

# THE LARSMONT LINE

Larsmont Community Club • Mid-Summer 2015



Home of the  
Little Red Schoolhouse  
Established 1914

If you are a resident  
of Larsmont,  
full time or visit part time,  
we invite you to get more  
involved in the  
community and meet  
your neighbors.  
Join the Larsmont  
Community Club for  
only \$10 per year.  
Paid members get  
one free use of the  
Little Red Schoolhouse  
during the year.

## Picnic Lunch and Reunion on August 1



The annual Larsmont Community Picnic will be held again this year at the Larsmont Little Red Schoolhouse, this time on **Saturday, August 1**, beginning at 11:30 a.m.

If you're taking a vacation, it's the ideal time to come to the lake. If you live in Larsmont, take a couple of hours out from your hectic week and relax with friends. Who can come? Everyone in Larsmont, full-time resident, part-time resident or visitor, is invited to the picnic. You don't have to be a member.

Once again, the Larsmont Community Club will sponsor the event and provide food and beverages for a flat fee of \$7 per adult and \$3 per child under 7.

The luncheon is a combination of hot dogs, brats, salads and drinks, provided by the Larsmont Community Club, and potluck desserts consisting of cookies and world-famous Minnesota bars, provided by those in attendance.

No RSVP is needed, so do show up and support the club and community. It's one way to catch up on what's happening in Larsmont and to tour the historic community Schoolhouse.

Attendance averages 45-50. It would be great to meet more people! Put a mark on the calendar right now and join us on the 1st. Feel free to bring a friend.

## Planning for a Community Rummage Sale

The Larsmont Community Club is planning a community-wide rummage sale at the Larsmont Little Red



Schoolhouse September 10-12 and would like to know if you're interested in participating. This will allow anyone who has wanted to hold a sale but has been reluctant to organize one of their own to participate and recognize returns from sales, while helping to maintain the Schoolhouse at the same time. An alternate date in October has also been reserved.

The organizing group is primarily interested to know who might be interested in participating. There are three options for

participation: Bringing items to the school to be sold for you by the volunteers; Have your own sale and area on the school grounds; Simply

donate your items to the sale, any and all proceeds becoming a donation to the Schoolhouse. The fundraiser asks for a 10% donation of sales, up to \$25, to be made to the Schoolhouse.

At this point, the event is still being organized. Please Contact Marlys Wisch at 218-834-5988, [mwisch@lakeconnections.net](mailto:mwisch@lakeconnections.net) by **July 31** if you'd like more information on how to take part in this year's sale. The hope is to make this an annual event.

Color versions of this and past newsletters are located on the Larsmont Website

[www.Larsmont.org](http://www.Larsmont.org)

## 2015 Community Club Annual Meeting Minutes

The Larsmont Community Club held its annual meeting on May 11, 2015, at the Little Red Schoolhouse. The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m. by President Bill Tranah. The minutes of the 2014 meeting were read and approved, as was the financial report.

**Old Business:**  
The Club will continue to have D.A.C. mow the schoolhouse lawn.

**New Business:**  
Old World Windows has been notified that we should have the funding for them to do the final repairs to the windows in 2016.

Marlys, delegate on the Lake County Recreation Board, reported on the new method of funding from the Board. The Club will now get an annual allotment and will not have to write grants each year, only submitting two vouchers each year for our allotment. Our grant submission was for \$6,500 a year starting this year, 2015, and we can “bank” what we don’t spend and roll it into the next year to fund our “new projects.”

**Projects Day** – Dale Isackson reported on the new type of bulb he will be using to light our flag, which will provide many more hours of use and be more cost effective. Marlys mentioned that the ash tree in back yard looks dead and may need to be cut down. Bill suggested painting just the white sections of the schoolhouse this year. There is a new type of paint (Zinsser’s) that should last longer. Our Projects Day will be July 8, starting at 9 a.m.; backup day is July 29. We discussed the damage made to our garage door. David Falk will follow through, first contacting Lake Connections, whom we feel did the damage, then the door company and our insurance company.

