



VIKING HALL 349-1613  
www.sofnalaska.com

September  
2016  
september



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

### A Very Deserving Couple



John and Cynthia Olnes beaming after personally receiving their Bridge Builders of Anchorage Excellence in Community Service Award from First Lady Donna Walker and Governor Bill Walker.

On August 20th, at the Bridge Builders of Anchorage Unity Gala, John and Cynthia Olnes, supported by many family members and Bernt Balchen Lodge members, received the Bridge Builders Excellence in Community Service Award in front of an audience of more than 400 attendees at the Hilton Hotel. Both were chosen for this honor by the Board and membership of Sons of Norway Bernt Balchen Lodge. If anyone deserves this award, they are Cynthia and John. As most of you know, John and Cynthia Olnes are a married couple who are two of the most industrious members of Sons of Norway Bernt Balchen Lodge. John was born in Nebraska and Cynthia was born in Michigan. John Olnes came to Anchorage, Alaska in 1974 and Cynthia has been a resident since 1961. John is of Norwegian heritage and Cynthia's ancestry harks back to Denmark, Sweden, and Finland. Both have been long-term members of Sons of Norway Bernt Balchen Lodge in Anchorage. John became a member in 1981 and Cynthia became a member in 1990.

As a married couple they form a true team in their volunteer work for both the Norwegian-American/Scandinavian community and the wider Anchorage community. They share the same interests and operate as full-fledged partners in most of their endeavors.

John Olnes served as a well-regarded President of Sons of Norway Bernt Balchen Lodge for three terms, in 1990, 1991, and 1992. From 1993 to 2012 he served with distinction as the President of the Viking Hall, Inc. Board of Directors. The Viking Hall, Inc. Board oversees the care and maintenance of Viking Hall, the physical home of Sons of Norway Bernt Balchen Lodge. This long-term service as President of Viking Hall was interrupted in parts of 1995 and 1996 when John and Cynthia embarked on a 15-month bicycle trip around the world. Today, John is still an active officer in the Sons of Norway organization, and now serves as a Trustee on the Sons of Norway Bernt Balchen Lodge Board of Directors.

Cynthia Olnes served as a volunteer bookkeeper for Viking Hall, Inc. for many years overseeing the day-to-day business operations. In the past she also served on the Board of Sons of Norway as a Trustee and ably performed the duties of our lodge newsletter editor. For the past two years she has served tirelessly as Treasurer for Viking Hall Inc.

Both have spent numerous volunteer hours in support of the mission of Ski for Light, an all-volunteer non-profit organization founded in 1975 that teaches the basics of classic cross-country skiing to visually- or mobility- impaired adults (Sons of Norway is a major supporter of Ski for Light).

*President's Message continues on Page 2*

**The Menu!**

Lamb & Cabbage,  
Boiled Potatoes,  
Carrots, Fresh Rolls,  
Desserts & Beverages  
and MUSIC!



*Sons of Norway*

# Faar-i-kaal

*This traditional lamb and cabbage dinner (pronounced "fore-ee-kole") only comes around once a year and is always a crowd pleaser. So bring the family and enjoy this wonderful Norwegian comfort food!!*

**Adults—\$22**

**Ages 12 to 16—\$10.00**

**Ages 5 to 11—\$5 and**

**Under 5 years—Free**

**Saturday, September 17th** ~ Enjoy Cocktails at 5:30 pm and Dinner at 6:00 pm. Music will be provided by the popular local band, **"The Polka Buzz!"** This event is held at Viking Hall. Call **349-1613** for **Reservations!**

## Bridge Builders Award

*President's Message continues from Page 1*

Both have served as guides for the participants and John Olnes has served as a member of the Board of Directors of Ski for Light. In addition, in 2006, John Olnes was selected to represent Ski for Light as a guide at the famous Ridderrenn Races held in Beitostolen, Norway. Later, in 2012, he received the Bjarne Eikevik President's Award for his long-term volunteer work in support of Ski for Light. When Ski for Light International held its annual week-long event in Anchorage in 1999, 2003, and 2014 both Cynthia and John volunteered as guides and also made many of the critical logistic arrangements necessary to the success of the event. Both travel each year to serve as volunteer guides for the visually impaired at the Ski for Light International events held around the country.

