



Knife River Heritage & Cultural Center

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By Paul von Goertz - KRHCC Board Member

FIRST STEP TAKEN IN BUILDING VIKING SHIP SHELTER.

A mighty big first step to create a new home for the Viking ship LEIF ERIKSON was pouring the building slab on September 4th. The 27' x 63' slab required four truckloads of concrete from Duluth Readi-Mix and totaled 41 cubic yards. The concrete pumper truck was impressive as it delivered concrete 5" thick to every corner of the slab form, and 12" along the perimeter (image left). The crew from Primetime Concrete on Old North Shore Road was fast and efficient in completing the pour in one smooth and continuous process (image right). Mike Ostman Trucking & Excavating of Two Harbors (TH) did all the dirt prep work. It takes at least 30 days for the slab to cure so sometime in mid-October the ship should be ready to be placed on the slab, with the help of the Knife River Marina.

Plans are for the details of the shelter design to be worked out over the winter months with a post and beam frame and red metal roof completing it next spring. If you would like to support the work of restoring the LEIF ERICKSON and building its shelter, email: duluthvikingship@gmail.com



Photo credits: Paul von Goertz

SWALE IN FULL BLOOM

The swale created to control run-off from the KRHCC site is in full bloom as of mid-September (photo below).

The swale was a key component of the grading and drainage plan for the KRHCC designed by a soils engineer within Lake County's department of Soil & Water.

The plan called for reducing the site grade at four percent to the north ending at a 12" deep x 12' wide swale running along our northern property line. The swale contains and dissipates run-off with water absorbing native plants, grasses and shrubs with excess water directed east into a field. All total about 3,000 grass plugs and 19 shrubs were planted. The remains of the weed suppressant white matt will eventually dissolve and nourish the soil. The tree cuttings used to hold the matt in place will be removed by snowfall. Photo credit: Paul von Goertz



Mike Ostman Trucking & Excavating of Two Harbors did the grading and Shoreview Natives, LLC (Dan Schutte), also of Two Harbors, created the swale. Cost for implementing the grading and drainage plan was approximately \$26,000 shared by the KRHCC, the Regional Rail Authority, SOS (Viking boat people) and a Lake County Soil & Water grant arranged through the state of Minnesota.

KNIFE RIVER LOSES ITS BELOVED CENTENARIAN

Audrey Carlson, Knife River's (KR) beloved centenarian, passed away Friday morning, September 20, at the dawn of a bright and beautiful warm summers day.

Audrey was one of KR's most loved elders and lived nearly all her 100 years in KR and within a few hundred yards of where she was born. She had lived the past few months at Barross Cottage House in Two Harbors.

Her father, John Sandwick, came to America from Sweden by way of Finland in 1892 when he was four years old. Her mother, Gertie, was from near Wisconsin Rapids and Swedish.

Her father took up commercial fishing and like so many lived by the Lake – just a bit west of where the CN railroad bridge crosses over Scenic 61. He would later work at the water plant in Two Harbors and the D&IRR water tower in KR.

NEWSLETTER



Audrey attended school in KR and after graduating TH High School went to work as a “Rosie the Riveter” in Rockford, IL, during WW II. She worked from August 1942 until March of 1943 at Woodward Governor inspecting engine governors for military aircraft of all kinds.

She married Bertil (Bert) Carlson in 1943 while Bert was home on leave from the US Army European Front. Bert was also Swedish and lived in Two Harbors. The couple had four children, Carol (Cookie), Stephen, Gary, and Julie. Bert died in 1991, Cookie in 2021 and Gary in 2022.

Audrey was a homemaker for many years before going to work for Sears in women’s fashions department, retiring in 1981.

Of note to readers is Audrey’s appreciation for history and that of the Knife River Lutheran Church (KRLC) for which she had been recording its history “forever” (since 1945). The undisputed matriarch of KRLC, she was often seen wearing Minnesota Viking clothing on Viking home game days.

Audrey has been a true blessing to KR for all her volunteer work, her family now spanning five generations, her church family, and all who love and admire her for her positive, upbeat and independent nature.

