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November / December

WINTER

2024

VINTER

november / desember

Greetings Lodge Members!



The Lutfisk dinner kitchen team – Anita Persson and Linda Bustamante aka professional carrot and potato cookers!

You are the best members any lodge could hope for! We just held three very big events - the Faar-I-Kaal Dinner, Nordic Market and Lutfisk Dinner – and you showed up making them all very successful and fun. Soon you'll be receiving the 2025 Calendar of Events. Make sure to get these popular events on **your** calendar. Early birds get the lefse at the Nordic Market and the Lutfisk dinner is usually sold-out even with two seatings! Also, please let our amazing event chairs know which ones you'd like to help with.

There are still many more activities coming up this year - Friluftsliv outings, Strikkekafe, Rosemaling classes, and next month we have the Lucia Family Christmas Party. More information on all can be found in this newsletter. Reminders are sent via eBlasts, Facebook, or on the website.



Lutfisk flown in fresh from Poulsbo, Washington and carefully prepared by our highly skilled crew – Steve Lambert, Patrick McCormick, and Merlin Hamre.

Our lodge board is set for next year with many having served in numerous leadership positions for many years. I am thankful to all for working hard to keep our lodge properly run for the benefit of the members. The Viking Hall board has reelected Jacob Mathiesen and John Olnes. We can thank this board for keeping the lights on; the parking lot cleared of snow; rentals; building repairs; and much more!

It's a great time to be a part of our lodge! Thanks to our members, the board, and committee members we've accomplished much this year. Let's keep it up and do it again in 2025!

*Med Vennlig Hilsen,
 Linda Bustamante, President
 Sons of Norway, Bernt Balchen Lodge*

Sons of Norway, Bernt Balchen Lodge

2025 Officers and Committee Chairs

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| President - Linda Bustamante | Trustee (3-year) - John Olnes |
| Vice President - Amanda Saxton | Trustee (2-year) - Marit Kristiansen |
| Secretary - Anita Persson | Trustee (1-year) - Jacob Mathiesen |
| Treasurer - Cynthia Olnes | Auditor - Patrick McCormick |
| Counselor - John Olnes | Auditor - Lloyd Persson |
| Membership Secretary - Hanna Persson | Librarian - Christie Ericson |
| Cultural Director - Christie Ericson | Newsletter Editor - Ruth Kvernplassen |
| Foundation Director - Amanda Saxton | Sunshine Chair - Anna Bryant |
| Sports Director - Martin Hansen | |



Bernt Balchen Lodge is part of District 2, Sons of Norway.

Follow the link to see what's up!

<https://www.sonsofnorway2.com/dynamic-2-newsletters/>

CLASSIFIEDS FOR VIKINGS



AD SIZE:
2 x 3.5 inches
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Attention:
Classifieds for Vikings

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"Gratulerer med dagen!"



"Happy Birthday!"

SUNSHINE REPORT

Greetings are sent to our members celebrating a birthday who are at least 75 years young!

NOVEMBER

Dawn Gillette	Orvetta Rae Elde	Elaine A Wilson
Arnold Link	Dale A Finlay	Birte Eliassen
Glenn R Soby	Boyd R Berg	Roger K Hansen
Gale A Olson		Ralph V Bagley

DECEMBER

Eva Bilet	Anstice M Tibor
John L Barstad	Carl J Pearson
Wallace A Smith	

If you know someone who needs a little sunshine
Contact Anna Bryant at: anna_bryant@hotmail.com

NEW MEMBERS 2024 - WELCOME!

Chris Tomsen	Birte Eliassen
Jan Tomsen	Adelheid Marlowe
Irina Grimberg	John Randall
Erik Holmquist	Dawn Gillette
Marcus Holmquist	Mary Anderson
Alf Kjetil Kartevoll	Alexander Davis
Siri Kartevoll	Brooks Davis
David Oaks	Elizabeth Davis
Richard Blankenship	Everett Davis
Stacie Blankenship	Grantham Davis
Andrew Fleming	Haley Finch
Michael Fleming	Joselynn Finch
Peter Fleming	Marcela Leon Squadrito
Judith Christia Smith	Tabitha Waller

VIKING HALL 907-349-1613 8141 Briarwood Street • Anchorage, AK 99518



Website: <https://www.sofnalaska.com>
Facebook: www.facebook.com/BerntBalchen

Instagram: [@sonsofnorwayanchorage](https://www.instagram.com/sonsofnorwayanchorage)
Sons of Norway International: <https://www.sofn.com>

Submit Articles: newsletter@sofnalaska.com Attn: The Flyer

LUCIA FAMILY CHRISTMAS PARTY 2024

Introducing this year's Lucia, Brooke Robertson. Brooke, 20, works at Escape Alaska and is preparing to leave for a gap semester in February. She'll be traveling through Europe for 10 weeks, visiting 9 countries. She has been participating in the St. Lucia festival since she was 5 years old and is honored to be Lucia again this year.

