



VIKING HALL 349-1613  
www.sofnalaska.com

April  
2015  
april



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## SONS OF NORWAY BERNT BALCHEN LODGE – PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

### Velkommen Ambassador Aas



Left to right: Terje Birkedal (President), Martha (Mickey) Andrew (Vice President), Erling Johansen (Honorary Norwegian Consul), Ambassador Kåre R. Aas, Eileen Johansen (wife of Honorary Consul), Marit Kristiansen (Former President of Sons of Norway International, currently Foundation Director), Urd Berge Milbury (Cultural and Information Officer, Royal Norwegian Embassy), Kjell Kristiansen.

On the evening of March 10, 2015 with just about a week's prior notice Bernt Balchen Lodge was able to put on a wonderful welcoming reception for Ambassador Kåre R. Aas, Norway's Ambassador to the United States. Ambassador Aas came to Anchorage for a brief visit to give the keynote speech for the business conference Arctic Ambitions IV. Though he had but one night in Alaska he chose to spend it with the members of Sons of Norway. We are very grateful to him for choosing to spend his limited time with us. Because I was not properly using the microphone not everyone heard what I said when I introduced him and also gave a short biography. This piece shares some information about the Ambassador's visit that should be of interest for those did not hear what was said at Viking Hall and those that could not be there.

Kåre Aas has had a long and distinguished career in Norway's Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This is a remarkable feat for someone was once just a young boy of working class origins who lived in the neighbor of Toyen in Oslo. He was initially targeted by school officials to go to vocational school, but he was able, in the end, to argue convincingly that he could handle a more rigorous academic track. He became a very successful student and in 1983 he joined the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Before taking the position of Ambassador to the United States in 2013, he served in many other important capacities. In 1995, he was made Deputy Director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and then in 1996 he was assigned to serve as a minister in Norway's delegation to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Later, in 2003 he was picked to head up the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' security division. In 2008 he was chosen to serve as Norway's ambassador to Afghanistan, a very challenging posting. From 2010 until he was appointed Ambassador to the United States he held the job of Political Director for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

*President's Message continues on Page 4*

## VIKING HALL NEWS



Viking Board had a very short, productive meeting on the 9th. Minutes were read. On-going finances were discussed and approved. It was recommended and approved that we transfer money from checking into a

CD. An Estate Sale that we discussed last month has booked, as well as other bookings.

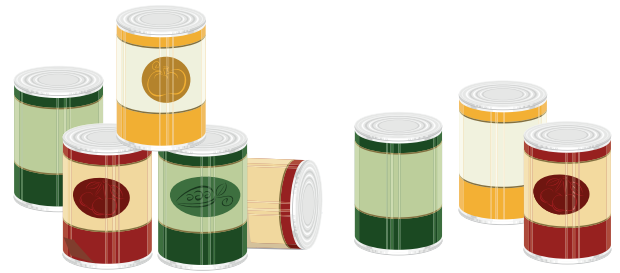
Ed Swearingen and Jim Bysheim did a major, time-consuming job of installing electrical plug-ins throughout the main floor. They had recently done the kitchen, so now all are new. Ed, Jim, John and others have given input on the placement of the new TV for the Hall. If you have thoughts on this, please share with any board members.

Chuck Dunnegan had checked out the Hall's insurance policy. He rated it as excellent coverage, detailing items that could have been overlooked when the building was built and insurance began. Our sincere thanks to Wayne Rockne for his work and diligence in seeing that we have this excellence in our continuing policy.

Annual maintenance items are done or being taken care of. We will have an VH audit.

Thanks to Ted and to Cynthia and John for closings.

*Sandra S Hanson, Viking Hall President*



## Spring Food Drive!

*Look through your pantry  
to see what you can spare  
for the Food Bank Barrel.*

*It will be out  
during all lodge  
events in April  
and May.*



## Sunshine Report

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

### APRIL

John Alfsen	Aud Severson
Loretta Hodson	Leif Strand
Donna Luiten	Robert Strother
Haakon Sande	



If you know someone who needs a little sunshine, please call Cindy McDowell:

696-0725 (cell - 862-1143)

Or, email at: [ccmcd38@hotmail.com](mailto:ccmcd38@hotmail.com)

*"Gratulerer  
med dagen!"*

*"Happy  
Birthday!"*

## CORRECTIONS

The March newsletter included an incorrect spelling of Honorary Danish Consul Grant Callow's last name.

