



VIKING HALL 349-1613  
www.sofnalaska.com

**November**  
**2015**  
**november**



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

### The Great Lutefisk Mystery



The big day is coming. The day many Norwegian-Americans in the Anchorage area look forward to with eager anticipation. It is the day when they will have an opportunity to eat large quantities of a quivering, gelatinous fish that has a slight chemical taste. That day is November 14 when Bernt Balchen Lodge will serve two Lutefisk and Lefse Dinners. One dinner will be at 4:00 pm;

the other at 7:00 PM. Not only will there be mass quantities of lutefisk; there will also be mass quantities of eager lutefisk eaters. It is Bernt Balchen Lodge's most popular annual dinner event.

My question is why? My older brother who was raised in Norway says that to him lutefisk was "mandag's mat", something you ate because it was cheap and fit the budget. It wasn't something you looked forward to; it was something you dreaded like a dose of cod liver oil. Eva Bilet, one of our long-term presidents and members, who was also raised in Norway felt the same about it as a child. "It was something you ate because you had to." To many coastal Norwegians with frequent access to fresh fish it was the last thing they would put on their Holiday menu.

But in the old days many interior Norwegians in the upper mountain valleys did not have ready access to fresh fish. What they could get hold of was stockfish ("tørrfisk" in Norwegian). Stockfish usually came from northern Norway, particularly the Lofoten Islands. Here the fishermen and fisherwomen would split the cod in two and hang it on high wooden racks to dry out in the late winter and early spring. The cool, dry winds would gradually deplete the fish of any perceptible moisture and in the end the fish would resemble something like hard tree bark. However, this "fish bark" could be preserved for years if kept in a dry place and it weighed less than 25 percent of its original weight. Not only did it not spoil, it kept all of the fish's nutrients, and because it was light in weight it travelled well too. In fact, Norwegian stockfish was popular all over Europe, including Spain and Italy where it was turned into "baccalao" (a popular and tasty fish stew). If you give the bark-like stockfish some good bangs and then soak it in cold water for several days it will rehydrate to close to its original size. Also, you can strip off small pieces of the dried fish itself and eat as a sort of nutritious fish jerky. All this makes good sense.

Now here comes the weird part. Somebody in the olden days got the notion to take the reconstitution of stockfish up a notch. They decided to not only soak the dried fish in water, but to also give the fish a two-day or more bath in caustic lye made from birch ashes. This plumps up the fish so that it becomes far larger than the original living fish. It also removes half the protein from the fish and it begins to disintegrate giving it a white gelatinous texture. Although the fish is further rinsed in cold water for a few more days some of the chemical taste of the lye remains with the fish. On the face of it, this use of lye to plump up the fish makes no sense whatever. Why not just use just use water with a little hammering? It is a mystery. I have asked Steinar Hansen, Eva Bilet, and Marit Kristiansen, all experts in things Norwegian, and they did not know the answer. If you have the answer to the mystery please share it with us. Eva and I Googled ourselves silly and found nothing but silly answers to this question such as the Irish tried to poison Norwegian Vikings with lye and the Vikings ended up liking the poisoned fish. Even if this nonsense were true, the real question is why would they continue to soak their dried fish in "poison" for the next few centuries? Norwegians must have thought there was some benefit from this strange process. The question is what was it?

Despite the fact we could not find out the practical reason why Norwegians added lye to the rehydration process, we know that many inland Norwegians thought lutefisk was a great food to enjoy on special occasions; most particularly for the Christmas Holidays when it was served as a much-desired feast food. To those who had no easy time getting fresh fish and lived most of the year on porridge, potatoes, and flatbread this plumped up stockfish was the next best thing to fresh fish – it even roughly resembled fresh fish in a strange way despite its gelatinous gleam and texture.

President's Message continues on Page 2

## Lutefisk

President's Message continues from Page 1

When the some 800,000 Norwegians immigrated to the United States in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries they took their treasured traditions with them. And among the most cherished were those associated with Christmas. For many of these immigrants lutefisk was a sensory touchstone to their best memories of the Norway they had left behind. When someone brought out a great steaming platter of lutefisk to the Christmas table and one could eat their fill of something so rare and special, what could provide a better memory of good times in the old country. Today, lutefisk continues to connect many Norwegian-Americans to their Norwegian heritage and their best memories of the Holiday season. So, as they eat, and eat some more, the endorphins flow in tandem with the good memories and they experience a sort of Norwegian high communion.

