

VIKING HALL 349-1613
www.sofnalaska.com

April
2014
april

Inside this issue:

Viking Hall News 2
Fish Dinner 2
Sunshine Report 2
Ski for Light 3
Norwegians in the Iditarod 4,5
Fra Biblioteket: April Book Review 6
Bernt Balchen Lodge Scholarships 6
Saturday Night Live! 7



**Sons of Norway Bernt Balchen Lodge
President's Message – My Ties to Norway**

All of us in Sons of Norway have something that ties us to Norway or other countries in Scandinavia. The ties that bind may be because of descent, a spouse or partner, or simply because of an appreciation for and interest in Norway's culture and heritage. Some of us in Bernt Balchen Lodge are Norwegian by birth and that is my own particular tie to Norway. I thought sharing the story of my connections to Norway would let you know more about me as your current President and why I care about Sons of Norway.

I was born in Stavanger, Norway in 1946 in the county of Rogaland which occupies the southwestern corner of Norway. Stavanger is a large city for Norway; it is the fourth largest and now is the oil capital of Norway.

The people of Stavanger are proud of their heritage, speak their own particular dialect, and call themselves "Siddis" or "citizen" –short for citizen of Stavanger. My father was a small businessman who dealt with skins and hides which he purchased from the farmers that lived in rural Rogaland. He was known for his sense of humor and his ability to mimic the dialect of any farmer of the region. Unfortunately he had a bad heart, gained after two bouts with rheumatic fever, and he died young at 42 when I was but 2 years old. My mother went back to work as a part-time secretary and my older brother (12 years my senior) eventually apprenticed as a full-time airplane mechanic to keep the family afloat. Yet it was tough economically after World War II in Norway and relatives of my mother in the United States urged her to emigrate for a better life. So, at the age of 43 she reluctantly made the move and we arrived in New York in December of 1950 as second class passengers on Queen Elizabeth I. Following the invitation of various relatives we tried New York, California, and eventually settled in Colorado Springs, Colorado where my mother's oldest sister had made her home since 1932. My brother remembers me playing with the local kids near my aunt's house babbling in Norwegian, but getting along just fine.

My mother like many immigrants started at the bottom as a hotel maid but later became an office worker. My brother joined the U.S. Air Force and made a successful career as a radar mechanic. We were not embedded in a Norwegian community and eventually at eight I asked my mother to only speak with me in English because I was laughed at for my accent in school. My mother never fully adjusted to leaving Norway and wanted to return, but did not want to leave my brother behind. After her death my brother and I brought her remains back to Norway as she had wished and she was buried beside my father in the churchyard near our old home. My brother has lived in British Columbia at the head of a Canadian fjord since 1972 and I am the last of my original family left in the United States. The United States has been good to me and I have had a successful career as an archaeologist in the National Park Service. Yet there is something in my core that is Norwegian and gets nurtured by Sons of Norway. Although when I was eight I asked to stop speaking Norwegian it was in that same year I saw a picture in the Golden Book of Archaeology that forever shaped my life. The illustration was of an archaeologist at a site conjuring up a vision of the life of the ancient Vikings. It is perhaps no accident that it was at that very moment I decided to become an archaeologist. And as it turned out, in 1967 I was able to participate in the excavation of the Pre-Viking site of Ullandhaug on a hill high above Stavanger and fulfill an eight-year-old's dream and also renew my ties to Norway.



Fraternally yours, Terje "Ted" Birkedal

Viking Hall News

John and Ed reported that the late fee for the fire department charge that had been sent to Dry Dock, was rescinded, as VH had not previously received the statement from DD.

Rental contract discussion: voted to make a few housekeeping detail changes for clarification.

Rental Chart: With February and March's Board evaluation of the rental chart in effect since January, 2013, a few changes were made. It was voted that all rentals would be rented at the rate on the Chart. If there is something that the chart does not cover, then it is to be referred to the Board.

Question on a possible new rental: an attendee at a recent rental wants to rent at a reduced rate. The vote was that the rate on the Rental Chart would apply.

Security System: due to several entering without shutting off the system soon enough, there was the potential of a substantial charge if this continued. Ed and John are working with Guardian, our server, to help eliminate further calls.

Two estimates were received for the carpet cleaning. Then Stanley Steemer did the job.

Ron suggested we purchase two music stands. After voting, Ron volunteered to get them.

Thanks to Mickey and Ron for closings, to Ed and John and all others for participating in various ways.

Sandra S Hanson, Viking Hall President



Sons of Norway Annual Fish Dinner!

