



Budstikken



Wergeland Lodge #5/028 P.O. Box 3591, La Crosse, WI 54602-3591

March 2016

Volume 51, Issue 3

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Wergeland Kalender

- ♦ March 3, General meeting at North Presbyterian Church, 6:30
- ♦ March 8, 8:30 am, Board meeting at Perkins on Hwy 16 near the mall
- ♦ March 19, 8:30 New member breakfast at Days Inn
- ♦ March 23, Deadline for Budstikken articles
- ♦ March 30, Budstikken mailed to members.
- ♦ April 7, General meeting at North Presbyterian Church, 6:30

Fra Presidenten



March is here and with it come some warmer days that lead to spring fever. Before winter could come to an end, Wergeland lodge had some business to take care of in the form of our annual inventory and audit. I am happy to say that with the assistance of those listed on page 3, those tasks are complete and our lodge is financially firm. In addition to these items, the board has also been working to develop a more accurate biannual budget which will help us going forward.

One of the things you will be hearing about this year is an effort by the American Fraternal Alliance, which Sons of Norway is a part of, to help maintain the non-profit status of fraternal organizations. Over a century ago the U.S. congress recognized the contributions of fraternal organizations like ours to the economy and the social fabric of the nation. That is a great way of saying it. We are fortunate to live in a land where we certainly belong to the greater whole yet are free to embrace our native cultures as well. Not only our own Norwegian culture but also the other ethnic events and influences that we enjoy here. Along with the native American influence, Oktoberfest and Irish Fest here in La Crosse, small towns both up and down the river also provide us with glimpses into other cultural groups that we enjoy each year. Swiss, Polish, and French traditions, among others, exist just a short drive from here. And since it is March, I'm sure a few of us will become temporarily Irish later this month to celebrate along with the sons and daughters of the Emerald Isle. Enjoy, and I will see you at the next meeting.

Dave

Next meeting: Thursday, March 3, 2015, 6:30 PM

North Presbyterian Church, 1327 N Salem Rd, La Crosse

Program for March

"The Lives of Kings of Norway" directed by Youth Directors Montaya Harter and Haylie McGuire.



The Youth group is proud to present a production of an original play, based on the lives of kings of Norway from the book **Kings of Norway** by **Anders Kvåle Rue**.

The youth will be reenacting the lives of the kings and the significant events that occurred. The youth are excited to share the knowledge of the kings with everyone and hope you enjoy our show.

In addition, Cheryl Wille-Schlessor, Dist 5 Youth Director, will be here to share information about Masse Moro camp and give out information to the members, trying to encourage youth, ages 8-15 to go to Masse Moro SON Camp. She would like former campers to speak up and encourage the youth.





March Birthdays

1 Raymond Mattison
 1 Robert Mickelson
 1 Marilyn Silbaugh
 2 Douglas Johnson
 2 Luther Selbo
 4 Jean Davis
 6 David Christianson
 7 Cathy Ells
 8 Pamela Knudtson
 10 Terry Loper
 10 Tia Mitchell
 10 Debra Roe
 11 Kathi Beane
 11 Muriel Roesler
 11 Annette Sherry
 13 Rylee Drugan
 15 Zachary Melby
 15 Janet Melby
 15 Helen Munson
 16 Marlene McCabe
 16 Elsie Olson
 16 Hayley Crossland
 20 Karen DeSchepper
 20 La Vonne Prudlick
 21 Gretchen Jacobson
 22 Lee Grippen
 24 Mary Cary
 25 Charles Hanson
 25 Eleanor Pederson
 26 Donald Anderson
 26 Leif Marking
 27 Madeline Anderson
 28 Kati Casida
 28 Mark Quade
 29 Ruth Scholze
 30 Brett Helseth
 31 Florence Olson
 31 Gloria Rainer
 31 Andrea Sannes
 31 Janice Storlie



Lunch providers for March 3 meeting

Sandwiches (2 1/2 dozen): Shirley Schoenfeld, Mary Jo Sanchez, Lil Malzacher, Eugene Johnson

Cheese & Crackers: Bev Nelson, Tom Monson, Darlene Erickson

Cakes: Marilyn Rudser, Karan Mathison, Kathi Beane, Jan Mattison, Phyllis Galstad

Fruit Plate: Ann Kathan

Pickles: Dave Glomstad, Lee Grippen

Members are asked to donate \$2 per person at the lunch table for lodge expenses.

