

THE LARSMONT LINE

Larsmont Community Club • Summer 2019

Annual Fun Day to be Held August 3



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 \$15 per year.
Paid members get
one free use of the
Little Red Schoolhouse
during the year.

Visit the
Community
Website at:
www.Larsmont.org

- Community News
- Calendar of Events
- Links to Resources
- Story Contributions

Help keep the website active.

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



The annual Larsmont Community **Fun Day** will be held this year at the Larsmont Little Red Schoolhouse, **Saturday, August 3, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.**

Open to the entire community and surrounding area, there will be food, games and entertainment. Membership in the Larsmont Community Club is not necessary to attend.

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.

Current plans call for Picnic Fare: hot dogs or sloppy joes, bags of chips and dessert for a flat fee. Beverages will include pop, water and coffee. Larsmont desserts, which will consist



of cookies and world-famous Ole & Lena bars, provided potluck by those in attendance.

Once again, there will be a musical trio to provide entertainment during the day. The picnic committee plans to have board and other games available. A **Fun Day** for all.

A Silent Auction of donated items will be held, with bidding ending at 2 p.m. Proceeds benefit maintenance of the Schoolhouse. If you have items to donate, contact Marlys Wisch at 218-834-5988.



At the Annual Meeting This Year



Minutes of Larsmont Community Club Annual Board Meeting, May 13, 2019, 7 p.m., Schoolhouse.

Attendees: Marlys Wisch, Jon and Kay Anderson, David and Margaret Glass, Cindy and Paul Hayden, Bill and Karen Hermanson, Dale Isackson, Margaret Larson, Bill Mohar, Kory and Nikki Thurnau, Bill Tranah.

President Bill Tranah called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

Minutes of May 7, 2018 meeting, M/S/C to approve as written.

Financial report: Income/expenses for 2018, M/S/C to approve as written, with one addition, the balance in the checkbook as of 5/13/2019, is \$13,974.28.

Old Business:

Bill T. shared information about the chimney work. It did not get completed last year as expected. We asked for an estimate from a different chimney expert. Work will get completed this year, will be done as close to historical accuracy as possible. First estimate person was notified that he is no longer needed.

New Business:

M/S/C to continue having the Lake County D.A.C. mow our lawn.

Building inspection projects and bids, and data sent to the Lake County Recreation Board. Estimates were asked for and received. Key projects listed by the Building Inspector, we prioritized the work: 1) chimney repair; 2) floor joists, insulation, insulation in attic, electrical work-several items; 3) flooring – good cleaning and complete wax job; 4) outside trim work and painting. Agate Electric, Brenna Carpentry and Remodeling, Duluth Tuckpointing and Chimney Repair. Work will be done between 2019-2021. All forms, estimate copies and expense report have been submitted to the Lake County Rec. Board.

M/S/C to approve costs of all schoolhouse building work and estimates.

Projects Day: painting porches, skirting of front wall, one red wall (if there is time), white trim, landscaping, wash windows. Projects Day is set for June 8, 2019, 8 a.m., lunch will be provided.

New projects: there is a dip in Larsmont Road by the culvert. Lake County is planning on redoing the Larsmont Road. Suggestion – build a Little Free Library to be set at the driveway, leave a book, take a book concept. Will need volunteer to maintain books, library when necessary. Suggestion: build little library to look like the schoolhouse.



Suggestion – have volunteers open the schoolhouse once a month, in the summertime only, dress to the period, be historians for our building and Larsmont in general. We would ask for donations. Create a docent position. Have archives ready to be read, offer coffee, tea and local history. Duane Madison is willing to volunteer one Saturday a month, he will work with the volunteers. Duane will share names of those on the big picture of the July 4, 1925, community picnic.

No decision was made on any of these projects/suggestions.

M/S/C to reimburse Marlys \$52.83 for costs of printing at Paper Hog.

Annual Fun Day/Picnic: August 3, 2019, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. We will not serve fruit. We will change the cost of the lunches to a flat price of \$5.00 and \$1.00 for beverage. The \$5.00 will include either a hot dog or a sloppy joe with chips and a dessert. Desserts will be donated.

Election of Officers: M/S/C to nominate, elect, accept the slate of current officers: President – Bill Tranah; Vice President – Margaret Glass; Secretary/Treasurer – Marlys Wisch; Grounds Keeper – David Falk; Flag Tender – Dale Isackson; Editor in Chief – Paul Hayden.

Adjourn at 8:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted Marlys Wisch, Secretary/Treasurer.

