates were met with a hearty 'welcome home': that there was a sincere expression of joy at our good fortune; that many insisted that only now that the Danish Jews were back home was Denmark whole again."

Equally astonishing, most of the Jews returned to find their homes, jobs and businesses intact, ready for them to resume the lives that had been interrupted. Employees had run

companies and shops on their own, drawing only their regular salaries and depositing the profits to the owners' accounts. Homes had been kept in immaculate condition, cleaned and painted, with several days' worth of food stocked in the refrigerators.

Virtually all of the Jews who escaped returned home immediately after the war. Meanwhile, the man at the center of the rescue also returned to Denmark some years after the war ended. Georg Duckwitz had stayed on at the German embassy in Copenhagen until 1945—his heroic treachery undetected by his Nazi masters. After the war he led a distinguished but quiet life as a career diplomat. In 1955, he became the German ambassador to Denmark. In 1971, two years before his death, Duckwitz was honored by Israel as one of the Righteous Among the Nations.

In the years since the miraculous rescue, many Danes have been asked why they made such heroic efforts to save the Jews.

"We helped the Jews because they needed us," a Copenhagen housewife said 20 years after the war. "How could anybody turn their back and not do everything possible to prevent the slaughter of innocent people? ...

"By saving Jews, we saved ourselves. We kept our integrity and honor. We struck a blow for human dignity at a time when it was sorely lacking in the world." •

— — —  
*This article originally appeared in the March/April 2011 issue of World War II magazine, ©2011 Weider History Group. We are reprinting it with permission.*

**The services you need for life.**

Phone • Wireless Phones • Internet  
 Security Systems • My Choice Packages  
 Business Integration



www.srt.com • 858-1200

*Caring for you through all  
 the stages of your life.*



Full Service Pharmacy

Phone: 701-858-6700  
 Toll Free: 1-800-841-7321  
 www.centerforfamilymedicine.net

1201 11th Ave. SW • Minot, ND 58701



**WESTLIE**  
 FORD • LINCOLN • MERCURY

North of the  
 SHA Park at  
 500 South  
 Broadway  
 Minot  
 852-1354



**MONTANA-DAKOTA  
 UTILITIES CO.**

A Division of MDU Resources Group, Inc.

## The Scandinavian Heritage • 22

# Hans Egede: Apostle to Greenland

Sometimes the questions of little boys drive them to adventures that no one could have imagined. Such was the case of Hans Poulsen Egede. He was born Jan. 31, 1684, at Harstad, on an island off the northwest coast of Norway. Hans's father, the resident magistrate of the district, had grown up in a parsonage in Denmark.

Life on the island was hard, but it proved a good training ground for Hans's future. Though his parents were desperately poor, they managed to send him to the university in Copenhagen. He loved history, mathematics and astronomy and had an aptitude for languages. Combining a determination to learn and a stubbornness that refused to quit, Hans graduated in just 18 months and was ordained before his 20th birthday.

After his wedding to Gertrud Rasch, Hans was assigned to a little fishing village in the Lofoten Islands. There he remembered stories from childhood about the Norsemen who had settled Greenland 700 years earlier during the days of Leif Erikson. It had been almost 300 years since there had been contact. Were any of them still alive? Hans had to find out. An "inner voice" told him to go to Greenland and search.

It took 13 years before Hans got the

backing of King Fredrik IV and a group of Bergen merchants who wanted to trade with the Eskimos. The war between Denmark and Sweden could spare no ships or money for the expedition. To prepare for his work as explorer, colonizer and missionary, Hans gathered information on Greenland by talking to sailors.

For 15 arduous years, Hans labored on the west coast of that ice-covered island. It was not easy. He won the confidence of the Eskimos, but the "angokoks" (witch doctors) plotted to kill him. Hans called their bluff and put them out of business. He found ruins of ancient Norse settlements, but no trace of the people. Because the Dutch traders burned down one of his settlements and threatened death to Danes, troops were sent from Denmark. This proved not to be a blessing. Quarreling and drunkenness got the best of them during the long winters. Sometimes they nearly starved before the supply ships arrived in the summer.

