



Valhall Lodge Newsletter

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Sons of Norway Lodge # 5-168 April – June 2025

www.sofn.com

www.sonsofnorway5.com

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Draft / UPDATE



Kalender



Saturday -May 10, 2025 – 11:00 am- 3:00 pm

**Potluck Picnic - Caster's Shelter-Boone County Conservation District
603 North Appleton Road - Belvidere, IL 61008**

Join us Saturday, May 10th for a picnic and tour of the Norwegian cabin

Did you know Valhall Lodge sponsors an authentic Norwegian Cabin in Belvidere? Arrive by 11:00 am and join us to learn more about this cabin and what the Boone County Conservation is all about. Tours of the cabin will begin at 11:30 followed by a picnic lunch as part of a Syttende Mai celebration. The path to the cabin is handicap accessible.

The menu will be cheese and crackers, brats, hotdogs, buns, lefse, potato salad, crab salad, cucumber salad, baked beans, chips, veggie tray, fruit tray, water. (bring your beverage of choice if you want something else to drink) and of course Dessert

So we have enough food for everyone **RSVP's are required by May 5th**.
Contact Lee Ann Harp with your RSVP at (909) 806-0825 or (815)-282-2374

**Saturday -May 17, 2025– Syttende Mai Weekend -Enjoy the celebrations in the area
No Saturday Cultural Class**

**Saturday, June 14, 2025 – 10 am to Noon
Stockholm Inn**

Program – Norwegian Scientist

Ellen Gleditsch (29 December 1879 – 5 June 1968) was a Norwegian [radiochemist](#) and Norway's second female professor. Starting her career as an assistant to [Marie Curie](#), she became a pioneer in radiochemistry, establishing the [half-life](#) of [radium](#) and helping demonstrate the existence of [isotopes](#).^{[1][2]} She was Vice President of the [Norwegian Association for Women's Rights](#) 1937–1939

June - Midsommer – Enjoy events in the area

**June 3, 2023 – Norsk Museum “Frokost” and Open House –
Cleng Peerson Lodge - Norway,IL**

June 16th – 6PM – Dancing Queen: An ABBA Salute- Concert at Veterans Memorial Hall

June 17th – 3PM – Join Swedish Historical Midsommar Celebration

June 21- Saturday Cultural Class – 10 am – 1pm

Goodwill Community Room –
3068 McFarland Road, Rockford, IL 61114

July – No Meeting

July 13 – 26, 2025 – District 5 Masse Moro Norwegian Heritage Camp

July 19th – Saturday Cultural Class – 10 am – 1pm -Goodwill Community Room -
3068 McFarland Road, Rockford, IL 61114

August 9th – Program : *Norwegian Women Magazine*

August 16th - Saturday Cultural Class – 10 am – 1pm - Goodwill Community Room -
3068 McFarland Road, Rockford, IL 61114

Sept. 13th – *Norwegian Emigrants*

Sept. 20th – Saturday Cultural Class – 10 am – 1pm - Goodwill Community Room -
3068 McFarland Road, Rockford, IL 61114

Oct. 3rd -5th – *D5 Adult Heritage Weekend - Sloopers Celeration*

Norwegian Adult Culture Weekend: in Norway, Illinois, October 3 -5, The weekend will be a celebration of the 200th anniversary of the Sloopers Norwegian Immigration. Details can be found on the 5th District's website <https://sonsofnorway5.com/> listed under News and Events.

Nov. TBD

December – Juletre Fest

Explore Your Heritage

Are you curious about the unique story of your family?

Then get inspiration to begin exploring using our newly updated guide, Genealogy Tips and Hints — Connecting with your family history. This handy 10-page introduction will help you get your research off to a quick start with information about Norwegian names and places.

Exclusively for Sons of Norway members, you'll find the guide online at www.sofn.com in the **Member Resources** area under genealogy.



