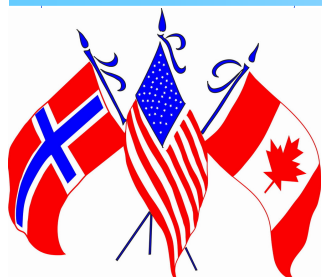


# TeleNews



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

Volume XVIII, Number 2  
September 2012

Published by  
Telelaget of America

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## Greetings from the President

This has been a very busy and successful year for Telelaget of America. We have released our third in a series of *Telemark to America* books; participated in another 7-Lag Stevne; increased our membership at a time when most ethnic heritage groups are declining in membership; and recently completed another popular tour of Telemark as well as Stavanger and Oslo.

Having participated in my third tour, I can attest to the quality of the 2012 tour and the high level of satisfaction by the 45 participants. Much of the success can be attributed to the leadership of Elaine Nordlie, whose knowledge of Norway and whose communication skills are second to none.

This year's tour provided an option for participants to hike in the mountains of Setesdal and western Telemark. The area known as the Hardanger plateau features a very rugged terrain, often treeless and snow-covered even during the summer months. Twelve individuals along with eight Norwegians participated in the four-day hike led by hiking guides Tone Jorunn Tveito and Harald Omnes. Hikers stayed in cabins along the way and prepared their meals.

One of the somewhat unique features of Telelaget tours is the emphasis upon visits

to ancestral farms. Elaine assisted in making arrangements for most of the tour participants. One of the joys of the tour is to witness the elation, sometimes very emotional, of individuals as they first visit a farm home of one of their ancestors.

I was pleased to be joined on the tour by my daughter and three granddaughters. They also participated in the hike. It was gratifying to see the interest in their ancestry and impressions of the scenery. As we were watching the fog lift and the sun break through over the Bandak from my grandmother's home churchyard in Lårdal, one exclaimed. "Grandpa, this is the most beautiful sight I have ever seen".

The only downside of the tour for me was my experience driving in Oslo after getting separated from the tour bus. Even with Darrel Johnson's able assistance, it took two hours of traversing tunnels, parallel one-way streets and construction sites to locate our hotel.

Pages 4 and 5 contain tour pictures. Please consider joining our next tour.

*Mange hilsner,*  
John Haugo  
President



2012 Telelaget Tour group picture taken near the "Eagle's Nest", east of Stavanger.

## Gorka, Oftelie and Hoberg Elected to Board

Rachel Gorka and Jim Oftelie were elected to the Board of Directors of Telelaget of America to their first three-year terms at the July 21, 2012 annual meeting in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin. Bill Hoberg was elected to his second three-year term at the meeting, which was held at the conclusion of the 2012 7-Lag Stevne.



Rachel Gorka

Rachel Gorka, who lives in New Richmond, Wisconsin, works at the Minnesota Historical Society in St. Paul, Minnesota as a financial analyst. Her financial management expertise will contribute to the work of the board of directors. Rachel was a member of the planning committee for the 2009 7-Lag Stevne held at the University of Wisconsin - River Falls. She also participated in the 2007 Telelaget

tour where she visited ancestral farms in Notodden and Lårdal. Rachel's maternal great-grandparents both emigrated from the Telemark region. Her great-grandfather Gregar Anundson emigrated in 1870 and her great-grandmother Johanne Torgerson emigrated in 1872. They both settled in Dunn County, Wisconsin in the rolling hills that were reminiscent of the hills of their Telemark. Rachel enjoys genealogy, knitting and gardening. Rachel and her husband, Cliff, have two children and one granddaughter.

