

VIKING HALL 349-1613
www.sofnalaska.com

Summer 2017 sommer



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SONS OF NORWAY BERNT BALCHEN LODGE – PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The Blessings of Brunost – Norway's National Cheese

My foot doctor is a proud Norwegian-American from North Dakota whose ancestral roots go back to northwestern Telemark. But about a month ago I learned she had never heard of geitost (goat cheese [pronounced “yayt ust”]) or any other kind of Norwegian brunost (brown cheese). Of course, I felt immediately compelled to get her a package of Ekte Geitost (true goat cheese) for one cannot be a real Norwegian and never have eaten brunost, Norway's national cheese. She and her sister both ended up loving it and wondering why they had not had it growing up in a community full of Norwegian Americans.

As a booster of all things Norwegian and as a lover of geitost (sometimes spelled gjetost) myself I thought it my duty to make sure that none of our members lived out their lives unaware of brunost and its tasty benefits. So, this President's Message is intended as an ode to both geitost and the other varieties of brunost.

Brunost goes back at least to the Bronze Age in Scandinavia. Some burned brunost residue was found in Denmark in a clay pot that dated to over 2500 years ago. So Scandinavians, and especially Norwegians, have been eating it for centuries. Brunost is another name for mysost (whey cheese). In fact it is not strictly a true cheese for it is made from the waste liquid that is left behind after cheese making; this is called whey. To make brunost you cook the whey with milk and/ or cream for about 10 hours until much of the liquid has evaporated and it takes on the consistency of gooey fudge and has turned from white to brown in color. Then you place it in block molds and cool it until it hardens further. The result is a semi-soft, sweet cheese-like product. It is the caramelized sugars in the cooked-down milk that give this type of “cheese” its characteristic sweetness.

My favorite type of brunost is ekte geitost which is made with goat milk. It is sweet and caramelly in taste, but with a noticeably extra sharp tang to the taste that derives from the goat milk. Another related variety of brunost is made with both goat and cow milk plus cream and it is known as Gubbrandsdalsost. (Gudbrand's Valley cheese) It was invented in the nineteenth century in the Gudbrands Valley by a lady named Ann Hov. Prior to inventing Gudbrandsdalsost she had added cream while cooking cows' milk whey. This first of her inventions is known as fløtemysost (cream whey cheese). Since it is partially made from goat milk, Gudbrandsdalsost still has a slight tangy taste from the goat milk, but it is sweeter and milder overall than ekte geitost. Fløtemysost contains no goat milk so it is the mildest in taste and is the sweetest of the three main varieties of brunost.

In order to properly eat brunost you must use a Norwegian-style cheese slicer known as an “osthøvel”, specifically invented in the early twentieth century to efficiently and easily slice brunost. The osthøvel gives you thin, but tasty slices of brunost that will deliver just the right amount of flavor to your mouth. You may put your brunost on a crisp cracker or slice of bread, or better yet on a Norwegian heart-shaped waffle.

President's Message continues on Page 2

CALLING ALL NORWEGIANS! JOIN THE PARADE!

Bring the Family and March in the
Downtown 4th of July Parade as we show
our Norwegian-American pride.

All Day Family Fun at
the Delaney Park Strip!!



Meet at 10:00 am at 8th St. and G St. on the
corner behind the Conoco-Phillips Building

*We will be walking with
Bridge Builders of Anchorage*

For More Information Contact
Viking Hall: 349-1613 or sonanacak@gmail.com

Watch for E-Blast updates and stay tuned to
our Website and Facebook pages!

Brunost

President's Message continues from Page 1

Don't skip butter; brunost marries beautifully with butter. And if you like, add some strawberry or raspberry jam, also a great taste partner with brunost. In addition, brunost enriches the flavor of Norwegian-style "brun saus" (brown sauce) which pairs wonderfully with meat balls or "kjøttkaker" (Norwegian meat cakes) and is really good with Norwegian "fiskekaker" (fish cakes).

