



# SONS of NORWAY



April 2020  
Walworth County, WI

## Norsemen of the Lakes 5-650

Greetings, fellow Norwegian Americans:

I am finally home, and I do mean home. Since traveling by car half way across the country in these crazy times, I am self-isolating for the 14 days recommended. In fact, even after that I'm not sure I want to venture out much until this Covid-19 thing has calmed down, and we are in a much better position of national health.

What times these are. I keep thinking that our children and grandchildren will have quite the stories to tell their children and grandchildren some day. Unfortunately, one of those things is that we had to cancel all (or most) of our plans for the summer of 2020. Stoughton has cancelled their *syttende mai* celebration for the first time in their 67 year history. Sherwood lodge closed us out the afternoon of our March meeting and the Credit Union barred us from using their facility in April. And I don't mean that to sound like I am disgusted with them. I totally understand and would have done the same thing. I would have felt very bad if we had accidentally brought the virus into Sherwood Lodge and endangered any of their residents, and I know you would as well.

The question is . . . Where do we go from here? And the answer is, I guess we wait and see. None of us wants to endanger anyone else or ourselves, especially since most of us are in the "danger zone" age-wise. Rest assured, however, that we will meet as soon as we safely can and the government allows. I am exploring ways that we might be able to at least carry on business via the Internet using programs that have been recommended, like Zoom or Google Meeting. If you have used one of these programs or another like it in the past and have any idea how to go about it, please let me know. I do my best with computer "stuff," but it's a struggle sometimes.

This is a great time to use that exercise video reviewed last month in the newsletter. While I was in AZ I was swimming in the pool every day (until it closed). Now that I'm back, I will get back to the video exercises. I've never been one to do home exercising, but I know they make me feel better. And remember, we can still walk trails, enjoy nature, take the dog for a walk and other outdoor activities, just keep your distance from other people and wash your hands well once inside.

FYI: Massa Moro has been canceled for 2020 and the District and International conventions are postponed until 2022.

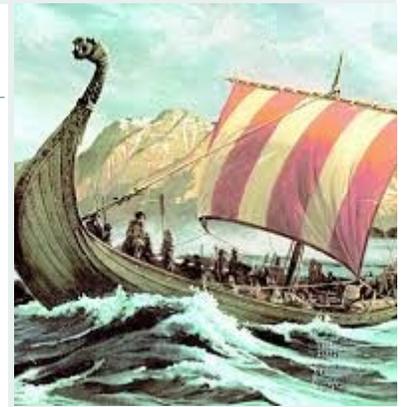
Until next time (whenever that is), stay well and please contact me if you need **anything** or just want to talk. Corlene Bartels

## Membership Committee News

**Plans for 2020:** All membership recruitment plans are on hold for now. Nevertheless, I think that once we get the go-ahead to have events again, that the idea of having a baking workshop will be a good one. Maybe people will be so tired of their own company by then that we will have an even greater turnout.

So—keep thinking and exploring where we could have this event once we get the go ahead to have community gatherings again.

The Sons of Norway Foundation has informed me that we can use \$200 of the funds they usually give lodges for recruitment breakfasts as something we can donate to a local foodbank instead, if we wish. I have already inquired about how we can do that and will follow up on it. I am sure our area can use it and will give it to the Elkhorn foodbank if and when it is grated to us from the Foundation.



### Gratulare Med Dagen

Diane Olson 2nd  
Elaine Lundgren 19th  
Anne Harrington Hope 30th

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### KALENDAR

- April 14th event cancelled
- May 12th will probably be canceled. event will be at 6 p.m. at the Advia Credit Union, Elkhorn. We will celebrate Syttende Mai with a smorgasbord.
- Tentative  
June 6th is picnic month. Join us at Babe Mann Park @ 960 Proctor Dr. in Elkhorn for potluck.
- Traditionally, we have not had meetings in July & Aug., but this year may be different. Stay tuned for further information as things progress.

# SWEET land

A LOVE STORY



When Inge Altenberg (Elizabeth Reaser) arrives in rural Minnesota, she meets Norwegian farmer Olaf Torvik (Tim Guinee), a fellow immigrant. Olaf's parents in Norway have arranged for the two to marry, but problems arise when she doesn't have the proper papers and it is discovered that she is really German, speaks little Norwegian and no English, and is quit unwelcome in post WWI America.

Despite being unwed, the couple lives and farms together, causing a rift with their community. In the face of considerable hardship, Inge and Olaf toil away and grow closer in the process.

This movie is based on a short story written by my writing professor at Bemidji State University. The short story is "A Gravestone Made of Wheat" and the prof. is Will Weaver; a great teacher and writer of several books. He also wrote a book called *Red Earth, White Earth* that was made into a movie for CBS.

This movie is on Prime. It is a great immigrant story. While fiction, it still shows a lot of reality.

