

# OVERLOOK

Cook County Historical Society • Biannual Newsletter • June (Sept) 2021

## Tofte-Schroeder Baseball Team

by Brian Tofte



*Tofte-Schroeder baseball team*

Around the year of 1910 a young man came to Tofte as a State Forester by the name of Henry Dorman. He was interested in the young people living here and decided to organize a baseball team. They knew of a place at the west end of Tofte which wouldn't be too difficult in clearing. So, everyone pitched in clearing the place for the

ball field. First, they had to cut down all the trees, pull out all the stumps and they piled everything alongside the field.

The group then borrowed a team of horses and a harrow from Andrew and John Tofte and started to drag the field. By the time they were finished, they had a fairly smooth field.

They started practicing every spare moment they could find and by the fourth of July they thought they were good enough to play the Grand Marais team.

The next step was to find a way to get to Grand Marais, as there were no roads and the distance to Grand Marais from Tofte was twenty-eight miles. They contacted the H. Christiansen and Sons Fish Company in Duluth who made regular stops along the North Shore picking up fish from the fisherman along the North Shore.

H. Christiansen and Sons would make three hundred and fifty-seven stops between Duluth and Tofte in the

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*Grace J - a boat captained by Martin Christiansen*

## CCHS HIGHLIGHTS

The Bally Blacksmith and Metal Shops were opened regularly to the public starting in June and will keep regular open hours on Fridays and Saturdays from 1-4 through September 25<sup>th</sup>. We will also be holding our last blacksmithing demonstrations by Don Hammer and Drew Johnson on September 24-25 from 11-4 in the yard behind the blacksmith shop. Volunteering for us at Ballys this summer are Brian Miller, Dean Farnum, Ray Rindahl, Mike Gieseke, Brian Tofte, Drew Johnson, Steve Frykman, and Kaj Erickson. Duane Ege continues to lend his expertise, stories, laughter, patience, trailers...

The 1940s replica herring skiff was finished by boat builder Josh Tolkan and the North House Folk School. We will soon put out a call to help name the boat. It is currently residing in the Bally metal shop.



Our Harbor History Tours took a Covid break last year but are back! Each Saturday at 1pm you can meet up with the tour group in front of the museum and take the tour from there to the far side of the Coast Guard station. Dennis Waldrop, Museum Manager and Archives Specialist, has been managing the tour schedule and he has been helped by tour guides Brian Miller, Ray Rindahl, Bob Carter, Dan Helmersen, and Tyler Howell.

Changes are coming to the History Museum as we work to safely store our collections, make the exhibits accessible to more people, accommodate our staff, and restore the Maritime exhibit in the addition. Research requests continue with over 50 yet this year. Martha Marnocha has been assisting with research requests from the public. When he wasn't digging into digital archiving, discovering new historical photos, or caring for the collections - Dennis created a fun, new scavenger hunt for kids of all ages. Volunteers Clay Ahrens, Ray Rindahl, and Dan Helmersen have helped us out this year.

The 1930s replica fish house on the west side of the harbor got a quick face lift recently compliments of Leah Thomas who cleaned it out, rearranged some of the contents, and is still trying to track down the proper flannel shirts and wool caps for the fish cleaning mannequins (don't worry, they are fully clothed in the meantime...) The Nee-Gee underwent an assessment by boatbuilder Josh Tolkan to determine the extent of restoration that is needed in order to preserve and share that piece of maritime history for years to come.

The JHP Art Gallery has started on the front yard landscaping, improved accessibility, expanded their gift shop, ran simultaneous exhibitions, and increased educational programming.



### Mission

The purpose of the Historical Society shall be the collection, preservation, and dissemination of knowledge about the history of Cook County and to relate it to the history of the State of Minnesota.

### Board of Directors

- Marja Erickson, President
- Myron Bursheim, Vice President
- Claire Smith, Treasurer
- Barb Backlund (Ex-officio)
- Brian Tofte
- Dean Farnum
- Doug Bruce
- Edward Hedstrom
- John Jacobsen
- Laurie Spry

Ann Sullivan, County Representative

### Staff

- David Kinworthy, Director of Development
- Katie Clark, Director of Operations
- Dennis Waldrop, Museum Manager & Archives Specialist
- Aliya Marxen, JHP Art Gallery Manager
- Doug Andrus, Facility Caretaker



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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

*Greetings!* What a time of excitement with kids headed back to school, the smell of fall in the air and three new hires at the Cook County Historical Society! As we prepare and stock up for the coming winter, it's also a good time for reflection on the past.

