

# Newsletter



## Knife River Heritage & Cultural Center

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### June 2021

By Paul von Goertz – KRHCC Board Member

### **MEMORIAL DAY 2021 FLAGPOLE DEDICATION - A MEMORABLE DAY FOR KNIFE RIVER**

The absence of a community flagpole in KR for more than 60 years ended on Memorial Day when the community dedicated its official flagpole at the KRHCC site under clear blue skies. The Two Harbors American Legion Post 109 conducted the ceremony while an estimated 150 people looked on. Photo credit: Scott Shelerud.



American Legion Post 109 Chaplain, Chris Belfield (right), presented a most thoughtful and meaningful message that recognized Memorial Day as “...not a holiday or celebration, but a time to honor the women and men in uniform who served our country and gave their lives for our freedoms...”.

The Chaplain also noted how KR served the WWII effort by providing fish to a nation and using their boat-building skills to build escort ships for the Navy.

He also introduced Polly (Wieme) Sannes who spoke for the Wieme family members who will be remembered with a brass plaque that will be attached to the pole at a later date. The Wieme family paid for the flagpole and large 7' x 10' flag. A Three

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Shot Rifle Volley in honor of Veterans who gave their lives for our country completed the ceremony. You can see the whole ceremony on YouTube video-taped by Jim Allert at: <https://youtu.be/OWQvaXdds0Y>



(Left) Some of the people who took time from their Memorial Day to honor our Veterans and witness a memorable day in Knife River history. Photo credit: Scott Shelerud

(Right) Members of the Two Harbors American Legion Post 109 prepare to return colors after firing a Three Shot Rifle Volley in honor of Memorial Day. It's the day we remember all those who gave their lives while defending our country during a time of war. Photo credit: Scott Shelerud



Wieme and Bugge family members gather for a family photo. Ethel (Bugge) Wieme was part of the large KR Bugge family going back several generations.

Photo credit: Wieme family

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## CONCRETE CREW RALLIES TO COMPLETE DEPOT APRON AHEAD OF DEADLINE

We were very pleased when the Lloyd K. Johnson Foundation awarded the KRHCC a grant of \$6,000 last summer to cover the cost, or at least in part, of the concrete needed to replace the old and cracked depot apron which was also a tripping hazard.

Like most grants it came with a fuse, in this case six months to complete the project and submit a final report. We knew this could pose a challenge as COVID reduced the ranks of our mostly retired volunteers. And then, our contractor, who was to remove the old apron, was three months late as a result of demand on his services.

It was early November last year when we were able to pour about a third of the apron with evening temperatures barely above freezing. It was clear we would not make the six-month deadline. We applied for an extension of the grant time frame, which was granted until the end of this month. Many thanks to the LKJ Foundation for understanding the circumstances leading to our extension request.



In May our concrete crew tackled the apron once more and on Wednesday June 3 poured about half of the remaining apron, and then on Tuesday, June 15, the balance. Job done!!! And two weeks in advance of deadline! Photo credit: Paul von Goertz

If anyone has done concrete work, or watched it, it is hard work. Concrete is very heavy and comes out of the truck very fast. We needed eight to ten able-bodies for each pour, which consisted of filling and leveling four to six apron sections.

We were very happy to see “Jerry,” a seasonal RVer at the KR Campground, join us in the pour. (“I needed something to do and be useful, so here I am”). Jerry is from Andover, MN, now living in Arkansas and his wife, Natasha, is from Louisiana. This is their second summer at the KR Campground and they have enjoyed watching the progress made.

While we realize that younger helpers would have helped had they not had work conflicts; please everyone give the Concrete Geezer Crew credit for making the grant deadline!



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## WHAT HAPPENED TO ALL THE GREAT LAKES FLEETS?

A chart now in the depot shows the stack colors of the Great Lakes fleets that crisscrossed the Great Lakes during the 1950s. Only a handful of those fleets remain today.

