

VOLUME XXIV, NUMBER 1 | NEWS FROM THE NORDLAND HERITAGE FOUNDATION, SIOUX FALLS, SD | SPRING 2017

TURNING UP THE LIGHTS IN HERITAGE PARK

The lights went on with an idea

The Nordland Heritage Foundation story begins with the first Nordland Fest in 1975. At a planning session for that event the idea emerged that there would be interest in a tour of the Berdahl homestead. James Berdahl, a prominent Sioux Falls lawyer, was asked if he would open for tours the house where he grew up and where Ole Rolvaag courted Jim's sister, Jennie. For two years during Nordland Fest people eagerly toured the house and surrounding environs that had figured in the lives of the early immigrant Berdahl family as well as author Ole Rolvaag and served as setting for his famous book, *Giants in the Earth*. At the end of that time James donated the house to the newly formed Nordland Heritage Foundation which had been organized to raise money to move it and to oversee its care and maintenance. Thus a light went on and Heritage Park was born.

The idea of the house was developed with the work of many

Arthur Huseboe was elected president of the Foundation and others on the original board included Arthur Olsen, Ole Sandvig, B. Bentzinger and Bob Johnson.

The house was moved to the campus in June of 1978.

Anne Berdahl, wife of James, immediately saw the need for a guild who would oversee the interior restoration.

She recruited Dorothy Grevlos, Eileen Devick, Iona Powers and Edith Davis to begin this work and by the following summer it was complete and the

house was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Many others have nourished this vision, including Carolyn Geyer, Mary Loftesness, Lorna Kilian, Barbara Berg, Ed Carlson and Ruth Olsen.

With the addition of the Beaver Creek Church the light intensified

In 1985 Augustana President Bill Nelson approved the appointment of Arthur Huseboe as executive director of the Nordland Heritage Foundation, and a fund drive, chaired by R. C. Johnson, was underway to move the Beaver Creek Church to Heritage Park. That year Berdahl/Rolvaag lectures were held during the Nordland Fest and five Heritage Park publications were in the works. The lights in the park shone brightly and in 1986 the Beaver Creek Church joined the park and a guild for its maintenance was formed consisting of former members of the congregation. Local members included Kenneth and Leroy Iseminger, members of the Elster family, Palmer Paulson, Ray Johnson and his parents. Dedication of the Beaver Creek Church was held on June 2, 1987.

The Eggers Country School brightened the park

In 1987 Edna Anderson proposed adding an old school to the park. In 1991 Art

Huseboe was empowered to spend \$2000 to purchase the Dances with Wolves tepee. That year a committee was appointed to consider the Eggers School as an addition. It was in 1993 that the Eggers School appeared in Heritage Park, thanks to the efforts of James and Vi Wehde, whose story was told in a previous issue of the Nordlander.

Alumni of that school were on hand to provide the original furnishings and to restore the building.

They included Doris Eggers Huseboe, the Wehdes,

Continued on next page

Brian Kaatz Retires as Executive Director

Nordland Heritage Foundation owes a debt of gratitude to Dr. Brian

Kaatz for the two years he served as executive director. He accepted the office at a crucial time and was instrumental in guiding the organization into the digital era with a website, Facebook,



Brian Kaatz

Google, etc. He worked closely with Augustana staff, lowered the average age of the board members and facilitated the addition to the board of our first Augie student. Under his leadership all four of the buildings were painted, the constitution and bylaws were updated and our financial procedures were clarified. He established relationships with other like-minded organizations in town and did outreach with the immigration posters he arranged to display at the Augustana Street and in the Gathering Place at Our Savior's Lutheran Church. He was whole-hearted in his dedication to NHF and was always available for advice and help.

In his own words, he said, "It was such a fun and interesting two years. I'd say some of the good stuff that happened was getting to know some interesting people with passions for an entity that is simply about history and family and tradition and NOT about greed or power." We thank Brian for contributing to that spirit and wish him the best as he uses his talents in new directions and finds new ways to be a contributor in the Sioux Falls community. He has assured us that he will continue to be a friend and supporter of the Augustana Heritage Park.