Program for April

Our program for April will be "Shadows of Time...Minnesota's Surviving Depots" by Bill Schrankler.

Sekretær Notater...

Minutes of the February 4, 2016 meeting

President Dave Glomstad welcomed the members and guests.

The Charter was draped in memory of the long-time member Marilyn Hammes who recently passed away. She had been living in Washington State. The group observed a moment of silence for Marilyn.

The group recited the Pledge of Allegiance and sang the three national anthems.

The President called for the introduction of guests: Gary Corbisier introduced his son-in-law's nephew Martin Berge Lund from Fyresdal, Norway who is visiting the United States for one month. Pam Knudtson introduced her brother Bradley Hegge and sister-in-law Cathleen Hegge from Pigeon Falls, WI and Marti Schwem from LaCrescent, MN.

The President called for all new 2015 members to come forward. Former President Shirley Schoenfeld and President Dave Glomstad conducted a welcome ceremony. Royce Curtis, Ilene Pavelko, and Ann Kathan were initiated as new members. A copy of the Modified Initiation Ceremony is attached hereto.

The President announced that the Minutes from the last general Lodge meeting were approved at the January 2016 board meeting and printed in the Budstikken. No questions were raised by the members. The President declared the Minutes will be filed in the Lodge's official minute book.

Treasurer's Report, Collection, and Correspondence Received

Marilyn Rudser informed the group that nine (9) directories are still available for purchase for \$4.00 each. She then presented her January 2016 Treasurer's Report: The Lodge's checking account had a beginning balance of \$1,266.63. Total income received during the month was \$275.50 and included: lunch \$148.00; Foundation \$42.00; and dues refund \$85.50. The income brought the checking account balance to \$1,542.13. Expenses for the month totaled \$1,177.72. The ending checking account balance was \$364.41 as of January 31, 2016.

The beginning balance of the scholarship account was \$1,849.00. Raffle proceeds of \$32.00 were deposited into the account resulting in an ending balance of \$1,881.00 as of January 31, 2016.

The beginning balance of the savings account was \$8,996.24, interest was added from the last quarter of 2015 in the amount of \$28.21, leaving a new balance of \$9,024.45 as of January 31, 2016.

The President discussed the low balance of funds in the checking account and called upon the membership to submit ideas for fundraising for the Lodge. He encourages the group to brainstorm about fundraising sources outside of the membership.

The Foundation contribution cans were passed throughout the membership.

(Continued on page 6)

Til minner om...

Howard Hoff who passed away on February 3 at the age of 91. He had been a member of our lodge for 46 years. Our sincere sympathy to his family.

Charlotte Hougom who passed away on February 7 at the age of 83. Charlotte and her husband **LeRoy** have been members for 14 years. Our sincere sympathy to LeRoy and her family.

George Sievers, Sons of Norway member since 1978, died on January 27, 2016 at the age of 61. George was active in the Sons of Norway throughout his whole career. He held leadership positions at all levels. International Secretary, International Director, District Five Secretary and Treasurer and many local lodge Vennelag 5-513 leadership roles. He was often selected to participate in committees at the various levels. George created in 1998 and maintained up until August 2015 the sonsofnorway5.com district website. It is with heartfelt sadness and yet a feeling of deep appreciation for having known him and I feel blessed to call him a friend.

Duane Kittleson



Condolences til...

Donna Olson whose brother **Kenneth Garves** passed away Saturday, Jan. 16, 2015.

Tusen takk...

To **Al Forde, Marlene McCabe, Doc Brudos** and **Marilyn Rudser** for conducting our Lodge audit for 2016.

To **Trygve Mathison, Joe Stekel, Agnetha Ames, Karen Scarseth** and **Dave Glomstad** for conducting the Lodge inventory.

