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Lynn Rasmussen

Trustee (2024-2026)

Karen Trzebiatowski

Trustee (2023-2025)

Kress Williamson

Vennligfolk Lodge
meets the second
Sunday at 5:00 pm
Sept thru Dec & April-May;
and, meets the second Sunday
Jan thru March at 1PM
at St. Paul's
United Methodist Church
600 Wilshire Blvd Stevens
Point, WI



Vennligblad



Friendly pages for the 'friendly people' of Vennligfolk and friends
Sons of Norway Lodge #5-627 for Central Wisconsin
Stevens Point, Whiting, and Plover

Volume 32 Issue 1

DISTRICT 5, ZONE 2

JANUAR OG FEBRUAR 2025

Fra presidenten:



Happy New Year! I trust that all of you had a blessed Christmas with family and friends.

For example, that means counting up the hours you spent on preparing refreshments, serving as marshals, doing table displays, attending planning meetings, working on Cultural Skills projects, etc.

Julefest was such a splendid evening and certainly one of the highlights of our Christmas season. *Tusen takk* to everyone who helped with the planning, set-up & decorating, food & money donations, and the clean-up that made Julefest so successful. You can enjoy pictures of our Julefest Celebration in this issue of Vennligblad.

Recently, Elvedal Lodge in Wisconsin Rapids was on the verge of disbanding due to low numbers and the recent loss of one of their officers. Instead of disbanding the lodge, Elvedal is going to "merge" with **Vennligfolk Lodge**. Thirty years ago, when our lodge was just starting, Elvedal Lodge was instrumental in helping us, as they were an established lodge of twenty years. In fact, during our early years, we used to join with Elvedal Lodge for our Julefest celebrations. My parents used to be members of Elvedal back in the '70's, so I have a real connection with this lodge. A big "*Velkommen*" to our Elvedal friends who are now a part of our lodge! We look forward to getting to know you.

It wouldn't be January if I didn't remind you of an assignment that is due by the end of February. Yes, it is time for all of you to figure out how many hours you spent on Fraternal and Community activities during 2024. Most of your hours will be "Fraternal."

You do not have to figure out the hours you spent on attending our regular lodge meetings because our lodge secretary, Tom Johnson, keeps track of those numbers. "Community hours" would be participating in the Cultural Festival. If you helped prepare lefse for this event, that counts. If you baked anything, helped set up or take down, or worked at Cultural Fest, that counts. Some of you faithfully keep track of those hours throughout the year.

Probably most of you just have a good idea of your hours. I am asking all of you to "put on your thinking caps" and at least do a good "guesstimate" of your hours. Then get those numbers to Tom Johnson. I suggest that you give him two numbers - Fraternal and Community. In our household, I total up both Arno and my numbers together, and then give Tom those two totals. Why do we need to do this every year? It helps Sons of Norway lodges retain a nonprofit status.

With the long, cold, dark months of Wisconsin winters, we have our change of **Vennligfolk Lodge** starting time. Remember that in January, February, and March, we start our meetings at **1:00PM** on the second Sunday of each of those months. That way, we can all be home before dark, which is greatly appreciated.

See you on January 12th at 1:00PM.

Hilsen, Susan Morton

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Gratulerer med dagen

Congratulations on the day!

Januar

New Year's Day – 1
 Jerry Schneider 4
 Lynn Rasmussen - 7
 Lois Hagen – 16
 Sons of Norway -16
 Bette Schneider 17
 Susan Morton - 31

January						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Februar

Valentine's Day - 14
 Gene Numsen – 19
 Suzanne Troestler - 25

February						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	



VENNLIGBLAD

What's Happening at Vennligfolk???

Jan. 12 1-PM – Hiking Wisconsin's Ice Age Trail – Tales of Thousand Milers Lynn Larson and Ruth Sommers present Wisconsin's 1200-mile unique hiking trail especially the segments in the Portage and Waupaca Counties. They will share tales/photos of their adventures along the way and their continuing work to make the trail even better for future hikers. **Food:** Jen Haas, Bea Berg, Patti Rous, **Table Display:** Susan Morton **Marshall:** Jane Gjevne



Feb. 9 1-PM - Entering New York City: Then & Now What did our ancestors who entered New York through Ellis Island see? What do present-day travelers see as they arrive in New York City? **Jan Flatoff** will share the most common sights: – the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island, Grand Central Station, Central Park, and Times Square – seen on her 2023 trip there with husband Ernie. **Food:** Sally Prideaux, Elaine Anderson, Karen Trzebiatowski, **Table Display:** TBD **Marshall:** Bea Berg

