



2021 Officers

President Susan Morton
(715)341-7248
skaymorton@hotmail.com

Vice Pres. Lois Hagen
(715)344-7460
hagenozzl@gmail.com

Treasurer Judy Pesanka
(715)344-0719
msbrewer2@charter.net

Financial Secretary
Arno Morton
(715)341-7248
mrmorocks@yahoo.com

Secretary Tom Johnson
(715)630-1070
T2johnso@gmail.com

Program Director
Charlotte Hensler
(715)592-4916
chensler@wi-net.com

Newsletter Editor
Carl Rasmussen
(715)341-7494
vennligblad@gmail.com

Newsletter Distributor
Lynn Rasmussen

Webmaster Patricia Serio

Publicity Kathy Clucas

Sunshine Coordinator
Bea Berg

Lodge Musician
Louise Lang

Lodge Librarian
Jane Gjevne

Lodge Historian
Lois Hagen

Language Specialist
Jan Flatoff

Cultural Skills Coord.
Karen Trzebiatowski

Trustee (2021-2023)
Ron Hensler.

Trustee (2020-2022)
Tom Johnson

Trustee (2019-2021)
Milo Harpsted

Vennligfolk Lodge
meets the second
Sunday evening, 5:00 pm
September thru May
at St. Paul's
United Methodist Church
600 Wilshire Blvd Stevens
Point, WI

Vennligblad

Friendly pages for the 'friendly people' of Vennligfolk and their friends
Sons of Norway Lodge #5-627 for Central Wisconsin
Stevens Point, Whiting, and Plover

Volume 28 Issue 1

JANUAR OG FEBRUAR 2021

Fra presidenten:



Happy New Year to all our **Vennligfolk** members! Let me start with some great news - - In spite of a year where we hardly met, our membership has

remained stable. That speaks volumes. Now here's some other news - - At our last Officers' Meeting in December, we made the difficult decision to cancel all meetings and activities until further notice. With the surge in Covid cases, it just isn't safe to meet right now. As soon as it is safe, Vennligfolk Lodge will resume our lodge meetings and activities, and I can hardly wait!

Have you read the last issue of the *Viking Magazine*? If you did, you would have seen Karen Trzebiatowski's picture on page 32. Karen is wearing the handmade Hardanger mask that won her a prize at our Midsommer gathering last summer.

In that same *Viking* issue, I was especially interested in the article about the American Birkebeiner that takes place in Hayward, Wisconsin every February. This is our country's largest cross-country ski race. The "Birkie" is meant to mimic a journey way back in Norwegian history where two warriors skied through mountains to bring the little son of King Haakon III to Trondheim. What really caught my eye was the picture of the famous painting, "Birkebeinerne" on page 20. The little Prince Haakon in the painting is my relative! A while ago I mentioned that my older brother has been working on our genealogy and found out we are related to King Haakon IV. I am told that my family's bloodline is through the little prince's

mother who was not royal. She was the mistress of Prince Haakon's father, King Haakon III. Isn't genealogy interesting?

Vennligfolk election results are in, and there is no disputing the

results. The slate of **Vennligfolk** Nominations was unanimously voted in. *Tusen takk* to all the officers who willingly agreed to help lead this group for another year. My first term as your "Presidenten" began in January of 2015. I want to quote what I penned in my first Presidenten letter from that date:

"Recently I read the following: 'Whatever we are called to do, we cannot do it by ourselves. Other people are strategic to our development. This is exactly how I feel as "Presidenten." It is because of you - - our loyal, hard-working, patient members that I feel humbled and very honored to be president of Vennligfolk Lodge. You all are strategic in making our lodge, our programs, and our activities successful.'

It is six years later, and I wouldn't change a word from the above paragraph. Thank you for all that you do to make our lodge successful. It truly has been an honor to serve as your president for the past six years, and I am looking forward to my seventh year leading this wonderful group who I now consider my friends.

*Vennlig hilsen,
Susan Morton*



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Gratulerer med dagen

Congratulations on the day!

Januar

- Lynn Rasmussen - 7
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| January | | | | | | |
|---------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
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Februar

Gene Numsen – 19

| February | | | | | | |
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| 28 | | | | | | |

Godt Nytt År!