Saturday, April 19th

5:30 to 7:30 pm

Bernt Balchen Lodge

Appetizers at 5:30 pm

Dinner at 6:00 pm

Appetizers & Dinner Menu coming soon!

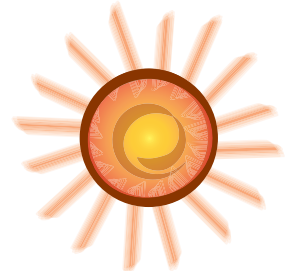


Call Viking Hall @ 349-1613 for Reservations

To help organizers with planning and to ensure your seat –

please make your reservation now!

Sunshine Report



Greetings are sent to the following members celebrating a birthday in APRIL who are at least 75 years young.

Prudence J. Brown
Loretta Hodson
Donna M. Luiten
Haakon Sande
Aud B. Severson
Robert G. Strother
Leif Strand
John Alfsen

“Happy Birthday!”

“Gratulerer med dagen!”

If you know someone who needs a little sunshine, please call Cindy McDowell 696-0725 (cell - 862-1143)

Or, email at ccmcd38@hotmail.com



2014 SKI FOR LIGHT INTERNATIONAL

The 2014 Ski for Light International event held in Anchorage, Alaska, February 23 through March 2 was a great success. The weather and skiing were outstanding despite warm weather on Thursday that led to the cancellation of Friday's Race/Rally. Participants loved watching the Iditarod start (Ski for Light bid on and won an Iditarider slot), running with the reindeer (several Ski for Lighters participated) and taking part in the many downtown activities. Many Ski for Light guides and participants also took part in the Tour of Anchorage ski race on Sunday, March 2.

Several Bernt Balchen lodge members were involved leading up to and during the event week. Heather Hall, Pete Mjos and Linda Yarborough served as guides and Charlie Rogge was one of the visually impaired participants. Glenn and Susan Soby, John and Cynthia Olnes, Wayne Johnson, Karen Ruud, Pete Mjos and Chris Tomsen helped with airport arrivals, ski rentals, transporting items from Viking Hall to the Hilton Hotel, and assisted during lunch at Kincaid Park. Susan and Glenn Soby, Sandra Hanson and Marit Kristiansen were also on hand to help Wayne Johnson serve Lapskaus stew during lunch on Friday. John and Cynthia Olnes were the local liaisons for the event and helped organize the local support and volunteers. Pete Mjos, Karen Ruud and John Olnes also helped transport Tour of Anchorage skiers between the hotel and the race start and finish areas. Other local support was provided by Challenge Alaska's energetic crew who helped with airport arrivals, ski rentals, and lunch setup and cleanup at Kincaid chalet

The Ski for Light International event also received generous support from REI, Princess Cruises and Statoil. Local television station KTUU Channel 2 filmed a very nice three minute segment about Ski for Light at Kincaid Park that aired on March 3. We were able to pull the story up on-line and played it at the Thursday, March 13 lodge business meeting.

Sons of Norway International President, Marit Kristiansen was an Honorary Director of Ski for Light



Newly elected Ski for Light President, Scott McCall, and guide John Soucheray enjoy a moment with Big Wild "Seymour" out on the trails at Kincaid Park.

and participated in the annual business meeting along with Eivind Heiberg, Sons of Norway International CEO. Marit also participated in Friday evening's "Norway Night" and delighted the crowd with her accordion playing.

Ski for Light president, Marion Elmquist, 2014 event chair, Nancy McKinney, and the 260 attendees were unanimous in voicing their appreciation of the support provided by Bernt Balchen Lodge. Our lodge and the hard working volunteers were honored at the closing night banquet with a standing ovation. In addition, Bernt Balchen Lodge 2-046 and Petersburg's Fedrelandet 2-023 were recognized in the Ski for Light 2013 Annual Report as the two top contributing Son of Norway lodges (\$500 or above). Well done Alaska!

The 40th annual Ski for Light International week will be held in Granby, Colorado from Sunday, January 25 through Sunday, February 1, 2015. Participants will stay at [The Inn at Silver Creek](#), and ski at nearby [Snow Mountain Ranch](#). Complete event information and easy-to-complete online application forms will be available starting in July at the Ski for Light website sfl.org.

Iditarod for Norwegians!

