



the ASKELADDEN news

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

April 2024

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

04-24

www.norwayinkalamazoo.com

facebook.com/AskeladdenLodge

Meetings:

Sept - April: 2nd Sundays, 2 p.m.

May only: 3rd Sunday, 2 p.m.

Trinity Lutheran Church

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Sunday, April 14, 2 p.m.

Alt for Norge

Elizabeth Kraatz

Trinity Lutheran Church, 504 S Westnedge

In the past few decades, reality competition shows seem to have taken over TV viewing. *Survivor*, *The Apprentice*, *American Idol*... Chances are that you've watched at least one episode. Let's be honest, chances are that, during the pandemic, you binge-watched entire series! But are you caught up with *Alt for Norge*?

Alt for Norge ("everything for Norway") is more than the royal motto of Norway. Launched in 2010, it's a reality show that has taken Norway by storm! The copycats in Sweden and Denmark have also launched their own versions.

Each season sees a handful of Norwegian-Americans compete with one another (both as teams and individually) to demonstrate who is the "most Norwegian" by completing a series of challenges while learning more about their Norwegian ethnicity. It gives Norwegians a chance to see their country through American eyes. The grand prize is the chance for the winning American to be reunited with his or her Norwegian family.

It manages to be entertaining and educational in equal parts. It is also quite addictive - perfect for binge-watching. The first ten seasons are available on YouTube; the earliest seasons are even available with English subtitling. Subsequent seasons were put on hold by the pandemic, but casting for Season 11 has just concluded meaning that we'll all soon have another chance to live vicariously as we watch our fellow Norwegian-Americans compete for the chance to meet their relatives in Norway.

Elizabeth Kraatz will give us a crash-course on the show at our April meeting so that we're up-to-speed and ready to cozy up to the TV with a bowl of popcorn (or rømmegrøt) when episode 1 drops!

Please bring a dish to pass for our 2 p.m. meal. Coffee, water and table service are provided. Use the entrance at the back of the church and then take the elevator or the stairs to get down to the Fellowship Hall. Askeladden members are requested to stay after the program for a very brief business meeting required by Sons of Norway.

ASKELOADDEN NEWS

March recap: Folk Art & Fjords

Joan Renaas O'Bryan, Acting Membership Secretary

Our lodge members enjoyed the special Norway travelogue presented by Gail Thompson-Hadley. She showed photos and shared experiences she had with a tour group as she explored various forms of folk art, the beautiful Norwegian countryside, museums and other places of interest across a broad swath of Norway last August. We also enjoyed many Norwegian desserts.

The business meeting that followed was attended by 15 Askeladden members and one guest. The Audit Committee presented their annual report, which the Lodge approved. Also approved was a Memorial Gift policy originally proposed by the Finance Committee and then approved by two board members. Gail asked for a volunteer to fill the newly open Vice President position.

March 2024 Askeladden Member attendance: Diane Andert, Jeff Andert, Rita Benzenberg, Curtis Cleveland, Kaaren DeWitt, Kerry DeWitt, Karn Erlandson, Judy Hande-Skutnick, Arden Hetletvedt, Holly Jensen, Joan O'Bryan, Kris Spence, Laurie Swanson, Robert Swanson, Gail Thompson-Hadley. Guest: Ruth Hetletvedt.

Contact Joan O'Bryan with any attendance corrections.

St. Patrick's Day Parade

Joan Renaas O'Bryan, St. Pat's Parade Coordinator

The 2024 St. Patrick's Day Parade nearly didn't happen. Between the cost of the insurance and the ever-increasing charges imposed by the City, the Irish American Club was forced to make the sad decision to cancel the popular downtown parade. When the City of Kalamazoo discovered this, they quickly adjusted the charges, and the parade that allows everyone to be Irish for a day was suddenly back on!

Askeladden members immediately stepped up with our largest St. Patrick's Day parade contingent to date, with 16 Lodge members participating! Every single member showed up on time or early, making our preparation run smoothly. We experienced excellent weather and welcoming crowds filling the downtown sidewalks from the curbs back to the storefronts. Many thanks are extended to each of you who showed up, helped assemble boats and costumes, and marched with us. We look forward to next year's parade!



