

TeleNews



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

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Greetings from the President

In recent years many individuals, especially the younger generation, have become involved in "social networking" through the use of information technology tools. Facebook, You Tube, 'googling', and twittering are among the applications utilized by many current day computer and cell phone users.

Socializing, reminiscing, and camaraderie among other immigrants were an important aspect of *lag* membership when Telelaget of America was founded in the early 1900s. Because of limited communications and transportation capabilities that existed during that era, much of the socializing was done at regional *stevner*. The initial emphasis of their communications was on the maintenance of the rich histories, culture and traditions unique to the Telemark region where they still had a strong attachment to their Norwegian homes and a deep sense of tradition and kinship.

After the original Telemark immigrants passed on by the 1950s, Telelaget went through a period of inactivity. It was reorganized in 1979 and has been active since 1980. While retaining the social aspects of the organization a major interest of current members, descendants of early Telemark

emigrants, has been genealogical research using new information technology. Communications among and between members was still an important aspect of membership. Annual *stevner* as well as newsletters and a Web site helped to retain a sense of togetherness.

As we plan for the next generation of Telelaget members, it is imperative that we address the application of these modern communications tools to achieve our overall mission. One of the Board of Directors' current goals is to explore concepts for the use of these tools. Our membership secretary, Joran Olson, has a background as a user and as a trainer in the application of information technology for genealogical research, family tree maintenance and reporting, and the use of Facebook. She will provide leadership in achieving this goal. Joran's article on the use of Facebook in this issue is an initial attempt to create awareness of the use of these tools particularly for the next generation of members.

Mange hilsner,
John Haugo
President of Telelaget



Telelaget members "social networking" at the 2010 7-Lag Stevne held at Winona State University

Telelaget's Web site:
www.telelaget.com

Nordlie and Jerviss Re-elected to Board

Long-time board members, Elaine Nordlie and Shelley Jerviss were re-elected to three-year terms at the Telelaget of America annual meeting held at the 7-Lag Stevne at Winona State University. Elaine, who was first elected to the board in 1999, has ably served the organization in a number of capacities: TeleNews editor, Telemark tour leader in 2002 and 2007, and as president from 2002 to 2007. Elaine is a graduate of Peterson High School and of Winona State University with a degree in music. While living in Oslo as an exchange student she met her husband, Kjell. They lived in Norway for 14 years before moving to Dassel, MN where Elaine was a music teacher for 17 years. In addition to currently teaching piano students, she and Kjell are leaders of the Dassel Leikarrin, a Norwegian folk dance group.

Shelley Jerviss has served on the board since 1992. She was co-editor of *Telesoga* from 1991 to 1997; secretary from 1998 to 2006; and treasurer and membership secretary from 2002 through this year. Shelley was born and raised in Houston, MN where she attended high school and currently serves the school district as librarian, Title I coordinator, and SLC instructor. Shelley is also a graduate of Winona State University. Her maternal ancestors are from the Seljord, Kviteseid, and Sau-land areas of Telemark. Her Norwegian ancestors immi-

grated to America in the 1850s and eventually settled in Rushford and on the Highland Prairie.

Telelaget is indeed fortunate to have the competent, dedicated leadership of Elaine and Shelley.



Members of the Telelaget Board of Directors present at the 2010 7-Lag Stevne are: *Front row:* Alice Kirn, Joran Olson, Shelley Jerviss; *Back Row:* John Haugo, Elaine Nordlie, Darrel Johnson, Bill Hoberg, and Jim Skree.

Facebook, A Social Networking Tool [by Joran Olson]

Facebook is one of the many social networking sites that flood the Internet today. It is free and it allows you to communicate and interact with friends, family and people with whom you may share similar interests. It is a great place for us to "meet" between lag meetings.

There are also many current news and special interests sites [groups] that you may want to "like" and you will receive them as they occur. There are sites for many of the Norwegian/Telemark interest groups such as: *Norwegian American Genealogical Center, Scandinavian Heritage Park, Telemark Heritage and Genealogy, Telelaget of America, Views and News from Norway* and *Ancestry.com*.

