



# the Askeladden News



December

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

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

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

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

No. 12-16

## Askeladden Christmas Celebration

### 4 p.m. Sunday, December 11 Trinity Lutheran Church

#### Meetings:

Monthly, most 2nd Sundays, 4 pm  
Trinity Lutheran Church  
504 S. Westnedge Ave  
Kalamazoo, MI

#### Officers:

**President:** Curtis Cleveland  
269-381-4531  
[cacleve82@att.net](mailto:cacleve82@att.net)

**Membership Secretary:** Vacant  
contact 269-350-3330

#### Vice-President/Editor:

Joan O'Bryan  
507 Clinton Avenue  
Kalamazoo, MI 49001  
269-383-6802  
[joan.obryan@wmich.edu](mailto:joan.obryan@wmich.edu)

**Secretary:** vacant

**Cultural Director:** vacant

**Treasurer:** Earnie Best  
269-375-0300  
[earnie@earniebest.com](mailto:earnie@earniebest.com)

#### Publishers:

Dennis & Jean Darling  
158 Bulkley Street  
Kalamazoo, MI 49006  
269-382-2340

#### Affiliation:

Sons of Norway International  
1455 West Lake St.  
Minneapolis, MN 55408

Andy Johnsen  
District 5 Zone 6 Director  
[aijohnsen@att.net](mailto:aijohnsen@att.net)

#### Benefits Counselor:

Greg Ragan  
1-800-442-4146  
[gregragan@aol.com](mailto:gregragan@aol.com)

Lodge contact info:  
[Askeladden.Lodge@gmail.com](mailto:Askeladden.Lodge@gmail.com)  
269-350-30

Please join us Sunday at our annual Askeladden Lodge Christmas Celebration. Activities begin at 4 p.m. with Christmas songs with Margery at the piano; Inger reading the Story of the First Christmas from Scripture in Norwegian; visit of St. Lucia, played by Lyla Niles; and the visit of Julenisse, aka Svein. The meal is scheduled to start at 5:30. Meats and cheeses will be provided. Please bring a dish to pass. China and flatware will be provided for us by Jean.



Chris and Fred Sitkins - Juletreffest 2009  
*photo courtesy of Philip Kunze*

If you are bringing children, RSVP with child's name and age to Joan at (269) 383-6802 so the Julenisse can have a gift ready for your child.

At this meeting, we want to remember the needy in our community. We are asking that you make a monetary donation to one of the Food Banks that serve West Michigan. Please write a check, or place money in an envelope, to one of the following:

- Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes
- Feeding America: West Michigan Food Bank (Grand Rapids area)
- Food Bank of South Central Michigan (Battle Creek area)

Finally, if you are purchasing a Norwegian calendar or the book *Hidden Heroes*, remember to bring your checkbook or extra cash.

**VASA's Luciafest - Pageant and Christmas party is 3 p.m. Saturday, December 10 at Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in the main Sanctuary and we are invited. Sankta Lucia is being portrayed by a student from Oslo!**

At Trinity Lutheran Church on Westnedge Ave, we meet in the lower level Fellowship Hall of the church. The entrance we use is at the rear corner of the church. There is an elevator at the rear of the church for those in need of it.

# ASKELOADDEN NEWS

## Fra Presidenten

Like other members, I purchased a copy of the book *Hidden Heroes: World War II in Norway* at last month's meeting. When I started reading the book, I found it to be a page turner.

The book is a collection of eyewitness accounts of the German invasion and occupation of Norway during WWII, 1940 to 1945, written by members of District 5 who were living in Norway during the war. Inger Thoen, then a child living in Oslo, wrote one of the accounts.

In the 20 different articles or memoirs, there were common themes. Food shortages affected just about all Norwegians. Farmers and Norwegians who had access to a farm fared slightly better. To compensate for the shortage of coffee, Norwegians would grind fried peas to augment the coffee. (I think we should try this at one of our Lodge meetings.)

The Germans outlawed and confiscated radios. However, many families hid a radio in their homes or farms, thereby permitting the opportunity to get the war news from BBC London.

Teachers were especially targeted by the German Nazis. If they did not agree to be reeducated, that is, to support the Nazis, they were sent to a special camp where they experienced severe hardship.