Jim Oftelie is an engineer with Caterpillar Corporation, who currently now lives in Joliet, Illinois. He is a mechanical engineer and MBA by training and specializes in hydraulic circuit and component design for off-road vehicles. His career in engineering involves the management of various aspects of new product development and mar-



Jim Oftelie

ket introduction. Jim's hometown is Decorah, Iowa. Jim's ties to Norway and Telemark are found in his father's family, which consist of the Oftelie, Groven and Weiby families. The Oftelie and Groven family farms in the Seljord and Morgedal areas of Telemark. Jim, who is the great-grandson of Telelaget founder and historian Torkel Oftelie, participated in both the 2007 and 2012 Telelaget Tours. During the 2007 tour Jim had the rare blessing of having visited some of the Telemark relatives and ancestral homes with his late father, Stan. Jim's outside interests include woodworking, carpentry, mechanical wristwatches and automobile restoration in addition to history, archaeology and family genealogy. Jim and his wife, Sara, his wife of 27 years have two children: Erin a journalist with the *Tampa Tribune*; and Daniel is Navy Midshipman studying mechanical engineering at Iowa State University in Ames, IA.

Bill Hoberg, from Benson, Minnesota, is currently vice president of the Telelaget Board of Directors. He was first elected to the Board in July, 2009. Bill participated in the 2007 Telelaget tour and visited a number of ancestral homes. Bill graduated from South Dakota State University where he majored in agriculture and was member of the football team. He began his career as a vocational agriculture instructor at Benson High School for four years and has been a banker for 36 years. He is a vice president and loan officer for the State Bank of Danvers. Bill and his wife, Judy, have two sons.

## Norwegian-American Center Project

Norway House, a Minnesota-based Norwegian-American organization whose mission is to be a bridge between contemporary Norway and the United States, is conducting a project that entails the establishment of a Norwegian-American Center in collaboration with Mindekirken Church. The Center is intended to be a resource available to all area Norwegian-American groups. It will serve as an event and cultural center; provide office and meeting rooms; and have a gallery and exhibition area for participating organizations.

First phase funding for the Center, that will be located adjacent to Mindekirken Church on Franklin Avenue in Minneapolis, has been pledged. A purchase agreement for an existing office facility has been signed. A professional fundraiser is working with the Norway House Board to raise funds from Norwegian-American organizations and individuals to support the completion of the Center. Please contact Norway House officials at [www.norwayhouse.net](http://www.norwayhouse.net) or call 877-247-7439 to learn about the project and to participate in its support.

## New Members

Sonja Albright	Waunakee, WI	Jackie Henry	Northfield, MN
Valarie Baugh	Sante Fe, NM	Sheryl Hove	St. Paul, MN
Lila Burmeister	Atwater, MN	Margaret Landa	Finnøy, Norway
Eric Danielson	Middleton, WI	Rodney and Shanna Kurth	Metamora, IL
Helge and Lilly Fugledal	Finnøy, Norway	Marne Olson *	Santa Rosa, CA
Orwall and Lois Hagen	Stevens Point, WI	Carol Volstad	Rochester, MN
John Hammett	Ventura, CA		

\* = Lifetime Member

## 2013 7-Lag Stevne to be Held in St. Cloud



The 2013 7-Lag Stevne is scheduled to be held from Thursday, July 11 to Saturday, July 13 at the Holiday Inn & Suites in St. Cloud, Minnesota. Hadeland Lag will serve as the host for the stevne. Anne

Sladky, who also serves as Telelaget's webmaster, will be the stevne coordinator. The logo for the 2013 stevne includes the battle cry found on the flag given to the 15<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin (Scandinavian) Regiment by the Society Nora in Chicago as the newly formed unit made its way to the front in March of 1862.

One in five Norwegian immigrant men served during the Civil War. Over 1,000 lost their lives. Six received the Congressional Medal of Honor. The experiences of Norwegian-American soldiers on both sides of the fighting and

### Skree Serves for 23 Years

Jim Skree of Caledonia, Minnesota has completed 23 years on the Board of Directors of Telelaget of America. During those years Jim served as Vice President for eight years, as Historian for seven years, as Co-editor of *Telesoga* for five years, Editor of TeleNews for three years, and as Secretary for two years. Because of Telelaget's new by-laws which limit board members to two three-year terms, Jim was no longer eligible for re-election. Jim, however, will continue as our Historian. We are grateful for Jim's many contributions to accomplishing Telelaget's mission.

