

Newsletter



Knife River Heritage & Cultural Center

PO Box 240 • 180 Marina Road
Knife River, MN 55609
info@krhcc.org

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By Paul von Goertz, KRHCC Board Member

A FLAGPOLE FOR KR'S HISTORICAL FOCAL POINT

Several times in the nearly 50 years this writer as a member of the KR community, many veterans, families of veterans, and many residents have suggested that KR should have a flagpole to serve as a community focal point. The flagpole will honor all those who have created and preserved our democracy, and the freedoms we embrace.

In Todd Lindahl's history of the KR depot he states that the focal point of any community was its train depot; a link to the world. People arrived and departed from the station. Telegrams were sent and received. The US Mail, formerly handled by the stagecoach line, arrived and left from the depot. Townspeople also checked their watches against the depot clock, because time was set by telegraph to assure time accuracy demanded by railroads.

From this history lesson, a flagpole at the depot would be the right place for it to be seen today. KR is an Unorganized Territory, under the governance of Lake County. So we have no local government building where one would typically see a flagpole.

There are flagpoles in KR. The Post Office has one, but that is on federal property. The KR school had one, but that was a county property and the pole has since been removed as the school has been converted into town homes. The marina has a flagpole, but that is state DNR property and it is placed in an area designated for boat owners and guests only.

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The KRHCC has had a flagpole on its site plan since March of 2018, when the plan was presented at a KR community meeting and later in an issue of the KRHCC newsletter. In that issue, I floated the idea of an individual or family sponsoring the pole to honor or memorialize a loved one. A week later, a long time KR family accepted the invitation, with another offer soon to follow, which I politely declined in respect to the first.

Now, more than two years later, the flagpole is here. The pole was ordered out of Lake Elmo, MN, direct from the manufacturer and arrived in KR in an 18-wheeler on August 12. It will be mounted this fall at the same time we pour the concrete to replace the cracked and heaved apron that surrounds the depot.

Randy Ellestad, Steve Betzler and Todd Lindahl was present to receive and help unload the 34' pole (overall length with base). Photo Paul von Goertz

The pole itself is quite impressive. At 30' it will be the tallest structure on KRHCC property. It can fly a flag up to 4' x 10", although in practicality it may be more like 3' x 5' or 4' by 6'. It will have internal halyards so no slapping of halyards against the pole, which can be annoying for those familiar with sailboat "halyard slap."

The pole will be able to be lit 24/7 as per proper flag etiquette. The directional LED lights will be placed on the west depot eve. It will be directed on to the flag in a southerly direction towards the lake, so not be distracting to our neighbors and passing cars.

A dedication of the flagpole will take place this fall. Perhaps on Veteran's Day at which time the sponsoring family will be recognized. Look for the date and time of the dedication ceremony in an upcoming issue of this newsletter.



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Namesakes of Knife River Part II – Tryg and Dorothy Peterson Park

Trygve (Tryg) and Dorothy Peterson lived across from what is now the park named after them since 1954, when it was just a wooded field owned by the school district, which would later sell it to the KR Rec Council. Their home pictured on right.



As small children their twin daughters, Lola and Laura, would play there with friends. And because the Petersons were such a hospitable family, the field and their home were always places for children to hang out. Dorothy liked to bake, and kids could usually count on fresh cookies. Even after the girls were raised, Dorothy would continue to treat those at Peterson Park with a great variety of Schwan cold treats on warm days. Dorothy Lusk Peterson was a life-long KR resident. Tryg was from central Wisconsin near the town of Colfax and came to KR in 1947 to work for the railroad, where he would eventually become a brakeman and engineer. He stayed with the family of Nels Lind for a short while and soon met Dorothy.

Tryg was Norwegian and Dorothy Irish and Scotch - complete with red hair. They apparently worked that difference out and married in 1949. They lived in Two Harbors for a while before Dorothy's uncle's house became available in KR.

Tryg was intent on joining the KR Lutheran Church, and found out by coincidence that the church's pastor, John Reppe, was also from near where he was born. Lola recalls Pastor Reppe was helpful in getting Tryg's baptism and confirmation papers properly transferred to KR Lutheran. Tryg and Pastor John became close friends.

Tryg's work on the railroad took him to Biwabik and Virginia and it was there he succumbed to the temptations of the Virginia Canelake Candy store. Tryg and soon Dorothy became friends of the Canelakes and that relationship extended to the Canelake sisters – Patricia and Pamela.

While the Petersons are honored with a namesake of the Tryg and Dorothy Peterson Park, their contribution to the community extends far beyond caring for a wooded lot that evolved into a playground.

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They were deeply involved with the Knife River community and were exceptional volunteers over time, donating hours and hours to the Development Achievement Center (DAC) that supports individuals who have developmental disabilities with dignity and respect.

Patricia Canelake, now a partner in KR's Great! Lakes Candy Kitchen, worked for a while along with Dorothy at the DAC. She recalls Dorothy making wonderful lunches for participants and even frying smelt they caught during the day! The Petersons also shared fresh produce from their garden to add to lunches.