What's Happening at the Little Red Schoolhouse

Larsmont Calendar

– July –

Scenic 61 Crafters – Homemade craft items
Friday & Saturday, July 19 & 20, 9 a.m.
Larsmont Little Red Schoolhouse

– August –

Larsmont CC Annual Fun Day & Picnic
August 3, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.
Larsmont Little Red Schoolhouse

Agate Bay Crafters
Friday-Saturday, August 9-10, 9 a.m.
Larsmont Little Red Schoolhouse

Scenic 61 Crafters – Homemade craft items
Friday-Saturday, August 16-17, 9 a.m.
Larsmont Little Red Schoolhouse

– September –

Agate Bay Crafters
Friday-Saturday, September 6-7, 9 a.m.
Larsmont Little Red Schoolhouse

Scenic 61 Crafters – Homemade craft items
Friday-Saturday, September 20-21, 9 a.m.
Larsmont Little Red Schoolhouse

20/20 Art Show
Friday-Saturday, September 27-28, 9 a.m.
Larsmont Little Red Schoolhouse

– October –

Agate Bay Crafters
Friday-Saturday, October 4-5, 9 a.m.
Larsmont Little Red Schoolhouse

Scenic 61 Crafters – Homemade craft items
Friday-Saturday, October 18-19, 9 a.m.
Larsmont Little Red Schoolhouse

– November –

Scenic 61 Crafters – Homemade craft items
Friday-Saturday, November 15-16, 9 a.m.
Larsmont Little Red Schoolhouse



– December –

Julebyen Christmas Village
Friday-Sunday, December 6-8
(more info at www.julebyen.us)
Knife River, Minnesota

Scenic 61 Crafters – Homemade craft items
Friday-Saturday, December 6-7, 9 a.m.
In conjunction with Julebyen
Larsmont Little Red Schoolhouse

Larsmont CC Project Day Covers the Boards, and More

Volunteers of the Larsmont Community Club gathered on June 8, 2019, to tackle several springtime tasks, including weeding, pruning and application of new paint to the porches of the Little Red Schoolhouse.

These annual Project Days are part of the Club's way to manage the upkeep of the Schoolhouse through its Building Fund. This year, the treads of the porch stairways were given an additional coat of protective paint, while work was done on the side porch to cover and preserve the wood, ensuring more life for the structure.

Additional painting time may be scheduled later in the year, but for now, the single workday seems to have covered most of the needs of the building this year. Thanks to all who participated.



Save
the
Date

Larsmont Community Club's
Annual Fun Day & Picnic

At the Schoolhouse

August 3, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.
Music, Games, Food and Silent Auction

www.larsmont.org

Knife River Heritage & Cultural Center On Track



By Paul von Goertz
KRHCC Board Member

Knife River is on track to create a Knife River Heritage & Cultural Center at the site of the Knife River Depot. The depot will be one of two remaining Knife River icons to be showcased at the center. The other will be the 35' fish tug *Crusader II*, built by the Larsmont Hill Brothers in 1939 for Carl Erickson of Knife River.

We actually got into the Heritage Center quite by chance. In late fall of 2016, the Lake County Historical Society gifted the Knife River community with the *Crusader II*. This came about when the Society realized that after displaying the boat unprotected on Lighthouse Point in Two Harbors for 34 years, Knife River might be a better steward for it. The boat had a long history with Knife River and several members of the community had demonstrated boat building and boat restoring experience. The Knife River Rec Council, a non-profit, agreed to take possession of the boat until another non-profit could be formed to restore and display it.

While community members searched for a location to display *Crusader II*, the Knife River depot became available. Randy Ellestad, who also owns the Knife River Campground, owned the depot. But the land upon which the depot rested was owned by the St. Louis and Lake County Regional Rail Authority.

In late 2017, a disagreement between Ellestad and the Rail Authority over who was responsible for restoring the depot resulted in the Rail Authority not renewing Ellestad's lease. The depot was faced with an uncertain future, including being demolished. The idea was born to combine both the depot and *Crusader II* at the depot site as historical attractions. Long time Knife River resident Larry Ronning suggested that a "Knife River Heritage & Cultural Center" be developed.

The "Center" idea was presented to the Knife River Community over several community meetings during the winter of 2018. One meeting included an informal survey of residents that revealed both icons were valued and should be displayed at the depot site.