### AFS Norway Exchange Program

AFS is an international non-profit, volunteer-based organization working for peace through student exchange. They are looking for host families in the Midwest for Norwegian exchange students to come to America. Many Norwegian youth come to the United States to learn more about the daily life and culture of our country. They attend high school and live with a host family while they are here. The Norwegian exchange students are in America for about 10-11 months, attending high school while they live with their host families. Both the student and the host family learn a lot about other cultures dur-

### Membership Renewal

If the label on this issue of your *TeleNews* has a highlighted **2012** on it, this means that your Telelaget membership is expiring and that this is the last mailing of *TeleNews*. To ensure that your membership will continue, please renew before the end of the year. See page 5 for a copy of the membership application form.

the war's impact on those waiting at home will be discussed by speakers and in classes throughout the stevne. At present class topics include: 15<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin/Scandinavian Regiment, the Dakota Conflict, the Andersonville Prison, the Civil War in Minnesota, and Norwegian-Americans in the Confederacy. Gene Estensen, former Telelaget Board Member and Historian will be among the presenters. Gene, who has several ancestors who served in 15<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin Regiment, has done a significant research on the Civil War.

The Stearns County Museum, the Hill Library at St John's University to learn about their medieval illuminated bible project, the Military Museum at Camp Ripley including its artifact-filled Civil War exhibit and boyhood home of famed aviator Charles Lindbergh are among the tours planned during the stevne.

A buffet supper and program will be held on Friday evening. There will be a full slate of classes on Saturday. Individual lag meetings will be held on Saturday afternoon. The Saturday evening banquet will include entertainment by members of *Furuleiken spel og danselag* from Gran, Lunner, and Ringerike Norway.

### Tour Featured in *Telesoga*

According to Editor Alice Kirn, the November *Telesoga* will feature the story of our 2012 tour, highlighting the four days of hiking, a joint venture of Norwegians and Americans. Tour leaders were Tone Jorunn Tveito and Harald Omnes. Other articles will include the fiddler Hans Fykerud and his fiddle named "Sigrid," the Quisling family of doctors and fiddle players, and the amazing story of Henry and Annie Peterson. Other articles are pending. Alice notes, "The November issue will continue to enable *Telesoga* to keep the memory of our Telemark ancestry alive through stories, history, reminiscences, and achievements among the descendants.

ing the stay, and grow tight lifetime lasting bonds. AFS Norway has a number of Norwegian exchange students (from ages 16-17) still in Norway, waiting for a host family in the United States to host them. AFS USA is having trouble finding host families for them all - this is why AFS Norway now steps in using our contacts in the United States. Contact Hal Stavland with any questions you might have, his email address and contact information follows: E-mail = [halvor.stavland@afs.org](mailto:halvor.stavland@afs.org) Office number = (011) 4722 3179 00 Cell Phone = (011) 4799 1053 96

**Telelaget of America;**  
**Over a Century of Celebrating our**  
**Telemark Heritage**

Pictures from the 2012 Telelaget Tour



Darrel Johnson and his daughter, Michelle Klose, meet a friend at Holmenkollen.



Randy Twito posing at the large rock lifted by his ancestor sterke [strong] Hans Twito from Tinn.



Kelsi, Kristin, Ashley and Meagan Haugo at the ancestral Haugo farm near Mo.



Telelaget officers John Haugo, Alice Kirn, Elaine Nordlie, Joran Olson, Darrell Johnson, and Jim Oftelie pictured in a feature article in *Telemarksavisa*.



Heddal Kirke, the largest of the 28 existing Norwegian stave churches, was visited on the tour.