She is passionate about reading, writing, traveling, her job and her cat, Loki. Her family consists of: her sister, Paige, her parents, Chris and Jennifer, her farmor, Sigrun, and her grandparents, Claud and Linda Garrett.

Schedule

PRACTICE

November 24th - 2:30 pm

December 8th - 2:30 pm

FESTIVAL

December 15th - 3:00 - 6:00!



LUCIA VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

As in the past, the hall will be beautifully decorated and we plan to offer treats of rice porridge, Christmas cookies, gløgg / cider, and open-faced sandwiches, along with the talent show, Lucia procession, and a visit from a "jolly old elf"!

This is a well-organized event that is fun for the whole family, but it takes a crew of volunteers to make it happen. Our most urgent need is people to keep the porridge warm and served as well as keeping the gløgg organized and served. Additionally, we need volunteers in the following areas:

- Decorating/set up (Sunday morning) • Sandwich making (Sunday morning)
• Rice porridge making • Clean up after event

Please consider volunteering some time to help make this wonderful lodge tradition happen this year. You don't need experience, we will help you know what to do!

Please call or text Jennifer Robertson, this year's Lucia Mom at 907-952-2058 or email her at jkgrobertson@gmail.com to volunteer with this year's event. Tusen takk! Thank you very much!



Santa Lucia, or Saint Lucy's Day, is the church feast day dedicated to Saint Lucy and is observed on December 13. Its modern day celebration is generally associated with Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland. Santa Lucia comes as a young woman with lights and sweets, marking the return of longer daylight to winter darkness. It is one of the few saint days observed in Scandinavia. At our program at the lodge, a procession is headed by one girl wearing a crown of candles (or lights), while others follow in the procession with girls holding a single candle and boys holding a star.

Children learn and sing Norwegian and Swedish songs, often accompanied by harp and piano. Families are treated to a talent show, singing around the Christmas tree, and enjoy authentic Scandinavian rice pudding, open-faced sandwiches, and desserts. Santa Claus makes a special appearance at this event and hands out goodies to all attending children.

CULTURAL CORNER

Guided by the Pole Star

Bernt Balchen was an Arctic adventurer, war hero, and pilot's pilot.

By L. Carl Jacobsen



[The following article was published in the October 1999 issue of Viking magazine in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of Bernt Balchen's birth. It is reprinted here in part with permission from Viking magazine.]

Every era has its heroic explorers. At the turn of the last century, it was polar explorers who were among the most famous and admired. Norwegians Fridtjof Nansen and Roald Amundsen were in the forefront of these explorations, and virtually every man, woman, and child in Norway followed their accomplishments. Bernt Balchen was born in 1899 in Tveit, Norway. His uncle, Oluf Dietrichson, had crossed Greenland on skis with Nansen in 1888. Amundsen was a family friend who Balchen met in 1912, the year after Amundsen became the first person to reach the South Pole. Balchen says in his autobiography that when Amundsen asked him what he wanted to be when he grew up, he answered "I want to be an explorer and go on an expedition with you."

Balchen did become an explorer and participate in one of Amundsen's expeditions. But aircraft—not ships or skis—were his means of exploration.

BY INSTRUMENTS AND INSTINCT

When he took his flight training from the Royal Norwegian Naval Air Force in the early 1920s, Balchen was already a seasoned outdoorsperson who had studied forestry and mapped much of the forest in the southern Mandal Valley. He was also a champion athlete who excelled at bicycling, wrestling, and the pentathlon. He had qualified for Norway's Olympic boxing team with an eye to the 1920 games, though he didn't compete there. As a flyer, too, he was superior, and graduated first in his class at the flight training school at Horten.

Balchen met Amundsen again in 1925 on the Norwegian island of Spitsbergen in the Arctic Ocean. Amundsen and the American explorer Lincoln Ellsworth had been forced down while attempting to fly an airplane to the North Pole, and Balchen was a pilot on the search and rescue mission. Amundsen remembered meeting him as a boy and recalled his childhood aspirations. So, the following year, when Amundsen attempted a flight to the North Pole in a dirigible, he decided to draw on Balchen's mechanical expertise and Arctic survival experience. At Amundsen's request, the air force assigned Balchen to the polar expedition.