You too can release your endorphins, come and have lutefisk communion with us on November 14th!

*Fraternally yours,  
Terje "Ted" Birkedal*



## VIKING HALL NEWS

Viking Hall continues to be updated and well maintained by workers, both Lodge volunteers and businesses, as needed. Our business license has been up-dated and is now in effect into 2017. We transferred money into another CD. Viking Hall is financially strong. We are always looking ahead at major physical projects for the Hall. John Olnes has prepared of long-term plan of these future needs that we will be prioritizing, including, but not limited to: paving the lower lot, painting, up-grading the kitchen cabinets, and replacement of a refrigerator, furnaces and water heaters.

John Olnes reported that Polar Refrigeration repaired the kitchen refrigerator; then Ed Swearingen replaced the gasket seal. The compressors in the kitchen entry will be cleaned, as will the Kitchen hood, after the last lefse making session.

Office supplies have been purchased by Cynthia Olnes. She contacted Sandra Johnson who has ordered a new vacuum for us, as well as donating 200 vacuum bags. Cynthia has filled in as needed in manning the office, also.

Sandra Hanson's term as board member and as President are up; she is not seeking another term. The Board gave thanks for long and excellent service.

Mickey Andrew's term is also up, but she is willing run again.

Jason Mathieson, who has professional construction experience, expressed his interest in serving as a board member. The Board voted to recommend Mickey and Jacob to the nominating committee as candidates for the Viking Hall Board.

The "old" piano has been sold. He had researched and recommended the type of larger wheels to get for our "new" piano. The Board approved the motion and this has been ordered.

We approved a donation to the Presbyterian Open Door Church, who have graciously allowed our overflow parking for the Bazaar and the coming Lutefisk Dinner, as a gesture of appreciation.

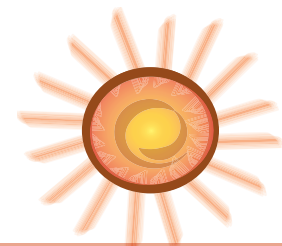
Thanks to John Olnes and Merlin Hamre for closings, and to all who make a terrific difference with their help.

Meeting Adjourned: 8:30 p.m.

The list of those on call should the building need checking on has been updated. This is a vital service being filled by several of our members. Thanks.

There is always an on-going need for members to close the Hall after rentals. Thanks to Chuck Dunnagan, Ted Birkedal and John Olnes for recent closings.

*Sandra Hanson  
Viking Hall President*



## SUNSHINE REPORT

### NOVEMBER

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

Orvetta Rae Elde  
Aurora Hovland  
Alice Lehnert  
Arnold Link  
Gene Moe  
Gale Olson  
Carol Restad  
Glenn R. Soby

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

696-0725 (cell - 862-1143)

Email: [ccmcd38@hotmail.com](mailto:ccmcd38@hotmail.com)

*"Gratulerer med dagen!"*

## Lutefisk Time Again - We could use your Help!

It is once again that time of year when over 300 guests will appear at Viking Hall begging for some lutefisk and lefse (and for the faint of heart, those tasty meatballs too!).

This dinner is one of the lodge's biggest fundraising events, helping to keep our wonderful Viking Hall in great shape and allowing us to continue providing great events for our members and friends.



Please consider helping out this year. It is a great way to not only show support for the lodge, but also to get to know other members and friends and find out just how much fun we have behind the scenes in making events like this possible.



**The dinner itself this year is on Saturday November 14th with two seatings, see Ad below.**

We ask that reservations be made for the dinner as we have limited seating and this is the most popular event of the year.

*In terms of helping out, there are various days and times where we could use your assistance:*

- Friday, November 6th:** Preparation for lefse rolling 3:00 - 6:00 pm – help boil potatoes and set things up for the two days of rolling
- Saturday, November 7th:** Roll lefse from 9:00 am to 6:00 pm (even a couple of hours of your time would be a great help)
- Sunday, November 8th:** Roll lefse from 9:00 am to 6:00 pm and note that from noon onward we welcome the youth of the lodge to come and assist and learn from the lefse rolling masters just how easy it is to roll some lefse
- Sunday, November 8th:** Meatball rolling from 1:00 - 4:00 pm
- Friday, November 13th:** Preparation for the dinner (veggies, sauces, dinning room, etc) starting at 10:00 am until done (usually around 8:00 pm)
- Saturday, November 14th:** The big event – help with first seating from 3:00 - 6:00 pm or second seating from 6:00 - 9:00 pm or cleanup from 9:00 pm onward.