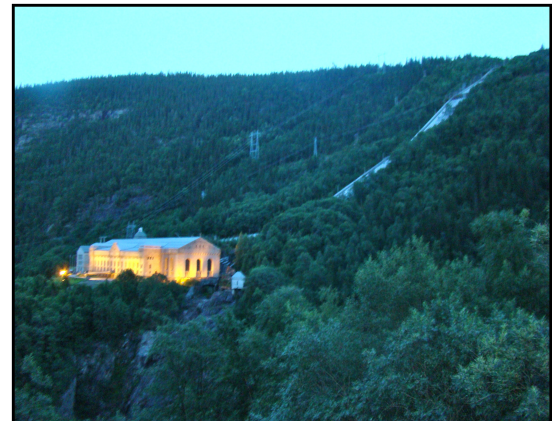
Laila Egelandsdal and Margaret Landa, relatives of Alice Kirn, hosted lunch and provided the guide for tour of Finnøy.



Telelaget Tour members aboard a replica of the Restauration, the first emigrant ship to leave Norway in 1825.



Kjell and Elaine Nordlie, their daughter Catherine Young, and granddaughters Caitlin Young and Gabrielle Hoffman are pictured with the Oslo Palace guard.



An evening view of the famous Vemork Industrial Museum in Rjukan, site of the famous World War II Nazi heavy water plant.



Hiking in the August snow.



Tone Jorunn Tveito presented a Viking shirt by her American cousins.



The twelve American and eight Norwegian hikers who participated in the HoVDen to Haukelisetter hike.

## Membership Application Form for *Telelaget of America*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Associate Member or Spouse: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State : \_\_\_\_\_ Zip : \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail : \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal: \_\_\_\_ New Membership: \_\_\_\_

Ancestor's Family Name[s]: \_\_\_\_\_ Ancestor's Farm[s]: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Dues For Individual or Household [January 1 to December 31]:

- One-Year Membership: \_\_\_\_ U.S.A. = \$12 \_\_\_\_ Non-U.S.A. = \$14 \_\_\_\_ Norway = NOK 85
- Four-year Membership: \_\_\_\_ U.S.A. = \$42 \_\_\_\_ Non-U.S.A. = \$50 \_\_\_\_ Norway = NOK 340
- Lifetime Membership: \_\_\_\_ U.S.A. = \$175 \_\_\_\_ Non-U.S.A. = \$180 \_\_\_\_ Norway = NOK 1050

Make check payable to: Telelaget of America

Mail check and completed form to: Joran Olson, P.O. Box 88645, Sioux Falls, SD 57109

Note: Use a separate sheet of paper or a photocopy if you wish to save this page.

## Minutes of 2012 Telelaget Annual Meeting

President John Haugo welcomed members of to the Telelaget Annual meeting held on July 21, 2012 at the Olympia Conference Center in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin. He called the meeting together at 8:00 a.m. All attending members introduced themselves and told where their ancestors were from in Telemark and when they immigrated to the United States. Members of the Board of Directors in attendance were Elaine Nordlie, Joran Olson, Darrel Johnson, John Haugo, Jim Skree, and Shelley Jerviss. Twenty-eight members attended the meeting.

*Secretary's Report:* Since Secretary Shirley Viesselman was not in attendance last year's annual meeting minutes were distributed electronically.

*Treasurer's Report:* Treasurer Shelley Jerviss presented the Treasurer's report. She reported that revenue for the period from July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012 was \$11,084 with membership dues accounting for \$4,611. Operating expenses for the year were \$14,969. The primary shortfall for the year was that over \$3000 had been paid for printing of unsold *Telelaget to America Series: Volume III*. Telelaget's bank balances totaled \$24,080 with \$2,637 in the checking account, \$8,606 in Savings Account 1, \$2,217 in Savings Account II, \$10,620 in a CD. There is 11,406.25 NOK in our Norwegian account. *Joran Olson moved and Elaine Nordlie seconded the motion to accept the Treasurer's report as presented. The motion passed.*

*President's Report:* President Haugo stated that most of the organizations accomplishments would be highlighted in his report of 2012 goals. He complimented the diligent work and leadership of various individuals. He noted that Telelaget was one of few *lag* that have shown an increase in membership. John also commented on the popularity of the upcoming Telemark Tour and of the success of our various publications including the *Telemark to America series, Telesoga*, and *TeleNews*. He reported that approximately one-half of the membership is now receiving *TeleNews* mailed to their email address.

