



VIKING HALL 349-1613
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februar



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SONS OF NORWAY BERNT BALCHEN LODGE – PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

The Treatment of Norwegian Immigrants in the United States

With so much recent talk of immigrants and their place in American society, I got to wondering about the reception that Norwegian immigrants received when they came to the United States in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Between 1825 and 1925 over 850,000 Norwegians entered the United States. In those hundred years around one-third of Norway’s population crossed the Atlantic. Other than Ireland no other European country lost a larger proportion of its population to out-migration.

On the whole early Norwegian immigrants appeared to have largely escaped overt discrimination. One reason they managed to avoid ridicule was their tendency to settle down in rural communities largely occupied or surrounded by other Norwegians or related recent immigrant groups like Swedes, Finns, or Germans. Also, many Norwegians served gallantly in the Civil War on the side of the victorious North and therefore their patriotism could not be easily challenged. One new Norwegian immigrant of the period, Eling Haaland, wrote his relatives back in Norway saying “of all Nations Norwegians are those who are most favored by Americans.”



Things began to change starting in the 1880s when the United States started experiencing a rising xenophobia as immigration by all groups, including Norwegians, was on a steep upswing. Suspicion of foreigners continued to increase into the 1890s and then grew to a feverish intensity in the first two decades of the twentieth century. American xenophobic nativism reached its peak just after World War I and then began to slowly ebb during the rest of the century.

In the 1880s many states began passing laws that banned the use of foreign languages in the schools or even in places of worship. Norwegians and Germans joined their voices in protesting the Wisconsin Bennett Law of 1889 which required that courses in the schools could only be taught in English. Many Norwegian communities of the time had schools where Norwegian was the main language of instruction. In the late nineteenth century Norwegian immigrants also found out they could not get some of the basic services that were offered to native-born Americans like life insurance. This is one reason behind the founding of Sons of Norway in 1895. As a fraternal organization Sons of Norway offered insurance and financial assistance in times of need to Norwegian immigrants who could not obtain protection from American commercial insurance companies.

Politicians and “yellow journalism” newspapers particularly attacked Norwegian-language newspapers and magazines as veiled engines of anti-Americanism. Once the United States entered into World War I the attacks on Norwegian-language publications doubled down and many were outright censored. Some, like Gaa Paa, a left-leaning journal, were shut down permanently by the authorities. At the height of this anti-foreign mania Governor Warren L. Harding of Iowa put a proclamation that forbid the use of foreign languages in the schools, in public places, on the telephone, and in churches. To its credit Sons of Norway rose in official protest of the governor’s order, but it was ignored.

During this period many Norwegians changed their names to appear more American and so they would not arouse attention (for example, “Thorstensen” to “Thompson”). A number of the Norwegian-language publications, if not shut down by the government, lost their readers and went out of business. Some Norwegians even went to the “dark side” and joined the Klu Klux Klan as it enjoyed an unparalleled ascendancy in the northern prairie states in this time period. As the great Norwegian-American historian, Odd S. Lovell, has written in his book, *The Promise of America*, the “prevailing fear in the American people of anything foreign allowed little room for argument.”

President’s Message continues on Page 2



The Immigrants

President's Message continues from Page 1

This xenophobic phase of American history admittedly swept away much of the original vibrancy of Norwegian-American culture and heritage in the United States. Nevertheless, Norwegians went on the offensive after the end of World War I in an effort to regain their standing and place in American life. They openly promoted the story of Leif Erikson as the "first American" to point out that Norwegians in North America pre-dated the Mayflower by some 600 years. Rebuilding the status Norwegians in the United States soon converged around planning for the Norse-American Centennial in 1925 which was to celebrate the arrival of the first Norwegian immigrants to America on the ship Restauration in 1825. President Calvin Coolidge was persuaded to give the keynote address and a hundred thousand people gathered at the State of Minnesota Fairgrounds to hear him and others openly celebrate Norwegian culture, history, and heritage. This signal event, which was highly publicized across the nation, allowed Norwegian-Americans to again take open pride in their heritage. However, the overall trend after 1925 was toward cultural assimilation and integration; the distinct language-bound Norwegian-American communities and neighborhoods that were so common at the beginning of the twentieth century gradually disappeared one by one over the remainder of the century. Also, the flow of new Norwegian immigrants to the United States dropped radically after 1925 as living conditions and opportunities in Norway began to improve and restrictions were set on the number of immigrants that could enter the United States.