As the crew made preparations for the dirigible's flight, United States Navy reservist Richard Byrd showed up on Spitsbergen determined to get to the pole first. He would navigate his ski-equipped Fokker trimotor, the Josephine Ford, with navy pilot Floyd Bennett at the controls.

They managed to beat the dirigible into the air by three days and claimed to have reached the pole, though their achievement was later disputed. They never would have gotten off the ground, though, without Balchen's help. After the Josephine Ford crashed on a trial takeoff and its skis were smashed up, Balchen rescued Byrd's hopes and did it with Amundsen's blessings; Amundsen seemed more intent on the success of his own mission than on reaching the pole first. Balchen helped build new skis for the plane from lifeboat oars—the only wood available—and told Byrd's crew how to seal them with a compound of pine resin and tar, how to pack the snow to make a ramp for takeoff, and what time of day and snow conditions would be best for their departure.

Balchen made such an impression on Byrd that the American invited him to come to the United States and join in future expeditions. As a result of the move, Balchen gained dual U.S.-Norwegian citizenship, and became the chief test pilot for the Fokker Aircraft Company in New Jersey. He also trained pilots for the fledgling Western Canada Airways, which was forging routes into the Hudson's Bay area. And on Byrd's next two expeditions, Balchen turned out to be a lifesaver.

Guided by the Pole Star *Continued on Page 5*

In May of 1927, Charles Lindbergh won the Orteig prize by becoming the first to fly across the Atlantic Ocean. But Byrd was still intent on making his own transatlantic flight that year and he chose Balchen and Bert Acosta as his pilots for the June trip. Acosta was not experienced at instrument flying and when the weather turned foggy, he nearly spun the plane into the ocean. Balchen had the necessary skills, took the controls, and completed the flight. At journey's end, when it proved impossible to land in Paris due to bad weather, he saved everyone on board again by turning back to the coast of Normandy and making a night landing in the surf.

On Byrd's November 1929 expedition to the South Pole—the first to reach that pole by air—it was not the weather but Byrd's underpowered and overburdened Ford trimotor airplane that presented a danger. Piloting the plane, Balchen faced the sheer wall of a 9,000-foot glacier and knew he couldn't gain sufficient altitude to clear the top. He called for the crew to jettison more than 200 pounds of provisions and flew to the very edge of the wall to catch a thermal updraft that carried the plane up and over.

His skill and instincts gained Balchen high regard among his fellow flyers. According to Dr. Paul Garber, curator emeritus of the National Air and Space Museum, Balchen was the one pilot universally trusted by other pilots. Amelia Earhart sent Balchen a telegram after she became the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic in 1932. He had coached her on instrument flying and made improvements to her airplane before the trip. "Your help made it possible," she wrote.

AN ALLY IN WAR

With his friend Hjalmar Riiser-Larsen, Balchen established Det Norske Luftfartsselskap, the Norwegian Airline, and served as its operations manager from 1935 to 1940. Business travel gave him the opportunity to observe events in Germany in the late 1930s. He aided the United States by reporting German violations of the 1918 Versailles Treaty to the American government.

Balchen was in the United States when Germany invaded Norway in 1940. On orders from the Norwegian government-in-exile he went to Canada to choose a training site for an independent Norwegian air force. He selected City Island, outside of Toronto, Ontario. It was eventually known as "Little Norway," and served as a magnet for any young Norwegian pilot who could manage to get there during the war.

Balchen was ferrying planes to England in 1941 when General Hap Arnold persuaded him to join the U.S. Army Air Corps. Arnold knew that Balchen had experience with construction projects in subfreezing conditions and put him in charge of building a fueling base in Greenland. In record time, Balchen and his crew built the Bluie West 8 Air Base at Sondre Stromfjord on Greenland's west coast. Anticipating that some planes would encounter bad weather or mechanical problems while flying over Greenland, Balchen also trained his unit—most of them construction people—in the skiing and survival techniques that would be needed to rescue downed airmen. They carried out scores of rescues on Greenland's icecap and Balchen was involved in more than 100 of them.

Throughout the Second World War, Balchen was also involved in clandestine operations, including supply drops for the Norwegian Resistance. He was appointed Chief of the Allied Transport Command for Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, and the USSR, and evacuated nearly 4,500 allied flyers and refugees from neutral Sweden to Great Britain without the loss of a single plane. At the end of the war, in Bodø, Norway, Balchen personally accepted the surrender of the German Air Command.

