



# *the Askeladden News*



March

Sons of Norway • Askeladden Lodge 5-610 • Kalamazoo, Michigan

*A Congenial Society of Sons, Daughters, and Friends of Norway*

No. 3-16

[www.norwayinkalamazoo.com](http://www.norwayinkalamazoo.com)

[facebook.com/AskeladdenLodge](https://facebook.com/AskeladdenLodge)

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Trinity Lutheran Church  
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Kalamazoo, MI

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# **The Kraatz Family's Norway Adventure**

**4 p.m. Sunday, March 13  
Trinity Lutheran Church  
504 S. Westnedge Ave. Kalamazoo**

Please join us on Sunday for our monthly meeting, including this month's cultural program. The Kraatz family, Elizabeth and her two children, James and Alice, will present a 45-minute program on their July 2015 trip to Norway. The cultural program, which is open to the public, is scheduled to begin at 4:15 p.m.

Traveling by automobile, train, and ship, the Kraatz's covered all sections of Norway on their month-long trip, including the great cities of Norway (Oslo, Bergen, and Trondheim), the last segment of the Pilgrim Trail leading to the Nidaros Cathedral in Trondheim, the farm where Elizabeth's ancestors were born, and most interestingly, the Arctic Ocean and the Norwegian-Russian border.

A short business session will follow the cultural program. Lodge members will have an opportunity to discuss/approve any resolution for the District 5 Convention in June.

A potluck meal will conclude the meeting.

We will meet in Fellowship Hall (lower level) of Trinity Lutheran Church for the opening ceremony, cultural program, business session, and meal. Please bring a dish to pass. Plates, cups, and eating utensils will be provided if you choose not to bring your own.

# ASKEADDEN NEWS

## Wedding Gifts That Disappeared - Bryllupsgavene som forsvant

*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 1100's. Folk traditions survived the church's marriage traditions and were kept alive until the mid-1800's, 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 benkegaven (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 1800's 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 1800's, 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 1700's, 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.

<http://forskning.no/historie/2015/10/et-gavedryss-med-baktanker>

### Askeladden Lodge Library

[www.librarything.com/catalog/SonsofNorway](http://www.librarything.com/catalog/SonsofNorway)

Contact Roger Drong with questions or to reserve resources.

# ASKELOADDEN NEWS

## Fra Presidenten

On Saturday, March 12, Askeladden Lodge members and friends will march in the St. Patrick's Day Parade in downtown Kalamazoo. Starting in 2010, we have marched in this parade for seven consecutive years. It is very appropriate that members of the Sons of Norway participate in a St. Pat's Day parade.

The St. Pat's Day Parade in Kalamazoo is organized by the Irish American Club of Kalamazoo. They are supported by another group, the Knights of Columbus. It is with this group, the Knights of Columbus, that we have a lot in common.

Both organizations, the Knights of Columbus and the Sons of Norway, began and continue to be fraternal insurance companies.

The Knights of Columbus began in 1882 by a parish priest in New Haven, Connecticut, who wanted to give financial relief to the Irish immigrant women who became widows when their husbands were killed or became permanently disabled.

The Sons of Norway is a similar story – just substitute the word “Norwegian” for “Irish.” The Sons of Norway began in 1895 in Minneapolis by 18 Norwegian immigrants, forming a mutual benefit society giving financial relief to Norwegian immigrant women who became widows.

The Knights of Columbus is a much larger organization, claiming 1.8 million members (all male) and 14,000 local councils. The Sons of Norway has 400,000 members and 400 local lodges.

On my visit to NYC at Christmas, I made an excursion to New Haven, Connecticut, to see the Yale University Campus.

Walking from the train station to the campus, I came across the Knights of Columbus Museum. Fortunately, I took time to visit the Museum. The museum had a special exhibit on European Creches (76 of them) for the Christmas season and two permanent exhibits on the Knights of Columbus and Catholicism.

Please join us on March 12 for the St. Pat's Day Parade and on March 13 for our Lodge meeting.

Curtis A. Cleveland

## 2016 Scholarship Information

*Joyce Hare  
Scholarship Committee Chair*

**Lodge Scholarships** - For all you members and grandparents, this is the time to get applications completed and sent for our local Askeladden Lodge Myrtle Beinhauer college scholarship program. The applications are available online at our web page:

[www.norwayinkalamazoo.com](http://www.norwayinkalamazoo.com)

The applications for the Askeladden Lodge Myrtle Beinhauer Scholarship are due March 15, 2016, and must be received by Joyce Hare by or on that date. Her address is: 6909 Towhee, Portage, MI 49024. Please contact Joyce Hare at (269) 327-5824 with any inquiries.

