



the ASKELADDEN news

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

Jun/Jul 2024

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

06-24

www.norwayinkalamazoo.com

facebook.com/AskeladdenLodge

Meetings:

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

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

Trinity Lutheran Church

Officers:

President: Gail Thompson-Hadley

(269) 845-2265

glthadley@gmail.com

Membership Secretary/Editor:

Joan O'Bryan

507 Clinton Avenue

Kalamazoo, MI 49001

(269) 383-6802

joan.obryan@wmich.edu

Secretary: Karen Hare

(269) 568-9797

astutekaren@gmail.com

Newsletter Publisher: Judy

Hande-Skutnick

(269) 903-8386

jhandeskutnick@gmail.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

1455 West Lake St.

Minneapolis, MN 55408

Cheryl Wille - Schlessor, President,

Sons of Norway District 5

Benefits Counselor:

Greg Ragan

(815) 623-8817

gragan51@gmail.com

www.raganfinancialgroup.com

Lodge contact info:

Askeladden.Lodge@gmail.com

(269) 350-3330

Saturday, June 15

Midsommar with Vasa

Noon - Decorate, 2 p.m. - Smörgåsbord 1453 S. Spruce Drive, Kalamazoo

WELCOME TO MIDSOMMAR 2024 (Rain or Shine)

What: Midsommar Fun, Food and Games with Vasa Satellite Lodge

When: **Saturday, June 15**

12 Noon: Pole decorating, making flower head wreaths, lawn games.

2 p.m.: Pole parade and Potluck Smörgåsbord

Where: Holly Jensen's garden at 1453 Spruce Drive in Kalamazoo.

Look for the Norwegian and Swedish flags.

Park high on the hill, turn your wheels to the curb, and set your break.

Use the path along the right side of the garage to access the garden.

There is one small step.

Questions? Lost? Call (269) 598-5523

Consider bringing: **Summer food to share,**

sensible shoes for playing Corn Hole or Kubb,

a friend or two,

and a Smile!

Table service and beverages are provided.

All of the Scandinavian lands are plunged into darkness for much of the year. How sweet the warmth of the returning sunlight feels! Midsommer, or the summer solstice, finds Norway bathed in light. The Askeladden Lodge will share the joy of a Swedish midsommar with our friends in VASA.

If you have flowers or ivy (or similar greenery) in your garden, please snip a few sprigs to bring with you. There is no such thing as an overstated midsummer pole!

What a lovely way to kick off the Fathers Day weekend.

ASKELADDEN NEWS

May recap: Syttende Mai

Joan Renaas O'Bryan, Membership Secretary

We had a great crowd of 27 people celebrating Syttende Mai! Elizabeth Kraatz provided traditional Norwegian-fare hot dogs wrapped in lefse with every imaginable variety of topping available. Scholarships were awarded to Kate Phillips and Kirsten Schutte and (in absentia) to Margaret Hetletvedt. We were treated to a show of bunads by 4 members of the Santas/Kraatz family and Gail. Laurie Swanson did a wonderful job on the piano accompanying our singing. We toasted the King of Norway and Jens Stoltenberg. We enjoyed ice cream! We watched special videos of the King's Guard and saw both a relative and a friend of Karn Erlandson performing! So cool!

May 2024 Askeladden Member attendance: Diane & Jeff Andert, Rita Benzenberg, Esther Ann Brown, Curtis Cleveland, Kaaren DeWitt, Karn Erlandson, Karen Hare, Alice Kraatz, Elizabeth Kraatz, James Kraatz, Teri Koretsky, Joan O'Bryan, Beverly & Curt Osborn, Kate Phillips, Sandra Phillips, Sandra Santas, David & Terese Sherman, Helen Spence, Kris Spence, Laurie & Robert Swanson, and Gail Thompson-Hadley. Guests: Kirsten Schutte and Nellie Schutte

Contact Joan O'Bryan with any attendance corrections.

Members support Food Drive/Food Bank Fund

Curtis A. Cleveland

At our May event, members donated food and money to support the Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes and the Food Banks that serve Southwest Michigan. Members donated 41 pounds (37 items) of nonperishable food, which was given to the Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes. This agency provides food to the low income persons of Kalamazoo County.

Members donated \$265 for the Food Bank Fund Campaign, distributed as follows:

\$160 to the Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes

\$95 to the South Michigan Food Bank

\$10 to the Feeding America: West Michigan (Grand Rapids)

Our lodge holds Food Drives and Food Bank Fund Campaigns twice a year: May and November. In May 2023, members donated 7 pounds of nonperishable food and donated \$145 to the Food Bank Fund Campaign. Thanks to all who donated food and money for this community project.

Lefse for Team Rubicon!

Elizabeth Kraatz, Cultural Director

You may be aware that a volunteer crew from Team Rubicon (<https://teamrubiconusa.org/>) swept into town the day after the tornado came through Portage. Team Rubicon is a veteran-led humanitarian organization that serves communities in crisis (for example, in the wake of a natural disaster). They are known as the "Greyshirts" and were bunked for a couple of weeks in the basement of the Portage Zhang Senior Center, while they worked to clear the debris and ensure public safety.