*Membership Report:* Membership Chair Joran Olson reported on the membership statistics for the 2012 year. She noted that we now have 448 family units and 621 individual memberships. We have added 44 new members during the year and lost 39 members. At present we have 33 Norwegian members. We also have eight members who have selected the new option of a lifetime membership.

*Genealogist's Report:* Genealogist Darrel Johnson reported that the genealogy table was very busy during the *stevne*. He has purchased a laptop computer for Telelaget for genealogy use. Darrell also reviewed statistics on the "Coming Home" part of our Web site.

*Webmaster's Report:* In the absence of Webmaster Anne Sladky, President Haugo highlighted her report on Web site activity. Over the past year our Web site, [www.telelaget.com](http://www.telelaget.com), was been accessed 27,762 times with 74,302 pages of Web site material being viewed.

That is an average 77 visits and 206 pages per day.

*Telesoga Report:* *Telesoga* Editor, Alice Kirn, who was unable to attend the *Stevne*, sent a written report. She noted that the May cover story about Dr. Hamlet Peterson caught the attention of Torbjørn Greipsland, a Telemark journalist who asked permission to use information and pictures to prepare an article that appeared in the *Rjukan Arbeiderblad* on June 23. Alice stated that the feature story for the November 2012 *Telesoga* will involve our tour with a picture of the hikers on the cover. She also has a number of other articles planned for the November issue that will enable *Telesoga* to continue to keep the memory of our Telemark ancestry alive through stories, history, reminiscences, and achievements among the descendants.

*Board of Directors Nominating Committee:* Darrel Johnson, chair of the nominating committee, nominated Rachel Gorka, Bill Hoberg, and Jim Oftelie, to serve on the board of directors for three-year terms. Gorka and Oftelie are new board members and Hoberg will be serving a second three-year term. *A motion was made by Elaine Nordlie and seconded by Shelley Jerviss to accept these members as new board members. The motion passed.*

A number of individuals commented on the contributions made by Jim Skree who has served on the board for over 20 years. Haugo noted that Jim will be recognized at the next meeting of the board and that he will continue to serve as Historian.

*Publications Report* – Jim Skree, Publications Chair, and Treasurer Shelley Jerviss reported on the sales of publications over the past year. They reported that during the last year 19 copies of *Telemark to America – Volume I*, 36 of *Volume II*, and 62 of *Volume III* had sold during the last year. They also noted that a significant number of books had sold during the *stevne*.

*2012 Goals:* President Haugo discussed the ten annual goals of Telelaget (include if more space needed.) He noted that excellent progress had been made over the past year towards the attainment of these goals.

*2012 Telemark Tour:* Elaine Nordlie, Tour Leader, gave a report on the latest news about our tour to Norway scheduled for July 30 to August 9. She stated that the tour is full and there are participants. Elaine noted that twelve tour participants have signed up for the four-day hiking option in which they would participate with eight Norwegians. She emphasized that one of the most popular elements of the tour were the visits to ancestral farms. Elaine noted that Harald Omnes and Anne Haugen Wagn, our Telelaget Board directors from Telemark, helped arrange farm visits.

*Darrel Johnson moved and Jan Frye seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting . The motion passed.*

