



Edvard Grieg Lodge 657 District 5
Cincinnati-Dayton, Ohio & Kentucky

The First Lodge in Ohio
Sons, Daughters and Friends of Norway
February 2011

Meeting Schedule:

Saturday, February 19-3:00 p.m.

Soprano Alisa Suzanne Jordheim, a Doctoral Voice Candidate at CCM, will sing Scandinavian Music at Ascension Lutheran Church, 7333 Pfeiffer Rd. Alisa will be accompanied by Dallas Heaton on the piano. Light refreshments will be served at Ascension, and members interested in dinner can get 10% off at the Crowne Plaza Hotel nearby after the concert.



Alisa, a native of Appleton Wisconsin is an accomplished performer with numerous awards. She has studied at Lawrence University and UC, and has more recently performed with Christopher O'Reiley (host of PBS radio "From the Top") at Hilton Head, and Chicago Orchestral Hall.

This should be a real treat for our lodge.

For more info, contact: Carol Luiso or Esther Charlton.

Saturday, March 19 - 4:30 p.m.

A regular lodge meeting at the IHOP, 9540 Colerain Ave. Cincinnati, Ohio 45251. One of our own, Ed Vallette, who is host of the Ashville Viking Festival, will give us some highlights of the festival

over the years. And, the fun of sailing a Viking ship on the Scioto River. For information and to RSVP, contact Esther Charlton, 513/923-3798 or esthersofn@aol.com.

President's message

Hello fellow Sons of Norway Members, Happy New Year! I hope this newsletter finds all of you warm and healthy this winter. I am personally loving the weather and staying warm in wool Norwegian sweaters!

A big thanks to all of the members and their family members who helped with Juletefest this year. Our 6th Annual Family Juletefest Celebration was successful once more and could not have been possible without everyone's hard work. The Board is already discussing some things to make this years event even better so mark your calendar for the first Saturday in December and make celebrating with Sons of Norway part of your family tradition!

At our January meeting earlier this month our new Board members were installed. We still have the Social Chair position open, and until the position is filled the Board as a whole will be planning our meetings. If planning our meetings interests you, I would love to talk with you about filling this position and the responsibilities it will hold.

Also, at the January meeting, several members of our Reading Circle discussed books that they have enjoyed reading. It is interesting to gain insight into the lives of our ancestors, learning about the hardships they endured, traditions that we don't fully understand and therefore gaining a new understanding of who we are as Norwegians or American Norwegians. Our library is full of wonderful books if you are ever interested in reading any of them please contact Esther Charlton.

Thanks to Carol Luiso for chairing this meeting.

We have lots of great meetings planned for the year and I look forward to sharing them with you!

Med Vennlig Hilsen,
Nina T Downs

Oslo Kringle Baking Demo

Would you like to learn how to make an Oslo Kringle pastry?.

Kari Poe will demonstrate how she makes this delicious dessert that she has shared with us at many of our lodge meetings.

The date is Sunday, Feb 13 at 2 p.m. We'll meet at Kari's home: 579 Belle Meade Farm Dr, Loveland, 45140

RSVP's necessary to either Kari @ 513.697.7142 or Carol Luiso @ 513.683.3631.

Second Helping! The Church Basement Ladies Sequel

Last May, several of us attended the hilarious musical comedy "Church Basement Ladies" at the LaComedia Dinner Theater, in Springboro.

The sequel "A Second Helping" will be performed from Sept 1-Oct 30, 2011. La Comedia states on it's playbill:

"Church Basement Ladies was one of our most popular shows in 2010 and the ladies of East Cornucopia Lutheran Church of the Prairie are back to serve up more of their hilarious antics and down-to-earth charm. It's 1969 - the world is changing and the ladies of the church are preparing for changes of their own below the House of God. You will see them serve the high school students at the Luther League Banquet, a church sponsored Missionary Night, and the rise and fall of a Vikings' Super Bowl Sunday. You'll laugh until your side-dish hurts!"

We have reserved 20 tickets for the Thursday matinee on Oct 20. The cost is \$38 per ticket (group

rate) which includes lunch. **If you would like to join us, please contact either Sandra Nelson 513.336.9810 snel1234@fuse.net or Carol Luiso 513.683.3631 CHLuiso@aol.com.**

Reading Circle

Our Reading Circle is beginning it's 4th year. The Reading Circle is one of the activities that makes up our Sons of Norway Cultural Skills program.

Our Reading Circle is very accommodating....each member can read whatever he/she chooses by a Norwegian or Norwegian American author or a book about Norway. At times, we all read the same book. We also exchange books. Since our beginning we have discussed sixty books! We have a growing lodge library with many books donated by members.

We meet every other month and have from four to nine attending. We usually meet at a Panera Bread in the Deerfield Town Center, Milford or Tri-County.

Our next meeting is Saturday, March 5 @ 2:30 at the Panera Bread, 405 Kemper Road, Cincinnati, 45246 (across from the Tri-County Mall). Your choice of a Norwegian related book.

Everyone welcome.