March 9 1-PM - Scandinavian Art Show (Act 2) Members will again get to display their best artwork and cultural treasure. **Food:** Lois Hagen, _____, _____, **Table Display:** NA; **Marshall:** Jen Haas



April 13 5-PM - Our Door County Lighthouse Adventure – Lynn & Carl Rasmussen share their one-week adventure as live-in docents at the Baileys Harbor Range Light and Ridges Sanctuary in Door County. **Food:** Bette Schneider, Louise Lang, Lori Johnson, **Table Display:** TBD **Marshalls:** Tom Johnson



May 4 5-PM – Sloyd Knives – Sloyd Knives are a Swedish designed tool widely used for wood carving and whittling. Because of their ridged blade and sharp cutting edge, sloyd knives excel at removing wood quickly and can make detailed cuts with its pointed tip. **Jerry Trzebiatowski** describes how he learned about this tool and how he uses it. **Refreshments:** TBD; **Table Display:** TBD **Marshall:** Tom Johnson



May 10: Portage County Cultural Festival "Food, Fun, & Music from Around the World" returns to Stevens Point Area Senior High. Mark your calendars and make plans to participate in this opportunity to demonstrate and celebrate our Scandinavian heritage. Our ever-popular lefse and bake goods sales raise funds to support our lodge activities throughout the entire year.

Midtsommer Celebration Watch this space in the March-April Vennligblad for updates on a time and location of a possible lodge Midtsommer gathering . . .



Treasurer Judy Pesanka reports: on Dec 4th our lodge showed a balance of \$3,656.

Women's Wellness and Culture tour to Northern Iceland: In 2016 Sue Kissinger presented an informative Vennligfolk program about her love for Iceland. In August 2025 she will be leading her 12th tour to the island nation. If you are interested in experiencing this beautiful "Land of Fire and Ice" the trip includes hiking through unique geological features, visiting museums and botanical gardens, riding Icelandic horses, soaking in warm geothermal waters, and toasts under a midnight sun. The tour is offered through UWSP Adventure Tours with more information on-line or by *emailing Sue at skissing08@gmail.com or calling her: 715-865-2745.*

Celebrating
30 years of Vennlig!

Vennligfolk Julefest 2024



Christmas Music Performance by The Sweet Adelines



2024 *Vennligfolk*
Julefest
Sunday, December 8, 2024

Velkommen to Vennligfolk Lodge Julefest 2024!
It is an honor to have you join us as we celebrate once again,
one of our most cherished Scandinavian heritage traditions.

4:30 PM Social Time with punch, cheese & crackers
5:30 PM Welcome Susan Morton, President



Louise Lang with Deacon



Susan and Arno Morton's grandson, Deacon enjoying a punch break



Vennligfolk's newly installed officers for 2025



Char & Ron Hensler granddaughters Willemina (R) and Isla (L) play for the group during the social time

Revered Finish Folk Artist - *Andreas Alariesto*

by *Carl Rasmussen*

Ten years ago, we purchased a decorative plate at an estate sale. We liked the frosty snow scene with its reindeer and sled. It harkened to an older time. We did not recognize the artist who prepared the scene nor were familiar with his work. We just liked the composition and design. We have displayed in different places in our house.



When Vennligfolk held its Norwegian and Scandinavian Art Show last year, we selected to bring the plate to display. We then started to explore who created the artwork and if there was any story behind it? The effort produced a few rewarding surprises.

We considered the plate was “old” because its scene “looked old.” But, when we examined the backside again, the date revealed the plate was made in 1981! The artist’s name was on the backside too. By researching the artist, we found the artwork on the plate was much older and, that it was part of a much larger painting!

The artist was Andreas Alariesto, who as it turns out, Alariesto is noted as perhaps one of Finland’s most prominent and revered folk artists!

Alariesto was born 1900 in the Finish village of Riesto 130 miles north of the Arctic Circle. His father was a farmer and reindeer herder and young Andreas worked by his side until he was 12.

In a 1987 Christian Science Monitor interview, Andreas said “We had some schooling, but it was not a regular school. It was just reading and writing. We had slate boards and chalk for practicing our writing but. . . I used mine for drawing!”

