

## Henry and Amy Wisness

Tree Dedication

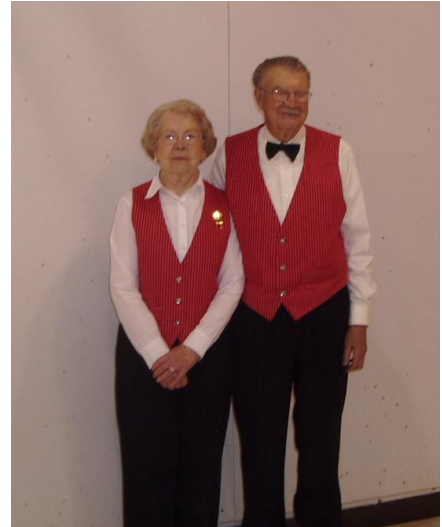
May 20, 2007

(given by Al Steinke)

Why this tribute to Hank and Amy – because they brighten up a room when they enter, starting with a friendly greeting, which may be in Norwegian, and even a “bowing ritual”! (see Lyle Schultz)

But first a little history of Amy and Hank:

The Norwegian roots of Henry and Amy go back many years. Henry’s father, Andrew Wisness, emigrated from Norway at the age of 16. He homesteaded in North Dakota in 1903 after leaving Norway, to make his way in the new land. Henry’s mother’s parents also emigrated from Norway.



Amy’s maternal Grandmother Swenson emigrated from Norway to Minnesota and then as a widowed mother of two young children; Amy’s father and aunt came to North Dakota and homesteaded in 1903. Her paternal Grandfather Grimestad also emigrated from Norway and homesteaded in North Dakota in McKenzie County.

Henry and Amy joined the Sverdrup Lodge in 1977. They have served in a number of activities since that time – Interlodge Sports Directors, Recreation Directors, Adopt a Highway Program, organized a number of winter ski trips, served the Lutefisk Dinners. They have been members of the singers and folk dancers for many years.

They both took Norwegian language lessons and are very proud of their Norwegian heritage.

Henry retired from the Highway Department after 26 years. Amy also worked for the state for a number of years and then was a stay-at-home mom to their four children.

They have 10 grandchildren, one step grandson and 5 great grandchildren, one of which has been christened Henry Wisness!

These are the facts, now some additional information and episodes with Hank and Amy.

On our several Sons of Norway winter ski trips, Hank had a cure for snakebites. We were to watch for “snow snakes”. They are all white and have pink eyes. The cure must have worked as no one ever got bitten by a snow snake.

While with the ND State Highway Department, Hank was in charge of secondary roads. He was well-liked by county commissioners around the state and a bridge near Upham, ND was named "Henry Wisness" as a tribute to his dedicated service.

There was a rumor in those days that Hank took the "washboard" out of the gravel roads. He did this by blacktopping them!

During his tenure with NDDOT, Hank gave several speeches. On at least one occasion, Hank, from memory, recited this poem titled "Building the Bridge for Him". This framed copy will be on display for your perusal.

Also on the back of this framed poem is a copy of "Flexible Bridge Design" that Hank provided to "help" me in planning a decorative bridge.

It is fitting and proper today that we pay tribute to Amy and Hank by dedicating a tree in our S/N Park. Thank you Amy and Hank Wisness!

### The Bridge Builder

An old man, going a lone highway,  
Came, at the evening, cold and gray,  
To a chasm, vast, and deep, and wide,  
Through which was flowing a sullen tide.

The old man crossed in the twilight dim;  
The sullen stream had no fears for him;  
But he turned, when safe on the other side,  
And built a bridge to span the tide.

"Old man," said a fellow pilgrim, near,  
"You are wasting strength with building here;  
Your journey will end with the ending day;  
You never again must pass this way;  
You have crossed the chasm, deep and wide-  
Why build you a bridge at the eventide?"

The builder lifted his old gray head:  
"Good friend, in the path I have come," he said,  
"There followeth after me today,  
A youth, whose feet must pass this way.

This chasm, that has been naught to me,  
To that fair-haired youth may a pitfall be.  
He, too, must cross in the twilight dim;  
Good friend, I am building the bridge for him."

Following the presentation, friends came up for autographs of the Wisnesses.