*Fraternally yours,
Terje "Ted" Birkedal*



Viking Board

After many years of service, Sandra Hanson has retired from the Viking Hall Board. When you see Sandra at one of the upcoming events, please take a moment to thank her for her dedication to Viking Hall. Additionally, the board welcomes our new member, Jacob Mathiesen.

The new year brings numerous administrative tasks required to keep Viking Hall functioning for another year. These include preparing the yearly lease for our tenants, Dry Dock, renewal of liability insurance, submission of the liquor license and submission of payroll tax forms.

A review of financial records reveals that Viking hall's cash on hand increased significantly in 2015. This is primarily due to an increase in income derived from hall rentals in the past year. Increasing cash reserves are comforting as a look back shows that repairs, replacements and upgrades are never far off.

*Jim Bysheim
President, Viking Hall Board*

CARVING SEMINAR!



It's time for the chips to start flying again at the Viking Hall. The Last Frontier Woodcarvers will be offering another day of woodcarving on Saturday, March 12, from 9 am - 4 pm for all those who would like to try their hand at this skill. There will be 10 classes offered from which you pick the one that interests you.

Cost is \$25.00 per person which includes the wood, tools to use for the day, carving instructions, choice of project and a great lunch. A parent must attend with any child participating. There is an age limit.

The class projects will be available to see at "Artistry in Wood" in the Northway Mall from February 24 - March 6th during mall hours. Register and pay for your class at that time to guarantee your spot in the class.

Woodcarvers, woodturners, woodworkers and woodscrollers will be demonstrating throughout the Artistry in Wood event for anyone to watch and learn. Just stopping by the Northway Mall to see the fantastic exhibit will be well worth your time. The "Woodshop" continues to be open for anyone looking for an Alaskan made wood project by members of the 4 wood working clubs in Anchorage.

For more information and to sign up for a fun day of carving contact Cindy McDowell at 862-1143. This is a SONS event.

SUNSHINE REPORT FOR FEBRUARY

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

Anton Meyer

**"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!"**

Cultural & Heritage Night

2nd Annual Nordic Language Fair



Saturday, February 20th

7:00 - 9:00 pm

We had so much fun last year hosting the Nordic Language Fair, that we decided to do it again!

Native speakers will be giving brief presentations on languages spoken in the Nordic countries, including Norwegian, Swedish, Icelandic, Danish, and Finnish. There will also be language-related activities for all ages, information about language learning resources, a display of resources from the Lodge library, and traditional Nordic desserts to sample. Information on scholarships/study abroad programs will also be available.

This event will be free and open to the public, so please invite your friends and family and join us for a fun evening!

Please contact Cultural Director Christie Ericson if you have a favorite Nordic dessert that you would be willing to contribute to this event: 602-0673; christieak@gmail.com



Sons of Norway

SUPER BOWL PARTY

@ Viking Hall

Watch the Game on Big Screen TV
Sunday, February 7th

Doors Open @ 2 pm

Raffle Drawing Held During Game
Only 300 Tickets Sold - 20 Winners!

Top Prize of \$1,000!!

