



TeleNews



NEWS FOR DESCENDANTS OF EMIGRANTS FROM THE TELEMARCK REGION IN NORWAY

VOLUME XXV NUMBER II

NOVEMBER 2018

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.

Your New Telelaget Directors

Three new members were elected to Telelaget's Board of Directors at the July Annual Meeting. Joan Niemiec and Jerry Burmeister were elected to two year terms, replacing Jim Oftelie and Deanna Zentgraf. Mary Aslakson was elected to fill the one year term left by Judy Mathison's resignation.



Joan and her husband, Dick, live in Minneapolis, Minnesota and have a second home near Decorah, Iowa. Joan became interested in genealogy when she learned her

husband's ancestors were aboard the Mayflower. Several years ago, Joan learned at a *stevne* that some of her ancestors came from Telemark. They were Hans Torgerson Vinbek Finnemyr from Sauherad (Sande), Telemark (DOB 24 Jan 1830) and Anne Skogen (Madsdatter) (DOB 7 April, 1834).



Jerry grew up on a farm near Harmony Minnesota. His wife, Lila, is currently a Telelaget board member. They live near Atwater, Minnesota and have

three children and four grandchildren. Jerry is the Consulting Manager at Interstate Telcom Consulting, Inc. in Hector. Jerry became interested in his Norwegian roots because of Lila's many years of research. According to his mother's DNA, she is 99 percent Norwegian with three of her grandparents emigrating from Telemark (Seljord, Tinn and Tokke). Jerry has visited the Telemark area twice, once on a family heritage trip through Norway in 2013, and again on the Telelaget Tour in 2016.



Mary and her husband, Elroy, live in Independence, Missouri. Their three children live in Jefferson City, Missouri (2) and Coal Valley, Illinois. Mary got interested in

genealogy when her brother was working on the McKemy, Kirkpatrick, and Teaford family lines. Then Elroy got interested in his side of the family. Then they discovered the *stevne* and the friendly folks there — and they keep coming back!

Please look at the inside cover of your *Telesoga* for a complete list of names and addresses of your Telelaget Board of Directors, liaisons in Norway, and other support people.

Coming Back Home

The "Coming Back Home" Project began as a way for members to connect with lost cousins in Norway prior to Telelaget's Centennial Tour to Norway in 2007.

Because of the great interest in the project, it was decided to continue to develop the database of information about the emigrants from Telemark. Through the project, members have been able to connect and share information about ancestors with long lost cousins on both sides of the ocean filling in entire new branches for their family trees!

To see if your ancestors are in the database, or to submit your genealogy information to the project, go to our website www.telelaget.com and click on "Emigrant Database" in the left column. You do not need to be a member of Telelaget to submit data.

www.telelaget.com

Spend some time exploring our website and enjoying the huge amount of data printed there. You will also find links to other interesting Norwegian sites.



2020 Telelaget Tour of Norway

2020 may seem a long way off, but not when you're planning another fantastic Telemark Tour! Elaine Nordlie, tour director, and her assistant, Jeff Huset, are busy preparing the itinerary for the tour which will likely be held in late July or early August. Preliminary plans are to fly into Trondheim and continue on to Lillhammer. Then on to Telemark, where we will stay in Rjukan and Morgedal. Visits to Dalen, Skien and Porsgrunn would be included, and we would end the twelve-day tour in Oslo. More information will be shared as plans are finalized.



Highlights of the Annual Meeting

Elaine Nordlie distributed brochures and described the beautiful wooden relief carving displayed on the wall called "In Hac Petra" ("Upon This Rock"), carved by Willmar resident, Fred Cogelow.

The balance at the end of June was \$23,012.69. The Lag had a profit of \$696 from hosting the 2017 Stevne.

Connie Anderson donated the book *Norsk Lutherske Menigheter i Amerika* and Volumes 1 and 2 of *Norwegian Migration to America* by Blegen. Appreciation was given to Sandy Gilbert for arranging to have the *Drangedal Bygdebok* from the 1920s re-bound.

The total membership as of April 14 is 379, including 13 in Norway.

Elaine gave a report on the planning of the 2020 Telelaget Tour of Norway.

Do You Have a Story to Tell?



