

Sons of Norway District 5 Convention and Lodge Meeting

Recap by D5 Secretary Darlene Arneson- updated 8/17/2026

Pictures- <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1410575062591249/media/albums>

New District 5 Board of Directors

President	Scott Wegner
Vice President	Laurie Barrett
Secretary	Darlene Arneson
Treasurer	Corey Olson
Sports & Rec	Andrea Malouf
Publicity	Christina Fairchild
Cultural	Lucy Ghastin
Youth	Lisa Rove-Williams
At Large 1	
At Large 2	
At Large 3	Connie Kross
At Large 4	Cheryl Will-Schlesser
Webmaster	Christina Fairchild

2024 and 2025 Lodge Achievement and Family Lodge of the Year Awards:

2024 Large- Family Lodge of the Year- Wergeland Lodge, LaCrosse, WI
2024 Small Lodge – Polar Star Lodge, Aurora, IL
2024 Large Lodge- Mandt Lodge, Stoughton, WI
2024 Large- International Lodge of the Year- Nordkap, Detroit, MI.

2025 Family Small Family Lodge of the Year- Circle City Lodge of Carmel, IN
2025 Large- Family Lodge of the Year- Nordkap Lodge, Detroit, MI
2025 Small Lodge – Polar Star Lodge, Aurora, IL
2025 Large Lodge- Mandt Lodge, Stoughton, WI
2025 Small- International Lodge of the Year- Polar Star, Aurora, IL

By the numbers:

- 150 registered for the convention
- 82 delegates
- 30 lodges sent representation

The Lodge Certificates of Recognition were awarded.

2024

Gold

- Nordkap
- Dovre

Silver

- Gronnvik

Bronze

- Edvard Grieg
- Ostestaden
- Fagernes
- Askeladden
- Scandiana
- Skjold
- Valkyrien

2025

Gold

- Wergeland
- Viking
- Valhall
- Scandiana
- Ostestaden
- Loven
- Gronnvik
- Fosselyngen
- Fagernes
- Edvard Grieg
- Dovre
- Askeladden

Silver

- Vennligfolk
- Valkyrien
- Sognefjord
- Music City Vikings

Most Compliant 2024

- Mandt
- Nordkap

Most Compliant 2025

- Mandt

Fundraising- Sons of Norway D5 Nordic Legacy Foundation

Activity	Amount	Benefits	Notes		
Foundation Fun Night	\$ 573	NLF			
Heads and Tails	\$ 138	MM	Winner donated her half		
Silent Auction	\$ 4,960	NLF			
Donation bowl	\$ 90	MM	Bowl set out at silent auction		
Sami Bowl Sale	\$ 1,000	MM			
Subotal Events	\$ 6,761				
Arnesons Donation	\$ 300	MM			
Idun Donation	\$ 1,000	MM			
Jane Conner Donation	\$ 50	MM			
Total Raised	\$ 8,111				
Total MM	\$ 2,578				
Total NLF	\$ 5,533				
	\$ 8,111				

Fundraising- Sons of Norway Foundation

I count 8 individuals/families, and 17 lodges gave checks for the \$60 for 60 campaigns for a total of \$3,093. This doesn't include gifts that came in via credit card, QR code, etc. That number includes the \$573 from the Foundation fun night.

Cultural Arts winners

First Place	Mandy Beck	Needle felted Viking Ship picture	Cleng Peerson
Second Place	Mitch Vesaas	Carved kubbestol	Norse Valley
(tie)Third Place	Jerry Rud	Cherry Tine box (bentwood box)	Circle City
Third Place	Karen Hankee	Rosemaled Tine box	Solvang