**Come and Enjoy Lapskaus Stew, Snacks,
Liquid Refreshment & Good Company**

Free Lapskaus for Raffle Ticket Holders



Thank You, Lucia Volunteers



Lucia committee co-chairs: Karin Childers and Crystal Enkvist

Lucia committee members: Carol Kalander, Karen Nordgaard, Anita Persson, Marty Margeson, and Anne Adasiak-Andrew

Sandwich crew:

Chris Lovett - chair
Laurie Zimmer
Marianne Storms
Cindy McDowell
Bev Griffin
Season Terrell
Karen Nordgaard

Set up team:

Lucia family
Nancy, Brett, Ian &
Emma Clark
Anita Persson

Rice Porridge makers:

Pia Meyer
Karen Ruud
Gayle Mathiesen
Mickey Andrew
Jan Adasiak
Karen Wanemaker
Karen Nordgaard

Master porridge mixer:

Bjarne Hansen

Rice Porridge servers:

Deanna James
Marty Margeson
Karen Nordgaard
Kjell Nordgaard
Eyrne Nord
Johanna Marvin

Cookie tray arrangers:

Karin Childers
Jan Adasiak
Karen Brown
Erika Childers

Kitchen serving crew:

Terry Gryting
Kelsey Lien
Logan Childers
Chris Robertson
Annie Margeson
Susannah Olnes

Lucia story & traditions in Norway:

Sofia Bryntheson &
Benedikte Ludvigsen

Table set-up team:

Martin Childers, Lloyd Persson,
Ryan Andrew,
Patrick McCormick

Photographer: Urban Enkvist

Mother Elf: Hannah Persson

Musicians:

Debbie Pankow, piano
Linda Yarborough, harp
Marit Kristiansen, accordion

Gløgg makers:

Lloyd Persson &
Urban Enkvist

Cashiers:

Cynthia Olness &
Merlin Hamre

Clean up crew:

Andrew family,
Crystal & Urban Enkvist,
John & Cynthia Olnes,
Kjell Nordgaard, &
Sheila Hansen

*Thank you to all the Lucia participants and
families for making this a very special event.*

God Jul go Godt Nytt År!

Tim, Anne, Juliana, and Eric Andrew

ERLING T. JOHANSEN



Erling T. Johansen, Esq. (1956 - 2015)

Erling Trygve Johansen, Esq., 59, of Anchorage, Alaska released his final breath, with his wife Eileen by his side, on December 24, 2015 at Overhalla Sykeheim, Overhalla Norway.

Erling was a long standing member of Sons of Norway Fraternal Benefit Society, Lodge 2-046 Anchorage, AK, where he met his wife, Eileen, a new lodge member, at a "Snakk Norsk" (speak Norwegian) evening at the home of fellow members Tobben and Tania Spurkland. Many lodge members may remember their courtship and their wedding on June 1, 2001. Notably, elected Lodge President for the years 2002 & 2003, he also served as Vice President, Treasurer and Counselor. As Treasurer Erling established the Bernt Balchen local lodge's website sofnalaska.com and donated a computer and accounting program Quick Books to the Viking Hall office. As Anchorage Lodge Vice President he increased membership due to sheer enthusiasm. As Lodge President he created new and unique programs, activities and projects, including an Iditarod Start and Restart fan event, cheering for Norwegian mushers, including two-time Iditarod Champion Robert Sørlie. The lodge was awarded District 2 Lodge of the Year for 2002 during his presidency. It was the first such award for the lodge in its 60 year existence. The award constituted recognition of the lodge as the best throughout Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Wyoming.

In May of 2007 Erling was selected as Royal Norwegian Honorary Consul for the State of Alaska. He met with and assisted many Norwegian nationals, distinguished business executives, diplomats and Ambassadors over the years. He invited Sons of Norway members to many Meet and Greet events with these distinguished visitors. The highlight of his consular career was receiving His Majesty King Harald V of the Kingdom of Norway in May

2015 on an official visit to the USA, which included the State of Alaska in connection with Arctic Issues. In May 2015 Erling was deeply honored to be the recipient of the Royal Norwegian Order of Merit, Knight First Class. Founded by King Olav V in 1985, this distinction is conferred on foreign and Norwegian nationals as a reward for their outstanding service in the interest of Norway. From May 2011 until October 2015 Erling also served as the Honorary Consul representing the Consulate of Sweden for Alaska. After Erling's father passed away in 2008, he was smitten by genealogy. Building upon the work that his father had started, he subsequently learned he was a distant, but direct, cousin to His Royal Highness King Harald V, 19 removed.

