



SONS of NORWAY



Sept. 2021

Walworth County, WI

Norsemen of the Lakes 5-650

Greetings all:

I hope you will all come to our next meeting in Elkhorn. The Advia Credit Union is a great meeting place, easy access, lovely meeting room great parking. I am working on a nice program and hope you will participate in our wonderful Scandinavian heritage.

This month's newsletter celebrates children with several articles about parental benefits, education and poverty. (I certainly wish my son was educated in Finland since he hated school with a passion.)

Scandinavian success at the 2020 Summer Olympics in Tokyo

Country	G	S	B	Total
Finland	0	0	2	2
Norway	4	2	2	8
Sweden	3	6	0	9
Denmark	3	4	4	11

In the maritime setting of Fredrikstad, at the mouth of the Glomma, Norway's longest river, a unique building is taking shape. It bears the name of the Hope Cathedral and is an interfaith, sustainable art project.

Inspired by Norway's famous stave churches, the structure rises majestically on its 120 m2 barge made of timber and roots and built in a traditional fashion. The roof is a 300 m2 multi-colored work of art made of plastic taken from the ocean and subjected to an innovative transformation process. More than 1000 fish boxes have been washed, granulated and turned into 4000 roof tiles in more than 50 different colors.

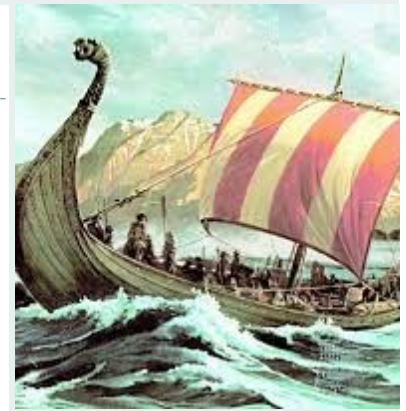
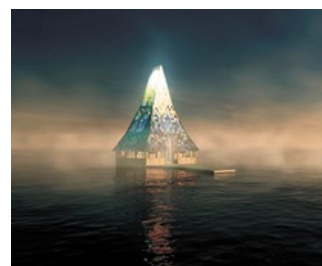
The Hope Cathedral is an environmentally sustainable project symbolizing the creation of hope through cooperation and reminding us that we are able to transform evil to good. Both the creative process and the finished cathedral is open to everyone. The project started in 2018 and will be formally opened on **June 5, 2021, UN Environment Day**.

The project is financed through support from numerous donors, great and small, in addition to a remarkable contribution of voluntary work – over 9000 hours so far. Our main sponsors are the municipality, the county, the Norwegian Church and the bank Sparebankstiftelsen DNB. The project is organized as a non-profit limited company of public utility.

Our point of departure is the ocean, which is borderless and binds us together – nations, continents and people, regardless of our religion. The ocean gives life and is our common inheritance. This inheritance is now threatened. If we are to save the ocean, we must do so together.

Hope and the ocean belong to us all!

Lori Ann Reinhall, from Seattle USA, has written a lovely article on Hope Cathedral, which was published in the newspaper *The Norwegian American*, February 2021. You can read the informative and inspiring article called [A Vision of Hope Rising from the Sea](#) here.



Gratulerer med dagen

September Birthdays

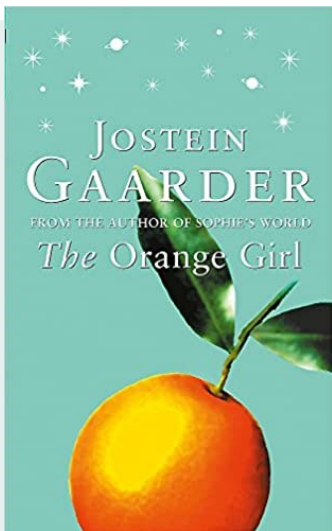
Robert Pederson	8th
Kathy Norquist	11th
Torben Brun	16th
Ashley Wilson	17th
Cole Pepper	23rd

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Greetings	1
Book Review	2
Parental Benefits	2
Child Poverty	4
Midnight Sun	5
Finish Education	6
Viking Heritage #4	6

KALENDAR

Potluck at Advia
Credit Union, 837
No. Wisconsin St.,
Elkhorn, WI 53121
6 P.M. Sept. 14th



From the author of **SOPHIE'S WORLD**, a modern fairy tale with a philosophical twist.

