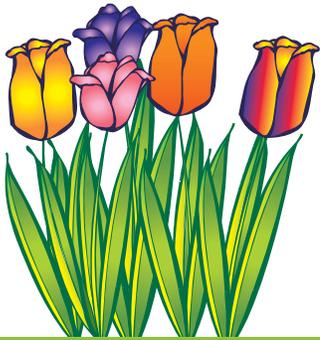


*The
Flyer*



VIKING HALL 349-1613
www.sofnalaska.com

**April
2016
april**



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My Story, Part II

In the March issue of the *Flyer* I began the story of my family’s immigration to the United States from Norway. In Part I of that story I took you up to the day we boarded the passenger ship that would take us from Stavanger, Norway to England, the first stage of our journey.



Birkedal family travel chest marked with stickers for *Queen Elizabeth*, the Cunard Line, and Southampton.

The ship we took from Stavanger, Norway in December of 1950 was one of the old World War I era passenger ships of the Bergen Line. We quickly encountered a large storm on the North Sea and water up to a foot deep would slosh across the upper deck when the seas began to get particularly unruly. According to my brother, Audun, passengers would have to carefully time their crossing on the deck by watching the motion and rhythm of the waves. A large rope had been lashed across the deck to allow passengers to “safely” leave the cabin area and make a mad dash to the dining hall at the other end of the deck. Once while making this dangerous run my mother lost hold of me and I fell to the deck amidst all the

water. Luckily another passenger, a man, grabbed me and kept me from sliding over the side of the ship. This, it would turn out, would not be the only time I was nearly taken by the sea on my trip to America.

Despite the storm we reached Newcastle, England without losing me or any other passengers. There my family took a train to Southampton in southern England for the next stage of our journey. Here, *Queen Elizabeth I*, the pride of the British Cunard Line, awaited us. We boarded as second class passengers along with a diverse group of other folks heading for the United States. Many on the ship’s manifest (which I have recently consulted) were listed as “stateless” and the United States was apparently their last hope. My older brother who has always been a keen dancer amused himself by having a good time with the Irish girls during the scheduled evening dances. There was no longer a third class steerage on the Cunard Line so life was not bad as we crossed the mighty Atlantic. As is common in winter a huge storm kicked up and most of the passengers hid away in their rooms heaving their hearts out. My family is not prone to sea sickness so at one point we were the only guests one morning in the second-class dining hall. We had a great time feasting on eggs and ham while most of the passengers could not even think of food. But not everything went so well. Again, the sea did its best to claim me. During one deck crossing during the storm my brother felt my grip on his hand loosen and he watched me tumble helplessly across the deck. This time I rolled under the lifeboats near the outer railing of the *Queen Elizabeth*. Luckily, I stopped for a moment in the lull between waves and my brother managed to reach me and pull me to safety. I don’t have a memory of that event, but I do remember the yellow toy truck in the window of the ship’s on-board store. Boy, did I want that truck, but it wasn’t to be; it was too expensive for second-class passengers such as us. After four and a half days at sea we reached New York City and passed by the Statue of Liberty. Here we were greeted and hosted by my mother’s middle sister and her husband (my mother’s two older sisters had immigrated in 1922). They took us to their apartment in Bay Ridge on 85th Street, then the heart of Norwegian Brooklyn. Here, I ate bananas and ice cream and watched television (wrestling and roller derby), all for the first time.

My brother liked bananas so much he bought five one afternoon and ate them all up sitting alone by himself in a little Brooklyn park. We also got to see the Rockettes’ Christmas show at Radio City Music Hall and went sight-seeing on the New York ferries. My brother did not like New York, he thought it was much too noisy and crowded compared to Stavanger. But he did like the cars, especially the Studebakers.

President’s Message continues on Page 2

My Story, Part II

President's Message continues from Page 1

As planned, we left New York for the home of my mother's oldest sister in Colorado Springs, Colorado. We rode non-stop on the Greyhound Bus for three days, getting off only to eat and go to the bathroom. For me, this three-day bus ride was the best fun a kid could have. I especially liked riding in the far back of the bus.