Cultural Challenge List

May 1, 2025 to May 31, 2026

Scandiana 5-600

David C. Hirschey -- Literature

Nordkap 5-378

Derrick Hendricks-Sinke -- Cooking

Carol Jehle -- Cooking

Denise Marvel -- Cooking

Roy Marvel -- Cooking, Genealogy

Mary Morehead -- Cooking

Eli Anita Steyskal -- Cooking

Wergeland 5-028

Karen Broadhead -- Literature

Mandt 5-314

Aurora Malouf -- Cooking

Janis I. Wegner -- Cooking

Scott Wegner -- Cooking

Valhall 5-168

Nancy Mayfield -- Genealogy

Polar Star 5-472

Don M. Hirsch -- Genealogy

Jeanne Leifheit -- Cooking, Literature

Richard Vigsnes -- Stamp Collecting

Jo Anne Ward -- Genealogy, Music

Michael Ward -- Stamp Collecting, Genealogy

Areas covered

Cooking - Various levels

Genealogy -- Various levels

Literature

Stamp Collecting

Music

Throwing Challenge

- We had 6 lodges and 24 individuals submit minutes of activities.

Lodge Minutes:

Lodge Totals	Mandt	3540	1st
	Nordkap	780	2nd
	Nordlyset	240	3rd
	Idun	85	4th
	Sognefjord	30	5th
		4675	minutes

Individual Minutes:

	Individual Totals	
1st	5280	Lars Arneson
2nd	3945	Ginny Olson
3rd	2640	David Thompson
	2640	Jens Arneson
	1765	Jill Jenson
	1560	Margarita Thompson
	1440	Sydney Arneson
	1230	Carol Jehle
	1035	Tom Olson
	765	Jeri Smith
	765	Mary Ann Furnie
	540	John Arneson
	375	Thad Jenson
	300	Darlene Arneson
	240	Todd Fossum
	222	Connie Aiello
	120	Bob Giles
	120	Dennis Flessland
	120	Louise Giles
	60	Mark Schubring
	30	Erik Scharf
	30	Haley Jarasz
	30	Laura Jehle
	30	Mike Jehle

Bylaw Proposals

#1- Passed.

No District Officer or Director shall be elected to serve more than three consecutive terms in any office except the Secretary, **Youth Director**, and the Treasurer whose term shall not be limited; so that there is continuity for the District, staff, and the facility.

#2- Passed after being amended

*To avoid disputes and conversations at meetings and **on public forums**, topics of religion and politics that are dominating and sparking division should be avoided. The leaders of the meeting or activity*

*are encouraged to share that our focus is on heritage and culture. Sharing of political activities, memes, and other messages and **on public forums** on any of the levels- International, District or Lodge should be avoided or removed.*

#3- Defeated

Par. 1 The elected Officers of the District shall be: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Recreation Director, Publicity Director, Cultural Director, ~~Youth Director~~ **District Masse Moro Director** and the four At-Large Directors provided for in these By-Laws.

Par. 6 The President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Recreation Director, Publicity Director, Cultural Director, and ~~Youth Director~~ **District Masse Moro Director** shall receive such compensation as determined by the District Lodge. The Board of Directors shall make recommendations to each District Lodge Meeting with respect thereto.

#4- Defeated

Proposal was to remove the requirement that District President candidates have served previously on the District 5 Board.

Resolutions

#1- passed

Therefore be it resolved that we drop the benefit member requirement for the District 5 Scholarships.

#2- passed with committee changes

The District Board recommends to the District Lodge and its committees to consider this compensation for District Officers:

President \$1,500 per annum
Secretary \$2,000 per annum
Treasurer \$2,000 per annum
Vice President \$500 per annum
Publicity Director \$500 per annum
Cultural Director \$500per annum
Youth Director \$1,500 per annum
Recreation Director \$500 per annum

#3- passed

Therefore, Be It Resolved that cumulative expense reimbursement for Barnebirkie volunteers be set at up to \$2500 per year for the next two years.