Visitation will be from 10 AM until the 11 AM service Thursday, October 3, at Knife River Lutheran Church. Burial will be in Lakeview Cemetery. Arrangements by Cavallin Funeral Home, Two Harbors.



Photo credits: Carlson Family

NEW DISPLAY SHOWCASES KR AS A MINI-TECHNOLOGY CENTER.

While many people may think of KR's historic industries as commercial fishing, logging, railroading and copper exploration, a new display at the depot calls attention to KR as a mini-technology center.

The display centers around the Ai Coolidge family who developed product designs and metalworking processes that continue to be used by industry today. They were also inventors, selling one product nationwide.

Much of the information for the display was provided by David Coolidge, a third generation Coolidge and founder of Serco Log Loaders sold across North America.

Randy Ellestad provided several of the photos for the 20"x 30" display. The display is mounted in the depot and is reproduced here.

Coolidge Family Members Were Technical Problem-Solvers

What began as a gas station and later a small machine shop in Knife River founded by Ai Coolidge in 1923, grew from machining parts for local fishermen, loggers and railroads to serving industries throughout the Upper Midwest. Ai Coolidge moved from Michigan to Knife River. A natural machinist, he began machining hard to find parts for anything on wheels. He would later be joined by sons Francis ("Dutch"), Loren ("Punk") and Lloyd ("Irish").



Photo: Steve



Ai Coolidge Photo: Randy Ellestad

The Coolidges were also entrepreneurs and patented their products. One clever device sold nationwide was a deep-diving trolling plate invented by Dutch Coolidge, a second

generation Coolidge. It could dive deep in seconds and then reverse itself and surface when a fish hit the spoon attached to it. While no longer made, the design of the Coolidge "Trollo-Plane" has been replicated by many companies and is still popular for deep water trolling in North America.

Machine shops shape metal through a variety of methods.



Photo: Randy

David Coolidge, a third generation Coolidge, designed, manufactured and became the owner of Serco log loaders, sold in all logging markets in the United States and Canada.

While Knife River has a rich history tied to the natural resources of the area, it was also a mini-technology center for product design and metalworking processes that continue to be used by industry today.



Reproduction: David Coolidge Coolidge Trollo-Plane with line to lure.

Serco loaders are designed and manufactured in different lift capacities for a variety of industries.



Photo: David Coolidge

NORTH SHORE SHORELINE EROSION - A STARTLING EXAMPLE OF EROSION -

All of us who may own Lake Superior shoreline have seen the effects of erosion from high water levels and increased wind on the lake.

Mary and I have four 4' x 10' raised vegetable gardens on the lake side of our home that are at risk from erosion. Given the cost to riprap our bank, we will let the lake claim our carrots. We will get organic carrots from Costco at \$6.79 for a six-pound bag.

In the August 26 edition of the DULUTH NEWS TRIBUNE, reporter Peter Paasi wrote a very startling story about lake erosion at the Scandia cemetery at 3200 London Road in Duluth. A fourth-grade boy found human bones on the beach while visiting nearby Glensheen mansion with his family.

Paasi's story "Human remains recently exposed" expressed the dilemma of how to protect the cemetery from future erosion, and how remediation would be funded. According to the paper, the non-profit Scandinavian Cemetery Association, which owns the cemetery, has acknowledged the exposure of the human remains, but has a total account balance of less than \$15,000. The cemetery dates to 1881.

As a point of north shore history, the current erosion resulting in exposed human bones is not the first at that location. The first took place in late April or early May of 1956.

I was an 11-year-old boy at the time and lived at 26th Ave East where I-35 and London Road merge. My father was a veterinarian and operated an animal hospital next to our home. My friends and I frequently played in the area around Glensheen, Tischer Creek and the cemetery, which were about three blocks away from where I lived - all of this was trespassing. As an aside, I once had the opportunity to talk to Elizabeth Congdon as I bicycled through her two block-long driveway loop. She was interested knowing more about me. I remember her as a very nice and well-dressed person.