This summer I have enjoyed family reunion pictures. Many live far away and it is an excellent way to see how the children have grown and learn about other family highlights.

Facebook is continually adding features that make the application more secure. You may keep your page as private or as public as you may wish. Security settings are there for your benefit.

I hope that this may help those who wish to know a little more about **Facebook**. Be sure to join the *Telelaget of America* group. Many of the groups add interesting pictures and information. See you there!!

New Members

Harold and Ruth Aasland	Tucson, AZ	David and Elaine Oftelie	Center City, MN
Cynthia Delano	Winona, MN	Lory Olson	Vancouver, WA
Daniel and Gabriele Flatin	Flemington, NJ	Cheryl Stakston	Burnsville, MN
Lois Grufke	Boring, OR	Allan and LaVonne Solomonson	Wausau, WI
Bruce and Connie Isaacson	Dassel, MN	William Stauffer	Waukesha, WI
Haakon and Kay Jonasen	Dade City, FL	Steve Stavos	Rochester, MN
Carolyn Johnson	Kiel, WI	Robert and Joan Thompson	Crosby, ND
Judith Mathison	Waukesha, WI	Jacquelyn Vail	Seattle, WA
Ann Nelson	Stoughton, WI	Jon and Ruth Wefald	Manhattan, KS

Syttende Mai Mini-Stevne Held in Milan

On Saturday, May 15, 2010, Telelaget members celebrated Syttende Mai cultural mini-stevne, entitled "A Taste of Syttende Mai 2010", at Milan, MN. The event featured various folk arts, ethnic crafts, and a parade and Norwegian food vendors .

Mini-stevne events were held in a variety of locations including: [1] the **Kvitseid Lutheran Church**-- named for the Kvitseid Church in Kvitseid, Telemark-- where a Scandinavian lunch was served, [2] the **Milan Village Arts School**, which hosts a diverse range of classes, and [3] the **Arv Hus Museum**, which contains unique artwork exhibits donated to the Museum.

Thanks to Telelaget member Dorothy Johnson of Starbuck, MN, who grew up in Milan, for making arrangements for the event.



Sharon Haugo and Joran Olson at Milan Arts School

2012 Telemark Tour

Every five years beginning in 1992, Telelaget has conducted a tour of the Telemark region. The 10-day 2007 tour was directed by Elaine Nordlie. A committee headed by Elaine has begun plans for the next tour to be held during the summer of 2012. Please contact Elaine with suggestions. We will keep you informed of plans as they progress.

Sønsteby Article in Telesoga

Gunnar Sønsteby, Norway's most highly decorated World War II hero, is featured in the cover story for the November issue of Telesoga. Sønsteby, who was born and raised in Rjukan, Telemark, is widely recognized for his daring leadership of the Norwegian resistance fighters during the German occupation. The 92-year old Sønsteby visited Minneapolis in April.

Telelaget to Participate with Telemark Group at Høstfest

Each year Telemark Heritage, an organization that promotes today's Telemark and its culture, has a large exhibit at the annual Norsk Høstfest held in Minot, ND. They have again invited Telelaget to help maintain

their booth in exchange for a chance to promote Telelaget by distributing brochures, etc. Selmer Moen and Gloria Porter will assist with the booth. Høstfest is being held from September 30 to October 3, 2010.

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

Telelaget of America is registered in Minnesota as a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. Your membership dues and contributions help us to maintain our www.telelaget.com Web site, to produce our publications, and to provide genealogical assistance.

To donate money mail a check to Telelaget of America to: **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.

A Reminder to Renew Your Membership

If the label on this issue of *TeleNews* has a highlighted 2010 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 continue, 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.

Please mail your membership payment to: **Joran Olson, P.O. Box 88645, Sioux Falls, SD 57109**. 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 on their own.