For more information, contact Carol Luiso at 513.683.3631 or CHLuiso@aol.com

Membership

An enthusiastic welcome goes to Yvonne Joy, who is a new member in our lodge. Yvonne joined at our Juletreffest. A thank you, to Roy Solvik, who recruited Yvonne into Sons of Norway.

We are always seeking new ways to promote and publicize our lodge, in order to increase our membership. If you have ideas that would help with advertising our lodge and Sons of Norway, please contact me. Should you need a membership application for a relative or friend, let me know of your need.

Esther Charlton, Membership Secretary

Moving to Norway

So the movers came and left. The house in Mason was suddenly definitely something we were moving away from, now it was almost empty. Just a few things left, but friends and family soon took care of that. The last few things were to be picked up the day after we had left.



The flight went fine. Oslo received us with nice winter weather, just below freezing. We took the train in and went straight to our hotel to rest. Donna slept more or less right away, but I couldn't sleep.

Later that night we went and had our first Norwegian dinner: "Pølse med brød og lompe" – Hot dog in bun and lompe (a small lefse). Yes, we were definitely here.

We saw our apartment the next day and got the keys. It was very empty, so my brother and his wife took us on the furniture store tour. We bought our bed with 5 weeks delivery time and the bed for the guest room which we have yet to put together – we're still sleeping on the mattresses on the floor. All in all a busy Saturday that ended up with dinner at one my other brothers' place.

We move in to our apartment on Monday and have slowly bought some more furniture. It is still pretty naked. The good news is that the crates with our goods will be here around February 10th.

Donna has joined a whole lot of groups already. Tonight we came home from a bar where there was a meeting for both DAN and RAN (Democrats / Republicans Abroad in Norway). The political aspect was absent; the purpose seemed to be more towards socializing.

Donna has made some observations, I am sure she'll share more of them with you in future newsletter, but some of them are:

- Norwegian women are taller
- They walk on snow and ice as if it wasn't there (Donna characterizes her own ice-maneuverings as walking like a Chinese lady that have had her feet bound – with tiny steps)

- Many of the Americans we have met now speak English with a Norwegian accent.

Godt nytt år fra Norge
Anders Marstrander

“Norway’s brand of democracy”

January 14, 2011

Editor’s note. This recent article from News and Views of Norway provided me with the best description in how Norway’s government works. It is long but in my opinion very interesting. I hope our members agree. The opinions stated do not represent anyone’s other than the author.

COMMENTARY: As two of Norway’s political parties consider major personnel changes, the two most striking features of Norway’s political system may be that individual lawmakers aren’t

held personally accountable to voters, and that consent of the governed isn’t required to decidewho actually governs, writes journalist and author Solveig Torvik (photo). This may not be a form of government that Americans, for example, immediately recognize as democratic, but it’s Norway’s take on parliamentary democracy.



The two countries’ political systems mirror each nation’s core values: Americans celebrate the individual while Norwegians celebrate society. Norway is a monarchy with a sovereign king while the United States is a republic with sovereign citizens. In a parliamentary monarchy, power flows from the top down. In a republic, it flows from the bottom up. This means Norway’s political system holds individual citizens further removed from their lawmakers than does the American system. Norwegians seem more inclined to defer to

the wisdom of political “authorities” than do their unruly, often self-interested American counterparts.



The Norwegian Parliament, known as The Storting, or "Stortinget." PHOTO: Views and News

This weekend, one of the parties that makes up Norway’s coalition government will have a national board meeting likely to hash out [who among its leaders will run for top party posts](#) in the spring. Ordinary voters will have no direct say in who’s chosen. Strictly speaking, individual Norwegians have no personal elected representatives as Americans understand that term. Norwegian lawmakers don’t have US-style individual constituent responsibilities because Norwegians don’t vote for a candidate, they vote for a party. Of course individual Norwegians can and do petition lawmakers, but the lobbying of lawmakers by individual citizens is not as pervasive a feature of political life as it is in the US. Compared with their constituent services-driven counterparts in the US Congress, Norwegian lawmakers – for better or worse – seem so far removed from the reach of individual citizens that they might as well be governing from the moon.

Norway qualifies as a democracy because voters do decide which of the country’s political parties should be given seats in the parliament (called *Storting*). Seven parties won seats in the most recent national election in 2009 and are now duly represented. But once that’s decided, Norwegian lawmakers are left to their own devices. They decide who will form a government. The Storting legally is empowered to ignore the stated will of the voters,

who have, in essence, only an advisory vote. Despite what voters may say, a prime minister cannot form a government without approval of members of the Storting and formal approval of the monarch. It’s almost as if the president of the United States were chosen by, and answerable to, Congress. And even though a sitting Norwegian government may lose an election, that’s not necessarily enough to throw the bums out, despite the meddlesome fact that the citizenry wants someone else to govern. Legally only the Storting can jettison a government.

“There are in fact no limitations on the powers of parliament in this country,” stresses Hans Brattestaa, secretary general of the Storting, which has no lower house. No troublesome balance of power issues among judicial, executive and legislative branches here.