#4 passed

Thank You – Resolution #4

Whereas, The 57th Biennial Sons of Norway District Five Lodge and Convention is coming to a successful conclusion; and

Whereas, District President Cheryl Wille-Schlesser conducted the meeting and her biennial duties with professional dispatch; and

Whereas, District Secretary Darlene Arneson has administered her office smoothly, with diligence, timeliness, and with boundless energy; and

Whereas, The District Board has performed its duties and obligations in an efficient manner; and

Whereas, International Director, Duane Kittleson, has represented our District on the International Board with distinction; and

Whereas, International Sons of Norway CEO, Daniel Seyfried has exhibited leadership in finding another like-minded fraternal to partner with; and

Whereas, the BetterLife staff have embraced our members and shared the BetterLife story as the new partnership develops. Thank you to Chair, President, and CEO of BetterLife, Chris Campbell, Dudley Simmons, Jake Manne, Rebecca Lureen, John Kielczewski and other BetterLife staff who assisted and volunteered throughout the convention; and

Whereas, International Sons of Norway Vice President of Fraternal & Foundation Development, Connie O'Brien, International Sons of Norway Foundation Director, Amy Tuchenhausen, Fraternal Manager Jana Velo and Fraternal Engagement Manager Kirsten Lehman, have updated us and were integral contributors to this biennial meeting; and

Whereas, The class presenters, farm tour hosts, and Cultural Arts Display participants added much to the richness and variety of this convention; and

Whereas, The District Five Board and its Biennial Convention Committee, being host to this fine assembly, carried out their duties with diligent planning and skill; and

Whereas, The Parliamentarian, Jerry Wendt, handled his duties with professional excellence; and

Whereas, The management and staff of the Tru by Hilton, Mandt Lodge, Otis Sampson American Legion, Halverson's Everything Nice, Main Street Kitchen, Stoughton VFW, and Stoughton Area School District Administrative Building provided excellent service and accommodations; and

Whereas, The outgoing and continuing Board members deserve our gratitude for their service over the last two years; and

Whereas, Those who donated gifts to the Silent Auction and supported both Foundations are to be commended and thanked, as well as the many buyers of those auction items; and

Whereas, Thanks are due to the appointed committee members and temporary officers of this Biennial District Lodge Meeting; and

Whereas, Delegates, Alternates and Visitors have given much of their time, talents and treasurers to attend and participate in this lodge meeting and convention, and much appreciation is due them;

Now Therefore, Be It Resolved, that the incoming District Board of Directors is asked to extend our gratitude and thanks to all the individuals and groups named above, and any others inadvertently omitted from this resolution.

Bids for 2028

There were no bids to host the 2028 District 5 Convention. The board encourages lodges to consider this and will discuss the matter at the fall board meeting.

BetterLife Presentation

Chris Campbell, the CEO of BetterLife addressed the meeting and provided an informational overview of the completed partnership between Sons of Norway and BetterLife. He described BetterLife as a member-founded, member-owned, community-based fraternal benefit society, and reviewed its financial position — including more than \$50 million in surplus and approximately \$900 million in assets under management — along with its focus on community wellness and membership growth to nearly 90,000 members. Mr. Campbell shared stories from several BetterLife communities illustrating the organization's common bond of celebrating traditions, supporting one another, and providing financial security, and noted that convention, district, and foundation governance are expected to continue under the partnership. The presentation was informational; no action was taken. He also introduced other BetterLife staff including Dudley Simmons, Jake Manne, Rebecca Lureen, and John Kielczewski, Greg Ragan from Sons of Norway, and opened the floor for questions.

Sons of Norway Staff Presentations

Presentations were given by Connie O'Brien, Vice President of Fraternal & Foundation Development; Amy Tuchenhausen, Foundation Director; Jana Velo, Fraternal Manager; and Kirsten Lehman, Fraternal Engagement Manager on their respective duties and roles at Sons of Norway.

Masse Moro Staff Presentation

Four staff members gave a presentation on the 2026 Camp and background about Masse Moro.