



V A L L E Y G R O V E N E W S L E T T E R

AUTUMN 2002

BY THE VALLEY GROVE PRESERVATION SOCIETY

With a tight new shake roof on the steeple, fresh siding and a new coat of primer and paint, Valley Grove is ready for weddings, reunions, concerts, fun and worship. Thanks to the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation and Valspar Corporation for the new paint and to River City Builders and Millworks who oversaw the project. River City Builders supplied the carpenter labor, millwork, turnings and painting labor for the church exterior. A special thanks to Kjerland Glass Studios with help in supplying and installing the glass for the new window behind the organ.

GOD JUL OG GODT NYTTAR

Our Christmas Service will be held as usual at 10 pm on Christmas Eve with traditional refreshments afterward. Brush up on your Norwegian hymns including "Stille Natt, Hellige Natt" and get the moths out of the Norwegian *genser* (sweaters) for the event. As St. Olaf Professor Lloyd Hustvedt explains, "the word Jul is pagan in origin. Jul actually means wheel, a symbol for the sun, and solstice was a big pepfest for its return. An earlier form was Gledelig Jul (joyous yule) which might have been more a Danish import. Norway and Denmark had common orthography for a time but they didn't say it the same way." John Maakestad is donating a large spruce tree for the service.

CHANDELIER SURFACES

Norman Rosenqvist of Long Beach, California has donated a brass oil lamp that was part of one of the chandeliers from the wood church. Feb. 28, 1905 is stamped on the lamp. A big thanks to Norman for being the first Valley Grove fan to help with the restoration effort on the original lighting.

THERE'S A WELL ON THE HILL

For the first time in its history, Valley Grove has running water. On June 13, 2002 the drilling of a 300 foot deep well was completed. The well has an underground pressure tank which protects the system from freezing. The water supply comes to two hydrants: one behind the stone church and the second in the parking lot next to the power pole. Thanks to the generous help from the F&ML Weyerhaeuser Foundation there will be water for the new trees on the prairie and plants in the cemetery.

COUNTRY SOCIAL

Everyone had a good old fashioned time on a sunny Sunday afternoon that featured a show of two dozen Amish-made quilts provided by Bryce and Linda Hamilton of Attic Quilts in Minneapolis. They started out nearly 30 years ago traveling the country collecting fine quilts, some of have been displayed at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. The white church also displayed an antique quilt by Linda Wagenbach's grandmother featuring the music and text of the hymn "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." Sheet cakes decorated with a quilt pattern were gobbled up—225 pieces of it—along with 150 cups of coffee.

Jolly, elegant and appropriate music was supplied by Just Du-et, the accordion duo of De Langley and Greg Dagoumas from Minneapolis and by local flutist Kay Sahlin and harpist Elinor Niemisto and keyboardist and board member Howard Segerstrom.

Federal Judge Joan (Erickson) Lancaster and author John Louis Anderson served as judges of the contest: Dan Freeman and Mary Rossing of Northfield won first place with their astonishing tray of mock cocktails replete with Jell-O "salt" on the rim of the margarita. Second prize went to Kathy Gerdes with her American flag triple tier Jell-O that arrived by Model T from New Prague. Zosha Winegar, age 8, came in third with her vivid abstract Odyssey Jell-O.

Thanks to... Knecht Nursery for donating the prizes—perennial flowers, Bob and Cheryl Matthies from Faribault who helped make it a real country social by giving rides in wagon pulled by their handsome black Percheron team, Chip DeMann and Jane Moline and their son Trip, who patiently gave rides on Lon, their Standardbred, and Gus DeMann for bringing his chicken, which provided atmosphere and brown eggs.

VALLEY GROVE ROCKS

Large handsome limestone slabs have been placed on the prairie landscape. Bring an easel, a camera, a book, or lunch and savor the beauty and quiet of this site. Thanks to Estrem Excavating in Dennison, MN for donating these magnificent stones.