2013 Iditarod Rookie of the Year, *Joar Leifseth Ulsom*, is the fastest rookie to have ever run the Iditarod. Joar, 27, was born and raised in Mo i Rana,



Norway, 50 miles south of the Arctic Circle. He and all but one of his dogs came to Alaska from Norway in 2011 to be part of Racing Beringia at RacingBeringia.com – a free online education program used by millions of students in K-12 classrooms around the world. Fueled by the adventure of the sled dogs, students learn natural and social science as they explore the

region from Alaska to Chukotka, Russia, known as Beringia. Joar went live with the program in 2012 from the Yukon Quest where he placed sixth, and then went to Russia for what is considered the toughest race in Eurasia: The Nasdezhda Hope Race. Joar became the first non-native champion of that race in 20 years, with the fastest time ever. He and his team also claimed victory in the 2012 Chukotka Sprint Championship. With this second Iditarod, the run for Racing Beringia continues in 2014. Joar now works full-time with his very small kennel of dogs. Back in Norway, he worked as a cowboy while he ran the great races of Scandinavia: Finnmarksløpet, Femundløpet and the Amundsen Race. He is a member of Rana Trekkt-og Brukshundklubb. He lists his hobbies as hunting, fishing, camping and “the North.”



***Joar Leifseth Ulsom
4th Place***



Robert Sørlie, 56, was born and raised in Norway. He began mushing in 1970 and became interested in the Iditarod after “winning all the long distance races in Europe. I wanted more challenge.” He has since won the Iditarod twice and is back in 2014 after a six year absence. Robert is married to Elin and they are the parents of two adult children, Håkon and Magnus. Robert says he enjoys nature and camping.

***Robert Sørlie
21st Place
&
2 time
Iditarod Champion***



Hurrah, Hurrah, Hurrah!

Ralph Johannessen, 56, was born and raised in Bergen, Norway. Ralph started mushing in 1973 after having grown up in a household with active hunting dogs. He has won all the long distance races in Norway, and is the reigning Norwegian



long distance champion. His racing kennel is based at Dagali, close to the Hardangervidda national park, where he enjoys an active outdoor life at all seasons. He is a member of Hallingen Hundekoyrarlag.

Ralph became interested in racing the Iditarod after his good friend Robert Sørliie won his first champion title in 2003. Having raced at top level in Norway for numerous years, Ralph is now ready for a new challenge and will be bringing his own dog team from Norway to the Iditarod.

Ralph is the father of two adult children, Marte and Sondre.



Ralph Johannessen
22nd Place



Tommy Jordbrudal
44th Place

Tommy Jordbrudal, 44, was born and raised in Kragero, Norway. He first began mushing in Juneau in 1990 and immediately began dreaming about the Iditarod. He and his family have lived in the northern most society in the world (78 N), Longyearbyen, Norway, since 2007. Before moving to Longyearbyen, they did long distance racing. He has run the major distance races in Norway multiple times. But there were no opportunities so far North. They live two days by boat from mainland Norway. They have enjoyed the Arctic wilderness and starting long dog sledge expeditions from their doorstep. He also guides dog sledge trips from day trips to longer expeditions over weeks to such places as the North Pole. Their dream came true this winter when Janne got the opportunity to stay almost a year in Fairbanks because of her job as a visiting researcher at the University of Fairbanks. In the fall they will be bringing the family and eight dogs to Alaska, with the plan of buying eight to ten more dogs when they get here so he can run the 2014 Iditarod. Tommy and Janne are the parents of Gaute, 4, and Tril, 2. He says he enjoys outdoor life and hunting.



All photos courtesy of Janet Clemens.

Thank you, Janet!

Bernt Balchen Lodge Scholarships

The 2014 Scholarship applications for both the Higher Education Scholarship and the Heritage Scholarship are available at the Sons of Norway Bernt Balchen Lodge (Viking Hall, 8141 Briarwood St., Anchorage, 9 am - 1 pm, Tuesday - Friday) or by email at threegs@alaska.com.

The Higher Education Scholarship is for persons entering a school of learning beyond high school level.

The Heritage Scholarship is for persons desiring to learn the language and heritage subjects offered in these programs.

Application deadlines are once again April 15. Scholarship recipients will be chosen by April 30th and announced at the 17th of May Celebration. If you have questions concerning application requirements and procedures, please contact Beverly Griffin, Chair of the Scholarship Committee, at 349-1176 or by email at threegs@alaska.com.

Please mail applications to:

Sons of Norway
Attn: Scholarship Committee
8141 Briarwood St.
Anchorage, AK 99518

OR

Send in your applications via email to: threegs@alaska.com
Sons of Norway International & District 2 Scholarships

Several scholarships are offered by the Sons of Norway Foundation and District 2. Go to www.sofn.com and www.sonsofnorway2.com to get a full description for each scholarship and application details.