Discussion on usage of the schoolhouse: keeping the “heritage theme,” whenever we consider what to allow. We will not need to change our by-laws. We will keep our security deposit at \$40 per event. Marlys will add one statement on our security contract, “if any damage, client will be responsible for full extent of repairs.” We will continue to ask for the “up to 10%” contribution of the profits of any event. If it is someone outside of the Larsmont membership list or area, we will ask them to become members. Marlys will have control over who, what, when. Marlys will also develop a list of what is expected of clients, to be shared with them when

booking. We also discussed having at least two members of LCC as backup people to open and close the schoolhouse for events when Marlys is not available. Will need to get keys made.



President Bill Tranah and Secretary/Treasurer Marlys Wisch conduct the proceedings at the May 2015 Community Club Annual Meeting.

[Tongue in cheek] Celebration for 2114: Paul asked who wants to volunteer for a committee to start planning for the next centennial celebration in 2114. He had made the request in the newsletter, but no one contacted him!

For the annual picnic, we discussed having a daytime Saturday event, maybe about 4 hours, perhaps 10 a.m.-2 p.m., possibly to be catered. Our first choice for date is August 1, backup will be July 25. Bill Miller will contact the possible caterer. Ideas for entertainment are: music, races, games, arts display(s), clowns, face painting, speaker(s), ongoing activity of some sort. Need to form a committee.

Other ideas for events at the school: community-wide rummage sale; Marlys will contact Renee Crassweller for her expertise. Each household that wants to be involved will be responsible for their own “produce” – getting it to the school, setting it up, pricing it and selling it.

Marlys gave an update on Gustav Mattson and family. Will pursue this further.

**Election of Officers:**

All current officers were willing to run again, M/S/C by unanimous ballot our officers are: President – Bill Tranah; Vice-President – Margaret Glass; Secretary/Treasurer – Marlys Wisch; Grounds Keeper – David Falk; Flag Tender – Dale Isackson; Editor-in-Chief – Paul Hayden.

Respectfully submitted: Marlys Wisch, Secretary/Treasurer.

## Larsmont Yesterday - a History [Pt. 5]

*The following is the fifth and final excerpt as written and illustrated from the short history book Larsmont Yesterday, written by Oliver Isackson (1906-1970) and published in July 1980 by Irene Hill Norgard. Part 1 was published in the Summer 2011 edition of The Larsmont Line, Part 2 was published in the Spring 2013 edition, Part 3 in the Summer 2013 edition and Part 4 in the Spring 2014 edition, all available online at [www.Larsmont.org](http://www.Larsmont.org).*

### MISCELLANEOUS

The early days were not without tragedies, as well as many happy occasions, of course. The first known casualty was the death of the father of the Thompson brothers, who was killed on the railroad crossing at the site of the depot. In 1909, a forest fire raged all along the lakeshore. During the summer 1911, Victor Sjoblom lost two cows that had wandered onto the railroad track and were struck by the train. This was a great loss to them.

On April 29, 1914, Esther Strom, aged 18, died in a Duluth hospital following surgery, and was buried in Duluth. On October 29, 1915, the post office in the John Strom home was robbed while everyone was attending a meeting at the schoolhouse. On March 17, 1918, little Ina Linnes Hendrickson, 1½ years old, drowned in their well. The funeral was held in the schoolhouse. On January 26, 1919, two-month-old Victor Daniel Sjoblom died, and the funeral was held at the schoolhouse.

In February of 1918, the Carl Wahlberg home was burned to the ground in a snow storm.

October 12, 1918, was the great forest fire, when those living on the hillside took refuge in the homes along the shore. The only place it crossed the tracks was at the Hickox place, which was burned down. Peter Villa sat smoking his pipe on a haystack while watching his house burn down! Six cars of Home Guards from Two Harbors came to help in fighting the fire. The last forest fire in this area was in April 1953, and it was then that the Larsmont Volunteer Fire Department was organized.

