

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

VIKING SHIP MOVED TO SITE OF NEW HOME



After eight moves since 1985, Viking ship LEIF ERIKSON made its last trip when it was placed on its shelter slab on October 29, image left. The move was well-planned by Randy Ellestad and other SOS (Save Our Ship) board members and went as planned, with even the weather cooperating.

Mike Ostman Trucking and Excavating of Two Harbors provided the truck tractor to deftly center the ship's trailer on the slab, and Rosenco of Duluth did the lift. Nice to watch two professionals at work and with such efficiency! Total weight of ship and cradle as

recorded by crane instruments was about 13,800 pounds, or 6.9 tons. SOS had estimated six to eight tons.

Prepping the slab site, pouring the slab, and placing the ship on it was SOS's goal for this year's building season. According to SOS's John Vegen, over the winter SOS will tweak the shelter design and finalize the funding package. Shelter will be traditional post and beam with red metal roofing to match the KRHCC's buildings. The shelter will have a viewing deck with interpretive displays much like CRUSADER II's shelter, but with a slightly different deck configuration.

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Heavy-lift crane is readied for the lift.



We have lift off; trailer can now be pulled out from under boat.

Photo credits: Paul von Goertz

HIGH SCHOOL PHYSICS PAYS OFF

By using just about every law of physics that applies to moving dead weight, CRUSADER II received its new (actually very old) engine on November 12. The original 4-cylinder Lathrop is long gone. The replacement engine is a 1920s-era 2-cylinder Palmer which is on a 20-year loan from the Lake Superior Marine Museum. Weight is estimated between 700 and 850 pounds. Details on how the engine was acquired and its ties to Knife River (KR) can be found in the April 2024 issue of the KRHCC newsletter, which is online at krhcc.org under "Recent News."

Many thanks to Randy Ellestad, Larry Ronning, and Dave Grong who together carefully planned the installation and gently eased the engine into the boat through its back doors. Thanks also to the Knife River Marina and marina manager Max Kolodziejczak who lifted the engine to the boat's deck. Max was also the forklift operator.

Installation sequence: Photo credits: Paul von Goertz

Step #1: The KR Marina forklift with extension lifts the engine and prepares to pass it through the back doors to engine beds.

Step #2: All going well until top of forklift hits shelter roof. Time for Plan B.

Step #3: With forward progress thwarted, a temporary deck is made for the engine to rest on while a come-along from inside boat pulls the engine onto a ramp that will allow it to slide onto its beds.

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Step #4: The engine is positioned on ramp – let gravity do the rest! Come-along serves as brake.

Step #5: Transition from ramp to engine beds.

Step #6: The engine is in place! Metal display stand that supported engine at the Duluth Marine Museum will be removed to allow engine to rest on engine beds. New beds were needed to replace rotted original ones.



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RANDY ELLESTAD – MASTER OF “THE ART OF THE DEAL”

It's been apparent to me over the past few months that KRHCC board member Randy Ellestad truly is the master of “The Art of the Deal.”

Consider these deals masterminded by Randy - in chronological order:

- Negotiated the move of CRUSADER II from Lighthouse Point in Two Harbors to KR and what would become the KRHCC. This required collaboration among the City of Two Harbors Public Works, Two Harbors Police Department (escort to Two Harbors city limits), Ostman Trucking & Excavating, and the Knife River Marina – all at no cost to KRHCC!
- One of four KRHCC board members who negotiated a five-year renewable lease from the St. Louis & Lake County Regional Railway Authority, owners of the land upon which the KRHCC now rests. (This lease was later revised to a 20-year renewable lease.)
- Obtained a generous \$20,000 matching gift from a community-minded KR resident. The KRRC provided the match – total \$40,000!
- Accepted an offer of \$1 from the KRHCC for the purchase of the KR depot that he owned.
- Organized and supervised moving the freight building 16 feet back from where it had encroached on the RR right-of-way.
- Convinced SOS to relocate Viking ship LEIF ERIKSON to KR.
- Took the lead in developing a design for the Viking ship shelter.
- Negotiated the price of a kiosk used to display a model railroad at Duluth Hobby for half the asking price. The kiosk was converted to a shelter between the depot and freight building.
- Allowed Julebyen to create a whimsical trail through his campground leading to Troll Village, as well as making space available for Julebyen activities.
- Worked out a deal to bring Nóatún Community Wooden Boat Works to KR from Duluth and rent the empty KRLSD maintenance building. A win for Nóatún, the KRLSD, and KR as we establish ourselves as a Scandinavian/American community demonstrated by a focus on traditional wood boat building and restoration, and the success of Julebyen.
- Arranged and orchestrated the equipment needed to lift and place Viking ship on foundation slab.
- Arranged for the KR Marina to donate a forklift with boom attachment to place antique Palmer engine in CRUSADER II.