Brunost delivers high amounts of protein, calcium, iodine, and vitamin B to your body. It does sport significant amounts of natural sugars but no salt. Admittedly, brunost contains a fair amount of fat yet much less than "real" cheeses. Overall, it is a nutritious food. Keep in mind that a proper osthøvel will give you wafer-thin slices that offer plenty of taste; brunost is not something you pile high on a cracker or piece of bread. It is best used sparingly.



It is estimated that Norwegians eat 12,000 tons of brunost per year; that roughly translates to almost 5 pounds of brunost for every man, woman, and child in Norway. The most popular type of brunost is Gudbrandsdalsost, with fløtemysost being the second favorite. Geitost, perhaps because it has the strongest flavor, is third in popularity. In 2017, a truck loaded with 27 tons of brunost caught fire in a long tunnel in Northern Norway. The fire, fueled by the sugars and fats in the cheese, raged out of control for four days and severely damaged the tunnel's superstructure, so much so that the tunnel was closed for months while it was under repair.

The most common brand of brunost available in the United States is Ski Queen Gjetost which is sold in a red package in most supermarkets; it contains both goat and cow milk. However, in Anchorage, you can now buy the blue-packaged Tine's Ekte Geitost, which is made entirely from

goat's milk, at the Natural Pantry on the corner of 36th and A Streets. If you need a good cheese slicer go to Habitat Housewares; they carry some good German ones that approach the Norwegian ones in quality.

So now you have no excuse for at least not knowing about brunost and its blessings. If you have never eaten go try it; you may simply like it or you may fall in love with it. It tastes like nothing else in the world. How important is it to Norwegians? Well, Marianne Krogness, a famous Norwegian comedian and singer even wrote a song about it called "Jeg vil ikke dele dusj og geitost med deg" ("I will not share my shower or geitost with you"). In Norway, you know you have been dumped when your girlfriend or wife won't share her beloved geitost with you!

*Fraternally yours,
Terje "Ted" Birkedal*

Congratulations to Mickey Andrew!

Sons of Norway Nominee for the Bridge Builders of Anchorage 2017 Excellence in Community Service Award

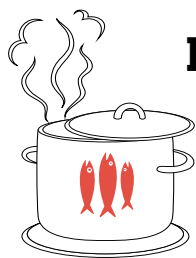
At the May Board/Membership Meeting, Martha ("Mickey" Andrew was unanimously chosen as this year's Sons of Norway nominee for the Bridge Builders of Anchorage, Excellence in Community Service Award. Since joining the lodge in 1984 she has served Sons of Norway in many ways. Besides holding many offices over the years she has served as our President and been a champion for both children's and senior programs for Sons of Norway. She has also served as District 2's Zone Director for Alaska as well as enthusiastically embracing the job of Secretary to District 2 for five terms. In addition, Mickey Andrew has been a tireless advocate for the celebration of Norwegian culture and heritage both in the lodge and with the many members of her big family.



Mickey will receive her award on Saturday, August 19th at the Bridge Builders Unity Gala at the Hilton Hotel.

If you wish to show your support for Mickey Andrew's many contributions to the Norwegian Community in Alaska, you can purchase tickets for the Gala from Merlin Hamre (Phone: 907-575-6420; email: mhamre@acsalaska.net).

Tickets are \$75.00 each and include dinner and entertainment. The event begins at 6:00 pm.



FISH BOIL

TUESDAY, AUGUST 15, 2017

FISH BOIL - 4:00 PM

DINNER - 6:00 PM

We plan to have another rousing fish boil this year!

Last year the flames from the kerosene at the finale of the boil rose at least 30 feet in the air to the amazement of all present. Come join us for this Wisconsin tradition orchestrated by Wayne Johnson, master cook and flame master.

The cost will be \$20.00 for adults, \$10.00 for 12 to 18 years, \$5.00 for 6 to 11 years, and Free for 5 years and younger.

Volunteers are needed for the event for helping Wayne manage the giant cook pot, prepare food, and clean up.

Please call 349-1613 to volunteer and/or make reservations.