John Olnes has served as a volunteer to assist a visually-impaired highly competitive skier in the National and World Masters Cross Country Ski Championships. To serve as a guide in these national and world-level events demands both highly honed skiing skills and guiding skills since the visually-impaired skier is competing with mainstream, sighted competitors. As a guide he has skied in several World Masters competitions, including one in Italy.

In addition, for the past four years John Olnes has partnered with a visually-impaired member of the Sons of Norway, and once a week, depending on the season and the weather, he has helped that member enjoy hiking, tandem biking, or cross-country skiing.

John and Cynthia have also been long-term members of the Anchorage Nordic Skiing Association and put in many hours helping with local ski events. John has served over the years as Race Chairman, High School Racing Chairman, and was awarded Volunteer of the Year by the Anchorage Nordic Skiing Association for his efforts. John also served as Chief of Course for the snowshoe competition at the 2001 Special Olympics World Winter Games in Anchorage, Alaska.

What is remarkable about John and Cynthia is their sheer level of devotion to Sons of Norway and the local, national, and international cross-country skiing community. Together they have put in vast number of volunteer hours. Both have served their community in volunteer positions that demand both time, effort, and expertise. The striking thing is much of their volunteer work is as a couple. They are rarely seen alone. They are indeed a team.

One thing that stands out is their ceaseless volunteer work at Sons of Norway – serving many times as lodge event chairs. They are also there to help with all Sons of Norway events and they do much of the work that no one else relishes. Cynthia is known for her ability to wash endless pots at Sons' dinner events without complaint. When the dance floor of Viking Hall needs a polish they are there, when the carpet is littered with spots, they are there, when the oven hood needs cleaning, they are there, when the safety light batteries need replacing they are there, when renters have "trashed" Viking Hall they are there. In 2000 when the Viking Hall interior was repainted John Olnes spent countless hours as one of the work crew. In addition, in recent years, both John and Cynthia prepped and painted the walls and ceiling of the large Viking Hall Library. No one in Sons of Norway Bernt Balchen Lodge has given so much time to the care of Viking Hall and given so much time in support of Sons' cultural events.

And they bring skills to their volunteer work. Cynthia Olnes worked as an analyst and programmer in her professional life and she applied this skill to build detailed informational spreadsheets for Sons of Norway, Viking Hall, Inc. and Ski for Light. In turn, John, a civil Engineer by trade, employed his skills to design the Viking Hall upper parking lot and retaining wall which surrounds Viking Hall today. He then helped to build the retaining wall itself.

John and Cynthia Olnes have attended the past two Bridge Builder Galas where Sons of Norway candidates have been honored. They openly embrace the mission of Bridge Builders and support Sons of Norway's involvement in Bridge Builders. But more importantly their work with the visually impaired and disabled in both Ski for Light and the Special Olympics demonstrates their spirit of community. They have repeatedly gone out of their way to assist people that have disabilities enjoy the sport of cross-country skiing. The people they have assisted as guides have come from many different groups and cultures. In fact, in the National and World Masters Cross Country Ski Championships John Olnes was the frequent guide for a visually impaired African American cross country skier. With John's guiding skills she often medaled in her competition with sighted skiers and one year was awarded national champion in her age group.

In summary, John and Cynthia Olnes, as a couple, embody the generous and cooperative spirit that exemplifies the Scandinavian people of the world. They are ambassadors of good will to all who have the pleasure of coming in contact with them. No one is more deserving of our thanks and the honor of a Bridge Builders Excellence Award in Community Service than they.



John and Cynthia Olnes at the Bridge Builders Gala with their family. Left to right they are Laurie Zimmer (John's daughter), Cynthia Olnes, John Olnes, John Olnes, and Susannah Olnes.