Hans began Christian work among the natives and set up trade in furs, whale oil and fish. The hard winters, however, claimed Gertrud's life. Eventually, Hans returned to Denmark where he was in charge of a school to train missionaries for Greenland. He

turned down the offer to be bishop of Trondheim.

In Godthaab ("good hope"), the capital of Greenland, a towering statue of Egede stands on a hill overlooking the city. Hans has been called "the Apostle to Greenland," and his family is still dearly loved by the Eskimos. •



PHOTO BY MARY PAT FINN-HOAG

Author Arland Fiske

.....

*Editor's note: This column is the 22nd in a series by former Minot pastor, Arland Fiske (now living in Texas), retired from ministry in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Fiske has written nine books on Scandinavian heritage. The chapter reprinted here is from his book, "The Best of the Norwegian Heritage, Vol. II."*

*Thank you to our advertisers! —The Scandinavian Heritage Assn.*

**CREATIVE PRINTING**  
*Printing with the Power of Imagination*

1831 BURDICK EXPRESSWAY WEST • MINOT

Call Us... 852-5552

**CONVENIENT CARE CLINIC**

Health Center – Medical Arts  
 400 Burdick Expy E. • Minot

Mon.-Fri. – 9 am-6 pm  
 Sat.-Sun. – Noon-6 pm

For appointments call  
 857-7817 (weekdays)  
 or 857-7383 (weekends)

**TRINITY HEALTH**

**THOMAS**  
 FAMILY  
 Funeral Home

Bradley Thomas • Bryan Thomas

*We are proud of our  
 Swedish Heritage  
 via the  
 Quist and Chelgren (Johnson)  
 lineages.*

# SHA memorials: Gifts that keep on giving

by Jo Ann Winistorfer

When a friend or loved one has just passed away, it's often a struggle to come up with a fitting tribute to that person's memory. Making a gift donation in that person's honor to the Scandinavian Heritage Association is one way to acknowledge how much the deceased meant to you. It's also a way to keep the heritage of our immigrant ancestors alive and well through our beautiful park in Minot's heart.

There are many ways to give a memorial to Scandinavia Heritage Park in

a loved one's memory. For example, you can choose to support a specific project, such as our Heritage House museum. Or, you can choose an ethnic group's project within the park (such as the Danish windmill, Swedish Dala horse, Gol Stave Church, etc.). You can also give a donation directly to the association to be used where needed.

Contributions of \$1,000 or more are acknowledged with a plaque on the Scandinavian Heritage Association Wall of Honor. Lesser amounts of \$25 or more are recognized in the Golden Book of Memory in the SHA headquar-

ters building.

It's a good idea, too, for each of us to sit down with our families to discuss where we would like our own memorials to go someday. We should write down our wishes so that other family members have the information and can follow through with our wishes. Remember that placing a notice in an obituary indicating where memorials are to be sent helps others who wish to honor the deceased.

And finally, the ultimate gift is to become a benefactor of SHA through your estate. It's a way for you to leave a lasting legacy to your Scandinavian heritage as well as a memorial to you or a family member.

We hope you will consider the Scandinavian Heritage Association when you discuss memorial donations or estate gifting. For information, contact the SHA office at (701) 852-9161. •

## Join Us In Preserving the Traditions of Our Proud Heritage

THE SCANDINAVIAN HERITAGE PARK, the only park in the world representing all five Nordic countries, hosts thousands of visitors each year from around the world; as well as providing a picturesque setting for weddings and family gatherings.

*As a member of the Scandinavian Heritage Association, You help support:*

- Interpretative Tours of the Park
- The Heritage House Museum
- Local School Field Trips
- The Annual "Midsommar Natt"
- "Arts in the Park"
- Seminars on Heritage and Culture
- The on-going preservation and promotion of Scandinavian traditions, positive values and ethics
- And much, much more!

### MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

#### SUSTAINING MEMBER

\$35.00 per year

Will receive the SHA Membership Package, which includes:

- Membership Card good for 10% off Scandinavian Gift Shop items

- Membership Pin (initial membership)
- The Scandinavian Heritage News, official newsletter of the Association
- Invitation to Annual Banquet and other SHA events
- Annual SHA Gift Packet
- Logo window Sticker

#### SPONSOR MEMBER

\$100.00 - \$499.00 per year

Receives the SHA Membership Package, plus:

- Recognition in Newsletter (one issue)
- One (1) Complimentary Ticket to the Annual Banquet

#### BENEFACTOR MEMBER

\$500.00 and above per year

Receives the SHA Membership Package, plus:

- Recognition in Newsletter (one issue)
- Two (2) Complimentary Tickets to the Annual Banquet

### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

I/We wish to support the Scandinavian Heritage Association at the level checked below:

Sustaining Member     Sponsor Member     Benefactor Member

Yes, I/We give permission to print our name in the SHA publications

Please contact us.     I/We would like to become Volunteer(s) at SHA.

Check enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_     Credit Card:  MasterCard     Visa     Discover     Am. Exp.

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name on Card (please print) \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

*Please mail to Scandinavian Heritage Assn., P.O. Box 862, Minot, ND 58702. Thank You!*

# SCANDINAVIAN SOCIETY NEWS...

## Swedish Heritage Society-NWND NEWS

### Traditional Swedish egg tree welcomes spring



by Bev Jensen, secretary  
Swedish Heritage Society-NWND

Two of our members, Robert Soderstrom and Ila Lovdahl, who recently returned from a trip to Sweden, brought back the Swedish tradition of a decorated Easter tree for our April meeting.

Traditionally, live birch branches are used, but in this case, Bob used dead branches—probably oak or cottonwood found in Oak Park. The pair decorated the tree with different colored feathers and egg-shaped decorations hanging from its branches.

The feathers represent brushing the season to hasten spring's arrival, "to wake people up that spring is here" (see picture). The bright colors help to welcome the season. Smaller trees were made for table decorations.

For our cultural study, Marcella Nelson led us in singing "Mama Lisa's World," known as the "Ride on the Rocking Horse." We sang it in Swedish and English. This may have been taught as a song or spoken as a poem. The Hattitudes entertained with a program in song and jokes.

Svenska Flaggans Dag (Flag Day) was observed on Monday, June 6. Members met at 8:30 a.m. to display our Swedish flags and enjoy coffee in the Heritage Park. We returned at 5 p.m. to enjoy an outdoor potluck meal before removing the flags. At this time, flower crowns were made for sharing at the Midsommar Night Festival on Friday, June 24.

Everyone is welcome to join us for these events! •



Ila Lovdahl and Robert Soderstrom brought the Swedish egg-tree tradition to the April meeting of the Swedish Heritage Society.

## Icelandic Heritage Society NEWS

### Did you know...

Settled by Norwegian and Celtic immigrants during the late 9th and 10th centuries A.D., Iceland boasts the world's oldest functioning legislative assembly, the Althing, established in 930.

• Fallout from the Askja volcano of 1875 devastated the Icelandic economy and caused widespread

famine. Over the following 25 years, 20 percent of the population emigrated, mostly to Canada and the U.S.

Iceland has vast amounts of water—because it rains so much. Icelandic water is so clean and pure that it is piped into the city and to the kitchen taps in the home without any treatment (no chlorination needed).

Urban Icelandic homes do not need a water heater or a furnace for heating. Steam and hot water are

piped into the city from natural geysers and hot springs for use in homes and buildings.