Now is a great time to catch up on the Norwegian books and movies recommended in this column. If you would like a long list of books available from the WI Library system, please let me know. Also, you can work at earning your cultural and sport pins at this time. Please give me or Catharine Nolan (our cultural director) a call. We would love to help you get started on these activities.

## Coronavirus in Norway: The Latest News on the COVID-19 Outbreak

by David Nikel

**UPDATED 31 MARCH:** The number to have died in Norway from coronavirus has jumped from 32 to 39 in the last 24 hours. The government has announced an extension to the emergency measures until Easter.

### The latest infection numbers in Norway

There are now **4,615 positive cases** in Norway at the time of writing, with **39 people** now confirmed dead. While the increasing numbers of positive cases are increasing, it's the number hospitalized that is most concerning.

**There are 319 people hospitalized** around the country, a number that has risen significantly in recent days. Of those currently hospitalized, **97** are in intensive care, a number that's also rising fast.

More than 24,000 people registered mild coronavirus-like symptoms within a few hours of a new online reporting tool going live. The health authority wants everyone with respiratory systems to register. While not everyone reporting mild symptoms is going to have the coronavirus, the health authorities admit the true number is higher than the current reports.

That's because anyone subject to home quarantine is not being tested unless they are showing serious symptoms. This is to prioritize people who need urgent care. Last week's rapid rise of cases spurred the health authorities and Norwegian government into taking dramatic action.

### The latest situation in Norway

Today, Prime Minister Erna Solberg announced the extension of the emergency measures brought in to limit the spread of the virus. Originally announced until Thursday 26 March, the measures will now continue **until after Easter, on Monday 13 April**.

All schools and universities will remain closed, most bars and restaurants will not be permitted to open unless they can guarantee social distancing. Many other businesses will be forced to close their doors, and anyone who has travelled abroad continues to face a compulsory 14-day home quarantine.

The quarantine and isolation regulations are law under the Control of Communicable Diseases Act. Anyone caught breaking quarantine faces a hefty fine and even jail time. At the weekend, one young Norwegian was fined 20,000 kroner for attending a party after testing positive.

### Travel severely disrupted, borders essentially closed

Air travel in Norway and across Europe is being disrupted as a drop in demand sees flights cancelled by most major airlines. Both SAS and Norwegian have announced drastic cuts to their flight schedules, focusing on just a few domestic routes and connections between Nordic capitals for the weeks to come.

Both airlines face significant financial trouble, as do Widerøe. Norway's government considers air travel a critical service, given the number of remote communities that rely on their small airports. So they have announced a survival package of loan guarantees worth six billion Norwegian kroner, with half earmarked for Norwegian.

The dramatic measures announced by the Norwegian government a few days ago, along with the Trump travel ban and other countries including Denmark closing their borders, have led to foreign citizens being turned away at the Norwegian border. The advice is simple: unless you are a citizen or permanent resident of Norway, **do not travel here**.

This is now even more relevant advice after today's announcement by Prime Minister Erna Solberg. From 8am CET on Monday, March 16, **all Norwegian airports and seaports closed** to everyone apart from Norwegian citizens and permanent residents returning home to Norway. However, foreign citizens will still be permitted to leave Norway, and should do so as soon as possible.

Foreign citizens already in Norway are also being impacted. Many passengers on cruise ships including the Hurtigruten coastal ferry have been stuck on board, as ports refuse to allow them off the ship. The company has now suspended all operations until mid-April.

**Domestic travel is strongly discouraged** for all but urgent needs. The Prime Minister has ordered Norwegians not to travel to cabins outside their home municipality for fear of overwhelming smaller rural medical facilities.

### What are the Norwegian authorities doing?

Previously, Norway's Directorate of Health said there were plans in place that would cover a scenario whereby up to 25% of Norway's population became infected. On the afternoon of March 27, the Health Minister announced plans to delay hospital treatment for all but essential cases. In addition, he announced that Norway is the first country in the world to trial an experimental treatment on COVID-19 patients.

With the number of cases increasing rapidly, the government introduced emergency measures to try and stem the spread of the virus. All educational establishments are closed, along with many workplaces, many shops, bars, restaurants, pubs and other public services. Supermarkets and pharmacies remain open.

Most Norwegian companies have now implemented home office arrangements where practical. However, the travel and hospitality industries, among others, are feeling the heat. Most pubs, bars, and restaurants are closed, forcing their owners to lay off staff.

The Norwegian government has announced a series of economic measures to help laid off staff and struggling businesses.

# The Nordic Region Explained

By David Nikel

**The Nordics is a term often thrown around when discussing Scandinavia and northern Europe. Let's take a look at which countries comprise the Nordic region, and what makes them different.**

Northern Europe is a vast region of outstanding natural beauty, a cold albeit changing climate, progressive politics and, depending on whether you believe the surveys or not, the world's happiest people.