On January 16, Sons of Norway celebrates its 126th anniversary. The organization was started in 1895 by a group of Norwegian immigrants living in Minneapolis, MN.

What's Happening at Vennligfolk???



Lodge officers have decided to suspend all future lodge activities until it is safe to meet again. The Officers will meet on **February 11** at St Pauls UMC to review progress on virus conditions and whether to move forward with holding meetings again in the spring. Watch for details for possible meetings in the March-April Vennligblad newsletter.



The **60th Annual Iola Winter Carnival** previously set for Feb. 5-7, 2021, **has been cancelled**. This includes all of the events related to it: Norwegian Lutefisk Supper, Iola-Scandinavia Chamber of Commerce Craft Show, ice-sculpting contest, skijouring, snowshoe race, Snow Bully Fat Bike Race, kid's ice fishing contest on Lake Iola, Snow Princess/Queen event, and the Winter Carnival raffle.



Cultural Fest May 2021 - Cancelled! Food, Fun & Music from Around the World will return in 2022 Look forward to a grand celebration after missing two years without gathering because of the Covid virus.

Are you missing the great informative programs Vennligfolk is known for? Then try out the Speakers Bureau at the Sons of Norway District #5 website (www.sonsofnorway5.com) Once there, go to the "Programs" tab and select "Speakers' Bureau." At the Speakers' Bureau you will find a list of over 30 presentations. Some are only 12 minutes; some are over an hour. These programs come complete with slides and narration. If you find a program you like, tell your fellow Lodge members. Your Vennligblad Editor particularly liked the July 21 presentation about "The Erie Canal: Immigrant Gateway to the West." Give it a try!

Old Norse "Godhouse" Unearthed



In the village of Ose, Norway about 125 miles southwest of Oslo, archaeologists from the University Museum of Bergen recently uncovered the remains of an eighth-century "godhouse." In its day, the structure was dedicated to the worship of the old Norse gods and housed ceremonies such as midsummer or midwinter solstice. This is a special discovery as it is the

first temple of its kind identified in Norway according to Smithsonian Magazine. Through digital reconstruction, researchers were able to determine that it resembles similar temples found in southern Sweden and Denmark.

In recent excavations, archaeologists have unearthed animal bones and cooking pits; their theory is that the worshippers prepared the food in offering to Thor, Odin, and other Norse gods. These religious displays also doubled as feasts where "you would have a good mood, a lot of eating and a lot of drinking," archaeologist Søren Diinhoff explains.

Researchers are still unclear as to what caused the demise of the godhouse, but they hope to uncover more clues as they continue their investigations.

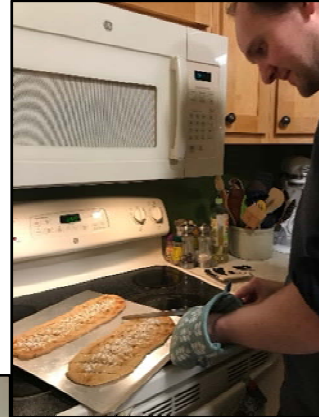
*godhouse digital reconstruction photo by University Museum of Bergen

Jul 2020 Photos

Unable to gather as a Lodge, we still prepared and celebrated our traditions as one



Susan Morton preps Julekaka



Patti Rous' son-in-law Andars makes Brune Pinner a.k.a. Brown Sticks



Kringlers coming! Yum



Arno enjoys!



Elin (L) & Benta (R) St Lucia



Norwegian star at Rous'



Kress & Cathy Williamson w-grand daughters Benta & Elin enjoying Icelandic Kleinurs



Karen & Jerry T's Nisse Tree



Lynn R. on her way to baking 1300 peppernuts!



Carl R "roll out the lefse"



God Jul at Trzebiatowski's



Char & Ron Hensler turn lefse with helpers grand-daughters Willemina (L) and Isla (R)



Kransekake (Almond Wreath Cake)

From *The Norwegian Kitchen*

Cake:

- 2 1/2 cups (6 dl) finely ground blanched almonds
- 2 1/2 cups (6 dl) finely ground unblanched almonds
- 4 1/3 cups (10 dl) sifted confectioner's sugar (sift first, then measure)
- 3 egg whites

Icing:

- scant 1 cup (2 dl) sifted confectioner's sugar
- 1 egg



Wreath cake can be temperamental. Even if we make it in "exactly the same way" each time we bake it, the results may vary from absolute perfection to complete failure.