Let me know by e-mail at [lise@gci.net](mailto:lise@gci.net) if you are willing to assist with any of the above areas, or give me a call at 222-5320 if you have questions. Tusen takk!

*Tom Falskow, Co-chair Lutefisk Dinner*

### LUTEFISK & LEFSE DINNER

(AND THOSE TASTY MEATBALLS TOO!)



**Saturday, November 14<sup>th</sup>  
with two seatings**

**First seating: 4:00 to 6:30**

**Second seating: 7:00 to 10:00**

#### DINNER PRICES:

Adults \$25  
(non-members \$30)

Ages 12-16 \$12

Ages 5-11 \$5

Ages 4 and under free

**Make your Reservation**

**TODAY by calling**

**Viking Hall at**

**349-1613**



## SUPER BOWL 2016

Ticket sales for the Sons of Norway 2016 Super Bowl Raffle are now underway. The raffle is the primary source of funds for the Sons of Norway Bernt Balchen Lodge No. 2-046 Language/ Heritage/Higher Education Scholarships.

The Raffle will again have 20 winners with a top prize of \$1,000. Only 300 tickets are sold so the chance to win is very generous, one in fifteen. Tickets are selling for \$25 each or a special deal of 5-for-\$100. Your ticket also entitles you to a free Lapskaus (Norwegian stew) dinner during the showing of the Super Bowl 50 game on a big-screen TV at Viking Hall on February 7, 2016.

To purchase raffle tickets please contact a member of the committee—John Olnes (562-2794), Sandra Hanson (243-2132), Wayne Johnson 248-3030) or Jane Moe (274-1357). Tickets will also be available during upcoming lodge events and at the Viking Hall office.



## Sons of Norway Lucia 2015

The Bernt Balchen Lodge Santa Lucia Program will take place  
Sunday, December 13th from 3:00 to 6:00 pm.

The Lucia Committee is pleased to announce that  
*Juliana Andrew*

will serve as the 2015 Lucia and lead the procession.

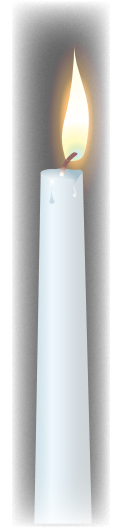
There will be **two 1-hour rehearsals** for this year's Lucia program,  
and all kids (4-18) whose parents or grandparents are members of  
the lodge are invited to participate.

Rehearsals: **Sunday, November 22nd, from 1:30 - 2:30 pm**  
**Sunday, December 6th, from 3:00 - 4:00 pm.**

*Carol Kalander, Lucia Committee Chair*



*Learn more about  
this year's Lucia,  
Juliana Andrew, in  
the December Flyer!*

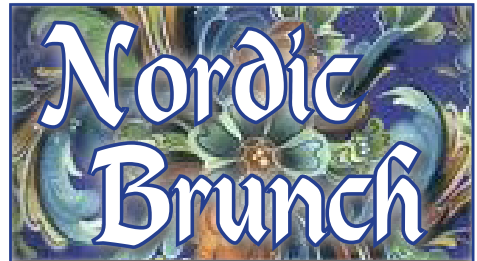


## Fra Biblioteket

A reminder that our lodge library contains some great periodical material that can be of interest for those looking to keep up-to-date with more current happenings in the Nordic region. Scandinavian Review, a publication of the American Scandinavian Foundation, is a quarterly look at past, present and future Scandinavia, featuring a blend of history, arts, current happenings and always a great section of recent book reviews from Scandinavian authors. The most recent edition features Denmark – a look at Vilhelm Hammershøi, one of the country's great late 1800's-early 1900's painters. Then comes Finland with a look at how the Sami celebrate Easter, which for them takes on an important aspect of celebrating the end of winter and the migration of the reindeer herds. Sweden is featured in an article that looks back at Ingrid Bergman's stage and screen career – she would have been 100 years old this year. And Norway is the focus in looking at the life of legendary soprano, Kirsten Flagstad, a girl from Hamar who once graced the stage of the Metropolitan Opera in New York with resounding applause for her performances of Wagnerian operas. Turning to more current affairs, there is a piece on the new trend of given children names taken from Norse mythology. Looking for a good old Norse name? For boys, try out the following: Brage, Trym, Vidar, Ask, Thor or Loke. And for a girl, how about Gerd, Liv, Idun, Sag, Freya or Embla.