Obituary

Nordland Heritage Foundation mourns the death of one of its charter members, Robert L. Johnson, otherwise known as Uncle Torvald. He and his wife, Betty, both served on the board periodically and were loyal supporters of the foundation. Bob was well-known and well-loved by generations of students through his work in the mail department at Augie. He was known by students, faculty and the broader community for his jokes and story telling as "Uncle Torvald." He was proud of his Norwegian heritage and his favorite way of demonstrating that was through his jokes and stories. His loyalty and good humor are sorely missed.

OLLI

OLLI (Osher Lifelong Learning Institute) will be holding a class on Heritage Park on Thursday, May 25, 2017 from 2:00-3:30. Charles Berdahl will lead the class on a walking tour of the Park and its buildings assisted by the docents. OLLI provides about 90 classes in Sioux Falls each term for seniors 55 and above on a wide range of topics. OLLI also has classes in Brookings, Vermillion and Chamberlain each term. You can view their website at www.olliuc.org for more details. David Hilderbrand, our executive director, is the volunteer chair elect of OLLI's Leadership Council. We hope that this will be the first of many cooperative activities between the Nordland Heritage Foundation/Heritage Park and OLLI.

Ruthie Parker and Eleanor Emmel. Board members Howard Hovland and Erling Tofteland wholeheartedly supported this addition.

Historic buildings were highlighted during Nordland Fest

During these years tours of the buildings were available Sunday afternoons during the summer or on special request. When Nordland Fest was on the Augustana campus that was always a time when the buildings were highlighted. The fate of Nordland Fest waxed and waned during years when it became a city event. In 1991 the Fest was revitalized and found a new home on the Augustana South campus. Exhibits and smorgasbord were located in the newly-completed Elmen Center. Horse-drawn wagon rides, games and contests such as the lutefisk eating contest were held in Heritage Park. The spotlight was on the historic buildings and hundreds toured them.

The spotlight shines on the Rolvaag Writing Cabin

The fourth building was added to the park and dedicated in 2002, the cabin in which Ole Rolvaag wrote the first draft of his iconic immigration story, Giants in the Earth. This was the generous gift of the Rolvaag family who felt it was appropriate to have the cabin near the Berdahl/Rolvaag House where Rolvaag had heard many of the tales incorporated in the book. Once again board members were active in establishing the cabin at its new site. Herb Mikkelson and V.R. Nelson volunteered countless hours of consultation and hard labor. More recently John Sturdevant, Milt Hanson, Gary Olson and Gary Earl have shared their expertise.

For several years students from Laura Wilder and Mark Twain school children toured the buildings each spring. These contacts were lost when the buildings were closed while the park was reconfigured. We have had scout troops and, especially since the addition of the Rolvaag Writing Cabin, book lovers and book groups. Along the way historic markers were designed and installed for each of the four buildings with the guidance of Bruce Blake.

In April, 2010 Art Olsen was appointed executive director of NHF because of the failing health of Art Huseboe, who had served in that position since its inception. When Art Olsen died in May of 2014 his widow took over as interim until Brian Kaatz accepted the position in January, 2015.

Now Is the Time to Turn Up the Lights

The lights have been on at Heritage Park since 1977 but still many have not been aware of them. In this world of competing lights it is time to increase the intensity, to "Turn up the Lights," to make our presence more widely known and president Charles Berdahl promises to lead the way. Heritage Park will be featured in the spring issue of the official Sioux Falls visitor's guide called Visit Sioux Falls. An ad will appear in this publication and Heritage Park will be listed with contact information along with other local museums.

During the summer months plans are under way to expand the regular visiting hours to include the first Saturday of each month from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Special programs and activities will be offered on these Saturdays between 10:30 and 11:30 a.m. On Saturday, June 3 at 10:30 a.m. Rev. Dave Johnson will present his program on "Theodore Roosevelt and South Dakota" at the Beaver Creek Church. For years David has collected memorabilia from Teddy Roosevelt's four trips to Dakota Territory and South Dakota along with his three trips to Sioux Falls. Rev. Johnson is a retired Lutheran minister, having served in Sioux Falls at East Side Lutheran, Peace Lutheran and retired as Senior Pastor Emeritus at First Lutheran.