Mother's Day Brunch

We had another successful Mother's Day Brunch. As is usual we had a number of past presidents helping put on the brunch under Co-Chairs Anna Decker and John Olnes. About 80 members enjoyed the brunch which consists of mimosas with a meal of pancakes, ham, scrambled eggs, mixed fruit cups. Next year we plan to end the brunch earlier at 1:00 pm rather than 2:00 pm. Very few folks tend to show up after 1:00 pm.

Thanks to all the Volunteers

Past presidents were well represented in the group helping with the Mother's Day Brunch. A huge thank you goes out to our young members Ian and Emma Clark, Juliana and Eric Andrew (grandchildren of Mickey Andrew), and Luna Olnes (granddaughter of John Olnes) who helped with greeting and serving. The assistance of these young folks is key to the success of this event. If you think your child may be interested in helping next year please let us know!

There was a good turnout for the event and those attending enjoyed time with family, the cheery atmosphere, and a traditional breakfast that continues to include the pancake and syrup recipes of Walter and Nuna Kjera. Tusen takk to all of you who were part of putting on this event and to everyone who attended.

John Olnes and Anna Decker, co-chairs

*"Gratulerer
med dagen!"*



SUNSHINE REPORT



*"Happy
Birthday!"*

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



JUNE BIRTHDAYS

Martha Andrew
John Jensen
Wayne Johnson
Sandra Johnson
Anne Marie Marson
H. Lee Pederson
Sigrun Robertson
Colleen Rudledge
Nancy Gay Wagster

JULY BIRTHDAYS

Marilyn Freitag
Shirley Iverson
Paul Roseland
Alice Sears
Marvin Olson
Caroline Saur
Shirley Marie Luedke

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

Richard Anderson
Margaret Benson
Steinar Hansen
Sigurd Langnes
Donald Saur
Diane Thomas
Pia Meyer
Nicholas Derenoff

Special Greetings to E. Frances Vadia, who turns 93 on August 19th.

If you know someone who needs a little sunshine -

Please call **696-0725 (cell - 862-1143)** or email Cindy McDowell: ccmcd38@hotmail.com

SYTTENDE MAI PARADE

Once again, Cynthia and John Olnes took care of the logistics behind the Syttende Mai Parade on May 17th. They also served up the hot dogs and ice cream. However, we had so many people attending the parade this year that they ran out of both the hot dogs and the ice cream well before everyone could be served! This is a first, but a welcome one for it marks the parade in 2017 as one of our most successful in terms of attendants (80+ adults and children)

Before the parade Lise Falskow, Honorary Norwegian Consul for Alaska, gave opening remarks about Syttende Mai and wowed the audience with fun facts about the celebration and its origins.



SYTTENDE MAI CELEBRATIONS

We had a successful Syttende Mai Celebration at Viking Hall on May 21st. We had about 80 attendees at the potluck with lots of food and the lodge supplied the traditional Norwegian food of hot dogs (plus reindeer sausages); this time with real Norwegian mustard and ketchup supplied by Lillian Anderson.

Thanks to Hedwig Faber, Anne Adasiak-Andrew, and Debbie Pankow we had wonderful musical entertainment spaced throughout the evening which started with the singing with the anthems of both the United States and Norway. Our speaker was Lise Falskow, Honorary Norwegian Consul for Alaska, who spoke about the operation of the Royal Norwegian Foreign Service in the United States and her own role in support of Norway and its relations with the United States.

Amanda Saxton, Scholarship Committee Chair, gave out the scholarship checks to the recipients (see below). Our Membership Secretary, Tom Falskow, spoke about growth in membership over 2016-2017 and handed out membership pins based on years of membership.

Tom also organized a popular aquavit blind-tasting for the membership. He camouflaged three different bottles of aquavit with colored-coded paper and with the help of our licensed bartender served each participant three small glasses of each type of aquavit; Swedish, Norwegian, and Danish. Each participant then ranked the different aquavits on their taste by casting color-coded ballots based on the colors of the camouflaged bottles. The top winner was Norway's Linie Aquavit. The Danish aquavit came in second and the Swedish aquavit last.

Lodge photos courtesy of Glenn Soby, parade photos, Ruth Kvernplassen



Bernt Balchen Members in Petersburg!



