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**Trustee (2019-2021)**  
Milo Harpsted

**Trustee (2018-2020)**  
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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 27 Issue 1

JANUAR OG FEBRUAR 2020

Fra  
presidenten:



Happy New Year! I hope that your Christmas was blessed with family time and happy occasions. One of my highlights of the Christmas season was celebrating Julefest with so many of our **Vennligfolk Lodge** members and guests. The evening was absolutely splendid



The church has also provided a sound system for our use. Their system is rather old, and several of our members have had difficulty hearing the people who use this present sound system. Your officers are aware of this problem

and have been trying to work out a way forward to address this. with the festive Scandinavian décor, delicious food, reflections of our lodge's 25 years, installation of officers, Christmas music by the Steven Calgaro Choral Group, and Jule Nisse & Elf distributing presents. This wonderful evening happened because so many of you made it happen. *Tusen Takk* to everyone who planned, decorated, set tables, cooked & baked, donated money, and set-up & cleaned-up. Sixty-three members and guests enjoyed Julefest 2019. Yes, Norwegians know how to have a party!

and have been trying to work out a way forward to address this.

With the New Year, we have some new things happening in our lodge. **Vennligfolk Lodge** is now on Facebook, thanks to our Webmaster Officer, Patricia Serio. If you are on Facebook already, check us out. And if you're not on Facebook yet, Patricia Serio and Kathy Clucas can help you get on Facebook. These gals have offered to show members how to set this up. It's not hard, but I must tell you - - Facebook can be addicting.

After much deliberation, we now believe we have a solution. Vennligfolk Lodge and St. Paul's UMC have a plan of working together to provide a new and much better sound system. Carl Rasmussen will tell our membership about the plan and our lodge's financial contribution. Your officers are all in agreement with the proposal, but we also need our membership to make the final decision. There will be a vote on the proposed plan to help financially with the purchase and set-up of a new sound system for Fletcher Hall at our January meeting.

St. Paul's United Methodist Church has been so gracious in letting our lodge use their facility as our meeting place for the last five years. In my opinion, one of the reasons our membership has grown is because of meeting at St. Paul's Church.

I always feel like I'm back in "teacher mode" when I write my January - February newsletter. That's because I need to remind all of you of some homework that is due this month. Yes, it is time to count up and submit the hours you have worked on **Vennligfolk Lodge** events. If you have been faithfully using the worksheets handed out a year ago, this is simple to do. If you haven't been using the worksheets to track your hours, you will have

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## Gratulerer med dagen

Congratulations on the day!

### Januar

- Lynn Rasmussen - 7
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January						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

### Februar

- Gene Numsen - 19

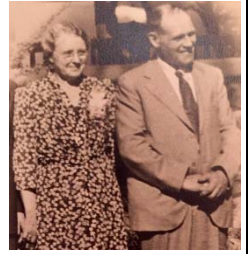
February						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
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VENNLIGBLAD

# What's Happening at Vennligfolk???

## January 12, 2020 "Our Grandparents' Norwegian Emigration"

Lodge President Susan Morton and her brother, Tom Johnson, will share interesting new family research they gathered on their paternal grandparents' emigration from Sarpsborg, Norway in April 1906 and their life after settling in Wisconsin. John and Olina Johnson thought their stay in America would only be for a few years. Little did they know that those "few years" ended up being a lifetime!



## February 9, 2020 "Scandinavian Happiness"

Year after year the Danes, Finns, Swedes, Norwegians, and Icelanders, rank among the happiest folks in the world. Richard Ruppel, Emeritus Professor of World Languages and Literature, UWSP, will explore what these cultures have or do that produces this "happiness" and what we might learn from them.

## March 8, 2020 "The Buzz on Bees"

Bees provide us with honey and pollinate our crops, yet their very survival is imperiled. Bee enthusiast, Pamela Fleishauer will provide a short history of our long relationship with bees, current bee keeping practices and what can be done to encourage the survival of honey bees and other pollinators. Pamela will bring a hive, frames and other bee equipment for viewing.