Dorothy, along with Gayle Faughnan and Sue Hubbartt, originated the "Merry Makers," a group that raised money and planned celebrations for special populations in the area, and for which she received many awards and recognition.

Tryg would often be found working along side Oden Alreck (see July issue of KRHCC) caring for what is now Oden Alreck Field. They would maintain the warming shack, skating rinks and the ball field.

The Petersons were very close to their neighbors. Brothers Lawrence and Wesley Bugge and their families lived just doors away. They were great friends with the Petersons and shared everything from baked goods to flowers and vegetables. Arne Bugge, Lawrence's son, now lives in the family home and for many years helped the Petersons with yard chores and snow removal, particularly after Tryg experienced a stroke.



Both Tryg and Dorothy loved gardening – both flowers and vegetables. Part of their beautiful yard was fenced in and called "Fort Tryg" (photo about 1988). Dorothy provided the altar flowers for KR Lutheran Church countless times. It is nice to see today, the current owners of the home – members of the Canelake family – continue to beautify the yard.

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Peterson Park was dedicated to the Petersons in 1995, a year after Tryg died at age 80. The park received a major upgrade in 2013 under the leadership of Chelsey Ojard and many volunteers.

Ironically, Dorothy's good friend and neighbor, Anne Bugge, would live as roommates at a Lester Park assisted living residence and both reach 100 years. Anne would die about a year before Dorothy in September of 2019, just a few months short of 101 years.

Mary and I were among many from KR who attended Dorothy's 100th at her residence. She seemed to glow all afternoon with the love and warmth she received from all who attended.

She and Tryg were remarkably kind and good people. KR and Lake County were deeply blessed by them.

Thanks to the Peterson daughters Lola and Laura for contributing so much of this tribute to a KR namesake. Lola lives in Two Harbors and Laura in Larsmont. Thanks, too, to Patricia Canelake for sharing her memories of Dorothy and Tryg.

Dorothy and Tryg with daughters Lola and Laura. The couple on left are Tryg's uncle Nils and aunt Laura Lind in 1955.



All photos provided by Lola Peterson.

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**Why we are thankful for the Tryg and Dorothy Peterson Park and all its fun
AND SAFE playground equipment!**



Pictured are the Harold and Grace Congdon sisters – Evelyn with light hair and Lorraine with dark. The sisters' grandfather was Pete Rosso, KR's depot agent from 1900 – 1934. They were well familiar with the playground available to them just outside the depot door. Peterson Park provides a far better playground option!

Thanks to Lorraine Ojard for sharing these two photos

CORNY FUND RAISER IDEA RESULTS IN \$536 FOR THE KRHCC

For the past several years the KRRC has brought the KR community together with a "Community Night Out," usually held in early August. The KRRC provided the meat item and Jim and Lee Bujold donated the sweet corn. Community members brought the sides and desserts. Music, dancing and children's games completed a fun night of neighbors mingling with new and old neighbors. This year the event was canceled because of that nasty COVID.

The take-away from the dinner itself was the fabulous sweet corn acquired from "Bob the Corn Man" of Baronette, WI, near Ashland, Lee's hometown. Lee had promised the KRRC that "The Corn Man's" corn was like no other and she was right! It has been reported by reliable sources that one dinner attendee put down six ears of corn!

This year, with the obvious disappointment of the dinner being cancelled, people were grumbling about not having "Lee's sweet corn." Lee had an idea. She ordered 25 dozen ears and asked people to order in advance and pay what they wished with

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the understanding proceeds would go to the KRHCC. All 25 dozen ears were sold (“I could have sold a lot more.”) which generated \$536 with the Bujolds again generously donating the corn!

Many thanks to Jim and Lee for coming up with this corny idea for a fundraiser, and driving the 180-mile round trip to pick up the corn on the very morning it was picked! Thanks, too, to all 25 people who bought corn knowing proceeds would benefit the KRHCC.

FOUR FAMILIES NEEDED TO SPONSOR OUTDOOR INTERPRETIVE DISPLAYS

The KRHCC is already planning for spring 2021. An important goal for 2021 is to create and mount four outdoor all-weather interpretive displays, similar to what you see in the photo provided by Pannier Graphics. They warrant their panels against fading and delaminating for ten years.

The four panels will be mounted in cantilevered metal frames and give an overview of KR’s historical periods from indigenous peoples through today. Messages of the four 24” x 36” panels will be succinct and at this early stage of planning will be as follows:



Panel #1: Near where train passengers deboard.

Welcome to Knife River, Minnesota: Brief mention of historical periods from indigenous peoples to present. Focus on early indigenous fishing camps to French fur traders to copper exploration – all prior to settlement of town.

Panel #2: Near depot.

Devoted to depot history and significance of KR as only North Shore town where two railroad companies lines intersected.

Panel #3: Near tracks.

KR as railroad town. Volume of pulpwood and saw logs that arrived and was shipped from here along with herring; mention of hundreds of thousands of tons of iron ore that passed through KR between Two Harbors and Duluth.