**Over a Century of Celebrating our
Telemark Heritage**



Lag Banners at 7-Lag Stevne



Participants in 7-Lag Stevne bunad parade [Teletaget members Joran Olson, Sharon Haugo and Elaine Nordlie on the right]



Stan Oftelie and son Jim, descendants of Teletaget Founder Torkel Oftelie



Aslaksons and Hobergs await 7-Lag Stevne banquet



Long-time Ex-President Arnold Ness welcomed to annual meeting by President John Haugo



Members attend picnic at Winona's Prairie Island Park following the 7-Lag Stevne

The 2010 7-Lag Stevne at Winona State University

"Rooted in Norway, Branches Grow" was the theme of this year's 7-Lag Stevne held at Winona State University in Winona, Minnesota, July 14-17. Hosted by Ringerike-Drammen Districts Lag, Narv Somdahl, lag president, served as coordinator. Participating groups included Sigdalslag, Numedalslagen, Telelaget, Landingslaget, Hadeland Lag, and Toten, the latter three celebrating their 100th anniversary. A brief history of each of the three appeared in the program. Genealogy was set up in the Darrell Krueger Library. All other campus events—vendors, classes, entertainment, dining, and hospitality— took place in Kyrzsko Commons. Three enjoyable and well attended tours included: (1) historic Lanesboro with a stop at the theatre to watch a performance of *The Enchanted* and lunch at the Sons of Norway Lodge; (2) a trip through Trempealeau County highlighted by a stop at the *Soldiers Walk Memorial Park* in Arcadia; and (3) the City of Winona with its interesting history and original Victorian architecture.

Vendors included several craft tables—jewelry, carvings, rosemaling—; a beautiful display of hand-crafted Scandinavian porcelain dolls dressed in authentic folk costumes; rosemaled clothing; and books. Jim Olsen's display of books was bigger than ever, a place where nearly everyone found something. Deb Gourley and her mother were busy at another book display that included an array of history and bilingual selections. Orders were taken for *Nordmændene i Amerika, deres Historie og Rekord (Norwegians in America, their History and Record)* by Martin Ulvestad. This 100-year-old book is being translated and printed in three volumes. Volume I is scheduled for a September mailing.

Nothing surpasses the socialization and comraderie of a *stevne*. After an afternoon of setting up — genealogy stations, registration tables, vendors' displays—and settling in—dormitory rooms for some; for others motel rooms—and for many dinner at the nearby Lutheran Church, the "Gathering Time" began in the East Hall. Narv Somdahl, coordinator of the *stevne*, gave a warm welcome, the Nor Win Singers entertained, and friends mingled as they did throughout the four days. Attendance totaled 275. This included 44 Telelag members and four more who joined Telelaget during the *stevne*. One of these, Ann Nelson from Stoughton, Wisconsin, is the result of an "In Search of" request from Norway placed in the *Telesoga* and Carol Johnson's work in finding Ann.

The opening session was held Thursday morning in the East hall where the *fane* (banner) from each lag was displayed. The national anthems—*O Canada*; *Ja, Vi Elsker Dette Landet*; and *The Star Spangled Banner*—were played and sung. Narv Somdahl, coordinator of the *stevne*, and each of the lag presidents extended greetings. This was followed by registration and the beginning of classes and other activities.

Classes included a variety of topics: genealogy, history, writing and publishing, Norwegian folk tales, music, and the ever popular Norwegian Folk Dancing class led by Elaine and Kjell Nordlie. First Timers *Stevne* Orientation, introduced last year by John Haugo, was once again well attended. Anne Sladky led a class on Building a Personal Family Website. Blaine Hedberg provided handouts and an update on activities, acquisitions, and available resources at the Norwegian American Genealogical Center and Naeseth Library in Madison. Of special note is the Center's new Website, available as of August 10—<http://www.nagcnl.org>—Connecting the Generations Project.

