

Sylvia and Terry Watson
May 18, 1997
by Audrey Solheim

It is my pleasure to tell you a little bit about my friends, Sylvia and Terry Watson today.

I first met Terry and Sylvia when they joined Sons of Norway in 1977. From the day they were initiated, they never missed a meeting. They were involved with lodge activities from the beginning.



John Erickson was president of the lodge then, and I was secretary. John and Edna Erickson lived next door to Terry and Sylvia, and they were good friends. The lodge was planning a big function - the Jan Borseth Orchestra was coming to play for a dance on August 16, 1978. John said to me - let's you and I go and talk to the Watsons about chairing this event. Well, we did, and they accepted, and that event was one of the most successful functions our lodge has put on.

First there was a dinner, just like we do for our socials, and a fantastic dance - It took place at the KC Hall. There were 205 people who attended that event. If you were one of them, I bet you remember that event to this day. Records show the cost of the meal was \$3.50. We charged \$6 per ticket or \$3 if you only came for the dance.

When the nominating committee met to seek officers for 1979 and 1980, Sylvia and Terry were selected as Marshals. In 1981, the lodge voted Sylvia in as Newsletter Editor and Terry as Publicity Editor, jobs they held through 1984.

In 1985, our lodge celebrated its 75th anniversary. Who better to put in charge of publicizing the event than Terry Watson, and publicity we got! They also worked diligently at making table decorations for the banquet. They were miniature stabburs. The First event of the anniversary party was the dedication of the Stabbur. It was followed by a big anniversary party at the Holiday Inn. Well, when the neighbor kids saw the many stabbur lined up in the garage, one of the little boys said - My Terry, you must really like birdhouses!

I suppose if you were to identify their single most significant contribution to our lodge and to our members you would say - its the Rosemaling.

Shortly after they became members of our lodge, Terry, knowing Sylvia's interest in Rosemaling, secretly signed her up for a class that Teresa Volk was teaching here in Bismarck. Sylvia loved it, and continued on - the couple of next years Carolyn Borgen taught Rosemaling classes through the Home Extension Agents office in Mandan, and Sylvia was hooked. Sylvia received a S/N scholarship to Camp Norway, in Sandane, Norway in 1984, this was an excellent opportunity to acquire even more skill in her craft. In addition to those classes Sylvia took a

Rosemaling design class in Decorah, Iowa and has also studied under several Norwegian instructors at classes she attended in Grand Forks and Minot.

But as she was learning, she was also sharing - sharing her craft with fellow Sons of Norway members. She taught classes in her home for a number of years. Sylvia received the cultural skills medals for Rosemaling and also attained the First Mentor Award in Rosemaling given by the International Lodge for her instruction of classes.

As she taught classes, you could be sure her right hand man, Terry was in the kitchen making sure there was coffee and sweets available for break time. As she created her own items, Terry was there to prepare the wood - sanding it, give it a base coat, or fix it in anyway necessary to make it ready for designs.

As she demonstrated for various functions, Terry was right there helping her carry in and set up her displays. She has painted about 50 trunks total for people all over the country; as well as other items such as plates and bowls too numerous to mention. She painted the podium for Sons of Norway as well as the ceiling beam in our Stabbur.

Now, you may not be aware of some of the other things Terry and Sylvia have done - for example:

Did you know they were part of the Folk Dance group that used to meet out in Driscoll?

Did you know that Terry played the piano for the S/N style show held during the Folkfest?

Did you know they both were involved in the spoken Norwegian Language Classes?

Did you know that they co-chaired the Lutefisk supper and hosted the Afterglow party following the supper?

Did you know that Terry has attained the bronze, silver and gold sports medals for walking and biking?

Did you know that Sylvia was a Charter member of the Hardanger Needlecraft Group?

If you have been lucky enough to receive a card from the Watsons' you probably do know that Sylvia is a very talented watercolor artist as well, she has been taking lessons from Florence Nelson and Anella Campbell.

It's not uncommon to be invited to the Watson home and have Norwegian delicacy's served - it might be rommegrot, or a Kransekaka, or any one of many Norwegian cookies. Its hard to say which of the two have made the food, but generally it is Terry - that is when he's not busy baking bread.

One day several years ago, when I was visiting at the Watson's, Sylvia was working on their genealogy. Since genealogy has been a hobby of mine since I was 14, we discussed at length what she was researching. When she said she was working on the Rogne line of Terry's ancestry I got excited! My maternal grandmother's maiden name was Rogne - could it be the same family. Well, I took over some information I had on that line, and sure enough - now we can call each other cousin - søeskenbarn, as Terry says. We're not first cousins or even second cousins, but what the heck, being 5th cousin, once removed is just fine with me.

Sylvia was raised in North Dakota and has lived in Bismarck most of her life. She attended the Bismarck and Driscoll Schools and took commercial courses in high school which enabled her a job. She was a medical secretary in Bismarck and worked in that field until 1975.

Terry was born and raised in Bismarck, attended elementary school in Minnesota, and came back to Bismarck to complete his high school. Following high school he joined the service and spent 4 1/2 years in the army.

In 1943, during the time Terry was still in the army, Sylvia and Terry were married and lived in California. When he was discharged from the army they came back to Bismarck to live.

Terry and Sylvia have 3 children, Renee, Terry, and Linda. They also have 4 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren.

Terry retired from working at the U.S. Post Office on September 30, 1977 so now they were both retired. Now there was time for hobbies! Those hobbies range from:

- A. Piano
- B. Painting
- C. Cooking
- D. Attending Travelogues
- E. Having Lunch with friends
- F. Walking
- G. Spending time with their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren

Their daughter Linda and son Terry live in Bismarck, but to see their daughter Renee they need to go out of state.

They have traveled abroad in 1984 when Sylvia attended Camp Norway, and again in 1992 when they visited relatives in Norway.

As you can tell from their many activities, Sylvia and Terry are proud of their Norwegian ancestry, we are proud to have them as members of our lodge, and proud to dedicate a tree in their honor today.