On Saturday, August 5th, Greg Olsen will present a program entitled, "The Life of the Common Union Civil War Soldier" with emphasis on the 15th Wisconsin Regiment, better known as the Norwegian Regiment. Greg will talk about and display the uniform and equipment carried by the typical enlisted man during the Civil War. The talk will also center on camp life and the diet of the soldier.

Greg's great, great grandfather, Halvor Brenden, was a private in Company E which was known as Odin's Rifles. Greg is a retired high school history teacher and life-long Civil War re-enactor with Company D, 13th U.S. Infantry based out of Sioux Falls. Weather permitting the program will be outside. Recommend bringing chairs. July 1 special event TBA.

Air-conditioning is being installed in the Beaver Creek Church to make it more accessible for weddings and other events during the summer. It's an exciting time for the Nordland Heritage Foundation.

A Treasure on eBay!

Louise and Don Berdahl made a surprising find on eBay several months ago thirty-eight postcards associated with the Ole and Jennie (Berdahl) Rolvaag family from the early 1900s! Here is what they say about the experience:

"They were sold individually so for a while we were pretty busy making bids! We are extremely pleased to be able to donate them to the Berdahl/Rolvaag House. There are postcards from Jennie to Prof. Rolvaag, cards between Jennie and her children, and cards from many relatives and friends, including one from Prof. Nora Solum, the translator of *Peder Victorious*. Our favorite is the one closest to Don in

the photograph. It was from six-vear-old Arthur Berdahl to his cousin Olaf Rolvaag in December of 1912. The card was almost certainly written for Arthur by his grandfather, Andrew Berdahl, and suggests that next summer the boys will 'both be big enough to ride alone' (on Grandpa's horse Nancy,) 'though Grandpa may have to lead her.' A couple of the cards were sent to Jennie



Louise and Don Berdahl with the postcards written by the Rolvaag family.

Berdahl c/o Andrew Berdahl in Garretson, SD, so were sent to the house now preserved at the Nordland Heritage Foundation site. Don is a descendent of Erick J. Berdahl, Henry A. Berdahl and John Stewart Berdahl. Louise is also a descendent of early Dakota pioneers—Johann Stokke, John E. Johnson and Gisle Johnson who were neighbors of the Berdahls. The photo shows two other Dakota artifacts. The picture on the wall is the group photo from the 60th anniversary wagon train reunion held in 1933. The table the cards are sitting on is a harvest table that belonged to Erick J. and Hannah (Branvold) Berdahl. It was used on their homestead to feed neighbors and kin who helped with the harvest and has the ability to extend to over thirty feet in length!"

We are immensely grateful to Don and Louise for discovering these cards, bidding on them and then donating them to the B/R House. We will work with advice from museum archivists on the best way to preserve and display them.

NORDLAND HERITAGE FOUNDATION MEMBER LIST

(as of 3/1/2017)

VIKING LEVEL \$251-\$2,000

Berdahl, Donald and Louise Berdahl, Mark Rossing, Bill and Vicenta

SPONSOR LEVEL \$250

Berdahl, Charles and Judy Garey, Kristin and Michael Mayeske, Dorothy Schultz, Greg and Karen

DONOR LEVEL \$100

Amundson, Loren and Mavis Anderson, Duane Augustana University,

Center for Western Studies Burling, Marian Doerner, Mina Eitrheim, Norm and Clarice Fossum, Arlyn and Jeann Hanson, Milt and Marjorie Johnson, Judy Larson, Cheryl and Jerry Looney, Sandra Oistad, James and Michele Olsen, Ruth Scott, Bob Simons, Bob and Sue

Srstka, Bob and Kim Stenseth, Shirley Stow, Ron Viste, Arlen Zempel, Elden and Solveig

CONTRIBUTOR LEVEL \$50

Abbott, Carol Berdahl, James and Susan Berdahl, Andrew Berdahl, Wayne and Doris Berven, Ardys Brendtro, Gary and Mary Earl, Gary and Sandy Halverson, Ron and Joan Hilderbrand, David and Julie Jencks, Jerald and Joan Johnson, RC Johnson, Ron Kaatz, Brian and Joyce Kielman, Russ and Betty Kilen, Frances Kittelson, John and Marcia Larson, Paul Meier, Harlan and Kathryn Naessig, Janet Olson, James Parker, Ruth

Powers, Iona

BASIC LEVEL \$25

Ahrendt, Ronald and Lois Bauder, Dwayne and Carol Belknap, Rowan and Karen Carlson, Jim Dedrickson, Jim and Judy Eiesland, David and Jan Elmen Eloise Emmel, Eleanor Engbers, Nick and Sarah Grevlos, Dorothy Iseminger,

Laurice and Kenneth Iverson, Ginny Johnson, Ray and Marty Kennedy, Karen and Kevin Kilian, Lorna Kratochvil, Karen Lefler, Arlene Olsen, Arne Olsen, Beret/Leon Rishniw Olstad, Lyle and June Pederson.