With community support the Center concept moved ahead and since then:

- a non-profit Knife River Heritage & Cultural Center was created thanks to a donation from a Knife River resident that covered legal and accounting expenses
 - a five-year renewable lease signed with the Regional Rail Authority at the cost of \$1 per year
 - *Crusader II* purchased from the Knife River Rec Center for \$1
 - The depot purchased from Randy Ellestad for \$1
 - A challenge match of \$20,000 to the Knife River community from a Knife River resident was matched by the Knife River Rec Council, which resulted in a quick \$40,000 to get the depot restoration under way.
- Restoration of the depot began on May 13 and is progressing well as of July 1, thanks to many enthusiastic volunteers. Restoration of the depot is Phase I of the center.

Phase II, which will take place in 2020, will see open shelters built to protect *Crusader II* and a 60' x 40' community picnic area.

Phase III in 2101 will see restoration of *Crusader II*, return of the depot interior back to 1914 and outdoor displays that tell the story of the Knife River area from indigenous peoples, copper exploration, mining, logging, commercial fishing and boat building.

Restoration of the depot is under the direction of Larry Ronning, recently retired general contractor with a specialty in restoring older and historic buildings. Larry is also a boatwright and was the lead in restoring the Viking boat *Leif Erikson*. He also replaced all of the exterior woodwork on the *Edna G* during its last refurbishing. The perfect man to be in charge of restoring two remaining icons of Knife River!

Larry is optimistic that the depot can be restored yet this year to a point where it can help greet this year's Julebyen festival-goers who arrive and depart from Duluth on the North Shore Scenic Railroad – also, allow a proper venue for an expected 1,000 people who will take the Troll Train to Troll Canyon in search of mischievous trolls!

Persons interested in supporting the Knife River Heritage & Cultural Center through gifts of time and/or money can do so by contacting: info@krhcc.com.



Restoration of the depot will replicate what remains of the original depot back to 1914, as seen at top. This site plan shows all three construction phases of the KRHCC. Phase I (2019) is the restoration of the depot and freight building. Phase II (2020) is construction of open shelters for the picnic area and *Crusader II*. Phase III (2021) is development and placement of historical outdoor displays and completion of the depot interior, which has yet to be determined – also restoration of *Crusader II*. The B&B Business car spur will accommodate up to three business cars from the '20s, '30s and '40s and will offer a unique B&B rail experience. The placement of buildings was designed to give train riders an unblocked view of the depot whether arriving from the NE or SW. The buildings are also staggered so that, when driving on Marina Road, no one structure blocks the view of another. Site design by Richard Gilyard AIA. Schematic by Krech Ojard Consulting Engineers.

Community Fun Day & Silent Auction Saturday, August 3, 2018 11 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 your Historic Red Schoolhouse, participate in some classic picnic games, win cool stuff in our silent auction to support the Schoolhouse, 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. Whether 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

Our picnic basket will contain choice of a hot dog or sloppy joe meal, with chips and dessert, for just \$5. Also available are coffee, pop and water.

All proceeds help support the maintenance of the Schoolhouse.

Please help with dessert by bringing some Bars or Cookies for dessert and auction

Sponsored by Larsmont Community Club

Larsmont History - Early Pioneers About The Life of Theodore Thompson



Editor's Note:

Dr. Roger Nelson contacted us this winter with his story of the Thompson brothers and the early days of Larsmont. He is the grandson of Theodore Thompson, among the early European immigrants to this area of the North Shore in the 1880s. It's the story of a family who made this part of the world their own piece of heaven.

"I have so many cherished memories of Larsmont," says Roger. "When I can't sleep at night I go over the walk from the streetcar to the end of the dock, where I would collect a pail of water, step by step. I miss it."

Pictured at top: The Theodore Thompson family (l-r) Harold, Florence, Karen, Alice, Cecelia Carolyn, Robert "Bob", Theodore, Edna. Right: Haying at Larsmont in 1894. Tollof Thompson is on top of the wagon with Theodore and Louie among the others. Not sure if all are brothers or helpers.

As told by his grandson, J. Roger Nelson, Clayton, Missouri

Theodore Thompson was born and raised in Longfyord, just west and north of Alta, Norway. His girl friend was Karen Nilsdatter, who lived in Skillefyord, a small farm, just east and north of Alta. Although details are sketchy, Theodore and five of his brothers came to this country in about 1883. They homesteaded a tract of land along the north shore of Lake Superior, about 23 miles up the shore from Duluth and two miles west of Two Harbors, and named it Larsmont. They cleared the land and planted it. (See the picture of five or six of them on a hay wagon and beside it, pitching hay onto it.) The farm was just east of Ollie's store, which was across the railroad tracks on the highway. Two of the brothers soon returned to Norway. Tollof and Louie (we called them uncles Tom and Louie) certainly stayed on the farm. (Louie was a little slow.)