To **Lloyd Hoff & Dick Marking** for putting new wheels on our library case.

To our delegates and alternates for volunteering to attend the 2016 district 5 convention. Delegates: **Dave Glomstad, Ann Kathan, Shirley Schoenfeld, Ramona Johnson, Adrian Johnson** and **Eugene Johnson**. Alternates: **Bev Nelson, Carol Stekel, Phyllis Galstad, Mary Sween, Frieda Nowland, Ron Nowland**.



Membership Breakfast March 19, 2016

The Days Inn Hotel

8:30 AM – 11:00 AM

Ask your friends and relatives to join

At this special annual breakfast, new members

will receive a \$5.00 reduction on their first year's dues. You and your new member guest receive a free breakfast. If the guest does not join, both must pay for the breakfast. Without a guest, the cost is \$10.00, including gratuity.

Menu: orange juice, scrambled eggs with cheese, bacon, home-fried potatoes, pastries, and coffee.

Call Ramona Johnson to sign up. 788-7507

...Deadline to call Ramona is March 14...

UPCOMING EVENTS

On Thursday, March 10, Wergeland member **Hannah Scholze** will be presenting the program "Cordelia Harvey: The Wisconsin Angel and Her State's Impact During the Civil War." Not only will the program focus on the remarkable life and contributions of Cordelia Harvey, the Wisconsin Governor's wife, but it will also highlight many of the important contributions made to the war effort by both Wisconsin men and women--including the Wisconsin 15th Norwegian Regiment. The program will begin at 7:00 PM at the Monroe County Local History Room located at 200 West Main Street in Sparta. Please call (608) 269-8680 or visit www.Facebook.com/mclhr for more information.

The **Coulee Chordsmen** will present their annual barbershop show at 2:30 on March 13 at the Heider Center in West Salem. Tickets are \$15 and can be purchased from Sig Rudser.

Off Da...

The phone number on the officer's page of the directory for **Marilyn Rudser** is incorrect. It should be 608-519-1713. The phone number and address in her member listing is correct.



KAREN'S KORNER

KAREN'S KORNER

Monge Tak to Shirley Schoenfeld who selected some books from the Norskedalen Library for our Sons of Norway Library. Readers, we have a bunch of new selections. One of my favorites is a large picture book of the bunads from the various regions. I have tried to purchase a bunad book at various bookstores but it has never been available. It is in Norwegian but you will certainly enjoy the pictures. Check out the ones from your regions of Norway. The Skaarseth family is from Gubrandsdalen, where is your region?

'Colonel Heg and His Boys': A Norwegian Regiment in the American Civil War is an old favorite, now a new addition to our library. It is one of the books published by the Norwegian-American Historical Association (NAHA). Waldemar Ager collected personal accounts of soldiers in the Fifteenth Wisconsin Regiment, written to family and friends, during the Civil War. Ager's intent was to convey to the next generation the significant contributions of this group of brave Norwegian Americans. After an appeal from President Lincoln for more recruits, Hans Heg was selected as Colonel to lead a regiment of primarily Norwegian immigrants. Here is a smattering of his impressive remarks to the press and in recruitment speeches:

"The land which we, as strangers, have made our home, has received us with friendship and hospitality . . . Let us prove ourselves worthy of that land and of those heroes from whom we descend. . . Come, then, young Norsemen, and take your part in defending our country's cause, and thus fulfill a pressing duty which everyone who is able to do so owes to the land in which he lives. Let us band together and deliver untarnished to posterity the old honorable name of Norsemen."

You can hear more about the Wisconsin 15th Norwegian Regiment by attending the event Shirley Schoenfeld highlighted in her e-mail on February 17. A presentation by Hannah Scholze, a Wergeland member, about **'Cordelia Harvey: The Wisconsin Angel and Her State's Impact during the Civil War'**. This is a free presentation at the Monroe County Local History Room, 200 West Main Street, Sparta, WI; **THURSDAY, MARCH 10 AT 7:00 p.m.** For more information call (608) 269-8680 or check out Facebook: www.Facebook.com/mclhr.

