



**SONS of  
NORWAY**

Vennelag Lodge 5-513

# Vennelag News

Mars & April 2025

## Important dates to remember:

### Lodge Meeting Dates: 6:30 pm start

March 16, 2025 – 2 pm  
April 24, 2025 – 6:30 pm  
May 29, 2025 – 6:30 pm  
June 26, 2025 – Picnic!

All Lodge meetings held at the  
Community Center - 107 N Grove St. in Mount  
Horeb unless otherwise noticed in the  
Newsletter article of a different location.

### Board/Business Meeting Dates: 6:30pm at Culver's restaurant in Mt. Horeb

March 12, 2025  
April 9, 2025  
May 14, 2025  
June 11, 2025

## Mark your calendar dates –

Syttende Mai – May 17, 2025  
Constitution Day (Denmark) – June 5, 2025  
National Day (Sweden) – June 6, 2025  
Edward Grieg's Birthday – June 15, 2025  
National Day (Iceland) – June 17, 2025  
**Kaffe Stue – July 19 and 20, 2025**

*Volunteers are not paid because  
they are worthless, but because  
they are priceless. – Unknown*

*Hei, alle sammen!*

*We are fortunate to have Cheryl Wille-Schlesser, the District 5 President, as a member of Vennelag Lodge. As such, she has been able to share what's happening with other lodges in the District. Unfortunately, some lodges are folding because no one is stepping up into their open leadership roles. We certainly don't want to see that happening with Vennelag, not with 50+ years of continuous operation to be proud of.*

*We've been looking for a new President over a year now and thus far have been quite unsuccessful. So what we propose to do is this: If no one steps up to the plate by 3/31, we will develop a shared co-presidency, to be enacted with somewhere between 4 and 12 new additions to the Exec Board. Each co-president will be responsible for anywhere from one to three months during the year, depending on how many members step up. But it will be a SHARED role, so as to not be onerous or overwhelming. There will be a lot of experienced help along the way. One of the area service organizations has adopted this model quite successfully. It's worth a try.*

*Your role as a participant would be rather straightforward - take part in the monthly Board meetings, and oversee the monthly Lodge meeting(s) to which you are assigned. Preferably the board meetings should include the one before your month, the one during your month, and the one after your month in charge. Many hands make lighter work, as well as bringing new ideas forward to keep our programs original and interesting. All in all, a win for the Lodge!*

*So when we ask you to participate, rest assured that you won't be alone.*

*We think this plan has a lot of merit and potential. We certainly don't want to become a statistic like those other lodges, which is what the alternative will be.*

*Takk så mye! Allen*

**The mission of Sons of Norway is to provide quality insurance and financial products to our members, promote and preserve the heritage and culture of Norway, and celebrate our relationship with other Nordic Countries.**

## March Program:

The Wauna-Strummers of Waunakee and Prairie-Strummers of Sun Prairie are ukulele enthusiasts who gather weekly to sing and play their instruments. The two clubs combined have over 150 members on their mailing lists, and usually have between 30 and 50 strummers attending



each of their weekly sessions. They share their talents often with many different venues, from Salvation Army Bell Ringing, to assisted living facilities, Friday Night Fish Fries, and various community activities. Many of the members are retirees who have only started playing ukulele in the last few years.

We look forward to sharing some familiar tunes with Vennelag Lodge on Sunday, March 16th.



Also we will have a Murder/Mystery book blind date, this is to celebrate the Påskrim tradition of reading the novels during this time.

## April program:

We will have a presentation from Casey J. FitzRandolph the American speed skater.

In 1997, FitzRandolph won the bronze medal at the World Sprint Championships in Hamar. He won another bronze medal in 2001 at the World Single Distance Championships on the 500 m.



His best year so far was 2002. He won silver at the World Sprint Championships in Hamar and went on to become Olympic Champion on the 500 m at the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City. This made him the first American to win the 500 m since fellow Madison native Eric Heiden won the event in 1980. Heiden was in attendance as the team orthopedist. He and his family now live in Cross Plains Wisconsin.

