

TeleNews



**News for Descendants of Emigrants
from the Telemark region in Norway**

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Telelaget's website:
www.telelaget.com

Greetings from the President

In 2009, Telelaget will sponsor the 7-Lag Stevne. We have chosen the University of Wisconsin-River Falls (UWRf) for the event, which is to be held from June 25 to June 28, 2009. There were a number of reasons for selecting this site: (1) River Falls has a small town atmosphere, yet is only 30 miles from St. Paul; (2) Telelaget and other lags have many members from the greater Twin Cities metro area; (3) the two-year old UWRf University Center has a beautiful décor, handicapped access, and classrooms which have state-of-the-art "tech podiums," and (4) a variety of air-conditioned, moderately-priced rooms and suites, and free parking lots are available.

Originally, the *stevner* (plural for *stevne*) were attended only by members of Telelaget, descendants of Telemark emigrants. Since 1986 Telelaget has joined with six other *bygdelags* (*lags*) to sponsor a 7(Sju)-Lag Stevne. Under this arrangement, each one of the *lags* in turn organizes the *stevne*, selects the site, and plans the program and banquet. However, each *lag* retains its identity, provides genealogical assistance, and has its own annual meeting.

Our 2009 Stevne Planning Committee has been active in planning the conference. As with all recent *stevner*, Telelaget will again make available its extensive library and provide assistance from genealogists who assist attendees to trace their ancestry and learn about the immigrant experience. In addition to the normal classes, entertainment, and social

events, we have identified weekend *stevne* activities that will be more appealing to younger members, who work or attend school during the week. In keeping with this focus, the theme of the *stevne* is "Bridging the Generations." Arrangements are being made with our Telemark directors, Anne Haugen Wagn and Harold Omnes, for approximately 40 people from Telemark to attend. They will provide cultural activities and entertainment.

Complete program and registration materials will be included in our next issue of *TeleNews*. In the meantime, set aside these dates and plan to attend the 2009 7-Lag Stevne at UWRf June 25 to June 28 next year. Let's demonstrate to our fellow Norwegian Americans, that we Telemarkings have the creativity, energy, and passion to conduct the most meaningful, best-attended *stevne* in recent history!

Mange hilsner,

John Haugo
President of Telelaget



University Center on the campus of University of Wisconsin-River Falls, site of the 2009 Stevne

Kirn and Olson Elected to Board of Directors

Alice Kirn of Wappingers Falls, New York and Joran Olson of Sioux Falls, South Dakota were elected to the Telelaget Board of Directors at the 2008 annual meeting. Alice has served as *Telesoga* editor for the past four years. A former English teacher, she has a masters degree from Michigan State University. In addition to serving as editor of *Telesoga*, she was primarily responsible for the publishing of *Telelaget of America: 100th Anniversary Tour to Telemark*, and

Telelaget: The First Hundred Years.

Joran was born on a farm in northeast South Dakota. She attended Concordia College in Moorhead, MN and received her B.S. degree from Northern State in Aberdeen, SD. She has had a career as a teacher and an assisted living director. Joran has been an active member of Telelaget, serving on a number of committees and attending annual *stevner*. She learned about Telelaget while researching her grandparents' memorabilia.



Alice Kirn and Joran Olson, new Board members,

New Members

Elaine Anderson	Anderson, WI	Nancy Kviden	Petersburg, ND
Terry Anderson	Stevens Point, WI	Harlan and Sandy Johnsrud	Austin, MN
Don and Joan Bungum	Lindstrom, MN	William Lahd	Mile, AB
Muriel and John Coulter	Tracy, MN	Karen Kennedy	Old Hickory, TN
Bev and Richard Ferraro	Kettle Falls, WA	Corrine Morrison	Orlando, FL
Connie Erdmann	Hawley, MN	Jim Oftelie	Ames, IA
Janice Flatoff	Plover, WI	Aanund and Barbro Olsnes	Vinje, Norway
Gudveig Gravin	Oslo, Norway	Shirley and Van Sindelar	Shakopee, MN
Mary Gullikson	Loveland, CO	Kathleen Theige	Iola, WI
Roger and Sandra Haugo	Sioux Falls, SD	Lucille and Glen Torkelson	Crookston, MN

Anniversary Books Donated to MN/WI Counties

During June and July, copies of our 100th Anniversary Book entitled, *Telelaget: The First Hundred Years*, were donated to county museums and/or historical societies in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Forty-one Minnesota counties and thirty-three Wisconsin counties requested

and received copies of the books. It was felt by the Board of Directors that because of the large concentrations of Norwegians of Telemark descent in these states there would be interest in the emigration from Telemark and in the history of *Telelaget of America*.