Masse Moro Norwegian Heritage Camp

July 13 – 26, 2025

Masse Moro is a Norwegian heritage camp for youth ages 9-15 years old sponsored by the **Sons of Norway Fifth District**. Since 1979, we've been helping youth celebrate their Norwegian heritage through a cultural immersion experience. Campers will learn Norwegian, build friendships, and gain important life skills like problem-solving, leadership, and teamwork through our Viking Olympics programming. In addition, they will also try their hand at becoming master craftspeople through woodworking, painting, leather work, and chip carving, experience exciting tales and Nordic myths, and celebrate Norway's rich history and traditions.

It's time to register for Masse Moro, our Norwegian Heritage Camp sponsored by District 5. Start planning now! Allow enough time for the doctor's visit and completion of all forms and documents.

- Tuition for 2025 will be \$1,200 for the two weeks of camp per camper
- Scholarships and matching grants may be available to those who register early. (\$250 matching grant available from District 5)
- Encourage all Sons of Norway members, parents, grandparents or aunt or uncles to, contact their Lodge for supporting grants and receive matching funds. (Two grants available from your local Valhall lodge)
- Invite a friend and encourage others to join them at Masse Moro (Campers **do not have to be a Sons of Norway member to attend**)!

- Campers will be enrolled on a first-come, first-served basis; encourage your young people to send their application in early to secure their place at Masse Moro.

Visit the Masse Moro website: for registration applications and supporting grant applications.

www.massemoro.org or the District 5 website at: www.sondofnorway5.com

To qualify for the Valhall Lodge scholarship and the matching funds from District 5, the "Lodge Endorsement form" must be postmarked by May 17, 2025

Send the completed form(s) with the campers' information to:

Richard Fairchild (Valhall Treasurer),
226 W River St. Rockton IL 61072 or email richard.fairchild.son@gmail.com

VALHALL LODGE GUIDELINES FOR YOUTH HERITAGE APPLICANTS AND MATCHING FUNDS:

- A. The Lodge will provide matching funds from its Masse Moro scholarship fund for two applicants
- B. Application to be sent to our Lodge Treasurer (Richard Fairchild – 226 W River St. Rockton, IL 61072).
- C. The applicant must be the child, grandchild, nephew or niece of a Lodge member in good standing. A member in good standing is identified as being a Valhall member for a minimum of two years.
- D. The applicant must provide one of the following after attending camp:
 1. A thank you and article written about his/her experience at camp that will be published in the Lodge newsletter.
 - OR
 2. A presentation at a Lodge meeting about their experience at camp. They may also wish to bring photos and any type of project, e.g., rosemaling, hardanger, or wood carving.
- E. The applicant and his/her sponsor must sign a contract stating his/her obligations when applying for a scholarship to Heritage Camp.



From **Life in Norway** “ The Mystery at the Oslo Plaz Hotel”

Last Updated on May 17, 2024 by [David Nikel](#).

Decades ago in the heart of Norway’s capital city, the Oslo Plaza Hotel became the scene of a perplexing mystery. It has since gone on to baffle investigators and true crime enthusiasts for decades.

On a seemingly ordinary evening in June 1995, a woman using the alias Jennifer Fairgate was found dead in her hotel room, her life ending with a gunshot to the head.

Her death was surrounded by several puzzling details. Her clothing labels were removed, she carried significant ammunition, and no personal identification or belongings that could reveal her identity were found.

A True Crime Mystery for Norway

This case came on my radar after I first stayed at the [Radisson Blu Plaza Hotel](#) in downtown Oslo. A friend messaged me to ask if I was staying in “that room” which sent me off down an internet search rabbit hole.

At the time of the incident, the Oslo Plaza was one of Norway's [most luxurious hotels](#). It caught the imagination of the Norwegian media at the time, notably VG, and it's a case that continues to do so, almost thirty years on.

Despite extensive investigations and media attention, including a Netflix true crime documentary, her true identity and the circumstances of her death remain unknown.

True crime has become an incredibly popular genre in recent years, with cases such as the unsolved [Geirangerfjord mystery](#) being studied all around the world. The Oslo Plaza case has drawn just as much attention.

Theories about her background include possibilities of her being involved in espionage, a criminal operation, or suffering from personal despair leading to suicide.

