

# Sven Sundstrom Grand Marshal for the 2018 Optog

The Grand Marshal for the 2018 Optog (walking parade) at 11:30 a.m. Saturday, June 16, is Sven Sundstrom.

Sundstrom emigrated from Sweden in 1959 and eventually settled in Astoria, Oregon, to work at the Astoria Plywood Mill. He and his wife Maureen were involved with the first Scandinavian Midsummer Festival in 1968. They and their daughters, Lisa and Yvonne, continued to participate for years.

Maureen passed in 2012 and Sven recently moved to Portland to be closer to his daughters, but he'll be back this year for all three days of



**Sven Sundstrom, grand marshal of the 2018 Optog**

the festival.

"Those of us who started the Astoria Scandinavian Midsummer Festival did something really special,"

Sven said. "We wanted all the countries of Scandinavia to come together, because we knew it would be stronger and more successful that way. We wanted the music, the dance and the foods from each country. We brought some unique festivities — like the singing of the national anthems, the raising of the Midsummer Pole, the Bonfire and burning of hexes, the Folk Costume Style Show, and in the old days, we had a parade downtown. We learned to know and accept each other and we've had a wonderful time."



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**ASTORIA  
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ANNIVERSARY OF THE

**ASTORIA SCANDINAVIAN  
MIDSUMMER FESTIVAL!**



**AUGUST 8-11, 2018**  
[ASTORIAREGATTA.COM](http://ASTORIAREGATTA.COM)

"MAY ALL MY ILL-LUCK DEPART AND BE BURNT UP WITH THEE"

Let it so be declared, that on June 15th, Saturday at 7:30 PM, we will celebrate a MIDSUMMER NIGHT FESTIVAL, or A NIGHT IN SCANDINAVIA, put on by Astoria's Scandinavian Folk Dancers, and the local lodges and clubs and the people of Scandinavian descent and heritage. The event to take place at the 4-H fairgrounds with one and all invited to attend.

A great MIDSUMMER BONFIRE will be kindled to cast aside for another year, evil spirits and bad luck. The young and old of both sexes will gather about and pass the time with dancing and singing, and feasting on delicacies of Scandinavian flavor. People dance around the fire and cast into the flames wood and bits of straw to counteract the power of the Trolls and other evil spirits who are believed to be abroad that night; for at that mystic season the mountains open and from their cavernous depths the uncanny crew pours forth to dance and disport themselves for a time. If an animal happens to appear before the fire, the peasants are firmly persuaded to believe it is the EVIL ONE in person.

A girl who sees nine fires on MIDSUMMER'S EVE will marry before the year is out. The charred pieces of wood from the fire are carried home and carefully preserved throughout the year. During thunderstorms a piece of the charred wood is burned on the hearth with a prayer; some is given to those who are sick; Ashes placed in the roof will prevent fires from breaking out in the house; to look at the bonfire through garlands of flowers is a sure preventative of sore eyes and eyelids. These are some of the old beliefs for the purpose of the MIDSUMMER'S EVE BONFIRE.

A small admission charge will get you a place at the fire, and an evening that's true and meaningful as in times of old. Proceeds to go towards the travel expenses and summer activities of the Scandinavian Folk Dancers.

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Won't you join us on this eve, to re-create and re-capture an old and familiar custom? We want all Scandinavian countries represented in displays, food and music, song and dance. If you can contribute to any of this, please let us know. Perhaps you know of someone who can help us if you can't. However, we want you all to come and if you own a Scandinavian costume, please wear it and help us to create a true "NIGHT IN SCANDINAVIA"

Thank you,

*Mrs. Laurence Obie, Director  
ASTORIA'S SCANDINAVIAN  
FOLK DANCERS*