Former President Elaine Nordlie Recognized

At the 2008 annual meeting, Elaine Nordlie was presented with a plaque for her dedicated service. The plaque reads, "Presented to Elaine Nordlie in appreciation for five years of outstanding leadership as President of Telelaget of America 2002-2007". Elaine, whose five years as president led us through our 100th anniversary year, lived in Norway for 15 years after meeting her husband,

Kjell, while on a college student exchange program. Elaine served as tour guide for the Telemark tours held during the summers of 2002 and 2007; has been actively involved in translating early *Telelag* documents; and has edited various *Telelaget* publications including the 100th Anniversary Book, *Telelaget: The First Hundred Years*.



Elaine Nordlie receives plaque from President John Haugo

2008 7-Lag Stevne at Stevens Point

The annual 7-Lag Stevne is always a happy event, and this one held at the Ramada Inn in Stevens Point, WI was no exception. With so many activities to choose from and so many people to chat with, the *stevne* came and went all too fast. There was an especially joyous reunion for those of us who experienced the 2007 Telemark tour. We could hardly wait to see each other, exchange pictures, and share remembrances. Just as on the tour, Stan Oftelie, the congenial grandson of our founder, was the center of attention. He brought with him more archival information, for which we are most grateful.

The *stevne* included two county tours. The Portage County Tour on July 16 took two large busloads to the Nelsonville Mill built in 1855, a nearby antique shop, a century farm, and the South New Hope Lutheran Church, founded in 1889, which includes an altar painting by the Norwegian artist Ingeborg Boe. The church is now used for weddings and special events. Our final tour stop was at the Nelsonville Lutheran Church, where we enjoyed a delicious meatball supper. We returned to the Ramada in time for registration and the movie *Sweet Land*.

The Waupaca County tour the next day included stops at the Hutchinson House Museum, built in 1854, where we enjoyed a box lunch on the picnic grounds. Following lunch, the tour stops included the Log Cabin Museum in Scandinavia, WI, and the Iola Railroad Museum that also features a county school and other old buildings. The tour returned in time for dinner and the evening movie *Our Vines Have Tender Grapes*. Both tours included excellent commentary from the guides as well as printed information.

The opening session, emceed by Landingslag president Sandra Hendrickson, included greetings from the each of the *lag* presidents and from the Mayor of Stevens Point, Andrew Halverson. Entertainment included Norwegian-related music and comedy by Aslak og Engebret. Consistent with the overall theme of the *Stevne*, a fascinating talk and slide show on the lumber industry was presented by *Lumberjack Louie* (Sterling Strathe from the Wisconsin Center for Environmental Education).

Attendees had sixteen different classes to choose from. Rachel Gorka attended Betty Knutsen's class in Hardanger embroidery and appreciated learning some of the basics as well as the heritage. Class participants were given a small project which could be completed during the three hours. "The basic technique," Rachel said, "is easy to learn; all that is required is the patience to be precise in your stitching." The genealogy room was well stocked and a busy place for those with questions. The vendors with their displays of art, books, and clothing were also kept busy. A favorite place, as always, was the hospitality room, a place to rest and chat over coffee and cookies.

The banquet is always a special event. Numedalslåggen *lag* was recognized for their 100th anniversary and several awards were presented. Entertainment included *Landingsleiken*, a children's dance group from the Hov Culture School in Sondre Land; the Twin Cities *Hardingfelalag*—Marybeth Stull, Janet Ulvin, and Rachel Ulvin Jensen; and soloist Harriet Wicklund. The 2008 *Stevne* included four Telelaget participants in the *Bunad* Parade.

