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**Historic  
Trondhjem,  
Telling a Story,  
Preserving a  
Treasure.**

**Christmas Concert to Feature**

# **Apollo Male Chorus**

**Sunday, Dec. 13, 2009 at 2:30pm**

Tickets are \$15.00

For tickets, contact Ramona Pumper at 507-645-8358 (home), or Personal Touch Office Office Services 307 Division St., Northfield, Minn. Phone 507-645-8811. Or email Ramona at [erlis@charter.net](mailto:erlis@charter.net).

Last year these tickets sold out, so make sure you don't miss out on them this year!

*Check inside the newsletter for more information on the Apollo Male Chorus.*



## ***A note from the President...***

Things are looking good at the historic church these days. We have many willing and responsible volunteers that keep things moving forward on several fronts. To give you some idea of the volunteer work that goes on I'll try to name and describe many of the efforts underway.

Care and maintenance of the historic building is managed by **Dallas Berg** who recently arranged for scraping and repainting of window and door trim. The newsletter is now managed and produced by **John Fossum, Charlene Hamblin, and Lee Topp**. Our website manager is **Shana Crosson** with help from me and **Mark Ward** recently joined that work. **Ramona Pumper** and **Sandy Valek** manage all schedules and rentals of the building. **Millie Johnson** with help from her graphic designer daughter **Jeanne Churilla** handles publicity for all of our public events. The museum committee has meets for a day once or twice a month to develop high quality exhibits of Trondhjem and surrounding community history. They are chaired by **Joyce Pflaum** and **Millie Johnson**, with expert help from **John Lindell, Barb Lentsch, Orv and Edie Peterson, Thyra Fossum, Kris Bierman, Mavis Fossum** and myself.

Our ongoing Capital Campaign is managed by **Pastor Howard White**. Of course, many more of you volunteer your time, your baked goods, and your work in the kitchen, and other hosting duties at each of our special events. The nine members of the board of directors meet monthly to manage the ongoing activities of the Society.

Our entire organization is run by these volunteers. Your money donations and contributions go to pay for utilities, supplies and services or into the fund for the future reception and exhibit hall. On the topic of donations; our vision for a future reception and exhibit hall continues. Your pledges and gifts are very much needed. So, please keep Trondhjem Church in mind when you make your gifts. When you consider worthy causes for your last will, please remember the permanent commitment that

TCPS has to historic preservation of our National Historic Site. This place is a treasured keepsake and a memorial to those immigrants who first arrived in this woodland and prairie.

Last week the museum committee met with **Joel Erickson**, the city administrator for Lonsdale. The city has just completed a new library which will open soon after next January First. They look to Historic Trondhjem as an important local landmark and a source of community history. So, out of our museum we are going to provide images for the walls of this new library, the story of the early Trondhjem community and copies of many old photographs.

Our web site is seen by people all over the world. You can visit [www.trondhjempreservation.org](http://www.trondhjempreservation.org) and see for yourself. From time to time we receive notes from people who have just located a connection in their family tree to old Trondhjem. Most recently we received a note from someone in Western South Dakota who just learned her great grandfather was **Amund Fossum**. Another person wrote from west of Minneapolis to say one of her ancestors was **Nils Solberg**. Both of these men were signers of the original document that started the Trondhjem Lutheran Congregation in 1876.

In mid January on a Saturday, the board is holding a workshop to update our goals and vision for the next several years. **Kate Roberts**, Ph.D., Senior Exhibits Developer for the Minnesota Historical Society has agreed to provide the outside leadership for this day-long event. We eagerly invite all committee members and every interested person to attend the workshop, learn more about TCPS and add your thoughts and ideas to the vision for the future.

**We're on the Web! Visit us at**  
[www.trondhjempreservation.org](http://www.trondhjempreservation.org)

## ***Apollo Male Chorus***

### **Christmas Concert to Feature Apollo Male Chorus**

**Sunday, Dec. 13, 2009 at 2:30pm**

Trondhjem's Christmas concert will be held on December 13th and will again feature the Apollo Male Chorus of Minneapolis under the direction of Roger Satrang Hoel and accompanied by Nadia Johnson.

The Apollo Male Chorus is one of the oldest continuously performing choruses in the United States and has one of the largest libraries of men's choral music in the world. It is made up of about fifty members. They have performed at Presidential Inaugurations, the USS Arizona Memorial at Pearl Harbor, the World's Fair, Governor Pawlenty's Inauguration, and at the Olympics of Choral Competition- the International Eisteddfodd in Langollen, Wales, in both 1982 and 2000; placing in the top ten on both occasions.

