



Chuck and Janet Esser

Given by Ella Nayes

May 19, 2013

This is a little history of Janet and Chuck Esser. I'll start with Janet. She was born in New Salem in 1935. Her parents were Rolf and Evelyn Romsland Peterson. The Petersons and Romsland families were from Almont. Both families were members of Sons of Norway. Janet has two children Zack and Julie. Janet grew up and attended school and college in Billings. Every summer she came to Almont to stay with her uncles, Sig, Torval and Barney.

She became a teacher and taught school for 7 years; one year in Livingston and six years in Camus, Washington. She then obtained a real estate license and sold real estate properties.

Chuck and Janet were married in 1979. He worked with Environmental Services in the research division. Chuck was born and raised in Camoes, Washington.

Anyone who knows Chuck knows he is a Jack of all Trades and had many diverse experiences. He was in the Navy from 1946 to 1950. He was an aid to Colonel Redford, the man in charge of the Pacific fleet. He lived in Hawaii for a year and in a car lot in Los Vegas for five years.

Chuck has two children Denise and Greg and 3 step children. Janet and Chuck's children consider themselves brothers and sisters by their own volition.

After they retired from their jobs in 1990 they moved to Mandan and stepped right into Jan's family. Janet's Aunt Valborg Fisher bought them to a Sons of Norway social and bought their dinner tickets. She said I'm buying today and after this you can join Sons of Norway and buy your own tickets. I remember hearing that conversation. They did join and have been important to our lodge ever since. They shared their home in Mandan for many lodge gatherings.

Many of you will remember when the Billings folk dance group was invited here for a learning session, which became the first of over 20 years of folk dance workshop for our District. Jan invited

the Billings group as well as our Bismarck group to their home. There were so many of us some of the people sat on the stairway juggling their plates on their knees. Marge Peterson was at the piano and we had a song fest as well. Our folk dance group housed the members that came in from Billings and it was such fun getting acquainted with them.

The Essers have been involved in just about every event Sons of Norway has tried to promote, traveling on the yearly bus trips, working on the Lutefisk dinner, making wooden carved table decorations, singing and folk dancing for many programs at schools and nursing homes when we have been invited.

When Janet became cultural director some years ago, this was at the time when the cultural skills programs were just beginning. She sought out leaders for each group, which included Hardanger, Knitting, Folk Dancing/Singing, and the Book Club. These were small 15-20 member groups that participated in learning these skills and in many cases obtaining medals. Many of these groups still exist today. Her next venture at being cultural director involved the terrific Heritage Programs which were presented by our local members at our socials.

Janet likes all Norwegian culture. She inherited two authentic Bunader – costumes from her Aunt Valborg Fishers. One is West (Vest) Agder, from the southern part of Norway, and the other one is a Hardanger bunad. Janet wears them proudly when the occasion presents itself.

Because of this involvement, we dedicate a tree in honor of Janet and Chuck Esser today. Congratulations!