



SONS of NORWAY



December 2019
Walworth County, WI

Norsemen of the Lakes 5-650

Greetings, fellow Norwegian Americans:

Our Julefest (Christmas Party) is right around the corner, and I can't wait. We are having it at a different location this year with new caterers, but the love of our Scandinavian heritage will be just as strong as ever. Be sure to wear your Nordic togs to bring out the festive mood. You can also bring a gift to pass if you want to, and, as always, we will sing carols around the Juletree. So be sure you have Dec. 10th on your calendar and we will see you at 6 p.m. at the Sugar Creek Lutheran Church, N5690 Cobblestone Road, Elkhorn.

I have some great news for our Jan. and Feb. events. Torbin & Judy Brun of Wms. Bay have invited us to their home, which I understand is more like a Nordic museum, for coffee and dessert Jan 12th at 2 p.m. More on that in the Jan. newsletter. For the Feb. event, plan on breakfast at Perkins in Delevan. More on the date and time in our Feb. newsletter.

If anyone is interested in learning how to make lefse or helping us prepare it for the Christmas Party, please let Corlene know. We are planning a lefse-making evening Dec. 6 at 5:30. All you have to bring is an apron.

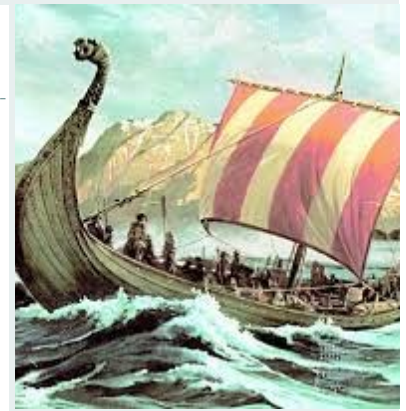
Don't forget to bring any cancelled stamps to the Christmas party for donation to Tubfirm to benefit handicapped children and adults in Norway.

Membership Committee News

Centennial: We continue to receive results from our volunteers who worked the Williams Bay Centennial. We had several new people attend our last meeting, including 3 generations from one family. An effort will be made at the Christmas party to invite those in attendance who are not members to join. There is a new policy this year regarding dues. You can now pay with an automatic credit card payment at \$5/month. That's all a one year subscription costs. I don't know about you, but I blow that much each month on soda and fancy coffee. We received one new member in Nov.



Brochure: Since the Int'l office doesn't have a brochure that explains all the benefits of being a member of the Sons of Norway, I have prepared a new brochure. I have had 100 copies printed on 28 lb. paper for about \$50. We will use the grant we were given to print the brochures. I think it will be a great recruitment item that we can leave in different places or send to prospective members. I recommend you keep a few copies of it along with registration blanks in your purse handy to use as a tool to get more members. And remember the easy pay plan discussed above also.



Gratulare Med Dagen

Emily Henderson	5th
Valerie Wick	8th
Haley Hansen	26th

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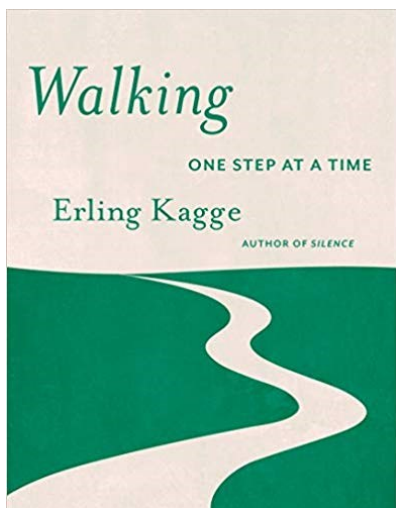
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KALENDAR

- Dec. 10th Christmas Celebration 6 p.m..
Sugar Creek Lutheran Church, N5690 Cobblestone Rd, Elkhorn. 6 p.m.
- Jan. 12th, coffee and dessert at Torbin & Judy Brun's house, 211 Circle Pkwy., Wms. Bay.
- Feb. 15th 9 a.m. Breakfast at Perkins, Delavan

Disney's Upcoming "Frozen 2" Inspired by the Scandinavian Sami

by David Nikel



Placing one foot in front of the other, embarking on the journey of discovery, and experiencing the joy of exploration—these activities are intrinsic to our nature. Our ancestors traveled long distances on foot, gaining new experiences and learning from them. But as universal as walking is, each of us will experience it differently. For Erling Kagge, it is the gateway to the questions that fascinate him—Why do we walk? Where do we walk from? What is our destination?—and in this book he invites us to investigate them along with him.