The December 13th concert will be at 2:30 p.m. at the Old Trondhjem Church. Tickets are \$15 and available from Ramona Pumper, at 507-645-8358 and her email address is [erlis@charter.net](mailto:erlis@charter.net), also Personal Touch Office Office Services 307 Division St., Northfield, Minn. Phone 507-645-8811.

Last year all tickets were sold out and people who heard the chorus were really pleased with the performance. The acoustics of the restored church provided an outstanding listening opportunity.

We hope to see you there!

## ***Ornaments for Sale***



These beautiful Christmas ornaments featuring Old Trondhjem church will be on sale at the Christmas Concert on December 13th.

They make the perfect Christmas gift and will be wonderful hanging on your Christmas tree also!

## ***Worship at the Historic***

Trondhjem Lutheran Church will again celebrate Christmas Eve at the historical church with an 11:00pm worship service. There will be special music, singing of carols, traditional candle lights and Holy Communion.

Trondhjem Lutheran Church invites everyone to share Christmas with them at this special worship on December 24th.

## ***Electronic Newsletter***

Would you like to receive your Old Trondhjem Church Newsletter by email? You can help save on postage and the environment!

To sign up for a pdf email version, send an email to [kim.smisek@gmail.com](mailto:kim.smisek@gmail.com).

## ***Trondhjem Community Preservation Society***

### **Board of Directors**

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# Memories of Country School

By Margaret Halverson Heglund

A recent article in the Minneapolis Star Tribune stated that nearly half of the schools in Minnesota failed to meet state math and reading goals this past year. That headline got me thinking about the old one-room country schools of the past and wondering how those schools would have fared if there had been testing available at that time. The country schools certainly were not high-tech like the schools of today. When I started first grade the school had no electricity, running water or indoor plumbing, and a less than adequate library. However, we had one dedicated, hardworking teacher for eight grades. The students who attended the one room country schools learned how to read, memorized multiplication tables for arithmetic and practiced penmanship holding the pen or pencil correctly and mastering the Palmer Method of writing. We used to sing "School Days, School Days, Dear old golden rule days. Reading and writing and 'rithmetic" This was indeed a no-frills school.

My granddaughters, Solveig, age eight, and Linnea, age five, love when I tell stories them about going to a one room country school. I will include some of their favorite tales in this article.

I can remember as a pre-schooler riding along in the car when my Dad drove my older siblings to the little country school, District 107 called Sunnyside, located below the hill from the Old Trondhjem Church. I would watch Elna, Gordy, Lyla and Gloria go up the steps and into the schoolhouse -and I could hardly wait until I was old enough to join them. By the time I started first grade Elna and Gordy had finished 8<sup>th</sup> grade and were going to high school in Northfield. Lyla was in 7th grade, Gloria in 4th grade and my cousin Eldon Fossum in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade when I started school. I was the only first grader -in fact, I was the only person in my class for all eight years of country school which meant I had no competition- but also I could progress as rapidly as I was able with no one holding me back.

One of my favorite memories of first grade was the "Kitchen Band" in which the students (all fourteen of us) participated. As the only first grader I got to lead the band as a majorette while the rest of the students played Kazoos or banged various

kitchen pots and pans together as drums. It was very exciting when we got to perform at the Faribault High School auditorium for a Rice County Country School event.

When I was in second grade my sister, Arlys, and cousin- Ramona Fossum- started first grade. That year I attended school with three sisters, Lyla, Gloria, and Arlys and two cousins, Eldon and Ramona.



**School boys at Trondhjem School District #107**

1926

There was a morning recess, noon recess and afternoon recess. The teacher would ring the school bell to let us know it was time to get back to our lessons -"reading, writing or 'rithmetic." We didn't have any elaborate play ground equipment only a kick ball a kittenball and a bat. During recess time we would play kick ball or kittenball or games like "The Farmer In the Dell" or "Drop the Handkerchief". One day when we were playing kittenball my sister Gloria was "pitching" and got hit by the ball knocking the wind out of her. She was unconscious momentarily and I remember being terrified that she had died! She recovered quickly and as I recall the game continued!

During the winter the pond across the road from the schoolhouse froze over and we would bring our ice skates and enjoy skating on the pond during recess. A warm spell one winter cause the ice to get a little soft and I remember Lyla fell through the ice with water up to her waist. I was so afraid that she was going to drown! In those days girls did not wear

jeans or slacks to school- we wore dresses and cotton stockings. Imagine Lyla's embarrassment when her wet wool/crepe dress began to shrink as she sat at her desk in the afternoon. By the time school was over for the day her below the knees dress had become a miniskirt!

