

# Vikingskip

www.vesterdalen.org



desember 2023

Vesterdalen Lodge No. 2-131 • Sons of Norway • Auburn/Kent, WA • Chartered October 23, 1983

Vol. XLI No. 11

## Hilsen Fra Presidenten



God Jul, Vesterdalen! We are in the holiday season, and I hope you are looking forward to time with family or friends. It was great seeing so many at our last Lodge meeting for Marv's interesting program. He shared much about his family history recorded in the Bygdeboker he owns.

We also had a candid discussion of our budget and how we need to consider some options to help us in the future. Since we haven't had any large fundraisers over the past few years, we have had to draw on our savings in our Sons of Norway account. It is time to be thinking of doing some fundraisers to get our budget more balanced.

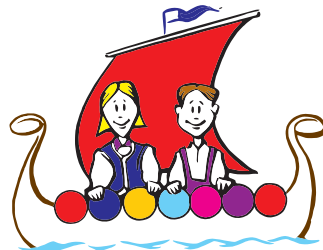
Since the church is not available to us on Saturdays, we need to consider a different location for our fundraisers. Our next planned large event will be our Nordic Fest in the spring. We are looking for a location. We may also consider another Lutefisk dinner, if we can streamline the process so it doesn't require so many people to put it on. If you have ideas and can help in any way, please let me know.

Our year will end with a JuleFest on Friday, December 8. It will be a potluck dinner, beginning at 6:15, so we hope to see many of you. Santa will join us, so if you have any kids or grandkids please bring them (and a gift for each of them). We also plan to have some Christmas Carol singing. Bring a favorite dish to share and join us for our end of the year party!

Best to all of you for a wonderful holiday season!

*Ha ei Fin Førjulstid,*

*Vernene*



## Our Viking Ship's New Life

Larry and I attended the Harald Haarfager Lutefisk dinner in November and found out that our Viking Ship has already been used for an event. The Coeur d'Alene High School mascot is the Vikings, and they used the Ship at their Homecoming Game. I know the ship will get lots of use there, and the lodge is thrilled to have it for their parades and other events. They shared some photos of the Homecoming game and the float there.

*Vernene*

## Upcoming Meeting

**Friday, December 8, 2023**

Messiah Lutheran Church

410 "H" Street NE • Auburn, WA

**6:15 PM Potluck!**

**7:00 PM JuleFest**



The Lodge Julefest will be held on Friday, December 8 at Messiah Lutheran Church. It will be a potluck, as we typically have done. Please bring your favorite dish to share: Salads, Sides/Vegetables, Main Dishes, Breads or rolls and especially Christmas & Norwegian desserts.

Come early and help set up.

Santa will be present. If you want Santa to give a gift to a child, please bring the present wrapped and clearly marked in large letters the child's name.

We hope to see you there!

## Social Directors' Report

### At the Last Meeting

Pumpkin pie topped with whipping cream was enjoyed by all! There were 32 members and four guests present. **Marv Nelson** gave a very interesting presentation on the Norwegian Bygdeboker. The lucky winners of \$10 for being present were **Larry Scheurer** and **Vernene Scheurer**.

### Upcoming Meeting

Vesterdalen's Julefest will be Friday December 8. Ideas of what to bring are above.

The program will include singing and the appearance of a certain jolly guest. We encourage parents/grandparents, who wish to do so, to bring a small wrapped gift for Santa to present. Be sure to clearly write the child's name on the package. There is no age limit so who knows--maybe anybody who has been very good will get a gift!

*Jorunn Ruff, Social Chairperson*

## Sunshine Report

Speedy recovery wishes to **Judy Jensen** who had knee replacement surgery. Our condolences to **Ginny Anderson** whose daughter passed away this summer and **Karen Knauer** whose son passed away this summer.

### December Birthdays

- 3 Håkon Aegerter
- 6 Kay Broman
- 9 Erick Larson
- 13 Karen Engan
- 16 Stephanie Erickson
- 23 Dotty Erickson
- 24 Arne Grette
- 24 Griffin Ronhovde
- 26 Oscar Larson, Joyce Klevjer
- 27 Robert Olson
- 28 Margaret Evenson, Judy Jensen

Six members who are 80+ years of age will receive birthday cards in December.

Please email or call when you know of a member who needs some Vesterdalen sunshine. Your help is needed to reach everyone. Thank you so much.