Come check out what is in store at the library this season. The library is open during normal business hours and during certain events. So long as you are a member, you can check out books to take home and read. And we are always on the look for new titles to add to the collection, just contact me if you are interested or have any questions.

*Tom Falskow, Lodge Librarian*



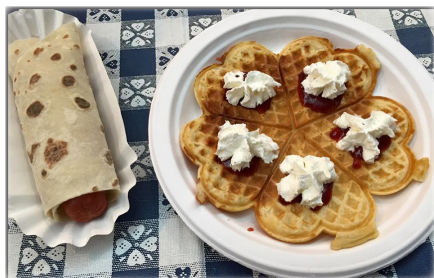
Britta Hamre has agreed to lead the effort to put the Christmas Brunch back on the Sons of Norway calendar. So please write (or key) it on your calendar for **December 6**. The menu is evolving to include Nordic specialties from Iceland, Denmark, Finland and Sweden along with our traditional Norwegian Yuletide fare.

If you have or if you know of someone that has a special entree, side dish, baked goods, dessert, etc, to be included in the brunch, please contact the Viking Hall Office with the information. Volunteers are needed to work in the Viking Hall Charcuterie; pickling, baking, cooking, decorating, etc. Please contact the office, Britta or her dad Merlin, if interested.

Also if anyone knows of a good recipe for "surströmming" please let Wayne Johnson know. He wants to give it to a few special friends for Christmas.



## Scandinavian Bazaar



Pølse wrapped in lefse and vafler at the cafe. Yum!



Shopping works up an appetite!



Scandinavian bazaar



Nisser?



Pia's booth is always very popular!



Anna Decker's rosemaling



Wood Crafts



Hand crafts



Anchorage Suomi-Finland Club



Vintage  
Scandinavian  
knitwear



The ever popular Cafe



Working hard in the kitchen





## Free Financial Review for our Members



Dear Members:

I am planning on contacting each one of you over the next few weeks. I will be travelling outside of Alaska during two of those weeks; that does not prevent me from giving you a call, but will prevent me from meeting with you face to face during that time.

To facilitate meeting with you, I am setting up my schedule to be at the lodge every Thursday (*starting October 15*) with the exception of, December 10th and December 24, 2015.

My lodge hours are from 9:00 am through 1:00 pm. You can plan on me being there during those hours so feel free to drop in. However, individuals or couples that make an appointment will have priority. I have a variety of Educational Power Points that I will be sharing from 11:30 - 12:15 with some lunch to follow until the 1:00 pm closing time. If a group of 5-10 people are interested in a topic I would be glad to present that earlier in the day or at my Anchorage office in the afternoon.

For those that require an earlier or later time to meet I have access to office space in Anchorage in the Arctic Blvd. Business Park on 41st street in Building 700 Suite #206.

Everyone is welcome to a free Financial Analysis

To provide this service you would need to complete a 3-4 page questionnaire that I would be glad to assist you with. This takes 30-45 minutes, with recommendations in a follow-up appointment or telephone call.

Dates that are open for scheduling include:

- November 5, 2015
- November 12, 2015
- November 19, 2015
- December 3, 2015
- December 17, 2015
- December 31, 2015

*Sincerely, Glenn C. Jacob*

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## WOOD SKI CLASSIC

**5K Race (adults)    2.5K Race (under 12)**

**WHEN: Sunday, November 29th, 2015 at Russian Jack Springs Park**

**Race Start: 12:00 Noon**

**Wave Start:** First wave - Authentic cross country costume with wooden skis.  
Second wave all others.

Celebrate our Nordic Heritage. Break out your wool knickers and sweaters!

*Stay for the Traditional Scandinavian breakfast in the Russian Jack Chalet*

### Co-Sponsors:

Sons of Norway Bernt Balchen Lodge and the Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage

*First Race of the AMH Anchorage Cup Series but not a points race!*

**Prizes:** Awarded to the best dressed Boy and Girl (12 and under) and Female and Male Adult (over 12) racers. Hint for the traditional costume judging - Wear wool in Scandinavian style and patterns

**Register:** Online at the Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage (NSAA)

Website [http://www.anchoragenordicski.com/anchorage\\_cup\\_register.htm](http://www.anchoragenordicski.com/anchorage_cup_register.htm)

**Bonus:** Pine Tar your skis 9:00 - 11:00 am. Pine tar supplied. Volunteers will apply pine tar for you. Bring clean skis; remove all wax before you arrive.