Local businesses stepped up and provided meals to give them the energy they needed to complete the task. What was missing? A touch of home-baked comfort!

All the lefse left over from the Lodge's 17. Mai celebration - along with butter, sugar and a personal thank you note - was delivered to the Greyshirts the following day, on May 20. This year the Lodge was able to provide food support for "Loaves & Fishes" AND for the volunteer heroes with Team Rubicon!

Jean Darling, 1937-2024

Joan Renaas O'Bryan, Editor

Even longtime lodge members may be unaware of the depth of contributions made by Charter and Golden Member Jean Darling. Jean served in many capacities over the years, but frequently behind the scenes. While some roles can be rewarding, some can take a toll. Rewarding or not, many jobs require sacrifices. For Jean, the job was not worth doing if it wasn't done perfectly - or close to it. I felt lucky because for years, Jean and Dennis served as publishers of the newsletter when I was editor so I frequently visited their home and talked with Jean. I learned of the many projects she was working on, often for their church and many times for our lodge. Any task she took on was always a project of love that she poured her whole being into. When she offered to host our Christmas event in her home, the planning and work began months prior. Each time I visited their home, I was updated on the many preparatory tasks underway. As you can imagine, there were myriad logistics to work out to host all those lodge members in her home for a very special Christmas dinner. We left that special night with lifetime memories because Jean pulled it off perfectly.

When Jean presented a program to the lodge, her approach was the same. She was always 100% prepared. If she had to read a 900-page book in order to give a program on a topic, she would do it. She might even contact the author of the book. Yes, she did that, and she



Left: Jean (standing) with Inger Thoen, Myrtle Beinhauer, Marge Hastings and Anne Rapp, 1988

Lower Left: Hildy Montgomery with Jean. Date unknown. Jean's beautiful sweater was on display at her memorial reception in May.

Lower right: Jean and others look to Inger for Norwegian dance instruction, 1988



also became an expert on many topics. An experienced educator, she always came with props for her talks. She was an expert on the primstav and displayed hers in her home. She and her dear friend, Karen Kunze, planned a Lucia Pageant for our Christmas event at the Portage Senior Center. Jean was so excited about having her own granddaughter play Lucia! Jean invited my then-teenage daughter into her kitchen and taught her how to make Lucia buns for the event. What a gift - a wonderful lifetime memory.

Jean played a huge role in bringing S/N to Kalamazoo. Before S/N came here, Jean gathered local people with Norwegian heritage in her home and they became great friends. When our lodge was officially formed, Jean was involved. She gave so much for over 35 years to guarantee the success of our lodge. We owe Jean so much!

A beautiful service was held for Jean at the Prince Of Peace Lutheran Church on May 25. One highlight was the perspective shared by Jean's very dear and trusted friend, Golden Member Joyce Hare. I encourage you to view the recording here:

<https://www.youtube.com/live/pIfVrX9qH0s?feature=share>

ASKELOADDEN NEWS

Fra Presidenten

How Norwegian Are You?!

Sons of Norway began in 1895 with a group of 18 Norwegian-American immigrants looking out for each other and grew to an international non-profit insurance and financial products business dedicated to preserving and celebrating Norwegian heritage and culture.

The international organization, based in Minneapolis, has experienced challenging times in recent years as it aims to survive as a business while continuing to support the approximately 400 local lodges. The national office has reduced staff and, sadly, reduced the *Viking* magazine from monthly to 6 times per year to cut expenses. Dues have not increased since 2018, but president Ron Stubbings reports that with 21% inflation since then, the international board increased dues substantially to help the organization survive.

Individual dues will increase from \$60 to \$84 and family dues from \$95 to \$144 as of July 1, 2024. With the prior 2018 dues increase, Askeladden instituted a policy to reimburse our members the portion of their dues which the international Sons of Norway sent back to each lodge - \$14 for individual memberships and \$28 for family memberships. Treasurer Curtis Cleveland mails each of us an application to request this reimbursement near the date of our dues renewal. As of July 1, 2024, the reimbursement would be \$15 for individual members and \$30 for a family membership.

If you request a reimbursement for your dues, the actual membership rates as of July 1, 2024, would be \$69 and \$114. You can pay with a credit card online at the Sons of Norway website with an annual or monthly payment option.

I am a Norwegian by heritage and by attitude and action. My grandpa was a charter member of the Peer Gynt Sons of Norway lodge in Long Beach, California, way back in 1913 and our dad was a charter member of Sonja Henie lodge where I first joined Sons of Norway decades ago. I grew up eating sardines on Saltine crackers for lunch and love to get out back on my snowshoes in the brisk air of winter. Sons of Norway has helped me value my heritage and learn more of its history.

The prime benefit to me and my family as a Sons of Norway Askeladden member has been the friendly association with others who value the Norwegian heritage, culture, and healthy friluftliv lifestyle. I've learned so much from our Askeladden members about travel to Norway, holiday celebrations, delicious Norwegian food, and the folk arts of rosemaling and hardanger embroidery. I've also increased my appreciation for the immigrant lives of my Norwegian-American grandparents. Without my Sons of Norway experiences, I would never have found my way to my awesome folk-art and fjords tour of Norway last summer.