Living in Norway means you are also a part of Scandinavia, and the wider Nordic region. Those terms are often used interchangeably, but the definitions are significantly different. A geographical and cultural region of northern Europe, the Nordic region comprises five countries and three autonomous territories.

## What is the Nordic region?

The Nordic Region consists of five countries: Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Iceland. Although not countries in their own right, the Faroe Islands, Greenland, and Åland Islands are also included in the definition. The combined population of the Nordic region is around 27 million.

Now, let's take a closer look at The main five countries in the Nordic region

**Denmark** is the southernmost country in the region. It's a compact, flat nation made up of a peninsula and a series of islands, large and small. The country is densely populated especially on the island of Zealand, which is home to Copenhagen, one of the region's biggest cities.

**Finland** is known for its lakes and forests, which cover much of the country. Most of the country's population lives in the milder south, especially along the southern coast. This region is known for mobile phones (thanks to Nokia) and the creation of the Moomins.

**Iceland** is a volcanic island that's geographically remote from the other four principal islands in the region. The population is small as much of the scenic island is uninhabitable. The lava fields and glaciers do, however, attract great numbers of tourists. Iceland is a republic with a directly elected president.

**Norway** is a specialty of ours. Just look at the title of our website! For most people, Norway is best known for either its oil and gas production or its spectacular mountainous scenery, or both.

**Sweden** is the Nordic region's largest country in terms of both physical size and population. It is traditionally the most industrialized country of the five, known for its steel, iron and car production. The capital city Stockholm is the most populous city in the region. (Cont.)



## Airline Bailout

Many in the Norwegian parliament have criticized Norwegian Air for taking too many risks and getting into debt. But now a majority has agreed to hand over the largest share of a coronavirus-related aviation industry state-aid package to the struggling airline.

Norwegian began the crisis by only canceling 22 long-haul flights while other airlines more reliant on business travel fared far worse. But when governments started to restrict travel and close borders, the situation quickly escalated. Four days ago, Norwegian temporarily laid off 7,300 employees as it canceled 85% of its flights.

Norway's government is keen to retain both an extensive and competitive aviation sector in a country that relies on air travel for reasons of geography. Norway's 5.3 million population is spread over a huge area, and even communities that are close on a map are often kept apart by fjords or mountain passes.

## NORWEGIAN: THE BIG BENEFICIARIES

Of the government's proposed crisis package of 6 billion Norwegian kroner (\$543 million), half will be made available to Norwegian. The support is in the form of state guarantees for bank loans.

Norwegian CEO Jacob Schram made a desperate plea for a cash injection last week. The combination of a drop in demand and border restrictions across the world introduced to try and curb the spread of the novel coronavirus COVID-19 put the airline on the verge of bankruptcy. Schram said the government support shows the airline industry has been heard and called the loan guarantees "very positive."



### Other territories classified as Nordic

The **Faroe Islands** is a north Atlantic archipelago that functions as an autonomous territory within the Kingdom of Denmark.

**Greenland** is also an autonomous territory within the (cont.) Kingdom of Denmark. The westernmost part of the Nordic region, this enormous land mass—mostly covered in ice—is geographically part of North America. However, it has been politically and culturally part of northern Europe for more than 1,000 years.

Perhaps the least known part of the region, the **Åland Islands** is an autonomous, Swedish-

speaking territory of Finland. The archipelago contains thousands of islands, but over 90% of the 30,000 population lives on the largest island, Fasta Åland.

### The Nordic Council

Now for the boring bit. The Nordic Council of Ministers is a forum to facilitate cooperation across the region. Their vision is to work together to “become the most sustainable and integrated region in the world” by 2030.

It may sound a little like the European Union, but there are significant differences. For one thing, members of the Council are not directly elected. They are members of the national parliaments and are nominated by the party groups.

Another major difference is that the full Council of Ministers meets just twice per year. At these forums, Nordic politicians make decisions on issues, but they are not binding decisions. Instead, the individual Nordic governments are strongly encouraged to implement them.

The Nordic Council is led by the Secretary General based in Copenhagen. At the time of writing, the former Swedish MP and governor of Jämtland County, Britt Bohlin, holds the post.

While this formal decision-making takes place infrequently, there is plenty of ongoing work conducted through committees and party groups. Two example committees are one on knowledge and culture in the region, and one on sustainability.

### The Nordic Model

Rising inequality is one of the biggest social and economic issues of our time. Given that the five Nordic countries are some of the world’s most equal on a range of measures, it makes sense to look to them for lessons in how to build a more equal society. When doing this, the phrase “Nordic model” is often used to describe the economy and society.

But what does that actually mean? Well, first things first, it does not mean socialist. Regardless of the current make up of their governments, all five Nordic nations are all social-democratic countries with mixed economies.

