

The Flyer



VIKING HALL 349-1613
www.sofnalaska.com

February
2019
februar



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Classic Skis.....	2
Sunshine Report	2
New Member.....	2
Fun for Weavers	3
Bernt Balchen, the Man	4, 5
Ditt of Datt	6
Membership News	6
Nordic Language Fair	7

SONS OF NORWAY BERNT BALCHEN LODGE – PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

TIDEN Å FEIRE – TIME TO CELEBRATE!

As we continue with 2019 we have something to celebrate, the final results are in and we not only met the 9% new member growth challenge, we substantially exceeded it, bringing in twice as many new members this year vs. our target. We added 60 new members in 2019 and I want to thank each and every one of you that helped to recruit these new members and welcome all 60 of you new members to Bernt Balchen lodge!



How did we do it? That is the big unanswered question, but I have to believe it has something to do with simply asking. Asking friends and family to attend an event, and then if they seem interested, asking them to consider joining. A survey that the international office did some time ago tells us that often the reason people join an organization is that they were asked. Seems really simple, but people like being asked and if we continue to ask people to join us at events and then follow up with an ask to join, you never know what the response might be!

I think one of the main reasons Bernt Balchen continues to thrive is our great programs that of course always include some great food. This year will continue the tradition of holding fun events with great food. And with 60 new members, we are on the lookout for some new ideas. We have several ideas already brewing along with some ideas to just slightly tweak our age-old favorites to make them even more exciting.

A big change we made this past year is to turn our meetings into a more relaxed and fun time to connect with other members. Our member meetings are now being held in Viking Council style around the long-table (in our case, several tables joined together) followed by Hygge Time, or Happy Hour. From what I have observed, Hygge Time is lasting longer than the meeting, which is great as most of the real work is done by connecting with fellow members to find out what they are interested in. There is one small requirement for Hygge Time – you simply bring something edible or drinkable to share with others. I’m bringing champagne once again this month to celebrate the addition of our new members and the great work of our existing members in bringing in a banner year!

2019 is off to a great start with lots more to celebrate as we move through the year together. Look for opportunities to help out at an event, it is lots of fun and the very best way to get to know your fellow members. See you soon!

*Fraternally yours, Tom Falskow
President, Sons of Norway Bernt Balchen Lodge*

MEET THE WORLD



Join us at Bridge Builders “Meet the World” event; something we have been doing now for over a decade.

This is an event that brings together all of the various cultural groups in Anchorage.

A family friendly event with live performances from our wonderfully diverse community.

Saturday, February 23rd at the Egan Center
11:00 am to 4:00 pm

"CLASSIC SKIS"

If *Hygge Time* isn't enough to bring you in to our Viking Council meetings (formerly known as Membership Board meetings) on the second Thursday of the month, then check this out!



Tim Kelley and Martin Hansen, *Sports Director* with the wooden skis from the old Moen homestead.

Skier and ski historian Tim Kelley presented our lodge with beautiful skis that were manufactured in the 1920s or earlier.

His presentation included great information on ski racing in Anchorage, as well as interesting facts about the lost ski areas in Alaska.

The Moen Homestead Skis

These skis were used by Norwegian-American Harold Moen, an original Anchorage, Alaska homesteader. Harold came to Anchorage from Wisconsin in 1936 and established a homestead in what is now the Goldenview Drive area. Harold used these skis to travel between his homestead and the Potter railroad stop.

Harold found these skis in an old building at Potter that was once part of a 1917 temporary camp used for the construction of the Alaska Railroad. Many Norwegians worked in the Anchorage area building the Alaska Railroad. And Norwegians staged the first known cross country ski race in Anchorage on March 4, 1917. So perhaps a Norwegian railroad worker left these skis at the Potter camp.

Harold put cable bindings on these skis after he found them. The cable binding hardware was removed during refurbishment of these skis to make them period authentic. Stamped markings under the tips indicate these are manufactured skis. Likely they were made in Norway.

In 2018, Harold's daughter Janey Moen gave these skis to Anchorage skier Tim Kelley to refurbish, and to find a good home for them.