This past summer has been amazing! The enthusiasm for all things Historical Society has been fun to be a part of. I am just full of gratitude for the people that have stepped in to help.

First and foremost, Katie Clark, our amazing leader. I cannot say "Thank You" enough for all that you have done over the last year. The time you put in was endless - you make everything perfect from gallery shows to Ballys to customer service to training in new staff. Thank you!

*Thank you also to the following wonderful people:*

Dennis Waldrop - your wisdom, enthusiasm, customer service and straightforward approach to life has helped the museum come to life

Doug Andrus - for the quiet way that you come in and do what needs to be done - we are so lucky to have your time and talents

Dean Farnum - you are an incredible volunteer jumping in wherever you are needed whether it is at the JHP, on the board, or part of a committee - we so appreciate it

Laurie Spry - it is so fun to work with you and you certainly know how to move things along!

Myron Bursheim - for being the co-pilot this past year and for chairing so many of the committees (your ability to run a meeting is greatly admired) - the experience that you have is invaluable and I thank you for sharing it

Claire Smith - for being the treasurer and helping to understand the endowments

Brian Tofte - your historical knowledge and your story telling are exceptional - thank you for your warm presence on our board and as a volunteer at the sites

Ed Hedstrom - for helping whenever someone is needed and for sharing your treasure findings skills

John Jacobsen - for your time, willingness to jump in, your honest and forthright opinions

Barb Backlund - for being my grounding rod, policy maker and opening night food prepper

Doug Bruce - for all of your thoughtful introspection, support, and humor

Ann Sullivan - your incredible skills in keeping us in-the-know

Traci Crotteau - for your time as secretary and your knowledge of marketing

Lois Clay - for your quiet get-it-done attitude

Carolyn Schmidt - for your time and customer service - and knitting know-how

Linda Otis - for your cheeriness and all of your extra time with helping at openings

Sharon Eliassen - for jumping in to help at the JHP

Dan Helmersen - thank you for sharing your stories and historical knowledge with all of us

Philis Anderson - thank you, you are the best hostess

Brian Miller - for your time at the museum and Ballys, and for all the extra research into details

Ray Rindahl - for your eagerness to help out at the museum, on tours, and at Ballys

Clay Ahren - thank you for your excellent museum docent duties

Bob Carter and Tyler Howell - for the energy and details you put into the Harbor Tours

Alta & Gary McQuatters, and Jerry & Kay Sivets - for all of your time caring for and sharing the Chippewa City Church

Lyle Spry - for doing everything that your wife volunteers you for - and doing it with a smile

Duane Ege - for standing around and waving your hands in the air. Seriously though, thank you for all your time, wisdom, puzzle fixing and passion.

Dick Gilyard - for your architectural knowledge and guidance

Maggie Anderson - for your down-to-earth style at the JHP

Pam Dixon - your experience, skills, and kindness are very much appreciated

Thank you to all of the artists that create and share your art with us and to all of the researchers and interested folks who contribute to our stories and collections. Thank you to all those that have taken the time to preserve and share your history with us so that we might share it with others - in particular, everyone that has done the "Coffee with Mildred" interviews with me. What a blessing those have been to myself and others all over the country (seriously, I get fan mail about the interviews). To anyone not listed here - we truly appreciate the help and support of everyone!

Thank you finally to all the members who voted to let me be your President for the past year. It has been a great adventure.

Marja Erickson





## Director of Operations

After several months of scaled back staffing, I am so very happy to welcome Dennis, David, and Aliya to our organization! The combined strengths and experiences of our new team are creating new momentum and I am really looking forward to working on our upcoming projects together.

I have begun the new role of Director of Operations in order to co-direct CCHS with David Kinworthy, our new Director of Development. With this co-leadership, we hope to collaborate our strengths in a more strategic and creative fashion. My position will support organizational growth and stability by further developing and managing the key operational and programmatic effectiveness and efficiency. Supporting the daily operations of our historic sites, programs, and services as well as handling the administrative needs of the organization will be my focus.