The Friday evening banquet began with the colorful *bunad* parade, followed by dinner of roast park loin and beef tenderloin tips. On behalf of *Fellesraad*, Marilyn Somdahl, president, presented rosemaled bowls with inscriptions commemorating their 100th anniversary to the presidents of Toten Lag, Landingslaget, and Hadeland Lag. Entertainment was provided by Scandium, a quintet from Northfield, who performed both vocal and instrumental ballads and folk tunes from Norway. They were greatly enjoyed and received a standing ovation.

The final day was spent in individual lag meetings and activities. President John Haugo led the business meeting for Telelaget, highlighting some of the year's achievements, which included increased membership and the first *mini-stevne* in recent years. Shelley Jerviss and Elaine Nordlie were re-elected to the Telelag Board of Directors. Each of the board members gave brief presentations. Announcements included the beginning of plans for the 2012 Telelag tour to Telemark and a proposed Volume III of *Telemark to America*. At the close of the business meeting, John Haugo provided a fascinating Power Point talk on the life of Nobel Laureate Norman Borlaug. An offshoot of John's research into the life of Dr. Borlaug has been his recent election to the University of Minnesota Borlaug Blue Ribbon Commission, an organization designed to honor the memory of Norman Borlaug.

Following John's presentation 25 Telelaget members enjoyed a picnic at Prairie Island Park. We were joined by two of our newest members, Ann Nelson from Stoughton, Wisconsin, and Steve Stavos from Rochester, Minnesota. We were happy that Arnold Ness, president of Telelag for many years, was able to be with us on our final day. We were saddened by the sudden death of Bob Gullickson. Bob and Phyllis from Stoughton, Wisconsin, had planned to attend as they have for so many years.

Next year's *stevne* will be hosted by Sigdalslag and held at the Double Tree Hotel in Fargo, North Dakota, July 14–17.

[Report prepared by Alice Kirn]

Minutes of 2010 Telelaget Annual Meeting

President John Haugo welcomed the attendees to the Annual Meeting held on July 17, 2010 at Kryszko Commons on the Winona State University campus. He introduced current board members: Elaine Nordlie, Alice Kirn, Joran Olson, Shelley Jerviss, Darrel Johnson, Bill Hoberg and Jim Skree as well as long-time former President Arnold Ness. Shirley Viesselman was unable to attend.

John called the business meeting to order at 9:30 a.m., after which he reviewed the Telelaget mission statement: "To enable members to learn about and gain an appreciation of the history, culture, and customs of their ancestors from the Telemark region of Norway."

Secretary's Report: Jim read the minutes from the June 26, 2009 Annual Meeting which was held at River Falls, Wisconsin. *Rachel Gorka moved to approve the minutes as read. Mary Aslakson seconded. Passed.*

Treasurer's Report: Shelley reported that as of June 30, 2010, our current Checking Account balance is \$8,626.74, Savings Account I balance is \$5,587.87, Savings Account II balance is \$2,212.11, and our Norwegian Account balance is NOK 12,280,90. Our CD has a current value of \$10,439.41. *Elroy Aslakson moved to accept the report as presented. Stan Oftelie seconded. Passed.*

President's Report: John made a few remarks about the positive 2009 7-Lag Stevne Survey. The highlight of the Stevne, quite naturally, were the superb Telemark entertainers: Tone Jorunn Tveito and Torgier Straand. John credited much of the success of the Stevne to the hard work of the strong Stevne Planning Committee made up of Telelaget members.

Membership Report: Joran reported that we are doing well with a membership of 444 (15 in Norway). She stated that she sends out reminder letters and that we have had an overall gain, with less than 30 who didn't renew because of death and other factors.

Genealogy Report: Darrel reported that 11 new "Coming Home" forms had come in and that more are wanted for the Web site. Warren Gedstad does the computer formatting of the forms and passes them on to Anne Sladky for the Web site. He thanked the Genealogy Committee: Jan Frye, Joran Olson, Elaine Nordlie, Connie Anderson and Mary Farrel.