"My father died eleven years ago. I was only four then. I never thought I'd hear from him again, but now we're writing a book together."

To Georg Røed, his father is no more than a shadow, a distant memory. But then one day his grandmother discovers some pages stuffed into the lining of an old red pushchair. The pages are a letter to Georg, written just before his father died, and a story, The Orange Girl.

But The Orange Girl is no ordinary story - it is a riddle from the past and centers around an incident in his father's youth. One day he boarded a tram and was captivated by a beautiful girl standing in the aisle clutching a huge paper bag of luscious-looking oranges. Suddenly, the tram gave a jolt and he stumbled forward, sending the oranges flying in all directions. The girl simply hopped off the tram leaving Georg's father with arms full of oranges. Now, from beyond the grave, he is asking his son to help him finally solve the puzzle of her identity.

This book is not available at our library system; however, it is only \$4.53 in paperback from Amazon.

Parental Leave & Other Benefits in Norway

April 16, 2021 by David Nikel

Norway—and Scandinavia as a whole—is known for its generous parental leave policies. It's one of the biggest differences that foreigners see when moving here, especially from countries like the US.

Children are a priority in Norwegian society. All core education and a lot of higher education is delivered free of charge. But the focus on children starts long before school.



The first years of a child's life are seen as key for the child's development. As such, parents are entitled to a combined 12 months' leave related to the birth of a child. Let's take a look at the details.

Who can receive parental benefits?

Norway places three conditions on parental benefits. First, you must live in Norway and be a member of the National Insurance scheme. Essentially, this means you are covered if you are a taxpayer in Norway and considered a "tax resident."

You must have had income for at least six of the last 10 months, which can include payments from NAV. When converted to an annual income, this income must be at least half the present 'G' value. At the time of writing, this is a little over NOK 50,000 (\$5,755).

Adoptive and foster parents have equal rights to leave, from the date when the care of the child is officially transferred. This right does not apply when adopting a stepchild or for children aged over 15.

Same-sex parents have the same rights to parental leave. How the leave is shared depends on whether you have a child via surrogate or whether you are both adoptive parents of the same child.

A mother that does not qualify for parental benefit can instead apply for a lump-sum grant. At the time of writing, this is NOK 90,300 (\$10,394) for every child you give birth to or adopt.

How long is parental leave in Norway?

How much benefit you receive depends on who is eligible. There are different roles for, for example, simple parents, or situations when only one parent is eligible. What follows is the situation when both parents are eligible for benefit.

Parents are entitled to a combined total of 48 weeks leave in connection with the birth and after the birth. This can be extended to 58 weeks if a lower rate of payment is accepted.

This time includes the mother's right to leave for up to 12 weeks during the pregnancy. It also includes six weeks of leave reserved for the mother after the birth.

When both parents are entitled to the parental benefit, the parental benefit period consists of a maternal quota, paternal quota and a joint period that can be shared as desired.

Maternal quota

The maternal quota is 15 weeks at 100% benefit or 19 weeks at 80% benefit. Mothers also get the last three weeks before the estimated date of delivery. The first six weeks must be taken immediately following the birth, with the remaining nine taken immediately following this or saved for later.

Paternal quota

The paternal quota is the same: 15 weeks at 100% or 19 weeks at 80%. Fathers can take the parental quote from week seven after birth or choose to wait until a later date. The quota can be taken consecutively, divided up, or combined with partial work.