*Fraternally yours,  
Terje "Ted" Birkedal*



## My Years with the Sons of Norway by Chuck Brodahl



My father, Casper Brodahl emigrated from Kolbu, Norway, a few miles south of Gjøvik. He arrived in Minneapolis in 1914 and very soon after, in 1915, he joined the Sons of Norway. The Sons of Norway Headquarters were then and are still located at 1455 W. Lake Street, Minneapolis. My father's association with SON makes me feel as if I have been a part of Sons of Norway for a long time! That was 100 years ago.

Here's a little history: Casper was drafted into the U.S. Army and shipped to France in 1917. When World I ended in 1918 he returned to Minneapolis and married Agnes Johnson. They had two children, Valborg (1921) and myself, Charles (1923). Casper worked as a house painter, but in 1928 at the young age of 34 years he died of Hodgkin's disease, of which there was no cure.

It was still the Depression, so when I turned 17 years I left the farm and joined the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). My salary was \$30 a month, they sent \$25 of it to my family to help them live on. I kept \$5 per month that I made by clearing trees on both sides of the highway, 8 hours a day. They clothed me in army clothing and the food was plenty and good.

In 1941 I went to Seattle and worked in the Boeing heat treatment department for a year before I was drafted. (Heat treatment changes aluminum parts into harder metal, so airplane wings could bend down and not crack.) We worked on B-17 Bombers, with the shifts going 24 hours a day.

I was drafted into the U.S. Army, Medical Corps and after five months of training we were shipped to New Guinea, which was being held by the Japanese. The 3rd Evacuation Hospital was a medical Army Surgical Hospital (MASH) where we took care of the wounded soldiers.



George Rengard, Charles Brodahl and Franklen Landstrom.



Outstanding athlete and good friend, George Rengard.

We joined the Sixth Army and traveled north on New Guinea Island where we made four D-Day landings, clearing out the Japanese. Then to the Philippines, where we made three D-Day invasions. On to Manila, the last stronghold of the Japanese Army. After the war ended our Unit set up a 200 bed hospital in the heart of Tokyo, Japan to care for the U.S. occupation troops.

In 1946 I was discharged after 3 years in the U.S. Army Medics. I arrived in Anchorage, Alaska on April 2nd, 1946 and began working at the Alaska Railroad on April 6th in the Carpenter's Shop. The real name of the place was Bridge & Building, and the top foreman was none other than Leif Strand. He was an upstanding man. Leif Strand was grandfather to Anna Bryant.

George Rengard was also working at the railroad Cabinet Shop. George and I were very good friends for many years before he returned to Norway.

In 1950 George and I drove to Key West, Florida, then from there flew to Havana, Cuba for several days. For his age George was very young at heart, ski jumping and water skiing. He served as Anchorage Sons

of Norway President and was a solid Christian.

One day George asked me if I would be interested in attending a banquet that Sons of Norway was sponsoring. The honored guest speaker was Norwegian pilot Bernt Balchen. I had no idea at the time the Anchorage SON Lodge would be named after him! He was a very interesting speaker, talking on his adventures in aviation in many parts of the world.

The event was held at the Aleutian Gardens at 4th & B Street.

Over the years I have enjoyed being a member of the Sons of Norway. I feel like I have been a member since before I was even born, as in 1916 my father served as secretary for the SON in Minneapolis.

Here in Anchorage I have met such good people at the Lodge, and have relished the good food, programs and fellowship.

Through the many years I have always enjoyed being a part of Bernt Balchen Lodge.

Charles Brodahl  
March 3rd, 2016



Chuck Brodahl at the 2016 Fish Boil. Photo by Glenn Soby

Images provided by Charles Brodahl except where noted.



