

Eagle's own Betsy Ross

Fanshaw sewing eight flags that will fly in for village

By Joan Holman

Freeman correspondent

EAGLE — At George Washington's request, Betsy Ross became the seamstress responsible for the sewing of our flag.

Donna Fanshaw, Eagle, at the request of the Eagle Business Association is responsible for the sewing of eight flags to be flying in the village by July 4.

In 1976, in celebration of the bicentennial and the opening of Old World Wisconsin, Eagle made national news by finding and flying 21 flags of foreign countries plus five American flags which represented eras in this country's development.

The Eagle Business Association revived this project in 1988 by flying flags through Labor Day.

However, according to Jerry Mealy, vice president of the association and flag raiser, "Much of the bunting was in bad shape with wind torn ends and threads streaming. Since it is our goal to keep them flying, member Donna Fanshaw put her talents to needle."

Fanshaw, representing the Alice Baker Memorial Library on the Business Association, said she's not sure her skills are as good as Betsy Ross'. "All I had to do was rehem the eight country flags and agree with the association that another Czechoslovakian one is needed."

When the flags went up for the first time in Eagle residents contributed time and support to create name plates of the countries each flag represented. The result was traffic holdups into Eagle for more than a mile when



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Donna Fanshaw of Eagle is sewing eight flags for the village of Eagle to fly on July 4.

families came to see the street of international flags.

Then the idea died until the three-year-old Eagle Business Association took on the project. Gerry Galubinski, president, believes that since this area is special in showing visitors to Old World Wisconsin customs and the way of life of diverse ethnic groups who came to Wisconsin, it makes sense to fly, amongst others, the flags of countries represented in Old World.

The flags were bought with donations to the FLAG Project. Besides the American symbols, other countries represented are: Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Scotland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Wales and Russia.

According to Mealy, when he and Bill Krestan collected the flags from the winter storage quarters provided at B & H Lumber in Eagle, they noticed what damage the wind and wear had caused. That's when Fanshaw was called in.

Now Mealy hopes yet another benefactor may be found. "Last year," explained Mealy, "Allen Salmela gave us a new Finnish flag. Now we wondered if a like, generous Czechoslovakian descendant might surface."

Otherwise the association has started a FLAG account c/o Bank One, P.O. Box 7, Eagle, WI, 53119. The money will be used to purchase, replace and maintain the flags. But with "Betsy Ross" Fanshaw in residence, the sewing is free.

Donna Fanshaw sewing flags to fly in Village 1991

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