All these deals are ones I witnessed. There may be more and certainly others were involved with carrying out each deal. **Thank you, Randy, for all the deals you've made to benefit the KRHCC, SOS, Julebyen, KRLSD, Nóatún, and our community!**

Image right: Randy Ellestad, Master Dealmaker, assists with placing Viking ship on slab.

Photo credit: Paul von Goertz



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NEW HOME FOR BOAT BUILDING SCHOOL NEARS COMPLETION



The former Knife River Larson Sewer District (KRLSD) maintenance building is nearing its transformation into the new home of Nótún Community Wooden Boat Works.

A wisp of smoke from its wood stove tells us the building is about ready for occupancy.

Image left: The Nótún building viewed from the south.

The non-profit moved to KR from West Duluth last summer where it had operated a boat building workshop since 2017. The company had lost its lease and was encouraged to relocate to KR by Randy Ellestad, a supporter of the school and (former?) board member of the KRLSD. Randy was aware of the empty KRLSD maintenance building and thought it would be a good home for the school, and help KR establish itself as a historic boat building/restoration center. The principals of Nótún are John Finkle, president, and Justin Anderson, secretary-treasurer, both of Duluth.

Nótún teaches classes in how to build centuries-old Norwegian skiffs in the traditional manner using period tools. The KRHCC has allowed Nótún to store some of its materials and building processes on KRHCC property while the KRLSD building is converted into a school.

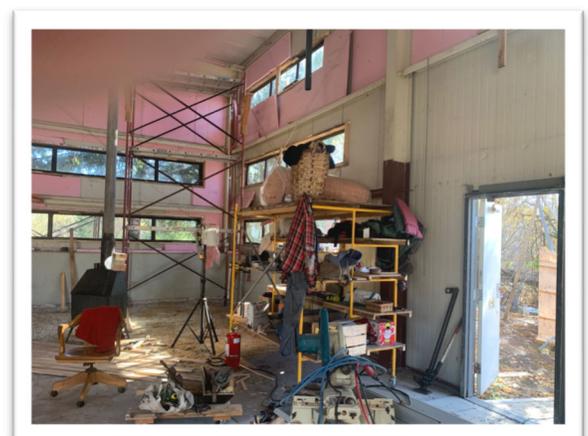


As of mid-November, Finkle said converting the building to its new mission will be a race against the weather but will be made functional by year's end thanks to robust insulation (Image left) and a wood stove. The company already has a contract with an Iowa Norwegian/American heritage organization to restore a 100-year-old replica of a Norwegian skiff

over the winter.

Image right: Caption: Several windows were cut into the building to supplement overhead lighting with natural lighting.

All images credited to Paul von Goertz.



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FADING MEMORIES

Twice a year Mary and I make a leisurely pass through the Wisconsin Bayfield peninsula to see the apple blossoms in the spring and spectacular foliage in the fall. A must stop in Cornucopia is Halvorson Fisheries right on the harbor front for fresh whitefish. A few feet to the east are several fish tugs, reminders of “Corny’s” commercial fishing past. I am saddened by the appearance of the boats, all weathered and in the process of collapsing into the sand.

The boats are cordoned off from passers-by with heavy mooring line. An interpretive display, sponsored by the Otto Bremer Foundation and the Wisconsin Coastal Management Program, reads as follows:

CORNUCOPIA....BRINGING HOME THE CATCH

And gentle winds and waters near, make music to the lonely ear.” Byron

“The RUBY, TWIN SISTERS, EAGLE and LIBERTY – grande dames of fishing days past rest here.