Their name was originally Thomassen, but was changed upon entry into the United States of America.

Theodore wanted to marry Karen Nilsdatter, but she would not marry until Theodore built her a house in Duluth. All of the bothers were highly skilled carpenters. So, Theodore built the house (10 E. 5th Street)

and another next door for Mrs. Monkebee (believed to be Karen's sister). After the marriage, Theodore began a furniture business on Superior Street. (He played the piano and the zither, the only zither in town.) They had six children – Cecelia (my mother), Florence, Edna, Alice, Robert Barbo and Harold. Alice says that after each meal Theodore would say, "Takk for maten" (thanks for the meal) and Karen would blush.

Jens, the father of the six boys, came over from Norway at the same time as the boys. He, Tollof and Louie ran the farm. After Jens died, Theodore gave up the furniture business (not a thriving business) and moved to the farm to help Tollof, where he stayed permanently. Although Theodore decided to go back to the farm to make a living, Karen would not leave Duluth, insisting that the children needed to be educated. Some finished high school, but had no further education, except for Florence, who became a nurse. Cecelia, the oldest, had to drop out of school, but took stenography classes and became secretary to the president of the steel mill in Duluth, where she eventually met Leslie Nelson, my father.

Back to the brothers. Jens, Theo, Louis and Tom built a fish house near the lake (*fisk hus*), a boat house, two parallel docks (since they fished for a living), a nice house with two bedrooms and a partially finished upstairs, a barn for their cow, one for their horse and a very large one for the hay that they harvested by hand. The horse was used



for heavy work, i.e. pulling up huge boulders to fill the attached structure that kept the two docks in place, and hauling up winter ice from the lake to the ice house on the hill, used to keep the fish fresh after being caught. The brothers sawed up ice from Lake Superior, with large saws, into cube blocks about 1-1/2 feet on a side, hauled them up

the hill and kept them under sawdust for the next year's fish to sell. (I remember playing in the buildings with my sister, Mickey.)

They homesteaded a large area. However, each year the Lutheran minister from Duluth came down and said how the church needed more money, so grampa, being a very generous man, would give them some land. Eventually the Lutherans ended up with about 40 acres on the lake.

The brothers built two open fishing boats (or purchased them from the boat builder), about 14 feet long, and in each was a small engine, probably about 2 hp. I remember that it moved the boat only about as fast as I could walk. (Once we walked to Knife River and they took the boat. We got there about the same time.) Although neither of them could swim, they made their living net fishing for herring, whitefish and trout. Suckers they buried in the raspberry patch. They would lay the nets at night and go out in the early morning to haul them in. I went with them at least twice and it was thrilling to look out of the front of the boat, over the rollers, to see the nets with the fish in them coming up out of the waters as they were being retrieved by hand. They would bring in the fish and would clean them (sometimes another man helped, but I do not know who – perhaps Louie). Then they would put them in small boxes with ice and people would come down and buy them. In their spare time the men would dry and repair their nets on rectangular 4-sided wooden structures.

I do not believe that any of the three brothers spoke much English, but I always remember them smiling most of the time. Grampa had marked vitiligo (loss of skin color in the form of depigmented, or white, patches of skin). He had big hands.

Each Sunday we had a fine meal prepared by Louie and we ate at a large table in the living room. It was always fish (whitefish, trout, but seldom herring) and boy, was it good. Probably cooked in butter.

When mother, Mickey and I would visit Duluth, almost each summer for a few weeks, Mickey would stay with Gramma in Duluth on 5th Street and the sisters Alice and Florence and I would stay either at the farm or with my Dad's parents in a duplex at 802 E. 4th Street. I was content to play by myself on the farm, but I learned a little about fishing, fixing nets and other things. On occasion Cosen (Les?) came over to play. Our swimming: we would strip down to our undershorts, jump into the cold water from one dock, swim the 25 feet to the next, get out, run into the fish house, dry off and dress.

Papa (we called him TEA-o-DOR) and Uncle Tollof read the "Decorah Posten" in

Norwegian in Larsmont, but Papa subscribed to the *Duluth Herald* when he was home in Duluth.

