



Northern Lights News

September 2009

Vol. 18 No. 7



From the Secretary.....

Hi Everyone! It's time to get back to regular club meetings! You may wonder as you go through this newsletter why it looks so much like a Halloween edition. Tom and I along with our Village North friends, Gerry and John McGraw and my sister, Wanda, are just back from the Region 8 Roundup, a Spooktacular Event! This sure has me in the mood for Halloween so the pictures throughout the newsletter will feature the event. The pumpkin pictured here, one of many at the gathering, I felt best characterized my personality. Take a look at the rest and see what you think! I hope to bring a slide show to our

September meeting so you can enjoy all the pictures!

Our September meeting will be held in a store front right next to Robin Lee's. This will give us easier shopping and I am told a more comfortable setting! We hope to have Robin or John at the meeting to fill us in on the latest village arrivals and store doings. Remember your Robin Lee Bucks! In addition, September is dues month so remember your real money too! We will spend some time planning the rest of the year including the holiday activities and January House Hop. Bring your ideas for future meeting programs or outings. OMG! Can it be that summer is nearing an end! I haven't had my cheese curds or turkey legs or for that matter anything on a stick yet so it's not over yet but we are getting close. Time to start the planning for Halloween, Harvest and Holiday Village layouts!

See you next week! *Shirl*

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Dates to Remember.....

- September 3rd - Regular Meeting
- October 1st - Display Contest!
- November 5th - Chili Feed!

Meeting Agenda Highlights

September

You won't want to miss this meeting. We will begin to plan the rest of the year. We hope to have a visit from Robin or John from Robin Lee's. Our annual membership dues are due this month. It will be a great time to catch up on what everyone is doing. We will have some handouts from the gathering in San Antonio Texas and hopefully some pictures. Start to think about a fall/winter activity for the club. We are looking for a service project for November/ December. Do you know of a charity such as a children's home etc. that would let the club set up a holiday display! Bring the information along!

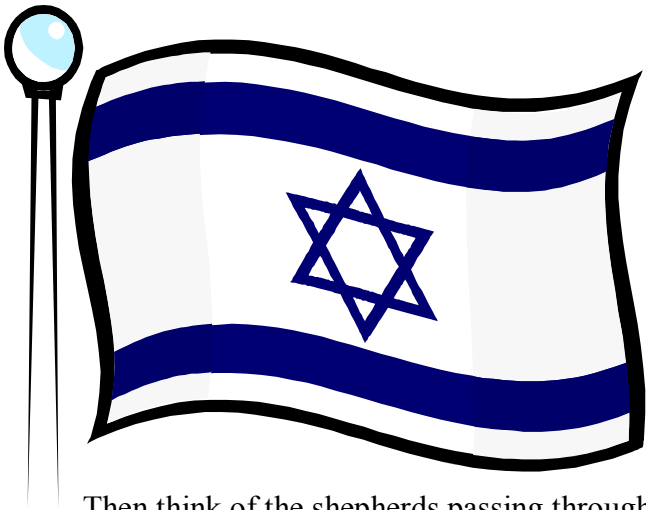
October

This meeting will be filled with tricks and especially treats. It is time for our annual Fall Display Contest. The display can be harvest, holiday or Halloween. You can do your own or partner with someone else! As usual there will be prizes and food! We will also hold our nominations from officers. Remember that the officer terms for this election period are 2 years. Consider running for an office; it is a fun way to get more involved in the club.

November

Our meeting will start with our traditional chili feed and officer elections. We may plan on doing a service project but Feed My Starving Children is moving to a new site in Coon Rapids so they are a little too far for us to go. If you have an idea for a local charity where we can volunteer for the evening let one of the officers know!





REFLECTIONS FROM THE VILLAGE PAST...

I always thought the shepherd's lot as a lonely one. The terrain is hot and dry; water is extremely limited. The animals drift along grazing slowly. At the day's close shepherds sup on a simple meal and enjoy a peaceful evening. This has gone on for over three thousand years.

Then think of the shepherds passing through several thousand years and imagine the time warp.

The shepherds in Israel still watch their flocks of sheep and goats much as they did in Christ's time. I didn't see a shepherd's crook or the robes of biblical times. The head dress was similar and the tents were still mobile. The materials are somewhat newer. Some residences we saw looked like they have been scavenged out of construction remains. There were pieces of corrugated tin, canvas, etc. to help reinforce protection from the weather.