Language reflects the idea that life is one single walk; the word "journey" comes from the distance we travel in the course of a day. Walking for Kagge is a natural accompaniment to creativity: the occasion for the unspoken dialogue of thinking. Walking is also the antidote to the speed at which we conduct our lives, to our insistence on rushing, on doing everything in a precipitous manner—walking is among the most radical things we can do.

This book is available at the library in print or audio form. The audio is approximately 3 hours long. He has also written a book called *Silence in the Age of Noise*, also available at the library in print or audio form. Either one of these selections may be used for earning your literature pin.

Representatives from the Sami have had input into the making of 'Frozen 2' as producers seek to get the details right.

Anna, Elsa, Kristoff and Olaf are back as the long-awaited movie *Frozen 2* hits the big screen in December. Cinema-goers will experience Sami culture, reindeer herding and Norwegian nature.

Disney has finally released the trailer. It's every bit as visually stunning as you would expect, and hints at the plot: "Far away, as north as we can go, once stood an enchanted forest."

Because so much of what happens in the movie is based on Sami lifestyle, Disney asked Sami people for help.

Help with the Sami-inspired details

For the last three years, Disney executives and producers have worked with representatives from Sami communities across the north of Norway, Sweden and Finland. An expert board of six visited the California headquarters and had direct contact with the animators.

Anne Lajla Utsi from the International Sami Film Institute is one of six people who helped. She told NRK that it has been a very educational collaboration. She also praised the animators for their willingness to be open and listen.

A successful collaboration

The brains behind the hit *Frozen* movie and its sequel is producer Peter del Vecho. He praised the Sami team for being warm, hospitable and helpful.

"We obviously want to make a credible film. Of course, it is not entirely realistic since it is an animated film, but the details are important to us. Working with the collaborative group and understanding the nuances has resulted in a fantastic collaboration," he told NRK.

The three Sami Parliament presidents Aili Keskitalo (Norway), Tiina Sanila-Aikio (Finland) and Per-Olof Nutti (Sweden), along with the president of the Sami Council Åsa Larsson-Blind, were all involved in the collaboration agreement.

They signed a "benefits declaration" on the collaboration. This laid out for the Sami to receive proper representation in the movie and also that the film should "give back" to the communities.

One of the ways that will happen is through a Sami language version of the film. It

will be released on 25th December, the same day as the Norwegian version.

The movie has already been released in the UK and USA and is receiving rave reviews, especially for its life-like animation.

Another tourism bump for Norway?

The first *Frozen* movie recorded worldwide sales of more than USD \$1.2 billion. It took more than a little inspiration from Norwegian landmarks including stave churches, Oslo's Akershus castle and the fjords.

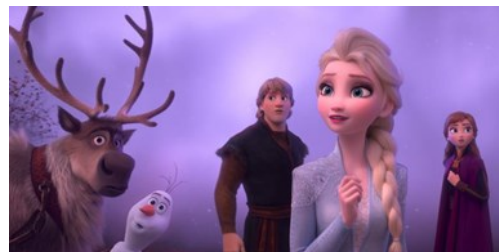
Such was the success of the first movie, Norway tourism bosses said it was responsible for much of the growth in tourism in the years following the film's



Norway's Sami Parliament 2017-2021 (Photo: Kenneth Hætta)

release. Disney's cruise line even ran a special *Frozen* cruise of Norway.

Time will tell if the second movie captures the world's imagination once again. One thing is for sure, though, the producers are doing everything they can to get the details right.



Juleøl: Norwegian Christmas Beer

by David Nickel

You can't go far in December without being offered a Norwegian Christmas beer. But what exactly is it?



Norway's **juleøl** is a dark, rich and strong ale brewed by virtually every Norwegian brewery – from the largest mainstream breweries to the smallest microbreweries – in the run-up to the festive period.

Christmas beers in bars and shops

If you're in Norway during December, simply pop into your nearest supermarket, and you'll see at least half of the alcohol space devoted to juleøl.

Of course, the beers available in supermarkets are limited to 4.7% alcohol, so for the stronger more authentic juleøl, you'll need to head to Vinmonopolet (state-owned off license) or a bar. It's here you're more likely to find one-off batches from local microbreweries too.

