

VIKING HALL 349-1613
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Inside this issue:

Fra Biblioteket 2
Mother’s Day! 3
Sunshine Report 3
Spring Clean up 3
Make it Monday
Ambassador Aas 4
Else Berit Eikeland
Arctic Issues Recap 4
Fish Dinner! 5
Syttende Mai Events 6
Consul’s Corner
Ambassador Aas! 7

Constitution Day and What Came After

Perhaps because the celebration of Norway’s Constitution Day on the 17th of May is now associated with peaceful children’s parades, ice cream and hot dogs, and the happy waving of Norwegian flags, we tend to pay little attention to what happened immediately following the signing of Norway’s constitution. What happened was war; a short but bloody war between Sweden and Norway, the Swedish-Norwegian War of 1814.



Sweden’s Crown Prince Karl Johan (Sweden’s effective ruler at the time) viewed the signing of the constitution a rebellion against the legitimate authority of Sweden. The Treaty of Kiel, signed by all the “Great Powers” of Europe in January of 1814, had granted control of Norway to Sweden in recompense for the loss of Finland and in recognition of Sweden’s role in the defeat of Napoleon.

Not only had Norway created its own constitution, it had had the further audacity to elect Crown Prince Christian Frederik of Denmark the King of Norway. A frustrated and angry Sweden attacked southeastern Norway on July 26, 1814. At the time Sweden had an experienced and well-trained army of around 45,000 soldiers ready for battle. Norway, in contrast could only hope to muster some 30,000 largely untrained and inexperienced men to its defense. The war began in the last days of July with a naval attack on the Hvaler Islands which lie in the extreme southeastern part of Norway. Here Sweden’s strong Navy overwhelmed Norway’s small fleet of little gunboats. Next the Swedish Army swept into Fredrikstad and it soon took the town along with its imposing fortress.

To the north at a place called Lier, between Eidskog and Kongsvinger, things did not go so well for the Swedes. Here, on August 2, 1814, five battalions of Swedish soldiers came up against the fortified positions of three battalions of Norwegian infantry and a contingent of cavalry. Using their light artillery to good effect the Norwegians knocked back several Swedish frontal attacks and eventually drove the Swedes into a full retreat. Joining the rest of the Swedish army at Matrand near the Swedish border the retreating Swedes stopped to care for the wounded and rest. On August 5th the Norwegians were in fast pursuit under the command of Lt. Colonel Andreas Samuel Krebs, who had been the successful commander at Lier. Again, the Norwegians took control of the situation and attacked under heavy fire. Through a variety of clever maneuvers they managed to encircle the Swedish army and block the escape of many of the Swedish soldiers. In the end the Swedes were able to launch a bayonet charge through the Norwegian lines and make their way back to Sweden, but they left behind 70 dead and 270 prisoners of war.

The next large engagement between the Norwegians and Swedes was at Langnes on August 9th along the River Glomma to the northwest of Askim, a town near the Swedish border. Here, the Norwegians had built a pontoon bridge to allow their troops to safely cross the Glomma River to escape a pursuing Swedish army. Colonel Diderich Hegermann, the Norwegian commander, had about two thousand men and several artillery field artillery units at his disposal and he entrenched these forces on the high ground above the bridgehead. His first move was to launch a surprise attack against the advancing Swedish troops before the dawn broke. The Swedish troops, numbering around 3,000 men, retreated for a time to regroup. They then attacked the Norwegians across open farm fields in the midst of a heavy rain storm that slowed their advance because the ground had become muddy.

President’s Message continues on Page 2

Constitution Day

President's Message continues from Page 1

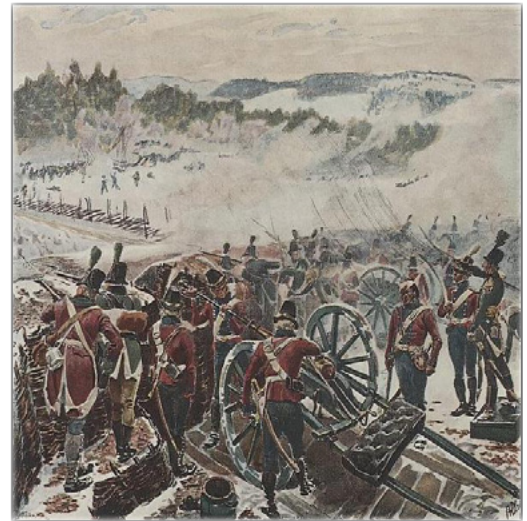
As they approached the Norwegian lines Hegermann's artillery opened up with deadly canister shot and mowed down entire ranks of the slowly advancing columns of Swedish soldiers. Again, the Swedes retreated to consider their next move.

For the final attack the Swedish army assumed a more open skirmish-style formation and temporarily won over the Norwegian artillery positions. Hegermann then called for a fierce counterattack which drove the Swedes out of the Norwegian lines. In the end the Norwegian casualties were remarkably light but the Swedish had lost around a 100 men in the repeated attacks. The Swedes then retreated to the south after having lost the initiative against the Norwegians. This was the last major conflict of the Swedish-Norwegian War of 1814.