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F (200 degrees C). Combine almonds and confectioner's sugar in a large saucepan. Add the unbeaten egg white and mix to a firm dough. Place the pan over low heat and knead until the dough is so hot that it is almost impossible to handle. Grease the ring pans for a 16-18 ring cake. Spoon the dough into a cookie press or pastry tube with a wide round tip. Press the dough into the rings, pressing the ends together to look as seamless as possible. Bake 12-15 minutes, until dry and firm outside, but still slightly soft inside. Cool slightly, then remove from the pans and cool completely. For the icing, sift the confectioner's sugar and combine with egg white to make a thick icing. Make a small cone of paper and cut off the tip. Pipe on garlands of icing and stack. Decorate with flags, bonbons or candy.

Another Ice Patch Discovery Yields Extraordinary Viking Era Hunting Artifacts

Earlier this year details were released about a forgotten Norwegian mountain pass yielding a treasure trove of artifacts as ice receded (see *Vennligblad* Sept-Oct). Now, an ice patch just 15 miles away has given up a different cache just as exciting. This site called Langfonne northeast of Bergen was used exclusively for reindeer hunting for thousands of years.

Recovered artifacts range from 6000 years ago to the most recent finds from around 1300 AD. The 5000-year period included artifacts from the Stone Age, Bronze Age, and Viking age (Iron Age). Considering the large number of reindeer antlers and bones found, the researchers say the area had been a very productive hunting spot. Eight hunting blinds made of stone were also revealed.

Chief among the finds were a number of arrowheads made from an array of materials including bone, mussel shell, slate, and iron. 68 arrow shafts were also discovered. Some had arrowheads still attached including the twine and tar used to hold the arrow together! The shafts were made of various woods of birch, pine, viburnum, cherry, and rowan wood.



Other articles recovered included a hide boot, a pine ski, and "scare" sticks. These sticks were used to move the reindeer into the kill zone. Some sticks had cloth attached to enhance the herding.

During the scientific fieldwork, free-range domesticated reindeer were regular visitors to the ice on hot July and August days. In doing so, these domestic reindeer were behaving much like their wild forebears retreating to the higher elevation ice to cool off and avoid biting black flies.

From the 1800's to the 1990's, the Langfonne ice patch lost 90 percent of what was there for the previous 500 years. In the last 20 years that followed the remaining ice shrunk an additional two-thirds; a scary testament to the effects of climate change. The research was published in the scientific journal *Holocene* in late November and available on-line for reading.

Photo credit: Secrets of the Ice / Glacier Archaeology Program, Innlandet County Council



Nordic Julemarket 2020 - Now Through January 31, 2021 Online

Through the end of January join Nordic Julemarket for their first ever Virtual Market! In response to the global pandemic, the 5th Annual Nordic Julemarket is 100% online. Search for: nordicjulemarket.com

Meet Carolyn & Rich Sommers

Between us we are 5/8 Norwegian, with a small percent of Iberian and Japanese sprinkled in.

For 22 years we went to Fargo for Christmas. The meal was Rømmegrøt, sot suppe, lefsa, krumkake, rosettes, spritz sandbakkels, meatballs, smoked and pickled herring, and lutefisk. Always lutefisk along with a few lutefisk jokes. You know, you cook it on a board, and then....

How cold does it get in Fargo, one year -50 degrees actual, and -100 degrees wind chill. You have not seen cold until you have been to North Dakota at Christmas. Twenty-eight years ago, Rich was at Science City in the middle of Siberia. A few of us asked a translator of scientific papers, how cold does it get in Siberia in the winter? The answer was minus 50 degrees Celsius. After some clumsy calculations, he said, "Do you know Jack London, The Call of the Wild, you spit, and it freezes before it hits the ground?" OK, we understood that!