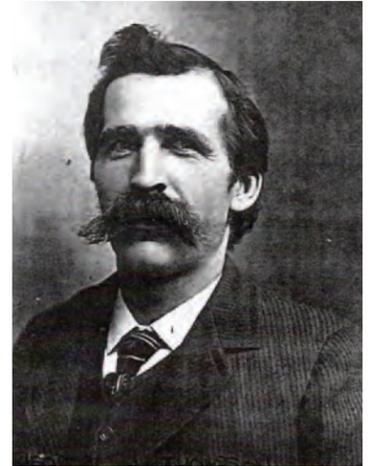
The mystery of Uncle Tom's (Tollof) trunk. The trunk had a rounded top and was fur-covered. It was kept padlocked until he died. It contained well-worn copies of Shelley, Keats, Edgar Allen Poe (quoth the Raven "nevermore" would return his lost Lenore) and, of course, Shakespeare, Tennyson ("O Captain, My Captain"), Ibsen, the Norwegian poet ("A Doll's House"). Uncle Tom left \$87,000 to the town where he was born (Alta?), which burned near the end of World War II. It was all accumulated from selling fish.

There always were two to three ore boats plying the lake at a time, carrying ore from Duluth or going empty to Duluth.

I stayed on the farm with Aunt Florence in a revamped streetcar. (We drove up from St Louis, Missouri, summers from about 1933-1942 and visited occasionally after that. The last time I stayed in the fish house was about 1953, with my wife, Jan (Nicholas). The fish house has washed away, along with the two docks. I was born October 5, 1928. My sister, Mickey, was born in Duluth in 1924.) I remember that a favorite thing was to walk up to Ollie's store and get a vanilla ice cream bar with chocolate coating on a stick.

My Uncle Bob was manager of the Duluth Street Railway (electric streetcars) and acquired an old streetcar. He put a store and small kitchen into it and placed it on a knoll, about 60 yards east of the big house in which my Aunt Florence lived in the summer. Bob began by taking tokens in the streetcars for the company when he was very young and slowly worked his way up to general manager. He was most generous and when he would see a poor boy selling papers he would occasionally buy him a partial membership to the Duluth Athletic Club. He loved to shoot billiards, and when they torn down the DAC, he acquired the billiard table, had it set up in the barn (where he and wife, Ellen, eventually moved) and played often. When my Dad came up on occasions, they played billiards. Bob sang "The Hills of Home" when driving his car. Once he drove 90 mph from Two Harbors to Larsmont, with me in the car – 2 miles in 1-1/2 minutes. Bob also had a small cottage on the shore of Pike Lake.

I became an internist and once assisted an ore boat captain off of his ship in Two Harbors, perhaps riding on the tug *Edna G*. He was having chest and upper abdominal pain. We took him to the hospital at Two Harbors, determined that he probably had gall bladder trouble then sent him on to Duluth. There was a write-up in the paper about this event. (I was mistakenly said to be a nationally known cardiologist – NOT!)



Theodore Thompson



Tollof Thompson



Karen Nilsdatter Thompson

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Donations to the Building Fund and Club

The Larsmont Community Club established the Building Maintenance Fund in 2006 to accept donations from members to be used toward repairs and upkeep of the building and grounds. Donations to the Building Fund have always been one of the most important cash contributions to the club. These funds are always needed. Those who donate are recognized through small certificates displayed in the Schoolhouse.

In addition to the Building Fund, each year members of the club renew their memberships and donate time and materials for the upkeep of the structure and grounds. There is no cash value to these donated hours, however these, too, are some of the most valuable ways support can be given to the endeavors of the LCC.

The board of the Larsmont Community Club continually expresses thanks to all who

give of their time and dollars to make sure that Larsmont has a figurehead worthy of praise and admiration.

Cash donations in 2018 were received from Len & Judy Beardsley, Donald & MaryAnne Bennett, Pamela & David Coolidge, Gaye DeBenedetti, Emily Ely-Stocke, Kathy & David Falk, Patrick & Mari Gannon, David & Margaret Glass, Charles & Carol Gunder, Bill Guse, Cynthia & Paul Hayden, Terry Highland, Ronald & Mary Holm, Kerry & Warren Jessen, Kevin Johnson, Timothy Kuehn, Neil & Barbara Normandin, James Ortman, Eugene & Alice Smith, Karen & Steve Smith, Lila Stevens, Earl & Julie Stewart.

You can send your \$15 dues or make donations specifically to the Building Fund through Secretary/Treasurer Marlys Wisch, 489 Swanson Rd., Larsmont, MN 55616.

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At the Schoolhouse

August 3, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

*Larsmont
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Larsmont, MN 55616



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