In 1921, Pittsburgh Steamship Division, which was US Steel's fleet, alone, had 96 boats. The decline in fleets and overall number of boats traversing the Great Lakes can be attributed to today's thousand-foot boats that can carry as much as five times that of smaller ships built prior to 1940, and competition from railroads and in some cases, trucks.

KRHCC historian, Todd Lindahl, wanted to display the chart to give KRHCC visitors a sense of how the Great Lakes served as a super highway connecting the Upper Midwest to the East Coast and even to New Orleans.

Cargoes in addition to iron ore shipped from and to western Lake Superior included grain, limestone, coal, salt, pulpwood and even cars and petroleum products. The railroad line between Duluth and Two Harbors, which included KR, was a part of this very efficient water transportation system. Many from Knife River worked for these fleets now long gone. Image below credit: Todd Lindahl



The chart is particularly meaningful to me. As a pre-teen “wharf-rat,” I made friends with Ralph Knowlton, who was with the Army Corps of Engineers in Canal Park. He gave me a chart just like the one in the picture. I grew up on the lake at 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue East and London Road and with this chart I could identify the fleet of almost any boat that went by.

There was one fleet I could identify without the chart and that was Nicolson Transit. In addition to bringing up a bulk cargo in its hold, it had new cars on its deck. The sun would shine on the windshields of these cars and the sparkle would tell me it was a Nicholson boat!

The chart was lost after I left home and I deeply

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regretted losing it. Todd Lindahl had an original of the chart and made two copies, one for depot and one for me, which is now framed and hanging in our home. Thank you Todd!

## **YES! THERE ARE STILL CHINOOK SALMON IN LAKE SUPERIOR!**

Mild-mannered Dave Grong, valued KRHCC volunteer, is not one to boast, but when he told me about the Chinook Salmon he and Linda caught recently, I was thrilled not only for them for landing one of these beauties, but because it confirmed these tasty fish are still to be found in Lake Superior, and apparently reproducing naturally.

Dave said they caught it near the McQuade Safe Harbor in 160' of water at a depth of 40' using a silver spoon. Says Dave, "We had been trolling for awhile and graphing nothing. Then the screen lit up and so we dropped a line into the middle of it, and then it hit. It was fun to catch!" Dave did not weigh the Chinook, but a good guess might be around 15 pounds. Photo credit: Linda Grong

According to the MN DNR, Chinooks were introduced first into Lake Superior by Michigan in 1967 and Minnesota in 1974. But, the low catch and effort by anglers in the fall, combined with low returns to the fish traps during spawning, prompted the re-evaluation of the program. As a result, Minnesota stopped stocking Chinook salmon in 2006. Wisconsin also evaluated its stocking program and stopped in 2007. Michigan and Ontario continue to stock Chinook salmon.



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## THE KRHCC WELCOMES A NEW BISTRO & MARKET!



The Larsmont Trading Post, (left) a self-described “Bistro & Market” has opened at the site of the once “Gil’s” sandwich shop in Larsmont.

Photo credit: Paul von Goertz

The KRHCC welcomes this new enterprise to a suburb of KR and wishes its owners, Derek and Ann Wright, much success. Derek is part of the long-time Wright family of Larsmont.

Your writer stopped by the LTP earlier this month to be greeted by Derek and Ann as they were applying the finishing touches to a very bright and spacious interior with a charm befitting the character of the North Shore.

Derek said their menu is fresh hand-prepared foods ranging from crafted cold sandwiches on artisan breads, breakfast sandwiches on grilled sourdough, hot grilled sandwiches, espresso coffees, cheese boards with artisan cheeses and cured meats, wines, craft beers, and hand-scooped ice cream and floats. Enough already! I’m ready for lunch!

Ann pointed out that along with basic necessities, they are also a specialty food market with many unique small batch foods. They carry a line of home-style foods high in taste with limited preservatives.

The Larsmont Trading Post has indoor/outdoor seating along with online ordering, pickup and curbside service, and delivery from Knife River to Two Harbors.