Photo right: My mother captured this photo of me in a U.S. Calvary uniform I made myself. Photo credit: Marcella von Goertz



The spring of 1956 was apparently very wet. One of my friends discovered that a part of the cemetery had washed into the lake. I was in the sixth grade at nearby Congdon Park school and on our way home that day we went to check things out. Sure enough, there was a mud bank with caskets and bones exposed. On the beach were a pile of charred bones apparently left by smelters who were illegally smelting the mouth of the nearby Tischer Creek, and burned the remains of caskets as firewood, along with the bones.

NEWSLETTER

We walked precariously along the steep mud bank and pulled bones from it. I took a femur for its size, some ribs and several vertebrae. I was examining the vertebrae in our front yard trying to figure out how they fit together when my dad, the veterinarian, walked by on his way home from his hospital for dinner, and saw the bones. "Where did you get these?" he asked. I was a bit reluctant to tell him as I thought I may be in trouble. My dad, like many fathers at this time, believed in corporal punishment. He calmly asked me to show him where I got them. After dinner I did.

When we got to the edge of the washout, we could see several smelters smelting the river mouth oblivious to the pile of charred bones. My dad saw what he needed to see and immediately called the authorities.

This is more detail than necessary but maybe this recollection should be recorded with the history of the cemetery, and my dad, Dr. Rolf von Goertz, credited with the discovery. I am the board chair of the Knife River Heritage & Cultural Center and know history is fleeting and, if not recorded, is lost forever.

I can't recall what immediate action was taken to control the erosion back in 1956, but I do remember years later passing by the cemetery in my boat and seeing squares of recycled sidewalk placed across what was the mud bank.

HERITAGE MARINE, HOME PORT KNIFE RIVER, IS SOLD.



Heritage Marine, Inc., a tugboat company with home port registered as Knife River, has been sold to a Detroit, MI, company, it was acknowledged recently by Captain Mike Ojard, company founder and CEO.

According to Ojard, the company has been purchased by Dean Marine & Excavating of Mt. Clemens, MI. The company's web site states that its services include shoreline restoration, marine towing, tug assistance, barge services, marine salvage, crane services, sheet pile installation, break wall and sea wall installation and repair, dock and marina construction, mechanical dredging, concrete and excavation work, marine demolition and emergency response.

Ojard said the sale includes all of Heritage's assets of three tugs, two of which work out of Duluth and the other out of Two Harbors. He said he could not speak to what Dean Marine's plans were for Heritage. Purchase price was not disclosed.

NEWSLETTER

Heritage Marine was founded in 2007 and over 17 years bought, rebuilt and sold eight tugs, ending up with three, said Ojard. "I named it "Heritage Marine" to honor my family's heritage in tug boating. My uncle Adolph began sailing on the EDNA G. in 1952 and was its captain for more than 20 years. My father, Harvey, started work on the EDNA G. in 1938 and retired as its chief engineer. I spent a lot of time on the EDNA G. as a child."

Photo right : Captain Mike Ojard

Photo credit: Professional Marine Magazine



"I registered Heritage Marine's home port as Knife River because at one time five of the EDNA G's seven-member crew were from Knife River. All the tugs were painted in maroon and gold, the colors of the Duluth and Missabe Railroad, as a tribute to my family who worked for it."



Heritage Marine is the fourth company Ojard has owned. Previously he owned London Auto Sales, London Auto Body, and Willie's Transmission Service.

Photo left: A steady push from the HELEN H. eases the 1,000-foot PRESQUE ISLE into her berth.

Photo credit: David Schauer

At age 78, Ojard said he "would still be running tugs, but years have advanced and my body with it." He said he is retired for good and intends to spend his time at his lifelong passion of restoring and rebuilding classic cars and hot rods.

Photo right: Mike Ojard, far left, with children from the Boy's & Girls' Clubs of Duluth and Superior. Mike, who was a child of a single parent family, grew up in a California boarding school until age 12. For many years he paid the costs for up to 30 club members to attend the KR annual Julebyen by train and enjoy the food and festivities of the Scandinavian Christmas festival.

Photo credit: Paul von Goertz



JOANNE LIND STILL CUTTING HER GRASS AT 94!