To find out more about these ski areas and the history behind them go to: www.alsap.org

To find out more about wooden skis please go to: www.woodenskis.com

Tim has been skiing since he was a very small boy and is well known in the skiing community in Anchorage.

Tusen Takk to Tim, and to Martin!

SUNSHINE REPORT

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Greetings are sent to our members celebrating a birthday who are at least 75 years young!

"Happy Birthday!"



"Gratulerer med dagen!"

Anton Meyer
Stephen W. Indahl

Per Bjorn-Roli
Gayle A. Bjorn-Roli

If you know someone who needs a little sunshine

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

MEMBERSHIP NEWS!

Membership in Sons of Norway is about ENRICHMENT

Since the beginning, Sons of Norway has maintained its dedication to the personal and financial well-being of its members. More than a century later, that devotion remains at the heart of the organization and fuels a collective passion for personal and cultural enrichment.

Welcome New Member -

Pamela Grefsrud!

A BIG Thank You to current members for paying your dues!

Find out what is happening in our lodge

You can see our *Flyer* in "full color" on our Website:
<http://www.sofnalaska.com>

Facebook: www.facebook.com/BerntBalchen

Instagram: [@sonsofnorwayanchorage](https://www.instagram.com/sonsofnorwayanchorage)

WEAVERS DELIGHT

SCARF IN A DAY

Please join us to weave a scarf at Viking Hall Saturday, February 16, 2019. This will be a great introduction to weaving, *and you will be able to take home your finished scarf at the end of the day.* Weaving looms will be available for use during class, prepared with suitable yarn. Materials and instruction will be provided during class.

Skill Level: Beginner. No experience necessary.

Student supplies: Equipment, material, and instruction will be provided.

Date & Location: February 16, 2018, 9:00 am to 4:00 pm at Viking Hall

Amount: \$35 to cover materials provided

To reserve a slot in the class, please register via sign-up genius:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f0e44aeac2ba1fc1-scarf>

Payment must be made by February 1st, 2019 to reserve a place in class. Cancellations after February 1st, 2019 shall result in the forfeiture of the payment, unless a replacement can be found, whether from the waiting list or arranged by the person cancelling the registration in the workshop.

If you have questions, please contact:

Lorri Wright, (907) 360-0276, lorrihome@live.com or
Sherry Rogers, (907) 694-3319, sherryweaves@aol.com



The total class fee is \$35 which can be paid on-line or checks may be sent to:

Anchorage Weavers & Spinners Guild
PO Box 244055, Anchorage, AK 99524-4055

TAPESTRY WORKSHOP

Please join us to learn the basics of Tapestry Weaving at Sons of Norway, Library (located downstairs), March 22, 23, and 24th 9:00 am to 4:00 pm each day. This will be a great introduction to Tapestry Weaving. The course is taught by Annita Magee, who is an accomplished weaver and has studied tapestry in Norway.

Materials and instruction provided during class. You will receive a pre-warped Beka tapestry loom ready to weave a small sampler, yarn from the Rauma Factory in Aldalsnes, Norway. You will have the opportunity to finish your sampler plus have the chance to warp your loom for a future project.

The class is limited to the first 10 students who register on Signup Genius (see link below).

Skill Level: Beginner. No experience necessary.

Supplies: Equipment, material, and instruction will be provided.

Student supplies: Please bring scissors, tapestry needle, a fork or tapestry beater, pencil with notebook and a sack lunch.

Date & Location: March 22 – 24th, 9:00 am to 4:00 pm
Sons of Norway Library, 8141 Briarwood

Amount: \$100 to cover instruction, equipment, and materials provided

To reserve a slot in the class, please register via sign-up genius:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f0e44aeac2ba1fc1-tapestry>

Payment must be made by March 1st, 2019 to reserve a place in class. Cancellations after March 1st, 2019 shall result in the forfeiture of the payment, unless a replacement can be found, whether from the waiting list or arranged by the person cancelling the registration in the workshop.

