



## **Friends of Mauriceville Newsletter No. 4, June 6, 2012**

Dear Members and Future Members of Friends of Mauriceville

Greetings from Vallejo, California, just across the bay from the windy and (summertime) fogbound city of San Francisco. San Francisco and Wellington probably tie as the Pacific's windiest cities in north and south. They both have stories of Scandinavian Pacific migration, and San Francisco has just held its annual Norway Day Festival ([www.norwayday.org](http://www.norwayday.org)).

**AGM** The 2012 AGM of FOM was held at Pukaha Mt Bruce on Sunday May 6. Continuing or new officers and committee members elected at that meeting are: Harold Devenport, chair. Denise Devenport, treasurer. Jean Thompson-Church, secretary. Committee: Bill Taylor, Norma Dunn, Nerrolly Hoar, Julianne and Willie Buick, Jack Olsen, Jeff and Claudia Larsen, Tony Church, Logie Atkinson, Kay Flavell.

### **FOM officers -- Scandinavian Connections.**

Harold and Denise Devenport: Harold is descended from Danish-born Gunder and Hermine Gundersen, pioneer settlers of Mauriceville West. Harold grew up on a family farm in Putara and now lives in Kopuaranga with his wife Denise, FOM treasurer. Harold and Denise are keen gardeners, and Denise is a member of the Wairarapa Embroiderers Guild.

Jean Thompson Church writes: My Swedish grandfather Johan Peter Jacobson was a seaman on SS Waitara, leaving the ship in Wellington. He found board with the Feist family, falling in love and marrying their daughter Rhoda Ruth. They went to Hastwell, and then onto Newman. Grandfather Jacobson was a Methodist Lay Preacher who worked within the district. My mother was born in Newman in 1900. Last year we had a Family Reunion, based in Masterton, and we visited the Mauriceville, Hastwell and Newman areas – a most enjoyable day. On the Sunday my cousin Rev. Pat Jacobson led the Reunion Rededication and Thanksgiving Service in the Norwegian Methodist Church, where Grandfather preached. I am proud of my Swedish heritage and it is good for our family to support the Mauriceville area.

**Membership Dues:** Yes, it is that time of year when Membership of Friends of Mauriceville is due for payment. The Membership Fee is \$10.00 per person, and is payable to Denise Devenport, 308 Opaki-Kaipororo Road, RD 2, Masterton, 4994 or can be deposited directly to Friends of Mauriceville Inc. National Bank of New Zealand Account No: 060689-0278183-00. Please include your name for our record keeping.

## Events in 2011-12

- Our last newsletter, #3, was in January 2011, just before the very successful Scandinavian Festival held in Norsewood in February 2011, hosted by the Manawatu Scandinavian Club and Norsewood Promotions.
- Planning is well under way for the next biennial Scandinavian Festival to be held in Dannevirke from February 22-24, 2013, hosted by the newly-formed Scandinavian Festival Trust. FOM secretary Jean Thompson-Church, president of the Manawatu Scandinavian Club, presided over the successful 2011 festival and is now deeply involved in planning the 2013 festival. We hope that visitors to the Festival in 2013 will take time to visit Mauriceville's unique monuments and buildings.
- In January 2011 the Tararua District Council provided \$4,900 in grants to FOM towards costs of *Whispering Roads*, an exhibition in the Eketahuna Museum, and signage in the Mangaoranga Cemetery in Eketahuna. We are grateful for this wonderful support. Signage has now been erected (May 2012) and booklets listing the name of those buried are available from the society at \$5 each.
- "Mellemskov. Heart of the Forest", An exhibition of historic photographs owned by Eketahuna Museum was displayed in the Herbert Gallery, Eketahuna from February 24- March 11, 2011. Organized by the museum committee and curated by Bridget Wellwood with funding granted to FOM from TDC, it was highly successful. Ms Wellwood pointed out that many people of Scandinavian heritage still live in the area, and encouraged them to visit the museum and share what they knew about the photographs. Eketahuna Museum is well placed to grow into a major site for Scandinavian history of the north Wairarapa from Kopuaranga to Eketahuna and Putara.
- Tararua Mayor Roly Ellis: 'Over the next few years we will be enhancing our district with a **Scandinavian Trail** from the northern end of the Wairarapa through Tararua to Norsewood. We believe this will further strengthen ties with those Scandinavians who wish to see how their resilient forbears came to live here.'
- **Pilgrims' Way in Norway.** In Norway (see the Lonely Planet guide) 340 churches are dedicated to St Olav, Martyr of the Battle of Stikkestad, who died on 29 July 1030. A Pilgrims' Way runs 'through wild mountains and forests, with fierce rivers to cross' from Oslo across the country to St Olav's grave in Nidaros Cathedral, Trondheim. This cathedral is the most popular Christian pilgrimage site in Northern Europe. Artist Kari Elise Mobeck, who did an artist residency at New Pacific Studio Mt Bruce in 2009, held an exhibition in the Trondheim city art gallery in November 2011, showing work inspired by her New Zealand experiences. Copies of *Whispering Roads. A Wellington-Napier Scandinavian Trail* were available in the gallery, with costs shared between FOM and Tararua District Council.