The morning of the final day was devoted to individual *lag* meetings. It was a very busy morning presided over by President John Haugo. Responsibilities for hosting the 2009 *Stevne* in River Falls on June 25-28, 2009 were discussed.



Sharon Haugo, Joran Olson, and Elaine Nordlie participated in the *stevne*' bunad parade.

Rannei Aamundsdatter Honored

A memorial plaque honoring Rannei Aamundsdatter Norheim was dedicated at a special ceremony held at the historic Norway Lutheran Church near Denbigh, ND on September 30. Rannei, the wife of Sondre Norheim, "Father of Modern Skiing," immigrated to the United States in 1884 and died in 1913 in Salem, Oregon. Sondre, who was born and raised in Morgedal Telemark, rose to fame throughout Norway for his skiing skills and his innovations in skiing equipment. After Sondre's death in 1897, Rannei moved

to Oregon where most people lost contact with her. This past year, David Gunderson of Fergus Falls, a Telelaget member and great-grand nephew of Rannei, discovered the location of her death and her death certificate. He coordinated the dedication ceremony which included the participation of ten Norwegians from the Norsk Skieventyr in Morgedal and from Skien. (A feature article on the event will be included in the next issue of *Telesoga*.)



Dave Gunderson at Norheim grave and memorial site.

Norwegian Pioneer Statehood Project

As part of Minnesota's Sesquicentennial, the Norwegian Statehood Pioneer Project recognizes the contributions of Norwegian immigrants. As a participating organization, Telelaget encourages everyone whose Norwegian ancestors were living in Minnesota at the time of statehood in 1858 to honor them by participating in this worthwhile project.

On October 18, 2008, a Celebratory Program and Banquet was held at the Marriott Hotel in Rochester, MN. The program began at 1:00 p.m. with Dr. Odd S. Lovoll as keynote speaker. The highlight of the program was a "Call of the Roll" of Norwegian pioneers. The banquet included a Norwegian dinner, a *bunad* parade,

and entertainment by the Minnesota Scandinavian Ensemble.

There are two options for honoring your Norwegian ancestors. First, one can apply for a Recognition Plaque or a Certificate of Recognition for each pioneer who lived in Minnesota prior to statehood. Another option is known as the Century Certificate and applies to all Norwegian Pioneers living in Minnesota between the time of Statehood and January 1, 1908. **The application deadline has been extended to December 31, 2008.** To apply, access the website www.mn-nspp.org or write NSPP, 6938 State Hwy 200 NW, LaPorte, MN 56461.

"As a participating organization, Telelaget encourages everyone whose Norwegian ancestors were living in Minnesota at the time of statehood in 1858 to honor them by participating in this worthwhile project."

Board Resolution Recognizes Arnold Ness

Telelaget's Board of Directors passed a resolution and presented a framed certificate of appreciation recognizing the contributions of Arnold Ness of Northfield, MN, Telelaget's long-term president and board member. Arnold provided leadership during the reorganization of Telelaget, in establishing sources of genealogical research, in reinvigorating the *stevnes*, and in establishing contact with individuals and groups currently living in Telemark. The resolution states: **Whereas**, Arnold Ness served as a member of the Board of Directors of

*Telelaget of America for twenty-two years; **Whereas**, he served as president of Telelaget of America for ten years; **And Whereas**, he provided visionary, diligent, and knowledgeable leadership to Telelaget of America. **Therefore, be it Resolved**, that the Board of Directors of Telelaget of America on behalf of all of our members express our gratitude to Arnold Ness for his exemplary service to and leadership of our organization.*



Arnold Ness, long-term Telelaget Director and President

Prime Minister Stoltenberg's Minnesota Visit

On September 23, Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg visited the Twin Cities with Honorary Consul General to Norway Walter Mondale as his host. In December 2007, Norway had downgraded its diplomatic status with Minnesota from a consulate office to an honorary level. Mondale stated, "At the time the decision was made, the Prime Minister assured us that it was not a reflection of flagging interests, but rather a decision to reallocate government resources." In his remarks Stoltenberg reassured attendees that his visit was an affirmation of Norway's commitment to the Midwest area. Stoltenberg also visited the University of Minnesota's Ecosystem Science Reserve and met with Gov. Pawlenty. Telelaget President John Haugo and his wife, Sharon, attended the reception. John talked with the Prime Minister about Telemark and his ancestry.



Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg and Telelaget President John Haugo discuss John's Telemark ancestry.

New Brochures Available for Members

Telelaget has an on-going goal of increasing its membership. (Membership increased by over ten percent last year.) As a means of providing information to prospective members, a new Telelaget colored brochure has been printed. It includes several pictures from Telemark and a membership application form.

The brochure is available to members who wish to have them for distribution at family reunions, at Norwegian-American conferences or exhibits,

etc. An electronic copy is also available. If you wish to receive either printed or electronic copies please contact: Shelley Jerviss, P. O. Box 292, Houston, MN 55943 by mail, or by phone at (507) 896-2088, or email Shelley at shelley.jerviss@houston.k12.mn.us.

Over a Century of Celebrating our Telemark Heritage

A Reminder to Renew Your Membership

If the label on this issue of *TeleNews* has a highlighted 2008 on it, this means that your Telelaget membership is expiring and that this is your last mailing of our newsletter. To ensure that your membership will not expire, please renew your membership soon. The one-year membership for a U.S. address is \$12 and a 4-year membership is \$42. Annual membership fees for those outside of the U.S. are \$14 and 4-year membership is

\$50; for Norwegian addresses annual membership is NOK 85 and a 4-year membership is NOK 340. Mail your membership payment to: Shelley Jerviss, Box 292, Houston, MN 55943. Norwegian members should deposit your *knoner* in the Telelag Account at Hjartdal og Gransherad Sparebank – account number 2699.07.11754. Renewal notices will be sent in January to those who have forgotten to renew.

Telelaget of America is a 501(c)(3)

Telelaget of America is registered in Minnesota as a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. In general, your membership dues and contributions help us to maintain our www.telelaget.com website, to produce our publications, and to provide genealogical assistance. **This next year as we prepare to sponsor and host the 7-Lag Stevne, contributions to support the travel**

costs of five guest Telemark musicians and other costs associated with the conference will be especially helpful.

To donate money mail a check to Telelaget of America to our treasurer: Shelley Jerviss, P.O. Box 292, Houston, MN 55943. A tax-exempt form recognizing your contribution will be mailed to you. Thanks for your support.

Summary of July 19, 2008 Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of Telelaget of America was held on July 19, 2008, at the Ramada Inn Conference Center in Stevens Point, Wisconsin. Forty-five members attended the meeting. Among those present were the following members of the Board of Directors: Pete Christianson, John Haugo, Shelley Jerviss, Darrel Johnson, Elaine Nordlie, Jim Skree, and Helen Steele, and Alice Kirn, *Telesoga* Editor.

President John Haugo called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. CDT. He welcomed all members present and asked them to introduce themselves, to tell where they live, and to comment on their roots in Telemark. The Board of Directors was also introduced.

Jim Skree, Secretary, read the minutes of the July 14, 2007 Annual Meeting which was held at the North Dakota School of Science in Wahpeton, North Dakota. The minutes were approved as read.

Treasurer Shelley Jerviss reported Telelaget's current checking account balance is \$4,102, savings account balances are \$20,861, and our Norwegian bank account balance is NOK 9.887. Shelley reported that year-to-date we currently have 410 paid member families with 22 from Norway, and five from Canada. Shelley also provided an inventory of all special publications and 100th Anniversary souvenir items.

Genealogist Darrel Johnson reported we now have 400 entries in the "Coming Home Project" and thanked Warren Gedstad and Gene Estensen for their continued help with that project. Darrel also thanked Joran Olson, Jan Frye, and Elaine Nordlie for their assistance in the Genealogy Room.

Gene Estensen, Webmaster, has agreed to serve in that role another year. It was reported that the number of "hits" to the website remains very high. There is a plan to convert the website to a newer format during the year.

Alice Kirn, *Telesoga* editor, reported that she is never short of articles to publish, but we still want to encourage all of the members to send in stories. The November issue will feature Rannei Aamundsdatter Norheim. Alice spoke briefly about the 2007 Telelag 100th Anniversary Tour to Telemark Book and the Telelag 100th Anniversary Book. She noted that the demand for both

publications has been great.