Webmaster: Anne Sladky reminded us that the website was changed completely last summer. People seem to be the most interested in the genealogy section and "Coming Home" forms as well as the pages devoted to each *kommuner*.

TeleNews: John mentioned that he tries to get it out a month earlier than the *Telesoga*. The last issue was devoted primarily to this year's Stevne.

Telesoga: Alice began by saying, "I have the job that Torkel Oftelie once had. He traveled by horse and buggy to make sure that the *Telers* were not forgotten and I am trying to keep up the work that Torkel Oftelie started so long ago." Alice needs more stories about women, saying, "Just as Torkel made sure that the *Telers* were not forgotten, let's make sure their *descendants* are not forgotten—send me your articles!"

Board of Directors Nominating Committee: Alice Kirn, representing the committee which also included Darrel and Joran, stated that Elaine and Shelley are up for reelection and that both had agreed to another three-year term. *Elroy Aslakson moved for a unanimous ballot for the slate. Carol Johnson seconded. Passed.*

2010 Goals: John provided an in-depth overview of our goals via a multi-slide Power Point presentation. A majority of them have been completed and the rest are in progress.

Telemark to America, Volume III: Elaine began by giving a bit of background on Volumes I and II and explained that almost all the articles for Volume III are from the old *Telesogas*. Most were written by Torkel Oftelie. Translations have been made by Harriet and Grace Foss, Glenn Nelson, Arnold Ness, Audrey and Dale Overland, Nettie Brown, Allen Osmundson and Dordi Round. The main decision which remains is which of the available articles to include in Volume III.

Telelaget's Facebook Project: Joran began by explaining why people use Facebook: to keep track of friends, as a photo album, as a blog merge, and for searching and browsing. Telelaget's Facebook pages will include: a link to the Norwegian-American Genealogical Center and Naeseth Library in Madison, Wisconsin, Views and News from Norway, Telemark Heritage and Genealogy, and Scandinavian Heritage Park.

2012 Telemark Tour Planning: Elaine reported that once again Harald Omnes and Anne Haugen Wagn will be helping with the planning. They suggest that August is a good time since there aren't so many tourists. To get more young people involved a variety of hiking tours are being planned, including up to the glaciers, etc. Tone Jorunn Tveito has volunteered to help since she is such a hiking enthusiast. Elaine also mentioned a cruise on the Lysefjord in western Norway [The 1997 Telemark Heritage Tour cruised the length of the Lysefjord and those who were along found it to be both beautiful and awe-inspiring, especially when we passed by the well-known *Prekestolen* (Pulpit Rock)].

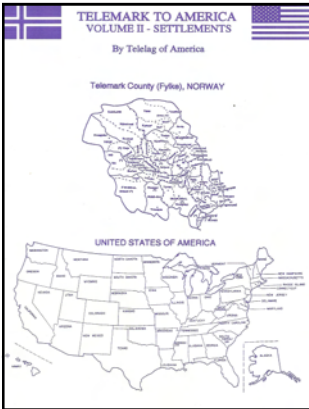
Elaine moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:40 a.m. Marv Bergland seconded. Passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Skree
Secretary
Telelaget of America

New Telelaget Publications

Telemark to America, Volume II—Settlements (Revised Edition)



In 1992, Telelaget printed 500 copies of *Telemark to America Volume II-Settlements*. Last year we sold our last copy. This volume is rich with settlement history from Wisconsin, Iowa, and Minnesota. This 179-page book has an index including over 5,500 names and places. All the chapters are translations from the early *Telesoga* written by Torkel Oftelie. Torkel visited most of the Telemark settlements in the above mentioned states between the years of 1907 to 1926. The first issue of *Telesoga*, published in 1909, contained the first settlement history. Torkel documented not only names of those living in these settlements, but also the stories of their ancestors - the first settlers in these areas. Volume II has been revised and 200 more copies have been printed. Revisions in the book included adding twenty-four more pictures, making numerous translation and grammatical corrections, explaining location of many place names, and making it more user friendly for younger generations by translating slang terms.