Terje Birkedal at age 5 in Sonoma, California in 1951 enjoying a palm tree.

We arrived in Colorado Springs at the foot of Pike's Peak and spent a month with my mother's oldest sister. Though I could not speak English I remember playing with the neighborhood kids who were very nice to me. I remember one older kid who wore a World War II pilot's leather helmet complete with goggles.

Next we boarded the Greyhound bus again, this time for Sonoma, California. This was the home of my mother's parents who she had not seen since 1910 when they had immigrated to America and left their three little daughters behind to be raised by their grandmother. Like many Norwegian immigrants they had officially changed their last name from "Thorstensen" to "Thompson". They lived in retirement on a little four and half acre farm with a few sheep and a chicken coop without any chickens. It was my mother's parents who had most urged her to immigrate to the United States. Perhaps they had wanted her to take care of them in their old age? Neither my mother nor brother liked the situation. My brother got a job at a local winery for a dollar an hour, but neither he nor my mother saw any benefit in staying in Sonoma. It was just a sleepy town back then with few prospects; not the bustling Mecca for rich wine aficionados of today's California.

My mother wanted to go back to Norway, but my brother wanted to return to Colorado where my mother's older sister lived and he thought he had the chance of a better job and brighter future than either in California or Norway. My mother finally relented and decided to follow him to Colorado. She did not want to see the family break up further after the death of my father. My mother's older sister and her English husband had connections to the Broadmoor Hotel and helped my brother get a good starter job as a caretaker for a carriage museum on the hotel grounds. My mother first got an office job at the Broadmoor but then took a supervisory position in maid service. Later she returned

to office work. My brother became a bellman and then joined the U.S. Air Force where he made a successful twenty-year career. He received his American citizenship in 1954 on the deck of the battleship Missouri in a special ceremony for foreign-borne servicemen. In 1972 he immigrated to Canada with his Canadian wife and had a successful second career in vocational education in northern British Columbia.

As for me, life was fine playing with the other kids that lived in the Broadmoor Hotel employee apartments. When I was eight I asked my mother not to speak Norwegian at home any more. I had proudly announced at school that we had bought a T.V. but I had pronounced it "Te Ve" and then all the kids in the class laughed and I was humiliated. Also, my brother had given me the nick-name "Ted", to replace my real name "Terje", so American children could pronounce my name. Soon, I lost both my Norwegian language and identity. Two things I have been trying to regain since adulthood.

My mother never lost her Norwegian language or identity and her final wish was to be buried beside my father in Stavanger, Norway, a wish my brother and I fulfilled in 1985. Her life as an immigrant turned out to be a tough one. On the other hand, her unflagging support helped me find opportunity and a good life in the United States. At eight years old I first had the dream of becoming an archeologist; and the dream came true.

Fraternally yours, Terje "Ted" Birkedal

SUNSHINE REPORT FOR APRIL

Greetings are sent to the following members celebrating a birthday who are at least 75 years young.

Loretta Lodson
Donna Luiten

Aud Severson
Leif Strand

Robert Strother –
Congratulations on turning 90!!!!

**"Happy
Birthday!"**

If you know someone who needs a little sunshine, *call* or *email* Cindy McDowell:

696-0725 (cell - 862-1143) Email: ccmcd38@hotmail.com

**"Gratulerer
med dagen!"**

Will you Host an Exchange Student?



Anna Kohler is a Local Coordinator with STS Foundation. They bring 20-30 high school foreign exchange students to Alaska each year. *Students will start arriving in August of this year.* Host families are needed, and as this organization is based in Sweden, many of the students are Scandinavian.

Below are some of the students arriving this fall.

They are all between 15-18 years old:

Amanda – Sweden

She loves sports including golf, hockey and skiing. Makes friends easily and loves learning new things. She likes to be out in nature and visit new places.