Among ale fans, the Christmas beer season is a fascinating one. Breweries consider their juleøl a prestigious product and a useful marketing tool. That's because the Norwegian media fall all over themselves to publish articles comparing the different varieties!

A strong history in Scandinavia

Of course, festive-themed beer is not unique to Norway, far from it. But it does have a very strong history throughout Scandinavia.

There are many references to the beverage in ancient times, and the creation of these winter beers in Norway on an informal basis is known to date back to pre-Christian times. The first commercial production of juleøl came as long ago the mid 19th-century, as commercial brewing changed production methods and drinking habits. Ads began to appear in the newspapers.

"The first newspaper ad I've found for something called 'Christmas beer' was in the *Bergen Adressecontoir Efterretninger* of 1 December 1869," explains Anders Christensen, an NTNU researcher and beer enthusiast. The ad read: 'Extra fine Christmas beer in tønner and ankervis available, and can be ordered from C. Andersen, Dræggen'. *Ankervis* meant that the beer would have been available in 38.6-litre wooden barrels.

Christensen went on to explain in an interview with *Gemini* that unlike the varieties available today, the early commercial juleøl was actually quite a weak product. The flavors, however, were reminiscent of today:

"By the end of the 1800s, Christmas beer was mainly something called *pottøl* (literally, pot beer) or *søttøl* (sweet beer). It was a rich, sweet but relatively weak beer. *Pottøl* was a remnant of the old beer brewing tradition that dated from before the Bavarian type of bottom fermentation was adopted in Norway. At the same time, it was also a kind of precursor for *landsøl* (a lager) and *vørterøl* (a malt beer)," he said.

Other Christmas drinks in Norway

Of course, not every Norwegian is a beer drinker! But that's okay; there's a drink for everyone at Christmas time. Here are some of the other popular choices:

Gløgg: A warm cup of this Scandinavian twist on mulled wine is the perfect accompaniment to a stroll around a Christmas market in sub-zero temperatures. It's often served with a handful of raisins and chopped almonds. Check out the recipe on the Sons of Norway website.

Julebrus: A festive twist on the humble soda! Typically coloured red with a creamier taste than regular sodas. The perfect way to make sure the kids and non-alcohol drinkers don't feel left out.

Whether you're an ale drinker or not, I hope you've enjoyed learning a little more about this Norwegian tradition. **Skål!**



Heritage Members Turning 16

Previously, Heritage members who turned 16 would receive one of four cards instructing them how to transition to the next membership category, Unge Venner. As a part of the simplified dues structure approved at the 2016 International Convention, the membership category for members age 16 to 23 was discontinued in the United States on January 1, 2018, and will be discontinued in Canada and Norway on January 1, 2020.

Unge Venner in the U.S., who are in a household with a member, are automatically transferred into a family membership. Those who are not part of a family membership will receive a dues statement that includes an explanation of the benefits of adult membership in Sons of Norway. (This will take place for Canadian and Norwegian members who turn 16 beginning on January 1, 2020.)

If you have a youngster who is turning 17, please review this with them and encourage them to continue membership.

The Mystery of Stave Churches

Seeing inside makes all the difference

THE NORWEGIAN AMERICAN
Eric Stavney, Mukilteo, Wash.

As my daughter and I put the spire on the top roof of our second cardboard stave church, a 1/87 scale model (for model train layouts) you can buy on eBay, we had the same let-down as when we finished the first one: all the cool stuff gets buried inside. The V-shaped trusses, the carved Saint Andrew's crosses, the stave columns rising up from the flagstones to define the midtrom or nave—you get to see all that as you build it, only to cover it up in darkness by piling on a succession of roofs.

We got so frustrated after one model, we even cut away one side so we could peek at the construction inside—like a doll's house. Indeed, the real charm and mystery of a real stave church is the dark interior.

I recently visited the Gol Stave Church in the Norsk Folkemuseum of Oslo. Gol Stave Church is a curiosity, because it was moved there from Hallingdal, and so lacks that sense of place where it was originally built. But I am thankful to King Oscar II for moving it to what became the Norsk Folkemuseum in Oslo, because now it is easily accessible to visitors.

However, I've had the Borgund Stave Church stuck in my head since I last was in Norway, because it's one of the most spectacular and best preserved. Once you've experienced that one, it almost spoils your visits to other churches.



Photo: Eric Stavney
Gol Stave Church seen from the outside as it appears today.