A little bit about **NAHA**, the Norwegian American Historical Association: It was organized in 1925 by a group of Norwegian Americans to provide a national center for the collection and preservation of historical material and to provide funds for publication of books to describe the experiences of Norwegian immigrants in the new World. Wergeland Lodge routinely receives NAHA publications to add to our library. NAHA also developed archives at St. Olaf college of Norwegian-American historical material.

Karen Scarseth
Librarian

Looking Back Through the Budstikken By Historian Karen Broadhead

Fem år siden (5 years ago)2010

Steve Marking presented the March program, singing a mixture of River Songs, Sinatra songs, and selections from his "Salute to Broadway" show.

Darlene Erickson received her Golden membership pin, signifying 30 years of membership and attaining age 65 or more.

Cantus, an ensemble of 30 female singers from Norway between ages 20-40, presented a concert at North Presbyterian church. Wergeland Lodge members served the group supper prior to the concert.

Ti år siden (10 years ago)2005

Tom Monson presented the March program with pictures from our new sister city, Forde. He also included insights and plans for future connections between La Crosse and Forde. Tom was part of the delegation for the first official visit to Forde in August of 2005.

Delegates for the state convention will be Bing Skogen, Pete and Annette Sherry, Marilyn Trisch, Anne and Max Farning, and Christine Hanson. Alternates are Charlene Harnish, Hjordis Helgestad, Trygve Mathison, Gene Johnson, Jackie Oldenburg, Leif Marking, and Dave Hendrickson.

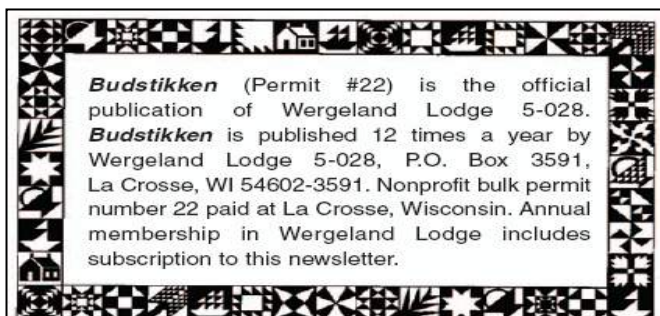
Permanent name tags will be ordered at no charge for all members. Members should sign up at the March meeting, indicating how you prefer your name on the tag.

Femten år siden (15 years ago)2000

Tom Skogen, field director for the Miss Wisconsin program, spoke about the 80 year history of the Miss America pageant, which began in 1921.

Ron and Frieda Nowland took a two-week trip to Texas, where they attended a tradeshow, visited relatives and snowbirds Al and Verda Guberud, and also visited Clifton, the "Norwegian capital of Texas."

Florence and Gene Johnson, Neil and Helen Nelson, and Harold and Elaine Nelson took cookies donated by Wergeland members to the Birkebeiner in Hayward. Over 1300 kids devoured 1400 dozen cookies.





“Steel and Stone: Viking Knives and Pottery”

Wergeland lodge was once again treated to a great program as Jon Lee presented "Steel and Stone: Viking Knives and Pottery" which included an historical overview of styles and techniques used in the past as well as the present.

Jon's presentation not only gave the technical aspects of knife and pottery making during the Viking age but also educated us on the social status that went along with ownership of these items along with present day techniques. Tussen takk Jon.



Not just snow in Norway

According to an article in *Newsweek* some time ago, you could choose from at least 16 terms for snow if you lived in Norway. For example:

Snø: common white flakes

Kram snø: wet snow, good for sculpting

Skare: icy top crust, which forms when fallen snow gets damp

Kladdeføre: snow stuck on the bottom of skis

Sludd: rain-snow mix that falls on balmy, 32° days

Slaps: dirty sludd

Snøfonn: snowdrift

Snøfokk: wind-swept snow



New International Foundation director introduced



Corrie Maki Knudson is the new Sons of Norway International foundation director. Corrie has expertise in various areas of development as well as experience in finance and operations. Most recently she served as the chief operations officer for LIFE Prep, a charter school in Saint Paul, Minnesota. In this position she was responsible for creating sustainability for the school through capacity building and strategic planning as well as handling compliance, finance, human resources, and operations. Prior to moving into that role she was the executive director for the LIFE Prep Foundation where she was the driver for not only fund development in the areas of individual giving, grant writing and corporate relations but also for creating strategic philanthropic and community partnerships. Prior to those roles Knudson was focused on major and planned gift fundraising for medical research. She started her career supporting the Departments of Surgery and Pediatrics at Loyola Medical Center in the Chicagoland area. She later relocated back to Minnesota where she supported cancer patients through the Minnesota Medical Foundation