A Grim Discovery

So, what exactly happened on the evening of 3 June, 1995 at the Oslo Plaza Hotel? Here's what we know.

At approximately 7.50pm, Espen Næss, a 25-year-old security guard, was asked to check on the person in room 2805, because of a lack of payment card being registered to the room.

“Jennifer Fairgate” was registered as the guest, although she had signed her name with the spelling “Fergate”.

As he approached the room and knocked on the door, a sudden gunshot resonated from within. The muffled sound, though somewhat dampened by the room's heavy door and concrete walls, was unmistakable.

Næss instinctively retreated and waited momentarily in the corridor, grappling with the gravity of what the sound likely indicated—a gunshot within a locked room suggested a dire scenario.

Opting for caution, Næss did not immediately enter the room but instead returned to the lobby to consult with the hotel's head of security and notify the police.

The head of security then took the elevator up to the 28th floor, approached room 2805, and knocked on the door multiple times.

Receiving no response and suspecting a serious issue, he used his key card to unlock the door, which had been double-locked from the inside. Inside, the scene was grim and unsettling.

A woman's body lay on the bed, lifeless, with a gunshot wound to her forehead, a pistol resting on her chest. The room was tidy with minimal signs of disturbance.

Unraveling the Initial Clues

Jennifer Fairgate's death was not just a simple case of suicide or murder; it was a puzzle composed of many complex pieces.

The labels from her clothes had been meticulously removed, obscuring any trace of her origins or personal tastes.

Her suitcase contained 34 rounds of ammunition, yet no personal items like a passport or wallet were found in her possession.

This careful eradication of identity hints at preparations that go beyond the ordinary, suggesting that whoever Jennifer was, she intended to keep her true identity a secret.

The Investigation Begins

As Norwegian police delved into the case, they faced an uphill battle from the start. The room was locked from the inside, a method that could either point to a suicide or a carefully staged homicide.

The hotel's sophisticated security system showed no signs of forced entry, nor any suspicious activity around the time of death, further complicating the narrative.

The last known sighting of the woman occurred the evening before her death. Kristin Andersen, handling room service at the time, remembered it because when Fairgate ordered food, she tipped 50 kroner, a generous amount at the time.

The autopsy revealed limited details about the young woman. Although she claimed to be 21, pathologists estimated her age to be around 30, give or take five years.

She had blue eyes, dark short hair, weighed 67 kg, and stood 159 cm tall. No matches were found for her fingerprints in the Interpol database.

Her dental work was notably sophisticated, featuring gold and porcelain commonly used in the U.S. and some European countries such as the Netherlands, Germany, and Switzerland.

Speculations and Theories

Over the years, numerous theories have been proposed about Jennifer Fairgate's identity and her reasons for being at the Oslo Plaza Hotel.

Some suggest she might have been involved in espionage, given the Cold War had only recently concluded and Norway's strategic importance in global intelligence was well-known.

Others theorize that she could have been part of a criminal underworld, possibly linked to arms dealings, given the ammunition found in her room.

Yet another line of thought is that she might have been grappling with personal issues, choosing to end her life in a place where no one would know her.

Media Involvement and Public Fascination

The case caught the attention of both national and international media, leading to numerous articles, documentaries, and even a feature on Netflix's "Unsolved Mysteries".

Each retelling brought new details to light, yet the core mystery remained intact.

Public fascination with the case has often focused on the mysterious elements: her false identity, the lack of personal belongings, and the eerie calmness of the crime scene.

Investigative Challenges and Technological Strides

Advancements in forensic technology have allowed investigators to revisit old evidence with new tools, yet the identity of Jennifer Fairgate/Fergate remains elusive.

The lack of digital footprints and the effectiveness of her anonymity strategies have left law enforcement and amateur sleuths puzzled.

Even the extensive DNA databases that have solved numerous cold cases over the years have yielded no matches for Jennifer.

That being said, this is the most likely route to uncovering her true identity, if a close match (i.e. a close relative) can be found.

Impact on Hotel Security and Privacy Issues

The Oslo Plaza mystery also raised questions about hotel security and privacy. In the aftermath, discussions ensued about the balance between guest privacy and the need for security measures that could help prevent similar incidents.