*Nancy Sommerfield, Sunshine Chair*

[dnsommerfield@comcast.net](mailto:dnsommerfield@comcast.net) 206-612-6389

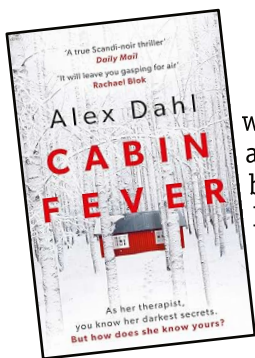


## Paulstad Calendars are Available

Members keep clamoring for the beautiful Paulstad calendars. The 2024 Paulstad calendars will be available for sale at our December 8 JuleFest for \$15 each.



## Book Club



The next Sons of Norway book club will meet on January 9, 2024 at 11 AM at Maggie's on Meeker in Kent. We will be discussing Cabin Fever by Alex Dahl. On the surface, Kristina seems to have it all: successful career as a therapist, great husband who's making strides in politics, and loads of money. Her life, however, gets

wrapped up in turmoil, when one of Kristina's clients, a famous author named Leah, asks her to meet outside of the office, in a remote cabin in the woods. Kristina's imagination runs wild with everything she can find there, but what she isn't expecting to find is a manuscript with her in the role of a protagonist. Alexandria Bockfeldt Dahl, known as Alex Dahl, is an American/Norwegian crime novelist who writes in the Nordic noir genre.

*Kari Waller*

## Kultur Hjørne

### Marv Nelson Tells a Great Story about his Family's Bygdebøker (Farm Books)

Marv Nelson and his family have contributed much to the lodge and he gave an informative and entertaining presentation about Bygdebøker last month.

Bygdebøker are genealogical gold mines because they list the history of Norwegian farms. Marv provided a multi-page handout showing exactly how the books can be interpreted, along with a list of common terms.

Marv also wove in the entertaining story of how he and his daughter Karin Plagens journeyed to Norway and discovered the farm where part of his ancestral line originated. They met four of his relatives who still live there!

Marv and Karin simply knocked on the side door of the farmhouse and simply left a note saying who they were and that they'd be back. They were led to a local resident, Per, who had compiled Marv's farm Bygdebøk.

We all may be curious about our own family Bygdebøk: does every farm has one? According to Curt Hanson, a librarian at the Chester Fritz Special Collections Library at the University of North Dakota, 80 to 90% of the people who have contacted the library for help do have a family Bygdebøk.

Hanson said that Bygdebøker are still actively coming out. He has noticed a trend that many now have entire chapters in English. At the Chester Fritz library, librarians can help locate a Bygdebøk, then scan and email sections to people researching their genealogy. Library contact info: 701.777.4625; [und.archives@UND.edu](mailto:und.archives@UND.edu)

Linda Kleppe-Olson, Ruthanne Henderson, John Nyseth, and Carol Larson all either brought their family's Bygdebøker or spoke about their research.

Other research sources of Bygdebøker, according to the website [NordicFamilyHistory.com](http://NordicFamilyHistory.com), are the University of Minnesota, primarily at the Wilson Library in Minneapolis and the Rolvaag Library, at St. Olaf College, in Northfield, Minnesota (large collection;) The University of Wisconsin also has some. (<https://nordicfamilyhistory.com/norwegian-bygdeboker-farm-books/>).

Thank you Marv, for a great presentation!



*Karen T., Kari Waller, Amanda Reding, Nancy Sommerfield, and Vernene Scheurer at a recent book club*





## The Norwegian Nisse in Modern Times

From the 19th century and onwards, nisse were included in literary works (such as the fairy tales by Hans Christian Andersen). Some characteristics of them were emphasized at the expense of others, and over time the visual appearance of the nisse as we know it today began crystallizing.

The romantic nationalism period, in the second half of the 19th century, is when the nisse was cemented as a Norwegian symbol. Christmas cards and booklets became popular, and were often illustrated with designs featuring nisse.

From then on, the image of the nisse with its beard and red pointy hat was part of the collective consciousness – so much so, in fact, that they became a symbol of resistance.

## Julenisse: The Norwegian Santa Claus

Santa Claus is called “julenisse” in Norway. Like Santa Claus, the Norwegian Julenisse is believed to be based on legends about Saint Nicholas, a bishop who lived in what is now Turkey around the 3rd century.

He was known for his generosity and concern for the poor, and the tradition of giving gifts on his feast day, December 6, started in the Middle Ages and spread across Europe. In contemporary times, children thinking of “julenisse” are likely to think of the “Coca-Cola Santa Claus”, with his bright red outfit trimmed in white fur.

Traditionally, the Norwegian version of Father Christmas is depicted as a friendly older man with a robust white beard and smiling eyes, dressed in woolen grey trousers, a long jacket, big boots, and a red hat.