Photo: Eric Stavney
The nave carving inside the Gol church.

Nonetheless, the Gol church does offer the senses some of the most important elements of a stave church: a dark, unheated interior, a unique smell, ornate carvings, and at least one painting. It's impossibly old, built sometime in the 1200s (Borgund dates back to about the same time).

When I stepped over the front portal of the Gol church, I was plunged into darkness: a single lit candle on the altar was the only real source of light. The floorboards are slightly springy underfoot. The museum has put a shallow bench on either side of the nave aisle for weary tourists, but I prefer to stand, as congregations did in stave churches for at least 400 years, before pews became fashionable.

And then I looked up, or tried to. As my eyes got used to the dark, it seemed the ceiling was far, far above, framed in ever-smaller rectangles of cross beams and arches of dark wood. Was there something up there? It was hard to tell.

The smell of the pine tar used to preserve the wood conjures up a smoky fire surrounded by mysterious hooded figures. On the outer posts, the tar has formed bubbles or blisters like charred wood. I've read that they extracted pine tar from wood smoldering in pit-kilns covered with turf to limit the availability of oxygen. The tar is a key element in preserving the church exterior from the weather.

At the door, my eyes got lost trying to follow the interwoven rings and serpents and figures—some I couldn't really see too well. It's bizarre to imagine this as a Christian "house of God" with the many Viking animal and serpent motifs, including the dragons on the roofs outside.

I've wondered why the carvings seem somehow Celtic, so reminiscent of the illuminated Book of Kells. The Book of Kells originated in Ireland or Scotland sometime in the early 800s. It isn't hard to imagine that the Vikings who raided in the 900s took home pieces of art like that found in the Book of Kells and that the artistic style influenced these amazing carvings. (Cont. Page 6)

Norway's Oil Fund Passes 10 Trillion Kroner

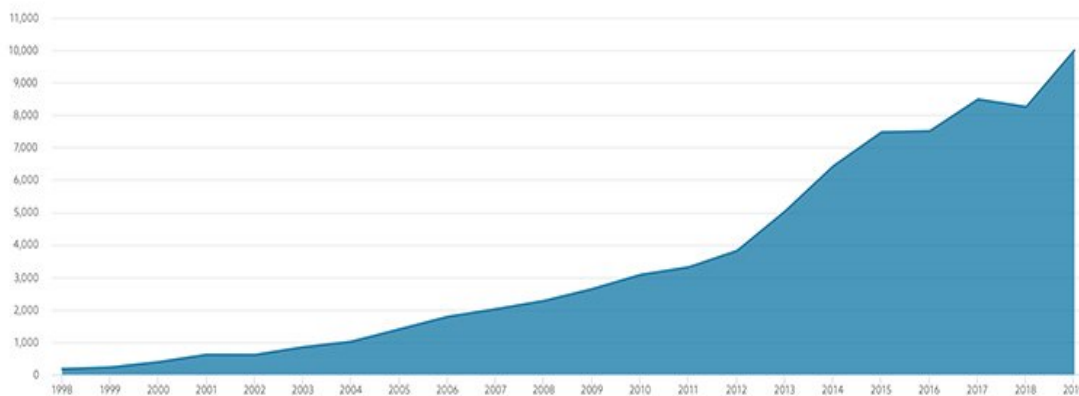
Fifty years after Norway struck oil, the value of the country's Oil Fund has passed 10 trillion kroner for the first time.

Norway's 'Government Pension Fund – Global', commonly referred to as the Oil Fund, has hit a new height. For the first time, the value of the world's largest sovereign investment fund has passed ten trillion kroner. That's about USD \$1.087 trillion. Norway defines a trillion in the old system of a million million, but most of the rest of the world now refers to a trillion as one thousand billion. That means the Norwegian media is reporting the number as 10,000 billion Norwegian kroner. We're fans of the latter system, so we—along with the global English media—are defining the number as 10 trillion.

Whichever counting system you use, it's a hell of a number! At the time of writing, the value stood at **10,053,993,562,824** Norwegian kroner.

An economic success storyj

In 1990, the Norwegian Parliament adopted the Government Pension Fund Act. The first deposit was made back in 1996. Since 1998, the fund has generated an annual return of 5.9



percent, or 4,660 billion kroner. As the head of Norges Bank Investment Management, Yngve Slyngstad is essentially the boss of the fund. He told NRK that Norway has been “unbelievably lucky” many times

in a row: “Not only did we find oil, but we got a high price for oil during the years we put the money into the fund. After that, we have been given incredible help from the world's markets, which have risen as much as they have done.”