This photo of us in the W. Exchange alley was taken by a good Samaritan shortly before we marched off. It is difficult to see everyone. From left to right are: Sandra Santas holding one side of the flag, then Rita Benzenberg, then Laurie Swanson holding the other side of the flag, Joan O'Bryan & Elizabeth Kraatz with the lodge banner, Jeff Andert, Elliott and Caleb DeWitt, Karn Erlandson (as the Troll), James Kraatz (nearly hidden behind the Troll), Kris Spence, Abby Renoos (in front), Dan Renoos, Kaaren DeWitt (again, nearly hidden in the very back), Kerry DeWitt, and Bob Swanson.

Member News

Velkommen new member!

Our lodge would like to extend a very warm welcome to new member Rita Benzenberg. Rita, a Kalamazoo resident, learned about Sons of Norway this past winter when strolling the Portage Trail. She saw our brand-new holiday card with our website listed on it. After reading up about us, she called our membership secretary on our lodge phone number to inquire about becoming a member.

Rita has hit the ground running, attending her first meeting in February, which coincided with Mother's Day in Norway. She was able to contact her daughter-in-law in Norway and wish her a Happy Mother's Day before it got too late (Norway is 6 hours ahead of Michigan time.)

A few days later, Rita attended our Language class in Marshall. We were thrilled to see her again at the March meeting. And Rita eagerly donned a Viking costume and marched with us in the St. Patrick's Day Parade! We tried to talk her husband, Brian, into marching with us, but we did not succeed.

Rita says she enjoys learning about the Norwegian culture and language. Her son moved to Norway over 5 years ago. He is now married to a Norwegian woman and they have a new daughter. Rita plans to return to Norway to celebrate her granddaughter's first birthday in July.

April 17 Norwegian language class

Elizabeth Kraatz, Cultural Director

Askeladden Lodge's Norwegian Language Class is more like a support group for those of us who are committed to learning through daily (or almost daily) practice. It is an opportunity to gather for questions, advice, suggestions and opportunities to practice and learn from one another.

Several members have purchased the *Sett i Gang* textbook, but none of us had dipped our toes into the affiliated *Sett i Gang* web portal. At our March session, we enjoyed exploring the first lessons in the portal together and were quite pleased with how well we did. We were able to score 100% on almost each lesson, which is clear evidence of how much progress we have made since we started this journey. We were impressed with the depth and variety of material that can be accessed through the portal and we now have another tool we can add in our language exploration quest. Access to the portal (settigang.com) costs \$10 for two years of unlimited access, which is a real bargain in our minds!

We hope you will join us April 17 (10:30 a.m. at the Marshall District Library at 124 W. Green Street in Marshall) as we explore another resource to support your self-study of Norwegian. Language learners of all levels are welcome!

Members requested to report service hours

Karen Hare, Lodge Secretary

A gentle reminder to please bring your Individual Tracking Sheet data with you to April's meeting. The Community and Fraternal hours and events tracking device is vital for the Lodge. You may also scan it and email it to Karen at astutekaren@gmail.com. Thank you!

ASKELADDEN NEWS

Fra Presidenten

Sleeping Bear and the Iditarod's Norwegian Heroes

A few weeks ago, I traveled to northwest lower Michigan for some explorations with my sister on Old Mission and Leelanau Peninsulas. We met my son, Dan, for some *friluftsliv* time hiking in Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. First, we did an up and down hike through the woods with a few inches of recent snow for awesome views of Glen Lake and Lake Michigan. Next, we did a short hike over the dunes for a walk along the Lake Michigan shoreline. We had good views of the pair of sleeping bear cubs – the Manitou Islands. Native American legend has it that the cubs drowned within sight of shore after swimming across the lake from Wisconsin to escape a forest fire. Their mother's shape can be seen as one of the large sand dunes. [Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(nps.gov\)](#)

The Alaskan Iditarod is a winter event that many of us follow who love winter sports so I was delighted when I recently happened upon an autobiography by DeeDee Jonrowe, *Iditarod Dreams: A Year in the Life of Alaskan Dog Sled Racer, Dee Jonrowe*. She spent her adult life raising Iditarod dogs with her husband and has competed in an amazing 32 Iditarod races and completed 29 of them with 16 top-ten finishes and was runner-up three times.

[The Inspiring Story of DeeDee Jonrowe - A Life of Dogs.](#) DeeDee overcame tragic obstacles including the devastation of the 2016 Sockeye Fire which destroyed her Willow, Alaska, family home of 30 years. She also persisted in her year-round training and competition in spite of breast cancer diagnosis and treatment.