The countries are not socialist in the classical sense because they are driven by financial markets rather than by central planning. That being said, the states play a strategic role in the economies. According to one researcher, the success of the Nordic countries shows that major egalitarian reforms and substantial welfare states are possible within prosperous capitalist countries.



# 5 Things to Do in Norway Instead of Skiing

By Jess Scott

If you can't ski or you simply don't enjoy it, don't despair! There's still plenty of things you can do in Norway to get out and about.

Luckily, skiing is not the only way to a Norwegian's heart. Socialising in Norway can be very challenging, particularly as a foreigner, but the best way to make friends is through shared activities and experiences in general ... not just skiing.

So, if you want to get out and socialize but skiing isn't an option, here are five things alternatives:

## 1. Swing dancing

There are several types of swing dances to choose from that are taught in Norway. I've been dancing Lindy Hop for about a year now, and it's still the highlight of my week.

Not only is the swing dancing community incredibly welcoming and diverse, but it's also part of a larger *global* community, so you never have to worry about making friends again, even if you leave Norway.

### Pros:

You can't help but meet people as you have to change partners every two minutes or so

It's fantastic exercise

You don't have to be cold to do it (in fact, the opposite tends to be the true instead – bring lots of water and an extra t-shirt)

### Cons:

You'll never be able to listen to big band music again without dancing

### Why not check out:

Kom og danse (Norway)

Bårdar Swing Club (Oslo)

The Cotton Tails (Bergen)

Trondheim Lindy Hop (Trondheim)

## 2. Knitting

Whenever I think of the women in the north of Norway, I always picture them with a cup of coffee next to them and a bag of yarn by their feet as they knit furiously. But knitting isn't just for older women above the arctic circle.

I have several friends my age in Oslo who are avid knitters and will even bring their knitting on the t-bane or to cafés. While it can be an individual activity, there are also lots of knitting events and workshops where people of all ages and genders gather to knit and learn new things.

### Pros:

You get new friends, a new skill, *and* a really warm pair of socks

You'll never have to worry about buying Christmas presents again

### Cons:

You'll need to find somewhere to put all that yarn that you can't stop buying

### Why not check out:

Oslo Knitting Festival

Bergen Knitting Festival

Tromsø Knitting Festival

## 3. Coding

The IT industry is thriving in Norway right now – not just in terms of job opportunities, but also as a social activity. In the UK, none of my friends have anything to do with IT, while around 75% of my



social circle in Norway work in tech. Whether you're interested in learning coding or you already work in tech, there's an event for you.

**Pros:**

An activity that is excellent for your employability as well as your social life

**Cons:**

Be prepared to become the automatic tech support for your family when you go home for Christmas

**Why not check out:**

Hackathons in Norway

Oslo Legal Hackathon

Oda nettverk

#### 4. Gaming

Much like coding and tech, gaming is now fully mainstream. Naturally, there is a big overlap between the two, but you don't *have* to understand tech to enjoy gaming. I may not have initially realized that python was a coding language as well as a type of snake, but that doesn't stop me from spending my Saturday evenings living vicariously through my Sims!

While there are large-scale events (including The Gathering, which is the second biggest LAN party in the world), smaller LAN parties at someone's apartment are also common. After all, nothing says "Please be friends" like giving out your WiFi password.

**Pros:**

There's such a wide variety of games that you will find something that you enjoy

You don't have to worry about awkward conversation

**Cons:**

Possibly losing entire days to that one quest on Skyrim, as time passes a lot quicker in the game world

**Why not check out:**

Polaris (*previously Gigacon*)

House of Nerds (Oslo)

#### 5. Homebrewing

I'm a teetotaler myself, so it was only after I heard several people mention that they were thinking of starting homebrewing that I even realized that there is a strong homebrewing culture in Norway.

Not only is homebrewing significantly cheaper than buying a beer (about 5 euros per liter, verses your own costs around 1 euro per liter), but it's also a lot easier to get started than you may think, with plenty of classes, an official Norwegian association for homebrewers, Facebook groups, etc.

**Pros:**

You get a great beer for cheap and the satisfaction of knowing you made it

You won't have to re-mortgage your house just for a drink with your friends

**Cons:**

Having to endure hipster jokes from anyone outside of Norway and Sweden that you talk to about homebrewing

**Why not check out:**

Norsk Hjemmebryggeforening

Ølakademiet

Vestbrygg (Bergen)

**Honourable mentions**

If none of these suggestions float your boat, you can always try:

**Frivillig.no** – where you can find a variety of opportunities for volunteering in your area. Find something that makes you feel good, contributes to society *and* introduces you to new people!

**Meetup.com** – where you can find lots of different groups for a whole spectrum of interests or even create your own group: you never know, maybe someone else *also* likes that very specific thing you do!

