



TeleNews



NEWS FOR DESCENDANTS OF EMIGRANTS FROM THE TELEMARCK REGION IN NORWAY

VOLUME XXIV NUMBER II

NOVEMBER 2017

The mission of Telelaget of America is 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.

2017 Telelaget of America Board of Directors



Pictured left to right: Doug Framness - Director, Judy Mathison - Membership, Jim Oftelie - President, Sandy Gilbert - Director, Elaine Nordlie - Tour Director, Sheryl Hove - Secretary, Lila Burmeister - Telesoga/TeleNews Editor, Deanna Zentgraf - Treasurer, Jeff Huset - Vice President

At the Annual Meeting held in Decorah in July, two new members, Sandra Gilbert and Sheryl Hove, were elected to the Board of Directors for one year terms to fill out the terms of Neil and Carol Johnson who retired this year for health reasons. They will each be eligible for two additional three-year

terms. Jeffrey Huset, previously appointed to the board to fill the remainder of the term vacated by Randy Tweito was elected to his first three year term. Elaine Nordlie and Lila Burmeister will each serve a second three year term.

Introducing Our New Board Members

Sheryl Hove lives in St. Paul, Minnesota. She and her husband have two adult children and three grandchildren. Sheryl is retired from St. Paul Public Schools.

Sheryl became interested in genealogy when helping translate an autobiography written by her grandmother's sister when she was a teenager. All eight of Sheryl's grandparents' families, plus her father-in-law's family, have ancestry from Norway and fortunately they all had family historians who shared their information. In addition to Telelaget, Sheryl is also a member of Vestlandslaget and Numedalslaget.

Sandy Gilbert is a retired lawyer and teacher from Plymouth, MN, who spends her days playing with grandchildren or researching her Norwegian roots. She is also an avid gardener whose yard was featured on the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum Tour three years ago.

Sandy has made multiple trips to Norway to visit family farms, including one trip last summer with Telelaget. She has met many distant Norwegian cousins who have become treasured friends. Sandy has written several articles for the *Telesoga*.



Are you looking for a Christmas gift for your favorite Norwegian? How about one of Telelaget's publications or memorabilia?

Telelaget to America: Volume I – Emigration;
Volume II – Settlements;
Volume III – Settlements, Biographies, & Telemark Lore.
 \$20 each or \$50 for the series.

A Year on Haugo Farm

The life of a girl living on a Telemark farm during WWII — \$20.

Telelaget, The First One Hundred Years

\$20 — free for a limited time to new lifetime members!

A one-year, four-year, or lifetime membership to Telelaget of America!

These items, along with **mugs, tote bags, and miniature fane (banner)** can be purchased on the website or by contacting Shelley Jerviss.



Occasionally we send updates or notices to our members via email. Be sure we have your current email address! Send it to telenews@telelaget.com.

**“Sustain and Celebrate
Our Legacy”**

Reflections on the 2017 Stevne

by Jim Oftelie

The 2017 7-Lag Stevne has come and gone, but it is still very much on my mind. The idea of culture immersion was a big part of the plan for hosting the 2017 stevne, “Sustain

and Celebrate Your Legacy.” With the help of many people, it was a tremendous success.

We called upon our friends in Norway to help and they did not disappoint. Tone Jorunn Tveito, beautiful and talented vocal recording artist and Torgeir Straand, talented and charismatic hardanger fiddler, headlined our Friday night general session. Some truly special guests were the Tinndølan dance team, based out of the Tinn region of Telemark. This was possible thanks to the dedicated efforts of our special friend and Friday evening’s keynote speaker Per Lykke. The group of high school and college age young adults delight audiences with their traditional Norwegian *hardingfele* and dance performances. They were finalists on the “Norway’s Got Talent” television show earlier this year. We met Tinndølan on the 2016 Telelaget Telemark tour, and we were thrilled to share them with our friends here in America.



Per Lykke gave a presentation to the youth camp participants about the reindeer in Norway on the Hardangarvidda.

We wanted to place a special emphasis on the children with a youth program, to extend the total immersion concept for these young people. Thanks to the efforts of Elaine Nordlie and Anne Sladkey, eight youth shared a wonderful experience in exploring their Norwegian heritage.



Tone Jorunn Tveito and Torgeir Strand

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Front: Sheryl Hove, Mary Aslakson, Elroy Aslakson, Edith Syftestad, Ardis Christen, Elizabeth Bruening, Anette Holt Bratsberg, Åsne Constance Haugen, Marianne Tvitekkja, Anlaug Nørstebø. Row 2: Eileen Ronning, Julian Ronning, Elaine Nordlie, Allan Solomonson, Sondre Haugen, Heidrun Midtbøen, Knut B. Berge. Row 3: Kristian Ronning, Gloria Lundblad, Ken Lundblad, Per Lykke, Carol Sersland, Heidrun Midtbøen, Sámund Midtbøen, Back: Bob Felstul, Geri Felstul, Bob Helgeson, Morrey Nellis, Earl Vraa, Irina Lykke



The popular Bunad Parade had participants from many parts of Norway. Tinn, East and West Telemark were well represented by the Tinndølan dancers. A few of our youth camp students participated, as did Tone Jorunn Tveito's daughter, Raghild.



