

# Askeladden News



ASKELADDEN  
LODGE 5-610

May 2025

**President:** Kris Spence  
(269) 719-0061  
askeladdenlodgepres@gmail.com

**Membership Secretary:**  
Joan O'Bryan  
(269) 383-6802  
joan.obryan@wmich.edu

**Secretary:** Karen Hare  
(269) 568-9797  
astutekaren@gmail.com

**Newsletter Editor:**  
Karn Erlandson  
(269) 579-0619  
karnerlandson@yahoo.com

**Treasurer:** Curtis Cleveland  
(269) 381-4531  
cacleve82@att.net

**Cultural Director:**  
Elizabeth Kraatz  
(573) 999-1113  
KraatzE@gmail.com

**Affiliation:**  
Sons of Norway International  
<https://www.sofn.com>  
District 5  
<https://sonsofnorway5.com>

**Lodge Contact Info:**  
Askeladden.Lodge@gmail.com  
(269) 350-3330  
Kalamazoo, MI

**Financial Benefits Counselor**  
Greg Ragan  
(815) 623-8817  
gragan51@gmail.com  
[www.raganfinancialgroup.com](http://www.raganfinancialgroup.com)



## Next meeting

**Sunday, May 18, 2025, 2 PM**

## *Syttende Mai Celebration*



It's time to break out your Norwegian flags, bunads, and red, white and blue gear! We're having our annual party to celebrate Norway's national holiday, *Syttende Mai* (17.Mai), on Sunday, May 18<sup>th</sup> at Trinity Lutheran Church (504 S. Westnedge Ave, Kalamazoo). Our festive food potluck follows the Norwegian 17.Mai custom of picnics and grilling out. Hotdogs and ice cream will be provided, so bring a salad, side dish, or treat fit for a picnic. We'll sing all the national anthems, have a sparkling cider toast to Norway's king, and present awards to our sports medal and Myrtle Beinhauer academic scholarship winners. A short *barnetog* (children's parade) is also planned.

This year, in honor of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first organized Norwegian immigration to the United States, we will have an informal read-through of the play "The Uprooting" by Vigleik Rosseland (translated into English by Kristbørg Eide). This play features Cleng Peerson, an important historical figure in the story of Norwegian immigration.

Join us for a *hyggelig* celebration- the more the merrier!



## May Reminders



- The language learning group meets Wednesday 5/14 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)
- Please bring donations (money and/or nonperishable food) to our May meeting for local food banks. See article on page 2 for details.

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

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



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

---

## Fra Presidenten

Kris Spence

Come one, come all, and bring a friend. We hope to see you at our Syttende Mai celebration. I look forward to it every year.

So, it's kind of a funny coincidence...I wasn't born Norwegian (except for a tiny %), but my birthday is on May 17th. Then I married into the Erlandson's, a proud Norwegian-American family. We've joked ever since that my birthday made me acceptable to my in-laws and I've totally absorbed all the good

vibes, history, and Norwegian holiday food. Syttende Mai has become a real highlight for me. Not only has this holiday connected me to my 'new' family, it has continued to give me a sense of belonging in the broader Scandinavian community.

I hope you find your sense of belonging in all that we do together. See you soon!

## April Meeting Recap- Norway Travelogue: Adventures in Svalbard

Joan Renaas O'Bryan, Membership Secretary

The highlight of our April meeting was a special travelogue presented by Elizabeth and James Kraatz. How does one present a travelogue of a place that is experiencing Polar Night? There are no birds chirping, no trees rustling in that frigid climate. And there was no sunlight the entire time lodge members Elizabeth, James and Sandra Santas visited Svalbard in January. But Elizabeth designed a fascinating program that included not only photos, but a comprehensive overview of the unique history of Svalbard as well, including the importance of its coal mines. The program was captivating from beginning to end!



Coal Miner's statue in Longyearbyen, Svalbard

*April 2025 Askeladden Members attendance: Jeff Andert, Curtis Cleveland, Kaaren DeWitt, Karn Erlandson, Karen Hare, Joyce Hare, Holly Jensen, Elizabeth Kraatz, James Kraatz, Joan O'Bryan, Kris Spence, Gail Thompson-Hadley. Guests: Nancy Colburn, Art McNabb. Please contact Membership Secretary Joan O'Bryan with any attendance corrections.*

## Myrtle Beinhauer Academic Scholarship Winners

- Two \$1000 scholarships for the 2025-26 academic year will be awarded at our Syttende Mai celebration on May 18.
- Congratulations to this year's winners: James Kraatz and Greta Hetletvedt! For photos and bios, stay tuned for our June/ July newsletter.

## Food Drive and Food Bank Campaign

Curtis Cleveland, Treasurer

At our annual Syttende Mai Celebration we conduct a Food Drive to support the Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes. If you are attending the May 18th event, please bring a bag of non-perishable food.