These were among 32 commercial fishing boats that harvested bounties of white fish, lake trout and herring out of Cornucopia’s harbor when fishing was at its peak.

Sometimes called “fish tugs,” the design of these sturdy boats evolved to meet the challenges of fishing on Lake Superior.

Fully enclosed with a raised pilothouse set amidships or on a square stern, these seaworthy craft could weather the worst storms... with lots of room for fish and a crew of four or five.

The fish tugs, and the families who fished from them, once braved the Lake to bring in the day’s catch. They made Cornucopia a center for commercial fishing, a heritage that continues today.”

In addition to recognizing the fish tugs, there is also a restored fishing paraphernalia warehouse nearby that helps captures the heritage of the community.



Photo left: Fading memories that at some point that will probably be reduced to dust – or ashes. Photo credit: Paul von Goertz

Mary tells me it is not nice to compare, but I am very thankful that the KR community so valued its commercial fishing heritage that we restored its most famous fish tug to (almost) “water ready,” and placed it in a shelter that will protect it for many generations.

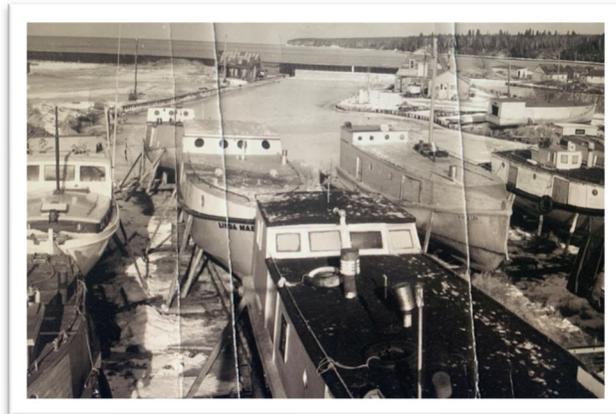
The history of our fishing heritage is told in five interpretive displays that are guaranteed not to chip or fade for ten years. Four of the five

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displays were sponsored by a different KR founding fishing family. The fifth describes the Indigenous presence in Knife River and fishing activity back to historic times. A KR family chose to sponsor that display anonymously.

There are several tributes to the Great Lakes commercial fishing heritage scattered around the five lakes. I have seen several. All the communities that made the effort to preserve this heritage are to be commended.

Image right: The fleet of Cornucopia fish tugs in winter storage sometime perhaps in the early 1950s.



AT FIRST LOOK A CLASSIC PHOTO, BUT A SECOND LOOK DISPELLS THE FIRST



Photo acquired through Erling and Kathy Nervick

Our brother-in-law is the son of Norwegian immigrants and a professional Norwegian. He and my sister-in-law found this photo in a box of photos and memorabilia belonging to his parents. Eureka! A photo of the LEIF ERIKSON sharing a dock with the EDNA G while enroute to Duluth. I will sell this to "Save Our Ship" (SOS) for big money!

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However, a closer look revealed the dock does not look like where the EDNA G. is today and there are cargo ship booms in the background. Upon presenting the photo to the SOS folks, I learned this is a photo of the ERIKSON when it stopped in New York harbor enroute to Duluth in 1926.

Mike Ojard, whose father was Chief Engineer on the EDNA G. for many years, said the tug resembles the EDNA G. as it is a “railroad tug” and pointed out many differences from the EDNA G. Idea of big money for me – dashed!

BIG IDEA WILL HELP SOLVE DEMAND FOR LEFSE AT JULEBYEN!



Mary von Goertz, left, holds Julebyen’s new turning stick capable of turning a five-foot diameter lefse round on a grill. Turning sticks are placed under the center of a round to gently flip the round to the opposite side. It is then used to remove the round from the grill.

The truth behind the stick belongs to our niece, Lisa Nygaard and her husband, Jerry.

The 8’ long turning stick was made by Jerry Nygaard with the rosemailing by his wife, Lisa. The Nygaards live in Richfield, MN, where their love of lefse kinda got out of hand to where they now

grill hundreds of rounds of lefse for family and friends on a near commercial scale. The “lefse” in the photo is actually a blanket made to look like a tortilla for those who love tortillas. But, it can double as a round of lefse.

