

## Celebrating Christmas in Wasioja

By Nan Babcock

Christmas in Wasioja was a festive event that provided an opportunity to socialize and enjoy old-fashioned Christmas music, crafts, food and decorations. Dec. 12 provided near perfect weather with a layer of snow to showcase the antique sleigh positioned at the entrance to the Creamery, privately owned

by Dodge County Historical Society Board president Jean Bartel. The sleigh provided a setting for a memorable Christmas photo of family and friends. Father Christmas greeted visitors outside the Creamery and shared the story of how he became a legendary symbol of seasonal giving.

Inside the Creamery, guests could enjoy eight Christmas trees, along with other historic decorations, many of them with a Scandinavian background. Bob Senjem, author of the book "Pages of Oslo," was on hand to autograph copies of the book and



Nancy Clancy and Jan Jech pose with St. Nicholas at the Creamery during Christmas in Wasioja.

visit with people about their memories of the Oslo area.

Visitors snacked on light refreshments, and baked goods were offered for sale. Aunt Sally cookies sold out, and so did the seven kransekake (Norwegian wedding cakes) lovingly put together by dedicated volunteers. Other historic merchandise was offered for sale as well, including Christmas ornaments, books, T-shirts and notecards.

Other stops on the festive circuit included our three historic Wasioja buildings, open and dec-

orated for the occasion. At the Recruiting Station, a Civil War soldier greeted visitors in a cozy room containing a live evergreen decorated with authentic ornaments. At the schoolhouse, another live tree featured homemade ornaments, and visitors could create their own ornaments from pine cones or milkweed pods.

In the church, with Levi Livingood at the piano, people could sing along with traditional Christmas carols,

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## Board Members

Jean Bartel, President

Mark Packard, Vice President

Lois Hancock, Secretary

Tom Gall, Treasurer

Dave Aakre

Nan Babcock

David Chicos

Janet Kubat Willette

## Contact Information

Dodge County Historical Society

615 North Main Street

Mantorville, MN 55955

Phone: 507.635.5508

Email: [dodgecountyhistorical\\_society@gmail.com](mailto:dodgecountyhistorical_society@gmail.com)

## Hours

Open by appointment only.  
Contact Dave Hanson at 507.374.6594 for more information.

## Website

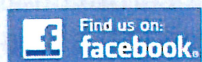
<https://dodgecountyhistorical.mn/>

## Moving?

Please contact the society if your address or email has changed.

## Ordering online?

When ordering through Amazon Smiles, be sure to designate the historical society for your donations.



*The mission of the Dodge County Historical Society is to collect, preserve, and disseminate knowledge of the history of Dodge County and its relation to the history of the state of Minnesota.*

# Time to renew your membership

The Dodge County Historical Society Board of Directors voted to once again have a mail-in election for board members.

The board made this decision at the January board meeting.

The election first moved to a mail-in ballot in 2020 because of COVID-19 and it has been very successful, with a great response rate from members.

Included on the back page of this newsletter is a membership form. Only members whose dues are paid by April 15 will be able to vote in the election. Members whose dues are due have a letter enclosed in their newsletter. If you are not a

**Watch your mailbox for information on proposed changes to the DCHS Constitution.**

member and want to cast a ballot in the election, please send in the membership form on the back page.

If you have questions about your membership, please call the museum at (507) 635.5508 or email [dodgecountyhistoricalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:dodgecountyhistoricalsociety@gmail.com). The Dodge County Historical Society is always looking for new members interested in collecting, preserving and sharing the history of Dodge County. Membership is \$20 per year for individuals and \$50 for a five-year member-

ship.

The terms of three board members expires this year. Those with expiring terms are David Chicos, Mark Packard and Janet Kubat Willette.

Ballots for the election will be mailed after April 15. In the meantime, be sure to nominate people to serve on the board. Nominations are due April 15. Ballots will be due back to the museum on May 19 and will be counted prior to the regular board meeting.

Send your nominations to [dodgecountyhistoricalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:dodgecountyhistoricalsociety@gmail.com) or mail them to the society at P.O. Box 456, Mantorville, MN 55955.

## Guess what?

No one was able to identify the building pictured at right. It's the Mantorville Brewery, which was located just east of the present day Hubbell House. The building was built against a bluff of solid stone. The photo is from 1939. Otto Schumann was the brewer in 1942.



# A great day to connect in Wasioja



Levi Livingood played the piano at the church and Barbara Loquai sang along.

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enjoy more seasonal refreshments, and view a display of Christmas trees with a variety of ornaments, including Hardanger ornaments, Christmas and U.S. presidential ornaments.

