



Norse Valley Lodge 5-491

Nytt Notes January 2026

Happy New Year to All!

I'll be heading "Up North" for the next 5 days to spend some time with my son's family and play Pop-Pop for my legion of grandkids as we will partaking in as many Nordic activities as possible. We have hockey, cross-country skating, downhill skiing, and cider sipping at an outdoor bonfire on the schedule. No plans at this time to toast the New Year with Aquavit but I need to set a good example for the younglings', right?

Here's hoping your 2026 is healthy, active, peaceful, and spiritually meaningful for you and your family.

Julefest Success

How could you go wrong when you had 40 people gathered together for good food (thanks to Treasurer Corey Olson for providing the main course of pulled pork and the many volunteers who provided casseroles, appetizers, and scrumptious desserts), great song (thanks to guitarist Vice-President Lois Gruetzmacher), along with a visit by Julenisse (thanks Dave) to pass out gifts





Next Lodge Meetings are as scheduled at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church located at 3009 North Meade Street in Appleton.

Saturday January 17th at 6:00 p.m.

A presentation by Eric Bestul. Eric is a former touring musician who is now a music teacher at Lessons From The Art in Iola, Wisconsin. He has a love for history and specializes in making and playing early medieval instruments. His presentation is entitled "Skogtroll" is an interactive show focused on early Nordic music where he shares the sounds and stories of the early medieval period though today. Don't miss the chance to hear and learn about these instruments from the time of the Vikings.

Saturday February 21st at 6:00 p.m.

Board member, LeAnn Ostrem Knoeck will present a pictorial tour of the famous Thomas Dambo trolls she has visited so far.

Saturday March 21st Noon:

March in the St Patrick parade in New London.

Saturday April 18th at 6:00 p.m.

To Be Determined

Sunday May 17th at Noon:

Syttende Mai Picnic

Another Feeding America volunteer event coming up on January 28th!

If one of your 2026 resolutions is to be more active in the community, both physically and spiritually, here is that opportunity! Mark your calendars for **Wednesday January 28th from 12:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.** to help the less fortunate in Northeast Wisconsin at Feeding America. Norse Valley members will volunteer at Feeding America on the north side of Appleton, at that time. We will pack boxes with food items.

Please contact Norse Valley member Linda Hash, (lhash@new.rr.com), our volunteer coordinator, if you would like to help out on Wednesday, January 28th.



Celebrating New Years the Scandinavian Way

Denmark: Speeches and Sketches

New Year's Eve in Denmark includes two unique television traditions. Official celebrations start with the Queen's Speech at 6 p.m., in which Queen Margrethe had addressed the nation. This has been a staple of Danish TV since the 1980s—you can even take bets on which topics will make it in! In 2024, there was a twist—Queen Margrethe chose New Year's Eve speech to announce her abdication from the throne (after more than 50 years!) paving the way for her eldest son, Frederik, to assume the role

of King. Presumably, King Frederik X will speak at this New Year's Eve, most likely ending his speech the way his mother always did, with "Gud bevare Danmark" (God save Denmark).

At some time before midnight, stations will then broadcast "Dinner for One." This 20-minute sketch was written by British playwright Lauri Wylie and performed in U.K. music halls during the 1920s. In the early 1960s, it was recorded as a black-and-white film for German television (in English, with a German introduction). Despite receiving little attention in its country of origin, it has become mandatory New Year's Eve viewing in Germany, Denmark, and Sweden.

In the sketch, wealthy Miss Sophie celebrates her 90th birthday party with four "friends." The problem? Her friends are all long dead—so her butler James steps in to play all four of them, getting drunker and drunker as the night wears on.

Despite their black humor, Danes are an optimistic lot at heart—as evidenced by their tradition of "jumping into" the new year. The aim is to jump as high as possible—so as midnight approaches, Danes will scramble to find a chair or sofa from which to leap into the air at the stroke of midnight. Providing they don't injure themselves, this jump is meant to give them the best possible start to 2026.

The Danish New Year's table isn't as sumptuous as the Christmas table but there's still plenty of comfort food to eat: a typical dish is boiled cod with mustard sauce, sometimes followed by pork with kale. The meal ends with Kransekage, a dessert made from stacked rings of baked marzipan. Marzipan is a sweet confection made from ground almonds and sugar, often flavored with almond or rose extract. This symbolizes wealth and prosperity for the year ahead.

If you're visiting Denmark between December 27 and January 1, beware: these are the only days in the year that Danes can legally set off fireworks, meaning that a lot of fireworks are set off at this time, often in combination with heavy drinking! As a result, supermarkets sell safety glasses along with fireworks; it's best to keep them on as you're walking around.

Sweden: Rhyme and Revelry

Just like in Denmark, Swedes will tune in to watch the annual screening of "Dinner for One" with their families. But instead of the Queen's Speech, there's another long-standing tradition: one that, curiously, also has British roots.

Every year, just before midnight, a famous Swedish actor will read out the poem "Nyårsklockan." It's a translation of English poet Alfred, Lord Tennyson's "Ring out, wild bells," though the translator has taken liberties to make it sound more Swedish. The actor, too, will reinterpret the poem, varying the delivery or choosing to omit certain lines. Here's an excerpt from the original English poem:

"Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light:
The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

"Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true."

Unlike the modest Christmas table, the Swedish New Year's Eve meal is luxurious. There's no set menu but it tends to have a more international flavor, with lobster and champagne often featuring. Some Swedes will opt for more traditional dishes: gravlax (salmon with dill), glasmästarsill (pickled herring), and kottbullar (meatballs).

Norway: Fireworks and Family

Norwegian celebrations are more low-key than those of their Scandinavian neighbors, with many leaving the cities for ski resorts or holiday homes. The gatherings that do happen are small, intimate affairs with family or friends. On the dinner table, you'll find pinnekjøtt (lamb ribs) or ribbe (pork ribs) with riskrem (rice pudding) for dessert.

As in Denmark, people will gather around the TV to hear the King's Speech, which is broadcast at around 7:30 p.m. As midnight nears, many will head to parks or hilltops to catch the fireworks. It's common for individuals to bring their own fireworks, as it's legal to set them off between 6 p.m. and 2 a.m. In fact, this is the only time in the year that they can! At the stroke of midnight, fireworks fill the night with dazzling lights, creating a spectacular display.



Attention Facebook Users

Be sure to Follow our lodge's Facebook page (@norsevalley) and check in regularly to Like and Share our posts if you happen to miss them in your feed.

The more our posts are Shared and Liked, the more exposure our lodge gets which is great advertising for us. Don't forget that our website norsevalley.org is a great place to find out about upcoming events and check out photos from past events.

Got a question? Send an email to norsevalley@gmail.com.

If you have any questions or concerns about lodge activities, please contact Judy Ghastin at judy62ghastin@gmail.com or 920-450-3584.