• The weather in Iceland is not as cold as you might think. Winter is a heck of a lot colder in North Dakota than it is in Iceland! •



## Thor Lodge Sons of Norway NEWS



# History lessons on Norwegian royalty

by Rob Odden,  
president  
Thor Lodge 4-067  
Sons of Norway

In late April, Prince William of England and Katherine Middleton were married at Westminster Abbey in London. The reigning monarchs of Denmark, Norway and Sweden were invited to the April 29 wedding. King Harald and Queen Sonja represented the Kingdom of Norway.

Like England, Norway has a long history of royalty. Modern-day Norway is a constitutional monarchy and a parliamentary democracy. King Harald and Queen Sonja will be visiting the United States this Oct. 11-22, including stops in Minnesota and Iowa.

Harald V has reigned since 1991 and is the third king of modern Norway. He and Sonja have two children, Haakon Magnus and Märtha-Louise. Haakon is next in line for the throne.

It is only recently that the law of the land allows women to be in the line of succession. Haakon and his wife, Mette-Marit, have three children.

In early times, Norway was ruled

by regional farmer-kings. Harald Haarfagre (Fairhair) was the first to unify the nation and rule it as a whole. His intended would not wed him unless he were king of the whole country. He vowed not to cut his hair until he had accomplished this task.

Before the 20th century, at various times Norway has shared kings with Denmark or Sweden through royal marriage and peace treaties.

Margaret I, wife of Haakon VI, formed the Kalmar Union. Through this union, Denmark, Norway and Sweden were ruled as one country from 1397 until 1523.

In 1905, Danish Prince Carl and Princess Maud (formerly English princess of Wales) were invited by the Norwegian government to become King and Queen of Norway. Prince Carl agreed on one condition: that the people would decide. The country voted overwhelmingly in favor, and the Storting (parliament) vote was unanimous.

Carl and Maud had been living in England, as she was the daughter of King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra. Carl and Maud's son, Alexander,

was renamed Olav.

Upon arriving in Oslo Fjord early in the morning of Nov. 25, 1905, soon-to-be Haakon was welcomed by the Prime Minister with these words:

"It has been nearly 600 years since the Norwegian people have had a king of their own. Not in all this time has he been solely our own. We have always had to share him with others. Never has he made his home among us. And where the home lies also lies the heart of a nation.

"Today, that all changes. Today, Norway's young king has come to build his home in the capital of our country. Chosen by a free people as a free man to lead this country, he is to be our very own.

"Once again, the king of the Norwegian people will emerge as a powerful, unifying symbol of the new, independent Norway and all that it shall undertake."

Cannons were fired in salute. Throughout the city, church bells were sounded to celebrate Norway's new royal family. The re-establishment of a the national monarchy came to represent a struggle that had been won, a Norway that was forever more free and independent.

• • •

On Monday, June 13, at 6:30 p.m., Rolf Stang, actor/interpreter/entertainer, will perform at a special Sons of Norway event; everyone is welcome.

Also, circle the date "June 24" on your calendar, then join us for Midsummer Night in SHA Park. •

## Dakota Finnish Society NEWS

# Try a Midsummer Night sauna!

by Marion Anderson, president  
Dakota Finnish Society

We are gearing up for Midsummer Night, which is June 24, 2011. The Finn Society is in charge of the bonfire in the pond as well as heating the sauna for the brave ones who wish to partake. Bring your swimsuit and try it out—there is not a more refreshing bath!!

## Update on Brad Tengesdal

As many of you already know, our member Brad Tengesdal was seriously injured on Feb. 16, 2011. He suffered a severe brain injury after a fall from a roof he was working on. Brad is a self-employed carpenter, and the benefit that was held for him was very successful. The family still needs your support and your prayers. Donations



can be sent to "Friends of Brad Tengesdal" at First Western Bank, P.O. Box 1090, Minot, ND 58702.

Brad was brought to Manor Care in Minot after a two-week stay at St.