Carolyn is third generation full Norwegian. She was born and grew to maturity in Fargo. She graduated from Moorhead State College across the Red River of the North. From there she went to a first-grade teaching position in Racine, Wis. She was getting closer.

Rich is 25% Norwegian and the first four years he lived in a very small town in northern Illinois near the ancestral farm of the 1850 immigrants from Dale Valley near the Sognefjord, Norway. We had one day to visit the farms in Dale Norway about four years ago with a man with local ties as our guide. How lucky is that? We have had a connection with Carolyn's cousins on Bømlo on the North Sea for about 23 years. We have had a connection with generations past to the present. That has been great.

The farm did have two outhouses and a pump. Does anyone aspire to a simple life?

Rich moved to a small dairy farm near Marshfield, Wi. That means, in High School, you had to get up and milk and feed the cows and get on the school bus at 7:00 am. When you got home at 4:00 pm, you had to do milk all over again. Rich got his formal elementary education in a one room schoolhouse with eight grades and one teacher. One year, there were 42 students!



Rich graduated from Marshfield High School and got a Science Teaching degree from Stevens Point Teachers College. That led to a 31-year teaching career in Biology at PJ Jacobs High School and SPASH. Along the way there have been a lot of careers, businesses, and opportunities to succeed or learn by the experience. One of those was partial or full ownership of three restaurants in Estes Park, Colorado, and Stevens Point. Well, Rich does know how to crack four eggs at once!

Carolyn and Rich met on the work crew at a camp in the upper Michigan peninsula on Lake Huron. After two years of divergent experiences, we reconnected when Carolyn moved to Racine. Two years later, we were married in Fargo. Carolyn moved to Stevens Point and taught at Rosholt for four years. Our son and daughter were born, and she has stayed at home and worked with our rental business since. That has been incredible, "Married with Business." After nearly 50 years, I have my same wife and same honeymoon car, and I better get that in the right order! Carolyn has stayed close to her Norwegian heritage and makes great coffee.

Our daughter has a degree in ~~French~~ Horn. When she studied in England, she found out they did not have French horns. They have Horns! Nor do they have French Fries. The Brits remember William the Conqueror in 1066. She has taught French Horn and piano in Manhattan, Athens, Georgia, South Bend and Lafayette, Indiana, and several northwest suburbs of Chicago. We always had interesting places to visit.

* * *

Now, the present. We have a son and daughter in Arlington Heights, IL just four houses from each other. We have five grandchildren, which until eleven months ago we would see a lot. Their families have had extremely different experiences in the past eleven months.

Our son-in-law is a professor and researcher at a Chicago area University. He has hardly left his office at home since March since everything is online. In May he was diagnosed with a mild and rare form of Covid-19. All he did in the weeks prior was pick up two birthday cakes. He recovered.

Continued on next page

Meet the Sommer's Continued from pg. 5

Our son has been a professional musician for 25 years. Near the end of February, he was in Germany playing for a conference. The speaker tested positive for Covid-19 and 12,000 people were sent home. He stayed around for a few days not thinking he was exposed.

But, that was “the day the music died” for him. Weddings, festivals, corporate and international engagements? They all disappeared. He has been trying to restart his career. He did a wedding, got Covid-19 and three members of his family at home got it too. They are doing good now. Recently he played bass for a virtual Christmas concert. There were 150 seniors singing into their cell phones individually. It sounded incredibly well.

Carolyn has kept contact with a cousin in Norway during the Covid-19 time. The Norwegians did what they were asked and have been probably the best country in the world to face the challenge. That is not the only thing Norway is best at.

From the Editor: I hoped you enjoyed these Getting to Know articles over the past year. We’ve had good participation from both new and long-term members and we hope to continue to carry this series. Lodge members can submit short introduction articles on their own or, kindly respond when asked.

Tusen Takk, Carl R. Editor

Remembering George Alfsen

Private family graveside services were held October 29 for long time Vennligfolk and Golden SON member George W. Alfsen who died October 21, 2020 in Stevens Point. Interment was at Lakeside Cemetery, Waupaca. George, age 86, was born on the family farm in Mt. Morris, Waushara County, son of the late Walter and Tedie (Stanford) Alfsen.