## April 5, 2020 "A Norwegian's Battle for Breath"

Jedidiah & Kendra Haas will talk about Jedidiah's diagnosis at an early age, his battle with Cystic Fibrosis, receiving a double lung transplant in 2017 and his inspiring message of hope and faith. The couple call it "Living with CF and winning." May is CF Awareness Month.

(Because of Easter, note our earlier monthly meeting date!)



## May 3, 2020 "Our 2019 Norwegian Experience"

Cindy and Mark Kluck will describe their "dream-come-true" 4-week trip to Norway complete with cozy visits with 26 cousins; fun surprises; stops at ancestral homes; and thrilling scenery.

(Because of Cultural Fest, note our earlier monthly meeting date!)

## May 9 2020 (Saturday) Cultural Fest 2020

Food, Fun & Music from Around the World. Save the date and make plans to participate in this primary fundraiser for our lodge. 10am - 5pm - Stevens Point Area Senior High



## Other Events of Interest

January 31-February 2 **Iola Winter Carnival** – Ski Jumping – Skijoring - Snowshoe Racing

Saturday February 1, **Lutefisk Supper & Vendor Craft Sale** - 1PM to 6PM Adults \$14

at the Iola-Scandinavia High School – 40 Vendors selling Norwegian & other craft items





# Julefest Photos – December 8





## Book Review by Patti Rous: "Clearing Out" written by Helene Uri

Preparing to leave for a three-week trip to Norway, I realized I needed some good reading material. An interview with Helene Uri about her newly translated book, "Clearing Out" was carried in the "Norwegian American Newspaper." The interview got me hooked. Released in June 2019, the book is a translation by Barbara Sjolholm published by the University of Minnesota Press.



"Clearing Out" is a novel made up of two stories--one a true tale from the author--we come to understand her discovery that her father's grandfather "from the North" was actually a Sea Sami. This was something that was never talked about and was unknown until a distant relative called her. Helene needed to know more and shares what she learned with her readers.

The other story is fiction but grew out of Uri's experiences as we meet Ellinor, a linguist, as she sets off to Finnmark to document the state of Sami language there as a research assistant.

I found this a fascinating read, weaving back and forth between the author's personal journey of discovery and the fictional one of Ellinor and her relationships and friendships she discovers in the far north.

"Clearing Out," in Norwegian is "Rydde Ut" and can often pertain to adult children dealing with lifelong possessions of elderly parents moving out of homes into smaller ones, or into care facilities. But it can also mean "Utrydde" which translates as eradication, elimination, or extermination! We are given some of each and much food for thought. Of the over six thousand languages in the world, 50 die out each year! That is one every week!

The book caused me to think about the Sami people of today and their history. What was it like during the "intense Norwegianization" period when the aim was to stamp out Sami language and culture? It is not hard to imagine that there are many Americans of Norwegian descent that may have similar stories to Uri's in the discovery of their relatives from the north.

This book available to buy or download from Amazon and I recommend it. Inter-library loan may also be helpful. The book got me searching for more books to learn more about Sami language, culture, and history. I welcome any suggestions. This book review is written to fulfill an elective requirement for a Cultural Skill's Level 1 recognition by Patti Rous.

## Vennligfolk Now on Facebook!



If you already have a Facebook account or are interested, you can now find our lodge by searching for @sofnvennligfolk; or, SOFN #5-627 Vennligfolk Lodge. Click "Like" and "Follow". There are many benefits for our group to be on Facebook. Some include: building a community of folks interested in Norway and all things Scandinavian; more exposure; membership growth; new connections; more friendships; new ideas; and a loyal fan base. For those not on Facebook, who would like join up, both Kathy Clucas and Patricia Serio are willing to help you get going. You may reach Kathy at (715) 321-0934 or Patricia at (239) 994-3868.



## A Sound System for Lodge Meeting Room

Vennligfolk Lodge officers have been looking to get better voice amplification equipment for some time. At our January meeting Vennligfolk members will be asked to vote on a cost sharing plan with St. Pauls UMC to accomplish this goal. Responding to a Vennligfolk request, St Pauls UMC got a quotation to purchase a new sound system similar to one recently installed in their main multi-purpose assembly room. The cost would be \$2,700 including installation, and a built-in cabinet to house the equipment. St Pauls indicated that if Vennligfolk was able to contribute \$1,000, they would fundraise to complete the project.

Vennligfolk Lodge Officers at their December 3 meeting voted to recommend to lodge members that we match \$500 in lodge funds with the \$500 recently received from the Marvin Lang family in his memory. Lodge members will be asked to vote to support this dollar amount at our January 12 meeting.



**From Our FIRST Lodge Presidenten . . .**

**Greetings Vennligfolk members,**

I am thrilled to see the lodge flourishing. Great job everyone! We wish we could be there for Julefest.



Diana and I are still working hard down here in the Atlanta area. Our daughter, Andrea, has a seven-year-old son who is a delight. Our son Jon and his wife, Mandi, started their family a couple months ago with a beautiful daughter. Both grandchildren live in the Atlanta suburbs.

My interest in Norway grows constantly. When I graduated from college 39 years ago I backpacked solo in Norway for eight weeks. At that time, I decided eventually get to Svalbard (part of Norway) and Iceland. I want to brag about our trip and inspire others to visit these places. For our 30th anniversary in 2012 we took a Hurtigruten expedition from Iceland to Svalbard! I'm enclosing two pictures from Svalbard. One is of an Ice Bear consuming a walrus on Moffen Island. The other is of a walrus that floated by on an ice flow. Moffen Island is 600 miles from the North Pole! I wore shorts nearly every day on the trip.



We also were very fortunate to stop and explore Jan Mayen (also part of Norway) on our way to Svalbard. I proudly joined the Jan

Mayen Naked Bathing Club with a skinny dip in the arctic ocean off Jan Mayen! The third picture is of Beerenberg volcano on the northern edge of Jan Mayen. It is the world's northernmost volcano. This particular picture was taken at midnight facing south! It is one of my all-time favorite moments.

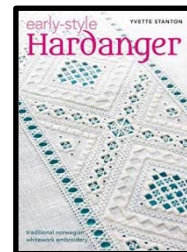


With all of you and Norway in my heart and on my mind, take care.

Tusen takk  
Doug and Diana Strommen

**Cultural Skills Corner**

**Stitchers**-Time to pick up the needles! We'll meet January 29 at 1PM again to continue the Hardanger lessons at Karen Trzebiatowski's Nelsonville home. Others, bring your current projects. Karen will be glad to help folks with their Level One knitting requirements. New members are welcome. If interested call Karen and talk about your interests and how she can help you get started. Knitting, weaving, and Hardanger are individual Stitchery skills that each can lead to a pin recognition. Call or email Karen at 715-824-7679 or Karentzeb@gmail.com The group will meet again Wed. Feb. 26, at a location to be determined.



The **Reading Group** and **Genealogy Group** will meet at St Pauls UMC on Tuesday January 28<sup>th</sup>. Reading Group will meet at 6PM and Genealogy at 7PM. February meetings will be set then.



Participating in a Cultural Skills activity could be just the thing you need to pass through winter! There are 14 different Cultural Skill activities that can be pursued on your own or in a group. Cultural Skills coordinator Karen Trzebiatowski has information on them all! You can also get information and view videos at the SON website (sofn.com). It is a little difficult to locate. You need to log-in as a member, then go to "Member Resources" then "Cultural Programming" then "Cultural Skills Program" to find the videos. It is worth checking out.

**Julefest Punch Recipe**

**By Lynn Rasmussen**



I received many requests for my recipe for the punch served at Julefest. The following is the low sugar recipe that I used. Regular cranberry juice and Canada Dry Ginger Ale can be substituted, but it doesn't change the flavor much and just adds to the sugar content!

- 1 qt Lite Cranberry Cocktail juice
- 1 qt pineapple juice
- ¼ cup sugar
- 2 tsp almond extract

Mix the above ingredients and chill for 4 hours

When ready to serve, stir in:

- 1 2-liter bottle of Diet Canada Dry ginger ale

## Introducing: Kathy Clucas

Kathy grew up in idyllic Rice Lake, Wisconsin, where she graduated high school and earned her Associate Degree at Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College. Kathy was close to her Norwegian grandmother, Hazel (Hustad), where she spent many summers walking three miles to her grandparents' farm creating wonderful memories baking, cooking, and watching her crotchet.

In the summer of 1978, she moved to Stevens Point where she began her career at Sentry Insurance. In 1987, she was married to John Clucas and together they had three daughters; Anastacia, Victoria, and Alexandra. Anastacia lives in Milwaukee and is a Care Manager for Community Care of Milwaukee, Victoria lives in Chicago and works as a Marketing professional for SmithBucklin, and Alexandra is a Hair Stylist at Studio 2827 and lives in Plover.



Kathy in Norway 2019

Kathy's daughter, Alex, gave her a DNA kit for a Christmas gift the previous year which sparked her interest in her family history. After many hours of research, she was able to find the farm where her 3<sup>rd</sup> great-grandfather, Eric Erichsen, emigrated from in Buskerud, Norway. So, after retiring from a 36-year career at Sentry Insurance, she and her daughters made the trip to Norway. They were able to meet their 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> cousins who still live on the farm that her 3<sup>rd</sup> great grandfather left to come to America. The trip was amazing!

Kathy volunteers in the Woodlands Church office one morning a week and enjoys gardening, cooking, baking, traveling, and spending time with friends and family. She also participates in the SONS genealogy class and knitting class.

**From the Editor:** Over the next year we'll look to do articles on both new and long-term members. Lodge members are asked to submit short introduction articles on their own or please respond when asked.

*Tusen Takk, Carl R. Editor*

### ***Fra Presidenten, - Continued from page 1***

to make a good "guesstimate" to figure out your hours. Here's what you need to do . . . Count up all the hours you spent on "Fraternal Events." For example: the hours you spent attending cultural skills classes, committee meetings & officers' meetings, baking and/or cooking when providing refreshments for lodge meetings, setting-up for or cleaning-up after lodge meetings, going on road trips, etc. Anything you did for the benefit of our lodge is considered a "Fraternal Event." Most of your hours will be in this category. Next, you need to count up the hours you spent on "Community Events." Any hours you spent working on or at the Cultural Festival would count as a "Community Event." Finally, you will need to give these *two totals* (Fraternal hours and Community hours) to our lodge secretary, Tom Johnson. Tom has to submit these numbers to Sons of Norway headquarters. Why is this important? These numbers help in keeping Sons of Norway status as a non-profit organization. Yes, we do need to do this assignment. If you have questions about this task, I can answer them at our January lodge meeting. I will also be handing out new timesheets for 2020 at that meeting.

Finally, I must express my appreciation for voting me in as your president for another year. This is a position I never imagined that I could handle, but with the help of the many competent officers I have been privileged to work with these last five years, here I am . . . starting my sixth year of leading this remarkable group of **Vennligfolk Lodge** members. Tusen takk.

*Vennlig hilsen, Susan Morton*



### *a little in English...*

**Where did the *julenissen* come from and why do we bring a fir tree into the living room?**

#### **Christmas tree**

There are several theories about how this tradition came to Norway, but the very first Christmas tree that was observed in this country was supposedly at Nes ironworks owned by Jacob Aall in the 1840s. This is not a Norwegian or Scandinavian tradition, but it probably came from Protestant Germany. It was not until 1870-1880 that it became commonplace in schoolhouses for the teachers to decorate a tree.

The smell of fresh trees and the green color was, however, part of the festival in older peasant culture. You washed the floors with lye and sand, and to create a party atmosphere, you topped it with finely chopped spruce or juniper that you sprinkled on the floor.

#### **Julenissen**

*Julenissen* [the Christmas pixie/Santa] is a figure made up of several different traditions. As a supernatural creature, he has many names. *Fjøsningen* [the barn pixie] was a little fellow; he often had a beard and was clad in gray, and he lived on farms. At Christmas you needed to leave porridge or a splash of beer in the barn so that he would not pull pranks the rest of the year. If he did not receive these gifts, he might make knots in the horse's mane or do something to hurt the cows.

The Anglo-American tradition originates from St. Nicolas of Europe who is a well-known saint. During Advent, he distributed gifts to those who had been kind, and punished the bad ones. And then we have the Coca-Cola Santa, the advertising version of St. Nicolas from the interwar period.

The *julenissen* [Christmas pixie] as we know it often has several of these characteristics.

### *litt på norsk...*

**Vet du hvorfor vi fikk *julenissen* og tok et granter inn i stua?**



#### **Julegranen**

Det er flere teorier om hvordan denne tradisjonen kom til Norge, men det aller første juletreet som ble observert her til lands skal ha vært på Nes jernverk hos verkseier Jacob Aall i 1840-årene. Dette er ikke en norsk eller skandinavisk tradisjon, men den kom antageligvis fra det protestantiske Tyskland. Først i 1870-1880 årene ble dette allemannseie og da gjennom skolehusene hvor lærerne pyntet treet.

Men duften av friske trær og grønnfargen hørte med til høytidsmarkeringen i den eldre bondekulturen hvor man vasket gulvene med lut og sand, og for å få feststemningen toppet man det med finhakket gran eller einer som man drysset ut over gulvet.

#### **Julenissen**

Julenissen er en figur som er støpt sammen av veldig mange ulike tradisjoner. Som overnaturlig skapning har den mange navn. *Fjøsningen* var en liten kar, han hadde ofte skjegg og var gråkledd, som bodde på gården. Men til jul skulle han ha grøt eller en skvett øl i fjøset for at han ikke skulle lage krøll resten av året. Fikk han ikke det, kunne han lage knuter i manen på hesten eller gjøre noe vondt mot kyrne.



Den angloamerikanske tradisjonen stammer fra St. Nicolas i Europa som er kjent som helgen. I tiden før jul delte han ut gaver til de som hadde vært snille og straffet de slemme. Og så har vi Coca-Cola nissen, eller reklameversjonen av St. Nicolas fra mellomkrigstiden.

Julenissen vi kjenner, har ofte i seg litt av alle disse utgavene.



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



**SAVE THE DATE!**  
 Sunday, January 12, 2020  
**"Our Grandparents' Norwegian Emigration"**  
 By Susan Morton & Tom Johnson

Sunday, February 9, 2020  
**"Scandinavian Happiness"**  
 By Richard Ruppel

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](mailto:Vennligblad@gmail.com)  
*Mange Tusen Takk, Carl Rasmussen, Editor*



**Support Tubfrim.** As you receive mail with postage stamps, cut the postage off leaving a ¼ inch border of paper. Bring your stamps to the next regular Vennligfolk meeting. Start today with cutting the stamp from the mailed edition of Vennligblad!

**SONS of NORWAY**  
 Celebrating 125 Years

Sons of Norway celebrates 125 years beginning January 16, 2020. Watch for celebration activities and commemorative items.

*Celebrating 25 years of Vennlig!*

Vennligfolk Lodge 5-627 began celebrating our 25<sup>th</sup> year as a chartered lodge October 9, 2019 Leif Erikson Day

**Celebrate 125 years in style! With Commemorative Gear Available at [sofn.com](http://sofn.com)**

