

## **Tribute to Lowell and Karen Jensen by Janet McCallum**

Sverdrup Lodge No. 107 -- Bismarck Sons of Norway

Syttende Mai Celebration -- Sunday, May 15, 2011



It is an honor to speak on behalf of Lowell and Karen Jensen. They have both been such an important part of our lodge for so many years.

Lowell and Karen are both proud of their Scandinavian heritage. Lowell's mother's family came to America from Ringsaker, Norway, and his dad's family was from Denmark. Karen's mother's family was from the Molde, Norway area, and her dad was also proud to be of Norwegian descent. All of their families were determined to keep their culture alive, as were Karen and Lowell when they established their own home.

Karen and Lowell met at Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota, where Lowell majored in English and Karen was in the medical technology program. They moved to Bismarck in 1968, where they raised their three children, Scott, Lori, and Lisa. Lowell worked in the State Department of Public Instruction, and later spent 17 years as the Superintendent of Bismarck Public Schools.

They joined Sons of Norway in the early 1980's. Lowell served as Vice President, President, and Past President of Sverdrup Lodge. He has also been pleased to present several of the monthly programs. Karen taught the Sverdrup Sons of Norway Rosemaling classes from 1989 to 2001, and during that time she brought in two nationally-known Rosemalers to teach workshops. She has also been active in the Hardanger and knitting groups. Karen Rosemaled the Sverdrup Lodge's portable library and painted over 30 stabbur centerpieces for one of the district conventions hosted by our lodge.

Before spending winters in Arizona, both Lowell and Karen helped with the annual lutefisk dinners and Karen's Rosemaling class would Rosemal dozens of cookies to decorate the cookie trays.

In the past, Karen displayed and explained Rosemaling each spring to 8<sup>th</sup> Graders touring Buckstop Junction. Although Lowell and Karen reside in Bismarck only six months of each year now, they continue to value their ties to our lodge and to their Norwegian heritage, and to their many Sverdrup friends.

I think of Karen every day when I am in my kitchen. On one wall hangs a large, beautifully Rosemaled plate, and on the opposite wall is an exquisite framed Hardanger piece, both done by Karen. Bob and I are blessed to have Lowell and Karen as dear friends. While we have never traveled to Norway with them, we did take a memorable trip to Italy together last November. We even experienced a flood in St. Mark's Square in Venice!

Congratulations, Lowell and Karen, on being recognized by our Sons of Norway Lodge. You are both most deserving of this honor.