

Arlene Olson
Tree Dedication 2009
By Beverly Mundell

Arlene was born and raised in the Valley City area and graduated from high school there. Her first full time job was with Northwestern Bell Telephone Company in Valley City as a telephone operator. They did not have a dial system at that time. It was number please. She married Joe Olson a local farm fellow and they had two daughters and one son. The family moved to Bismarck from Fargo in 1965. Joe passed away in 1974. Over the years, one daughter-in-law, two son-in-laws, three granddaughters, one grandson and one step-grandson have been added to the family.



After moving to Bismarck, Arlene attended Bismarck State College part time and later worked part time at A.W. Lucas Co as a receptionist for five years, then full time at the Bank of North Dakota, where she worked for 21 years in the Student Loan Dept. She retired in 1993.

Arlene is proud of her Norwegian Heritage. Her Father was born in the Trondheim area and came to the Valley City area with his family in 1910, when he was three years old. Her Mother's family settled in Southern Minnesota in the 1870's & 80's. Both sets of her great grandparents were married in Norway and came to America soon afterwards. Her maternal great grandparents came from Hardanger and Paternal great grandparents came from Valdres.

Arlene joined the Sons of Norway 1984. She served as secretary from 1990 to 1996, served as Assistant Director on the Publicity Committee from 1999-2002 and Co- Director on the Cultural Committee from 2005-2006. Other involvement in the Sons of Norway include being active in the Hardanger and knitting cultural groups. She has delivered meals on wheels for a number of years.

Arlene is a member of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church and works with the quilters and does input into the church web page.

In 1997, she became a charter member of the Central Dakota Optimist Club, which is a senior club. She has served as secretary/treasurer and president of this group. This is a service club that does things to help the youth of Bismarck/Mandan.

Arlene has two regular volunteer jobs that she spends three hours a week on each of these. One is at the North Dakota State Library where she works in the Talking Book Department. These books are for the visually handicapped or physically unable to hold a book. She has worked at this job for 15 years. The second job is with the North Dakota State Insurance Dept. with Medicare Part D Prescription drugs doing computer input.

Hobbies and spending time with her grandchildren are a big part of Arlene's life. Her hobbies include quilting, hardanger, knitting and rug hooking. She has made 6 queen size quilts for her family that she has hand quilted. She is currently working on number seven.

A trip to Norway in 2003 was one of the high lights of her life. She visited Oslo, Hardanger area, Bergen area and Trondheim traveling by train and cruise ship. One of the special parts of the trip was to visit the farm in the Hardanger area, where her Great Grandmother grew up. The food there was wonderful. They are very hospitable people. Arlene feels it is has to be one of the most beautiful places to visit.