- FOM former co-secretary Kay Flavell had the pleasure of meeting in Dunedin in November 2011 with Otago University Emeritus Professor George Petersen, a renowned geneticist known as 'NZ's father of DNA.' Professor Petersen is the son of George Conrad Petersen, the revered author of *Forest Homes*. He was pleased to hear of work under way to preserve Mauriceville's heritage, and presented Kay Flavell with a copy of his father's biography of Ditlev Gothard Monrad.
- November 2011 marked the bicentenary of the birth of Danish bishop and prime minister Ditlev Gothard Monrad on November 24, 1811, who lived in New Zealand and farmed at Karere, Palmerston North, with his family from 1866-69. Before returning to Denmark Bishop Monrad donated a magnificent personal collection of 599 prints and etchings to the nation— its first significant art gift. His great-great-grandson Ian Macfarlane organized a series of events in Wellington and Auckland and a publication to commemorate this occasion. Te Papa mounted a display of prints and etchings and Te Manawa and the Palmerston North City Library also organized small exhibitions.
- Jean Thompson-Church organized a Monrad Day in Palmerston North on Saturday November 26, 2011. This included a mayoral reception at Te Manawa, talks, exhibition viewing and tour of significant Scandinavian heritage sites in the district, with a very good commentary by Bodil Petersen. It ended at the home of Roger Clausen, where a significant stand of lowland forest has been preserved.
- In October 2012 Danish children's author Lise Bidstrup and illustrator Birde Poulsen will spend 3 weeks in New Zealand in residence at New Pacific Studio, Mt Bruce researching Scandinavian women settlers of the 1860s and 1870s for a children's book based on the life of Emilie Monrad, wife of Bishop Monrad, called *Always a Garden*. It will be based on Emilie's letters during the years from 1866-69. Bodil and Gunner Petersen did extensive work translating these letters into English. We mourn the sudden passing of Gunner in May 2012 and send our deepest sympathy to Bodil.

### **What's Happening in Mauriceville**

- Arild and Kari Vikerhausen from Norway, descendants of Eli Larsen, made a repeat visit to New Zealand in April 2012 and enjoyed visiting the Norwegian Methodist church and churchyard and other local monuments. They were hosted by Nerrolly and Stuart Hoar and by KF at New Pacific Studio.
- Mauriceville West Reserve Committee (chair Willie Buick) reported to a FOM committee meeting on May 26, 2012 that progress is being made on repairs to the old building (spouting, glazing, etc). A separate access road leading to the old school and the first cemetery up the hill beyond it was also created by the committee in February 2011. New signage is also in place. In 2011 Richard

Nester and builder (DOC) also replaced a broken window frame with a new purpose built frame.

- Headstones in the Mauriceville Cemetery have been sprayed and research on the families buried there is under way by Julianne Buick et al.
- Nerroly and Stuart Hoar are seeking funding for the upkeep and increased insurance of the Norwegian Methodist Church
- A FOM brochure is in the works and the website ([www.scandinaviantrail.org.nz](http://www.scandinaviantrail.org.nz)) is being updated.
- The Mauriceville and Kopuaranga Fair Association has awarded FOM \$800 to assist towards the preparation costs of booklets edited by Kay Flavell titled Rainbows over Mauriceville. From Scandinavia to Mauriceville. It is hoped they will be available by February 2013.

Finally, this is my last newsletter since I stepped down as co-secretary last month, so I want to thank you all very warmly for your support. It has been a privilege to work with you over the past three years. In the next three months, I shall be eating and sleeping and dreaming Mauriceville history --while walking through Vallejo and San Francisco. A typical migrant's experience!

Best wishes to you all

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Kari and Arild Vikørhaugen read the epitaph of Lars Andersen Schou at a local Cemetery.