Please support this new local business, and all other locally owned businesses. Web site is: [www.larsmonttradingpost.com](http://www.larsmonttradingpost.com) Post phone number is 218-510-0608. They ship across the US and to Puerto Rico.

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Left to right: kitchen, deli case, specialty food display and dining area. Alexa Smith, holding a menu, is one of the LTP's hostesses and servers.

Photo credit: Paul von Goertz



## **DULUTH GIVES VIKING SHIP TO SOS; SOS NOW FREE TO FIND NEW HOME FOR IT**

The Duluth city council voted unanimously June 22 at its weekly council meeting to donate the Viking ship LEIF ERICKSON, a once Duluth icon, to the non-profit Save Our Ship organization (SOS). The vote now gives SOS the opportunity to finally find a home for the ship that has been without one since 1985.

The city was gifted the ship by Duluth businessman Bert Enger in 1927 after it retraced the course thought to have been taken by Leif Erickson from Norway to North America, and then to Duluth as part of a Great Lakes goodwill tour. Enger included a covenant that the city would care for the boat and publically display it. The SOS organization maintains the city did not fulfill the covenant, which Duluth mayor Emily Larson has acknowledged, and so the ship now belongs to SOS.

SOS president Neil Atkins told the city that his organization has identified two potential sites, one being the KRHCC and the other in Canal Park.

What all this means is that a site out of Duluth is now under consideration and one that SOS board member (and also KRHCC board member) Randy Ellestad of Knife River says makes a lot of sense. "The ship needs to be placed where it can be seen by the public 24/7, should be on public land, close to the Lake and where visitors can easily find and access it. The KRHCC offers all this and both Knife River and Two Harbors have ties to the LEIF ERICKSON from when it traveled along the North Shore on its way to Duluth."



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Ellestad said that with the Duluth Council's decision, he expects SOS can now devote its full energies to selecting either KRHCC or a Canal Park location for the ship's new home, and hopefully in a timely manner.

KRHCC president, Paul von Goertz, said the KRHCC is moving ahead with plans to build a shelter for the fishing tug CRUSADER II, a KR icon, next year. "We have space set aside on our site plan for two boat shelters, the other for LEIF ERICKSON, if that's the decision of SOS. SOS will design and fund their own shelter, but one that is in architecturally harmony with the one for CRUSADER."



(Left) The LEIF ERICKSON photographed off Knife Island. It later became becalmed and two KR fisherman towed it towards Duluth until a gentle NE breeze came up that brought the ship into the Duluth ship canal in time for a gala welcoming celebration.

Photo credit: Randy Ellestad collection

## **KR A POPULAR DESTINATION FOR NSSR TRAIN RIDERS**

KR continues to be a popular destination option for riders on the North Shore Scenic Railroad (NSSR).

Each of three Saturday "Picnic Trains" in June sold out all 75 seats available, according to Josh Miller, NSSR Station Manager. The sell-out echoes last fall's eight "Fall Color" trains, which also sold out.

It appears a shorter trip option to Two Harbors, access to the Agate Beach, appeal of a restored train depot, and Great! Lakes Candy Kitchen within walking distance, are all factors in KR's popularity according to the depot's "Depot Agent," who greets train riders.

The NSSR removes all trash as KRHCC has no garbage service, and shares in the cost of a portable toilet with the KRHCC.



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## **MAY DONATIONS, MEMORIALS, HONORARIUMS AND SPONSORSHIPS**

### Donation:

To KRHCC general fund by a North Shore Scenic Railroad “Picnic Train” rider.

### Sponsorship:

Web site underwriting by Doug & Becky Pruitt of Knife River.

*The KRHCC is a 501 (c3) non-profit so all donations whether in the form of a memorial, honorarium or sponsorship are fully tax deductible. Your comments and suggestions for this monthly emailed newsletter are always welcome. Email to: [info@krhcc.org](mailto:info@krhcc.org)*

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