Bill Hoberg was given a plaque recognizing his service as our lag president in 2015-16



Prior to our annual meeting, Martha Griesheimer explained the primstav murals created by Norwegian painter Sigmund Aarseth in Vesterheim's Gathering Room. Primstav's were used to help keep track of Saint's days and the church year and over time acquired worldly calendar associations dealing with seasonal agricultural and domestic activities.

Heartfelt thanks goes out to your Telelaget Board of Directors, along with other dedicated volunteers who served as the planning committee. Our special thanks to the staff of Luther College, who did everything we could ask of them to make the event a success. Be sure to take note of the additional articles and photos of the *stevne* in this issue of the *Telesoga*.



Birgit Haukås, Annbjørg Sagvolden, Jorunn A. Nørstebø, Carolyn Burkhart, – Erin Oftelie, Torgeir Straand, Judy Mathison, Frieda Nowland, Isaac Harrison. Row 2: Helge Sigurd Amdal Tølnes, Ole Per Haukås, Eva Haukås, Sandra Fjelstad Gilbert, Daniel Oftelie, Rachel Gorka, Douglas Framness, Bill Hoberg, Ron Nowland, Lila Burmeister, Sara Oftelie. Back Rows: Thorleif Gunleiksrud, Ruth Christ, Sharon Haugo, David Christ, John Haugo, Jim Skree, Suzanne Peterson, Mary Aslakson, Shelley Jerviss, Jeff Huset, Ham Peterson, Joran Olson, Deanne Zentgraf, Jerry Burmeister, Jerry Ostenson, Jim Oftelie

Thank You Telelag



Thank you for the beautiful plaque honoring my years as editor of the *Telesoga*. I did not realize until I returned home that the plaque is handcrafted by Jim Oftelie, which

makes the award even more special. As most of you know, it was Jim's great-grandfather, Torkel Oftelie, who co-founded Telelaget and also created the *Telesoga* as a means for remembering the emigrants from Telemark. For 20 years Torkel traveled the Midwest, much of the time at his own expense, collecting stories, writing most of them himself, and publishing them in 53 issues of the *Telesoga*. His final writing was a summary of his work in 1926. "We must make sure the Telers are not forgotten" and "I simply had to do it" are two of his oft repeated sentences.

Following Torkel, the *Telesoga* was not resumed on a regular basis until the 1980s, and by then Torkel's work was all but forgotten, that is, until Arnold Ness, former president of Telelag, discovered the body of Torkel's work in the St. Olaf Library. When Telelag reorganized in the 1980s after the difficult years of the Great Depression and world wars,

translating the articles written in old Telemark dialect in Gothic script became an important objective. The translations appear in our three *Telemark to America* series. This was followed by another mammoth undertaking: placing the translated articles on CDs, the work of Gene Estensen, our webmaster at the time, and Elaine Nordlie, president of Telelaget at the time. Needless to say, Torkel is an inspiration. My first acquaintance with him was through the research of Gene Estensen, which he posted on our website. So, when Elaine Nordlie asked me to fill in *for an issue or two*, "I simply had to do it." My hope is that we will continue to keep the history of our ancestry alive.

It has been exciting to have Torkel's great-grandson, more than one hundred years after Torkel, serve as our president. Thank you, Jim, for the handcrafted plaque and for walking in your great-grandfather's footsteps.



Kristan Ronning, Hastings MN
Scott Brunner, DePere WI
Terese Harwood, Duluth MN
Brad Woxland, Rushford MN
Diane Knutson, Yakima WA
Larry Madson, Plymouth MN
Aveeda Rada, Eureka CA
Aase Therkelsen, Kongsberg NO
Torjus Bolkesjø, Notodden NO
Robert Paulson, Alpine CA
Sandra Sathre, Grand Forks ND
Ann Haroldson, Wheaton IL
Beverly Aga Schmidt, Eagan MN
Lisa Torvik, St. Paul MN
Barry & Vonnie Hoffmeyer,
Castle Rock CO
Marybeth Nelson, Minneapolis MN
Tom Dennstedt, Minneapolis MN
Ardis Fiskerbeck Christen
Rochester MN
Larry & Gail Larson, Bozeman MT
Rebecca Lewis, Amana IA
Pam Mathison, Austin TX
Cindy Ostlie, Brookings SD
Darla Thorland, Decorah IA
Linda McBride, Linton UT
Marilyn Hanson Yoder,
Kalona IA
Bradley Haroldson, Glencoe MD
David Stinson, Seattle WA

RømmegrøtBars



When you think 2017 *Stevne*, do you think *Rømmegrøt* bars? Several of you requested the recipe for these delicious bars that were served in the hospitality areas.

2 pkgs. crescent roll dough
2 8 oz. pkgs. cream cheese, softened
1 1/3 cup sugar (divided use)
1 egg separated
1 tsp. vanilla
1/2 tsp. cinnamon

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350. Grease 9x13" baking pan. Press one package of crescent rolls in bottom of pan. Mix cream cheese, 1 cup sugar, 1 egg yolk and 1 tsp. vanilla. Spread mixture over crescent rolls; then cover with the remaining package of crescent rolls. Beat egg white until foamy and baste over the top layer of crescent rolls. Mix together 1/3 cup sugar and 1/2 tsp. cinnamon. Sprinkle over the top crescent roll layer. Bake for 25-30 minutes or until golden brown. Cool, cut and enjoy!

DOLLAR\$&CENTS

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- **International Telemark** -- news about contemporary Telemark
- **Telemark Heritage & Genealogy**
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