and then served bone marrow transplant patients and their families with Be The Match Foundation.

Knudson is a native of Eveleth, Minnesota and was raised on the Iron Range. She earned her B.A. from Wartburg College in Waverly, Iowa and a Master of Management in Nonprofit Administration from North Park University in Chicago, Illinois. She is the proud mother of two children, Maija and Finn, with her husband of fifteen years, Kyle. Knudson is Norwegian by marriage but is very excited to learn more about the culture and has already joined Synnove-Nordkap Lodge 1-8 in Saint Paul, MN. She is also a life-long member of the Croatian Fraternal Union Arrowhead Lodge in Gilbert, MN.

March meeting minutes (cont'd from page 2)

The President read the note received from Marilyn Horn thanking the Lodge for the memorial in memory of Duane Horn.

Upcoming Events

The President announced various upcoming events:

New Member Breakfast: The new member breakfast is scheduled for Saturday, March 19, 2016 at the Days Inn on French Island at 8:30 a.m. Free breakfast will be provided to new members and their sponsors. \$5.00 will be taken off membership dues for the first year for those who apply for Lodge membership on the day of the breakfast.

Barnebirkie: Gene Johnson is reviving the tradition of bringing cookies to the skiers at the Barnebirkie ski race in Hayward, WI to be held on February 19, 2016. If you would like to contribute cookies, given them to Gene now or bring them to the board meeting next Tuesday. The Barnebirkie is a good way to get kids initiated into the sport of cross-country skiing.

Masse Moro Camp: The Masse Moro camp is coming up this summer. Masse Moro, meaning "lots of fun," is a Sons of Norway Norwegian heritage camp located in Fall Creek, WI near Eau Claire and youth ages 8 to 15 may attend. District 5 and Wergeland Lodge will help defray the cost for camp attendees. Get your kids and grandkids to submit applications to be campers. Shirley Schoenfeld announced a representative from Masse Moro will be coming to the Lodge's March meeting to talk about the camp. A few persons in the group identified themselves as having attended Masse Moro. The camp has undergone extensive renovations.

Lodge Inventory: The Trustees and Committees should come to the Lodge on Saturday, February 13, 2016 to inventory all the Lodge holdings. Anyone who would like to help should show up.

Lodge Audit: Thursday, February 11, 2016 is the Lodge audit.

Announcement: "Telling Stories . . . With Wood" by Harley Refsal, a Vesterheim Gold Medalist woodcarver, will host a two-hour luncheon and wood carving presentation in LaCrosse at the Courtyard Marriott Hotel, 500 Front Street South, on Sunday, February 28, 2016 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. The cost is \$35.00 and you can register at the Vesterheim website. Also, Vesterheim's new CEO/President will give a museum update.

Dan Hammes, son of Marilyn Hammes, attended the meeting as a guest. He thanked the Lodge for his mother's many happy years of Lodge membership. He stated how important Sons of Norway was to her. His mother left a legacy of \$787.00 for the Lodge with instructions that the funds are to go to the Wergeland Dancers. Mr. Hammes, on behalf of his mother and his siblings Mark Hammes, Joe Hammes, and Sue Kvamme, presented to the President a check for \$787.00 and such funds shall go to the Wergeland Dancers.

February birthdays were celebrated by the singing of "Happy Birthday to You."

The President announced the next general Lodge meeting is Thursday, March 3, 2016 at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, February 9, 2016 is the next board meeting at Perkins by Valley View Mall. The Counselor Adrian Johnson was not present. No remarks were made for the good of the order.