After reading the graphic account of DeeDee Jonrowe's year of intense dog-training and competition, I wondered if any Norwegian had ever won the Alaskan Iditarod. A quick search led me to the accomplishments of legendary Norwegian musher, Robert Sorlie, who has been racing for more than 50 years. Known as "King of Femundlopet," he has run that Norwegian dog sled race 30 times and won his 12th victory in 2018. He also has three Finnmarkslopet wins.

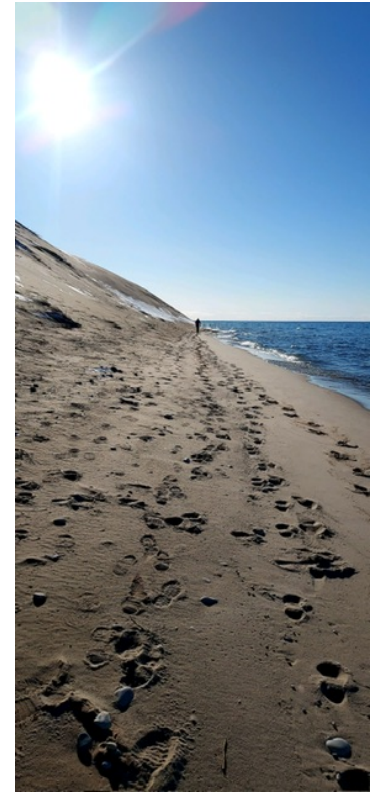
Sorlie ran his first Iditarod in 2002, placing 9th, and then had an astonishing win in 2003. His strategy was different from all the other competitors. He took shorter rests and raced at a slower pace but did "monster long runs" and surged ahead to never look back. He brought the same dog team back to Alaska and won again in 2005. He said the most important thing in running sled dogs is "to have positive thoughts and good energy; it will spread like rings in your team and the dogs will do the best they can. Trying to motivate them to do a job for you. To keep them enjoying it the most, that is what dog mushing is about." [Norway's Super Hero: What it takes... - Qrill Pet Arctic World Series \(qrillpaws.com\)](#)

Since Sorlie's win in 2005, more Norwegians have won the Iditarod. Norwegian Joar Leifseth Ulsom was the third international-born musher, and second Norwegian, to win the Iditarod in 2018. [Norway's Ulsom finally adds name to Iditarod winner's list | Reuters](#) A third Norwegian won it in 2020. [Norwegian musher Thomas Waerner wins Iditarod XLVIII - Iditarod](#)

Please join us for Elizabeth Kraatz's program on *Alt for Norge* on Sunday, April 14th. Lodge members are asked to stay after the program for a short business meeting to decide on the Do Dah Parade and plan for our Syttende Mai celebration on May 19th.



Askeladden members Gwen Meredith & Dan Hadley at Sleeping Bear Dunes woods trail and shoreline



Barnehage on the move

Pre-schoolers in Norway are some of the most hardy and adventurous kids around. Each weekday, kids in barnehage are prepared for anything the weather can throw their way.

Growing up in the rugged countryside and even in cities, kids experience *friluftsliv* at a young age, braving the elements wearing tiny safety vests with their care providers.

Around 400 Norwegian daycare centers go on daily adventure outings with their 11,000 charges. The hope, according to Kristin Oftedal of the Norwegian Trekking Association, is that they "learn skills and attitudes that they can carry with them for their whole lives."

"We believe outdoor children are happy children," she adds.

The aim is to teach children simple and nature-friendly ways to be outside together, play, experience, wonder, explore and learn about nature. Oftedal says that she hopes this practice will produce a new generation of nature lovers.





SONS of NORWAY

April
2024

Askeladden Lodge 5-610

507 Clinton Ave
Kalamazoo, MI 49001

APRIL KALENDER

- april 14 - **Askeladden Lodge Meeting 2 p.m.** - Trinity Lutheran Church 504 S Westnedge Ave
- april 15 - Deadline: Sarah Paulsen Memorial Masse Moro Scholarship
https://sonsofnorway5.com/financial/youth_scholarships.php
- april 17 - **Norwegian Language Class 10:30 a.m.** - Marshall District Library
- mai 4 - last day to submit *Askeladden News* articles



Photo by Irish American Club President Margaret Strzelecki

Askeladden Lodge Library

www.librarything.com/catalog/Sonsofnorway
Contact Curtis Cleveland with questions or to reserve resources.

Gratulerer med dagen!

Fødselsdag Hilsener
April Birthdays

Diane Andert	Lyra Fugett
Katherine Harvatine	Herman Lee
John Riggs III	Leif Selden
Helen Spence	Jamie Lynn Stafne
Robert Swanson	



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.