# FISH AND FIRE !



Getting ready. CE



Hard working crew. GS



Prep, prep, prep. CE



Corn a-plenty. CE



Potatoes and Onions. CE



Steamy. CE



Lowering carefully. CE



Hot work. CE



Hungry SON members dishing up! GS



Kerosene time. CE



Yum! CE



Good food and fellowship. GS



Fire! GS

**Great Food, Great Music, Great People! – All Photos by Christie Ericson (CE) and Glenn Soby (GS)**



## About the Band at the Fish Boil

Ryan's Bridge brings a new flavor to folk and bluegrass. Comprised of five long-time Alaskans – Ryan McLaughlin on fiddle, Ian Wahl on mandolin, Rose Hanson on



Ryans Bridge. GS

guitar, Miles Allen on fiddle, and David Devlin on drums – the band brings hot instrumentals and sweet harmonies to their music.

They met back in the day at Mary Schallert's Alaska City Folk Arts Camp, and you can find them teaching at that very same camp most summers. Ryan's Bridge has played all around Alaska, and did not disappoint the appreciative members of the Sons of Norway.

## ICICLE SEAFOODS OF SEWARD



Arni. GS

Tusen takk to Icicle Seafoods of Seward! The firm donated 70 pounds of prime, flash-frozen rockfish (including snappers) to Sons of Norway Bernt Balchen Lodge for the Fish Boil on August 16, 2016. And many thanks to Arni Thomson who arranged the donation and brought the fish to Viking Hall's freezer from Seward, Alaska. The event received good coverage in the Alaska Dispatch News with a great shot of the final ball of fire in the paper.

Icicle Seafoods donation to our lodge makes sense. The company was founded some 50 years ago in Petersburg, Alaska by Norwegian fishermen and other citizens of the town. It is now one of the largest fish processing companies in North America. Their logo is a Viking ship in full sail. Thank you again Icicle! Seafoods of Seward, Alaska.



## Norwegian Language and Culture Class 2015-2016

*Sons of Norway Bernt Balchen Lodge will be offering a Norwegian Language and Culture Class in 2016-2017.*

*The class will be taught by Lillian Anderson who is a native speaker and expert on Norway.*



This book is *Norsk, Nordmenn, og Norge: Antologi 2* by Kathleen Stokker. It is available from Amazon, Barnes and Noble, or the University of Wisconsin Press for \$19.95. We also recommend that all students purchase a Norwegian-English dictionary for use in the class.

If you are interested taking the class please call Viking Hall at (907) 349-1613 and give your name and which class tier you would like to attend (you may leave a voice mail). Also, you may just show up at the first class and sign up.

This weekly class will be scheduled for Sunday Evenings. The first class will be on October 2, 2016 and the classes will end in late May. The total cost of the 8-month class will be \$20.00 for members of Sons of Norway and \$40.00 for non-members, payable to the Sons of Norway. It will be held at Viking Hall which is located at 8141 Briarwood Street.

The class will be divided into two tiers. The first part of the class will be for beginners while the second part will be for more advanced students in Norwegian. These classes will purposely overlap to allow for interaction and conversation in Norwegian among all the students.

**Beginners: 6:30 PM to 7:30 PM**

**Advanced: 7:00 PM to 8:00 PM**

Beginning texts in Norwegian will be provided free of charge to any students that want them. Anyone taking the advanced section of the class will need to personally purchase the text for that part of the class.

## SUNSHINE REPORT

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

### SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Grethe Berge	Marianne Lang
Kaare Elde	Norma Link
Ronald Flugum	Louise Maakestad
Douglas L Iverson	Fred Walatka
Kjell Kristiansen	Sandra Hanson

If you know someone who needs a little sunshine, call **696-0725 (cell - 862-1143)** or

*"Happy Birthday!"*

email Cindy McDowell:  
**ccmcd38@hotmail.com**

*"Gratulerer med dagen!"*

## 20th Annual

## Scandinavian BAZAAR

**Saturday 10am to 4pm**  
**October 8, 2016**  
**Sons of Norway**  
**at the Viking Hall**

The **Velkommen Café** is looking for 'team members' join the kitchen action! We have a place for you - we need a "Soup Meister" to stir the soups & chowders, servers for the popular Polse (reindeer wrapped in lefse), & willing hands to assemble our delightful open face sandwiches.

