

A Delightful Day in Askov

Minnesota is a beautiful place in throughout most of the year (excepting a few weeks in February and March). No season has more potential beauty than autumn during the time of the turning leaves. On Saturday, October 6th the Head of the Lakes Corvair Association from Duluth-Superior hosted Corvair Minnesota in Askov, Minnesota for the 2nd annual Bar-B-Cruise picnic.

While last year's picnic happened on a day with 95°F temperatures, the 2007 version found everyone dressed in parkas and mukluks. The picnic consisted of excellent burgers and side dishes served in the Askov park pavilion right in the center of town.

The town of Askov is only a few miles east of I-35, just north of Hinckley. Askov offers a look back in time to an era when immigration meant settlers from northern Europe—Scandinavia in general; Denmark in particular. Reminders of the Nordic heritage are everywhere.

The original street signs in Danish proved too difficult for non-native speakers. As a result bi-lingual street signs appeared.



The Askov City Clerk, Arla Budd, served as our emcee and tour guide. Her handsome friend is the town mascot, Gunthar, a friendly troll. Arla told about the history of Askov and the surrounding area.

Among other things we learned that the Danish immigrants dealt with other Scandinavians (Swedes) by encouraging them to live on the outskirts of town

Gary Nelson told about his own Nordic heritage. (Carol had heard the story before.)



Arla led us on the short walk to the Bethlehem Lutheran church. She is in the choir and a pillar of the church. The church is a beautiful example of a 19th century house of worship, updated and preserved in the 20th century and is currently on the National Register of Historic buildings. Of special interest were the organs as were the old paintings behind the altar and the hand carved pulpits and tables.



Bethlehem Lutheran Church sanctuary



Painting by altar

The town has two museums across the street from each other: the farm museum and the Pine County Historical Society museum had closed for the season but re-opened for our visit. We learned about the lumber industry and the 1894 Hinckley fire that wiped out the forests and the industry. Farming became the basis of the economy after the fire. Rutabagas were a principal crop in Askov. A rutabaga malted milk was mentioned as a local specialty.

*Lena's gift shop is just a block from the museums. Lena specializes in Scandinavian imports from Swedish rugs to Danish music, chocolate and cookies.
(There is no "Ole" in this Lena's life.)*



BNSF freight trains pass at speed through the middle of town adding a modern aura to our taste of the past.

Following the tour of the town, members of the Head of the Lakes club displayed some of their hobbies. Patty Prudden demonstrated her spinning wheel on which she turned Alpaca wool from her farm into fine yarn. CMI's Eric Prosis displayed a number of his Corvair toys.

Once again, the Head of the Lakes club put on a great event. Our day in Askov provided an opportunity to get to know the members of the Duluth- Superior club better, and to learn more about the history of Minnesota. If you haven't been to Askov, take a short detour off I-35 next time you're headed north.

President emeritus,
Ray Alexander