*Hidden Heroes* also features 53 excellent photographs.

This book, as explained in great detail in last month's newsletter, is part of the District 5 fund raising campaign for Masse Moro, the District 5 Youth Camp in Wisconsin.

If you didn't purchase a copy last month, you will have an opportunity to purchase a copy at the December meeting for \$20. You may want to consider ordering multiple copies as Christmas gifts for your children and grandchildren.

I hope to see you at the December 11<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Curtis A. Cleveland, Lodge President

## November meeting recap

*Curtis Cleveland, Chair, Cultural Committee*

At the November 13 Lodge meeting, held at Trinity Lutheran Church, the 14 members and 1 guest, enjoyed the Lefse Party. Members first spent a good hour baking the lefse, then sat down to enjoy the fruits of their labor as well as enjoy some delicious soups. All the lefse was consumed during the meal. Teri directed the Lefse Party. Joyce was in charge of set-up.

During the business session, the Lodge approved the 2017 Budget and elected the 2017 Officers and Committees.

Several members purchased the book *Hidden Heroes*, which is a collection of eyewitness accounts of the German invasion and occupation of Norway during WWII (1940-1945), written by District 5 members, including Inger Thoen.

We had a Food Drive, collecting 34 items (30 pounds) of nonperishable food, which was given to the Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes. In comparison, in November 2014, members donated 120 items of food. In November 2015, members donated 59 items of food.

I want to thank the members who attended and participated.

## 2017 Calendar Orders - payments due

Inger will deliver the calendars to us at the December meeting, in time for Christmas. If you placed an order for calendars at the November meeting, please bring cash or check to reimburse Inger for the calendars.

## Gratulerer med dagen!

*Fødselsdag Hilsener*

## December Birthdays

Tore Ramstad

Donna Kaarlie

Margaret Hastings

The **Splendor of Norway** calendars have gone up in price this year to \$9.70, but are still a significant savings over the \$15 retail cost.

Price of the **2017 Viking Verse** (the Rosemale design) calendars was not known at the time this was written.

Tusen takk to Inger for organizing this purchase for us - saving us significant effort and money!

## Askeladden brings Norwegian Christmas to Kalamazoo's 2016 Holiday Parade

Under Holly Jensen's careful direction and relying on her expert knowledge of Norwegian folklore, Askeladden brought Father Christmas, our Norwegian Troll, St. Lucia and a pair of nisse to the biggest parade in Kalamazoo - the extremely popular Holiday Parade, which draws as many as 30,000 people.

If you know about nisse, you know they are tiny beings. Askeladden friends Ryah Stoneburner and Lili Briggs dressed in Nisse costumes that were designed and lovingly crafted by Holly. The mid-November weather cooperated and the children had a magical time marching in the parade to the delight of the Kalamazoo community crowd. New this year were Lodge member Teri Koretsky, and her 3-year old granddaughter, River, who was a perfectly adorable St. Lucia.

To see additional pictures of this fun event, visit the album on our facebook page: [www.facebook.com/AskeladdenLodge](http://www.facebook.com/AskeladdenLodge)



## Norse Code to perform at New Year's Fest!

The Scandinavian group Norse Code - consisting of Askeladden members Karin and David Code and their children, Astrid and Mai Elise Code - present a sampling of traditional folk music from Norway and Sweden including tunes on the multi-stringed Norwegian Hardanger fiddle and the Swedish nyckelharpa. Celebrate a beautiful Nordic winter from upbeat dance tunes to thoughtful ballads. Admission buttons required and advanced \$5 button sales begin December 15 at local Harding stores.

Norse Code is scheduled to perform at 5:30 and 7:15 p.m., but the printed schedules are not available yet and subject to change. Verify the performance schedule when you purchase your admission buttons.

More information can be found at [www.newyearsfest.com](http://www.newyearsfest.com)



# ASKELOADDEN NEWS

## Remembering Chris Sitkins

One year ago, our December newsletter included an obituary for our friend Fred Sitkins. Sadly, less than a year later we unexpectedly lost Chris. The day following our October meeting many Askeladden Lodge members gathered at Zion Lutheran Church for the funeral of our good friend and long-time lodge member, Chris Sitkins, who passed away October 5. We have so many fond memories of Chris, we're sharing some of them with you here.