The clothing looks updated and so is the mode of transportation. I chuckled at the sight of an ATV being used to transport water and keep animals where they belonged.

So much for my romantic notions . . .

Israel has amazing diversity in the kinds of cheese that are offered. We were fortunate enough to sample numerous kinds during our visit. We ate dairy at breakfast only because we stayed at Orthodox lodgings; but this made breakfast a magnificent feast.

Breakfast also included salads, cold roasted peppers with Olive oil, and wonderful breads.

Water is still scarce. In fact, many sink holes are appearing along the River Jordan on both sides because the water level is so low there is nothing to support the soil above it.

Both the Israelis and Jordanians will have to start thinking about even more efficient ways to conserve underground water.

When it does rain the water doesn't absorb into the earth where it is hard packed and dry. Imagine having to import bottled water to meet the demand for it. This is a totally different way of life.

Until next time consider the shepherds as they graze their flocks in your village setting.

Myrna Hjellming



Region 8 Roundup Review!

What do you get when you put together pumpkins, ghosts, witches, little houses, Styrofoam, a lot of hot air and about 300 avid D-56 collectors? You have a Spooktacular gathering, San Antonio style!

Tom and I were joined by John and Gerry from Village North and my sister Wanda from Windy City 56ers for the Region 8 Roundup last week. We traveled down to Texas on Wednesday and after a little security issue at the airport in San Antonio (no we weren't arrested although some of you probably thought that this group was sure to get in trouble) we arrived in time to have a late lunch and a long swim in the pool. We also used the hot tub for quite some time. The temperature was a pleasant 100

degrees as we enjoyed the pool. We then spent the evening at the bar waiting for Tom's arrival. John sure enjoyed the Lone Star beer then and on several other occasions during our weekend!





On Thursday morning we began our self guided tour of San Antonio at the Mexican market. It was here that we were exposed to Gerry's true talent, Power Shopping! After just a few minutes I knew I had met my match! Gerry was shopping for items to go with her Rosita's Cantina and the Mexican market was a perfect spot. . The market was really quite an interesting place with all the colorful hats, dresses, pottery and nick knacks. Gerry did her best to shop every store and John did his best to keep up.

Our next stop was a trip to the Alamo! I don't know if Gerry will remember the Alamo but she will remember the gift shop! The

temperature was 103 degrees as we trotted down the streets to the Riverwalk area. Gerry stopped to shop at many of the stores along the way but the rest of us didn't mind since we could enjoy the air conditioning. Despite the heat we decided to take a cruise on the river. The Riverwalk area is very unique with old and new buildings, a variety of shops and of course more Tex Mex restaurants than you can count. We enjoyed the ride (well, I can't say Tom did since at one point he said he thought he was going to die from the heat. No, I didn't use this opportunity to throw him overboard but I was tempted!).

After the boat ride we thought it best to get some lunch inside as quickly as we could. The Republic of Texas served up some of the best enchiladas I have ever had and of course the cranberry- strawberry margaritas weren't bad either. (Just ask Wanda, someone who gets tipsy at a wine tasting!)



On Thursday night we went back down to the Alamo area for our Ghost hunting tour. Peter our guide walked us several blocks around the downtown area discussing the different ghosts that had been seen or heard in the different buildings in the area. Do you know why hauntings usually happen in hotels? Peter said that people who have crossed over to the other side and are not completely at rest usually like to return to the place where they were most comfortable. Soldiers usually like to haunt the hotels that they stayed in before



going to battle. I don't know about you but that has me wondering about the rooms with the sleep number beds at the Radisson! We ended the evening with a true ghost hunt complete with scientific instruments. One of the ghosts that has been sighted at the Alamo was said to have been a ladies man so the ladies in our group were told to flirt at that side of the building where he is seen. I don't know if we got close to conjuring him up but it did make for some pretty funny looks from the other folks touring the area!