At the 2006 Winter Olympics in Turin, FitzRandolph finished 12th on the 500 m and 9th on the 1,000 m.

FitzRandolph with Senator Herb Kohl after the 2002 Winter Olympics

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

***Dust off that family recipe for soup and make a pot for the meeting as there will be a soup potluck –if your dish has special add-ins please bring those as well.***

## Have you heard?

We are going to be changing up the Kaffe Stue a bit this year. Keep your ears open for further details in the coming months with the messages from the Board. We are looking into changing up how we connect with the public for the Kaffe Stue and are looking for volunteers for making of the goodies and working at the event.

### Soft Oatmeal Chocolate Chip Cookies

Recipe source: <https://www.nrk.no/mat/store-myke-sjokoladekjeks-1.6914054>

#### Ingredients:

- 160 g (1 and 1/3 sticks) butter at room temperature
- 200 g (1 cup) granulated sugar
- 150 g (heaping 3/4 cup) brown sugar
- 360 g (3 cups) flour
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. vanilla sugar
- 1/2 – 1 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 3 eggs
- 350 g (or 1 3/4 cup) chocolate chips or chopped dark or milk chocolate
- 100 g (or 1 cup) oatmeal



#### Directions:

1. Mix together the sugar and butter in a food processor. Add the flour, baking powder, vanilla sugar and cinnamon and mix it together to a crumbly mass.
2. Add eggs and chocolate. Work the dough together quickly.
3. Form the dough into a thick sausage shape using baking paper. Let it rest in the fridge or freezer.
4. Cut the dough into 1 cm thick slices and bake at 180 °C (or 350°F) for 10–15 minutes.

### Catching Up with New Scandinavian Cooking

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 actually 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.

Since its inception in 2003, New Scandinavian Cooking has been shown in over 130 countries. Viestad has toggled as host with chefs from Sweden, Denmark and Finland. In 2020, Norwegian Christer Rødseth became the 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 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 NSC website and gaze at photos on the show's Instagram.

### **Queen of Norway?**

**When Princess Märtha Louise of Norway was born in 1971, women were barred from ascending the throne of Norway. Her brother, Crown Prince Haakon, was born 2 years later and would eventually become next in line to the throne.**



**Eventually, in 1990, the law was changed so that women could become queen. But it only applies to those born after the law was put into place.**

**The Princess recently shared that she was given the option to change the law. "When I was 15, the Prime Minister at the time was a woman, and she suddenly came up with the idea that [the law] was wrong. I remember she came home to us, with granddad [King Olav V], and we had a discussion about whether we should change the whole system and I should be queen."**

**"They said, 'What do you want, Märtha?' And I'm like, 'I'm 15, I don't know about these things,'" she added. Ultimately, the laws remained unchanged for a few years, but it started the discussion about updating the rules.**

**Now, Norway is set to have a female monarch in the future. Crown Prince Haakon's first-born child is Princess Ingrid Alexandra, and is second in line to the throne.**

Photo from Wikipedia

### **Hoping for spring - 7 Nordic-Inspired Ways to Celebrate Spring**

As late winter gives way to Spring, here are some Nordic-inspired ideas to celebrate the change of seasons.

1. Be inspired by natural beauty and savor the stillness of each morning by photographing the sunrise over several days or weeks.
2. Pick your favorite Norwegian cookie or bread and fill your home with the inviting scent. Then surprise a friend by sharing your homemade treat.
3. Every spring brings changes to our lives. Take time to handwrite a letter to an old friend you haven't seen in months or years and ask "what's new?"
4. Enjoy a walk in the warming weather. Look for budding trees and new growth on shrubs and bushes. Have some early spring flowers like snow drops or daffodils started to pop up?
5. Is there a cultural skill you want to explore this year? Consider a skill you're curious about but have never tried. Even better, share the fun of learning by inviting a friend or family member to join your exploration.
6. Fill a bird feeder and your bird bath, if temperatures permit. Keep a birding guide handy to identify returning migratory birds. When will the first robin of the season arrive?
7. It's been said that when you plant kindness you gather joy. As you go about each day, live your Nordic values with simple acts of kindness to others and add joyful moments to your life!