Chris and Fred Sitkins - summer 2015  
*photo courtesy of Philip Kunze*

My favorite Askeladden memory of Chris dates back to our Juletreffest (Christmas Tree Party) of 2009, perhaps because we have my husband's archived photo of Chris and Fred (on page 1), but even more because she prepared her splendid 'Confirmation Chicken' which my son-in-law enjoyed so much that he afterward sought out the cook to thank her!

Chris was a willing and tireless worker for our lodge, especially in the kitchen. She was proud of her Norwegian heritage, enjoyed wearing her Norwegian Solje on special occasions, and brought her grandson Nathan Gunnar to lodge meetings. When Nathan grew up he played on the lodge-sponsored hockey team. Chris' husband, Fred, who was Polish for goodness sake, and also a member, enjoyed all things Norwegian along with the rest of us. Fred even helped by serving as our vice president for a time. Sadly, we lost them both within a year of each other. But I'm grateful to have and share wonderful Askeladden memories of Chris and Fred.

*Submitted by Karen Jaegersen Kunze*



Chris with Norwegian Fjord - July 2016  
*photo courtesy of Joan O'Bryan*



Chris participating in Nordic Yule Ornament workshop conducted by Joyce and Holly at September 2012 meeting  
*photo courtesy of Dennis Darling*

Our vivacious Christine Sitkins was a one-of-a-kind wife, mother, friend, mentor, fabulous cook and so much more. One can't think of Chris without her beloved Fred, sharing 37 years with one another. Together they raised their blended family and enjoyed their grandchildren, two of whom lived with them at times. Chris was active in the Kalamazoo Historical Society. Owning what could be considered a historic home on West Main may have been the impetus for her involvement. She ran the kitchen at Zion Lutheran Church where she supervised the Wednesday evening meals during the school year as well as the infamous Sauerkraut dinner. She served on many committees over the years at Zion.

Chris enjoyed the ancestry websites, digging into her Norwegian genealogy. Computer time included exploring UFFDA.com and other Norwegian-related sites. Chris acted as host at Zion for our monthly lodge meetings for several years. In addition, she served the lodge as Membership Secretary for many years.

One remembrance includes Fred pulling a surprise 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday party at the Plainwell Conservation Club. Two of her Zion friends dressed as Norwegian women donning braided blond wigs and stood inside a cardboard Viking ship Fred made. Chris enjoyed being roasted with the humor and obvious affection. The tables were decorated with Norwegian flags and other Norwegian and family related memorabilia.

Chris will be missed by all who knew her. Chris' warm smile, her generosity, enthusiasm and love to everyone she cherished remain in the hearts of all who loved her. UFF-DA, Chris!

*Submitted by Joyce Hare*

## Askeladden Lodge Library

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

Contact Roger Drong with questions or to reserve resources.

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



*www.sonsofnorway.com*

## DESEMBER KALENDER



- desember 6 - Finland's National Day - celebrating Finland's independence from the Russian Republic in 1917
- desember 10 - Nobel Peace Prize awarded in Oslo, with King Harald V in attendance  
Live webcast available at [www.nobelprize.org](http://www.nobelprize.org)
- **desember 10** - **VASA's Luciafest - Pageant and Christmas party 3 p.m.** Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church  
504 S. Westnedge - main Sanctuary. Lucia portrayed by a student from Oslo!
- **desember 11** - **Askeladden Lodge - Christmas Celebration and festive dinner - Trinity Lutheran Church**  
Jul songs and hymns performed by Dr. Margery Selden 🎵
- desember 13 - Luciadagen - St. Lucia Day
- desember 23 - Lille julaften - Little Christmas Eve
- desember 24 - Julaften - Christmas Eve
- desember 25 - Juledag - Christmas Day
- desember 30 - last day to submit *Askeladden News* articles
- desember 31 - Nyttårsaften - New Year's Eve
- desember 31 - New Year's Fest 2016 - Norse Code performs at Trinity Lutheran Church



*God Jul!*

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



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.