



the ASKELADDEN news

Sons of Norway • Askeladden Lodge 5-610 • Kalamazoo, Michigan

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

facebook.com/AskeladdenLodge

May 2020

05-20

Meetings: cancelled until further notice due to State of Emergency

Sept - April: 2nd Sundays, 2 p.m.
May only: 3rd Sunday, 2 p.m.
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Fra Presidenten

WWII Army's 99th Battalion and the 10th Mountain Division : Ski Troopers!

Greetings to all Askeladden Lodge members as we celebrate Norway's National Constitution Day, Syttende Mai. May is the month we remember those who fought and died in service to our country with our own Memorial Day celebrations May 25th, so it seems an appropriate time to learn more about the Norwegian Americans who fought for our freedoms as part of the United States Army's 99th Infantry Battalion and the 10th Mountain Division.

By the 1940's, Norway had the world's third largest Merchant Marine with 1,000 vessels and 40,000 sailors – the pride of Norway. They provided 40% of the petrol and supplies to the British war effort but then thousands of Norwegian sailors were stranded in America after Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941. In May of 1942, a decision was made to form a US Army separate battalion whose members could speak Norwegian for eventual deployment to Norway where 400,000 German soldiers had occupied Norway and were stationed to prevent the Allies from a northern invasion of Europe.

The 99th "Viking" Battalion recruited many of those stranded Norwegian Merchant Marine sailors as well as Norwegian-American immigrants who spoke Norwegian. The 99th Battalion of 1,000 men was sent to Camp Hale at 9,000 feet elevation in the Colorado Rockies to train with the 14,000 troops of the Army's 10th Mountain Division who were already in place there as the Army's first winter mountain fighting force.

The 99th Battalion spent 9 months of brutal training at Camp Hale learning to ski and snowshoe with heavy packs and rifles. They survived blizzards in 10° and colder temperatures living in tents for weeks at a time.

The 99th Infantry Battalion sailed for England and after the D-Day invasion by the Allied Forces on June 5, 1944, they arrived at Omaha Beach, Normandy, France on June 21. They helped Bradley's 1st Army with fighting in France, Belgium, and Holland and also fought with Patton's 3rd Army. The 99th Infantry Battalion was part of Patton's security force in April 1945 which escorted gold and art treasures to safety which the Germans had hidden in salt mines during the war.

After the Germans surrendered on May 8, 1945, the 99th Infantry Battalion finally sailed for Oslo to help with the peaceful removal of the Germans from Norway. They served as honor guards for the King of Norway when he returned. Most of the Norwegian Merchant Marines hadn't seen or communicated with their families for more than 5 years by the time they returned to Norway, which made for many joyous reunions!

I learned about the training and valor of the 99th Infantry Battalion from several websites and from watching the documentary film, *The Viking Battalion: The Story of the 99th Battalion (Separate)*, 2013.

I also learned much from another excellent documentary film, *Fire on the Mountain: The Story of the 10th Mountain Division*, 1995, which our son had given our dad, who as a Norwegian American who knew how to ski, had been recruited to join the 10th Mountain Division when he was serving with the Army in Alaska. Our dad decided on a different path but did fight with Patton's 3rd Army in the Battle of the Bulge.

Our son had learned about Camp Hale when he did back-country skiing and stayed in one of the nearby "huts" which are part of the hut and trail system established by a 10th Mountain Division member after the war. Two thousand of the 10th Mountain Division soldiers came home to be ski instructors, and built 62 of our country's new ski resorts. Their rigorous training at Camp Hale along with their Norwegian work ethic and love of the winter life outdoors helped them survive WWII and return home to tackle whatever they set their minds to with enthusiasm and vigor!



WWII medals, 2nd Lieutenant CR Thompson, Patton's 3rd Army

Gail Thompson Hadley

links and more photos on page 2

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Looking Back

Curtis Cleveland, Lodge Historian

Thirty years ago, May 6, 1990, the lodge met at the old Masonic Lodge building, Parkview and 11th Street, in Oshtemo Township. Myrtle Beinhauer was the lodge president, serving the final year of the four years that she was in that position.

Members paid a \$2 admission fee to attend this meeting just as they did to attend the other monthly lodge meetings. The fee was to defray the meeting expenses. Larkin Winther, the financial secretary, was in charge of collecting the admission fee. Shortly after arriving at the meeting, members were confronted by another member selling raffle tickets, again to defray the meeting expenses.

Members, after singing Norwegian songs to commemorate Syttende Mai, watched a 30 minute video on O.E. Rolvaag, the author of "Giants in the Earth." Dr. Richard Stavig, Professor of English at Kalamazoo College introduced the video.

During the business session, the treasurer reported a balance of \$2,456. The lodge membership at this time had 108 adults. The meeting concluded with a "Dessert Smorgasbord."