On June 7, 1919, Andrew Barthell went to Duluth and died while walking on the sidewalk. His funeral service was held at the schoolhouse.

Once some Larsmont fishermen were trapped on the ice and were rescued by the tug *Edna G.* of Two Harbors.

In 1919, the schoolhouse was closed from November 20 to December 15 because of the Spanish Flu, which had invaded every home. Out of a population of 104 persons, 56 were bedridden. Fortunately there were

no deaths. At that time, Jennie Strom, who later became a foreign missionary, went from home to home caring for the sick. Later on, the community gave her a surprise party to show their appreciation. They had collected \$18. Mrs. Peter Erickson also carried soup to the sick and milked their cows.

One day in the early '20s, little George Wahlberg, age 5, decided he was going to help his father out in the potato field, some distance from the house, and so informed his mother. Somewhere along the way he took a wrong turn and ended up in the woods. After several hours, his parents discovered he was missing and sounded the alarm. Men from Larsmont as well as Two Harbors came to help in the search. In the meantime, George had walked for several miles, crossed the Knife River (fortunately it was very low at the time) and ended up at a strange house. The lady tried to find out who this little boy was, even coaxed him with candy, but since George could only speak Swedish yet, and the lady only spoke English, she got nowhere with him. The story had a happy ending, however. Later that day the searchers found George and reunited him with his parents. The only thing that impressed him was the bag of candy the nice lady had given him!

Other tragedies occurred in later years. Arvid Johnson was accidentally killed near Two Harbors in 1927. Helmer Hill died of diabetes in 1931 at the age of 15. In 1932, Edwin Evenson, husband of Elsie Strom, was struck by a train while crossing the tracks in a truck and was instantly killed. Roger Johnson died of tularemia in 1932. Harry Hill, 19, died of injuries sustained in an auto accident on the highway near Larsmont in January 1940. Glen, the young son of the Elof Andersons, was struck and killed by a car while riding his bike on the highway near their home, in 1953. One of our very first settlers, Louis Thompson, died on February 17, 1939. Several of our Larsmont youths died in the prime of life, either accidentally or from illness: John Coston, Dick Nyquist, Wilbert Wahlberg, Clifford Wahlberg and Edwin Sjoblom.

On the other hand, a number of our residents lived to be more than 90 years of

### Larsmont Community Club

701 Larsmont Road  
Larsmont, MN 55616

#### President

Bill Tranah

#### Vice President

Margaret Glass

#### Secretary/Treasurer

Marlys Wisch

218-834-5988

[mwisch@lakeconnections.net](mailto:mwisch@lakeconnections.net)

#### Building/Grounds

David Falk

#### Flag Tender

Dale Isackson

#### Newsletter Editor

Paul L. Hayden

Visit the  
Community  
Website at:

[www.Larsmont.org](http://www.Larsmont.org)

- Community News
  - Calendar of Events
  - Links to Resources
  - Story Contributions
- Help keep the website active.

Send your info to:  
[info@larsmont.org](mailto:info@larsmont.org)

[www.larsmont.org](http://www.larsmont.org)

Go to  
[www.Larsmont.org](http://www.Larsmont.org)  
for parts One  
through Four of  
this short history  
book by Irene Hill  
Norgard.



## Larsmont Yesterday - continued

age: John Nyquist, Eric Johnson and Albert Montague all reached the age of 92; Barbara Lounsberry died at 97 and Ole H. Isackson was 98.

Among the happier occasions were: A surprise party given for Mr. and Mrs. John Strom to celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary on April 22, 1914; and a party given in the schoolhouse honoring Theodore Thompson on his 75th birthday, February 21, 1938.

Among the early home weddings in Larsmont were: Oliver and Vera (Hill) Isackson, 1927; Peter and Helen (Sjoblom) Ohlin; Charles and Margaret (Hendrickson) Whittaker, 1930. There were two weddings in the schoolhouse: William and Evodea (Barthell) Matas, and Magnus and Henrietta Jensen.