To the Left:
Ingrid and Ted Kelly and Lisa Nelson in Petersburg.

At Right:
Tina and her Viking Ship!

Photos provided by Tina Watts.



Sons of Norway Bernt Balchen Lodge - 2017 Annual Scholarships

First I wish to thank the *Bernt Balchen Scholarship Committee* for its dedicated work in reviewing the scholarship applications in 2017. The committee consisted of Amanda Saxton (Chair), Kristin Raeesi, and Tami Wagster. As of this date Sons of Norway Bernt Balchen Lodge has given out \$52,000 in scholarships over the years.

Each of the following received a Higher Education Scholarship of \$800.00.

Juliana Andrew: Juliana graduated from East High School and will attend Pacific Lutheran University in Seattle, WA.

Christian Casper Mathiesen: Christian graduated from West High School in Anchorage and is planning to pursue a higher education at the University of Alaska, Anchorage.

Christian McCormick: Christian graduated from Service High School in Anchorage and will be seeking a degree in bio-chemistry from Gonzaga University in Spokane, WA.

The recipient of the Language and Heritage Scholarship is Christie Ericson, our Cultural Director. She will be attending the International Summer School, University of Oslo to study Norwegian language and the culture of Norway. She has volunteered to assist Lillian Anderson in teaching the Norwegian Language and Culture Class at Viking Hall in 2017-2018. She too, received a scholarship of \$800.00. *Terje "Ted" Birkedal, Lodge President*



Scholarship recipients, left to right, Ted Birkedal, President; Amanda Saxton, Chair, Scholarship Committee; Christie Ericson, Christian Mathiesen, Juliana Andrew, and Christian McCormick.

DITT og DATT!

Sankthans

Sankthans, or the official abbreviation "St. Hans," or Jonsok, is June 24th. Norwegians, however, are more fond of Eves (note Christmas Eve equals Christmas to Norwegians), so Sankthans is celebrated the evening of June 23rd. The origin of Sankthans is from pagan days, when summer solstice was celebrated. When Norway was christened, the Church knew it was easier to give any holiday a religious reason than to try to do away with it. So they named it Jonsok for Døperen Johannes (John the Baptist), in his memory. Hans is short for Johannes and "sankt" means "saint," hence St. Hans or Sankthans. This day was an official holiday until 1770.

In today's Norway, Sankthans is beloved by school children as it generally marks the beginning of summer vacation. It is also common to celebrate with bonfires, the bigger the better, and hotdogs, BBQ food, and adult beverages into the wee hours of the morning. People living close to the coast build fires along the shore of on small islands nearby. People living further inland tend to try to build their bonfire on top of the highest accessible mountain or hill. The bonfires were originally lit to ward off witches and other powers of darkness. Nowadays, the fires have become convenient avenues of disposing of old or broken furniture, branches and twigs from spring cleanup activities, and various and sundry wooden items otherwise destined for the garbage heap.



The tallest Sankthans bonfire ever recorded was lit on June 23rd, 2016, in Slinningsodden by Ålesund. It measured an impressive 47.4 meters (155.5 feet).

Summer Discounts for Lodge members

There is a 25% discount for members who rent Viking Hall for events! This is the perfect venue for Birthdays, Graduation, Weddings, and other celebrations.

Trollhaugen Lodge turns 45!

Three days of celebration at the lodge in the beautiful Cascade Mountains in Washington state. July 14 - 16 (Friday through Sunday). Go to www.trollhaugensofn.com for more information.

Viking Battalion

On Aug 12, 2017 the 99th Infantry Battalion (Separate) will be holding it 75th Anniversary of its creation at Camp Ripley, Mn. We are asking if any Sons of Norway members have information about the battalion.

This 99th Battalion was made up of Norwegian Americans who could speak fluent Norwegian and could ski, well as Norwegian seaman who were left without a place to go when Germany invaded Norway.