Twenty years ago, May 14, 2000, the lodge met at the Portage Senior Center. Margery Selden and Joyce Hare were the lodge co-presidents.

For the cultural program, Jean Darling gave a brief history of Norway's Constitution Day, followed by the Code family, David, Karin, Kjartan, and Larena, performing Norwegian music and dance.

The meal featured open face sandwiches. The new members included Cliff and Audrey Davidson; and Bob and Donna Kaarlie. The lodge membership included approximately 70 adult members.

At this meeting the first scholarships were announced: \$3,000 to Kari Erickson, daughter of Scott and Elaine Erickson; and \$500 to Donna Buehl to attend a Rosemaling class at the Vesterheim Museum. In their "President's Column," Margery and Joyce wrote: "At our last meeting we as an organization took a bold stand and voted to fund two scholarship requests.... This kind of support to our members is what we as members of Askeladden are all about."

Ten years ago, May 9, 2010, the lodge met at the Portage Senior Center. Dennis Darling was the lodge president.

The Syttende Mai Celebration consisted of the Children's Parade, organized by Karen Kunze; group singing led by Margery Selden at the piano and Karen Kunze as song leader; the Toast to the King Harold of Norway, led by Holly Jensen; and concluded with the singing of "God Bless the King." Margery Selden gave a lecture on the Norwegian flag and the Norwegian national anthem.

Joyce Hare announced the winners of the \$600 scholarships, four of them: Charles Berdahl, Kjartan Code, Scott Dawsey, and Brett Jensen.

The members enjoyed a potluck dinner. There were approximately 65 adult members in the lodge.

Fra Presidenten WWII (Continued from page 1)

Following are reference links from Gail's article.

<https://www.99battalion.org/>

<https://www.norwegianamerican.com/the-vikings-of-world-war-ii/>

<https://www.tenthmountainfoundation.org/>

<https://snowbrains.com/10th-mountain-division-history-fire-mountain/>

http://www.huts.org/The_Huts/jackal.php

Membership News Celebrating Jean Willinger's Milestone Birthday

Jean is proud to be 100% Norwegian with two Norwegian parents. Her great-grandparents immigrated originally to Madison, Wisconsin, from Norway and she still remembers her great-grandmother speaking Norwegian.

Jean counts herself fortunate to have traveled to Norway several times in her life.

We have been fortunate to have Jean as a member of our lodge and I know we all enjoy the lufse she regularly brings to our shared meals.

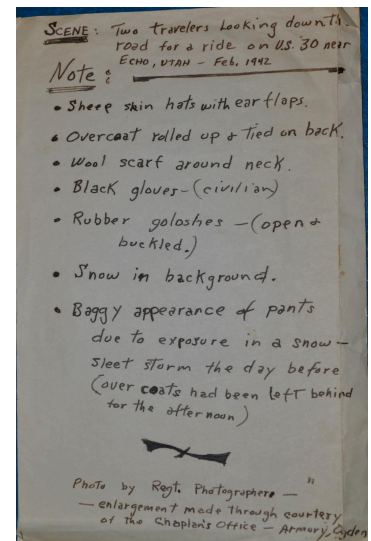
Jean turns 95 at the end of the month and the entire lodge wishes her a **Very Happy Birthday!** We can't wait until we get to see you again, Jean.



Fire on the Mountain film with "Winter Whites" of Ski Troopers.



2nd Lieutenant Conrad R. Thompson (on the left), Charter member of Sonja Henie Sons of Norway Lodge.



Hand-written description of Army winter wear by CR Thompson.

ASKELADDEN NEWS

Askeladden Lodge 2020 Scholarships Announced

Joyce Hare, Scholarship Chairperson

The Scholarship Committee of Askeladden Lodge is happy to announce the recipients for the 2020 Myrtle Beinhauer Askeladden Lodge Scholarships.

Congratulations to Daniel Phillips and Kaeler Stafne, both High School Seniors graduating this June.

Daniel will be attending Loyola University in Chicago in the fall.

Kaeler will be attending Grand Valley State in Grand Rapids and is interested in the 5-year Sports Medicine Degree.

We hope they can attend a meeting sometime so we can congratulate them in person. We wish them well in their studies.

Daniel extends his gratitude for being awarded the scholarship. He has fond memories of the Sons of Norway and is looking forward to starting at Loyola in the fall!

When the Loyola University Chicago revealed the Track & Field/Cross Country 2020-21 Recruiting Class, Coach Bogdan wrote this about Daniel: "Loyola is an MVC powerhouse in the 400m event at this time. To maintain our level of competitiveness, we want talented runners to come through our doors and strengthen our squad. With the addition of Daniel, we know that we are getting a great athlete, one that has established himself as one of the best in the state of Michigan. Daniel stands out as a hard worker who values learning and getting better with each year. He is very excited for every opportunity he has and that's a huge attribute to have as a future college runner. Daniel will fit right away with our squad and I am really excited to see him wear the Loyola uniform starting this fall."