The raffle drawing was conducted by the President. Tia Mitchell had the correct number and won \$42.00. Beverly Nelson's name was drawn from the general membership and she won \$42.00. The remaining \$42.00 was placed in the Scholarship Fund.

The Closing song *We Remember Old Norway* was sung in both English and Norwegian.

The President declared adjournment of the general meeting at 7:07 p.m.

Co-Social Director Mary Jo Sanchez thanked everyone for signing up to bring sandwiches and cakes. She inquired if the group would like to add something to the lunch buffet such as fruit and cheese and cracker platters. She passed the March lunch sign-up sheets around.

Cultural Program

Co-cultural Director Shirley Schoenfeld introduced John Lee of Coon Valley who presented *Steel and Stone*. His daughter Emma Lee, who assists him with decorating pottery, attended. John has studied with Norwegian knife makers and potters. He presented information on ancient Norwegian knives and pottery and the intricate skills involved in making these tools. He brought examples of his own work and many of the pieces are available for sale.

Attendance: 85 adults and 12 children = 97

Table collection: \$132.00

Foundation collection: \$56.66

Ann N. Kathan, Lodge Secretary

The mission of Sons of Norway is to promote and preserve the heritage and culture of Norway, to celebrate our relationship with other Nordic countries, and provide quality insurance and financial products to its members.

A little in English...

Wedding Gifts That Disappeared. The ancient Norwegian tradition survived until the mid-1800s before it became illegal. Herleik Baklid has investigated sagas, kings' letters, wills, court records, legal documents and old laws to find traces of a certain Norwegian wedding tradition, namely bridal gifts. Baklid has found evidence that this practice dates back to the 1100s. Folk traditions survived the church's marriage traditions and were kept alive until the mid-1800s, when a new Norwegian law abolished the rights the bride had to these gifts.

Widow's Insurance. When we think of wedding gifts today, we tend to think of kitchenware, silverware and gorgeous designer items that the happy couple receives from friends and family on the big day. But in the Middle Ages the gifts had an entirely different purpose. To understand the idea behind these gifts, it is important to understand why people got married in the past. Economic reasons stood behind the couple's union, for the most part. Throughout history, it turns out that the groom often gave one or more traditional gifts to the bride. "The bride could take out these gifts if she became a widow. The basic principle behind these gifts was that she would be secure if her husband died," Baklid tells forskning.no. "This was a society without government aid. Therefore the groom and his future in-laws were responsible for providing the bride with economic security," he continued. Throughout history there have been three different categories of gifts that the bride got from her husband-to-be. Probably only a few people have heard of festegaven (the engagement gift) and benke-gaven (the bunk gift), while morgengaven (the morning gift) lives on. Baklid has found all three of these extending far back into Norwegian history.

Strengthening the Agreement. Marriage during the Norwegian medieval period until the end of the 17- and 1800s was primarily an economic affair. The marriage was generally agreed upon between the bride and groom's family. When this agreement or betrothal was settled, the future married couple was referred to as betrothed, better known today as engaged. Immediately the flow of gifts started from the future groom. "The betrothal gift was given at the engagement. This was a gift that would strengthen the marriage arrangement," explains Baklid. The gift could be anything from silver spoons, silver jugs and jewelry, to land. The bride was entitled to cash in all of this should she become a widow.

Entertainment and humor. Before the actual ceremony, the groom had to promise gifts that would convince the bride to leave her parents. This was often negotiated between the various parties on the bride's and groom's behalf, how the bride would "be released from the bunk", i.e. stop sleeping in a bed at her parents. Hence the name of the second traditional gift: benkegave or bunk gift. A bunk gift can most likely be connected to bride purchasing, an even older tradition. Simply put: the gift says what the groom is willing to pay for his future wife. This gift could consist of anything from a horse and saddle to jewelry and property.

One last gift at dawn. The morning after her wedding night, the bride received a final gift from the groom. This is what we know today as morgengaven, the morning gift, which is the oldest of the three gift practices. "The morning gift can be traced through the Germans all the way back to the Roman Empire," says Baklid. This gift could consist of so many things. For example Knud Nielsen from Tinn in Telemark gave Helge Torgrimsdatter among other things a horse, a saddle, three animal pelts and 120 thalers as a bunk gift and morning gift. In higher classes, such as among the royals, the morning gift could be property.