Joint period

The joint period is the weeks of parental benefit that you can share. It is 16 weeks at 100% or 18 weeks 80%. This can be divided equally or taken entirely by the mother or father. However, when the father takes parental benefit from the joint period, the mother must be working, studying or be engaged in some other approved activity.

How much money is paid?

The amount of paid leave is based on annual income up to six times the 'G' amount. At present this is NOK 608,106 (\$69,993). Payments made are based on your income from the last three months, but this can be assessed if it was significantly less than your typical income. Benefit can be paid by the employer or the state. If paid by the state, benefit is paid out by the 25th of the month.

Additional leave

In addition to the first 12 months, each of the parents is entitled to one year of leave for each birth. This leave must be taken directly after the first year. If you are taking care of the child yourself, you are entitled to both the years. Other people who care for the child may also be entitled to leave.

How to apply for parental leave

While parental leave is an employment right in Norway, you must still apply for it from your employer in good time. This should be done no later than three months before the leave is due to start. A pregnant employee is also entitled to paid leave in connection with pre-natal appointments. Disputes over the right to leave may be decided by employment arbitration boards.

Cash-for-care support

Known in Norwegian as *kontantstøtte*, cash-for-care support or cash support, is designed to help parents of children between the ages of 1 and 2 that do not attend a government-subsidized kindergarten. Cash support is not liable to tax. [Specific rates](#) depend on the amount of time the child spends in a kindergarten.

Child benefit

The purpose of child benefit, known in Norwegian as *barnetrygd*, is to help cover the costs of raising a child. Most new parents are entitled to receive the payments from the month after the child is born. The child's mother or father can receive child benefit payments or it can be shared equally.

At the time of writing, the [monthly benefit](#) for a single child is NOK 1,354 (\$156) to the age of 6, and NOK 1,054 (\$121) thereafter. Child benefit payments are not liable to taxation, and are paid out until the month before the child turns 18. Single parents receive an extra supplement.

More information on family benefits in Norway

Phew! This isn't even half of all the things you need to know as a new parent in Norway. That's especially true for those adopting and for single parents.

But I hope this answers the most basic questions people have about how parental leave in Norway and other benefits work. For the full information, see [NAV's family section](#), but be aware that only some of the content is available in English.

Want to hear more? Go to a podcast comparing [raising children in Norway vs. the USA here](#).



Dramatic Increase in Child Poverty in Norway

March 31, 2021 by David Nikel

New figures from [Statistics Norway](#) show that the number of children living in households with a persistently low income continues to increase.

Child poverty figures in Norway

From 2018 to 2019, the number of children living in households with a persistently low income increased by 4,000 to a new high of 115,000. In general, the figures show that children in the big cities are most exposed to a low-income lifestyle. The statistics show that Oslo and [Viken county](#) are the worst affected areas. Sarpsborg, [Fredrikstad](#) and Drammen are particularly bad, but there was also a big increase in Stavanger.

11.7% of all children in Norway are now considered to be living in low-income households. As you'll see from the chart below, it's a trend that continues to climb.

Because the recent figures relate to 2019, they are not explained by the pandemic. So, if the pandemic isn't to blame, what is?

Immigration and child poverty

Statistics Norway says that children with an [immigrant background](#) are increasingly overrepresented in the study. Children with an immigrant background make up 18% of all children in Norway. That means the child was born outside of Norway, or both par-

ents were. Yet since 2013, this group has accounted for more than half of all children living in low-income households. Of the 115,000 children with persistent low income in 2019, 67,700 had either immigrated themselves or were children of parents who had immigrated. This in turn means that 39.1% of all children with an immigrant background belong to a low-income household.

"This has a clear connection with the fact that households with a weak connection to the labor market are most exposed to low income," stated the report.