Born on May 9, 1956 in Rochester, New York, U.S.A., to parents Inger Marie Johansen and father Dr. Erling Johansen, a professor and researcher of dental medicine at Rochester University, Rochester, New York, Erling decided already at 8 years old he would one day live in Alaska after learning of the 1964 Alaska Earthquake. Erling graduated from Pittsford High School in 1974, and went on to attend St. John Fisher College at Rochester, New York. When his father moved the family to Needham, Massachusetts, just outside of Boston, in 1976 (to become the longest sitting Dean of Tufts Dental School,) Erling made his move to Alaska where he transferred to the University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

Erling was no stranger to hard work, already as a teenager applying asphalt pavement to driveways, working on a pig farm and building insulated windows. From 1976 through 1986, between finishing his undergraduate degree, Erling moved to Cordova, Alaska where he managed Bayside Cold Storage and the Copper River Fishermens' Cooperative. He and his coworkers worked unbelievably long hours getting the work done, which he found gratifying and requiring enormous teamwork. In 1988, Erling used his knowledge of business and lessons from the fish plant and struck out on his own as a salmon broker, establishing the closely held Independent Cordova Alaska Fish Co., Inc., selling and exporting Copper River Salmon and Pink Salmon to both domestic and international markets. He sold Alaska pink salmon by the cargo shipping van, shipping frozen silver salmon and halibut by air, with offices in both Cordova and Anchorage

Erling became interested in politics and ran for Mayor of Cordova when he realized he could influence and have the final vote on issues facing the city. He was elected Mayor of Cordova, serving two terms. During his terms, he championed for the rebuilding of the Copper River Highway from Cordova to Anchorage, and dealt with the aftermath of the notable 1989 Exxon Valdez Oil Spill. He enjoyed reminiscing of the visit to Cordova by Vice President Dan Quayle and Erling being the highest elected official onboard Air Force Two as the Vice President left Cordova by other means. During his term as Mayor he established a permanent fund for the city and left office with \$1M balance in the fund. From 1987 through 1988 he served as President of the Alaska Conference of Mayors.

Following the expiration of his term as mayor, Erling returned to Boston to study for his J.D. His father advised him then that in three years he could be 37 years old or he could be 37 years old and an attorney! He earned his Juris Doctorate of Law at New England School of Law in 1993, also being awarded the T. Cronin Award for Public Service. He returned to Anchorage to take the Alaska Bar. His mother Inger was his most devoted study partner both through law school and preparing for the bar exam.



A MAN TO REMEMBER

Erling practiced civil law at Davison and Davison Law Firm from 1994 through 2006, when he moved to Barrow, Alaska continuing as Assistant Borough Attorney, for the North Slope Borough. In 2009, at the birth of his youngest daughter, Elisebeth, he supported his wife's desire to return to Anchorage where he then continued until the fall of 2014 as Assistant Attorney General for the State of Alaska.

His court admissions included: Supreme Court of the United States; U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit; U.S. District Court for the District of Alaska; U.S. District Court for the District of Hawaii; U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia; Supreme Court of the State of Alaska; Supreme Court of the State of Hawaii; District of Columbia Court of Appeals. He was a member in good standing with the American Bar Association, the Alaska Bar Association, and the Hawaii Bar Association & District of Columbia Bar Association.

He was also an active member and former Board Member of the Resource Development Council for Alaska, Inc. from 1998-2002.

Erling had the unique quality of being comfortable whether he was in the company of Royalty and Statesmen or the average "Joe." He was the epitome of the "Sharp Dressed Man" when the occasion called for it, yet he usually sported jeans and a denim shirt. He made everyone feel they were the "Guest of Honor" in his presence. He encouraged people to see the best in themselves and their unique abilities; he was enthusiastically supportive, a truly loyal friend. He was a visionary, with the ability to inspire dedicated support and cooperation for the many endeavors, events, projects and activities he promoted.

