



Scandia Baptist Cemetery Association

Historic Cemetery Established: 1857

Issue: June 2024

North Entrance and Interpretative Signs Project Completed!



The year was 2014....An idea for signage to tell a bit about Andrew Peterson and about the Cemetery itself was conceived over a lunch in downtown Waconia with Wendy Biorn, Executive Director of the Carver County Historical Society, Karen (KJ) Bach and Margaret Osborne, Scandia Baptist Cemetery Association (SBCA) Board members. With the Scandia Baptist Church building moved in 1973 from its original location about 200 yds west of the Cemetery, the stories of these pioneers and their final resting place were getting lost.

After six years of pondering and fundraising, the Board decided to sub-cut the small mound at the opening in the north fence and have 2 small patios with interpretive signs. This project also gave the 'Swedish Rock' a more prominent location.

Picture Perfect Landscaping was hired in the Fall of 2020 to do the excavating & rock retaining wall work. Vacker Sign Company of Roseville, MN was engaged to manufacture the two interpretive signs. A friend of KJ Bach's accepted the invitation to be the graphic designer. With many iterations of the verbiage and associated pictures, a final design was approved by the SBCA Board of Directors in late 2022 and sent off to Vacker Sign for production. The 2 new interpretive signs were installed on May 20, 2023.... Spring Cleanup Day. Sixteen people were onsite to help with the cleanup ... and to witness the installation of a nine-year vision. A bench in memory of Mary Peltz Luedtke was provided by the Peltz Family and installed on the east patio on June 2, 2023 by KJ Bach and Tom & Jacque Waugh (Mary's daughter).

On August 26, 2023 a gathering of about 50 people celebrated the new North Entrance, signage and Flagpole area. KJ Bach emceed a short program thanking the MANY people that were involved with the completion of this project. Vision and perseverance have now given the Scandia Baptist Cemetery a way to share a bit of its history and stories with those who stop by and wonder about this little Cemetery in the middle of a golf course!



Jo Mihelich Remembered - by Margaret Osborne

The Cemetery lost a dear friend last year when Josephine “Jo” Mihelich passed away on September 16, 2023. Jo cared deeply about the Scandia Baptist Cemetery, because it is the final resting place for so many of the people she wrote about in her book, Andrew Peterson and the Scandia Story. She never served on the Cemetery Board, but Jo made sure we knew her concerns about the condition of the cemetery: its fence, leaning headstones, insufficient signage about the history of the Scandia community and general appearance. She cared because she had personally invested so much time and energy in learning about the beginnings of this community and its historical importance. The amazing part of this story is that she was not native to the area.

Josephine Radosevich was born in Chisholm in 1926, and married her high school sweetheart William “Bill” Mihelich in 1945. They moved to Waconia in 1962 for Bill’s career. Jo never forgot her Croatia and Slovenian heritage,

but she also became interested in the history of her new home. As the Bicentennial Year (1976) approached, Jo was commissioned by the mayor of Waconia to help identify and preserve historic landmarks in Carver County. Jo had the gifts of persistence and ability to handle detail, so she researched the Scandia Community, conducted interviews with children and grandchildren of the early settlers, completed site surveys and collected photos. From this wealth of material, she wrote the Andrew Peterson book in 1984. She also researched and wrote the document that placed the Andrew Peterson farm on the National Register.

Jo’s book tells us so much about the history of our Scandia ancestors that those of us on the Cemetery Board refer to it as “the Bible”. We use it to answer many questions about the cemetery and its occupants that would otherwise remain mysteries. For me personally, Jo’s oral interviews provided a treasured recording of my grandmother’s voice and childhood memories.

Jo stayed involved and concerned about the cemetery even as her health declined. We wanted to have her present at the North Entrance Dedication last year, but it was not to be. She did get to see pictures of the new informational signage and was pleased that we had finally done it!. Jo was predeceased by her husband Bill, and is survived by her daughter Susan Krech, granddaughters and great-grandchildren.

Thank you, Jo, for all your contributions to making the Scandia Cemetery a fitting resting place and tribute to those early settlers of Carver County.

SBCA Finances by Dan Norman & Lisa Lundsten-Nees

Wonderful SBCA family members, Carver County & Waconia area neighbors! Our 2023 Investment Portfolio dividends plus individual donations yielded total income of \$4,118 with expenses of mowing, graphic design (entrance signs), Carver County Historical Society donation ended at \$2,250 leaving \$1,868 for maintenance/projects for 2024. Projects slated for this year include removing a severely leaning tree and stump removal at \$2,000 plus the boundary fence is in desperate need of replacement. Our request this year is for donations to cover the shortfall of the mowing and tree removal costs and we will obtain estimates for a new fence to be installed sometime in 2025 or later. The 2024 Spring Clean-Up was held Saturday, May 18 and was a great success! Thank you to all the devoted SBCA family team in picking up and sprucing up the cemetery from the winter/early spring weather debris.

The SBCA Board of Directors appreciate your financial and emotional support for all our committed partnership to keep “God’s Little Green Acre” in good standing as the founding family members of the Scandia Baptist Church had always hoped.

Donations can be sent to: SBCA, c/o Lisa Lundsten-Nees, 594 Brimhall St., St. Paul, MN 55116.

The SBCA is a tax exempt 501(c)(13) Non-Profit organization.

More information is available on the Scandia Baptist Cemetery Facebook page and on our website at www.scandiabaptistcemetery.org

