

Askeladden News



SONS of
NORWAY

ASKELADDEN
LODGE 5-610

★
April 2025

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Next meeting

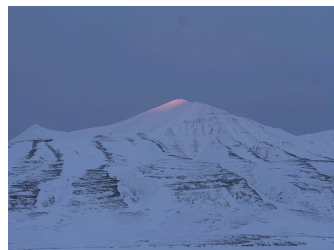
Sunday, April 13, 2025, 2 PM

Our Adventures in Svalbard
James & Elizabeth Kraatz



Now that the first spring flowers are appearing and the days are getting longer and sunnier, winter will soon be a distant memory. But for our April meeting, we will revisit winter with a trip report from Elizabeth Kraatz and her son James. Elizabeth was our 2024 Norway trip award winner. This January, she & James traveled far above the Arctic Circle to Svalbard, the island archipelago home of polar bears and a small community of hardy humans (including Elizabeth's daughter Alice, who is attending Folkehøyskole there). Svalbard is so far north, it experiences polar night (the sun never rises above the horizon) for >80 days and midnight sun (the sun never sets) for >90 days!

We will begin our meeting with a potluck- please bring a dish to pass. I'm looking forward to pickled herring and smoked salmon and all the other delicious dishes (taco søndag anyone?) ! After our food & fellowship, we will enjoy the Kraatz's presentation. Following the presentation, we will have a brief business meeting.



Ser deg snart! (See you soon!)

The February sun waits just below the horizon for the end of polar night season in Svalbard.

Photo taken by Alice Kraatz

April Reminders



- The language learning group meets Wednesday 4/16 at 10:30 a.m. at Marshall District Library (124 W. Green St, Marshall, MI). We're continuing to use the [Sett i Gang \(3rd edition\) textbook](#). *Alle er velkommen!* (All are welcome)
- Online book club meets Thursday 4/24 at 7 p.m. Join Sons of Norway members across the country for the discussion of *Norse Mythology* by Neil Gaiman and *The Iron Chariot* (mystery by Stein Riverton). Sign up online at https://sonsofnorway5.com/programs/cultural_corner.php



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

www.norwayinkalamazoo.com



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Fra Presidenten

Kris Spence

Happy Springfulness or “vårfølelse!” Taking our evening walk around the neighborhood is so pleasant now. In Norway, spring often brings the first outdoor swim of the year. I’m not ready for a swim yet, so I’ll go exploring for emerging springtime flowers instead.

How are you incorporating friluftsliv into your routine and what spring activities are you looking forward to? Lodge members Kaaren and Gail have some ideas of how to keep active– come learn about it at our April Lodge meeting.

April’s meeting also features a trip report from Elizabeth and James on “Our Adventures in Svalbard.” You won’t want to miss it!

The birth of spring also means we’re just a month away from our Syttende Mai celebration so please put that on your calendar (May 18). We hope you’ll join us.

Wishing you a springfulness state of mind!

March Meeting Recap: Beautiful Music by Women Composers

Joan Renaas O’Bryan, Membership Secretary



Askeladden members were invited to a very special event following the shared meal and brief business meeting on March 9. Our lodge was one of several sponsors of a special recital organized by the Ladies’ Library Association (LLA): *Beautiful Music by Women Composers*.

Our own Elizabeth Kraatz is Vice President of the LLA. She and other LLA members spent months researching and preparing for a salon style recital of music by women composers, including several songs composed by our beloved

Margery Selden. Performed on the lovely LLA stage, the Oboe and Piano recital was just two blocks from the church where we met.

As sponsors, our Lodge members were given upfront seating. The Lodge offered a 50% refund of the ticket price to lodge members. Elizabeth and James were both hard at work at the LLA all afternoon, deeply involved with this exquisite production. We send our gratitude to them for all their dedicated hard work that made this very special event possible.

March 2025 Askeladden Members attendance: Jeff Andert, Curtis Cleveland, Kaaren DeWitt, Joyce Hare, Karen Hare, Holly Jensen, Elizabeth Kraatz, James Kraatz, Joan O’Bryan, Beverly Osborn, Curt Osborn, Sandra Santas, Kris Spence, Bob Swanson, Laurie Swanson, Gail Thompson-Hadley, Astrid Willis. Please contact Membership Secretary Joan O’Bryan with any attendance corrections.