**Registration morning of the race from 10:00 - 11:00 am**  
(This is in addition to the online registration.)

**Bib pick up from 10:00 - 11:30 am on race day.**

## Sons of Norway Foundation Raffle

**Drawing at Lucia, December 13th**

**\$2.00 per ticket or 3 for \$5.00!**



*Especially Designed for Children!*

**Buy your Raffle Ticket for a Norwegian made Kicksled (Spark).** What a wonderful gift this would be for any child now that winter is approaching. Tickets can be purchased at upcoming lodge events or by calling 562-5172.

**The Sons of Norway Foundation** is the charitable arm of Sons of Norway and provides scholarships, grants and assistance to members if they experience losses from natural disasters.

**Please support this worthy cause!**

Marit Kristiansen,  
Foundation Director

# How do you S-P-E-L-L WE WON!

## Verbose Vikings Win Again!

Lodge members Tim Andrew, Nancy Clark, and Terry Gryting were this year's winning team for the Alaska Literacy Program's 2015 BizBee adult spelling bee. The team beat out 12 other teams to be crowned champion in this fundraiser to benefit adult literacy services. The team



misspelled a word in the ninth round, but was able to stay in after the other remaining teams misspelled their words as well. They then went on to spell their next three words correctly. The team was cheered on by the very festive Sons of Norway fan table, which also won the Best Spirit Award. This is the seventh year that Bernt Balchen Lodge has sponsored a team in the event. Tim, Nancy, and Terry were also the winning team in the 2013 BizBee.



Here are the words that the team had to spell:

1. Nightingale, 2. Luau, 3. Nachtmusik, 4. Anomaly, 5. Recalcitrant, 6. Prosciutto,
7. Tokamak, 8. Pseudoscience, 9. Omnilegent, 10. Enthalpy, 11. Porcini, 12. Katana

Hurrah, Hurrah, Hurrah!!



## The Consul's Corner

*Information and Opportunities for Norwegian Alaskans*



*I am honored to have been asked to serve as the Norwegian Honorary Consul in Alaska. When information and opportunities come across my desk, I will let Norwegians in our community know about them in a regular Consul's Corner section of the Flyer. If you have any questions, you can reach me at [907norway@gmail.com](mailto:907norway@gmail.com).*

### Opportunities:

- Are you an adventurous U.S. Citizen of Norwegian descent? Dreaming of making a visit to the country of your ancestors? O'Connor Casting are now looking for new cast members for the 7th season of Alt for Norge ("The Great Norway Adventure"), Norway's #1 Emmy Awards winning reality TV series. **Deadline is December 2, 2015**



For more information and requirements, go to <http://www.jotformpro.com/oconnorcasting/norway7>

- Your 3-minute film about the Arctic could win your team a trip to Norway! The Royal Norwegian Embassy in Washington, D.C. is looking for U.S. student and amateur filmmakers to help tell stories about this fascinating region. The Royal Norwegian Embassy in Washington, D.C. invites you to participate in a film competition with the aim of showing people all over the world the things they didn't know about the Arctic.



**Deadline for entries is Friday, November 20, 2015**

For more information: [http://www.norway.org/News\\_and\\_events/Embassy/meetthearctic/#.VhHRfDdCju0](http://www.norway.org/News_and_events/Embassy/meetthearctic/#.VhHRfDdCju0)

Lise Falskow



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

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### **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.

## **EVENTS**

### **NOVEMBER**

3	Tuesday	10:00 am - Noon	Needle Crafts and Rosemaling Class
6	Friday	3:00 - 6:00 pm	Lefse Making for Lutefisk and Lefse Dinner
7	Saturday	9:00 am - 6:00 pm	Lefse Making for Lutefisk and Lefse Dinner
8	Sunday	9:00 am - 6:00 pm	Lefse Making for Lutefisk and Lefse Dinner
12	Thursday	7:00 pm	Board/Membership Meeting Election of 2016 Officers Announcement of 2015 Lucia
13	Friday	10:00 am - 8:00 pm	Preparation for Lutefisk and Lefse Dinner
14	Saturday	4:00 pm - 6:30 pm 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm	Lutefisk and Lefse Dinner

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

Please send articles or event information  
for the next Newsletter by November 20th to: [sonancak@gmail.com](mailto:sonancak@gmail.com) Attention - **Ruth** Subject Line - **The Flyer**