We aim to make a difference in the community by protecting, preserving, and sharing the historical and artistic record of Cook County. It's a mission that we have committed ourselves to and that we take pride in providing.

**Katie Clark**



## Director of Development

As the director of development, I am eager to apply my experience in business, sales, and both traditional and online marketing to help serve the ongoing efforts of the Historical Society. I am looking to expand to new social media platforms not only for relevancy but to infuse modern north shore life with humor and its rich history.

I am excited to develop more avenues for the youth of Cook County to engage their history through our "Passport to the Past" program and new campaigns to come. In addition to these

efforts, we will be launching "Legacy" projects for members, donors, and sponsors to cement their family's history and love for Cook County in very tangible ways. Finally, as we continue to build a "bridge" between past traditions of Cook County and our lives today we are hoping to enrich the membership experience by honoring key member anniversaries and building a stronger connection to our historical sites. I will be reaching out to current members for suggestions and ideas on how we can serve our community better. Thank you,

**David Kinworthy**

*Tune into our social media to see more news, updates, and stories!*

[www.cookcountyhistory.org](http://www.cookcountyhistory.org)  
[www.facebook.com/CookCountyHistoricalSociety](https://www.facebook.com/CookCountyHistoricalSociety)  
[www.facebook.com/JohnsonHeritagePostArtGallery](https://www.facebook.com/JohnsonHeritagePostArtGallery)

[www.instagram.com/jhpartgallery](https://www.instagram.com/jhpartgallery)  
[www.instagram.com/historiccookcounty](https://www.instagram.com/historiccookcounty)  
YouTube—Historic Cook County (MN)

# WELCOME

CCHS is proud to introduce our new staff members!



## DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

**David Kinworthy** is a new Cook County resident living in Grand Marais with his wife and five children. David is originally from the midwest, born and raised in Kansas City, but he has spent most of his adult life in Kailua-Kona, Hawaii. Noticing the similarities between the harbor views of Grand Marais and the ocean views of Hawaii made Cook County feel like home to David.

Hoping to raise their children with small town values surrounded by the great outdoors, David and his family moved to Grand Marais full time in 2020.

In accepting the position of Director of Development, David is eager to serve the community and learn the history of Cook County.

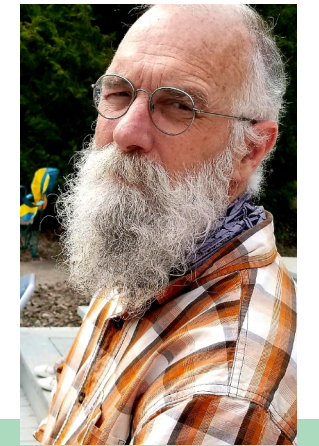


## JHP ART GALLERY MANAGER

**Aliya Marxen** grew up in Grand Marais, spending her childhood tromping through the woods in her backyard, participating in local theater productions, and making almost daily walks to the library. Upon graduating high school in 2011, she attended culinary school and spent five years as a fine dining cook in Minneapolis. In 2016, Aliya returned back to Grand Marais to pursue a degree in Business Administration which she completed Spring 2021.

Since moving home, Aliya has enjoyed exploring new outdoor hobbies - most recently picking up cross country skiing and ice skating. She has also continued to be involved in various Grand Marais Playhouse productions including Mom's Gift, Beauty and the Beast, and The Tempest.

When not exploring, Aliya typically can be found cooking, or with her nose in a book and two cats in her lap.



## MUSEUM MANAGER AND ARCHIVES SPECIALIST

**Dennis Waldrop** and his family decided to make Grand Marais their forever home after numerous vacations on the North Shore.

His previous background was in litigation support for law firms. This involved gathering and organizing data to be presented in trial. Dennis' strengths lie in developing positive relationships with internal and external customers and teams, building trust with clients, and developing strong organizations.

In his new role of Museum Manager and Archives Specialist, Dennis will be handling the history museum's overall development of collections and exhibits, the museum experience, and the collections care responsibilities.

Dennis is inspired to give back to Cook County all the joy and happiness this area and people have given to him.