Removed by law But after the 1800s, the traditions began to eventually die out. There were several reasons for this. What may surprise most is that Baklid has not found evidence that the church opposed these traditions. "These were gifts that had a clear practical-economic function that didn't actually come into conflict with church teachings about marriage," he explains. But the Norwegian laws that gave the widow legal claim to the gifts were removed in 1854. Part of the reason may have been because they could cause problems in litigation. Extended inheritance would instead compensate for the valuables she lost. Something else that might explain the tradition's demise is the notion that you married one another out of love, and not for economic considerations. But before they disappeared completely, the gifts took a slightly different turn. "The bunk gift continued as a form of entertainment for a few decades, before going away. Betrothal gifts changed style, into more personal gifts, such as a hymnal or a watch," says Baklid. Finally the face of marriage had changed so much that there was no longer room for the old customs. "Marriage was seen as an economic matter until the end of the 1700s, but after that, the romantic ideal came into play," said Baklid.

Traces in today's society Old Norwegian traditions still have a tendency to creep into our modern society. It does not take much to see that we still partially practice our ancestors' ancient customs. "The bunk gift disappeared, but the morning gift on the other hand, has sprouted up again. Although betrothal gifts disappeared around 1870, engagement rings came into practice," says Baklid. "The symbolism is perhaps a little different now; the gifts are supposed to express love and aren't supposed to provide financial security in the event of widowhood," he added.

Litt på Norsk...

Bryllupsgavene som forsvant. Den eldgamle norske tradisjonen overlevde helt fram til midten av 1800-tallet før den ble ulovlig. Herleik Baklid har gransket sagaer, kongebrev, testamenter, rettsprotokoller, skriftprotokoller og gamle lover for å finne spor etter en bestemt norsk bryllupstradisjon. Nemlig brudegavene. Baklid har funnet tegn til denne skikken helt tilbake til 1100-tallet. Folketradisjonen overlevde kirkens egne ekteskapstradisjoner og ble holdt i live helt fram til midten av 1800-tallet, da en ny norsk lov avskaffet retten bruden hadde på gavene.

Enkeforsikring. Når vi tenker på bryllupsgaver i dag, tenker vi gjerne på kjøkkenutstyr, sølvtøy og lekre designervarer som det lykkelige paret får av venner og familie på den store dagen. Men i middelalderen hadde gavene et helt annet formål. Men for å forstå tanken bak disse gavene er det viktig å forstå hvorfor folk giftet seg før i tiden. Stort sett lå det nemlig økonomiske hensikter bak parets union. Gjennom historien viser det seg at brudgommen ofte har gitt én eller flere tradisjonelle gaver til bruden. – Disse gavene kunne bruden ta ut dersom hun ble enke. Det lå som et grunnleggende prinsipp bak disse gavene at hun skulle sikres dersom mannen falt fra, forteller Baklid til forskning.no. – Dette var et samfunn uten offentlige støtteordninger. Derfor var det brudgommen og hans fremtidige svigerforeldres ansvar å skaffe bruden økonomisk sikkerhet, fortsetter han. Opp gjennom historien har det vært tre ulike kategorier for gavene bruden fikk av sin kommende ektemann. Festegaven og benkegaven er det nok få som har hørt om. Mens morgengaven lever videre i beste velstand. Alle de tre variantene finner Baklid igjen langt tilbake i norsk historie.

Styrket avtalen. Ekteskap i norsk middelalder og fram til slutten av 17- og 1800-tallet var altså først og fremst en økonomisk affære. Ekteskapet ble som regel avtalt mellom bruden og brudgommens slekt. Da avtalen, eller festemålet, var i boks, ble det fremtidige ekteparet omtalt som festefolk, bedre kjent som forlovede i dag. Allerede nå begynner gavedrysser fra den kommende brudgom. – Festegaven ble gitt ved festemålet. Dette var en gave som skulle styrke avtalen om ekteskap, forklarer Baklid. Gaven kunne være alt fra sølvskjeer, sølvkanner og smykker til jordeiendom. Alt dette hadde bruden krav på å få utbetalt dersom hun skulle bli enke.