On Friday we got down to the business of the gathering. The decorations for the gathering were wonderful. You can see the picture of the Alamo made out of Styrofoam that housed all different pumpkins. In fact a Texas club member told me that the group had decorated over 200 pumpkins in the last eight weeks. It was a good thing they had found them at 70% off the previous November. The pumpkins were decorated in a variety of ways. Some were painted, some were carved, some were wrapped in mummy bandages and some had items stuffed in them. Some of the pumpkins were part of the auction Saturday night and the left over pumpkins were sold for donations on Sunday morning. I think they made about \$600 for the Wings charity just from the pumpkins! There were also some beautiful fall floral decorations along with tombstones, witches brooms and ghostly fences!



I always enjoy the seminars at the gatherings and I have to tell you that Texas does them in a big way. I actually went to four seminars before lunch on Friday. That must be some kind of record even for me. The first two seminars were the best of the day. Pat and John Ehrenreich always do a spectacular piece during their seminars that they later donate to the action. This gathering's piece was "Make it Easy Texas Style". John crafted a traditional oil drum barbecue grill complete with a wood looking stand made completely out of Styrofoam. He really knows how to get the most out of the Hot

Wire tools! On the top of the grill was the barbecue pit piece from Snow Village complete with an underground patio area with a bar scene. The bartender actually looked like John Wayne.

I couldn't miss the "How to Get Mooned Over San Antonio" seminar. Darrell Ingmire, a new presenter, showed us how to use a piece of stained glass from Home Depot, etc and some Styrofoam and lights to make a low hanging moon complete with clouds and witch silhouette. This same method could be used to have Santa Clause and his reindeer flying over your village. I even thought that I might be possible to have a chimney sweep silhouette in a low hanging moon for a Dickens Village!

Melinda Seegers gave two great sessions, “Dickens – His life and Times in the Dept. 56 Villages Series” and Halloween – The myth and the legend of a favorite holiday as it relates to the Snow Village Halloween Village Series”. I am now thoroughly committed to building up my Halloween village. In fact a lot of the new gathering attendees I spoke to came to the gathering specifically due to the Halloween theme since that is the only village they collect. When you see the detail and the imagination the artists have used to create the new Halloween pieces it is no wonder!

I also attended the “Making Mountains without a Hot Knife” given by Miles Taylor and Tom Woods. I have to admit that I have been to their seminar before and I came back for the entertainment. They show how to make great mountains using the everyday table fork. Of course you better have a good vacuum cleaner as well! Miles also went through the steps he takes to make the sawdust he collects from his local Home Depot into great landscaping material; an added bonus to the seminar.



We all spent some time and money in the market place and a couple of us spent some time volunteering at the NCC booth and other spots in the gathering. A main attraction on Friday and Saturday was the display and silent auction room. I know I say this about every gathering but the Texas displays have truly raised the bar. The Halloween displays were tremendous. Many of the displays had animation and sound. Kirk Wylie from Chicago even attached a hidden fog machine to make his display interactive. When you pushed the button you either got a treat, a smiling lighted pumpkin face or a trick, fog mist. His display was also quite tall with the height made possible by pvc pipes sprayed with “Great Foam” and then painted to look like a tree. He won first prize in the small category for his efforts.

Vern Schwieterman had two displays featuring motion. On his hearse that is pictured above, the wheels turned. The scene underneath featured the 10th Anniversary Halloween train and dancing skeletons. The pumpkin display shown on the left also rotated.

The haunted Halloween train was also the focal point of the Southwest Villagers of Arizona Club display that took everyone's breath away. In fact it was even hard to get a picture because some many folks just stood in awe. They had the train on an acrylic track that circled on a pulley system giving the train motion. The also had a water feature and a stunning backdrop scene. See the display at the end of the newsletter. They won first place in the club category as well as the People's Choice award.



The main event happened on Saturday night, The Monster Ball. This was so much fun. My sister and I had been thinking about this for months. Wanda finally made the witch costume of her dreams complete with a hat from Department 56 that she bought at the Mall of America store over five years ago. I was a little worried about the heat with my long sleeves, full length costume and cape not to mention the four layers of undergarments I was wearing but let's not go there! Little did John know that he would need his cowboy costume to escort three witches around that night! (Wanda, Gerry and I pretended to be the Sanderson sisters in Disney's Hocus Pocus movie. Of course I was the divine Bet Midler!). Many others joined in the fun, we had a great showing of witches, some clowns, a complete pirate family, gypsies, a cereal killer and of course the trick or treat Snowbabies! Take a look at some of the great costumes! The winner costume was the "Time's a Wasting" waiter, the accessory piece to the new Halloween dining car. Can you figure out who is Mary Poppins?