In addition we are raising money for three food banks that provide food assistance to low-income and homeless people in southwest Michigan. At the May 18th lodge meeting, we ask our members to donate with check or cash in an envelope addressed to one of the following food banks:

- Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes, located in Kalamazoo, serving all of Kalamazoo County
- South Michigan Food Bank, located in Battle Creek, serving Calhoun, Kalamazoo, and 6 other counties
- Feeding America: West Michigan, located in Grand Rapids, serving VanBuren, Cass, Allegan, and 37 other counties

Thank you!



## Svalbard Art Conversation

Elizabeth Kraatz, Cultural Director

Artist Elizabeth Philotera Bourne will discuss her work from her Svalbard period on May 28 from 4-5 p.m. The discussion is sponsored by the 55-and-Better Ministry of St Luke's Episcopal Church (247 W. Lovell Street, Kalamazoo). Sons of Norway members are invited to attend this free presentation. The artist will be participating remotely from her home in Washington State. A ZOOM link will be posted on our website for those unable to participate in person.

Elizabeth Bourne first visited Svalbard as a tourist in 2017. She returned as the Galleri Svalbard artist in residence the following year and spent the next seven years painting and photographing the arctic. "In order to know a place, you must be in that place. ... Even now, seven years later, I don't feel I know this place, though I love it still. But I do know what it is to walk this barren land in all weathers, at all times of the day and night, and in both the light and the dark season."

The discussion includes two paintings from Bourne's Modern Martyrs series, which portrays icebergs as icons of climate change saints. Her inspiration was the realization that "climate change is due to our greed. The burning wish to have more – more money, more convenience, more things – fueled a wasteful use of resources with no thought for future generations. I came to see the reduction of the Arctic ice as a sacrifice of the natural world to our greed."



## Heritage Members Represent Norway

Jeff Andert, Social Director

Askeladden Lodge Heritage members Finna, Malin and Rorick Andert represented Norway in a Diversity Night recently. The three are grandchildren of Jeff and Diane Andert. They live outside New York City and their community has an annual Diversity celebration with about 50 nationalities represented. In addition to their Norwegian dress, they shared numerous cultural items and food. You may recall Finna, Malin and Rorik as the Ice Cream Social hosts last summer. They have plans to be back in August for ice cream this year!



### Mai Kalender

- 5/1 *Arbeidernes Dag* - Labor Day (Norway)
- 5/8 *Frigjøringsdagen* - V-E Liberation Day, 1945
- 5/11 Mother's Day (U.S. & Canada)
- 5/14 Askeladden Lodge Board Meeting, 6:30 p.m.
- 5/17 Syttende Mai - Constitution Day (Norway)
- 5/18 Askeladden Lodge 17.Mai Celebration, 2 p.m.**
- 5/19 Victoria Day (Canada)
- 5/21 Norsk language group, 10:30 a.m.  
(Marshall District Library)
- 5/26 Memorial Day (U.S.)
- 5/28 Elizabeth Bourne artist presentation, 4 p.m.
- 6/2 **Last day to submit June/July newsletter articles**

### Mai Birthdays

Gratulerer med dagen til:

- |                 |                   |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| Jeff Andert     | Penelope Erickson |
| Josephina Croce | Harper Fugett     |
| Elliott DeWitt  | Alice Kraatz      |
| Liam DeWitt     | Curt Osborn       |
| Augie Erickson  | Kris Spence       |



### Norske ord

Hurra for Syttende Mai! (hooRAH for SITTenah My) = Hooray for the 17<sup>th</sup> of May!

Det er en feiring! (Day are en FIREing) = It's a celebration!



**SONS of  
NORWAY**

***Askeladden Lodge 5-610***

507 Clinton Ave  
Kalamazoo, MI 49001

## **Welcoming Back the Restauration**

A communication from the Norwegian Embassy via Elizabeth Kraatz

Though the first Norwegians arrived in North America 500 years before Columbus, the story of organized Norwegian immigration to the U.S. begins with the 53 immigrants who left Norway aboard a ship called the Restauration. They arrived in New York City on October 9, 1825.

This year, exactly 200 years later, Norwegians and Americans will come together in New York City for a gathering featuring speeches and cultural programming. Around noon on October 9, we will proudly welcome a replica of the Restauration as it completes its retracing of the historic journey from Stavanger to New York.

We warmly invite friends, collaborators, and the Norwegian-American community to join us for this special occasion. The event is free, though it will require registration. For now, [click here](#) to express interest. Please note that this does not guarantee access to the event, but gives the organizers an overview of the estimated participation. More information, as well as a detailed program and a registration link, will follow closer to the date.