Spontaneous and fun, Erling frequently took the opportunity to win a toy from the "Claw game" re-gifting them to Toy for Tots or a Christmas party gift exchange; in recent years as prizes for his children. He enjoyed participating in raffles and buying the occasional lottery ticket. He enjoyed gardening; zucchini and tomatoes being his favorite crop, but in recent years he added potatoes and pumpkins, inspiring his wife and children. He entered his homegrown crab apples at the Alaska State Fair winning Honorable Mention and took 1st Place for his entry of North Star pie cherries in 2007.

One of his most cherished sport activities was fly-fishing on the Kenai, Russian and Ninilchik Rivers. He Trophy mounted his largest catch, a 70 pound King Salmon, displayed prominently at his office. He loved the challenge of "combat" fishing, and no river was ever too crowded for him to get into the action. Dip-netting at the mouth of the Kenai River and participating in the Homer Winter King Salmon Tournament were also favorites.

Erling inherited his father's belief in the importance of education and he enjoyed diversified achievements as he continued with various University, college, continuing education and other courses throughout his career. He earned his Alaska Real Estate Salesperson License, though never actively marketed properties. During his residency in Barrow, Alaska, he earned his Alaska Class A Commercial Driver's License including air brakes and double/triple trailers, tankers and hazardous materials transport endorsements, at Illisagvik College. He dreamed of retiring, and then maybe driving big trucks around the lower 48 as a new adventure! He loved road trips, especially with his family; Chena Hot Springs being one of many favorite destinations.

Growing up, learning Norwegian at home, and many trips with his family back and forth to Norway throughout his childhood and teenage years, he spent summers in Overhalla and Nordli, in Nord-Trøndelag, solidifying his Norwegian language skills and his connection to Norway. He was deliriously happy when he met his wife, Eileen, who he openly gushed was his "Dream Girl" and whom he claimed "tickled his brain and the marrow of his bones." Her Norwegian roots, fish and cannery experience, and studies at the University of Alaska confirmed for him that she would and became "the Love of his life." Erling was a devoted husband, a compassionate and supportive step-dad and step-grandpa declaring frequently that they each were "A fine young man." His joy was complete when he became father to twins Elias and ElliAnne and then to Elisebeth. He cherished his family with his whole heart. His affection and support was tangible as he enthusiastically encouraged fine arts, sports and any other interest they were engaged in. He blessed them with his loving, patient, and generous devotion. Erling was very pleased that his family members have dual citizenship, Norway and USA, due to the unique circumstances of their births.

Erling fought a dignified, brave and valiant battle with the illness Bulbar Onset ALS. Having been diagnosed in June 2014, the illness progressed rapidly and relentlessly. Even as the disease took away his ability to speak and to walk, Erling continued to encourage his family and caregivers with a big thumbs up. January 2016 would have marked the 40th anniversary of Erling's residency in Alaska. Erling liked celebrating mile-markers, once even celebrating his 1992 Buick Century odometer reading 100,000 miles.

Erling was a fine and exceptionally honorable man. His enthusiasm for life and devotion to his family and friends will be deeply and sorely missed. Funeral services were held at Ranem Kirke, Overhalla, Norway on January 8, 2016. A Memorial Luncheon followed at the Overhalla Hotell. Erling is preceded in death by both of his Norwegian born parents Dr. Erling Johansen, D.D.S. and Inger Marie Johansen. He is survived by his wife, Eileen Haagensen Johansen, 8 year old twins Elias Erling Johansen and ElliAnne Marie Johansen, 6 year old daughter Elisebeth Eileen Johansen, step-son Logan P. Prokopowich, step-grandson Taylor S. Prokopowich, of Anchorage, Alaska, and brothers Erik Bjarne Johansen of Sydney, Australia and Steven Douglas Johansen of Nordli, Norway.

Erling was a Christian believer in Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and was filled with The Holy Spirit. His family is comforted that he is safely Home, and are looking forward to the day they will be reunited in Heaven.



Eileen Johansen

Readers Write



SOMETHING NEW – THE CONSUL'S CORNER

What a great idea from our new Norwegian Honorary Consul in Alaska, Lise Falskow.