To be a part of the "Best Lunch in Town" on Oct. 8th call Gayle at 441-9358. Takk!

**Also, Vendors...time to apply!**

## Passages

*Dagrun Brotherston*, a long-time member of Bernt Balchen Lodge, passed away on July 30, 2016; she was 87 years old. At the time Dagrun was living in Olympia, Washington. A funeral service was held at the Faith Lutheran Church in Badger, Minnesota on August 13<sup>th</sup> and she was interned at the Nannestad Cemetery.

Gone also are: *Ingvild S. Priebe* (1965 - 2016);

*Annelise Moss* (1923 - 2016); *Alice Lehnert* (1913 - 2016); and

*Edwin William "Ed" Larson* (1942 - 2016)

A celebration of life was held for Ed at Viking Hall on August 20th.

Please take to time to reach out to the friends and family of those who have passed.

They need our fellowship more than ever.

## Bridge Builders honors Merlin Hamre with President's Award



Merlin Hamre is not only the Treasurer for Sons of Norway Bernt Balchen Lodge; he is also the Treasurer for Bridge Builders of Anchorage. He has done great service for Bridge Builders and has managed to straighten out their books and get Bridge

Builders financial house in order. He has also contributed his skill and labor to many more mundane tasks such as cleaning up their storage unit and hauling Bridge Builders paraphernalia to and from events on numerous occasions.

A surprised Merlin Hamre received the Bridge Builders of Anchorage President's Award from First Lady Donna Walker, Governor Bill Walker, and Bridge Builders President Lourdes Crawford at the Bridge Builders Unity Gala on August 20, 2016. His award was for his "steadfast leadership and commitment to Bridge Builders of Anchorage". His award was certainly deserved.

## JOIN THE LEFSE MAKING CREW September, October, and November

*For those new to lefse making, there are several steps between raw potatoes, flour, salt and a package of ready-to-sell lefse at the Bazaar. For those not interested in "rolling" there are other ways to help with this important Lodge event. The typical 3-day lefse-making session, Friday through Sunday, consists of the following activities:*

**Friday:** Wash, boil, peel, and rice potatoes; set up lefse making stations (griddles, cooking and rolling boards, rollers, etc.); set up cooling, sorting, and packaging areas.

**Saturday:** Mix potato and flour loaves; shape in balls, roll and cook lefse; boil, wash, boil, peel, and rice potatoes; sort and package lefse, and clean up work stations.

**Sunday:** Mix potato and flour loaves; shape into balls; roll and cook lefse; sort and package lefse; break down the lefse-making stations and return griddles, cooking and rolling boards, etc. to the storage area; and clean up work stations.

Even a couple of hours of your time helps, so please contact Lefse Chair Ted Birkedal at 351-6095 or [tedbirkedal@gmail.com](mailto:tedbirkedal@gmail.com), to let him know you would like to help, when you wish to help, and for how long. Our honorary "Lefse Queen" Anna Decker will also be happy take your calls at (694-2051).

### Lefse-Making Sessions in September, October and November

*Lefse Making for Bazaar:* Friday-Sunday/September 9-11

*Lefse Making for Bazaar:* Friday-Sunday/September 30-October 2

*Lefse Making for Lutfisk Dinner:* Friday-Sunday/November 6-8

**Lefse Making Hours:**

Friday 3-6 pm/ Saturday 9-6 pm/Sunday 9-6 pm

THANKS!





## 66TH BIENNIAL DISTRICT TWO CONVENTION

The 66th Biennial Convention of District Two took place June 1-4 in Coeur d'Alene, ID and was hosted by Harald Haarfager Lodge #2-011. I was honored to be elected as one of five delegates to represent Bernt Balchen Lodge at the convention, along with Ted Birkedal, Sandra Hanson, Marit Kristiansen, and John Olnes. Mickey Andrew also attended as the District Two Secretary.