## *Souris Valley Danish Society NEWS*

# From Denmark to the Great Plains

*Again in this issue, we are highlighting family histories of our members. The following is the history of the Sorensen family, ancestors of Souris Valley Danish Society member Lauren Larson. We hope you enjoy these articles.*

**F**redrik Vilhelm Sørensen was born 2 Nov. 1852 in Sæbyhøj, Sæby Parish, Holbæk County, Denmark, and died 18 April 1930 in Froid, Richland County, Montana. He married Sophie Christensdatter on 21 March 1882 in Denmark, daughter of Christen Thomsen and Maren Christoffersdatter Bang. Sophie was born 20 March 1861 in Ruds-Vedby, Holbæk County, Denmark, and died 7 June 1955 in Medicine Lake, Sheridan County, Montana.

Fredrick was the first of the family to cross the ocean—in 1869, when he was 17 years old. The ship was the White Star Line Royal Mail Steamer, SS Britannic. He came to Minnesota via New York. At this time, Ulysses S. Grant was president.

Fred filed his Declaration of Intention (first naturalization paper) in Brown County, Minnesota, on 22 Jan.

Alexius Rehab in Bismarck. Prior to that, he was in St. Paul for treatment after being transferred there from Minot. On June 1, he will be transferred to Dakota Alpha Rehab Hospital in Mandan.

He is doing amazingly well, considering the extent of his injury. He knows everyone, talks, cracks jokes, walks around, etc. But more rehab is needed for a full recovery, and everyone is very hopeful for that to happen.

Brad's wife, Anna, was born and raised in Finland. They have three sons: Aleks is a musician in Duluth, Minn.; Isak is in premed school in Boulder, Colo., and Jonas just graduated from Minot High School. •

1878. He became a self-made immigration officer, traveling back to New York himself and then to Denmark. He made this trip many times, seven times during one 10-year period. Each time, he would arrange for others to be brought back to Minnesota. He would help them get settled, file on their claims, even write and print for them, filling out forms, etc.

He brought his father, Soren Olsen, over in 1872, then his brother, Ole Sorensen. One sister (last name Jensen) also came over. Fred was the guardian for his sister's children—William, James, Christine and Fred.

In 1882, on his fourth trip back, he attended church and met Sophia Josephine Thomsen. She invited him home for dinner (she and her mother, Maren, had been wanting to go to America). Six weeks later, on 21 March, Fred and Sophia were married.

Sophia had an inheritance coming from her father, but she had to be 21 years of age and not married in order to receive it. Later that spring, the newlyweds, Sophia's mother and others left for the U.S. Sophia was pregnant but while on the boat suffered a miscarriage. Even through all this, they kept the marriage a secret, and Sophia did get the inheritance.

From 1883 to 1901 the couple lived in Storden, Cottonwood County, Minnesota. In the fall of 1901, the family moved to northern Minnesota near the towns of Ulen and Flom. By this time they had 16 children.

During the early part of the 20th century, eight young people from the Sorensen family moved from Minnesota to Sheridan County, Montana, to establish their homes. In 1905, brothers Alfred and Joseph traveled in a covered wagon across the prairies of North Dakota to south of Dagmar, Montana. The wagon was their home, but the first morning brought a surprise. They found that thieves had stolen their horses. In haste, Joseph set out to track them. With the help of a bicycle, he traveled 30 miles before sundown. He found the horses tied to

a wagon, minus harnesses. Fearing the thieves were hiding nearby, Joseph quickly rode off with the horses.

After trips for supplies needed for building shelters, they traveled east to find work, for their money was gone.

Having established a sod shack, Alfred returned to marry Annie Torgerson in 1908. Alma (Mrs. Mike Hoff) and Franklin joined the family.