When it comes to personality, the julenisse borrowed traits from the “regular” nisser we described earlier. He was known to be temperamental, and appeasing him with offerings of Christmas porridge was wise.

The Julenisse borrows other elements from Norway’s already existing nisse folklore. For example, while Santa Claus has elves to help him, the Julenisse can rely on the support of *fjøsnisser* (barn gnomes) for his work.

In today’s Norway, you are just as likely to encounter depictions of the “Coca Cola Santa Claus” as you are of seeing the traditional Julenisse. For a chance at spotting traditional Julenisse imagery on a trip to Norway, try one of the country’s many Christmas markets.

*Life in Norway*



*Vesterdalen member Jean (Ladderud) Coy at Nordic museum Julefest where she played her Hardanger fiddle with the Hardanger fiddle group. She is wearing her grandmother’s Trøndelag bunad.*

## Celebrate Lille Julaften

Christmastime is one of the high points of the year in Norway with many rituals leading up to the big day of julaften—Christmas Eve. Weeks of preparation include cookie baking, Christmas market visits and gift-buying, lending a festive atmosphere in every town. The anticipation is almost too much to bear! Thus, Norwegians get a head start on the merriment, celebrating lille julaften “Little Christmas Eve,” on December 23rd.

But this is no recent addition- lille julaften has been celebrated as early as the 12th century in Norway and other Nordic countries. Tradition dictates that this day is for cleaning the house to make way for the juletre, the Christmas tree: everything had to be tidy and the whole family bathed, to ensure no evil spirits could invade and spoil Christmas. Today Norwegians might buy their tree on the 23rd, without first having to banish the dark forces. Next comes tree decorating with popular ornaments such as Norwegian flags, candles, white lights, tinsel and red and white woven heart baskets.

For supper, it is common to enjoy creamy risgrøt (rice pudding) with a dash of cinnamon and sugar on top. Then it’s time to settle in for some favorite shows: trivia quizzes like Julenøtter [Christmas stumpers], some favorite cartoons and Christmas films, the list of which grows longer every year.

*S/N Newsletter*

# Kalender

# 2024 Vesterdalen Officers

Annual Calendar is at [www.vesterdalen.org](http://www.vesterdalen.org)  
**desember**

- President ..... Vernene Scheurer ..... 253-848-7231  
president@vesterdalen.org
- VP/Membership ..... Don Olson ..... 253-862-6138  
dondc@reachone.com
- Secretary ..... Nancy Sommerfield ..... 206-612-6389

- 5 Board Meeting - via Zoom.....6:30 PM
- 8 JuleFest (Christmas Party)  
Potluck Supper.....6:15 PM  
Program.....7:00 PM

Rose Stevens – 1-800-210-0240  
Sons of Norway Financial Benefits Counselor

- januar**
- 8 Board Meeting - via Zoom.....6:30 PM
  - 15 Lodge meeting in person and via Zoom  
Social .....6:00 PM  
Lodge meeting & Officer Installation .....7:00 PM

**The Scandinavian Hour**  
with Seth Tuffeland  
is on KKNW 1150 AM  
on Saturdays, 9:00 - 10:00 AM  
Listen anytime at:  
<https://www.thescandinavianhour.org>



- februar**
- 5 Board Meeting - via Zoom.....6:30 PM
  - 19 Lodge meeting in person and via Zoom  
Social .....6:00 PM

- mars**
- 4 Board Meeting via Zoom.....6:30 PM
  - 18 Lodge meeting in person and via Zoom  
Social .....6:00 PM  
Lodge Meeting.....7:00 PM

Visit the following website to find local Nordic events.  
**WWW.NORDICSEATTLE.COM**

## The Origins of the Norwegian Nisse



The origins of the word "nisse" (pronounced "nee-suh") are unclear. Some say it's a short version of the name Nils – the Nordic form of Nicholas,

The English translation of the word varies from one work to the other. Some translators use the term "gnome", others "pixie" or even "elves".

The word "goblin" has even been used to translate "nisse" in Danish author Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales. This translation may not work as well today, since it brings to mind the monstrous creatures depicted in the Lord of the Rings novels and films.

The Swedes use a different word which can shed light on the origins of the legend. A "nisse" in Swedish is called a "tomte".

The purpose of the offerings to this ancestral spirit was to ensure growth, peace, and fertility. Eventually, the "spirit" morphed into a "nisse" being a small man who tended, combed, and brushed the animals, and who protected both animals and people on the farm against evil powers.

What's going on around here?  
Check out Sons of Norway's District Two web site!  
<http://sonsofnorway2.com>