CHANGING COMMERCIAL AVIATION

His years of Arctic experience convinced Balchen that the region could be a valuable shortcut for commercial aviation between North America and Europe. As president of the Norwegian Airlines from 1945 to 1948, he championed polar routes. He also facilitated the merger of the Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish airlines into the Scandinavian Airline System (SAS) in 1946.

The Cold War called him back to active duty in the United States Air Force in 1948. His leadership in the construction of Thule Air Base in northwestern Greenland in 1952 may have been the most important contribution to America's defense in that era: Thule was the only American airfield from which bombers could reach the industrial heartland of the Soviet Union—an effective deterrent against Soviet aggression.

Balchen retired at the rank of Colonel in 1956, when he was the top Arctic consultant for the Secretary of the Air Force. Until the end of his life in 1973, he also served as a consultant to the aviation and energy industries, and was available to the Air Force for special assignments. Having served both his native and adopted countries admirably, he was buried with honors at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia.



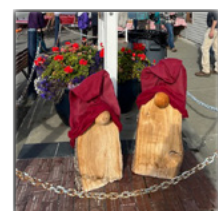
NORDIC MARKET



By the way...

**...Donations of Scandinavian/
Nordic items for the Silent Auction
held in the fall during the Nordic
Market are accepted year-round.**

Thank you!



Photos by Anita Persson

FAAR-I-KAAL DINNER



Photos by Anita Persson



SUPER BOWL RAFFLE 2025 SCHOLARSHIP FUNDRAISER



There are only 3 Books left, so get your tickets now!

The Super Bowl Raffle is the primary source of funds for the Sons of Norway Bernt Balchen Lodge No. 2-046 Language/Heritage/Higher Education Scholarships. In May 2024 three scholarships were awarded. Tucker Lien and Luna Olnes were recipients of the Higher Education scholarship, and Hanna Persson received a Language and Heritage scholarship. Details on how to apply for either of these scholarships will be in the lodge newsletter coming out in January 2025.

The Raffle will again have 20 winners with a top prize of \$1,000. Only 300 tickets are sold so the chance to win is very generous, one in fifteen. Tickets are selling for \$25 each or a special deal of 5-for-\$100. The drawing will be held at the Super Bowl Party on Sunday, February 9, 2025, during the airing of Super Bowl LIX (need not be present to win).

Raffle tickets are available at upcoming Lodge events and through the office (leave a phone message at 907-349-1613 or email sonacak@gmail.com). Give a call or send an email and we will arrange getting tickets to you.

LUTEFISK & MEATBALL DINNER



Photos by Anita Persson

Friluftsliv Events

2024/2025

Join the Sons of Norway for November's Friluftsliv outing!

Friday November 29 Opt Outside Initiative

November's Friluftsliv is inspired by REI's Opt Outside initiative, which encourages people to spend the day after Thanksgiving outdoors instead of shopping.

When: Friday November 29th 11:30 am-1:30 pm

Where: Meet outside the Kincaid Park Chalet (the chalet will be closed)

What: We'll take a walk on the Coastal Trail, starting at the chalet. We might go down to the beach if conditions allow (low tide is at 12:23 pm). Sledding is also a possibility!



October Friluftsliv ~ Glen Alps Fall Hike!



Sons of Norway Anchorage has celebrated Friluftsliv monthly for the past 5 years. Friluftsliv events began during the pandemic and provided a way for us to gather and enjoy Anchorage's beautiful outdoors and recognize the important Nordic value of being outside.

In 2025 we plan to host The Wooden Ski classic, The Annual Winter Kubb tournament and a Spring Bird Watch.

Stay tuned for dates and times in 2025.

Wooden Skis, Wool, and Waffles



On Sunday, January 26, 2025, Bert Balchen Lodge will sponsor the combined *Wooden Ski Classic and Kincaid Classic* ski event at Kincaid Park. It is our way of celebrating our winter traditions with wooden skis, wool clothing and waffles. We partner with the Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage (NSAA) who puts on the event. Lodge members volunteer to help NSAA manage the race. And, we award prizes to the skiers with the best traditional costumes (wool), serve fresh apres-race vafles, and pine tar skis.

NSAA will have race details on their website <https://anchoragenordicski.com/races/amh-anchorage-cup/>. Our event is Race Number 3 in the AMH Cup Race Series.