Exchange rates push the value to a record high

At the end of the second quarter of 2019, the fund was invested with 69.3 percent in equities, 2.7 percent in unlisted real estate and 28.0 percent in fixed income. The fund's market value is affected by investment returns, capital inflow and withdrawals, and exchange rate movements.

It's the latter that has proved pivotal lately. Because so much of the fund's holdings are denominated in US Dollars and other world currencies, any movement in exchange rates has a significant impact on the overall value in Norwegian kroner.

Recently, the Krone has weakened to record levels, leaving many economists scratching their heads. At the time of this article, one US Dollar buys 9.21 Norwegian kroner. That number was 8.64 just three months ago, and below 7.7 in early 2018.

Economists have pointed towards Brexit uncertainty, international trade conflicts and global unrest as underlying reasons for the poor position of the Norwegian krone. They say the krone could weaken even further before the end of the year. That's bad news for Norwegians travelling overseas, but great for export business and for the Fund.

The Fund's first director Knut Kjær said that despite the weak krone making a significant difference, there are still many reasons to celebrate: “The size of the fund exceeds all the fantasies we had when we started. It has been fantastic, so there is good reason to celebrate that it has gone so well so far.”

In the Gol church, there's a faded painting of the Last Supper over the altar, as if to remind parishioners why they were there.

They stood in this church, on these planks, in all seasons for Sunday services, and for innumerable weddings, baptisms, funerals, and confirmations through 700 – 800 years of history.

They witnessed the conversion of their services from Catholicism to Lutheranism. Yet many of the rituals, like the changing of the seasons, remained the same: the reading from scriptures, the priest's or pastor's homily or sermon, the gathering of family, the cadence of weekly worship.

As I counted the staves surrounding the nave, I remembered that they're usually made of carefully selected Scotch pine, which is still very common in Norway today. Looking at the cross beams and timbers, it's hard to believe wooden pins with notched beams hold it all together, and that it's still standing after 820 years.

When someone finally led me out of the building, in a daze, I realized why I love stave churches so much. Despite having read books and articles on stave church construction, built models, painted pictures, and taken zillions of photos, I just can't leave one without feeling humbled and in awe.

I hope sometime you get a chance to visit one: there are several excellent replicas in the United States, in Norway, of course, and in Denmark, Sweden, Iceland, and Poland.

I don't think you'll be the same coming out as when you went in.

Stave Church replicas in the US

Door County, WI
Rapid City, SD
Moorhead, MN
Minot, ND
Islip, NY
Warren County, IN
Washington Island, WI
Epcot Center, Orlando, FL



*Photo: Eric Stavney
The ambulatory at the Gol Stave Church.*

2020 Lodge Events (snip this off for your refrigerator)

Jan. 12th at 2 p.m. Torbin & Judy Brun invite you for coffee and dessert at their home at 211 Circle Pkwy, Wms. Bay. Come see all their Nordic knickknacks.

Feb. 15th at 9 a.m. Breakfast at Perkins. Join us for food and games. Remember, Jan. & Feb. are great months to work on your Sports and Culture Pins Challenge. Winners will be revealed at the Julefest in Dec.

March is movie month. Join us at The Atrium, 116 Cherry St., Williams Bay for the movie *Kon Tiki*. The Thor Hyerdahl story.

April is medal programs' month. Learn how you can earn medals in sports and Norwegian culture pins.

May is Syttende Mai. We will have our lodge smorgasbord on our regular event day at Advia Credit Union. A group will be organized to travel to Stoughton Sat. May 16th for their parade and the Norwegian dancers.

June is Picnic month. Join us for potluck at Babe Mann Park, 960 Proctor Dr, Elkhorn.

July & Aug. are months to travel & enjoy family. Don't forget to continue working on your culture pins and sports medals.

Sept. is Royal Family month. Enjoy a program that features the royal family members and what they do.

Oct. is athlete month. Learn about current famous Norwegian or Norwegian-American athletes.

Nov. celebrates Gustav Vigeland and Vigeland Park. Learn more about this famous artist and his works.

Dec. is Julefest. Reward yourself for a great year of learning about your Norwegian Heritage. But it doesn't stop there. Julefest is a special tradition all its own.