We eagerly looked forward to each wedding in Larsmont, for that meant a shivaree! No doubt more than one cow had to surrender her bell for an evening every now and then, and mothers lost their pots and pans for a while, too. Some newlyweds really made us work for our "reward," and the shivaree went on and on until they gave us some money. Then we'd buy ice cream and goodies, and go to someone's home to celebrate. The last shivaree in Larsmont was held in the early 1940s.

Other items of interest: Saxoni Erickson was born on a ship in mid-ocean, coming from Sweden in 1905. The name of the ship was *Saxonia*, from which he got his name.

In 1943, the Albert Montagues had a dog, part police and Great Dane, who was accepted for duty in the K-9 Corps and was awaiting shipping orders.

In 1933, David Anderson, one of the "Singing Fishermen," had a close call when his boat tipped over in the lake. He shouted to comrades Ragnvald Sannes and Helmer Hill, who eventually came to his aid. They were so far away that they thought it was a loon calling, but after a few minutes they realized that it was David.

Several celebrities have stayed in the cabins in Larsmont in years past, such as country-western singer Jeanie Seeley, the Everly Brothers and Patty Berg.

### SOME HUMOROUS HAPPENINGS

As in all small communities, Larsmont had its share of "humorous happenings." In most instances, names will be omitted to protect the innocent ... (or guilty?).

One evening at dusk, a young Larsmont lad was riding his bike on one of the side roads. He heard a rustling in the bushes and was certain it was a bear coming out of the woods. Instead of pedaling all the harder, he jumped off his bike and began to run, trusting his legs to get him away from the scene more quickly than his bike could! It turned out that it wasn't a bear, but just a neighbor woman taking a shortcut through the woods.

\* \* \*

Back in the late 1920s, when everyone in Larsmont was still on the same party line, a little first-grader was walking home from school one afternoon when she came face to face with the family's two pigs. Now, she wasn't at all fond of pigs, so (she) ran for home and mother as fast as she could. But when she got there, mother was nowhere to be found. Going to the telephone, she rang their (own) familiar ring, knowing if mother was near a telephone, she would answer. When mother got on the phone, she heard the tearful

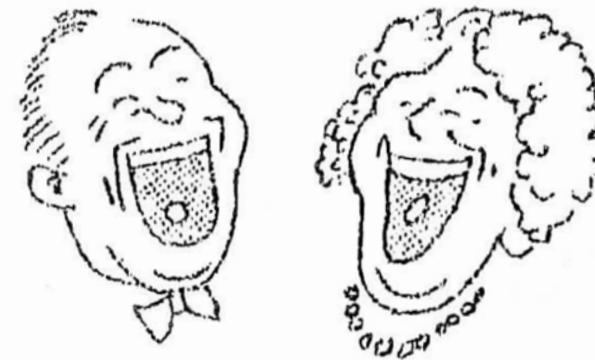
voice crying, "Ma! The pigs are out!" She tried to console her little girl, and promised to send help. She was about as far from home as she could be, visiting a distant neighbor – so she called a neighbor to take her daughter to their home until "Ma" would stop by for her.

\* \* \*

From time to time, some of the men would take to "shining" deer at night. One such night, this particular family was trying their luck. Suddenly their flashlight picked up some eyes shining in the dark ... and BANG! When they went to see how big the deer was all they found was one very dead cat that had been sitting on a woodpile!

\* \* \*

One of the local fishermen was having his dock fixed, and had hired some neighboring boys to help him with it. Suddenly, while



standing on the dock, he lost his balance and fell into the water, completely over his head. When he came up, sputtering, he had one hand firmly placed on his shirt pocket and the other in his hip pocket – apparently the places where he kept his money – and he wanted to make sure that it was safe. The boys had to quickly run behind the fish shanty so he wouldn't see them laughing!

\* \* \*

One year the William Hills were raising two little pigs, to be butchered in the fall. They went on a short trip one day and left enough food and milk for the pigs to last until they'd return. Well, apparently the pigs made "hogs" of themselves and when the family came home that evening, they found that one of the pigs had overeaten and had burst wide open! The other one survived, however.