I encourage you to explore the Sons of Norway website

<https://www.sofn.com/> and that of District 5:

<https://sonsofnorway5.com/> I believe you'll find a bounty of information including an archived blog and cultural skills programs. As a member, you can also access audio online Norwegian language lessons which we've used for our language sessions at the Marshall District Library.

Please continue to support Sons of Norway.

Gail Thompson-Hadley

Clifford Davidson, 1932-2024

Joan Renaas O'Bryan, Editor

Dr Clifford Davidson was a scholar his entire life. He loved to research, analyze his findings, and write up and share what he discovered. He authored and edited numerous publications during his career and well into his retirement from Western Michigan Univ. Clifford was the first "senior" member of our lodge to take advantage of the Senior Option. Retired from WMU, he traveled alone to Norway and Europe with some help from our Senior Option – and of course he spent part of his trip performing research.



Ice Cream Social, August 2013

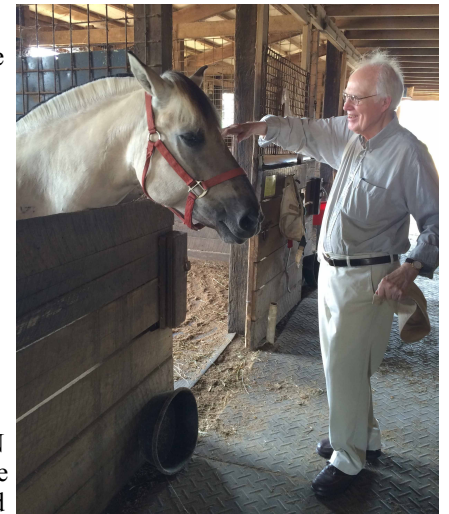
I remember one scholarly discussion between Professor Davidson and Vasa member Audrey Engstrom who had lived in Norway with her family. I sat between them at an Ice Cream Social as their conversation turned to the research he had conducted on that recent trip. Needless to say, most of what they discussed went right over my head.

When Clifford decided to author a book about Norwegians in Michigan, he spoke to our lodge about what he had outlined so far. He then asked for suggestions for his book in progress. I was in attendance at that lodge meeting and made one such small suggestion. Our lodge president, Dennis Darling, also a retired WMU professor, drove Clifford from place to place around the entire state of Michigan for his research for the book. I cannot tell you how thrilled I was to open the published book, only to see that he had included a section on the topic I had suggested!

We knew Clifford as a gentle, shy, yet always friendly man who was willing to share his knowledge with us and other S/N lodges. Also a Vasa Satellite 661 member, Clifford could be seen at Vasa Fish Boils as well as S/N events – such as road trips to Punzel's, or the Norwegian Fjord Horse farm in Marshall as well as special lodge anniversary celebrations.

When Clifford discovered he had a progressive heart condition that would limit his physical abilities over time, he set and pursued an important goal. He wanted to ensure that the works of his late, beloved wife, Audrey Ekdahl Davidson, also an author and Askeladden member, would be preserved for posterity.

Clifford was one of those people universally liked by everyone in his realm. It was always a treat for me when he attended a lodge event or presented a program to our lodge. This wonderful man will be greatly missed. We are so grateful to his trusted companion Jayne Cappelletti for all she has done for Clifford for so long. At the time of this writing, we are waiting for a memorial date to be set. Arrangements are being handled by Joldersma and Klein.



Clifford with Fjord horse, Marshall, MI July 2015



SONS of NORWAY

Askeladden Lodge 5-610

507 Clinton Ave
Kalamazoo, MI 49001

JUNI-JULI KALENDER

-  • juni 5 - Grundlovsdag - Constitution Day of Denmark
-  • juni 6 - Sveriges nasjonaldag - National Day of Sweden
-  • juni 7 - Unionsoppløsningen - Norway-Sweden Union dissolved 1905
-  • juni 14 - U.S. Flag Day
- juni 15 - **Midssommar with Vasa noon - Jensen residence**
- juni 16 - Father's Day
-  • juni 17 - Icelandic National Day
- juni 19 - Juneteenth
- juni 24 - Sankt Hans Dag - Jonsok - Midsummer Day
-  • juli 1 - Canada Day
-  • juli 4 - U.S. Independence Day
-  • juli 4 - HM Queen Sonja's Birthday, 1937
-  • juli 20 - HRH Crown Prince Haakon Magnus' Birthday
-  • juli 29 - St. Olav's Day (Olsok)

Gratulerer med dagen

Fødselsdag Hilsener

June/July Birthdays

- June - Rita Benzenberg
- June - Kjell Croce
- June - Kaaren DeWitt
- June - Abe Erickson
- June - Terese Sherman
- June - Kaeler James Stafne
- June - Laurene Swanson
- July - Karin Loberg Code
- July - Carolyn Hande
- July - Terilyn Koretsky
- July - Sondra Phillips
- July - Clarence Platt
- July - Jonathan Platt
- July - Shawn Platt
- July - River Rose Reich
- July - Marilyn Sogge
- July - Gretchen Wesenberg



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.