Art historians classify Alariesto for his “naïve style.” Naïve art is typically defined as visual art created by a person who lacks the formal education and training professional artists typically go through. Everything sprang from his own natural talent and memories of traditional Sámi folklore.

His paintings showed stories of his childhood, some true and some imagined. The area where Andreas Alariesto grew up,

the villages and their surrounding areas for the most part is now below the surface of a man-made reservoir called Lake Lokka.

His life’s work is described “as a vast output of artistic and ethnological importance which is hard to match anywhere and which is in a category by itself.” His colorful works about the lives of people communicate something genuine and original – echoes from a world that is now lost forever.

Although he was a life-long painter, Alariesto and his artwork

only became widely known in the 1970s when Alariesto was already in his 70’s. His first art exhibition came at age 76! Today Alariesto is considered Finland’s prize folk hero, renowned as a storyteller of traditional Lappish life. His lively paintings have been displayed across Europe, and he did art shows as far from Finland as Israel.

A well-known art museum dedicated to his career is located near his arctic circle hometown. The museum boasts a permanent collection of 100 of his works and are now considered to be of great value. The gallery was opened in July 1986 just three years before his death at age 88 in 1989. It features a permanent exhibition of Alariesto’s lifelong artistic work. Unfortunately, much of his early artwork was destroyed in a house fire. This only adds to the sense of loss for what the world will never get to see.



Folk Artist - Andreas Alariesto - continued. . .

As noted, our plate was released in 1981 during the period when Alariesto's popularity and influence was continuing to rise. The plate was manufactured by a company called Arabia. It turns out that Arabia is one of Finland's best known and most highly regarded brands and was once the largest and most well-known producer of ceramics and porcelain in Finland. For over 140 years, Arabia was to Finland, what Royal Copenhagen is to Denmark and Rorstrand to Sweden. Alas, the factory closed in 2016 and all production relocated to Thailand and Romania.

Our plate was number 12 in a series of some 52 ceramic plates that used Alariesto designs. Knowing this, we look to purchase a few more now that we have a greater appreciation of their history and uniqueness.

The Norwegian/Scandinavian Art Show will return for an encore engagement to Vennligfolk, March 9, 2025 at Fletcher Hall.



Finns Looking at Whales in the Ocean; A. Alariesto, 1979

Members and friends, should be thinking of a worthy piece to share. Perhaps your piece has a story to tell? If your artwork has inspired you, consider submitting the written story to Vennligblad!

Sources: Museum Gallery Alariesto, Sodankylä, Finland; Mutualart.com/Artist/Andreas-Alariesto; Christian Science Monitor, Andreas Alariesto, 1987; Wikipedia: Andreas Alariesto and Arabia porcelain.

Celebration of the Nyttårsbukk

New Year's Eve celebrations often include a countdown, gathering of family/friends, food, and drink. While this holds true in Norway, Nowegians also have a very unique tradition called *Nyttårsbukk* or, New Year's Goat. On New Year's Eve, Norwegian children visit houses in their neighborhood and sing New Year's songs in exchange for candy, cookies, and oranges. Sounds familiar, doesn't it? It is almost like Halloween, but instead of saying "Trick or Treat" there is singing and instead of Halloween, it is the last day of the year.



Even adults participate in *Nyttårsbukk* by dressing up in fancy clothes, visiting friends and family, then getting treated to food and drink in return. What better way for kids to end the year than with a sweet little treat and adults enjoying a visit with family and friends. If nothing else, it is a great excuse to essentially celebrate Halloween twice.



The activity is also called *julebukking* as it takes place in "romjul", the period between Christmas and New Year.

Photos JAN ERIK NYGAARD - Bergens Tildende

Gnome for the Holidays

By Lynn Rasmussen



In 2004 Carol Aebersold's book "Elf on a Shelf" started an elf phenomenon across the US. Based on a family tradition, her story involved a "scout elf" sent by Santa to report back each night on the good and bad activities of the household. After checking in with Santa, the elf returned home to sit in a different place each morning and observe.

Around the same time those with ties to Scandinavian heritage soon found they too had a growing invasion to deal with. Our version became known as "Gnomes in our Homes!"

Last Christmas our son-in-law took a keen interest in the abundance of gnomes around the Rasmussen home. He took on a personal mission to count them all! Included were stand-up figures as well as pictures and even those on door mats. His final tally was 69! We can attest that they continue to multiply with each passing year!