Marie and Lydia Sorensen soon joined their brothers and took land adjoining theirs. The sisters helped by baking, washing and sewing and were repaid by having some of the heavier tasks done for them. At harvest time, the girls worked in cook cars. Marie married Ludwig Wastwet, and Lydia became Mrs. Tom Flick. In 1910, brother David joined the group.

Marie Wastwet (Lauren's grandmother) was blessed with a daughter, Marian (Lauren's mother), in 1911; later, Marian married Lawrence Larson of Voltaire, North Dakota.

Twins born to Marie in 1913 died. A wise Indian midwife named Eliza Decept (Mrs. John Charette) could not speak English but saved Marie's life.

This incident prompted Mr. and Mrs. Fred Sorensen to visit their sons and daughters in 1913, bringing daughters Agnes, Esther and Nina. Only Nina returned with them. Agnes married Martin Torgerson; her twin, Olive, married Elmer Rasmussen. Agnes and Martin bought the Wastwet homestead after Ludwig's death.

In 1915, Joseph married Oma Dean. Two children were born to them. Joseph and Oma both died of influenza in 1918, leaving the children—Freddie and Ruth—to the care of Lydia Flick, then a widow.

Marian and Lawrence Larson had three children, Lauren, Loretta and Gerald. Lauren married Mavis Bergstad of Bergen, North Dakota; they had two children, Lori and Bruce. Lori (Mrs. Richard Nelson) and her first husband, Dirk Grabow, had two children—Natasha (Mrs. Jeremiah Johnson) and Tony. Natasha and Jeremiah have one son, Xavier James. •

# Scandinavian Heritage Association

P.O. Box 862  
Minot, ND 58702

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Minot, ND  
58701  
Permit No. 266

Page 16 • June 2011 • SCANDINAVIAN HERITAGE NEWS

## Tracing your Scandinavian ROOTS • 33

### Handle Ancestry.com with care!

by Jo Ann Winistorfer

Perhaps the most widely hyped genealogy resource of our day is the website [Ancestry.com](http://Ancestry.com)—and for good reason. Its ability to link data you enter onto your pedigree chart with information in its vast collection of genealogy records makes it a valuable tool for hunting ancestors. You can even save copies of original records directly to your ancestor's "profile."

Joining Ancestry.com costs money, although you can sign up for a free trial period first. You then pay either monthly (\$19.95 per month; \$29.95 for the international version) or annually, by credit card. You save by paying by the year. A membership allows you access from your own computer. However, many libraries now subscribe to Ancestry.com, so you may be able to access the site that way. It won't be as convenient, but it's free!

Your first "assignment" once you log on is to start entering your family data onto a pedigree chart, which can be broken up into family group sheets or profiles of individuals at will. It's exciting to see your list of relatives grow. It's especially fun when you upload photos of the people to your pedigree. You choose one picture to represent each person on your tree; other photos can be added as well and viewed by clicking on the "Media Gallery" you build.

Especially exciting is when a tiny green leaf in the right-hand corner of an individual's pedigree "box" beckons you to click for more information on that person. You click on the leaf and are taken to a page listing resources containing your ancestor's name. It might be a census (with names of family members residing in the same household); it might be a death index; it might be a World War I draft card signed by your great-grandfather.

Or, it could be information from someone else's family tree containing the same ancestors! You can then compare family trees and correspond with others who may be researching the same roots. Sometimes you find out 10 or 12 people are exploring the same lineage. Here's how it works: You click on the "trees" that contain info on the same ancestor and meld it into your tree. If, for example, someone has a marriage date for your mutual ancestor but you don't, you can add that data to your tree.

It's important that you do your homework first: Just because the name of the person on *their* tree is the same as that of *your* ancestor, doesn't mean it's your relative! This is especially true when researching ancestors who have patronymic names (the system formerly used in Scandinavia).

Another caution: You can't assume that all the information they've compiled is accurate! So check it out!!!!

I'm no expert—just thought I'd share my thoughts on this genealogy resource from my vantage point as a beginner who is now "hooked." •