It is so nice to be able to keep up with what is going on between Alaska and Norway, even if it doesn't involve the lodge directly.

Thanks Lise, Eva Bilet

HOW OUR LODGE GOT ITS CURRENT NAME

When our lodge was organized in August 1944, it was named Anchorage Lodge # 2-046.

It wasn't until 1970 - 1972 that the name was changed.

One of our members, Anton Meyer, who was and still is, an avid reader, writer and history buff, told our lodge about Bernt Balchen and his connection to the Arctic, Alaska and Scandinavian Airline – SAS. Anton felt it would be an honor if our lodge could be named after such a great norwegian. It was put to a vote before the lodge's membership and everyone voted in favor of the possible name change. We still needed Bernt Balchen's permission to use his name.

In the early 70's we were lucky to have SAS fly direct to Anchorage – Copenhagen, Denmark over the North pole – 8 1/2 hours! It so happened that SAS was having a celebration party where Colonel Balchen was to be one of the honored guests. Norman Bakke and I were invited (at that time we were past and present President of the lodge) so we were able to meet and talk with Colonel Balchen in person! He very gracefully gave us permission to rename our lodge after him. **WE DID**, and the rest is history!

Thank you Anton.

By the way, besides Bernt Balchen Lodge #2-046, Anchorage, Alaska, there are two other lodges named after Colonel Balchen; one in Rowlands, PA, #3-566 and one in Kristiansand, Norway, #8-003.

Eva Bilet

Do you have something to say?

**Contact the editor at
sonancak@gmail.com**

Please use THE FLYER in the subject line.

Meet the World



Bridge Builders of Anchorage will host its annual festival, Meet the World, at the Anchorage Museum at Rasmuson Center on Saturday, February 27th from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Meet the World is a celebration of Anchorage's cultural melting pot which includes music and dance performances along with "destination booths" representing the various cultures that reside in Anchorage throughout the Museum.

Bernt Balchen Lodge has traditionally had a booth that included Norwegian Cultural displays, information about Norway and the Sons of Norway. Lodge members are present at the booth, possibly wearing traditional dress, to answer questions, provide information about Norway, inform the public about upcoming lodge events and recruit new members to the lodge. The Norwegian Embassy has been helpful about providing handbooks and materials to display about Norway.

Volunteers are needed to design this years booth, setting up the booth the evening of February 26th, staffing the booth in shifts and disassembling the booth. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Merlin (mhamre@acsalaska.net or 575-6420).

Admission to the *Meet the World* and the museum is free on Saturday.

Sons of Norway Bernt Balchen Lodge 2016 Officers



From Left to Right:

Ashley Brusven, *Recording Secretary*
Merlin Hamre, *Treasurer*
Ruth Kvernplassen, *Newsletter/Web Editor*
Tom Falskow, *Membership Secretary*
Anna Decker, *Counselor*
Ted Birkedal, *President*
Linda Bustamante, *Vice President*
Marit Kristiansen, *Foundation Director*
Christie Ericson, *Cultural Director*
John Olnes, *Trustee*

Jacob Mathiesen, *Trustee*
Amanda Saxton, *Trustee*
Cindy McDowell, *Assistant Marshal*

Not Pictured:

Beverly Griffin, *Secretary*
Martin Hansen, *Sports Director*
Sandra Hanson, *Marshal*
David Hewko, *Auditor*
Charlotte MacCay, *Co-Publicity Director*
Jane Moe Newby, *Co-Publicity Director*
Patrick McCormick, *Auditor*

The Rewards of Membership

As we start the new year it is always good to reflect on what we accomplished in the year just passed. Organizations like Sons of Norway can only maintain their vibrancy with the addition of new members who bring new energy, new ideas and help the organization move forward in a powerful way to maintain our connection with our heritage. Sons of Norway is truly a unique organization that has withstood the test of time and provides a strong connection to our culture through events that bring people together to celebrate all that is good, especially when it involves some good food as well!