The turning stick with the “lefse” will be the backdrop for the lefse demonstration and sales at Julebyen December 7 & 8.

Photo: Paul von Goertz

GET YOUR CHRISTMAS TREE AND GREENERY AT “TREES. TRAINS. TRADITIONS”

On Saturday, November 30, the KRHCC will hold its annual “Trees. Trains. Traditions” holiday celebration from 10:30 AM to 1 PM. The event is held in conjunction with the North Shore Scenic Railroad’s “Christmas Tree Train” where families from Duluth select a Christmas tree from the Jon Hanel family tree lot, have it wrapped and placed on a flatbed car for return to Duluth.

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The trees are pre-paid, so riders select their trees from 10:30 to 11:30, at which time the lot is open to the public until 1 PM. Live holiday music and hot food and beverages are provided by Larsmont Trading Post. Children's menu available.

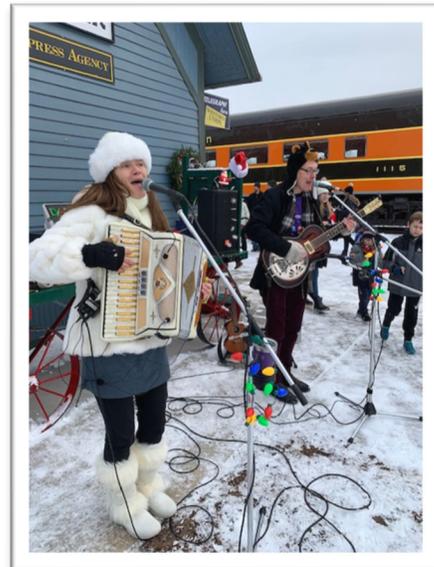


Photo left: Families select their trees provided by the Jon Hanel family of Two Harbors. Photo right: "Dance Attic" is back again by popular demand to play traditional and rockin' holiday music.

KRHCC PREPARES FOR JULEBYEN 2024 FAMILY FUN!

During Julebyen 2024, the KRHCC site becomes "Troll Village" where trains arrive and depart throughout the weekend and visitors can shop 14 farmer market booths under a heated 40' x100' tent. A busy and fun place to visit during Julebyen!



Image above: Festival-goers at Troll Village
Photo credit: Marilyn Magnuson, the Viking Lady

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Food with a children’s menu will be available in the depot catered by Larsmont Trading Post and from food trucks. Sit around the fire pit with hot coffee and cocoa and enjoy the magic of a Scandinavian-themed Christmas, occasionally frequented by curious trolls and a strolling minstrel!

The KRHCC will preview its Scandinavian boat building/restoration heritage for the first time with three boat displays. Leading the way will be the 35’ fish tug CRUSADER II now restored and under its new shelter built this past summer. See its recently installed 1920s-era 2-cylinder engine! Five interpretive displays on the boat’s viewing deck tell the story of KR commercial fishing from Indigenous times to present.

Viking ship LEIF ERIKSON now rests on the foundation for its shelter. SOS relocated the ship to KR in 2021, prepared a site for it and will build a structure over it in 2025. New interpretive displays will describe the history of the ship and its significance in helping to prove Leif Erikson was the first European to land in North America.

Nóatún Community Wooden Boat Works, relocated from Duluth to Knife River this summer to take over the unoccupied Knife River Larsmont Sewer District maintenance building. Over the last several months it has been transformed into a boat building/restoration shop. They will display a replica of a 1100s, 23’ Norwegian faring boat, supported with interpretive signage.

The grounds of the KRHCC have been landscaped for easy and safe walking and the entire site is barrier free in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Dogs are not allowed on site. Parking is off-site nearby and well-marked.

Julebyen 2024 is sponsored by “Lovin’ Lake County.”



NOVEMBER DONATIONS, MEMORIALS, HONORARIUMS AND SPONSORSHIPS

Memorials/Honorariums:

- Gift to the general fund by Bill Berg in memory of Terry Berg.

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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