Preparations for this event started several weeks before Dec. 12. Past society president Dave Hanson donated live trees to be used in the Recruiting Station and the schoolhouse. Artificial trees were put up in other locations and decorated by a group of enthusiastic and dedicated volunteers who donated many hours to make the event a success. Talented bakers went to work in mid-November to produce their delicacies.

The Christmas event was an opportunity to invite the public into our historic buildings to showcase these amazing remnants of history in Wasioja. It was a great time to connect with people and enjoy the season. This was a fundraising event, and we greatly appreciate the generosity of the people who shared the day with us. We hope to continue this tradition in Wasioja.



Above, several people gathered for the service at the church in Wasioja.

At left, The sleigh outside the creamery was a focal point for photos during Christmas in Wasioja.



# Thank you

*Thank you to all who have donated money to the Dodge County Historical Society. Your generosity enables the society to continue to operate.*

American Legion Post #52  
Marlene Aakre  
Chris Abel  
Barbra Alberts  
Denise Anderson  
Robert Anderson  
Nan Babcock  
Jean Bartel  
Joel Bigelow  
Daniel Blanchard  
Kenneth Durst & Janice Borgstrom-Durst  
Gary Bromley  
Mary Bucher Ann  
Minor (Corky) Buckingham  
Cindi Carter  
Shirley Chapin  
James Checkel  
Nancy Clancy  
Claremont Chamber Of Commerce  
Terry Cochran  
Con-Tech Manufacturing Inc.  
Jerry Dallmann  
Darrol Davis  
Randy Demmer  
John Donovan  
Samuel Edge  
Eleanor Engesser  
David Erickson  
John Fouarge  
Scott French  
Nancy Fryer  
Samuel Fudenberg  
Bruce Fure  
Thomas Gall  
Darleen Gillard  
Douglas Gochnauer  
Kelvin Grabau  
Erik Hahn  
David Hanson  
Denice Hassenstab  
Philip Haukom  
Gary Hayden  
Colleen Hayne  
Wayne Hendrickson  
Thomas Hennessey  
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Robert Law  
Barbara Loquai  
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Mark Packard  
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Merrie Powell  
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Daniel Senjem  
Judy Severson  
Linda Sorensen  
Jeff Stevenson  
William Stromme  
Jerry Suhr  
Michael Suhr  
Marilee & Kirk Swenson  
Sharon Thiemann  
Nancy Thornton  
Dan Tokheim  
Dee Tollefson  
Gina Tuohy  
Mike Tuohy F.  
Carmen VonRuden  
Timothy Voth  
Wasioja Township  
Wells-Peterson Post 384  
Clinette Wolf  
Lowell Wright

*The Dodge County Historical Society has also benefited from the support of a large number of enthusiastic and energetic volunteers who donated their time and effort to make our 2021 events*

*successful. Thank you so much, volunteers!*

Marlene Aakre  
Barbra Alberts  
Gloria Alberts  
Marge & Ron Albright  
Bill Babcock  
Janice & Ken Borgstrom-Durst  
Mary Ann Bucher  
Jim Checkel  
Nancy Clancy  
Cindy DeBlicke  
Char & Larry Edgar  
Tonya Edgar  
Eleanor Engesser  
Trudy Engleby  
Dave Erickson  
Julie & Scott French  
Ian Gall  
Barb Gilliland  
Sandy Gochnauer  
Ken Greene  
Diann & Phil Greene  
Dave Hanson  
Denise Hassenstab  
Wayne Hendrickson  
Jan Jech  
Linda Jervis  
Ken Johnson  
Patti Krier  
Donna Lee  
Levi Livingood  
Barbara Loquai  
Barb Maplethorpe  
Barb Meidinger  
Sharon Melquist  
Jane & John Olive  
Merrie Powell  
Jerry Roy  
Warren Schwenke  
Bob Senjem  
Sharon Thiemann  
Kaye & Orlo Toquam  
James Twaddle