The biennial convention provides an opportunity to take part in the governing process of Sons of Norway and our district, but it's not all strictly business. There were cultural displays, exhibits, and vendor tables to browse. Everyone looked forward to the coffee breaks with the never-ending selection of traditional Norwegian cookies. Delegates were also treated to a dinner cruise on beautiful Lake Coeur d'Alene. The hospitality room that Zone 6 (Alaska) hosts was also great fun. (Although kind of crazy!)



New District 2 board, including our own Sandra and Mickey!  
— photo credit Mike Satren

As a first-time delegate, I found the convention to be very informative and inspiring. I was able to talk with representatives from the International office, and it was great to meet delegates from all the District Two lodges, but especially the other Alaska delegates. I also sought out other lodge and district cultural directors and got lots of ideas for lodge programming, social media, and publicity. In talking with other lodge delegates, I was also struck by the many differences and similarities between lodges and came to realize what a great lodge we have here in Anchorage.

As a result of my overwhelmingly positive experience at the District Two Convention, I volunteered and was selected to be one of three Zone 6 delegates to the International Convention taking place in Tacoma, WA this August. I am looking forward to representing Alaska at the convention along with delegates Marit Kristiansen of Bernt Balchen Lodge and Silvia Greuter of Midnatsol Lodge (Ketchikan). Congratulations are also in order for Sandra Hanson, who was elected as the new Zone 6 Director and to Mickey Andrew, who is continuing on as District Two Secretary.

*I would like to thank Bernt Balchen Lodge for providing funding to attend the District Two Convention. I highly recommend participating in the convention. I got to meet some great people, and it gave me a much better understanding of the organization as a whole.* Christie Ericson, Cultural Director



Woman of the Year Award to Marit Kristiansen — photo credit Mike Satren



Installation of new District 2 board  
— photo credit Mike Satren



Lake Coeur d'Alene dinner cruise:  
Ted Birkedal, Christie Ericson,  
Sandra Hanson, John Olnes.  
— photo credit Mike Satren



Lake Coeur d'Alene dinner cruise



Fane (banner) parade



Rosemaling at the vendor fair



District 2 board

*All photos taken by Christie Ericson unless otherwise noted.*



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

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PERMIT 505

### 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 FOR SEPTEMBER!

**8**

**Thursday**

6:30 pm  
Potluck Social  
7:30 pm  
Board Membership Meeting

**9**

**Friday**

3:00 to 6:00 pm  
Lefse Making for Bazaar

**10 & 11**

**Saturday & Sunday**

9:00 am to 6:00 pm  
Lefse Making for Bazaar

**17**

**Saturday**

5:30 pm  
Faar-i-Kaal Dinner

**20**

**Tuesday**

10:00 am  
Needle Crafts &  
Rosemallings Class

**30**

**Friday**

3:00 to 6:00 pm  
Lefse Making for Bazaar

## ADVANCE NOTICE!

### *Upcoming Norwegian Food Classes at Viking Hall*

Lillian Anderson of Bernt Balchen Lodge will be teaching a series of Norwegian cooking classes. Each of the seven classes (monthly) will focus on one or more traditional food items.

Class times are 5:00 - 6:30 pm and are \$20 for members/\$30 for non-members - *each class*. Fees cover the cost of ingredients and other necessary items.

October 16: smørbrød

November 13: lapskaus

December 4: risgrøt, riskrem, and krumkaker

January 15: Kjøttkaker and kålstuing

February 5: fastelavensboller

March 26: vaffler, panekaker, and ertesuppe

April 30: syttende mai kaker and pølser and potetstappe

To sign up please contact Christie Ericson at (907) 602-0673.

Participants must RSVP at least one week before the start of each class.

*Note: Dates of one or more classes may change so as not to conflict with important, future Sons of Norway rentals of 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 September 20th to: [sonancak@gmail.com](mailto:sonancak@gmail.com) Attention - **Ruth** Subject Line - **The Flyer**