Many apologies to Mr. Callow.

Please send any

Corrections

Comments

Submissions to:

[sonancak@gmail.com](mailto:sonancak@gmail.com) Subject line - Flyer

## Sons of Norway Cultural Skills Program

We all know that the Bernt Balchen Lodge offers great cultural activities, but did you know that the international Sons of Norway also offers a Cultural Skills Program?

The Cultural Skills Program is an exclusive benefit of Sons of Norway membership, available to members only, and provides a framework for learning about traditional and contemporary Norwegian culture. This program offers 14 different units that cover a wide variety of subjects, ranging from Norwegian cooking to music to literature. There are also 5 units just for kids.

Each unit consists of three levels of skill-specific activities that can be completed on your own, or as part of a lodge group or class. For most units there is a PDF overview as well as a link to YouTube videos. For each level, you'll complete a few activities, email (or mail) them in to Sons of Norway Headquarters, get feedback, and earn a pin in recognition of your accomplishments.

To access the Cultural Skills Program, go to <https://www.sofn.com/> and log in. If you don't have an account on the Sons of Norway membership portal, you can easily create one, but you will need your member number. After you log in, click on *Cultural Programming* and then *Cultural Skills Program* to access the units.

If you are interested in working through the skills units as a group activity with other lodge members, please contact Cultural Director Christie Ericson at 907-602-0673 or [christieak@gmail.com](mailto:christieak@gmail.com). While you can do the activities on your own, this would be a great way to share what we're learning with each other.




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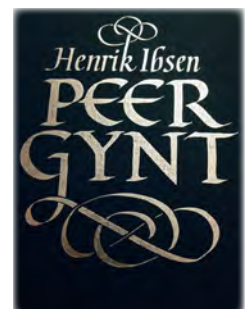
### CULTURAL SKILLS UNITS

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Traditional Norwegian Cooking  
 Reading Norwegian and  
 Norwegian-American Authors  
 Collecting Norwegian and North  
 American Stamps  
 Rosemaling  
 Genealogy-Family History  
 Hand Knitting  
 Norwegian Language and Culture  
 Hardanger Embroidery  
 Figure Carving  
 Weaving  
 Ornamental Woodcarving  
 Chip Carving  
 Folk Dancing  
 Music and Musicians of Norway

### FIVE UNITS JUST FOR KIDS

Folk Dancing  
 Figure Carving  
 Hand Knitting  
 Norwegian and  
 North American Stamps  
 Hardanger Embroidery





## Norwegian Ambassador's Visit to Our Lodge



*President's Message continued from Page 1*

Ambassador Aas was accompanied by Urd Berge Milbury, Cultural and Information Officer for the Norwegian Embassy. She is publicly noted for arranging Norway's gift of a huge Christmas tree to be erected each year at Washington's Union Station. Both Ambassador Aas and Urd Berge Milbury were very friendly and open



Left to right: Ambassador Aas, Kjell and Marit Kristiansen.

people and greatly enjoyed their time with the some seventy members of Bernt Balchen Lodge who turned up for the Ambassador's reception. We had some great finger food and desserts prepared by a phalanx of skilled and dedicated volunteers. Plus, Viking Hall was decorated with simple elegance in time for the reception.

Ambassador Aas kindly gave us some remarks about Norway and its interest in the Arctic and spoke of the good relations enjoyed between Norway and the United States. He also informed us that His Majesty, King Harald of Norway, is scheduled to visit Anchorage in late May. We have put out an invitation through the Ambassador that we would love to host the King at Bernt Balchen Lodge, but we will not know if he will actually come to Viking Hall until sometime in early April.