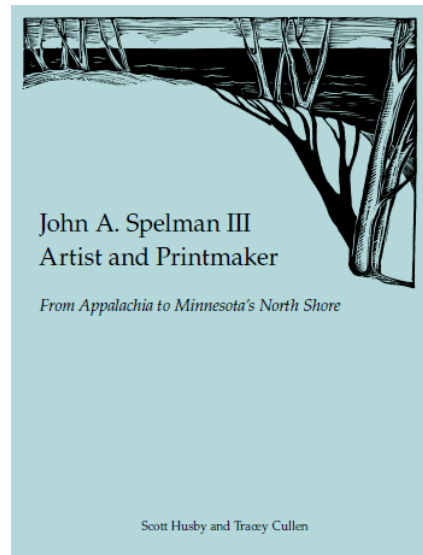
## SHOWCASING AN ARTISTIC LIFE

The Cook County Historical Society had the pleasure of sponsoring the *John A. Spelman III, Artist and Printmaker: From Appalachia to Minnesota's North Shore* retrospective exhibition. The show was curated by Scott Husby and Tracey Cullen, who authored a book of the same name to accompany the exhibition. The beautifully displayed artwork of Spelman spanned his life and celebrated the evolution of his work - from the evocative works of Appalachian architecture through his depiction of North Shore scenes in watercolors, sketches, and relief printmaking.

The Historical Society would like to thank Scott and Tracey for bringing the work and life of John A. Spelman III to life. Their interest and dedication helped to reveal a talented artist deeply connected to the landscape of wilderness and architecture around him.

The Historical Society is also grateful to receive the proceeds from the sale of the Spelman books, prints, and cards. The revenue received will help to continue improving the gallery spaces at the JHP with the goal of incorporating the permanent collection into a yearly rotation of works. We are working on creating a larger educational component to add to our programming.

Thank you to the Lloyd K Johnson Foundation for their generous funding support and permission to use the Anna C. Johnson West Wing for the exhibition. The exhibition was also funded in part by the GMATA 2021-2022 1% Local Events Grant/Mini Grant Program. The majority of pieces were loaned by Sharon and Donn Eliassen or are part of the permanent collection of the Johnson Heritage Post Art Gallery. Other members of the local community also kindly contributed artwork.



Authors and curators Scott Husby and Tracey Cullen (on far left) with members of the extended Spelman family attending the opening reception.



## DATES

September 10 - 17

September 17 - October 10

October 15 - November 7

November 12 - December 5

## ARTISTS/GROUP/EVENT

*Plein Air Grand Marais* - Competition Week

*Plein Air Grand Marais* - Exhibition

Michelle Combs, Marva Harms, Christine Tierney, Matt Kania

Karen Nease

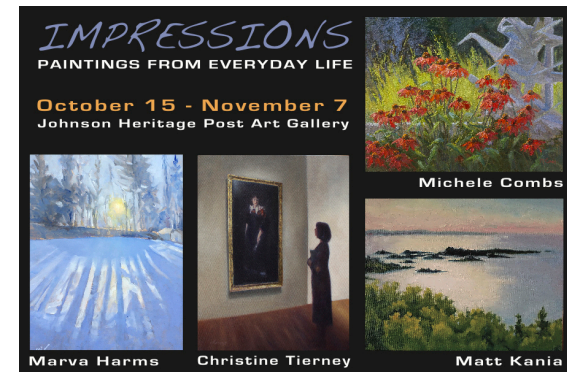


Competition week of Plein Air Grand Marais is currently underway and the resulting exhibition will be installed in the JHP Art Gallery from Sept 17 - Oct 10. Over 100 artists will take advantage of the beauty of Cook County as they create their landscapes in paint and other mediums.

Following the PAGM exhibition we will be bringing works back by Anna C. Johnson into the west gallery. Plans are in the works to also feature other local historic artists from our permanent collection in the same shared space.

The east gallery will feature *Impressions, Paintings from Everyday Life* featuring the works of Michele Combs, Marva Harms, Christine Tierney, and Matt Kania. Their show runs Oct 15 - Nov 7.

Karen Nease, whose artwork is rooted in nature and her connections to it, comes to the gallery Nov 12 - Dec 5.