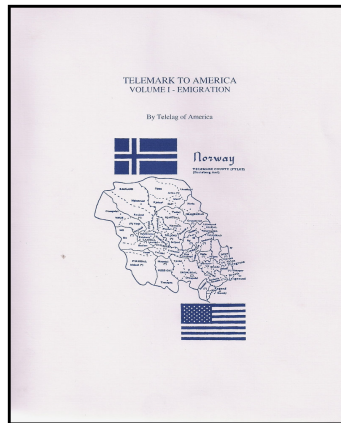
Respectively submitted,

John Haugo

President

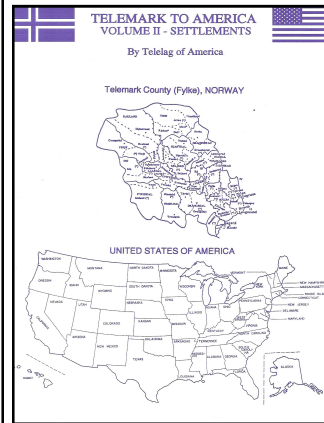
## Telelaget Publications

### Telemark to America, Volume I – Emigration



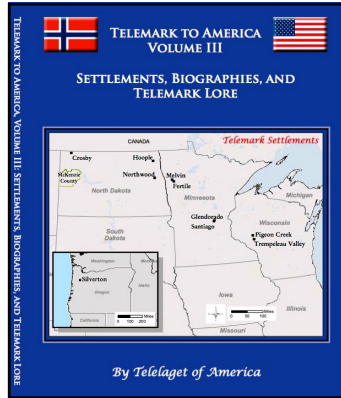
In 1837 the first Telemark emigrants set off for America beginning a stream of thousands starting a new life in a strange land. They retained a love for Telemark that has been passed down through the generations. This volume is a collection of articles written both by authors from Telemark and Americans with roots in Telemark, as well as translation of articles written long ago. It tells as complete but concise a story of Telemark emigration as possible and gives insight into the country that the immigrants left behind.

### Telemark to America, Volume II—Settlements



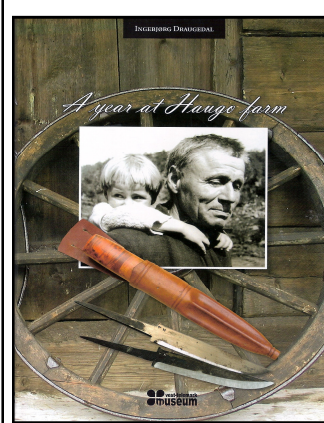
Volume II is rich with settlement history from Wisconsin, Iowa, and Minnesota. All the chapters are translations from the early *Telesoga* written by Torkel Oftelie. Torkel visited most of the Telemark settlements in the above mentioned states between the years of 1907 to 1926. The first issue of *Telesoga*, 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.

### NEW! Telemark to America, Volume III— Settlements, Biographies, and Telemark Lore



Volume III of the *Telemark to America* series was published and released in July, 2011. The book is divided into three parts: articles on settlement history, emigrant biographies, and Telemark folklore. Much of the content was provided by Torkel Oftelie where he spent over twenty years visiting the settlements and documenting the lives of the Telemark emigrants. Torkel was concerned about the rich Telemark cultural heritage not be left behind. As with the other volumes, it is a valuable resource in searching for your Telemark ancestors, farms, and customs.

### "A Year on Haugo Farm" by Ingebjorg Draugedal



This is the English version of the book in which the author - who now lives in Kviteseid, Telemark, Norway - tells of her life as a young 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. The book recounts how they shared the work, the hardships and the pleasures of living on a close-knit family farm. It describes in detail the practical work that was done on the farm.

### ORDER FORM

- \_\_\_ 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 \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_ 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 **Telemark to America, Volume III—Settlements, Biographies, and Lore**  
 @ \$20.00 + \$3.00 S&H = \$23.00 or NOK 125 + NOK 102 S&H = NOK 227 \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_ Sets of **Telemark to America, Volume I, II, and III SPECIAL OFFER!**  
 @ \$50.00 + \$8.00 S&H = \$58.00 or NOK 250 + NOK 102 S&H = NOK 352 \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_ Copies of **A year at Haugo farm NEW PRICE!**  
 @ \$20.00 + \$2.50 S&H = \$22.50 \_\_\_\_\_
- Total = \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Mail Order to : **Shelley Jerviss**  
**P.O. Box 292**  
**Houston, MN 55943**

**Note: These publications, Telesoga CDs, and various Telelaget 100th Anniversary Commemorative items may also be ordered through our Web site, [www.telelaget.com](http://www.telelaget.com).**

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