\* \* \*

As stated previously (in this book), there were a number of visiting ministers who stayed in various homes from time to time as they passed through Larsmont. A young boy asked one of them, who usually only had a briefcase with him on his journeys, "You don't take much with you, do you? Only your pajamas and a toothbrush...." – to which the minister replied, "Oh, I don't even have to carry a toothbrush. I find plenty of them in the homes where I stay!"

\* \* \*

In the early days of tourist cabins, before they became more plentiful, they would often be filled for many miles up and down the shore. One evening the John Hendricks wanted to go out for a few hours, so they asked a young couple to come and stay at their home – all of their cabins were filled, so all they would have to do was to inform any incoming tourists of that. Shortly a couple stopped by, and the conversation went something like this:

Tourist: "Do you have a vacancy?"

She: "No, we're all filled."

Tourist: "How far up are they filled?"

She: "All the way to the top!"

The tourist was heard to mutter as he turned away, "Smart Alecs." Of course, he meant how far up the shore were they filled.

\* \* \*

Often when the children started school, they could speak very little English ... mostly Swedish.

Apparently one little tot had learned some nursery rhymes at home, and when it came time to recite "Old Mother Hubbard," it came out that "She went to the *skåp* and the *skåp* was bare!" (*Skåp* means cupboard.)

\* \* \*

In the olden days, there was very little wasted – whether it be food or clothes. If someone outgrew an article of clothing, it was simple to find someone who it would fit. One teenaged boy could no longer fit into his "long johns" – it seemed that they shrank when his mother washed them. One of the neighborhood girls was about the right size, so over loud protests, she was chosen to inherit them. Imagine! A bashful young girl wearing *boys'* underwear! She hoped nobody ever found out about it.

\* \* \*

We are uncertain about the first automobile in Larsmont, but one day Olaf Nordquist had an unnerving experience in his Model T. He was driving down the road, with John Hendrickson as his passenger – no doubt holding onto the steering wheel for dear life on those bumpy roads – when off came the steering wheel in his hands! The car just kept on going – into the ditch. No harm was done – they were able to fasten the wheel back on, got the car out on the road again and went on their merry way – no doubt a bit "shook up" from the experience.

\* \* \*

In those early days, everyone in the community knew everyone else – even to



## Larsmont Yesterday - continued



each family's dog. How many of these can you remember from the 1920s and 1930s? *Happy Wahlberg, Smokey Erickson, Queen Montague, Mitzi Meyers, Belle, Fay and Spud Hill, Bruno Isackson, Teddy Sjoblom, Ring and Tootsie Thompson?*

Once the Thompsons even had a dog that could sing. Tollof would begin to sing, "*Kan Du Glömma Gammal Norge*" and the dog would sit right up and begin howling along with Tollof's singing!

\* \* \*

Then there were the Sears, Roebuck & Co. and Montgomery Ward catalogs, which had numerous uses before they were through. First and foremost, of course, was to order whatever was needed, for in those days one couldn't go to town very often to shop. Then, for those immigrants who didn't understand English very well yet, the catalog was a great help in learning the language and what different articles were called. The catalogs also could turn a regular chair into a highchair for a little tot – two or more catalogs put him just at the right height to eat at the table with grownups! Little girls could cut paper dolls and have hours and hours of fun with them. Then last but not least, the catalog found its way to the little house out back....

And while on that subject – one day a "man of the house" came in from out there, laughing hilariously.

"Now I've seen everything," he said. "They even print instructions ... 'Match this notch with notch on back!'" It seems his wife had decided to get rid of some old dress patterns, and so had carried them to the little house out back – complete with "instructions" printed on each piece!

\* \* \*

No doubt there would be many, many more tales to tell of life in our community, but these are just a few that came to mind.

**LARSMONT TODAY** [as written in 1980]

Before this decade of the 1980s has passed, it will be 100 years since Larsmont's first settlers arrived on these shores.