NSAA will post race day volunteer slots closer to race day. Our president, Linda Bustamante, organizes the apres-race waffles. Martin Hansen, your Sports Director, is ready for questions and suggestions. Text (907) 980-5333 or Email bikeskifish@gmail.com.



"May you always have a smile on your face, a twinkle in your eye and love in your heart."

HURTIGRUTEN 2025!

Join us in **NORWAY!**

August 11-21, 2025



Travel the scenic coast of Norway starting in Bergen and cruising over 1,500 miles north to Kirkenes aboard the well-loved Norwegian Hurtigruten ship August 13 to 19, 2025.



There are two options:

- #1 Travel to and from Norway on your own and make sure you get on the ship in time.
- #2 Show up at our Anchorage airport with your suitcase and travel carefree as a group with everything pre-planned until we arrive back in Anchorage.

Cruise only prices per person based on two in a cabin:

\$2,236 - Inside Cabin + \$2,638 - Polar Outside + \$2,884 for Arctic Superior - Deck 5 + \$3,756 for Arctic Superior - Deck 6

No Gratuities charged nor expected

Call Charlene Howe at (907) 333-7207, or email CharleneH907@gmail.com for more information.

STRIKKEKAFÉ



To all our fellow knitters and makers out there, we are looking forward to seeing you. *Strikkekafe is going strong!*



Bring your finished projects for Show and Tell! It will be so fun to see what everyone has been up to.

Strikkekafe means 'knitting cafe' and is popular all over Norway for all who enjoy handcrafts, it's not just for knitters! This is a time to gather with your projects and enjoy the company of others. It is a great way to meet other members, get inspiration, share your skills, or get a little help.

Strikkekafe meets the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month.

Check the E-BLAST for notifications or contact:

Christie 602-0673 or Anita 301-4215.



Norwegian Conversation Group

Saturdays ~ 10-11 am via Zoom

All levels welcome

Contact Christie Ericson to register christieak@gmail.com

Rosemaling Lessons

The lodge is offering a Rosemaling class the same evenings as Strikkekafe at the Lodge (every other Wednesday).

Amanda Saxton will be teaching this class.

If interested, email the lodge at sonancak@gmail.com and then Amanda will reach out with more information.



In Remembrance



Grethe Synove Berge passed away peacefully at her beloved cabin in the Big Lake, Alaska, area on Sept. 1, 2024, at the age of 92. She passed the day after spending a happy evening celebrating her 93rd birthday with her loving family and close friends. She was just two days shy of turning 93.

Grethe was born on Sept. 3, 1931, in Strommen, Norway. She grew up during World War II, witnessing and experiencing more than her share of hardships. After finishing school in Norway she worked in England for a short time before becoming a flight attendant for Scandinavian Airlines.

She spoke five languages fluently. It was during her time as a flight attendant that she met her future husband, Johannes Berge, at the Anchorage International Airport. He was also Norwegian.

They decided to immigrate from Norway and settle in Anchorage, Alaska, where they had their two daughters, Lisbeth and Ingvild. Unfortunately, her husband died unexpectedly in 1971. She then raised her two daughters alone, showing them what a true pillar of strength she was.

She later became a grandmother to four children: Matthew and Michael born to Lisbeth; and Annika and Anders born to Ingvild. She absolutely adored her grandchildren.

Tragedy hit again when she lost her youngest daughter, Ingvild, in 2016. After that, she devoted her life to her oldest daughter and her four grandchildren whom she was very close to, again persevering and displaying remarkable strength. Her personality was one of wisdom and strength.

She was known for her humor and outspokenness, which she was well loved for. She lived independently, drove her old Subaru and cooked for herself and her family until the day she passed. She was a true inspiration to everyone; she pushed forward when met with hardship and adversity.

Grethe is survived by her daughter, Lisbeth; grandchildren. Matthew, Michael, Annika and Anders, her daughter-in-law, Jordan; and several extended family members in Norway.

Grethe's passing has caused unspeakable heartbreak and grief. She will forever be in our hearts and will be missed terribly. A memorial service was held on October 26, 2024, at Amazing Grace Lutheran Church in Anchorage.

"May the wind be at your back, the sun on your face and the love of God in your heart."



Our neighbors need us.

Our lodge continues to donate canned goods, non-perishable foods and money to the local food bank. Consider helping those less fortunate, and bring your food or monetary donation in to Viking Hall.

Sons of Norway 8141 Briarwood Street



Anchorage, AK 99518 907-349-1613