Cultural Skill Scholarship applications are available to members in the form of a grant, not to exceed \$250. The grants may be given to attend workshops, seminars, conferences or other events promoting Norwegian Culture. There is not a due date for the Cultural Grant program. The application guidelines are also on our website.

**Masse Moro Heritage camp scholarships** - District 5 holds a two-week heritage camp in central Wisconsin every summer. Askeladden provides a “matching grant,” which when combined with the District 5 grant, brings the cost of the camp to almost half. Our lodge automatically gives matching grants to children and grandchildren of lodge members who apply by the deadline. Download the form from either the District 5 website or the Masse Moro website and turn the completed form into Lodge Treasurer Earnie Best. For more info on Masse Moro, you are encouraged to check both the District 5 website and [massemoro.org](http://massemoro.org)

**District 5 scholarships** - Applications are due by March 15. There are several scholarships available and information can be found by visiting [www.sonsofnorway5.com](http://www.sonsofnorway5.com) and clicking on the District 5 Scholarships tab on the left-side menu.

**The Sons of Norway Foundation** - offers college scholarships starting at \$1,000 for current members, children or grandchildren of current members. Sons of Norway Foundation post-high school scholarship deadlines begin March 1, 2016. Please remind the college students in your life to begin the scholarship application process. They may view all scholarship applications by visiting [www.sonsofnorway.com/foundation](http://www.sonsofnorway.com/foundation) and clicking on the Grants and Scholarships panel.

## Input wanted for Trip Policy

The Norway Trip Committee presented their work at the January Lodge business meeting. The Lodge passed a motion at that time to allow members the opportunity to submit amendments for the proposed Norway Trip policy to the committee.

Email any input for consideration to [healingmoments15@gmail.com](mailto:healingmoments15@gmail.com) no later than March 13.

## February Meeting Recap

*Curtis Cleveland  
Cultural Committee Chair*

At the February 14 meeting, attended by 23 members and guests, Jean Darling gave an interesting lecture on the life of Odd Nansen (1901-1973). In her talk, Jean included the WWII prison diary that Nansen wrote, *From Day to Day* and Tommy Buergerthal, the 10-year old Jewish youth, who Nansen befriended in prison.

During the business session, the Lodge elected delegates and alternate delegates to the District 5 Convention, June 22-26, Marshfield, WI. Curtis Cleveland and Holly Jensen were elected as delegates. Dennis and Jean Darling were elected as alternate delegates.

After the program and business session, we had the meal, which left some of asking: “Where’s the beef?” The buffet table had an abundance of deserts: cakes, pies, cookies, and candy. The meats and vegetables were not so abundant. I guess this is to be expected on Valentine’s Day. Fortunately, we had herring (Margery) and Korean Egg Roll (Earnie).

Thanks to all who attended and to Jean, who spent months researching and preparing her special presentation for us.

## St. Pat's Parade - Join us!

*Joan Renaas O'Bryan*

The annual St. Patrick's Day Parade in Kalamazoo takes place Saturday morning, March 12. Contact Joan if you are interested in participating so we can have a costume for you. We will meet near the Comerica building. Arrive in plenty of time to assemble your costume, but no later than 10:30. Remember, some streets will be closed for the parade, so allow enough time to park and walk to the staging area.

ASKELOADDEN LODGE 5•610  
SONS OF NORWAY  
158 Bulkley Street  
Kalamazoo, MI 49006



*www.sonsofnorway.com*

## MARS KALENDER

- mars 12 - **St. Patrick's Day parade** downtown Kalamazoo. Marchers and helpers meet by 10:30 am. Plan to join us for some fun!
- mars 13 - Deadline for member input on proposed Norway trip policy - see article page 3
- mars 13 - **Askeladden Lodge Program/meeting/potluck dinner**  
4:00 p.m. Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church  
*Daylight Saving Time begins at 2:00 a.m. - spring forward!*
- mars 15 - Askeladden Lodge and District 5 Scholarship applications due  
<http://sonsofnorway5.com>
- mars 17 - St. Patrick's Day
- mars 20 - *Palmesøndag* - Palm Sunday
- mars 25 - *Langfredag* - Good Friday
- mars 27 - *Påskedag* - Easter Sunday
- mars 31 - last day to submit *Askeladden News* articles

### Gratulerer med dagen!

*Fødselsdag Hilsener*

### March Birthdays

David Sherman	Esden Stafne
Richard Adams	Joan O'Bryan
Druanna Darling	Betsy Fish
Robert Laird	Christina Sherman
Andrew Sherman	Mary Sue Dawsey
Margaret Schmieding	Arden Hetletvedt

### Daylight Saving Time

Note that we will lose an hour as we spring forward on March 13, which coincides with our next lodge meeting and program. So plan ahead and set your clock forward by one hour before retiring on March 12.



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