Of practical necessity, even parties overwhelmingly rejected by voters routinely are allowed to join governing coalitions in order to muster enough compatible seats to form a government; Norway hasn’t had a one-party majority government (Labour) since 1961. For example, in 2009 the tiny Center Party, with just 6.5 percent of the vote, and the Socialist Left (SV), with 8.8 percent, nonetheless were seated to govern with

Labour, which had won 32.7 of the vote. In 2009, the Center Party and SV won even fewer votes (6.2 and 6.1 percent respectively). They clearly weren’t favoured by voters, but Labour could still invite them to stay in the government after it won 35.4 percent. Though incompatible with Labour, the relatively right-wing Progress Party, by way of contrast, was preferred by 22.9 percent of voters. This seems to suggest that adhering to the will of the majority of voters isn’t a high priority in Norway.



This trio of party leaders is still ruling in Norway, even though two of them lost voter support in the last national election. From left, Local Governments Minister Liv Signe Navarsete of the now-troubled Center Party, Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg of the Labour Party and Education Minister Kristin Halvorsen of the Socialist Left party. PHOTO: Statsministerenskontor

Another indication that the will of the majority isn't a paramount concern in Norwegian political life is that one seat in the Storting, for instance, represents 7,000 citizens in sparsely populated Finnmark County, while one seat allocated to Oslo represents 18,000 citizens living there, according to the Storting's public information office. Even though the US Senate seats also represent huge differences in political representation as well, it's offset in the US House of Representatives, and such starkly unequal representation in Norway is a paradoxical reflection of the country's otherwise admirable passion for equality. It seems meant to ensure that the interests of citizens in lightly populated districts not be ignored just because few people live there. While Norwegians can view the US' Electoral College system as undemocratic, such electoral disenfranchisement as their own district voting rights (called *utjevningsmandater*) may seem startling to Americans, but it hasn't been legally challenged.

Norwegian lawmakers also conduct more of the public's business in secret than do members of Congress, whose committee deliberations are subject

to open meeting rules and whose individual votes usually are recorded. But because Norwegian lawmakers normally vote as a block with their parties, tracing an individual politician's performance can be problematic. In my view, all this contributes to a troubling accountability deficit in Norwegian political life.

So for that matter do coalition governments, which also can be found elsewhere in Scandinavia and Europe. They can blur party responsibility to the vanishing point. Moreover, many voters say they resent having the same old discredited parties, soundly trounced at the polls, re-seated as members of new governing coalitions. Is this practice really democratic?

"Probably not if you define democracy as slavishly following what the voters tell you to do," answers Professor Hanne Marthe Narud, an expert on government accountability at the University of Oslo.

In Norway, that seems unlikely to happen any time soon.

Solveig Torvik is a Norwegian-American political journalist and author of "The World's Best Place: Norway and the Norwegians," available as an e-book only or printed document at www.smashwords.com.

Birthdays

February

Luke Sutphin[1], Tillie Elvrum[5], Aaron Nelson[5], Richard Glatfelter[6], Patsy Bannick[6], Lee Luiso[12], Sylvia Casas[15], Robert Bowman[17], Linda Burge[17], Cassi Rice[19], Hekge Bjorvik[21], Jennifer Reeder[26], George Bjorvik[28].

March

Kari Watts[2], Bob Charlton[11], Robert Hippert[13], Megan Luiso[15], Larry Bannick[17], Alene Rice[23], Alex Crocker-Lakness[24].

April

Sonja Kinney[1], Katherine Sanders[2], Braden Watts[8], Angela Holmen[10], Logan Opals[13], Sarah Rudie[13], David Johnson[19], Donna Kent[25], Robert Price,Sr[26], Walter Varland[27].

Tours available

Two tours have been sent to Nina for consideration.

The first is managed by Erling Hansen in cooperation with Norsemen of the Lakes lodge in Williams Bay WI. It visits Oslo on May 17th, and is 7 days long, going to Bergen and Lillehammer.

Website is; www.noramtours.com

Email is; noramtours@elknet

The second is run by Else Bigton, and her husband Phillip Odden, which starts on August 12th for 12 days, beginning at the airport Gardemoen, north to Lillhammer, Romsdalen, Alesund, Stryn, and down the west coast to Bergen. The focus is on rural life traditions, food and folk art.

Website is; www.norskwoodworks.com .

Email is ; nww@norskwoodworks.com .



Picture of the Atlantic Highway between Molde and Trondheim. Alene Rice sent the photo album from "slideshare" (Google slideshare and Atlantic highway to see all of the pictures).

Bob Charlton

Bob went into the hospital with congestive heart failure today (Monday), and is looking at a 4 to 5 day stay for testing. Understandably, getting the newsletter out comes second in Esther's priorities, so we pray for Bob's speedy recovery and a return to normal.

Remember to go to:

website: www.evensens.net/sons/sons.html

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KALENDER

Saturday February 19th, Alisa Jordheim Soprano
Saturday March 19th, Viking Festival at 4:30

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