Martine – Norway

She loves swimming, working out at the gym, and dogs. Also likes to hang out with her friends and family and watch netflix.

Trine – Norway

She likes fantasy books and TV shows, is the youngest of 6 and has a twin sister, she is very social and empathetic.

Eric – Norway

He is very social, easy to get to know, loves soccer and driving anything with motors. Very interested in social sciences and history. His grandparents are from Croatia.

Kajsa – Sweden

She is a positive and goofy person, likes to job and eat healthy. Very energetic person. She has danced for 6 years and loves books.

Ingrid – Norway

She is a positive girl, has danced and played piano since she was very little. Also enjoys reading, writing, and hanging out with friends

Mandi – Finland

She is a very upbeat and open minded girl, loves dogs and has always been interested in space, stars, and the universe. She has played golf since she was little and is learning how to sew.

Marcus – Sweden

Marcus is a very calm, cheerful and friendly who lives an active lifestyle. He loves to hang out with friends, play football, golf and watch his favorite teams play ice hockey and soccer.

Malin – Sweden

She is a happy girl who always tries to have a smile on her face. Her hobbies are horseback riding, skiing, ice skating and going to the gym.

Hedvig – Sweden

She is an honest and positive girl who loves to meet new people and try new things. She loves to spend time with family and friends. She loves music, plays the flute and also teaches gymnastics to kids.

Christina – Denmark

She loves to travel, meet new people and experience different cultures. She is excited to share her own culture with an Alaskan family.

Carla – Denmark

She spends her time on sports, homework and friends. She also loves to cook healthy food and cakes. Education is a high priority for her and she endeavors to achieve high marks.

You can contact Anna at 907-602-2790 or email: anna.kohler27@gmail.com if you would like any additional information. They are also able to place students in other parts of Alaska besides Anchorage.

Woodcarving Time!



12th Annual Artistry in Wood

Make sure you sign up in time for the next one!

HIP HIP HURRA!

Sons of Norway Bernt Balchen Lodge scrambled to get the word out for its members to meet at 15th and Cordova to cheer the nine Scandinavian mushers on their way to Nome.

Thanks must go to Lisa Nelson for alerting the Lodge. Calls were made, a special E-Blast was sent out by Charlotte MacCay, and our members responded.



All photos courtesy of Madelien Oonk - Thank you!

WELL DONE!

Flags waved and cheers rose up as the mushers headed out. Many thanks to all who contributed to this effort.



RESULTS	
6th	Joar Leifseth Ulsom
8th	Ralph Johannessen
13th	Robert Sorlie
23rd	Sigrid Ekran
26th	Geir Idar Hjelvik
27th	Mats Pettersson
29th	Lars Monsen
30th	Dag Torulf Olsen
36th	Tore Albrigtsen



All photos courtesy of Madelien Oonk - Thank you!

SPRING BREAK-UP MUSICAL FUN BY LODGE TALENT

3:00 PM, SUNDAY, MAY 1, 2016

Come greet and celebrate the Alaskan Spring by coming to this fun musical event put on by our talented Bernt Balchen Lodge Members at Viking Hall.

The event is FREE but we welcome desserts and/or donations.

This "Musical Fun" spring celebration is the inspiration of Hedwig Faber and Anne Adasiak-Andrew, two of the most talented amateur singers in Anchorage.



SPRING FUNDRAISER

Calling for Donations

In early June several Bernt Balchen Lodge members will be serving as delegates at the biennial Sons of Norway District 2 convention hosted by Harald Haarfager Lodge No 2-011 to be held in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. In an effort to raise funds to assist delegates with a portion of the expenses for travel and registration our lodge is holding a Spring Fundraiser in the form of a Silent Auction. The Silent Auction will be held during the Norwegian Fish Dinner on Saturday, April 16th.

For several years proceeds from the popular Kaffeslabberas helped fund the registration and travel costs for convention delegates. Volunteers prepared and served wonderful open face sandwiches, homemade soups and delicious desserts to delighted lunch goers. Sadly, 2013 was the last year these monthly luncheons took place.