Askeladden Shines in Parade

Joan Renaas O’Bryan

On March 15, Askeladden members donned Viking gear and marched through the Kalamazoo downtown mall in sunny, but extremely windy weather for the St. Patrick’s Day Parade. James Kraatz played the parade favorite Norwegian Troll, bringing wonderment to kids all along the route. Curtis Cleveland, Kaaren DeWitt, Karn Erlandson, Elizabeth Kraatz, Joan O’Bryan, Dan Renoos, Sandra Santas, Kris Spence, Bob & Laurie Swanson, along with Heritage Members Abigail, Caleb and Elliot, also had fun representing our lodge to our local community. Many thanks to all who participated, including Holly Jensen, who prepared and contributed Viking costumes, including our famous Troll.



Michigan Nordic Fire Festival

Gail Thompson-Hadley

One of the highlights of the Michigan Nordic Fire Festival was the ceremonial burning of the 20' replica Viking ship. My son Dan (Askeladden member) and family joined me on Friday night to watch the solemn parade of Viking era clad drummers chanting as they pulled the ship to the burn site. After the burning, we enjoyed an Irish band with two drummers and a bagpiper while the adults sipped a little local mead, the Viking drink brewed from honey.

On Saturday, my daughter Christine (Askeladden member) and family arrived to explore the Viking era demonstrations and multiple vendor tents. One granddaughter went home with a soft rabbit skin and the 3 grandsons procured sturdy plastic and foam Viking swords. We found it to be a terrific family event to learn more about our Norwegian heritage.



Left to right: Ceremonial burning of Viking ship; Vendor tents of Viking era wares; Vendor of fur, beads, woven work; Drop spindle wool spinning demonstration.

Friluftsliv & Sports Medal Inspiration

Kaaren DeWitt, Sports Director

On Sunday, March 23rd, my son CPT Nathan DeWitt and his wife, Jamie DeWitt, successfully completed the Norwegian Foot March at Fort Custer, demonstrating exceptional endurance and perseverance. The challenging ruck march, which originated in Norway as a military fitness test, requires participants to cover an extended distance while carrying a weighted pack for 18.6 miles in less than 4 hours and 30 minutes, testing their physical and mental resilience. Even if you're not completing an 18+ mile hike, we can all be inspired to be more active and enjoy the outdoors too. Set a goal for yourself today!



April Kalender

4/13 Askeladden Lodge Mtg, 2 PM

4/13 *Palmesøndag* - Palm Sunday

4/16 Norsk language group, 10:30 AM
(Marshall District Library)

4/18 *Langfredag* - Good Friday

4/20 *Påskedag* - Easter Sunday

5/4 Last day to submit May newsletter articles

April Birthdays

Gratulerer med dagen til:

Anna Christianson

Lyra Fugett

Katherine Harvatine

Herman Lee

John Riggs III

Jamie Stafne

Helen Spence

Robert Swanson



Norske ord

God påske! (Goo POHskeh) =
, Happy Easter

Blomstene blomstrer (BLOAMsteneh bloamstrair) =
The flowers are blooming



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.



Askeladden Lodge 5-610

507 Clinton Ave
Kalamazoo, MI 49001

Matching Grants for Masse Moro Campers

Joan Renaas O'Bryan, Membership Secretary

Are you thinking of sending your child or grandchild to [Masse Moro](#) this summer? Masse Moro is District 5's 2-week summer Norwegian heritage camp experience near Eau Claire, Wisconsin. Askeladden Lodge is a participant with Sons of Norway District 5 in a grant-matching program, assisting with the cost of the camp. Upon request, Askeladden will cover \$250 of the camp tuition and District 5 will automatically match that amount, reducing the total camp cost by \$500. Contact Joan O'Bryan with any questions or to verify your Sons of Norway member number.

The grant request is found [here](#), or also by visiting the Events page of our website at:
<https://www.norwayinkalamazoo.com/events>

Print and complete the top part of the form and submit to Treasurer Curtis Cleveland or President Kris Spence in advance of the May 17 deadline.

South Dakota Symphony Orchestra to Perform *Giants in the Earth* Opera

Gail Thompson-Hadley

In celebration of the 200th anniversary of the first Norwegian immigration to America, the [South Dakota Symphony Orchestra](#) is presenting two performances 4/26-4/27 of an opera based on the classic 1927 Norwegian-American historical pioneer novel, *Giants in the Earth*. I plan to attend a bus tour (fully booked) but there are still plenty of tickets available for the performance. Stay tuned for more details of the experience in a future newsletter.