

# Toête à tête with Nona

at the Harrington Opera House  
by Karen Allen



On Saturday, July 18, noted author and artist Nona Hengen presented her artwork, books and stories to a sold-out crowd at an old-fashioned tea party hosted by the Harrington Opera House Society. The event was a benefit for the continued restoration of the Harrington Opera House.

The people who attended the tea were from Harrington, Davenport, Reardan, Almira, Washtucna—and a wonderful lady from Seattle who was visiting the area.

Even though Davenport's Pioneer Days festival was in full swing, and the temperature was over 90 degrees, Nona filled the house! The last time she had been to

Opera House was about 13 years prior, and she reminisced about the cucumber sandwiches that were served at that time.

This time, the cakes and treats were even more delectable, and beautifully presented among the fine china sets and teapots at each table. As the people sat glistening from the heat and gently waving their fans, Nona reminded them of their strong community pride and spirit that is alive

in Harrington. She lives in a small community, and it is very apparent that her heart is there, and she that she appreciates small town life as she details this in her paintings and stories.

Her presentation included a slideshow of her many

paintings, beautifully narrated with her voice. When the slideshow ended, she talked about her life, and the background of her books. The stories are filled with fascinating history, and personal life experiences within her family. You could have heard a pin drop as the people listened to Nona describe the plot for each featured book.

When the presentation ended, Nona talked with folks one on one, but nobody was in a hurry to leave. The wonderful volunteers who organized the event were busy clearing tables, and cleaning the large auditorium. It was an enjoyable and successful day.

As with other people who have presented or performed at the Opera House, the last thing they always say before they leave is "I would love to come back!" Nona Hengen made the same comment. She is an extraordinarily talented lady who is loved and appreciated by everyone and will always have a place at the Harrington Opera House. ■



Back row: Debra Hendrickson and Karen Robertson; middle row: Bunny Haugan, Billie Herron and Linda Wagner; front row: Lorraine Gilliland, Nona Hengen, Cassandra Pfaffle-Dick and Harrington Mayor Paul Gilliland.