V A L L E Y G R O V E N E W S L E T T E R

A U T U M N 2 0 0 2

GROVES NAMED, TREES READY TO ADOPT

On the prairie surrounding Valley Grove, there are the beginnings of seven peaceful and scenic memorial groves. Enclosed with the newsletter, we have a map of the protected land around the churches that shows the location, the grove name and the number of trees that will be in each grove. We are planting mainly oaks, but will plant other native species as a transitional buffer between the prairie and big woods. The size of the trees will be between 2" to 3" at the base with a height from 6' to 9'. We have a prairie committee that will keep the trees mulched, watered and cared for until they become established. Any tree that does not survive the first few years will be replaced.

21 oaks have been planted and already 10 have been dedicated to families and individuals, which leaves 19 trees ready for adoption. In you would like to honor or memorialize someone with a tree or support our tree project contact Ken Sahlin or Peter McKinnon at 507-645-0551.

GRASS ROOTS SUPPORT

Valley Grove has received a check for \$3,000.00 from the Minnesota DNR for nesting cover. Our thriving prairie plants are once again providing shelter and food for birds including pheasants. We have already seen a variety of songbirds, cedar waxwings, eagles and hawks enjoying the flowering open space with more to come as our grasses and forbs provide homes for abundant and diverse wild things.

SUMMER SOLSTICE ART SHOW

On June 22, the old stone church was packed with visitors who came to admire and to buy artwork showcasing the landscapes of Valley Grove and of the region and to enjoy the living midsummer landscape. Among the selections featured at the "Earthly Beauty" show were works by St. Olaf College Professor John Maakestad, Tom Maakestad, Fred Somers, and former Minnesota First Lady Gretchen Quie. More than 25 wonderful artists participated in the event. Some artists donated their artwork outright and others gave a portion of the sales to the VGPS. Riita Hellerud's hand dyed collage of hand made paper depicting Valley Grove in brilliant deep colors was judged Best in Show. Riita won a gift certificate to The Art Store in Northfield. Visitors to the show nibbled excellent goat cheese donated by Shepherd's Way in Nerstrand and enjoyed wine and coffee. The VGPS received over \$1000 in donations. Now on to Valley Grove Art Show 2003: regional art work and photography are invited for next June's show. Images of Valley Grove in all seasons are especially welcome and will be posted on our new and growing web site for all to enjoy.

GIFTS TO CELEBRATE

Valley Grove received gifts to celebrate the marriages of the following two couples: Connie Ladda and Peter Rodosovich and Gwen Anderson and David Hagedorn.

DEDICATIONS

Board member Gary Wagenbach led the tree dedication service in memory of Lilian Wasner and Arnie Rudningen, long time board members, on June 22 during the art show. Arnie's tree was the first tree dedicated in Tyske Grove and Lillian's was the first dedicated in Prairie Rose Grove. During the service two Robert Frost poems were read:

In Hardwood Groves

The same leaves over and over again!
They fall from giving shade above
To make one texture of faded brown
And fit the earth like a leather glove.
Before the leaves can mount again
To fill the trees with another shade,
They must go down past things coming up.
They must go down into the dark decayed.
They must be pierced by flowers and put
Beneath the feet of dancing flowers.
However it is in some other world
I know that this is way in ours.

The Middleness of the Road

The road at the top of the rise
Seems to come to an end
And take off into the skies.
So at the distant bend
It seems to go into a wood,
The place of standing still
As long the trees have stood.
But say what Fancy will,
The mineral drops that explode
To drive my ton of car
Are limited to the road.
They deal with near and far,
But have almost nothing to do
With the absolute flight and rest
The universal blue
And local green suggest.

MEMORIALS

This summer we received gifts in memory of Russell Hope. Russell was a member of the Valley Grove Church and early supporter of this society. Two of Russell's brothers, Alan and Donald were founding members of the society and Donald is a current member of the board.

The Valley Grove Preservation Society is dedicating a tree to honor the Paul Wellstone Family. Senator Wellstone was an avid supporter of projects like ours and the environment. A formal tree dedication will be held next year. The time and date will be announced in the newsletter and on our web site.

STAY IN TOUCH

Our web page is www.valleygrovemn.com. Our address is Valley Grove Preservation Society P.O. Box 75, Nerstrand, MN 55053. Write us with your Valley Grove reminiscences, your fundraising suggestions, your recollections of people and events past at Valley Grove and your ideas for its future.