Postcard for upcoming Impressions group show



Neil Sherman, *Golden Ridge*, Oil

## Meet our new JHP Art Gallery Manager



It is with great pleasure that I introduce myself to the incredible CCHS community! My name is Aliya, and some of you may recognize my face from around town, whether it be from early shifts at The Crooked Spoon, my time flouncing across the Grand Marais Playhouse stage, or most recently across the county at North Shore Federal Credit Union.

I certainly have a varied background of experiences that I am eager to apply to my new position at The Johnson Heritage Post. I bring lessons from my brief time on the kitchen line into everything I do (and if you ever want to chat, food is a sure-fire way to get me talking), and theater taught me flexibility, teamwork and poise under pressure.

My hope is to continue to empower the JHP in doing what it already does so well - sharing art with a community that thrives on it. Please don't hesitate to stop by to chat - I can't wait to meet you!

**Aliya Marxen**

early 1900's. They would come up the north shore from Duluth and turn around at the Onion River and start picking up fish from the fisherman on their way back to Duluth. Martin Christensen, the Captain of the Grace J, and his brother Otto who was the engineer, agreed to take the whole group to Grand Marais and back to Tofte. Once they landed at the Tofte dock, they had to unload all the empty fish kegs and equipment onto the dock so there would be room enough for around fifty men and women and the ball players. There was standing room only, but no one seemed to mind.

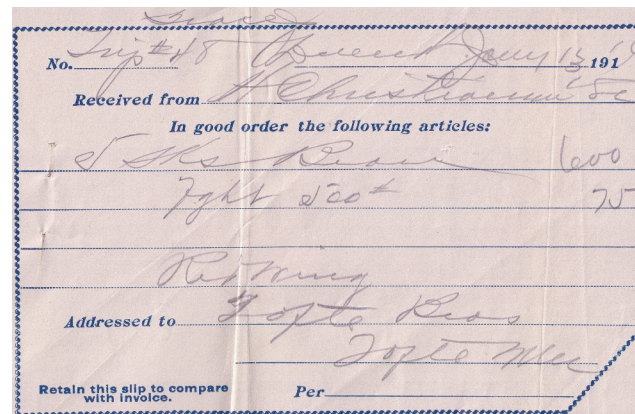
We lost that first game but as we played over the years, the Tofte-Schroeder team went on to win most of the games probably due to all the engineers and foresters who really knew the game so well.

Later, other steamboats like the Winyah, a 115-foot boat built in 1894 as a private yacht owned by Andrew Carnegie and later purchased by H. Christiansen and Sons, was converted to a fish tug and took the teams up and back. Another steamboat, the Crescent owned by the Johns Fish Company and captained by Willy Johns, took the teams many times. Everyone that could possibly get to the ball games would be there both from Tofte and Grand Marais. Chris Tormondsen noted in an interview, that back in the 1910 or 1912 period there were twenty-seven boats running up and down the shore picking up fish from the fisherman.

On one game a bet was made on the outcome by L. B. Gaskill, an elderly man who never missed a game. He got out in the field challenging anyone to bet that the Tofte-Schroeder team would win, and the loser would have to pay for the whole team's dinner at the Paine Hotel. Our team was the lucky one to win so Gaskill won the bet and the team its dinner. We all enjoyed having such a good time and being able to talk and visit with everyone.



Martin Christensen on the Winyah



Christensen & Sons, Grace J (1914)

The first Tofte-Schroeder team organized was Henry Dorman, pitcher; Chris Tormondsen, catcher; Andrew Olsen, first baseman; George Smith, second baseman; A. Louis, third baseman; Bill Smith, short stop; Elias Carlson, outfielder; Engel Eide, outfielder; and Carl Carlson, outfielder. During this time period, both State engineers and foresters were needed in this newly being built up country, so we always had extra men playing ball with us.



Baseball c 1910



Winyah at the Tofte dock



Tofte-Schroeder and Grand Marais baseball teams (Maude Small Toftey collection)

Mr. and Mrs. Louis Engelsen were great baseball fans and on one of our trips to Grand Marais they entertained the whole Tofte-Schroeder team at a dinner in their home. Louis was an uncle of mine and a brother of another uncle of mine, Hans Engelsen.

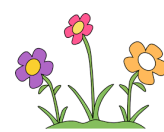
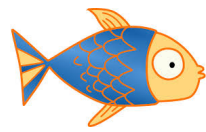
The Grand Marais team also had to come to Tofte in the same way we had to travel - which was by boat. Sometimes coming down on Saturday, staying overnight, and going back by boat on Sunday.