If you have any names of people who served and were Sons of Norway members, or any memorabilia they would consider contributing to the 99th Infantry Battalion (separate) museum at Camp Ripley, please *Email* dennirusinko@aol.com, *Call* 612-789-2272 or *Mail*, Dennis Rusinko 617 24th Ave NE. Minneapolis, Mn. 55418



The North by North Festival took place from May 11-14 in Anchorage and included people from Norway and other Arctic countries. The three day event included artists, musicians, chefs and filmmakers from Iceland, Norway, Finland, Greenland, Canada, Russia, and Sweden. Sons of Norway Bernt Balchen Lodge hosted a table at the Anchorage Museum as part of the Arctic Cultural Exchange.



Thanks to all who volunteered to help set up and attend the table. There was quite a bit of interest in Norway!

Photos courtesy of Ruth Kvernplassen



Sami Handwoven Bands

By Lorri (Haugan) Wright

I read with great interest the article in the April 2017 newsletter titled "Norwegians in Alaska, and a Question". I have an interest in the hand weaving tradition of the Sami and the connection to Sami in Alaska was a great reminder of how close we are to the culture.

I became particularly interested in the handwoven bands because they are beautiful, colorful, and practical at the same time. The handwoven bands are a part of the traditional Sami clothing and are still in practical use today.

Common uses would be to hold the coat together, or to wrap boots (like a gator would be used today), and as a carrying handle for a baby basket.

The bands are woven on a small hand held loom, and can be carried easily. That portability was an advantage for the nomadic Sami culture. It is also the feature that attracts many of us who want to do crafts, like to travel, and have space constraints.

I learned to weave the bands from a workshop led by UK teacher Susan J Foulkes providing an introduction to weaving the bands.



Handwoven by Lorri (Haugan) Wright

She is an excellent instructor and makes learning the process remarkably easy. She has many books published and available via

Stoorstalka.com. She also has many you-tube lessons on the weaving process available to anyone at no charge. She will lead a Yahoo study group with the UK based Braid Society in late October, 2017. The Yahoo Braid Society group is free to join.

I would like to coordinate a study group for those interested in following Susan Foulkes teaching via the Yahoo group. The plan is to meet at Viking hall on Saturdays as soon as the start dates are announced. I will provide my experience to assist anyone wanting to learn this craft. The price is nominal to begin. Those who want to participate will need to purchase a double slotted heddle (available via Stoorstalka.com – approximately 176 Swedish Krona or \$20USD), some clamps, and the appropriate yarn size to begin. Specific instructions and printable handouts will be available at the time of the study group. Please send me an e-mail if you are interested in participating at lorrihome@live.com and I will contact interested parties in the October timeframe.



Bernt Balchen Lodge at Tradition Tuesday

Tradition Tuesday is part of "Welcoming Anchorage" and takes place at the Loussac Library.

The Library set out several books for check out to accompany our displays. Of course, our wonderful Norwegian vaffler was a big hit!

To find out about Tradition Tuesday's, Welcoming Anchorage and more visit the Municipality of Anchorage website:

www.muni.org/Departments/Mayor/WelcomingAnchorage/Pages/TraditionTuesday



Photos courtesy of Ruth Kvernplassen



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

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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.

*Please consider helping
those who are less fortunate.*

EVENTS FOR SUMMER!

July 4th

Tuesday

10:00 am

Meet at 8th & G St. Parade Day!

August 15

Tuesday

4:00 pm - Fish Boil

6:00 pm - Dinner

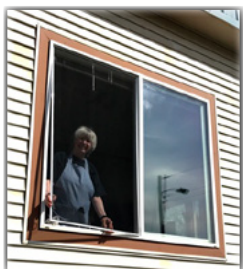
August 19

Saturday

6:00 pm

Bridge Builders Unity Gala

Once last thing....



Spring Clean up was a great success! Our Lodge was detailed inside and outside by a small but mighty crew!
Martin Hansen, Ruth Kvernplassen, Ted Birkedal, John and Cynthia Olnes, and Jacob Mathiesen were among those who came out to help.



Editor's note: I left before the others, so apologies if you aren't on this list.

This was my first time helping out and I definitely plan to be there next year.

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

Please send articles or event information
for the next Newsletter by August 20th to:

sonancak@gmail.com Attention - **Ruth** Subject Line - **The Flyer**