Gnomes are undeniably cute and loveable, but do you know that they have quite a history? Gnomes have had a heavy influence on Scandinavian folklore harking back to the time of the Vikings.

Traditional gnomes are closely linked to the mythology of the four classical elements of Earth, Fire, Water, and Air and are said to be the nocturnal protectors of the Earth. Legend has it that gnomes live underground, where they guard the nearby plant life as well as their personal stashes of buried treasure that can include tools and shiny things missing around one's house.

Stories of gnomes in Scandinavian folklore emerged at a time of economic struggle. Farms were isolated, and a sense of loneliness and isolation blanketed the area. As a way of coping and feeling more engaged, people began telling stories of visits by these mythical spirits, often representing good fortune, respect, and care in many Scandinavian homes.

In Norway, these small, bearded, and mischievous little creatures are referred to as "Nisse", and were thought to protect family homesteads throughout Norway, Denmark, Sweden, and Finland. Traditionally, these gnomes were attributed to be born of the soul of the first owner of the farmland on which it resides, ensuring the welfare of their land for generations to come.

Many believe gnomes are the primary force behind the magic of Christmas. In Norway it is believed that the Christmas gnome's sole responsibility is to protect the welfare and health of their livestock throughout the year, but, on Christmas eve for their loyal service they demand a delicious bowl of porridge. If one gave them their bowl of porridge, they stayed your friend, however, if you did not, they become upset and begin to play mischievous pranks.



Are elves and gnomes related? Gnomes are a hybrid species of elves and dwarves that first appeared in tales during the Runic period of the third through thirteenth centuries.

What is the difference between a gnome and a nisse? In Norway, a gnome is called

a nisse - a creature who lives in barns or homes, protecting the countryside and the people who live there.

Why do gnomes cover their eyes? Gnomes often wear their hats down over their eyes because unlike nisse, their eyes are sensitive to sunlight since they live in burrows and typically come out only at night.



Now that you have been introduced to Gnomes and their propensity for multiplying, let us do some counting! **Vennligfolk members, how many to do you have in your house?** Our Lodge Officers agreed to offer a prize to the home that comes up with the most Gnomes. Your Gnome can represent any holiday, be a statue, figurine, soft cloth, wall hanging, picture, on a rug, or pillow, but they must be out in the open. No shy Gnomes hiding in storage! **Report your count back by Friday, January 10, 2025** to Lynn Rasmussen by email at: lynnrathome@gmail.com or phone at: 715-341-7494 The Rasmussen's will not be part of the contest. The winners will be announced at our January 12 Lodge meeting and prizes awarded! Have fun and happy counting!



Watch New Scandinavian Cooking Style On-line

Chef Andreas Viestad is known for New Scandinavian Cooking, which revolutionized the cooking show by placing the food and its origins in the foreground of breathtaking Norwegian nature.

A unique aspect of the show is that it is filmed twice - first in Norwegian for domestic tv, named "En Bit Av Norge," - A Piece of Norway. Then, the entire show is re-shot in English for its worldwide viewers available on PBS in the US.

Since its inception in 2003, New Scandinavian Cooking has been shown in over 130 countries. Viestad regularly switched as host with chefs from Sweden, Denmark and Finland. In 2020, Norwegian Christer Rødseth became the primary host of Season 16.

Hailing from Aurskog outside of Oslo and called "a young star in the cooking stratosphere" by culinary team Nortura



Proff. Rødseth started cooking at age 9, inspired by his grandmother. Now there is seemingly no end to the irons that Chef Rødseth has in the fire - he is a restaurateur in Oslo, appears regularly on Norwegian tv, wins international culinary competitions, and has written several cookbooks.

Find mouth-watering recipes on the New Scandinavian website: www.newscancook.com. YouTube videos in Norwegian are readily available for viewing. Wisconsin Public Television Passport supporters can view the luscious scenery and programs in English at PBS.org.