LaMoyne and Karyn Poss, Becky Reynolds, Nola Knutson Thompson, Harry and Ronelle Wehde, James



Nordland Heritage Foundation will hold its Annual Meeting on Sunday, June 11, 2017 in the 3-in-1 room of the Morrison Commons Building at Augustana University. The traditional Cora Stavig egg dish buffet brunch will be served at 12:00 noon, followed by a brief business meeting to vote on accepting the new members nominated for the NHF Board of Directors. Special music will be provided by the Mandskor, the men's chorus directed by Terry Walter.

The speaker will be the new executive director, David Hilderbrand, who will share his vision for the future of NHF and Heritage Park. David comes to the foundation with a rich experience in academic and non-profit fields and is well suited to guide us in the next phase of our history. The title of his talk will be Nordland Heritage Foundation and Park: Opportunities and Challenges for the Future. He sees the Park as a wonderful resource that has been beautifully sustained by the NHF. In order to ensure that the Park is still relevant in the decades ahead he will present a series of ideas as possible approaches to achieving the goal of capturing the interest of all generations in the history it represents.

The day will begin with the annual traditional church service at 10:30 a.m. in the Beaver Creek Church. The preacher will be the Rev. Richard Foster. Rev. Charles Berdahl will lead the service and Rev. Foster will play the organ. Rev. Foster grew up in Minnehaha County and graduated from Augustana University and Luther Seminary. He served parishes in this area as well as places as far flung as West Berlin, Manhattan and California. He now resides in Sioux Falls.

The public is cordially invited to the annual meeting as well as the church service. Reservations are appreciated for the brunch. Call (605) 681-6650 to reserve.



Contact Information

The Nordland Heritage Foundation (NHF) has new contact options! We look forward to connecting with you via:

- US Mail: NHF, Augustana University, Box 735, 2001 S. Summit Ave., SFSD 57197
- Telephone: (605) 681-6650
- Email:
- nordlandheritagefoundation@gmail.com
- Facebook: www.facebook.com/nordlandheritage

We welcome you to contact us to schedule your wedding ceremony in the soon to be air-conditioned Beaver Creek Church, to request a tour for a school group or other interested parties, to inquire about special programs/presentations and to join the Nordland Heritage Foundation and support its work of preserving heritage.

For additional information, we invite you to visit our website at www.nordlandheritage.org. A special thank you to Augustana University and NHF Executive Director David Hilderbrand for these expanded contact options.



When the weather settles into spring, watch for two new benches along the walks of Heritage Park. This will enhance your enjoyment of the landscaping and the return of the ducks in the pond. Remember that the Park is always open even when the buildings are not, and a stroll along the paths during pleasant South Dakota weather is a good way to restore your soul.

David Hilderbrand Is New Executive Director of NHF



David Hilderbrand

Nordland Heritage Foundation shares the good news that David Hilderbrand has accepted the position of executive director of NHF recently vacated by the retirement of Brian Kaatz. The following is the introduction of David sent out by board president Charles Berdahl to members and friends of the foundation. David began his work with us on January 1, 2017.

"We are pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. David Hilderbrand as Executive Director of the Nordland Heritage Foundation, Sioux Falls. Dr. Hilderbrand served at SDSU as Head of the Department of Chemistry, Director of International Programs, Director of SDSU programs in Sioux Falls, Dean of Graduate School

and Related Programs. In his post retirement he has served at SDSU as Professor Emeritus; Dean Emeritus, Graduate School; Interim Dean, College of Education and Human Services; Interim Dean, College of Arts and Science.

Dr. Hilderbrand has approximately 20 professional publications and extensive experience in starting and developing programs in a wide range of local, regional, national and international settings.