If you have questions, please contact:

Sherry Rogers, (907) 694-3319, sherryweaves@aol.com



The total class fee is \$100 which can be paid on-line or checks may be sent to:

Anchorage Weavers & Spinners Guild
PO Box 244055, Anchorage, AK 99524-4055

BERNT BALCHEN THE AVIATOR AND EXPLORER: AS WRITER AND VISIONARY

I decided to take look at Bernt Balchen, our lodge namesake, as a writer and visionary. But before we delve into these additional talents let me review the main accomplishments of his life.

He was born in Tveit, Norway just outside Kristiansand. In his youth he became an accomplished outdoorsman and cross-country skier. Ever in search of adventure, he joined the Royal Norwegian Navy Air Service as a pilot after a stint in the French Foreign Legion and also as a volunteer cavalryman in the Finnish Civil War. In Norway's challenging aerial environment of fjords, mountains, and bad weather, Bernt Balchen, by necessity, became an accomplished instrument flyer. In recognition of his piloting skills, he was asked to join the Amundsen-Ellsworth Relief Expedition in 1925 which was organized to rescue a lost Roald Amundsen in the Svalbard Archipelago.

He returned to the archipelago a year later at the special request of Amundsen who sought Bernt Balchen's assistance as an expert aviator and outdoorsman to help safely launch the dirigible Norge for its flight from the island of Spitsbergen to Teller, Alaska. However, he did not fly with Amundsen, but instead, was asked by Amundsen to provide technical support for Commander Richard E. Byrd, who was also in Spitsbergen, where Byrd and his co-pilot made a celebrated attempt to be the first to reach the North Pole in an airplane. Later, in 1927, he joined Byrd as a crewmember on Byrd's historic successful flight across the Atlantic Ocean in a tri-motor Fokker. Commander Byrd continued to rely on Bernt Balchen as both an aviator and innovative airplane mechanic when he and his crew made the first flight over the South Pole in history. Balchen was the Chief Pilot during this pioneering aerial expedition in the Antarctic.

In 1931 Amelia Earhart sought him out to specially modify her Lockheed Vega plane for a solo trans-Atlantic flight. Landing in Ireland in her plane in 1932 she was the first woman to successfully cross the Atlantic by airplane. Bernt Balchen spent the rest of the 1930's advising the newly-formed Norwegian Airlines, working to establish the Nordic Postal Union, and negotiating an aviation treaty between Norway the United States.



In 1940, in anticipation of the coming war, he set up "Little Norway" in Canada, a base that trained 2,500 Norwegian aviators during World War II. As a dual Norwegian and American citizen he joined the U.S. Airforce as a Colonel and flew numerous dangerous long-distance flights to Europe in order to ferry much needed military aircraft to the war zone. After the war he was assigned to Alaska where he became heavily involved in developing strategies and techniques for the rescue of downed aircraft in the Arctic. In 1949, while in Alaska, he flew on a mission over the

North Pole and became the first man in history to have flown over both the North and South Poles.

After his military career ended in the mid-1950s he turned his attention to commercial aviation in both Norway and the United States. He died at Mount Kisco, New York in 1973. In recognition of his service to the United States he is buried in Arlington Cemetery.

Bernt Balchen was certainly a pioneering pilot and master airplane mechanic of distinction for over 30 years, but there was even more to the man. He was also an accomplished painter whose works were often offered for sale in New York's best galleries (our lodge is lucky to have two of his paintings). In addition he was a wonderful writer and strategic visionary. His writing skills are amply showcased in his 1958 book *Come North with Me: An Autobiography* published by E.P. Dutton. His writing is direct and enormously engaging in its descriptive power. For instance here is his word portrait of Roald Amundsen on the eve of his dirigible expedition over the North Pole:

"His face is expressionless and we cannot read it. Beneath the thick tufts of his eyebrows, white as hoarfrost, his eyes in their deep sockets are hidden in shadow. His cheeks are leathery and folded into hard creases, with a fine network of wrinkles spreading out from the corners of his eyes like a map of all the dog trails he has run. The most prominent feature of his face is the thin and arched nose, which gives him the look of an eagle. It is a face carved in a cliff, the face of a Viking."

Bernt Balchen, Writer and Visionary continues on Page 5

Bernt Balchen, Writer and Visionary - continued from Page 4

Later in the book he paints another vivid word portrait, this time of the famous aviator and inventor Tony Fokker.