The Norwegian victories at Lier, Matrand, and Langnes proved to be of great importance to Norway's negotiating position with the Swedish government. Sweden realized the conquest of Norway would not be easy and would require the expenditure of a large amount of both men and money. Despite its striking victories, Norway in turn recognized that it could not long sustain a fight against the larger, better-supplied and trained Swedish army. By August 9th Norway had begun to run out of the necessary ammunition and other resources necessary to pursue the war. Eager for an end to the hostilities, both Sweden and Norway sat down on August 10th to begin talks to end their mutual conflict. By August 14th an agreement, named the Convention of Moss, was signed by both parties. Under the terms of the agreement King Christian Frederick of Norway would step down as the ruler of Norway and the Norwegian people would accept the King of Sweden as their new monarch. However, Norway would remain nominally independent within a personal union with Sweden under the Swedish King. And most importantly, Sweden accepted Norway's right to its own independent constitution, the one that been signed on May 17th, 1814 at Eidsvoll and had originally provoked Sweden to war. The Swedish-Norwegian War of 1814 put an end to Swedish aggression and also secured Norway's right to put its newly written constitution to use as the guiding law of the land. The point is that this right was not granted, but won by thousands of brave Norwegian soldiers who stepped up to the challenge.

Please come and celebrate Norway's hard-won constitution at our May 15th potluck and program at Viking Hall and at our 17th of May Parade on the Anchorage Park Strip.

*Fraternally yours,
Terje "Ted" Birkedal, President
Sons of Norway Bernt Balchen Lodge*



Fra Biblioteket

The arctic is Norway's number one foreign policy issue and we are receiving a fair amount of attention in Alaska since we are one state that makes the USA part of the arctic debate. The Norwegian Foreign Ministry has been sending various representatives to Alaska for talks on the arctic as you may have read in the Consul's Corner section of the newsletter. Two additions to our library from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs might be of interest to those interested in the arctic, both past and present. For the history buff out there, check out "Cold Recall – Roald Amundsen's Reflections from the Northwest Passage". This book combines the complete text of lectures that Amundsen gave about his 1903-06 expedition through the Northwest Passage with original hand-colored lantern slides used to illustrate his lectures.



Together they offer a unique insight into how he presented his expeditions to the world audience of his time. There are even a few photos from Alaska as he ended his expedition in Nome on August 31, 1906. Jumping forward to the present day, the ministry has issued a new publication, "Norway's Arctic Policy" highlighting the many dimensions of transformation that the arctic is undergoing. It is a fascinating read on how the world must come to terms with creating balance between development, resource management, climate change, international cooperation and emergency preparedness along with honoring the traditions of the indigenous populations that have inhabited this part of our world for over one thousand years. Check out these new reads on offer from our "biblioteket"!

Tom Falskow, Lodge Librarian

Mother's Day Brunch

at Viking Hall

Sunday, May 8th 10 am to 2 pm

The menu includes:

Walter's sourdough pancakes, Nuna's apple cinnamon syrup, ham, reindeer sausage, eggs & mixed fruit.

Juice, coffee, tea & champagne for the adults.

BRUNCH PRICES:

Adults \$12

Ages 12-16 \$8

Ages 5-11 \$5

Children under
5 years are FREE

Please call 349-1613 for Event Information

SUNSHINE REPORT MAY

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

Margaret Edward

Darrell E. Korman

Reidun Hansen

Marianne Storms

Gordon Homme

Gerald Swanson

If you know someone who needs a little sunshine,
call or email Cindy McDowell:

696-0725 (cell - 862-1143)

Email: ccmcd38@hotmail.com

*"Happy
Birthday!"*

*"Gratulerer
med dagen!"*

Spring Clean Up

at Viking Hall

Please join us on Saturday,
May 14th between 10 am and
12 pm with outdoor clean-
up around the hall. Bring
shovels, rakes and gloves
to help spruce up our
lodge in preparation
for the Syttende
Mai Celebration
the following day.
Contact John Olnes
at 562-2794 if you
have questions.



The Anchorage Chamber of Commerce presents in partnership with the Alaska World Affairs Council

Make it Monday Forum: Falling Oil Prices: What is Norway Doing and Recommendations for Alaskans and other Arctic Countries

Monday, May 16th 2016
noon-1pm | Dena'ina Center



Ambassador Kåre R. Aas
Ambassador, Norwegian Embassy
in Washington D.C.,
Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs



moderated by **Lise Falskow**
President & CEO
Alaska World Affairs Council
Royal Norwegian Honorary Consul, Alaska

For more information & registration, visit:
<http://anchoragechamber.chambermaster.com/events/calendar/>

A Visit from Else Berit Eikeland

*Senior Arctic Official and Ambassador to the Arctic
from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs*

On March 14th, Lodge members had the opportunity to meet with Else Berit Eikeland, the Senior Arctic Official and Ambassador to the Arctic from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Ms Eikeland spoke at a small breakfast gathering at the Westmark Anchorage Hotel on the topic of "Polar Exploration and Policy" and was very enthusiastic about the many historical ties between Norway and Alaska.