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Panel #4: Near CRUSADER II.

KR as most prolific provider of herring from the Lake Superior North Shore to Upper Midwest markets. History of CRUSADER II and pertinent specifications. Christening by Crown Prince Olav of Norway in 1939.

The KRHCC is offering four individuals or four families the opportunity to sponsor a panel each at \$1,000. If we can raise that (\$4,000 total), a grant for which we intend to apply will cover the balance. The grant is specifically for projects that focus on Minnesota history and culture, so a good fit for our project.

The KRHCC will be responsible for researching and writing panel content, acquiring high-resolution photos/images, securing photo/image rights, verifying accuracy of content and mounting stands in concrete bases.

We are hopeful the money for the panels can be raised and the panels constructed over the winter and mounted as soon as frost is out of the ground!

For more information on this sponsorship opportunity, contact info@krhcc.org

LOOKING FOR LUDWIG

The goal of the KRHCC is to return the KR depot back to a functioning 1900s depot took a major step forward (backward ?) when a woman interrupted the KR Depot Agent's welcome to North Shore Scenic Railroad picnic train riders on August 8th, demanding if any of the riders had seen someone named Ludwig.

Dressed and speaking as someone from the 1900s, the woman, who appeared to be of sound mind and good virtue, identified herself as Clara Brandtner. She claimed to be from Boston, and travelled to KR in response to letters by a Ludwig Dinndorf from the KR area. He was lonely and looking for a bride here in the remote wilderness of northern Minnesota.

She said she had arrived at the depot at 5 AM that day expecting to be greeted and wooed by Ludwig, but as yet he had not shown up. The Depot Agent questioned this by stating he believed he had seen her at the Jack Pepper saloon the night before, which she denied.

None of the picnic train riders acknowledged seeing anyone on the train or at the Duluth depot that fit the picture she had of Ludwig. Clara went on to show a handful

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of love letters written by Ludwig and even Deutschmarks to cover her expenses, though they could not be used in Boston. She acknowledged that KR, being primarily a Norwegian community, perhaps was not ready to welcome a German family, and had convinced Ludwig not to marry her.

The Depot Agent expressed compassion for Clara's plight, but carried on with his greeting to Picnic Train riders. Clara was last seen mumbling to herself in German and walking in circles.

So who was Clara? Answer in next month's issue of this newsletter.

"Clara Brandtner" (right) holds a photo of Ludwig while clinging to the hope that he will not abandon her at the KR depot. Photo Paul von Goertz



KRHCC NEWSLETTER READERS TOP MORE THAN 200 – NOW ON THE AIR, TOO

The KRHCC newsletter just surpassed 200 online readers plus those to whom it is passed along. Goals of the newsletter are to keep people informed on KRHCC progress and plans, to pass along interesting pieces of KR history, and yes, to remind readers to continually support its work with donations of time and money.

In June the newsletter went on the air with newsletter writer, Paul von Goertz, reading the current letter to listeners of KTWH-FM, community radio for the Two Harbors area. I had made the mistake of mentioning to Katya Gordon, KTWH volunteer, that I was once an announcer for KUMD-FM while attending UMD 50 years ago. KTWH is on our email list so she was familiar with the newsletter. After some arm-twisting, I agreed to read the newsletter on the station. If you want to catch the radio version, it will air the second Friday of the month at 9:00 AM at 99.5 FM.

In related news, the NORTH SHORE JOURNAL will be carrying selected stories from the newsletter with permission. The entire newsletter is copyright protected by the Knife River Heritage & Cultural Center.

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KRHCC newsletter writer Paul von Goertz stumbles through reading of the June newsletter at the KTWH FM studios in Two Harbors. “Working the board” is not an easy task for a non-techy.

Photo Katya Gordon

A CHANCE TO SEE A CLASSIC STREAMLINER!

New this year for the NSSR will be a three-hour fall color excursion to KR on Saturdays and Sundays beginning September 19.

A special feature will be the SOO Line 2500 F Unit pulling the train. It is the first such engine on the SOO Line and a classic streamliner. Well worth the time to come down and see it!

Trains will make a very brief stop in KR around 11:15 AM to turnaround before heading back to Duluth. Passengers will have an option to briefly deboard, be greeted by the KR Depot Agent and invited to checkout the depot restoration in progress. All passengers will receive a box lunch provided by the Vanilla Bean included in their ticket price.

The train returns to the Duluth depot just after 1PM.

Adults: \$38.00, Children: \$25.00. For more information:

<https://duluthtrains.com/event/fall-colors-train-to-knife-river/>

The SOO Line 2500 passing the unrestored KR depot several years ago. See it now all recently buffed and waxed as it revisits KR and our restored depot!

Photo: Dave Schauer



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Your comments and suggestions for this monthly emailed newsletter are always welcome. Email to: info@krhcc.org If you have family or friends who may enjoy receiving it, please forward to them, or send their email addresses to same email address and they will receive their own copy.

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