As parting gifts we gave Ambassador Aas and Ms. Milbury wood carvings from the Fur Rondy's exhibit "Artistry in Wood". The Ambassador received a prize-winning wooden mammoth (our state fossil) brilliantly carved by Jon Iverson, a former member of our lodge who now lives in Soldotna. Ms. Milbury received a small but beautifully-made Alaska birch bowl turned by Kristine Chase, another Alaskan artist. Both loved their gifts.

During our time together I learned that the Ambassador and I shared some things in common. Like him, I had to escape being sent on a vocational track in school. Second, both of our mothers worked as cleaning maids in hotels. Third, we both entered government service, he in Norway and I in the United States. But that is where the similarity ends. He went on to high office and great accomplishments. And he will undoubtedly accomplish much more for Norway and the world before his career comes to an end. It was an honor and a privilege to meet and talk to him.

Both the Ambassador and Ms. Milbury did get to see a little of Alaska thanks to Eileen Johansen who took them to Glen Alps. On the way to Viking Hall I gave them a look at Cook Inlet from Point Woronzof. Hopefully, Ambassador Aas and Ms. Milbury will get a chance to see more of the "Great Land" in the company of the King when he comes in May.

*Fraternally yours, Terje "Ted" Birkedal  
President, Sons of Norway Bernt Balchen Lodge*

## ♥ A Norwegian Love Story: Of Potatoes and Sheep Heads ♥

While I was doing some background research prior to Ambassador Aas' visit to Alaska I came upon a fun story in the Washington Post about Ms. Urd Berge Milbury, Cultural and Information Officer for the Norwegian Embassy, who was to accompany the Ambassador on the trip. The article in the Washington Post was about Urd's key role in the erection of an artistic artificial 32-foot Christmas tree at Union Station each year. This is annual gift from Norway to the people of Washington D.C.



The article in the Washington Post also told a truly Norwegian love story. Years ago Urd met a man on line who then lived in Idaho. After they got to know each other better through on-line chats the man realized that Norwegians love potatoes. So, he decided to send Urd the biggest, grandest Idaho potato he could find. This gesture, won her heart.

But that was not enough, the man now had to win over Urd's father who had grown up in Voss where they have a local delicacy called smalahove. This consists of half of a sheep's head cut down the middle. After it is split it goes in smokehouse for days and days. Apparently, Urd's father tested all her serious boyfriends with this dish. To win approval one would need to eat it with obvious delight and relish and without too much aquavit. So, Urd took her as-yet-unapproved "Potato Boyfriend" to Norway for Christmas for his test. He was so smitten with Urd, a beautiful blond, that he ate it, as they say in the Norwegian fairy tales, "snip, snap, snute" ("snute" means "snout" in Norwegian). The father was amazed at how enthusiastically he wolfed down the food and cleaned his plate. He was won over on the spot and approved of Urd's American fiancé. That is how she got the "Milbury" tacked on to her Norwegian name. Todd Milbury and his Norwegian wife now have two small children, and these too have taken to their Norwegian heritage by eating smalahove with gusto when they visit Norway.

*(Note: I confirmed this Norwegian love story with Urd; she said it is true. Also, this version of the story is of my writing based on the Washington Post article)*

*Terje "Ted" Birkedal*

## Spring Breakup Musical Fun

April 19, 2015 3:00 p.m.

## Viking Hall

*Add a musical interlude to your spring reverie. Come and enjoy fun and inspiring music at Viking Hall at 3:00 p.m. on Sunday, April 19, 2015.*

*If you have any questions please contact Chairs Hedwig Faber (354-7043) or Anne Adasiak-Andrew (337-6527).*

*The event is Free but we welcome desserts to share and/or donations.*

## Sons of Norway Bernt Balchen Lodge Scholarships

***The 2015 scholarship applications for both the Language and Heritage Scholarship and the Higher Education Scholarship are available at the Sons of Norway Bernt Balchen Lodge***

(Viking Hall, 8141 Briarwood Street, Anchorage, 9 am -1 pm, Tuesday-Friday).

The *Language and Heritage Scholarship* is available for persons of any age who are interested in attending or participating in Norwegian language or heritage programs.

The *Higher Education Scholarship* is available for persons entering a school of learning beyond the high school level.