April Book Review



Fra Biblioteket:

This month we feature another recent donation to our library, a five volume set of Gerhard Naeseth's *Norwegian Immigrants to the United States: A Biographical Directory*. These five volumes feature genealogic information from the years 1825 -1850. This set of significant genealogic record was generously donated by lodge past president Paul Roseland and joins our collection of genealogic reference books.

Naeseth was born in Valley City, North Dakota in 1913, the son of a Lutheran clergyman. His genealogical work began in the mid-1950s at a family reunion in Minnesota, when he agreed to write up the history of the Naeseth-Fehn family. He self-published this work in 1956. Naeseth founded the Vesterheim Genealogical Center in 1974, working out of a temporary office at the University of Wisconsin library in Madison and slowly acquiring a vast collection of resources. By charging for genealogical research and selling annual memberships, Naeseth built the center into the hub of Norwegian genealogical research

in America. By the early 1990s the center had its own building and a staff of professional researchers.

In the late 1980's and 90's he continued his earlier work and expanded it into two volumes and printed 150 copies. This work had gotten him interested in the 150 people who came to America on the same ship as his family. Eventually his project expanded to include the 18,000 Norwegian immigrants who came to America prior to the 1850 census. Naeseth completed the first of this five volume history of Norwegian immigrants to the United States in 1993. After Naeseth passed away in 1994, subsequent volumes were completed by Blaine Hedberg, Executive Director of the Norwegian-American Genealogical Center & Naeseth Library.

Anyone wanting to find out when and where your Norwegian immigrants came from will find this impressive work a valuable resource. Come by the library and do some family history research of your own!

Tom Falskow, Lodge Librarian

Lordag (Saturday) Night Live!

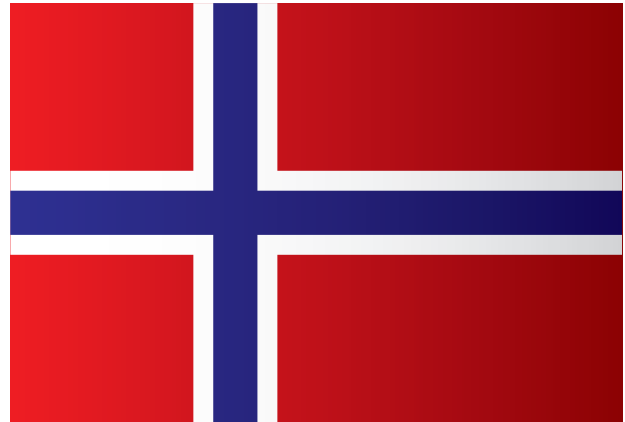
Norwegian Comedy and Fun for Young Adults

Saturday, April 5, 2014

7:00 PM

Sons of Norway Viking Hall

8141 Briarwood Street



Join other young adults at Viking Hall and get a sample of contemporary youth culture in Norway. You will get introduced to both current comedy and music that is in vogue among younger Norwegians.

The program is free and non-members are welcome and encouraged to attend. If you have Norwegian or Scandinavian roots or are just curious this is your chance to learn about what is happening “i Norge” today.

*This event is sponsored by
Sons of Norway's Bernt Balchen Lodge.*



Sons of Norway
8141 Briarwood St.
Anchorage, AK 99518
907-349-1613

Non-Profit Organization
US Postage
PAID
Anchorage, Alaska
PERMIT 505

APRIL EVENTS

1	Tuesday	10:00 am - Noon	Needle Crafts
3	Thursday	7:00 pm	Full Board Meeting
5	Saturday	7:00 pm	Lørdag (Saturday) Night Live
8	Tuesday	7:00 - 9:00 pm	Rosemaling Class
10	Thursday	6:30 pm 7:30 pm	Potluck/Program Business Meeting
15	Tuesday	10:00 am - Noon	Needle Crafts
19	Saturday	5:30 - 7:30 pm	Norwegian Fish Dinner
22	Tuesday	7:00 - 9:00 pm	Rosemaling Class

Food Bank Donations

Our lodge continues to donate canned goods, non-perishable foods and money to the local food bank.

Please bring your food or monetary donation in to Viking hall.

All events take place at Viking Hall, 8141 Briarwood St., unless otherwise noted.

Please send articles or event information

for the next Newsletter by the 20th to: sonancak@gmail.com Attention - **Ruth** Subject Line - **Newsletter**