# Cutting history in wood

By Janet Kubat Willette

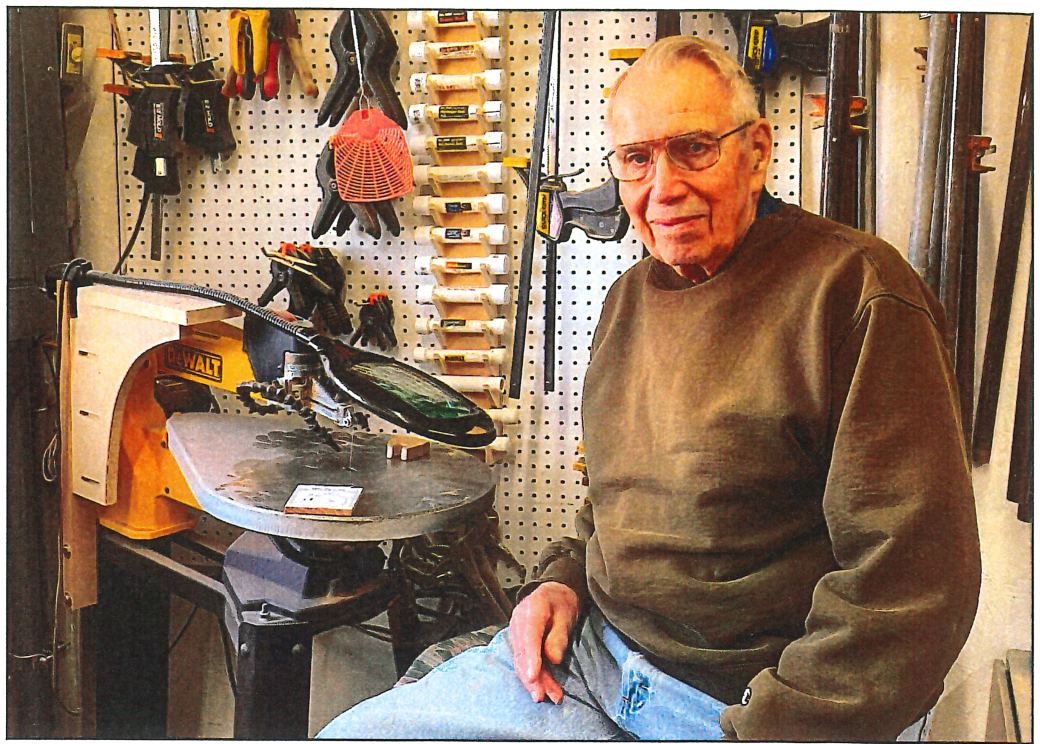
Fred Asche pulls out his cell phone and starts scrolling through images until he finds the one he's seeking: An image of the Lord's Prayer cut into wood, with the words in wood looking as good as those written by the teacher who taught you penmanship in elementary school.

Fred, 87, has been creating art with wood since he was a child growing up in rural Clara City, Minnesota.

"I didn't have any Tonka toys, I made my own," Fred said. He still uses the hammer he got in his first woodworking set, gifted to him when he was 8 or 9 years old. It came in a steel box and included a saw, planer, hammer, chisel and square.

One of his first projects was a barn, complete with windows. His mother gave it away when he got older. A lamp that he made for his mother is one of the oldest projects he continues to use. The home he and his wife Joan share contains many others: An entertainment center crafted from oak packing crates, desks and a grandfather clock. The lion in the meeting room at the Kasson Public Library was created by Fred. His sons earned purple ribbons with their 4-H woodworking projects at the Minnesota State Fair using skills they honed under their father's guidance.

Joan and Fred farmed in Minnesota for 30 years before moving to California, where Joan had family. Fred worked as a machinery me-



Fred Asche sawed the ornaments pictured below in his wood shop.

chanic for Ford New Holland, traveling up and down the San Joaquin Valley in his service truck.

In May 1997, they moved back to Minnesota and Fred worked for the grain elevators in Kasson and Bryon. In 2008, Fred bought a book of patterns for ornaments and started sawing. He's made thousands of ornaments since.

"He says it's not a good day unless he makes sawdust," Joan said.

In July 2021, Fred had a display in the Creative Activities building at the Dodge County Fair. The display showcased his ornaments, each a 5/16 inch to 3/8 inch thick, and each unique, cut by hand on a scroll saw in his woodshop using a blade that's about as thick as dental floss.

Fred was approached about creating ornaments that replicated several of the historic buildings in the Wasioja Historic District. He agreed. Turns out, he's often approached about creating ornaments, Joan said. A friend will ask him to create this or that in an ornament or wall hanging.

"There's always new ones," Joan said.



He often works from photographs. He uses the copy machine at their church to get the pattern to the right size and begins to create.

"He's a very patient man," Joan said.

Fred took images of the historic seminary ruins, recruiting station, church, school and Doig house and created patterns. The ornaments are available from the Dodge County Historical Society.

Each ornament is hand cut by Fred on his saw, one cut at a time.

"It just takes time," he said.