“The America (Byrd’s tri-motor airplane) is being towed back to the hangar for the third time, and Tony Fokker has been up all night, waiting vainly for the take-off. When Commander Byrd strolls into the hangar later that morning, Uncle Tony flies into a Dutch rage. His round pink cheeks blow in and out, like the rubber bulb-horn of his Lancia, as he honks with fury. He is sick and tired of this damn stalling. Byrd can fly America nonstop to hell, for all of him—he is through right now, by Gott. He roars off in his sport car in a cloud of mud and flying grass, and goes for a long cruise in his yacht to cool off.”

Bernt Balchen was particularly adept at writing about the arctic environments which he loved so much. For instance, here are his amusing observations on Antarctic penguins:

“The ever present penguins meet us as we jump ashore at Discovery Inlet—little Adélie penguins the size of waddling ducks, and groups of giant Emperor penguins more than half the height of a man. They stand in single file in their stiff white shirts and black Tuxedos, weaving a little and teetering impatiently from one foot to the other, like slightly inebriated dinner guests waiting their turn at the men’s room.”

Besides his skills as an aviator, explorer, painter, and writer he was a prescient visionary. Near the end of his 1958 autobiography he mused that “if the present rate of warming continues for another thirty years, we shall have an ice-free ocean over the North Pole in the summertime.” In a similar vein, he recounts his thoughts in the cockpit during his flight over the North Pole in 1949.

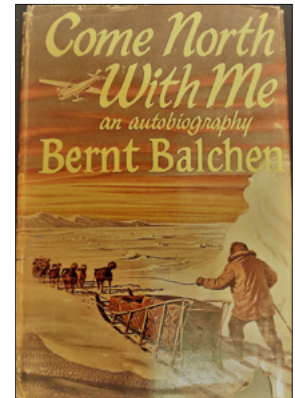
“I looked north as I flew, and beyond the north to the future and in my mind I could picture commercial vessels plying some day over this vast new sea, opening up the riches of all the hitherto inaccessible lands within the Arctic rim: Prince Patrick Island and Grant’s Land and the whole Canadian Archipelago.”

Later, in the same chapter he wrote:

“Today the only true map is the globe, and the airplane has turned it on its side. In Roman times the Mediterranean Sea was considered the center of the world; but our new Mediterranean is the Arctic Ocean, and the North Pole is the crossroads of tomorrow’s travel.”

Also recognizing the strategic importance of the North, he then went on to warn:

“Not only will commercial travel follow this polar route. In time of war, enemy aircraft and missiles may be expected to use the great circle course, bringing all these areas within range of strategic attack.”



And next he wrote of Norway’s strategic importance in this northern future.

“We must look north, but like a good pilot, we must be able to see to the west and, more important, to the east. The Soviet’s only entrance to the North Atlantic is between Norway and Spitsbergen. If we can block this Dardanelles of the Arctic, we can turn the Atlantic into a NATO lake where our shipping can move free of naval interference. ‘Who controls Norway commands the North Atlantic’ is as true for the Communists as it was for the Nazis once. The Russians themselves must realize that their Achilles’ heel is the Arctic, and that their occupancy of Scandinavia would close this exposed flank. Here is where the next brush war is most likely to flare up, I think, and our defense of the Scandinavian Peninsula is vital for the security of all the world’s democracies.”

In light of Bernt Balchen’s strategic observations quoted above, it is no accident that NATO conducted a massive military training exercise in Norway this year, the largest such exercise in Europe since the end of the Cold War. It involved up to 50,000 troops engaged in practicing complex maneuvers on the land, sea, and in the air.

Bernt Balchen was a man clearly of many talents and accomplishments. He is most famous as a pioneering aviator and Arctic explorer, but as we have seen, he was also a strategic visionary, artist, and a surprisingly good writer. He is without doubt one of the truly great Norwegians and Norwegian-Americans of the twentieth century. Perhaps he will one day gain the world-wide fame he deserves in the emerging twenty-first century.

Terje “Ted” Birkedal

DITT og DATT!

Why did Norway's Capital change it's name?

Answers differ. Maybe our readers can weigh in on this. Here are a couple of theories so far.