Carol Johnson, Chairperson of the Nominating Committee, presented the names of John Haugo, Jim Skree, Joran Olson and Alice Kirn for nomination to the Board of Directors. All were elected to two-year terms. She commented that Arnie Ness and Pete Christianson have chosen not to run for reelection to the Board.

Jim Skree reported on the Norwegian Statehood Pioneer Project to be held at the Marriott Hotel in Rochester, MN on October 18, 2008. He stated that we have five applications so far and encouraged members to submit names of ancestors who lived in Minnesota prior to 1858.

Elaine Nordlie announced that the 2009 *7-Lag Stevne* will be at the University of Wisconsin in River Falls from Thursday June 25 through Sunday June 28, 2009. She stated that the plan is to make this *stevne* more intergenerational and we need to invite children and grandchildren. Anne Haugen Wagn and Harald Omnes are planning to bring a group of people from Telemark. The tour officially ends at the *stevne*, but they will have an option to stay longer if desired.

President John Haugo gave a Power Point overview of the member survey results. He noted that nearly half of the members had responded to the survey. In general, members indicated a high level of participation in various Telelaget activities and rated them highly. *Telesoga* and the Telemark tour received the highest ratings by members. He also noted that respondents had many good suggestions for improvement of the various publications and activities, and for making the organization more appealing to younger members and the next generation.

John thanked the various individuals for their roles in Telelaget. He presented a plaque to Elaine in appreciation of her five years of dedicated service as President of Telelaget.

Jim Skree
Secretary

Popular Telelaget Publications

Telelaget – The First One Hundred Years

This book is the result of several years work and contains over 200 pages of Telelaget’s history with 95 pictures. Some pictures are fold-out and some are colored. There are 12 pages of indexed names. The DVD contains scanned copies of every page of all *Telesogas* from 1909 through 2005.

Prices: \$35.00 + 7.50 S&H = \$42.50 or NOK 210 + NOK 126 S&H = NOK 336

Telesoga DVD only: \$25.00 + 2.50 S&H = \$27.50 or NOK 150 + NOK 24 S&H = NOK 174

A word of caution and explanation about the Telesoga DVD:

- This is *not* a video DVD and therefore will *not* appear on your TV if inserted into a standard DVD player.
- You must have a computer that will read DVDs, not just CDs.
- To view the Telesogas on this DVD you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader version 6.0 or newer installed on your computer.

Adobe Acrobat is **free** to download to your computer. For a full selection of Acrobat Readers for Macintosh as well as Microsoft computers visit this page: <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/alternate.html>

Telemark to America, Volume I—Emigration

This book discusses a number of aspects of the emigration from Telemark. A brief Norwegian history is included, including the visits of early Northmen to Minnesota. Another section of the book covers the customs, foods, and culture of our Telemark ancestors. Many firsthand experiences of immigrating families are included. The last section of the book contains analysis of the Telemark settlements in the United States.

Prices: \$25.00 + 5.00 S&H = \$30.00 or NOK 150 + NOK 102 S&H = NOK 252

Order Form

___ Copies of Telelaget – The First One Hundred Years and Telesoga DVD
 @ \$35.00 + 7.50 S&H = \$42.50 or NOK 210 + NOK 126 S&H = NOK 336 _____

___ Copies of Telelaget – The First One Hundred Years (Book Only-no CD)
 @ \$25.00 + 2.50 S&H = \$27.50 or NOK 150 + NOK 24 S&H = NOK 174 _____

___ Copies of *Telesoga* DVD only:
 @ \$25.00 + 2.50 S&H = \$27.50 or NOK 150 + NOK 24 S&H = NOK 174 _____

___ Copies of Telemark to America, Volume I—Emigration
 @ \$25.00 + 5.00 S&H = \$30.00 or NOK 150 + NOK 102 S&H = NOK 252 _____

Name _____

Mail Order to : **Shelley Jerviss**
P.O. Box 292
Houston, MN 55944

Address _____

Phone _____

Note: These publications and various Telelaget 100th Anniversary Commemorative items can to ordered through our web-site, www.telelaget.com. Anniversary commemorative items include a tote bag, a cap, a mug, and a fana (minature Telemark flag).

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