We are always looking for articles and essays for the *Telesoga*. Maybe you have a story you've always wanted to share, but don't know how to go about writing it. There are several people in the Telelaget organization who would be happy to help you edit or revise an article. Some ideas to get you started include:

- Settlements in the United States that Telemarkens were instrumental in helping to settle.
- Christmas and other holiday traditions in your Telemark family.
- Discoveries you have made about your ancestors or relatives while traveling in the US or abroad.
- Anything that would help preserve or promote the cultural heritage of your Telemark ancestors.
- Current events about people living in Telemark or the United States with roots in Telemark.
- Artwork and handicrafts reflecting Telemark that either you or someone in your family creates.

Keep in mind that if you quote someone, you need to include who you are quoting and where you found the quote. If you find information in another printed source, you need to include that source. If you are unsure about the format for that, include a copy or photo of the front flyleaf in the source. If you find an article written by someone else that you think may be of interest to our readers, send the article and the name and contact information for the author, so they can be contacted about a possible reprint.

If you have an article or an idea, contact our *TeleNews/Telesoga* editor, Lila Burmeister at lilajbs@gmail.com. Phone 320-979-0658. Regular mail address is 7410 159th Street NE, Atwater MN 56209.



Norwegian Lag Week

Norwegian Lag Week is a time when persons interested in Norwegian genealogy meet together in Salt Lake City at the Family History Library to research and learn together. The 2019 Lag Week, held from March 3 to March 9, will be the 14th annual event. The two organizations that help plan this week are Family Search (related to the Family History Library in Salt Lake City) and the Fellesraad (the umbrella organization for the *bygdelag*). Lag week follows a major genealogy/technology conference called Roots Tech. A block of rooms is available at the Salt Lake Plaza Hotel which is next door to the library. Special rates of \$92 — \$102 are available until February 4, 2019. You must contact Rich Williams at the hotel, 801-606-2410. Other costs for the week are your transportation and food. More information is available at www.fellesraad.com.



- William Gregerson, Dardenne Prairie, MO
 Trygve Olson, Moorhead MN
 Reid Hegland, Plymouth MN
 Carolyn Fjelstad, Oak Grove OR
 Melanie Herriges, Milwaukee WI
 Gordon & Eunice Peterson, Sheridan WY
 Joseph Wall, Chamberlain SD
 Sandy Gjervold, Perley MN
 Linda George, Edina MN
 Aaron Hanson, Salt Lake City, UT
 Margaret Parish, Elberta AL
 Barbara Stover, Littleton CO

In Loving Memory

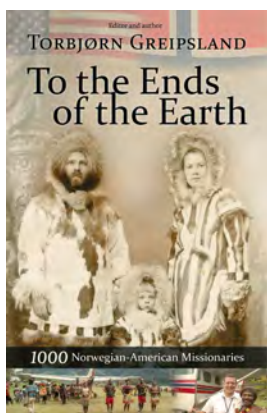
On behalf of Telelaget of America, the board of directors extends sincere sympathy to former board member and membership chairperson, Judy Mathison, in the death of her husband, William (Bill) Stauffer. Bill was a friend to anyone and everyone, generous in spirit, and a person who would go out of his way to help. A devoted husband and loving father, Bill took pride in raising two sons, taking them in with open arms despite neither being his biological children. He was a pragmatist and a hard worker, a co-owner of a successful manufacturing company with his wife and family until they retired. A man of faith, he acknowledged he wasn't perfect and didn't expect others to be, which meant he was always happy to talk and listen. Bill passed away at home, as he wished, surrounded by his wife, son, and dogs, on August 30th, 2018 at the age of 71. Bill will be deeply missed by his wife of 29 years, Judy Mathison, son Brandon (Abby) Krawczyk of San Antonio, Texas, brother Mark (Rachel) Stauffer, and other friends and family. Bill was preceded in death by son Daniel Stauffer and parents Wesley and Charlene Stauffer. A memorial service was held October 6 in Waukesha, Wisconsin.



Kristina M. (Torkelson) Gray, 62, of Crookston passed away unexpectedly Thursday, May 31, 2018 at her home. A funeral service was held Monday, June 4, in Crookston. Kristina was a graduate of Crookston High School, