



# SONS of NORWAY



January 2021  
Walworth County, WI

## Norsemen of the Lakes 5-650

Godt nytt år to all of you and congratulations for surviving 2020. Although it has been a challenging year, we can be grateful for many blessings. One is that they are rolling out the vaccinations, although it will seem not to come fast enough.

Please, if any of you are in need of anything, let me know. I believe the Sons of Norway Foundation is available for financial assistance if you require a boost of that kind. Additionally, we are all here to lend an ear if you need someone to just "vent" your frustrations. I know we are all anxious to "get back to normal," however, I heard on the news that it may be late in 2021 before that happens. We will have to engage our Norge patience and pray for one another. God bless and Godt nytt år. Corlene

**A Virtual Woodcarving Class** will be offered by James Ray Miller. In this three-session class (Feb. 4, 11, 18) you will learn everything needed to complete the Woodcarving cultural skill pin - Level 1. Course fee is \$60 and includes one prepared wood carving blank. Max class size is 12. Sign up at: <http://son-class1.jamesraymiller.com>

### Virtual Nordic News

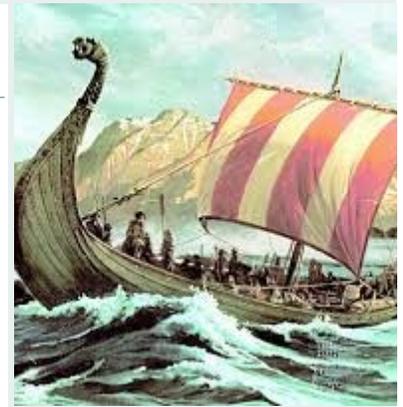
Nordic News introduces you to experts on Nordic and Nordic-American heritage. It is a "radio show" produced by our Fifth District and aired every Tuesday at 6:20 PM (Central), 7:20 PM (Eastern). You can view it live each week, or you can enjoy recorded past episodes on the Fifth District Website. Some of the topics have been *Ole Evinrude: Norwegian-American inventor*, *Coffin Ships - Death on the Ocean Crossing* and *One Family's Story*, **The Joy of Norwegian Woodcarving by James Ray Miller (see above class offering)**, and Viking Ship funerals.

To view any of the past programs,

go to the District Website at <http://www.sonsofnorway5.com/> click "Programs" on the menu, then click "Speakers Bureau" then choose one of the many programs recorded and click on the link for the one you would like to watch, and it will automatically play.

We would appreciate your comments and suggestions on these programs. To make a comment about the program, click on the "Comments" button on the upper right corner of the TechSmith Screen-cast screen page (which is where the video plays).

In the "Add a Comment" form, enter your name, email address and comment. Then click on the "Submit" button. We would love to have suggestions about future topics you would like to hear about or share with use something you have information about.



### Gratulare Med Dagen

#### December Birthdays

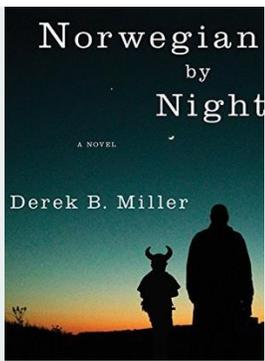
Dennis Westgor	8th
Deb Weber	11th
Catherine Nolan	23rd
Marra Andreas	26th
Trevor Wilson	27th
Chandler Rosecrance	31st

#### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Greetings .....	1
Virtual Nordic News .....	1
Book review .....	2
Winter in Norway .....	2
Norway Gets Vaccine .....	3
Finn-Kirsten, Witch .....	4
Norwegian/Americans ..	5
Landslide: 7 Dead .....	6

#### KALENDAR

Let's all hope and pray for extermination of the Covid 19 virus by spring so we can resume some semblance of normalcy.



Derek B. Miller's affecting debut, about a cantankerous Jewish widower transplanted to Norway who becomes party to a hate crime, is an unusual hybrid: part memory novel, part police procedural, part sociopolitical tract and part existential meditation.

Native New Yorker Sheldon "Donny" Horowitz, 82, is a retired watch repairman living in Oslo with his granddaughter Rhea, an architect, and her new Norwegian husband, Lars. She thinks her grandfather is slipping into dementia. Haunted by his experiences as a Marine sniper in the Korean War and by his son Saul's death in Vietnam, Sheldon sometimes has trouble distinguishing between fantasy and reality. He thinks the Koreans are still after him. But he is more strong-willed, decisive and wily than his granddaughter thinks.

When a stranger murders the immigrant woman who lives upstairs, Sheldon shelters and then escapes with her young son, fearing the boy is in danger, too. On the run with the boy, who doesn't speak English, the old man deftly talks his way into a pricey Oslo hotel, gives the boy a makeover to disguise him, steals a boat and heads to Rhea's summer home. In close pursuit are the killer and tough-minded Chief Inspector Sigrid Ødegård, a staunch opponent of her country's open-door policy.

Sheldon, who has never forgiven himself for encouraging his son to go to war like himself, boasts an abrasive wit. And Miller makes the setting a powerful character as well. Hovering over the narrative is Norway's roundup of its Jewish population during the Nazi occupation—for which, the author points out—the nation didn't formally apologize until 2012.

This novel, first published in Norway, was worth the wait. This title is available at our library system in hard copy, ebook, and audio disc format.

## What is a Norwegian winter really like?

November 6, 2018 by David Nikel



and "the white one".

This of course isn't a scientific definition! But there is a fast descent from the short autumn season into the dark, wet and windy days of the early winter, which tends to run through until Christmas. It's the time of year with the most rainfall, but temperatures tend to remain above freezing.

Once New Year is done and dusted, the days start to get longer once again and the likelihood of snow is much greater. I can't understate how much snow brightens things up here in Trondheim! On the flip side, this is also easily the coldest time of the year.

Depending on where you live, snow can fall as early as September and as late as May. Typically in Trondheim we expect snow from around mid-November or early December through to Easter, but there are many, many days without snowfall, of course! Some years we haven't seen any snow at all until January.

### How cold is the Norwegian winter?

Many people planning a visit contact me to ask, how cold is the winter in Norway? The answer again, of course, is that it depends!

The long Norwegian coastline reaps the benefits of the ocean currents throughout the year, which have a warming effect in the winter. The average temperature in the northern Lofoten Islands rarely dips below freezing, despite having the same latitude as northern Canada.

Indeed, if you're from Minnesota or parts of Canada, the Norwegian version of the season may well be surprisingly mild compared to what you're used to.

That said, for most people moving here, the winter is going to be much colder than you expect. In the cities a daily temperature of around freezing is common, but there are milder spells every year.

Each year in Trondheim the temperature dips below +14F a handful of times, and maybe gets as low as -4F once a year.

The coldest temperature I've personally experienced in Norway was -9F in Oslo, but it can get significantly colder than that away from the coastline in places such as Røros and on the Finnmark mountain plateau in northern Norway.

### Norway in December

The run-up to the festive period is a popular time to visit Norway and I get emails from many people asking specifically about this time of year. Along with January, December is the darkest time of the year but the streets are lit by candlelight, white festive lights, and Christmas markets. But not necessarily snow!

While snow is absolutely normal at this time of

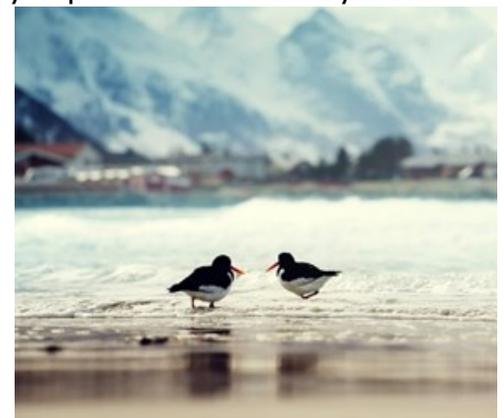
year, it's not a guarantee. January to March tends to be the period with the most snowfall.

Perhaps not as white and cold as you think!

The nights are drawing in (fast), the temperatures are plummeting, and the Marius sweaters are everywhere. Yep, it's that time of the year again.

### When is the winter in Norway?

I've written before about how I perceive there to be five seasons in Norway, with winter very much split into "the wet one"



Lofoten in the winter

Here are the sort of temperatures you can expect in various cities around the country during the month of December, based on a long-term range of the average temperatures:

**Oslo** (south-east): 23F to +36F

**Kristiansand** (south): 24F to +36F

**Bergen** (west): +31F to +41F

**Trondheim** (central): +25F to +34F

**Tromsø** (north): +23F to +33F

Remember these are statistics, so the actual temperature on any one day can be considerably colder! If these temperatures don't seem very low to you, that's because the coldest temperatures tend to be experienced throughout the country between mid-January and March.

### Winter in Oslo

The Norwegian capital is a popular choice to visit during the winter. Unlike many other places in Norway, Oslo remains well and truly "open for business" from a tourism perspective.

Most attractions keep their regular opening hours (many have a schedule for the entire off-season) while some offer extra interest with a Christmas theme. Bærums Verk runs a Christmas market including craft stalls and reindeer sled rides for the kids, while several other festive markets spring up around the capital's streets.

One popular spot is the market at Spikersuppa, the open area between Karl Johans gate, the Norwegian Parliament building, and the National Theatre. Here a small Christmas market proves very popular every year, as does the free-to-use ice rink, for which skates can be rented on site if you don't have your own.

While I understand that they are a truly spectacular sight when covered in snow, there is a reason you don't see too many white-dusted photos of the fjords: It's hard to get there with many mountain passes closed and accommodation options are few and far between.

Road closures include many of Norway's popular National Scenic Routes, including Trollstigen, Gamle Strynefjellsvegen and the Sognefjellet mountain road.

Even when roads are open, conditions can be precarious, especially if you're not used to driving in snow and on icy roads. Take care, and perhaps consider a different time of year for your epic road trip.



Ice rink at Spikersuppa, Oslo



Last issue I inserted an article about popular Norwegian board games. I thought some of you might like to give them to kids or grandkids for Christmas gifts. I took my own advice and purchased a game called Yggdrasil Chronicles for my son and daughter-in-law. They have been playing (just the two of them) and learning the game in order to introduce it to their group of friends. My son says it is really

fun, fast paced and quite different because one plays against the game board and not each other. Players need to cooperate. I thought I would let you know in case you were thinking about one of the games for your family member or neighbor. I purchased it on Amazon for \$55.

## Norway Gets Vaccine

**Norway expects to receive its first batch of Covid-19 vaccines on December 26th and begin vaccinating the following day.**

The timescale was confirmed after the EU Commission gave the green light on Monday to the Pfizer/BioNTech coronavirus vaccine for use across the European Union, following approval by the European Medicines Agency.

The EMA's approval paves the way for the roll out of the Pfizer vaccine throughout EU countries and also clears the vaccine for use in Norway and Iceland, which are signed up to the EU's procurement scheme.

Norway will receive an initial batch of 10,000 doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine, Norwegian Institute of Public Health (NIPH) area director Geir Bukholm said at a press briefing.

Seven municipalities -- Oslo, Ringsaker, Hamar, Stange, Sarpsborg, Fredrikstad and Hvaler -- will receive the first doses. The seven were chosen based on current infection rates and logistics, NIPH chief medical advisor Are Stuwitz Berg said at the briefing. A second batch of around 35,000 doses is expected to arrive in Norway on December 28th.

Following this, a set number of vaccines will be distributed across the country weekly, with distribution adjusted according to population sizes. "What we now know is that the distribution plan for the new vaccine is around 40,000 doses per week from the start of January," Bukholm said.

# Norway's Forgotten Witch

January 31, 2019 by [Gemini](#)

**Finn-Kirsten Iversdatter was the last person to be executed for witchcraft in Central Norway, but her story was mostly forgotten. Until now.**



## **An almost forgotten case**

The case has been almost completely absent from Norwegian history, despite the fact that it caused an uproar at the time. It was the talk of the town in Trondheim, between the remote villages from the south to the north of Trøndelag, and even all the way to Nordland.

The story itself, and the characters that emerge from the court records, could easily be from the pages of a fantastic and macabre novel. The trial against Finn-Kirsten started in the isolated mountain village Støren in 1674 and rumbled on until 1677.

After that, it disappeared into the darkness of history. Finn-Kirsten Iversdatter was the last person to be executed

for witchcraft in Central Norway, with over thirty people from all levels of society at risk of the same fate throughout the trial.

## **On trial in Trøndelag**

In the mountain village of Støren in the south of Trøndelag county, a poor Sami woman was put before the local court in 1674. She was due to be interrogated by the local bailiff Jens Randulf on charges of harming people and animals in Gauldalen, striking them down with illness and misfortune using malicious witchcraft.

The court was crowded; all the farmers wanted to see and hear her explanation. The vagrant woman had roamed the villages, irritating the locals with begging, and threatening them in order to get food. When denied, she mumbled dangerous curses, vowing that the farmers would no longer enjoy their prosperity. Afterwards, horses would fall dead, cows would not give milk, and inexplicable diseases would afflict the farming families.

The repulsive woman had drifted down into the village communities from the savage mountain, where the southern Sami people roamed. The woman was of the Sami people and her name was Kirsten Iversdatter, but she was more commonly known as “Finn-Kirsten.”

The farmers had, for several years, bumped into her in their villages, but no sooner was she standing in one of their doorways, than she would suddenly disappear. No one knew where she came from or where she went.

## **A common view of Sami people at the time**

The woman frightened the farmers, because everyone believed the Sami people were in contact with wild chaotic forces, demonic energies neither priest nor Our Lord himself could tame. The Sami were infamous for being great witch masters. They could summon the spirits of their ancestors and gods of nature with their magical drums (the so-called “rune-drum”), enabling them to both see the future and divine news from distant places. Additionally, their percussive magic could find lost items and influence fortunes in life and business.

Historical sources tell us that Norwegian farmers would pay the Sami for such magical services, but that one should be wary of their company. If one incurred the wrath of a Sami, so the Norwegians believed, the Sami could release a “gand,” an evil spirit and/or a physical object, which had the power to strike a man dead, even to split mountains.

## **Accused and arrested**

On 18 February 1674, the bailiff's assistants, the peasant sheriffs in Støren, arrested Finn-Kirsten. She was placed under lock and key to await trial, during which she vehemently denied performing any evil witchcraft. However, the chaplain of Støren, Peder Schjelderup, and the local villagers could all testify that the frightening vagrant had not sought the church on a regular basis, as all subjects of the kingdom were obligated to do. Moreover, Finn-Kirsten would roam with two daughters, one twenty years old and the other just two, and neither could be shown to have been born in wedlock as required by law.

Even with a confession to witchcraft missing, often crucial for securing a guilty verdict, one could at least determine that the children had been “bred in sin.” Finn-Kirsten was convicted for her sacrilegious sins and fornication and was sentenced to die “from her neck,” i.e. a beheading.

After the judgement, she was placed in the custody of the local bailiff Jens Randulf, a man with experience in both accusing witches and in getting such “devil disciples” to talk. After some time as his prisoner, she finally confessed “to have given herself to the Devil.” She identified herself as an apprentice of Satan and claimed that he used to come to her in the shape of a dog.

### Met the devil in the mountains

She said that she and others had met the Devil in the mountains encircling Støren on a regular basis. Finn-Kirsten’s case now changed from being a church disciplinary matter to a full-blown witch trial. The new confession would be punishable under the Danish-Norwegian criminal code for “real witches,” a law that demanded death by burning for anyone “in league with the Devil.”

After this new confession, the case was transferred to the Trondheim Court of Appeal. Finn-Kirsten was detained in “Kongsgården” (the King’s royal palace) in Trondheim city – today known as the Archbishop’s Palace – under the custody of the county governor Joachim Vind.

### Thirty accomplices named

After torture and interrogation by Vind and the public officers of Støren, she named more than thirty people as accomplices, ranging from both wealthy and poor in Trondheim to prominent farmers in the valley of Gauldalen.

Amongst other things, Finn-Kirsten “confessed” that the son of Inger Rognessen had visited Hell three times; she claimed that another woman called Inger (who lived by the city bridge) had levitated through air with her, and that she knew both white magic and sorcery.

Finn-Kirsten also claimed that Inger was eager to become an apprentice of the Devil, but that she refused her the same “honor” as she had only served Satan for two years. Guri, a carpenter’s wife, was alleged to have been ridden into the mountains to meet the devil twice, but Finn-Kirsten could not say if Guri was the rider or if someone rode her!

### Sentencing and the subsequent witch-hunt

This was the end for Finn-Kirsten. Her punishment was increased from beheading to death by burning, as the statutes against witchcraft allowed; she was executed outside the city gates 12 October 1674, with a huge crowd present.

Even after her death, the accusations against her alleged “accomplices” in witchcraft demanded investigation, tying up the judicial system in Trøndelag for years to come. The witch trial was the talk of the town, both in the city and the surrounding villages. Gossip was everywhere, and the scene was set for an intense witch hunt in southern Trøndelag.

The aftermath of the case lasted until 1677, and many people were at times in danger of suffering the same fate as Finn-Kirsten. However, she was the last woman burned as a witch in Central Norway.



A fog-filled Gauldalen valley (Photo: Ole Husby / Flickr)

## ★ Scandinavian Americans ★



### Residents with Scandinavian heritage

By state		Percentage of population	
1. Minnesota	1.58 million	1. North Dakota	36.1%
2. California	1.51 million	2. Minnesota	32.1%
3. Washington	739k	3. South Dakota	21.5%
4. Wisconsin	728k	4. Utah	14.9%
5. Illinois	575k	5. Montana	14.1%

Discover more on [www.lifeinnorway.net](http://www.lifeinnorway.net)

# Hope Fades in Norway Landslide That Left 7 Dead; 3 Missing

By JAN M. OLSEN 3 January 2021

Hope fades in Norway landslide that left 7 dead; 3 missing

By JAN M. OLSEN 3 January 2021

COPENHAGEN, Denmark (AP) — Norwegian officials insisted Monday that there was “still hope” of finding survivors in air pockets five days after a landslide killed at least seven people as it carried away homes. Three people are still missing.

Police spokesman Roger Pettersen said search efforts in the landslide-hit the village of Ask, 16 miles northeast of Oslo, are still considered “a rescue operation.” But only bodies have been found in the past few days.

The region’s below-freezing temperatures are “working against us, but we have been very clear in our advice to the (rescuers) that as long as there are cavities where the missing may have stayed, it is possible to survive,” said Dr. Halvard Stave, who is taking part in the rescue operation.

Temperatures in Ask were minus 17.6 degrees Fahrenheit on Monday.

“I would still describe the situation as very unreal,” said Anders Oestensen, the mayor of Gjerdrum municipality, where Ask is located.

Authorities said one victim was found Friday, three more on Saturday and three others Sunday. Ten people have been injured, one of them seriously.

Search teams patrolled with dogs as helicopters and drones with heat-detecting cameras flew over the ravaged hillside in Ask, a village of 5,000 that was hit by the worst landslide in modern Norwegian history. At least 1,000 people were evacuated.

The landslide early Wednesday cut across a road through Ask, leaving a deep, crater-like ravine. Some buildings are now hanging on the edge of the ravine, which grew to be 2,300 feet long and 1,000 feet wide. At least nine buildings with over 30 apartments were destroyed.

“This is completely terrible,” King Harald V said after the Norwegian royals visited the landslide site on Sunday.

The limited number of daylight hours in Norway at this time of year and fears of further erosion have hampered rescue operations. The ground is fragile at the site and unable to hold the weight of heavy rescue equipment.

The exact cause of the accident is not yet known but the area is known for having a lot of quick clay, a material that can change from solid to liquid form. Experts said the quick clay, combined with excessive precipitation and damp winter weather, may have contributed to the landslide.

In 2005, Norwegian authorities warned people not to construct residential buildings in the area, saying it was “a high-risk zone” for landslides, but houses were eventually built there later in the decade.

Norway’s biggest landslide was in 1893 in Verdal, north of Trondheim in mid-Norway and killed 116 people, the VG newspaper reported. It was reportedly up to 40 times bigger than the one in Ask where somewhere between 1.4 million and 2 million cubic meters of land tumbled down.



Rescue workers continue their efforts on the site of a major landslide in Ask, Norway, Jan. 4, 2021. (Terje Pedersen/NTB via AP)