Scoreboard

THANK YOU!

### Site Work Volunteers



Leah Thomas for stepping in where it's needed and working hard to bring new life into the replica fish house.  
Bill Braniff, Jim Wiinanen, and Kaj and Skinner Erickson for their help with the temporary filling for the JHP mosaic centerpiece spot until we can put together a competition for artists to fill the spot in front of the building!  
Lyle Spry for taking such great care of the Bally and JHP Art Gallery yards.  
Monica Anderson for her attention to our flowers!



Anna C. Johnson, *Hollow Rock*

## 2022 CALENDARS FOR SALE SOON!

Our 2022 Anna C. Johnson calendar is in the works and will be available soon!

Paintings and sketches of Anna's will be showcased in a 12 month wall calendar.

Visit [www.cookcountyhistory.org/shop](http://www.cookcountyhistory.org/shop)

FOR 96 YEARS, COOK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
HAS BEEN COLLECTING, PRESERVING, AND SHARING  
OUR MATERIAL, CULTURAL, AND ARTISTIC HERITAGE.

HELP US CONTINUE TO COLLECT THE STORIES OF  
COOK COUNTY FOR GENERATIONS TO COME!

Cook County Historical Society currently maintains the Cook County History Museum (the 1896 Lightkeeper's House); the Johnson Heritage Post Art Gallery; the St. Francis Xavier Church of Chippewa City; the Bally Blacksmith Shop; and a replica 1930s fish house with the 35' fishing tug, the Nee-Gee.

Three of our buildings - the History Museum, the Bally Blacksmith Shop, and the Chippewa City Church are on the National Register of Historic Places.

*If you are interested in  
renewing or upgrading your  
membership*

- or -

*becoming a sustaining member,*

*please visit our website at  
[www.cookcountyhistory.org](http://www.cookcountyhistory.org)  
and click on Membership!*



Unknown couple with cabin

**NOT A MEMBER?!?** Go to [www.cookcountyhistory.org/become-a-member](http://www.cookcountyhistory.org/become-a-member)

**DONATE ONLINE!** Go to [www.cookcountyhistory.org/donate](http://www.cookcountyhistory.org/donate)

OR

Please accept my tax deductible donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
to be put towards the general operating fund of the Cook County Historical Society  
in order to support programs and services to the community.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail this form and your contribution to:  
Cook County Historical Society  
P.O. Box 1293, Grand Marais, MN 55604

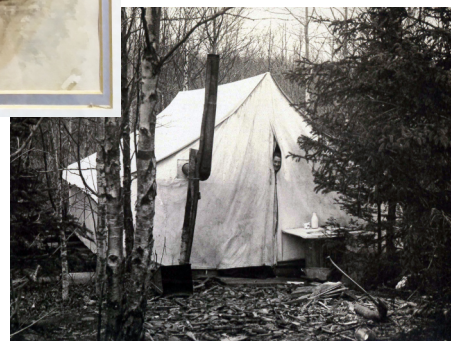
To donate by phone please call 218-387-2883

# reCollections

Child's coat from Humphreys,  
donated by Carolyn Higgins



The untitled Anna C. Johnson watercolor (c1910), on loan from Nancy and Russell Smith, was matched up recently with a photograph of Laura Pepple (Scott) in the same tent where she lived for several years while teaching in Grand Marais. The tent was located in the woods across the street from Birch Terrace (where Anna lived at the time).



Baskets woven (1986) by Charlie Cook  
(last Cree native of Gunflint and Saganaga), donated by Nancy Smith



Ceremonial items from the  
Northern Light Chapter #292 of  
the Order of the Eastern Star,  
donated by Linda Otis





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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

A friendly reminder — your next membership payment is due by the date to the right of your name on the address label.

If you are a lifetime member — no payment is due, but please consider an additional donation!

*Thank you!*

James Vannet - stone carver  
 and fish decoy creator -  
 Inuksuk, \$45



Nan Onkka - printmaking artist and art educator -  
 Blank greeting cards, \$5 each



Fritz Lehmborg - studio  
 potter since 1983 -  
 Teapot (\$50),  
 Mug (\$35),  
 Tray (\$70)

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