Saturday night's festivities were not all fun and games. We were there of course to raise money for Wings, a non-profit organization that provides uninsured women with breast cancer treatments. The auction raised \$6,500 for charity and I was pleased to have participated for the first time, winning the Dickens's Old Queensbridge Station. I know that this will grow to be a very special piece in my village because of the way I obtained it. The auctioneer was Mr. Dudley who is best known for livestock auctions. He has a great sense of humor and always pleases the crowd with his style at the gatherings he attends.

Melinda also made a very special presentation at the Saturday night event. She announced the Collector of the Year award that went to Sharon and Richard Wylie as a couple. They have been very active as club members of several clubs in the Chicago area as well as having played an integral part of the two Chicago gatherings I have attended. I have had the pleasure of getting to know them at the gatherings and the Windy City House Hops that I have attended with my sister. They are great people and truly deserving of the honor. Congratulations Sharon and Richard! You may remember Sharon and her son Kirk from the NCC Convention as the crazy folks doing the 50-50- raffle!



As we sat for breakfast on Sunday morning I was thinking how fast the gathering had gone by. One minute we were swimming in the pool and the next we were trying to find out just how big the box from UPS was going to be. As always the greatest part of the gathering for me was connecting with old friends and making new ones. It was hard not to make a new friend or two at this gathering; you probably shared the line to the elevators with a couple of new faces during the weekend! It was especially memorable to have Gerry, Wanda, John and Tom to share the experience with. We really did make up quite a group of trouble but what happens in San Antonio stays in San Antonio. (Unless of course it makes a great story for the newsletter!) I want to thank all the folks in Texas who worked hard at putting the gathering together; having worked on the NCC Convention I now know just how much work that is. I hope we continue to have collectors willing to take the time to help with gatherings in the future; they are special events with special people! See you all again in Michigan where I hope we are joined by some new faces as well! *Shirl*

Member News.....



Happy Birthday to the following member!

Carol Veziris 26th

If you know of a member who is celebrating an extra special event in their lives or could use a bit of cheering up, please let one of the officers know.

Northern Lights Treasury Report – September 09				
By Tom Iacoviello				
Balance	6/30/09			\$1,822.22
Revenue:				
Received From		Description	Amount	
Total Revenue				0.00
Expenses:				
Paid To	Ck No.	Description	Amount	
Total Expenses				0.00
Balance	7/31/09			\$1,822.22

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Internet version of the
newsletter
<http://www.minnesota56clubs.com/clubnews>

Submit articles to
Shirleywillis@comcast.net

Northern Lights Meetings
First Thursday of the
Month
Meetings start at 7:00 PM
Crystal Shopping Center
345 Willow Bend
Crystal, MN
see Robin Lee's Hallmark
for exact location



Northern Lights Events

September 3 – Regular Club Meeting

We will start club meeting again at Robin Lee's.
Look for new storefront location next to the store!
Remember your Dues!

October 1 – Display Contest

It's time for our annual Fall Display Contest!
Bring your nominations for club officers!

November 5 – Chili Feed!

Our annual chili feed and club elections!

December 3 – Holiday Activity!

2010 D-56 Collectors Gatherings:

September 16-19, 2010 “The Seasons of
Michigan Gathering” Livonia, MI

Thanks to our Sponsor!

Robin Lee's Hallmark

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Gold Key Dealer ~ John and Robin Prest

Crystal Shopping Center

345 Willow Bend (Bass Lake Rd & West Broadway)

Crystal, MN

(763) 566-5277



Northern Lights Collectors' Club
% Robin Lee's Hallmark
345 Willow Bend
Crystal, MN 55428 - 3969



D56 Collector Web Sites

Minnesota Clubs

<http://www.minnesota56clubs.com>

Get up-to-date information about the activities of various Minnesota D56 Clubs

Department 56

<http://www.department56.com>

Official Department 56 site with the latest D56 product information.

Department 56 Webring

<http://i.webring.com/hub?ring=dept56>

Links to web sites of collectors, retailers, and anything else related to Department 56 collecting.

National Council of 56 Clubs

<http://www.ncc56.com/>

News and information from the NCC.