The case has served as a study point in criminal justice and hospitality courses, discussing how hotels manage security without infringing on the privacy rights of their guests.

The Legacy of a Mystery

As we continue to piece together the puzzle of the Oslo Plaza Hotel mystery, it remains a captivating story that challenges our understanding of identity, security, and mystery in the modern age.

Whether Jennifer Fergate's true identity will ever be known remains uncertain, but her story endures as a compelling reminder of the mysteries that still exist in our seemingly interconnected world.

This case, rich with enigma and fraught with unanswered questions, continues to be a subject of intrigue and study, inspiring both professional investigators and amateur detectives to keep searching for the truth, hoping that one day, the full story will emerge.

Recipes

Arme Riddere

A Norwegian version of French toast, Arme Riddere is a wonderful way to warm yourself up on a chilly, wintry morning.

PREP TIME: 5 mins

COOK TIME: 15 mins

TOTAL TIME: 20 mins

Serves: 4

INGREDIENTS

2 eggs, lightly beaten

2 tsp. vanilla sugar (alternative substitute:

1 teaspoon vanilla extract and 1 tsp. ground cinnamon)

a pinch of salt

125 ml (1/2 cup) milk

8 slices of brioche or challah bread, sliced thick (stale works well) butter for frying

INSTRUCTIONS:

In a shallow baking dish, combine the eggs, vanilla extract, cinnamon, salt and milk. Set aside.

Bring a skillet to medium high heat and while it is warming up, lay a slice of bread into the egg mixture. Evenly coat the bread slice, then turn it over and coat the other side.

Once the skillet has been brought to temperature, add a pat of butter to the pan allow it to melt, then cook the bread slice until browned on both sides. You will need to turn the bread over halfway through cooking, or after 3-4 minutes. Repeat until all bread slices have been cooked, adding more butter to the skillet as necessary to keep the bread from sticking.

Top your arme riddere with butter, maple syrup, fresh fruit, powdered sugar or your favorite topping.

NOTES: This recipe serves four and can be doubled.

Author: Whitney Love at <http://thanksforthefood.com/>

Gratulere Med Dagen

March:

Lillian Reinerstsen
Jon Solem
Wanda Berke
Jennifer Johnson
Jayne Brod
Barb Palm
Dennis Donahue
Beth Johnson - Donahue
Karen Drager
Michael Jones
Ray Pederson
Richard Jewell
George Hagen
Ray Pederson
Ike Piske

April:

Eric Moe
Ethan LaPonsie
Wayne Erickson
Cooper Williams

May

Berit Ryberg
Xander Tucker
Karin Ropp
Lisa Rove-Williams
Jacob Calhoun
Lee Ann Harp
Lillian Berke
Oliver Ropp

June

Clairan Wistar
Madeline Barnhart
Elizabeth Barnhart
Benjamin Barnhart
Isabel LaPonsie
Bill Brod
Greyson Berke
Gerald Bocker Md
Riley Jones
Kathleen Lee

July

Kimball Higgins
Susan Bocker
Jessica Piske
Grace Calhoun
Patty Hendrickson-Klawitter

God Bedring UPDATE

Valhall Lodge is thinking of and praying for **Karen Drager**. & **Ray Pederson**

Ray Pederson is having surgery on his arm and hand May 21st...

If you would like to send a card.

Karen Drager
13012 Oak Lawn Ln
Poplar Grove, IL 61065*8202

Ray Pederson
1935 Meadows Cir.
Rockford, IL. 61108



Valhall Lodge extends a warm welcome to our newest members :

The Piske Family –
Matthew, Jessica, Henrik and Ike
from
Belvidere, IL

Home Office Contacts

- Member updates, address updates, submitting a death, etc.: cbs@sofn.com.
- Foundation, Scholarships & Grants:
[Amy Tuchenhagen foundation@sofn.com](mailto:AmyTuchenhagenfoundation@sofn.com), (612) 821-4655.
- Fraternal & Membership:
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- Insurance Sales:
[Michael Godbout sonsofnorwaysales@sofn.com](mailto:MichaelGodboutsonsofnorwaysales@sofn.com), (833) 707-0012, option 2.
- Passwords or website issues: ithelp@sofn.com.
- The toll-free number: 800-945-8851.