"It takes time"

Sarpsborg is one of the Norwegian cities singled out in the report. In 2019, almost 20% of the city's children were living in low-income households. Sarpsborg's mayor Sindre Martinsen-Evje told [NRK](#) that they take the problem seriously, "but it is also a job that takes time and cannot be solved overnight." The mayor agrees with the SSB summary that children with an immigration background are hardest hit. "Many of these families are low-income families who have come

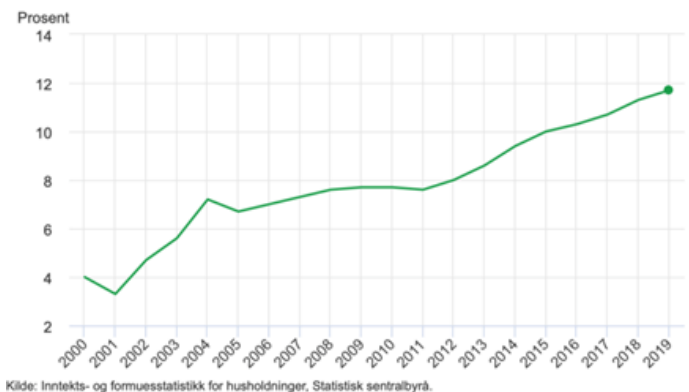
from other countries. We believe that work and education are the key to getting families out of poverty. Therefore, we must work purposefully with children and young people in these families, so that they can complete the educational race," he said.

Storing up mental health issues?

Studies show that people born into low-income families are at an increased risk of being left behind in several areas of living conditions, most notably health. It has also been shown that young people's [mental health is affected](#) by belonging to a low-income household.

Concern for 2020 and beyond

Figures for 2020 will not be available for some time. Yet many are concerned the pandemic will have thrust even more families into the low-income bracket. The Red Cross is among those concerned that even more children are now having an hard time with parents out of work. Spokesperson Camilla Ringdal Dukefos believes that changes must take place. "Child benefit must be increased, and measures must be implemented that ensure all parents have the opportunity to have an income," she said. The days in the run-up to the Easter vacation have seen [long queues](#) outside [Fattighuset](#) in Oslo. Fattighuset is a voluntary aid organization that, among other things, distributes food parcels to those in need. A spokesperson for the center said that increased unemployment during the pandemic has led to an increase in demand.



The Midnight Sun in Norway

April 8, 2018 by [David Nikel](#)

The sun never sets for months at a time during the long Scandinavian summer.

Visitors to northern Norway during the winter are obsessed with hunting for the northern lights, but in the summer the focus turns to the midnight sun. For residents of Arctic towns and villages, the midnight sun is no tourist attraction, it is a simple fact of life!

The midnight sun is simply the phenomenon whereby the sun doesn't set for a period of time. At the Arctic Circle it's just around the time of the Summer Solstice, but at the North Pole the sun doesn't set for a full six months.

Between these locations, there's a varying degree of time. People in Tromsø, the largest town in northern Norway, experience the phenomenon for approximately two months each year: 20 May to 22 July. At the North Cape, the midnight sun is visible for a few weeks more, approximately 14 May to 29 July.

The light at midnight

The midnight sun is something of a misnomer. It would be far better termed the “midnight light”, especially at or just below the Arctic Circle. For example, Trondheim is a few hundred miles below the Arctic Circle but for a couple of weeks around the summer solstice, it's usually light enough at midnight to comfortably read outside.

The human impact of the midnight sun

Norway uses giant mirrors, light-therapy clinics, and even teaches positive thinking to overcome seasonal depression in the winter, when the sun doesn't rise in parts of the country for months at a time. But Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) can also strike people in the summer.

In contrast to people who suffer from SAD in the winter, those who experience it at the height of summer will be more likely to show symptoms such as insomnia, decreased appetite and weight loss, and agitation or anxiety. Researchers still debate the exact reasons for the condition, which is much rarer than its winter companion.

“It's not known exactly which neurotransmitters are affected, but Rosenthal believes those with summer SAD likely struggle with either the light that comes with expanded days, or else the heat”, reported Quartz when speaking to psychiatrist and author of *Super Mind*, Norman Rosenthal.