A number of those who were born and raised in Larsmont chose to settle here permanently after marriage, and raised their families here. And the pupils of our first

school in the Skomars' home are now the "old folks," with grandchildren and great-grandchildren of their own.

Our oldest living resident at this writing is Mrs. Hannah Barthell, who was 96 years old on July 8, 1980. She has lived in Larsmont for 66 years.



This 1959 picture shows Mrs. Skomars (left) and Hannah Barthell near the Barthell 1914 home in Larsmont. Hannah established five Barthell's Cabins in 1935, eventually 10, and lived to be 97. Courtesy Bill Miller.

Some who left Larsmont years ago to seek their fortunes elsewhere have now come back "home" to spend their retirement years in this great little community.

Many of the first homes are still standing, although some have been remodeled and modernized through the years. Apparently the rural atmosphere appeals to many, for new homes are being built and new families are moving in.

Larsmont has produced many

talented people – artists, poets, etc. – either "native-born" or through marriage to one of our residents. We think it is fitting to end our book with this very appropriate poem by one of our own.

### One Thing Remains

I wake to music, soft and sweet,  
Or sometimes to the tune of "rock."  
She woke to roosters' crowing din,  
And it was only four o'clock!

I press a button; coffee perks  
While I am in my shower bath.  
She made a fire; as water boiled,  
Stepped out and walked the "little path."

I stack the dishes in their trays,  
Then vacuum through the living room,  
She filled the dishpan full and hot,  
And picked up dust with cloth and broom.

Old-fashioned, modern, was, and is –  
One thing remains the same today.  
The love and pride she felt for us,  
I took from her and give away.

– Ruth Wahlberg



*Community Picnic & Reunion*  
*Saturday, August 1, 2015*  
*11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.*

**Our Famous Great Community Gathering**

**Remember the Date**  
**Make Your Plans Now**

This is our annual gathering of the community – a chance to meet your neighbors, catch up on old times, tour the Historic Red Schoolhouse, participate in some classic picnic games, use the spiffy biffy and have a Great Time. We really have fun!

### *A Special Time for a Special Neighborhood*

If you're taking a vacation, it's the ideal time to come to the lake. If you live or just visit in Larsmont, take a couple of hours out from your hectic week and relax. Who can come? Everyone!

***Saturday will be a Great Day for the Get-together***

**Bring the Whole Family**

**\$7 per person, \$3 for children under 7, includes meal**

Our picnic basket will contain hot dogs, brats, salads  
and includes coffee, pop and iced tea.

**Please help with dessert by bringing some Bars or Cookies**

Sponsored by Larsmont Community Club



*Larsmont Calendar*

**August -**  
*Larsmont Schoolhouse Annual Picnic*  
August 1 Schoolhouse

**September -**  
*Agate Bay Crafters*  
Sept. 4-5 Schoolhouse

*Larsmont Community*  
*Rummage Sale*  
Sept. 10-12 Schoolhouse

*Pioneer School Days*

**October -**  
*Agate Bay Crafters*  
Oct. 2-3 Schoolhouse

*Pioneer School Days*

The volunteer painting/scraping group took aim at the lower boards of the Larsmont Schoolhouse on July 8. Pictured, clockwise from upper left: Marlys Wisch supervises David Falk, Kathy Falk and Margaret Glass; (right) David Falk has the scraping down pat; (lower right) Bill Tranah works on leveling out inside doors; (lower left) Bill Miller scrapes the panels in the back; (center) Cindy Hayden (hands only) tackles the side stairs. Photos by Paul Hayden.

[www.larsmont.org](http://www.larsmont.org)

*Scraping Painters care for the Schoolhouse*

Once again there was activity to help preserve the Larsmont Schoolhouse. The annual Project Party was held on July 8 with volunteers scraping and painting the side

stairs and white underpinnings of the building. The red siding did not need paint this year. Pictured here are just a few of this year's happy painters and valued volunteers.



*Larsmont*  
*Community Club*  
701 Larsmont Road  
Larsmont, MN 55616



*Home of the Little Red Schoolhouse*