Please support our efforts to offer financial assistance to convention delegates by donating gently used Scandinavian/Nordic items for the Spring Silent Auction. Bring your items to Viking Hall (open 9am-1pm, Tuesday-Friday) or call Cynthia at 562-2794 for more information or to arrange a drop-off time outside of office hours.

Thank you in advance for your support!

Raffle!



Norwegian Wooden Pie Carrier

Hand constructed by Bill White.

Rosemaling by Anna Decker

Tickets are \$2.00 each or 3 tickets for \$5.00

Tickets will be available for sale at the Annual Fish Dinner, April 16th
Bernt Balchen Lodge
or at the office in Viking Hall.

Drawing is scheduled to be held at Syttende Mai Dinner Held on May 15, 2016.



Sons of Norway present

NORWEGIAN

FISH DINNER

Saturday, April 16th, 2016
at Viking Hall

8141 Briarwood St., Anchorage, Alaska 99518

MUSIC BY
 BOOTLEG BROWN
 6:30



Call for
 Reservations!

349-1613

APPETIZERS:

GRAVLAKS (*Gravlax*)

MARINERTE ANSJOS (*Marinated Anchovies*)

SOPP FYLT MED GJEITOST OG TIMIAN
 (*Stuffed Mushrooms with Goat Cheese &
 Thyme*)

SOPP FYLT MED VÅRLØK (*Stuffed
 Mushrooms with Blue Cheese & Scallions*)

KJØTTKAKER (*Norwegian Meatballs*)
 Also, *Cucumber salad and pickled beets*

SOUP: **KRABBE BISQUE** (*Crab Bisque*)

ENTREES:

TORSK MED URTESAUS OG TOMATRELISH
 (*Cod with Pesto Crust and Tomato Relish*)

LAKS (*Salmon*)

BENLØSE FUGLER (*Boneless Bird—Stuffed Rolled
 Steak*) **POTETSTAPPE MED SELERI OG EPLER**
 (*Mashed Potatoes and Celery with Apple
 finish*)

GRØNNSAKFAT (*Vegetable Platter*)

DESSERTS:

NORSK EPLEKAKE MED VANILJEKREM
 (*Norwegian Apple Cake w/Vanilla Pastry Cream*)

RABARBRA RULLEKAKE (*Rhubarb Dumplings*)

SJOKOLADEKAKE (*Chocolate Cake*) **AND MORE!**

5:30 TO 10 PM

Please choose a time for seating to ensure your
 fresh fish ~ Served at 5:30, 6:10, 6:50

Adults - \$30 ❖ Ages 12-16 - \$15 ❖ Ages 5-11- \$5 ❖ Under 5yrs Free

Call Viking Hall at 349-1613 for Reservations

To help organizers with planning and to ensure your seat—please call by Friday, April 15th



Sons of Norway
8141 Briarwood St.
Anchorage, AK 99518
907-349-1613

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EVENTS

APRIL

- | | | |
|----|----------|---|
| 2 | Saturday | 10:00 am - 1:00 pm
Spring Bike Tune-up |
| 5 | Tuesday | 10:00 am - Noon
Needle Crafts and Rosemaling Class |
| 14 | Thursday | 7:00 pm
Board/Membership Meeting |
| 16 | Saturday | 5:30 pm
Norwegian Fish Dinner |
| 19 | Tuesday | 10:00 am - Noon
Needle Crafts and Rosemaling Class |

FOOD BANK DONATIONS

Our lodge continues to donate canned goods, non-perishable foods and money to the local food bank.

Please bring your food or monetary donation in to Viking Hall.



All events take place at Viking Hall, 8141 Briarwood St., unless otherwise noted.

Please send articles or event information

for the next Newsletter by April 20th to: sonacak@gmail.com Attention - **Ruth** Subject Line - **The Flyer**