While researching [Moon Norway](#), I travelled extensively around the north of the country in the summer. The light wreaks havoc with your brain and your body clock, even though most hotels have black-out blinds and/or thick curtains to keep the light out. If you're staying in hostels or cabins, an eye mask is an absolutely essential item to pack.

Where to see the midnight sun

I get this question quite a lot and am always a bit perplexed by it, but I guess people compare the midnight sun to seeing the northern lights. Whereas catching a glimpse of the aurora can be improved by visiting certain places at certain times, the midnight sun is always there in the sky.

As I said, it's more about the light than seeing the sun itself, especially as science tells us never to look directly at the sun! While thousands travel to the North Cape every year to watch the sunset, I don't think that's an essential experience at all. Because the midnight sun is about experiencing light late into the evening, you're far better off finding a quiet mountain or hiking path (there's plenty of those in northern Norway), packing a picnic and a sketch book, and simply enjoying the experience wherever you are.



10 Facts About Education in Finland



© Natalia Rumyantseva | Dreamstime — The Finnish-Russian School of Eastern Finland.

Finland is a small country, famous for its fantastic education system, one of the best in the world. To be specific, Finland takes the 6th position in the world with its system of education. We provide you with some facts about education in Finland that can blow your mind.

The first thing to mention is that children in Finland do not go to school until the age of 7. It means that they have enough time to enjoy their childhood, to spend time with their families and to get ready for school. It may surprise you, but you will not find a child in Finland who will cry because the time to start school has come.

There is no standardizing test in Finland, no competition between children, no pressure. Sounds great, right? In Finland, all pupils are equal and there is not differentiation between students who are good in studying and those who are not.

The third thing to mention derives from the two previous: there is a strong belief in equality in Finland. Furthermore, they do care about children and their happiness. A surprising fact is that each newborn gets presents from the government. Yes, it is not a mistake, each.

Do you remember how much time you spent to complete your homework? Did you like it? 99% of people will say that they do not. So how about no homework? In Finland it is not a dream of a student, it is a reality, beautiful and happy reality.

Now let us talk about time. Week school time in Finland is no more than 20 hours. Once again, why not provide your kid with a happy childhood?

Previously mentioned point means, that children in Finland spend no more than four hours in school a day. What is more, this time includes a lunch break. It is important to provide children with enough time to relax and enough time to learn something besides school. As you can see, people in Finland follow this easy rule.

Teachers in Finland have to get a master's degree. It means that all of them are highly qualified. As they provide some kind of a bridge between childhood and adult life, it is very important to hire professionals who know their job. It makes a lot of sense, right?

Teachers in Finland are highly respected. They are standing next to such professions as doctors and lawyers. Finally somewhere people understand the importance of education!

Considering all the above mentioned, this fact can surprise you a lot, but every Finnish student knows at least two foreign languages. The most popular ones are English, German, French, Spanish and Swedish. Yes, Finnish people value the importance of communication.

Finally, there are no private schools in Finland. Discrimination is evil and in Finland you probably will not see it anywhere, especially when it comes to schools.



The Digervarden ski. Photo: Aud Hole, secretsoftheice.com

6 Things We Owe the Vikings

#4. Skis

Though the oldest known skis, dating to between 8000 and 7000 B.C., were discovered in Russia, and the first written reference to skiing comes from China's Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 220), we have the Vikings to thank for inaugurating the Western tradition of skiing. Even the word "ski" comes from the Old Norse "skíó." Ancient Norsemen skied across their snowy homelands for both recreation and transportation purposes, and the Norse goddess Skaoi and god Ullr were often depicted on skis or snowshoes.

The ice in the high mountains is melting due to rising temperatures and climate change. This melt has released many artefacts around the world, especially in the last decade (read [more here](#)). This is not least the case in Norway, which holds more than half the artifact finds from glacial ice globally. Also, you can download the paper on the Digervarden ski for free here: [Prehistoric and Medieval Skis from Glaciers and Ice Patches in Norway](#).