

Wagons Forward, The 57th Biennial Convention of the Sons of Norway District 5

Cheryl Wille-Schlesser, Past President

On behalf of the 2024-2026 District 5 Board of Directors, I would like to thank the eighty-two delegates and their families for making their attendance possible at this year's convention. We respect and require the assistance of our membership in addressing the district's business.

To the many individuals who chaired or constituted an advisory committee prior to the convention, thank you! I know this service placed one more responsibility on your plate, but using technology has made committee work easier, allowing for advanced meetings prior to the convention. It was exciting to see numerous younger lodge leaders step into chair positions and serve admirably.

I have had a busy four years trying to chart the Fifth District's course through some rough seas which provided me with many opportunities for learning. I would like to thank the Executive Committee members: Darlene Arneson, Jim Herman, Connie Kross, and Corey Olson for their guidance and expertise.

The additional members of the board willingly accepted their roles and fulfilled their duties to the best of their ability. Some individuals, when asked, wore multiple hats, changed positions, and served in an unrivaled capacity. We were a cohesive team and accomplished much.

It was great to have representation from the Sons of Norway International office in Minneapolis. Connie O'Brien and Amy Tuchenhausen led the charge. Many of our delegates had never met the support staff that often work closely with their lodge's concerns, Jana Velo and Kirsten Lehman.

Words from Chris Campbell, CEO and Chairman of the Board at *BetterLife*, provided a sense of relief to our members who own benefit products. Any current Sons of Norway policies are in effect and secure.

The newly created partnership provides our members with many more options in safeguarding the future of their loved ones. *BetterLife* is authorized to conduct business in thirty-seven states. Agents for *BetterLife* may be contacting you with further investment information. Know that you are in control of your personal information and can have it removed from future marketing.

Lodges who wish to invite a salesperson to a meeting should contact the Chief Distribution Officer, Dudley Simmons, for further assistance. At the present time, Sons of Norway financial benefit counselors are completing on-boarding training to represent the new partnership. Contact the *BetterLife* home office: 608-833-1936, 800-779-1936 or email: info@betterlifeins.com to learn more. One may also find a dedicated representative or connect digitally via the *BetterLife* contact page address indicated.

The oath has been taken, the gavel passed, and the first meeting of the 2026-2028 District 5 Board of Directors is in the books. Now is the time to direct our attention to Scott Wegner, our newest "Friendly Fifth" president. I wish him the best of luck in this very demanding position, fully knowing that he is up for the task and will lead the district to heights unknown.

Tusen takk til alle for fire år,

Cheryl

Cheryl Wille-Schlesser

Past President, District 5 Sons of Norway

cwschlesser200bc@gmail.com