



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

W I N T E R 2 0 0 3

BY THE VALLEY GROVE PRESERVATION SOCIETY

## CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

God Jul Og Godt Nyttar!

Christmas Eve is always a homecoming at Valley Grove, and this year as always, friends and family will spend the evening celebrating in the simple, old fashioned way. The handsome Christmas tree that graces the church will be donated by Tom and Elaine Hill of Medford. Please join us to help decorate on Sunday, December 21 from 1 to 3 p.m.

The Valley Grove service on Christmas Eve will begin at 10 p.m, music 9:45. Reverend Hugh Kaaste of Northfield will help with the service. Look for his traditional ruffed collar. Our organist will be Nadine Langworthy. There will also be clarinet and flute music preformed by Joe Ann Polley and Kay Sahlin. Wear your Norwegian *genser* (sweaters) and bring treats to share after the service when we socialize over our special hot cider.

## IN ADDITION

There are sturdy new back doors and hardware on the white church thanks to River City Builders. The Carriage Club Drive and Trail Ride in October attracted riders and drivers from St. Croix Horse and Carriage Society and Whips'N 'Wheels. They enjoyed hearty hot potluck and organ music after a scenic fall ride past Gary and Linda Wagenbach's home, up Hwy. 246 and through the backyard prairie of Doug and Mary Jones. Valley Grove made the cover of the lovely new coffee table sized book. "Churches of Minnesota, An Illustrated Guide" (U of M Press \$29.95) by Alan K. Lathrop, University of Minnesota Libraries manuscripts division. "This was the only church site in the state with two churches on a hilltop," said Lathrop. The photo was taken by Bob Firth of Carver, Minnesota. We hope to have books and the authors at a book signing and sale at the 2004 Solstice Art Show.

## ORGAN

The tracker organ is in top shape thanks to extensive organ repairs done recently by Rutz Organ Company of Morristown, Minnesota. Late last April the organ was completely disassembled with only the bellows with its supporting legs holding it in place. (see our web site for photos) Due to an unexpected funeral Rutz Organ had less than three days to completely put the organ back together. Besides completing the work in the nick of time they also donated much labor over our original bid. Thank you Rutz Organ!

## ROOF PITCH

The church's much needed new roof will be completed by Blesener Quality Exteriors of Dundas. The roof can't wait, and the company is willing to carry part of the bill until we have the needed funds. The finished roof will not only match our handsomely refurbished steeple but it will be dry and tight for decades, and the growing stains on the interior ceiling will be gone. Work will begin some time after Christmas and be finished for spring 2004 events and weddings. Contributions are tax deductible and are very much needed for this big task. The Fredrick and Margaret L. Weyerhauser Foundation has been generous enough to start us off with a \$10,000 donation!

## DEEP ROOTS DEDICATIONS

Without the roots that held firm during the past, Valley Grove would not have survived. Among the strong tap roots are neighbors and board members John and Bobbie Maakestad in whose honor a tree was dedicated during a ceremony on the prairie after the Country Social. At a small gathering on the prairie east of the cemetery, where their tree is planted, John told stories about the early days of the Society. Another friend whose roots have held Valley Grove together is Howard Segerstrom, who was honored with a tree of his own in recognition of his long service to Valley Grove on the board and to his kind and generous work to preserve it.

# VALLEY GROVE NEWSLETTER

## WINTER 2003

### VALLEY GROVE ON CD

Northfield's celebrated musician Andrea Een has recorded a CD of hardanger fiddle music at Valley Grove and United church of Christ in Northfield. "From the Valley" was recorded in July 2003 and will be released this winter. The hardanger is a Norwegian folk instrument dating back to 1600 and some of the music is medieval.

The CD features 13 tunes, with four composed by Een. They include bridal marches from the Voss tradition (a region north of Hardanger fjord), *springars* —dances in triple meter, and *rudls* — or dances in duple time. Een, a St. Olaf music professor, has been teaching hardanger since 1979. St. Olaf is the only college in the US that offers hardanger instruction, says Een.

In May 2002, Een received the St. Olaf Medal from the King of Norway for her work with Norwegian culture and strengthening ties between Norway and America. The Hardanger Fiddle Association of America has held its last two conventions in Northfield.

"Vang, Trondheim, Kristiana, Gul —we are near all of these wonderful Norwegian churches, but Valley Grove is special, so I take every Norwegian fiddler who visits to see it. You can sense what it was like in 19<sup>th</sup> century, it's a really spiritual place. When I thought about doing a CD I wanted to have a live space, and Valley Grove has spiritual resonance for me. You can hear the birds chirping on the CD and that ruralness is such an important part of hardanger fiddle in Norway."

### SUMMER SOLSTICE ART SHOW

The annual "Earthly Beauty" Valley Grove Art Show attracted visual art ranging from paintings to glasswork. The many guests who came out for the wine and cheese on the Friday, June 20 evening exhibit opening enjoyed perfect weather and a long twilight. Art was contributed by many regional artists and a portion of all sales were donated to the VGPS. Remember to visit Sheperd's Way in Nerstrand and Faribault Dairy to enjoy our wonderful local cheeses year-round!

You can't buy the four-panel image of Valley Grove exhibited by architect Sean Olson of Minneapolis (who was recently married at VG to Guthrie Theatre graphics designer Holly Welch), but you can own it in the form of gift cards. These and other Valley Grove cards by Olson, can be purchased at *digs* in Northfield, MN (507-664-9140). Proceeds benefit Valley Grove!!!

### COUNTRY SOCIAL

Bryce Hamilton of Attic Quilts in Minneapolis exhibited Amish-made quilts in the white church. Refreshments, including a quilt pattern sheet cake, were served in the stone church.

In the Jell-O contest Jon Larson of Northfield took the honors in pure art division, Zosha Winegar-Schultz of St. Paul won the kids' division and Gina Washburn took the church basement classic division. Our expert duo of Jell-O judges John Louis Anderson of Carver and Joan Erickson of Minneapolis judged the contest with lively and provocative commentary. The WindWorks woodwind quintet played a program of their favorite pieces, reflecting the idyllic setting of Valley Grove. The big black Percheron team owned by Bob and Cheryl Mathies of Faribault and Appaloosa riding horse owned by Jill and Dale Culver of Nerstrand provided rides and enjoyment for children and families.

### PAST IS PRESENT

Valley Grove lives on a prairie hilltop, and it also lives through our shared histories. We need to collect and share stories from everyone who loves and knows Valley Grove. Please write or e-mail and tell us your memories of services, people, events etc. If you like, we will publish them on the website for everyone to enjoy.

### PROJECT WISH LIST

We can use more volunteers! So few do so much and more are needed. Come out for prairie work, church clean ups, holiday decorating, country social set ups —it's more fun than it sounds!

### STAY IN TOUCH

Write us with your Valley Grove church reminiscences, your fundraising suggestions, your recollections of people and events past at Valley Grove and your ideas for its future. Letters, photographs, original furnishings and other memorabilia of Valley Grove are welcome for inclusion in our archives.

Our web page is [www.valleygrovemn.com](http://www.valleygrovemn.com). Our address is Valley Grove Preservation Society, P.O. Box 75, Nerstrand, MN 55053. Contributions are always very welcome and put to good use.