## **New TV Station**

In Norway, there is a tv station called TV BRA (*TV Good* in Norwegian) that provides wonderful opportunities for people who are autistic or have disabilities. Not only do all the reporters of the TV station have a learning disability, but the program is made specifically for similar people in Norway.

It is a one-hour long program that about 4,000 to 5,000 people tune into every week. The station covers topics unique to those with autism or learning disabilities, but also touches on news, entertainment, and sports.

The founder of TV BRA, Camilla Kvalheim, felt that there were many untold stories and experiences that needed to be heard. She also stressed the importance of those with learning disabilities knowing about and understanding the news so that they can take part in society.

The Norwegian government also agrees that TV BRA is important. Lubna Jaffrey, Norway's minister of Culture and Equality, stated: "TV BRA takes on an important role by presenting news and current affairs in a way that's understandable and inclusive."

## **Nordic Literary Event at Library of Congress**

The Library of Congress recently collaborated with the Nordic embassies in Washington D.C. to celebrate fiction and non-fiction works being published in those countries. Each embassy invited an author to represent their country at the forum, which was attended by Norwegian Ambassador Anniken Huitfeldt.

The authors in attendance included: Josefine Klougart from Denmark, Hanna Pylväinen from Finland, Hanne Ørstavik of Norway, Hildur Knútsdóttir from Iceland, and Moa Hengren from Sweden. During the separate panel events, two different themes were discussed.

One theme dealt with the Nordic landscape, which featured heavily in the works of the Danish and Finnish authors. Pylväinen's work, "The End of Drum-Time" and Klougart's "On Darkness" both move beyond the usual assumption in their writings that the Nordic landscape is cold and forbidding.

The second theme revolved around the keeping of secrets – both from others and ourselves. This theme is found in the other three authors' work – Ørstavik's "Ti Amo," Hengren's "The Divorce," and Knútsdóttir's "The Night Guest." During this panel, Norwegian author Ørstavik discussed her own longing for truth, being vulnerable, and emphasized the need for having a listener in your life. She also suggested that books can even fill these needs at times.

## **Composer Who Wrote Ja Vi Elsker (Norwegian National Anthem) Only Lived to 23**

This translation is written in *nynorsk* to challenge your language skills. Nynorsk is one of two official standards of written Norwegian, the other being *bokmål*. About 13% of Norwegians write in nynorsk, primarily in Western Norway, while *bokmål* dominates in the rest of the country. *Bokmål* is a heavily Danish-influenced version of written Norwegian, and *nynorsk* is a conglomerate of dialects, representing Norwegian, as if it had remained uninfluenced by Danish rule. <https://www.nrk.no/kultur/xl/rikard-nordraak-komponerte-den-norske-nasjongsongen-ja-vi-elsker-1.14992970>

**This story comes directly from Sons of Norway International so apologies for the potential for wonky translations and phrasing.**

## **Den unge flammen**

Rikard Nordraak er saman med diktaren Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson ansvarleg for at vi alle reinskar halsen og tar sats ved «og den saganatt som senker, senker drømme på vår jord».

Nordraak blir fødd 12. juni 1842 i Christiania. Familien hans har piano i stova, og Rikard byrjar å spele tidleg.

I 1850 flyttar søskenbarnet Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, som er i byen for å studere, inn hos familien.

Bjørnson observerer at den unge guten har musikalsk talent.

Ja, vi elsker «Ja, vi elsker»

«Ja, vi elsker» strekk seg over eit unormalt langt tonesprang til å vere allsong. Han er overambisiøs. Mange har nok opplevd å starte så mørkt dei kan, men likevel ende opp med pipestemme ved slutten av songen.