Daniel Phillips
Mattawan High School

Kaeler, an Askeladden lodge member who began as a Heritage member, and attended Masse Moro Norwegian Heritage Camp with his brother, has expressed thanks for being awarded a scholarship. Kaeler made the most of his high school experience as a member of the National Honor Society, Spanish Honor Society,



Kaeler Stafne
Marcellus High School

S.A.D.D and the Student Council. He also served as Vice President of his class. Kaeler participated in football, basketball, and golf. He was captain of football and basketball for two years. Twice in basketball he was on the all-conference 1st Team. He was recognized as Hemi Athlete of the Week and has been two-time WSJBT Radio Student Athlete of the Week. The *Kalamazoo Gazette* also named him Player of the Week two times and named him honorable mention to the *Kalamazoo Gazette* Dream Team. Kaeler says his most impressive accomplishment was being the third player in Marcellus history to eclipse 1,000 points in a career. The thing he is most proud of is accomplishing all this while maintaining a 3.98 grade point average.

District 5 News

While local lodges are not currently meeting in person due to the restrictions imposed during a global pandemic, our District 5 leaders are hard at work creatively providing activities at the District level to keep all our members engaged. In addition to the Virtual Walk to Ringsaker Challenge, that we learned about from our Sports Director Curt Osborn in the February newsletter, there are other opportunities in the works. By the way, the District 5 Board has now extended the Ringsaker Virtual Challenge to December 15, 2020.

http://www.sonsofnorway5.com/programs/sports_and_recreation.php

District 5 Treasurer Mile Palecek has announced an exciting photo contest for individuals and lodges. Your Scandinavian photo can be part of a deck of Nordic playing cards, which Sons of Norway District 5 will be making available for purchase in time for the Christmas season. Deadline to enter is July 5, 2020.

Complete rules and entry form for the Scandinavian Photo Contest can be found on the District 5 website. Even if you don't plan to enter, you can visit the site and enjoy viewing the over 50 photos that have been submitted so far.

http://www.sonsofnorway5.com/conventions/convention_contest.php

Mile Palecek has also coordinated a weekly cultural program for us that airs every Tuesday evening. You can choose to join in live or go back and watch previous shows at your convenience. Each presentation runs about 40 minutes. Past presentations have included topics covering "Norwegians in Michigan" and a D5 lodge's trip to Norway to visit the "Norway Building" that was disassembled, returned to Norway and then reconstructed. Some interesting upcoming programs include:

May 19 - 75th Anniversary of the end of WWII in Norway: Eyewitness Accounts (Ola Hirth)

May 26 - Chicago's Eastland Disaster and some Norwegian-American Heroes (Andy Johnsen)

Tuesday, June 02: Coffin Ships: Death on the Ocean Crossing - One Family's Story (Glenn Borreson)

Information on viewing past episodes and the various ways to connect to future airings is available on the District 5 website.

http://www.sonsofnorway5.com/news/oles_corner.php

As you might have guessed, the Sons of Norway District 5 website is a hub of great information and activity. Take the time to explore it so you become aware of the resources available to you - from our lodge newsletters to what's happening around the entire district - you will find it all here:

<http://sonsofnorway5.com>



SONS of NORWAY

Celebrating **125** Years

Askeladden Lodge
507 Clinton Ave
Kalamazoo, MI 49001

MAI 2020 KALENDER



- mai 1 - Første Mai - Arbeidernes Dag - Labor Day in Norway
- mai 8 - Frigjøringsdagen, 1945 - V-E Day - Liberation Day
- mai 10 - Mother's Day USA and Canada
- mai 17 - Syttende Mai - Grunnlovsdag - Norwegian Constitution Day
- mai 18 - Victoria Day - Canada
- mai 21 - Kristi Himmelfartsdag - Ascension Day
- mai 25 - Memorial Day
- mai 31 - Pinsedag (WhitSunday) - Pentecost
- juni 5 - last day to submit Askeladden News articles for June/July issue



Gratulerer med dagen!

Fødselsdag Hilsener

May Birthdays

Jean Willinger	Linda Lou Piper
Alice Kraatz	Curt Osborn
Harper Fugett	Ruth Hettletvedt
Jeffrey Andert	

NOTICE: All Askeladden in-person local events are cancelled until further notice.

Askeladden Lodge Library

www.librarything.com/catalog/Sonsofnorway

Contact Curtis Cleveland with questions or to reserve resources.



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.