Later that day, Ms Eikeland spoke at the "Make it Monday" panel forum at the Dena'ina Center on the topic of "International Collaboration in the Arctic: Celebrating 20 years of the Arctic Council". The panel, which was jointly sponsored by the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce and the Alaska World Affairs Council, also included Dr. Lassi Heininen, Professor of Arctic Politics at University of Lapland, Finland, and Anchorage Mayor Ethan Berkowitz. The panelists spoke about ongoing Arctic relations and cooperation, as well as exploring policy and developmental options in the future.



FISH DINNER!



It takes a dedicated group to put on a successful Fish Dinner (and Silent Auction). The food was delicious and the music amazing. We really do have a wonderful group of people here at Bernt Balchen Lodge!



All photos courtesy of Christie Ericson. Thanks Christie!

NORWEGIAN CONSTITUTION DAY CELEBRATIONS

Syttende Mai Potluck Celebration at Viking Hall, Sunday, May 15th

Viking Hall 5:00 PM, Cost: \$5.00 per person



Come to our 17th of May Potluck Celebration. Bring a side dish, dessert, or salad.

Sons of Norway will supply a meat dish.

Our special guest will be Ambassador Kåre Aas, Norway's Ambassador to the United States.

Also, this year's Scholarship Award recipients will be announced at the potluck.

If you would like to help or have any questions please contact Ted Birkedal at 351-6095.

Syttende Mai Parade, Tuesday, May 17th

West End of the Anchorage Park Strip 6:00 PM

Join us in celebration of Norway's Constitution Day for a traditional parade on May 17.

A short commemorative program featuring Ambassador Kåre Aas, Norwegian Ambassador to the United States, will precede the parade. Hotdogs and ice cream will be served following the parade.

We encourage you to wear your bunads or Norwegian sweaters and red and blue ribbons as we carry Norwegian flags and the Bernt Balchen Lodge banner around the block led by talented musicians.

We will have flags on hand – or you may bring your own.

We will meet downtown near the Delaney Park Rose Garden in the open space west of "N" Street between 9th and 10th Avenues.

Note: This is a new location as the memorial block is no longer available for group rental.

This event takes place rain or shine. If you would like to help or have questions contact John Olnes at 562-2794.





Consul's Corner

Information and Opportunities for Norwegian Alaskans



Other Opportunities to Meet and Listen to Ambassador Kåre Aas

I am so thrilled that Ambassador Kåre Aas has chosen Alaska as the place he would like to be for the 17th of May. He will be in Anchorage for 3 days and will then head to Petersburg, Alaska, for their celebrations. In addition to the Syttende Mai Potluck on the 15th, and the Parade on the 17th, there are two more opportunities in Anchorage for everyone to meet and hear Ambassador Kåre Aas.

Put all four on your calendar to experience a memorable, informative, and cultural Syttende Mai Week with Norway's Ambassador to the United States.



1. Lunch Presentation at the Dena'ina Convention Center

May 16th

Ambassador Kåre Aas will be speaking at a "Make It Monday" Lunch co-sponsored by the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce and the Alaska World Affairs Council. The title of his talk is "Falling Oil Prices: What is Norway Doing, Recommendations for Alaska and other Arctic Countries." Program will be moderated by Lise Falskow and will be held at the Dena'ina Convention Center between 11:30 AM and 1:00 PM. The price of the lunch is \$35.00 for those who sign up in advance on the Chamber of Commerce website.

2. Coffee/Breakfast with the Ambassador

May 17th



When I lived in Norway, I learned that friends and family gathered for breakfast on the 17th of May. Come experience this tradition in Anchorage! Back by popular demand, we are having breakfast with another Norwegian Diplomat, this time Ambassador Aas. Tuesday, May 17th at the Captain Cook Hotel. We will be up on the top floor in Club Room #2 where there is a fabulous view. Cost is \$10 and coffee and muffins will be available. Ambassador Aas will give a short talk and is very excited about talking with Sons of Norway Members. The breakfast is scheduled for 9:00 AM to 10:30 AM. RSVP is required by May 12th to 907norway@gmail.com.

If you have any questions about either of these events, please contact me at: 907norway@gmail.com.

Lise Falskow

I am honored to have been asked to serve as the Norwegian Honorary Consul in Alaska. When information and opportunities come across my desk, I will let Norwegians in our community know about them in a regular Consul's Corner section of the Flyer.



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

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EVENTS

MAY

- | | | |
|----|----------|---|
| 1 | Sunday | 3:00 pm
Spring Breakup Musical Fun <i>by</i> Lodge Talent |
| 3 | Tuesday | 10:00 am - Noon
Needle Crafts and Rosemaling Class |
| 8 | Sunday | 10:00 am - 2:00 pm
Mother's Day Brunch |
| 12 | Thursday | 7:00 pm
Board/Membership Meeting |
| 15 | Sunday | 5:00 pm
Syttende Mai Celebration |
| 17 | Tuesday | 10:00 am - Noon
Needle Crafts and Rosemaling Class
6:00 pm
Syttende Mai Parade! |



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 May 20th to: sonancak@gmail.com Attention - **Ruth** Subject Line - **The Flyer**