Among Dr. Hilderbrand's current activities are Chair-Elect of OLLI (Osher Lifelong Learning Institute) Advisory Board, curriculum committee and OLLI instructor. He is a member of First Baptist Church, a church council member and adult Sunday School instructor. David is also a docent at the Butterfly House and Marine Coye."

The Nordland Heritage Foundation board and members look forward to David Hilderbrand's leadership among us as we seek to "Turn up the Lights" at the Augustana Heritage Park.

NOTES FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Nordland Heritage Foundation members and friends, it is a pleasure to have been selected to serve as your Executive Director. From everything I observed and heard, Brian Kaatz was an outstanding Executive Director and a difficult act to follow. (Brian and I have been colleagues and friends for many years so I know well his leadership skills.) Brian has done an outstanding job of formalizing procedures, updating records, utilizing technology and building bridges with Augustana University. As I assume this role, I want to do what serves the Foundation and Park best and contributes to their continued significance in the community. First, I will work with the Board of Directors to continue and build upon the initiatives that Brian brought.

Although I have lived in Sioux Falls for over twenty years and was aware of the Heritage Park, I had never actually been in any of the buildings. Over the past few weeks as I have talked to friends, I find that is true of most of my friends. When Brian took me on a tour, I was very amazed at what Nordland Heritage Park has to offer historically and educationally. Thus, one of the first contributions I hope to make is to enhance current efforts to help make the Park more visible in the community. One way of doing this is to collaborate with other like-minded non-profit organizations in the community. OLLI (Osher Lifelong Learning Institute) is going to have a one session class on the Nordland Heritage Foundation in the Church in May. I have also invited the Sioux Falls History Club to hold one of their monthly meetings at the Park. They are enthusiastic about the idea and have set the meeting for May 2. I would welcome your suggestions of other local organizations that may be interested in something similar. This whole range of activities fits directly under the "Turning Up the Lights" initiative that President Charles Berdahl has described.

A third initiative that the Nordland Heritage Foundation needs to implement, in my opinion, is a significant push for new members. I believe that working with organizations like OLLI and the Sioux Falls History Club can be first steps in that process. I anticipate that this will be a significant discussion topic on the Board agenda over the next several meetings.

Finally, it may serve the Foundation Well to do some visioning for the future. What do you want the Nordland Heritage Foundation and Park to look like in the future?

I look forward to meeting and greeting more of you over the next several months as we work together to even further strengthen what you have built.

David Hilderbrand

News from other Heritage Organizations



SONS OF NORWAY

As this is being written Sons of Norway members are focusing their energy and organizational skills to prepare for the annual Torsk/Meatball Dinner. It is scheduled for Friday, March 3 in the Nordic Hall from 4:30-7:00 p.m.

The April meeting will be on the 20th at 7:00 p.m. at Our Savior's Lutheran Friendship Room. This will be the annual Memorial Service honoring the loss of former SON members during this past year. We will also hear from the student recipient of the SON scholarship to Girls' State. Music will be by the Saugstad Brothers.

Syttende Mai, Norwegian Constitution Day, will be celebrated on Tuesday, May 17, 6:00 p.m. at First Lutheran Church with a Scandinavian Buffet and music and humor by Mogen's Heroes. Exhibits and punch will be available at 5:00 p.m.

The June meeting will be a 6:00 p.m. picnic on Thursday, June 15 at Nordland Heritage Park on 33rd Street across from Augustana University. Broasted chicken and beverage will be provided and tours of the buildings will be available.

Monday, July 10 at 6:00 p.m. will be a picnic at the McKennan Park Shelter followed by the 7:00 p.m. band concert.

Thursday, August 17 from 5:00-8:00 p.m. will be an outing to the Strawbale Winery. Food will be available for purchase. Music will be from the Summer Porch Series.

Thursday, September 21, 6:30-8:30 p.m. will be a trip to the Nora Store for an old fashioned sing-a-long and lunch at the Original Norwegian Settlement where Christmas at Nora takes place yearly.