George was a 1952 graduate of Wild Rose High School, received his Bachelors degree in 1962 from UW-Stevens Point and Masters degree in 1967 from UW-Whitewater. As an elementary teacher, George spent 30 years teaching in Wisconsin elementary schools. From 1954-1956, Sargent George Alfsen was stationed with the United States Army in Germany.

George is survived by Lois Schroeder Alfsen, his wife of 60 years and their two sons, Geoffrey (Lisa) Alfsen and Gregg (Diane Shuda) Alfsen and two grandchildren, Chelsea(Wes) Irek and Pfc. Erik Alfsen.

In lieu of flowers, donations to St. Pauls United Methodist Church, 600 Wilshire Blvd. Stevens Point, Wi 54481 or to your local food bank which feeds elementary school children are suggested by the Alfsen family.

Move over Hygge, There's Mys in Town

First Denmark introduced us to hygge and their national obsession with all things cozy. Just like we struggled with how to pronounce hygge (it's HOO-gah), we also struggled with understanding just what this coziness thing was that was all the rage? News articles covered it, books were written, and on-line videos explained it. We learned hygge seems to involve plenty of candles, toasty fires, comfort food, and togetherness of friends and family.

But just when it seemed we were getting hygge with hygge, a new cozy from Sweden has arrived called “mys.” While mys and hygge are alike, Swedish mys, (pronounced mees) appears to be concerned with creating a super-cozy setting and an individual experience of coziness.

The New York Times recently presented an article (11/25/2020) attempting to describe the phenomenon and shed light. Danish hygge it seems is much broader than Swedish mys. Mys in turn appears to be a personal

state of warmth, like being “wrapped in a woolen blanket amid lighted candles while sipping a steaming mug of tea or cocoa with a purring cat on your lap.” Stockholm, Sweden appears to be the center of mys with a number of stores devoted to an appropriate mys atmosphere and experience.

Be on the watch for mys as it cozies into America. Definitely, it will not be confused with Finnish kalsarikännit discussed in Vennligblad May-June 2020!

Vennligfolk Cultural Skills

Pursue a Norwegian cooking, literature, knitting, language, or other skill project, document your work and earn a recognition pin! Cultural Skills coordinator Karen Trzebiatowski has all the details. Reach out to Karen at 715-824-7679 or send an email to: Karentrzeb@gmail.com.



The Sons of Norway website (sofn.com) also has information and in some cases, links to helpful YouTube videos.

[a little in English...](#) Thorvald Meyer – Oslo philanthropist – The Opposite of Scrooge

[litt på norsk...](#) Thorvald Meyer – Oslo filantrop – Motsatt av Scrooge

Grünerløkka's Father. Look at him. The hat. The mutton chops. Does he not look like Ebenezer Scrooge? This is Thorvald Meyer, who despite the similarity, is the miser's polar opposite. Although this guy was practically born in the lap of luxury, there is something that separates him from Dickens' and Barks' stinking-rich churls. Philanthropy. Thorvald was the patron of several well-known artists (Bjørnson, Kielland, Munch, Hamsun AND Vigeland), co-financed the National Theater and gave monetary gifts to impoverished actors every Christmas.



Source Oslo Museum; image no. OB.F03331A (Byhistorisk samling), via oslobilder.no.

When he went out the door, he'd fill his pockets with coins. Then, back at home he was empty-handed; everything was distributed to the needy. Thorvald started the first public bath in Oslo as a gift to the city, gave money toward several of the statues we see today, initiated school breakfasts, gave away land for the Pauluskirken [Paulus Church] and Birkelunden [The Birch Grove—a large urban park] which must always remain a park according to Meyer's clause. And outfitted the (Fridtjof Nansen) Fram expedition.

Meyer was a financial institution with seemingly quite social liberal tendencies. He was also a businessman of rank, as when he bought Grünerløkka cheaply and parceled it out with 40 times the profit. As a thank you for the investment, he got the rare honor of having a street named after him while he was alive!

Thrift is Strength. That was his motto. And action was his credo. He died at the age of 90 and just beforehand, he said: "It is no matter that an old man passes away, when I die there will be a party."