Underholdning og humor. Før selve vielsen måtte brudgommen komme med løfter om gaver som skulle overbevise bruden om å reise fra foreldrene sine. Dette ble ofte forhandlet fram mellom ulike parter på bruden og brudgommens vegne, hvor bruden skulle «løses fra benken», altså slutte å sove i sengen hos foreldrene sine. Derav navnet på den andre tradisjonelle gaven: benkegave. Benkegaven kan mest sannsynlig koples til brudekjøp, en enda eldre tradisjon. Enkelt sagt: gaven sier hva brudgommen er villig til å betale for sin fremtidige kone. Denne gaven kunne bestå av alt fra hest og sal til smykker og eiendom.

En siste gave ved daggrø. Morgen etter bryllupsnatten fikk bruden den siste gaven fra brudgommen. Dette er det vi kjenner også i dag som morgengaven, som er den eldste av de tre gaveskikkene. – Morgengaven kan spores blant germanerne helt tilbake til Romerriket, sier Baklid. Denne gaven kunne bestå av så mangt. For eksempel gav Knud Nielsen fra Tinn i Telemark, Helge Torgrimsdatter blant annet en hest, en sal, tre skinnfeller og 120 riksdaler i benkegave og morgengave. I høyere klasser, som for eksempel blant de kongelige kunne morgengaven være eiendom.

Fjernet fra loven Men utpå 1800-tallet begynte tradisjonene etter hvert å dø ut. Det var det flere grunner til. Det som kanskje overrasker mest er at Baklid ikke har funnet bevis på at kirken motarbeidet disse tradisjonene. – Det var gaver som hadde en klar praktisk-økonomisk funksjon som egentlig ikke kom i konflikt med kirkens lære om ekteskapet, forklarer han. Men de norske lovene som gav enken rettslige krav på gavene ble fjernet i 1854. Noe av årsaken kan ha vært fordi de kunne skape krøll i rettsaker. Utvidet arverett skulle i stedet kompensere for de verdiene hun mistet. Noe annet som kan forklare tradisjonenes bortgang, er forestillingen om at man giftet seg med hverandre av kjærlighet, og ikke av økonomiske hensyn. Men før gavene forsvant helt, fikk de en litt annen vri. – Benkegaven fortsatte som et underholdningsinnslag noen tiår etter, før de falt bort. Festegavene endret karakter til mer personlige gaver, som for eksempel en salmebok eller ei klokke, sier Baklid. Til slutt hadde synet på ekteskap endret seg såpass mye at det ikke lenger var plass til de gamle skikkene. – Ekteskapet ble sett på som et økonomisk anliggende fram til slutten av 1700-tallet, men så kommer det romantiske idealet inn, sier Baklid.

Spor i dagens samfunn Gamle norske tradisjoner har likevel en tendens til å snike seg inn i vårt moderne samfunn. Det skal ikke mye til for å se at vi fortsatt delvis praktiserer våre forfedres gamle skikker. – Benkegaven har forsvunnet, men morgengaven har jo derimot blusset opp igjen. Selv om festegaven forsvant rundt 1870, kom forlovelsesringer inn i stedet, forteller Baklid. – Symbolikken er kanskje en litt annen, nå skal de uttrykke kjærlighet og ikke nødvendigvis sikre en eventuell enke, fortsetter han.

**Sons of Norway
Wergeland Lodge**

#5/028

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Norskedalen Activities

Throne Visitors Center:
(January 1-March 31)

Monday-Friday: 8 am to 4 pm

Saturday: Closed

Sunday: Closed

Norskedalen 'Member's Use' Program in Place with Windshield
Parking Pass Sunrise time to Sunset time



Upcoming Norskedalen activities

March 5: Ukranian Eggs class

March 19: Benefit Rummage Sale at Coon Valley Village Hall

Norskedalen phone: 608-452-3424

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