Join the Sons of Norway Book Club, send an email with your name, lodge name and contact information (phone number and email address) to:

SonsofNorwayBookClub@gmail.com

Note: The Zoom sign on/link information will be available at the beginning of each month for that month's reads. It will be emailed to all current book club members on or around the beginning of each month

Sons of Norway Mission Statement

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 provide quality insurance and financial products to our members.

Are you ready to SPRING into action?

With spring just around the corner, get busy with the Sports Medal program. Embrace nature like a Nordic, as you get active outdoors walking, hiking, biking, and more. This is a fun way to work toward a goal and earn recognition medals.

Learn more from the lodge sports director Karl Ropp or log in at sofn.com and go to Member Resources.

Sons of Norway District 5 Adult Culture Weekend October 3-5, 2025 “Celebrating Norwegian Immigration - The Sloopers 200th Anniversary”

2025 is the 200th anniversary of the first organized emigration of Norwegians to the United States. The single mast sloop, “Restauration,” sailed from Stavanger, Norway on July 4, 1825 with 52 passengers on board. This group, often referred to as the “Sloopers,” left Norway for religious freedom and new opportunities. They arrived in New York City harbor on October 9, 1825.

The New York Quakers set aside land in upstate New York, near Rochester. After nine hard years of clearing heavily forested land to farm, they sent Cleng Peerson out west in search for better farmland. He and his group of Norwegian settlers traveled to Illinois and followed the Fox River down to LaSalle County Illinois.

Polar Star and Cleng Peerson lodges are planning to celebrate Norwegian immigration and the 200th anniversary of the Sloopers arrival in America, by presenting a 3-day culture weekend October 3-5, 2025. We will honor the history and culture of the early Norwegian-American pioneers who settled and established farms and communities on the Prairie of LaSalle County, Illinois.

Join us for a weekend of Norwegian fun featuring Sloopers and Fox Valley Settlement Pioneer history, Norwegian culture and craft presentations, Norwegian games, a fun Sloopers walk, a Norwegian barn dance with Norwegian folk music, a traditional Norwegian worship service, and a chance to meet descendants of those Norwegian-American immigrants at their Sloopers Society Annual Meeting.

The Culture Weekend begins at 1:30 p.m. on Friday, October 3 at the Community Center in Norway, Illinois, 3667 E. 2603rd Road, Sheridan (Norway), Illinois.

Details on all events, activities, registration forms and updates can be found on:

- ☐ Polar Star Lodge website: www.polarstarlodge.com
- ☐ Norsk Museum website: <https://norskmuseum.org>
- District 5 Website: [Leadership Workshop | Sons of Norway District 5](#)

Weekend pre-registration is required.

Please note....Due to local interest, we will be accepting one day registrations for (\$25.00). If you would like to attend on only one day - Friday or Saturday , please note that on the registration fee. All meals must be paid for in advance.

Questions: Contact Barb Johnson at barbJJohnsonB@aol.com or 630-632-2329.



Sons of Norway Rockford
Valhall Lodge 5-168
Christina Fairchild-Editor
226 W River St.
Rockton, IL 61072

If you know of a member that is ill at home, in the hospital, lost a family member, fell on some hard times, needs some encouragement or passed away contact Valhall's

Sunshine Person: LeeAnn Harp email leeannharp@yahoo.com

The Valhall Lodge Newsletter is published every three months. Submit items of interest you would like to post in our newsletter to the Editor by the 15th of the month. When you attend a Norwegian event that would be of interest to your fellow lodge members, please add your editor's name & address to their mailing list. Also, please notify the editor of a member passing so they may be acknowledged in our newsletter.

Editor: Christina Fairchild 226 W River St. Rockton, IL. 61072 Phone (815) 624-4478

E-mail cfairc56@gmail.com If you have an e-mail address; please let us know what it is.