I remember the day I took the kick ball with me on a visit to the outhouse which happened to be a "two-holer". Of course I couldn't resist the urge to bounce the ball when I was in there and you can guess the result. I had to tell the teacher what happened to the kickball and she was not amused. I am sure there was nothing in her job description about retrieving kick balls from the outhouse. After the ball had been retrieved her only comment to me was, "Margaret, I hope you're happy *now*". When I tell my granddaughters this story they want to know what color the kick ball was. I always ask them if they mean before or after the trip to the outhouse.

At the end of my second grade, School District 107 closed because of too few students. Along with sisters Gloria and Arlys and cousins Eldon and Ramona I started third grade at the School District 126 called Mudlake. When I was in sixth grade my cousin, Randa Fossum started first grade at District 126. It was unique to attend school with not only three sisters but also with three cousins-something unheard of in this day and age!



**Mud Lake (Oak Grove) School,  
District #126 about 1927**

**Row 4:** Fritz Hruza, Floyd Johnson, John Hruza, Leonard Anseth

**Row 3:** Eunice (Madson) Stave, Agnes (Docken) Bauerly, Ruth (Johnson) Little, Harriet Messinger – Teacher, Gertrude (Haugen) Vangen, Alvina David

**Row 2:** Ted David, Reuben Johnson, Glenard Haugen, Russell Anseth

**Row 1:** Marvin Madson, Joseph Hruza, Lowell Quist

Mudlake School was a little smaller than District 107 but had a teeter-totter on the playground which we enjoyed at recess time. Some of the things I remember about going to school at District 126 are: spelling bees on Fridays, almost daily multiplication table races at the black board, a festive Maypole dance in the spring, discovering the outhouse occupied by a large woodchuck, burning trash across the road from the schoolhouse and suddenly finding the entire hillside on fire, and going to school on a cold January morning and finding the oil burning stove wasn't working. Writing while wearing heavy mittens was a challenge.

It was always a little scary when the Rice County Superintendent of Schools would visit our little school. These visits were unannounced -but you can be assured we were all on our best behavior and our teacher tried to show off our accomplishments! We were also visited once a year by the county nurse who as I recall always gave a demonstration on the proper way to brush our teeth.

Of course we all carried our lunch to school in a lunch box or paper bag. A thermos with milk, cocoa, or nectar was a welcome addition -there were no juice boxes in those days. We would sit at our assigned desks and eat lunch. Since there was no running water a large water jug with a common dipper or cup was shared by all the students.

Special holidays were enjoyed by the country school pupils with Halloween and Valentine's Day parties that included games and treats. I remember my sister Arlys was so enthusiastic about celebrating "April Fool's Day" that she wanted to continue the joke- and pranks well into April until she was not so gently reminded that April Fool's Day has passed.

The highlight of the year was our Country School Christmas Program. We would practice for the program from Thanksgiving or -rehearsing songs, skits and plays. We brought sheets for stage curtains and we all helped decorate the Christmas tree. The students drew names for a gift exchange -and the teacher often gave each of us pencils with our names on them. The evening of the performance the sight of the lighted school was very thrilling. The schoolhouse was packed with parents and grandparents -an appreciative, enthusiastic audience. We all wondered who Santa Claus would be. Usually one of the Dads would dress up as Santa and come in with a burlap sack over his shoulder- carrying apples along with bags of nuts and candies.

The end of the school year meant a pot-luck

## ***Memories of a Country School cont...***

picnic for parents and students with lemonade and ice cream provided. A lively softball game as well as three legged races and gunny sack races provided the entertainment with prizes being awarded.

Finishing 8<sup>th</sup> grade in a one-room country school where I was the only one in my class and starting high school as a 9<sup>th</sup> grader in Northfield with a hundred classmates was a huge adjustment. But I found that my diligent teachers had prepared me well for high school -in fact, some of my class work as a ninth grader was actually a review for me.

The country school bells are now silent. They exist along with a few preserved school houses only in museums and Pioneer Villages. For those of us who attended a one room Country school these are treasured memories of a by-gone era.

"We did have fun -and no harm done". Thanks for the memories!



### **Children at Bible School**

**Back:** Laura (Docken) Quist, Alice (Docken) Cox, Esther Johnson, Eleanor (Hanson) Cleland, Myrtle (Johnson) Hagen, Olga (Hanson) Zanner, Agnes Docken

**Front:** (unknown), Orville Hanson, (unknown), (unknown), Ruth (Johnson) Little

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### **Kieth Berg BerghTomkins**

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Ramona Pumper  
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Elvah Fossum  
Lyla Arneson  
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