Sons of Norway has goals to continue to grow membership and this starts at the local lodge. I am happy to report that for the year just ended we have for the third time in the past ten years grown our membership. Our lodge now stands at 314 adult members which does not include the 108 Heritage members (children and grandchildren of members up through age 15). So we are reaching an audience of well over 400 people just through our active membership record. Thanks to all of you that have helped keep our lodge strong by recruiting new members! The challenge lies in the fact that we also lose members each year – in 2015 we lost 40 members (which includes folks that moved out of town and also those that sadly passed away). So in order to grow at all, we had to first replace the 40 that we lost – and while seemingly small, we added 41 members for a net gain of 1 new member. Do not be discouraged by this small gain - losing 40 members is a large gap to fill just to start, and we did it plus one!

Let me give a brief profile of our current membership. We are what I would call a healthy lodge. Over 50% of our members have joined Bernt Balchen within the past 10 years, and



half of those within the past 5 years. This tells me that we are still able to actively recruit new folks and offer something that draws people to be a part of our organization. People join for many different reasons, but overall, one of the main draws is associating with fellow Scandinavians and having some fun together at our events, and just as importantly in preparing for our events. Viking Hall, our beautiful home, was built by our members and provides us the space and venue to stage outstanding events, including this past year's visit by the King of Norway! We are one of the only heritage organizations to have our own building and this anchors our ability to create a living and growing organization to celebrate Norway and all that it offers our community. Another sign of our health is the age of our membership. Over 50% of our members are under the age of 60 – we have one of the strongest showings of Heritage members in our organization. We also continue to grow the Unge Venner (age 16-23) members, which is the foundation for a great future. We are open to new ideas and welcome all ages to our events and attempt to provide a range of events and activities that can attract a wide audience. We are always looking for new ideas, so if you have an idea you want to bring forward, please attend a membership meeting or talk with one of the lodge officers.

So where do we go from here? As we head into 2016, we have a huge opportunity to continue to grow our lodge. According to the latest US Census data, Alaska has over 30,000 citizens that identify themselves as being of Norwegian decent. Of these, over 8,000 live in the Anchorage area. With just 314 adult members that means we have only captured 4% of the market, so let's make 2016 a year where we double that to 8% of the market! Also, our potential audience is actually much larger. If we also include the Swedes, Danes, Finns and Icelanders in our potential audience, that adds another 6,000 people in the Anchorage area that we can attempt to lure our way. As a Dane myself, I know all too well that Sons of Norway is where the Scandinavians come to meet! After all, we all eat from the same jar of pickled herring and our lodge bar stocks aquavits not just from Norway!

So let's all make 2016 another year of growth for our lodge. Past surveys have told us that one of the main reasons people do not join is simply, "I was never asked..." Perhaps the easiest goal to set for yourself is to simply ask a friend, co-worker, or family member to join. You never know what the answer might be. Membership makes a great gift to give as well for a birthday, anniversary or other notable event. And given all that we have to offer, including our spectacular Viking Hall home, the price of membership (\$57 for an adult) is fantastically reasonable and includes the monthly Viking magazine as well as discounts to our events and to other online products through our members perks program.

As a final plug, I am looking for new members to join the membership committee for 2016, so if you are interested in helping out, drop be a line or give me a call.

Tom Falskow
 Membership Secretary
lise@gci.net or 222-5320



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

Non-Profit Organization
US Postage
PAID
Anchorage, Alaska
PERMIT 505

EVENTS

FEBRUARY

- | | | |
|----|----------|---|
| 2 | Tuesday | 10:00 am - Noon
Needle Crafts and Rosemaling Class |
| 7 | Sunday | 2:00 pm
Super Bowl Party |
| 11 | Thursday | 7:00 pm
Board/Membership Meeting |
| 16 | Tuesday | 10:00 am - Noon
Needle Crafts and Rosemaling Class |
| 20 | Saturday | 7:00 - 9:00 pm
Cultural and Heritage Language Fair |
| 27 | Saturday | 11 am - 4 pm
Bridge Builders, Meet the World |

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 February 20th to: sonancak@gmail.com Attention - **Ruth** Subject Line - **The Flyer**