Photo: Christer Rødseth from NewScanCook.org

CREAMY RICE PUDDING

As served at Vennligfolk's Julefest 2024! - Serves 8-12 - Submitted by Jan Flatoff

INGREDIENTS:

6 cups milk
1 cup (white) rice uncooked,

While the rice is simmering:

8 oz cream cheese,
softened
1 cup sugar
2 eggs
2 tsp vanilla
1 tsp nutmeg



DIRECTIONS:

Heat to the boiling point (in a 4½-6 quart Dutch oven or pot)
Stir in the rice, cover, and simmer for about 20-60 minutes,
until the rice is tender and the milk is absorbed

Cream the sugar, egg, and vanilla into the cream cheese

When the rice is done, stir the cream cheese mixture into the rice and cook for another 5 minutes. If you want to add raisins, add 1 cup

Sprinkle nutmeg on top of the rice pudding in the serving bowl

Serve warm or cold

Adapted from the "Rice-Cheese Pudding" recipe in the cookbook: *Wonderful Ways to Prepare Cheesecakes* by Jo Ann Shirley, 1979, p. 89 Photo: <https://HealthyNow.ca>

a little in English... Spat On

At the end of the 1880s, girls at Norwegian folk high schools began wearing village clothing as a symbol of Norwegian identity. It was a way to rebel.

The reactions were strong. In the cities, the girls were spat on, says Anne Kristin Moe, cultural historian and conservator at the Norwegian Folk Museum.

Hulda Garborg was a radical and ardent champion of all things Norwegian. She traveled around the country, teaching Norwegian folk dance. During her travels, she gained a lot of knowledge about Norwegian folk costumes.

litt på norsk... Spyttet på

På slutten av 1880-tallet begynte jenter på norske folkehøgskoler å bruke bygdeklær som symbol på norsk identitet. Det var en måte å gjøre opprør på.

Reaksjonene var sterke. I byene ble jentene spyttet på, forteller Anne Kristin Moe, kulturhistoriker og konservator ved Norsk Folkemuseum.

Hulda Garborg var en radikal og ivrig forkjemper for det norske. Hun reiste land og strand rundt for å lære bort norsk folkedans. På reisene fikk hun mye kunnskap om norske folkedrakter.

CONTINUED ON Pg 8 - BACKFOLD...



Vennligfolk Lodge #5-627
 Carl Rasmussen, Editor
 3136 Dans Ave
 Stevens Point, WI 54481

**Hiking Wisconsin's Ice Age Trail –
 Tales of Thousand Milers**

by Lynn Larson and Ruth Sommers
 Sunday Jan 12 at 1PM

Entering New York City: Then & Now

By Jan Flatoff
 Sunday Feb 9 at 1 PM



a little in English...& litt på norsk... Continued from Page 7

Garborg was the trendsetter of her day. Now even the city folk began to take an interest in how to make costumes inspired by the village clothes, says Moe.

Hulda Garborg thought that bunads should be a Norwegian alternative to the fashionable dresses from Paris and Rome, which were then common in Norway.

The fabrics were to be wool, and they were to be woven in Norway. The colors were to be made from Norwegian plants. For Garborg, it was important that most people could make the bunads themselves

They wove the fabrics themselves, dyed the yarn and usually sewed the costume themselves. It took a long time, but it was manageable financially. After the war, a new bunad ideology emerged. Then it became very important that the bunad be historically correct and linked to local traditions.

Garborg var datidens trendsetter. Nå begynte til og med byfolket å interessere seg for hvordan man kunne lage drakter inspirert av bygdeklærne, forteller Moe.

Hulda Garborg var opptatt av at bunadene skulle være et norsk alternativ til motekjolene fra Paris og Roma, som nå var blitt vanlige i Norge.

Stoffene skulle være ull, og de skulle være vevd her i Norge. Fargene skulle være lagd av norske planter. For Garborg var det viktig at folk flest kunne lage bunadene selv.

De vevde stoffene selv, farget garnet selv og sydde vanligvis drakten selv. Det tok lang tid, men det var overkommelig økonomisk. Etter krigen vokste det fram en ny bunadsideologi. Nå ble det svært viktig at bunaden var historisk korrekt og knyttet til lokale tradisjoner.

The mission of Sons of Norway is to promote and preserve the heritage and culture of Norway and to provide quality insurance and financial products to its members.

Vennligblad, the official newsletter of **Sons of Norway Vennligfolk Lodge (#5-627)**, is published at the beginning of the odd-numbered months of the year. If you have an item of interest to **Vennligfolk** members, please submit it to the Editor by the 10th of the even-numbered months. Send it to Carl Rasmussen at 3136 Dans Dr., Stevens Point, WI 54481 or by e-mail addressed to: **Vennligblad@gmail.com**; Takk *Carl Rasmussen, Editor*