KR's Joanne Lind turned 94 on Thursday August 29th.

Every town needs a few characters to give it personality and KR is fortunate to have Joanne as one of ours. We all know Joanne from her manicured lawn, which she still cuts mostly herself, (or at least directs it) and her home holiday lighting on the northwest corner of Central Avenue and Scenic 61. She's admired for her always pleasant and positive nature, her recall of KR history, being a one-time avid hunter and gardener, Tomboy, and totally honest nature.



Her mother was Emily (Hanson) Erickson, founder of the original Emily's Restaurant and later the Riverfront Restaurant located where Joanne now lives. Joanne worked alongside her mom at both places. She would later work for the DMV in TH and retire from there.

Her dad was Sig Erickson, brother to Carl who owned CRUSADER II. She married Norman "Hack" Lind from KR who was a commercial fisher and worked on the EDNA G. along with several other KR men. Hack died in February of 2008.

Photo credit: Paul von Goertz

The memory I have about Joanne that sticks in my head and perhaps somewhat defines her, was a conversation we had that related to the old smelting days when KR property owners had to fence their yards to keep their property from being vandalized. Joanne and Hack lived on the river and so had a very secure fence around their property.

The conversation was about gun control. Joanne commented, "I had a gun for deer hunting, one for grouse and one for rabbits." I then blurted out, "And you had one for smelters, too! I remember that incident where an unruly smelter tried to breach your fence, and you met him with a shotgun." "Yes," said Joanne, "but I shot over his head..."

Happy Birthday Joanne and many, many more! We love you!

ANNUAL CORN SALE RESULTS IN \$1,772 FOR THE KRHCC!

What has become the annual "Best Corn Ever Sale" was held at the KRHCC on Friday, August 30. All corn had been pre-ordered beginning Wednesday the 28th with pick up on the 30th.

This whole fund raiser is the brainchild of Lee and Jim Bujold. Lee is from Ashland, WI, and was aware of "Farmer Bob" from near Cumberland, WI, who has a reputation for growing the "Best Corn Ever." And it really is.

NEWSLETTER

On the day of the sale Jim and Lee drove more than 200 miles round trip to Cumberland and trailered back about 100 dozen ears that had been picked that morning, enough corn for the fund-raiser and the KRRC community picnic the following day.

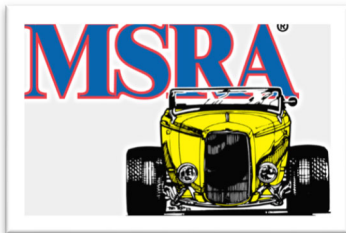
All proceeds from the KRHCC corn sale were designated to help cover the cost to add some Scandinavian flair to the CRUSADER II boat shelter. The money raised has the potential to be matched by the IRRR under a Culture & Tourism grant for which the KRHCC will apply next spring. So, with match - \$3,544!

Many, many thanks to Lee and Jim for creating and hosting the corn sale, and to the corn handlers, Mary Shaw and Linda Keller. Lastly, thanks to all who bought corn in support of the KRHCC!

Photo right: Corn handlers with Corn Queen, Elin von Goertz. Missing from photo are Mary Shaw and Linda Keller.
Photo credit: Someone who bought corn



KRHCC WELCOMES MINNESOTA STREET ROD ASSOCIATION



The Northern Minnesota Chapter of the Minnesota Street Rod Association (MSRA) hosted the association's annual rendezvous with home base at Sonju's in Two Harbors. Organizers said part of the reason for holding the event out of Two Harbors was the numerous attractions along the North Shore, including the KRHCC.

The KRHCC's depot agent welcomed members on Friday, September 7th from 1 - 4 PM

Photo right: A classy coupe owned by a couple from Sauk Rapids, MN, at the KRHCC.
Photo credit: Paul von Goertz



SEPTEMBER DONATIONS, MEMORIALS, HONORARIUMS AND SPONSORSHIPS

Memorials/Honorariums:

- Patricia Ingle Meyer and Bill Meyer donation of a memorial tree in memory of Pat's brother, James Ingle.

Donation

- Lee Cohen undesignated gift.

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

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