Actually, I take it back. He's just like Scrooge. After he met "The Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come!"

Grünerløkka's Far. Se på ham. Hatten. Kinnskjegget. Ser han ikke ut som Ebenezer Scrooge? Dette er Thorvald Meyer, som likheten til tross, er gjerrigkarkens rake motsetning. Skjønt denne karen nærmest ble født i en pengebinge, så er det noe som skiller ham fra Dickens' og Barks' søkkrike skruer. Filantropien. Thorvald var mesén for flere kjente kunstnere (Bjørnson, Kielland, Munch, Hamsun OG Vigeland), delfinansierte Nationaltheateret og gav pengegaver til de fattige skuespillerne hver jul.

Når han gikk ut døra, fylte han lommene med mynter. Vel hjemme igjen var han tomhendt, alt var fordelt til de trengende. Thorvald startet det første offentlige badet i Oslo som en gave til byen, gav penger til flere av statuene vi ser idag, initierte skolefrokost, gav bort jord til Pauluskirken og Birkelunden som alltid må forbli en park i følge Meyers klausul. Og utrustet Fram-ekspedisjonen!

Meyer var en finansieringsinstitusjon med tilsynelatende ganske sosialliberale tendenser. Han var også en forretningsmann av rang, som da han kjøpte Grünerløkka billig og utparsellerte den med 40 gangers fortjeneste. Som takk for investeringen fikk han den sjeldne æren av å få en gate oppkalt etter seg mens han levde!

Nøisomhet er Styrke. Det var hans motto. Og handling var hans credo. Han døde 90 år gammel og like før sa han: Det er ingen Sag at et gammelt Menneske gaar bort, naar jeg dør skal det være Fest.

Egentlig tar jeg det tilbake. Han er akkurat som Scrooge. Etter at han møtte The Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come!

Norsk Sayings:

Har du røyka sokka dine?

Translation: Have you smoked your socks?

Meaning: Are you crazy?

Å snakke rett fra leveren

Translation: To speak directly from the liver.

Meaning: To speak plainly/truthfully without sugar-coating.

Å svelge noen kameler

Translation: To swallow some camels.

Meaning: To give in / to chose to ignore something, often to keep the peace.

Bite i gresset

Translation: Bite the grass.

Meaning: Admit defeat.

From: theintrepidguide.com/funny-norwegian-phrases-and-idioms



Vennligfolk Lodge #5-627
 Carl Rasmussen, Editor
 3136 Dans Ave
 Stevens Point, WI 54481 USA



The mission of Sons of Norway is to promote and preserve the heritage and culture of Norway and to provide quality insurance and financial products to its members.

Vennligblad, the official newsletter of **Sons of Norway's Vennligfolk Lodge (#5-627)**, is published at the beginning of the odd-numbered months of the year. If you have an item of interest to **Vennligfolk** members, please submit it to the Editor by the 15th of the even-numbered months. You may send it to Carl Rasmussen at 3136 Dans Dr., Stevens Point, WI 54481 or by e-mail addressed to: **Vennligblad@gmail.com**

Mange Tusen Takk, Carl Rasmussen, Editor



Support Tubfrim. As you receive mail with unique stamps cut the postage off leaving a ¼ inch boarder of paper. Bring your stamps to the next Vennligfolk meeting.



SON Foundation Scholarship Applications now open!



Do you have a child or grandchild who wants to study abroad in Norway? Know a student heading off to college who could use tuition assistance? The SofN Foundation offers 14 different scholarship opportunities for a variety of students, including international study, adult learners, vocational programs and more. For many recipients, these awards are a life-changing opportunity to explore educational passions in the US, Canada or Norway.

Many opportunities are available to members or their children or grandchildren, and awards range from \$1,000 to a full year's tuition. Applications are due January 15 for international opportunities, and March 1 for domestic. To find more information and to apply, visit sofn.com/foundation/scholarships.



Keep welcoming new members to Sons of Norway in 2021!

YOU are the reason our newest members love being part of Sons of Norway. Even as COVID restricts face-to-face meetings, please reach out to fellow members with calls, notes or special greetings as the year progresses.

Thank you for being a Sons of Norway member!