- It was an act of nationalism. The name change was made after Norway gained its independence from Sweden, and 110 years after it was ceded from Denmark to Sweden. Up until 1624, the settlement in the innermost parts of Viken (The Oslo fjord) was known as Oslo. After it burned down in 1624, the Danish King Christian IV ordered the city to be moved and re-christened it after himself. After independence, Danish rule over Norway was seen as a yoke to the nation, and people found it unsuitable that the newly independent nation should have its capital named after a foreign king. Thus, the name was changed back to the original.

- Oslo was founded at the delta—the “os” as the place where a river widens and enters the sea is called - of the Lo river - in ancient times. It could very well have been a site for an ancient pagan temple or offerings. When Christianity hit, they did build a monastery close by, possibly to reform the reputation of an old heathen place.

Norwegian Language and Culture Class

We are still going strong on Sunday evenings from 6:30 - 8:00 pm and will run through mid-May. Taught by Lillian Anderson and Christie Ericson. This is fun and usually there is a sweet treat. All skill levels welcome (fluent/native speakers, too!--come help us improve our Norwegian!)



Do you have some fun facts for Ditt og Datt?

Contact us by email at: sonancak@gmail.com

Attention - Ruth Subject Line - Ditt og Datt

Stay informed through:

Facebook: www.facebook.com/BerntBalchen

Instagram: [@sonsofnorwayanchorage](https://www.instagram.com/sonsofnorwayanchorage)

SONS OF NORWAY MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Beginning January 1, 2019, a new membership option became available: Family Membership. This option enables everyone living at or receiving mail at the same U.S. address to be members of Sons of Norway for an annual inclusive dues amount of \$95.

New Members (individuals who have never been a member of Sons of Norway)

Adding a new member(s) to an existing single or family membership can be done in three ways:

1) Online

- Click the 'Join/Renew' button in the upper right corner.
- Click 'Add a Family Member'
- Enter the first and last name and member number of the primary member
- Enter the information as requested.

2) Paper application

- Select the Family Membership option on the application.
- Cross out \$95 and write in 'adding a family member'
- On the front of the application, write in the information for the current primary member (member number and name). Write the information for the new family members on the second page of the application.
- Mail in the application to Sons of Norway headquarters.

3) Over the phone by calling 612-821-4643

Note: Adding a new member to a single membership will not increase dues at the time the addition is made. The family rate of \$95.00 will be applied at the next renewal date.

Existing or past members

At this time, combining existing or previous members into a Family Membership cannot be done online or with a paper application. Instead, members who wish to expand their membership by adding a current or past member to their household should contact Membership Services: 612-821-4643. Questions? Membership Services: 612-821-4643, email: Fraternal@sofn.com





5TH ANNUAL

NORDIC LANGUAGE FAIR

FEBRUARY 9, 2019 / 7-9 PM

Viking Hall, 8141 Briarwood St



Language presentations / Activities
Scholarship info / Language resources
Traditional Nordic desserts

FREE ADMISSION
ALL AGES WELCOME



Sponsored by Sons of Norway
Bernt Balchen Lodge

For more information, contact Christie at
907-349-0642 or christieak@gmail.com



WWW.SOFNALASKA.COM



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

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

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 FEBRUARY

5th
Tuesday

10:00 am to Noon

Needle Crafts

9th
Saturday

7:00 pm

Nordic Language Fair

13th
Wednesday

7:00 to 9:00 pm

Strikkekafe

14th
Thursday

7:00 pm

Board/Membership Meeting
Viking Council

16th
Saturday

9:00 am to 5:00 pm

Scarf-in-a-Day Weaving

19th
Tuesday

10:00 am to Noon

Needle Crafts

23th
Saturday

11:00 am to 4:00 pm

Bridge Builders

Meet the World - Egan Center

27th
Wednesday

7:00 to 9:00 pm

Strikkekafe

EARLY WARNING!!

Norwegian Fish Dinner

Saturday, April 13th

5:30 pm

at Viking Hall

(Contact Merlin Hamre if you would like to help.)

**Did you know you can view
The Flyer in living color?**

<http://www.sofnalaska.com/newsletter>

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**