NORWEGIANS WORLDWIDE (NORDMANNS-FORBUNDET)

The Norse Federation (Norwegians Worldwide) Spring Banquet is scheduled for Tuesday, April 18 in the 3-in-1 room of Augustana Morrison Commons. The program will begin at $6:00~\rm p.m.$

The featured guests will be a combination of faculty and students from three great courses that were held in Norway during interim 2017: 1) Professor Pam Schroeder and students from our nursing exchange, 2) Professor Sherry Barkley and students from her course on exercise science/outdoor life, and 3) Professor Matt Johnson and his course on special education. These courses were all over Norway and the participants learned many unique things that they are excited to present. The cost of the dinner will be \$14 per person. Make your check payable to Norwegians Worldwide. You will have a choice of either Baked Icelandic Cod or Holiday Ham. Contact Michael Nitz, Commissioner, for more information at (605) 274-5474 or email *michael.nitz@augie.edu*.

MINNEHAHA MANDSKOR



Winston Kittelson the dog enjoying rehearsal with Director Terry.

After a post- Christmas break Mandskor resumed rehearsals January 30. They have been pleased to have two guests, Leslie Hernes (bass) and Ken Mork (tenor) and will welcome them as members if they choose to join.

Also visiting rehearsals has been their mascot, Winston Kittelson. Winston spent nearly two weeks at the home of Director Terry and her husband Don while his owners were on a cruise. He enjoyed attending rehearsals where, after greeting everyone, he spent his time napping on the podium.

Continued on the side panel

Heritage Organizations continued

Mandskor has the Sangerfest music in hand and has been through all of it. Some of it they used last fall so the list of songs to be learned is shorter. Joint Sioux Valley rehearsals are scheduled and everything is a go for the Sioux Valley Sangerfest in June.

NORSE GLEE CLUB

The Sioux Valley Singers
Association Sangerfest will be held
on June 10 at the Spirit of Peace UCC
Church here in Sioux Falls and the
Norse Glee Club is the host group.
Glee club members are busy
planning for this event.

In January George and Judy Regan continued an 18-year tradition by inviting members to a mid-winter evening of "Court Whist". This year there were seven tables of players, enjoying the card-playing, fellowship and good food.

Brookings Sons of Norway member Duane Allison has invited the Glee Club to give a performance at the Ascension Lutheran Church in Brookings on April 30 at 2:00 p.m.

Norse Glee Club mourns the loss of three long-time valued members. Marvin Glen Nelson, 100 years old, died on January 23. Eugene A. "Gene" Johnson, 85 years old, died on February 4. Each of these men sang with the group for over 30 years and was helpful translating Norwegian Ivrics in Glee Club music. Robert L. "Uncle Torvald" Johnson died on January 2 at the age of 93. He had been a member of the bass section for 40 years and was well-known for his self-deprecating Midwest humor, especially when he teamed up with "Red" Stangland.

Norse Glee Club was happy to welcome one new member last fall, Brian Noe. New members are always welcome!

GENEALOGY INTEREST GROUP

This group meets regularly on the last Tuesday evening of the month at 7:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall of Grace Lutheran Church, 3300 E. 18th Street, Sioux Falls. Please enter the building off the parking lot at the rear of the church. Meetings usually include a coffee break with treats furnished by participants. Meetings conclude by 9:00 p.m. All persons interested in researching their Norwegian ancestry are welcome.



THE NORDLAND HERITAGE FOUNDATION Augustana University Box 735 2001 S. Summit Ave. Sioux Falls, SD 57197



The ad that appears in the Sioux Falls Visitor Guide.

- The Nordlander is the news publication for the Nordland Heritage Foundation. This organization was founded in 1977 and maintains the historic buildings in Heritage Park and makes them available to the public. Ruth Olsen is the editor.
- * Mark your calendar for the next annual meeting of the Nordland Heritage Foundation which is scheduled for June 11, 2017.
- The four historic buildings are open for touring on Sunday afternoons from 2:00 to 4:00, during the summer. Special tours can be arranged for school groups or other interested parties during the year. Call (605) 338-1291 or (605) 338-6372. The park is open all year.

Yes!

I want to join Nordland Heritage Foundation and support its work of preserving heritage.

Send to Nordland Heritage Foundation Augustana University Box 735 2001 S. Summit Ave., Sioux Falls, SD 57197 ☐ Have you included the Nordland Heritage Foundation in your will?