Prices: \$20.00 + \$3.00 S&H = \$23.00 or NOK 125 + NOK 102 S&H = NOK 227

"A year at Haugo farm" by Ingebjørg Draugedal



Recently, Telelaget of America entered into a distribution agreement with Vest-Telemark Museum, the publisher of the English version of the book entitled, "A year at Haugo farm". Under the terms of the agreement, Telelaget will sell and mail copies of the book in the United States and Canada. Author Ingebjørg Draugedal - who now lives in Kviteseid, Telemark, Norway - tells of her life as a girl in 1945, growing up under Nazi occupation on a farm in Telemark that was still as self-sufficient as those our emigrant ancestors left in the 1800's. How did people back then provide for nearly everything they needed themselves? In the book Ingebjørg recounts how they shared the work, the hardships and the pleasures of living on a close-knit family farm. The book describes in detail the practical work that was done on the farm, but it also tells about the relationships between the family members and within the local community, and about the intimate interaction with the surrounding landscape. Ingebjørg's vivid reminiscences breathe life into what is now a bygone era for most of us.

Price: \$40.00 + \$2.50 S&H = \$42.50

Order Form (May be photocopied.)

___ Copies of Telemark to America, Volume II-Settlements

@ \$20.00 + \$3.00 S&H = \$23.00 or NOK 125 + NOK 102 S&H = NOK 227 _____

___ Copies of A year at Haugo farm:

@ \$40.00 + \$2.50 S&H = \$42.50 _____

___ Copies of Telelaget – The First One Hundred Years

@ \$20.00 + \$3.00 S&H = \$23.00 or NOK 125 + NOK 102 S&H = NOK 227 _____

___ Copies of Telemark to America, Volume I—Emigration

@ \$20.00 + \$3.00 S&H = \$23.00 or NOK 125 + NOK 102 S&H = NOK 227 _____

Name _____

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

Address _____

Note: These publications, Telesoga CDs, and various Telelaget 100th Anniversary Commemorative items may also be ordered through our Web site, www.telelaget.com. Commemorative items include a tote bag, a cap, a mug, and a fana (minature Telemark banner).

Telelaget of America Officers

President & TeleNews Editor

John Haugo
1407 Croix Crest Dr.
Hudson, WI 54016
(715) 381-1430
john.haugo@gmail.com

Vice President

Bill Hoberg
503 17th Street North
Benson, MN 56215
(320) 843-3988
jbhoberg@charter.net

Genealogist

Darrel Johnson
25216 N. Pine Drive
Sebeka, MN 56477
(218) 472-3264
dejohnso@wcta.net

Publications

Jim Skree
15279 Skree Drive
Caledonia, MN 55921
(507) 896-3709
shelley.jerviss@houston.k12.mn.us

Treasurer

Shelley Jerviss
P. O. Box 292
Houston, MN 55943
507) 896-2088
shelley.jerviss@houston.k12.mn.us

Tour Director

Elaine Nordlie
620 Maple St.
Dassel, MN 55325
(320) 275-2286
enordlie@charter.com

Secretary

Shirley Viesselman
1015 Jefferson Street SE
Hutchinson, MN 55350
(320) 587-4692
kwsav@hutchtel.net

Membership Chair

Joran Olson
1816 South Holly Drive
Sioux Falls, SD 57105
(605) 271-9328
joranlho42@sio.midco.net

Telesoga Editor

Alice Stangeland Kirn
2147 Alpine Drive
Helena, MT 59601
(406) 422-5539
alicekirn@bresnan.net

Telemark Director

Anne Haugen Wagn
Solskinnsvegen 8
3684 Notodden, Norway
awagn@online.no

Telemark Director

Harald Omnes 3825
3825 Lunde, Norway
harald.omnes@c2i.net

Webmaster

Anne Sladky
6938 State Highway 200 NW
LaPorte, MN 56461
(218) 547-1156
anne@mnwebsteps.com



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