Teksten er skriven av Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson.

Då diktet skal bli tonesett til Grunnlovsjubileet i 1864, gir Bjørnson sjølv sagt oppdraget til sin kjære fetter.

Første offisielle framføring blir under Grunnlovsjubileet 17. mai 1864.

Dirigenten til mannskor har fortalt om den første øvinga at songen «elskedes straks og alle følte: her er vår nasjonalsang kommet!»

Tidspunktet er perfekt. Som Bjørnson seier, tar «Ja, vi elsker» opp i seg pusten til eit heilt folk, nokre tiår før Noreg blir sjølvstendig.

«Ja, vi elsker» blir ganske raskt nasjonalsongen i kraft av sin popularitet. 21 år gammal har Rikard Nordraak klart det utrulege.

Dødsleiet

I november 1865 får han lungebetennelse. Etter fem månader med sjukdom, omgitt av legar og husverten, dør Rikard Nordraak 20. mars 1866.

Sjølv om vi i ettertid kan lese alle godorda om Nordraak, glir gravferda hans umerka hen, og vitnar om ein einsam ung mann. To menneske møter opp i gravferda: Husverten og ein ven.

## **Ny Aktualitet**

Utover 1900-talet får Nordraaks idear ny aktualitet når Noreg blir sjølvstendig. Han blir heidra med minnesmerke i Berlin, København og Oslo, før urna hans blir flytta til Vår Frelsers Gravlund i 1925.

I desember 2019 blir «Ja, vi elsker» offisielt stemt fram som Noregs nasjonalsong av Stortinget, etter å ha vore i bruk i over 150 år.

## **English translation:**

### **The Young Flame**

Rikard Nordraak, together with the poet Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, is responsible for all of us clearing our throats and belting out "and the saga night that lays, lays dreams upon our earth."

Nordraak was born on June 12, 1842 in Christiania. His family has a piano in the living room, and Rikard starts playing early. In 1850, his cousin Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, who is in town to study, moves in with his family. Bjørnson observes that the young boy has musical talent.

### **Yes, We Love «Ja, Vi Elsker»**

"Ja, Vi Elsker" extends over an abnormally wide tonal range to be a sing-along. It is overambitious. Many have probably experienced starting as deeply as they can, and still ending up with a squeaky voice at the end of the song. The lyrics are written by Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson. When the poem is to be set to music for the Constitutional Jubilee in 1864, Bjørnson of course gives the assignment to his dear cousin.

The first official performance takes place at the constitutional jubilee, May 17, 1864. The men's choir conductor recounted about the first rehearsal that the song "was immediately beloved and that everyone felt: 'Now, this is our national anthem!'"

The timing is perfect. As Bjørnson says, "Ja, Vi Elsker" inhales the breath of an entire people, a few decades prior to Norway becoming independent.

"Ja, Vi Elsker" quickly becomes the national anthem by virtue of its popularity. At 21 years old, Rikard Nordraak has managed something incredible.

### **On his deathbed**

In November 1865 Nordraak contracts pneumonia. After five months of illness, surrounded by doctors and his landlord, Rikard Nordraak dies on March 20, 1866.

Although we can later read all the praise about Nordraak, his funeral goes unnoticed, and is a testament to a lonely young man. Two people show up at the funeral procession: his landlord and a friend.

### **New relevance**

Beyond the 20th century, Nordraak's ideas gained new relevance when Norway became independent. He is honored with memorials in Berlin, Copenhagen and Oslo, before his urn is moved to The Cemetery of Our Saviour in Oslo in 1925.

In December 2019, "Ja, Vi Elsker" was officially voted Norway's national anthem by the Storting, after having been in use for over 150 years.

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**\*Find us on the web: [www.sonsofnorwaymthoreb.org](http://www.sonsofnorwaymthoreb.org)**

**\*If you know someone who is interested in membership in Vennelag Lodge, please direct them to this site. It will give them a better idea of our organization.**