Application deadlines are once again April 15. Scholarship recipients will be chosen by April 30th and announced at the 17th of May Celebration.

If you have any questions concerning the application process and procedures, please contact Beverly Griffin at (907) 349-1176 or by email at [threegs@alaskan.com](mailto:threegs@alaskan.com).

**Please mail or drop off application packets to:**

Sons of Norway  
Attn: Scholarship Committee  
8141 Briarwood St  
Anchorage, AK 99518

*Several other scholarships* are also offered by the Sons of Norway Foundation and District 2. Go to [www.sofn.com/foundation](http://www.sofn.com/foundation) and [www.sonsofnorway2.com](http://www.sonsofnorway2.com) to get a full description for each scholarship and application details.

### **Application Requirements for Language and Heritage Scholarship**

1. Name, date of birth, and address
2. Name of program to be attended
3. Membership in Sons of Norway Lodge #2-046, or a relation to a member of Sons of Norway Lodge #2-046
4. Essay describing your involvement in Sons of Norway Lodge #2-046 and what the Sons of Norway has meant to you
5. Essay of "Why I want to attend a Language/Heritage Program"

### **Application Requirements for the Higher Education Scholarship**

1. Name, date of birth, and address
2. Name of High School with transcript included
3. Date of graduation or expected graduation
4. Membership in Sons of Norway Lodge #2-046, or a relation to a member of Sons of Norway Lodge #2-046
5. Extra-curricular activities and honors
6. Essay describing your involvement in Sons of Norway Lodge #2-046 and what the Sons of Norway has meant to you
7. Essay of "Why I should receive a Higher Education Scholarship"



## Sons of Norway Annual Fish Dinner

This year we pay tribute to  
Paul Roseland, Alaska Musician

April 18, 2015 ~ Saturday

5:30 Cocktails & Appetizers

6 pm Dinner

Music by Bootleg Brown, & Jessica  
Zimmer, & Lloyd & Sevrin Persson

Sons of Norway - Viking Hall

8141 Briarwood Anchorage



**RSVP** by April 16

Thursday

Adults: \$25

12-16: \$12

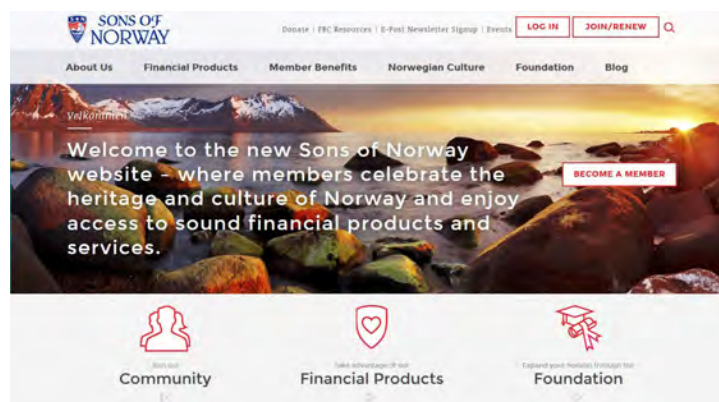
5 to 12yrs: \$5

Under 5 : Free

Phone: 907-349-1613  
sonancak@gmail.com



## New Website for International Sons of Norway



The International Sons of Norway organization recently launched a redesign of its website.

The new site is much more open and inviting and features a clean, crisp design. Other enhancements include a new color palette, the use of more engaging images, and more user-friendly navigation.

Visit the new site online at [www.sonsofnorway.com](http://www.sonsofnorway.com) and explore all that Sons of Norway has to offer!



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

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## EVENTS

### 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.



### **APRIL**

7	Tuesday	10:00 am - 12:00 pm	Needle Crafts & Rosemaling Class
9	Thursday	7:00 pm	Board/Membership Meeting
18	Saturday	5:30 pm	Norwegian Fish Dinner
19	Sunday	3:00 pm	Spring Breakup Musical Fun
21	Tuesday	10:00 am - 12:00 pm	Needle Crafts & Rosemaling Class

**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: [sonancak@gmail.com](mailto:sonancak@gmail.com) Attention - **Ruth** Subject Line - **The Flyer**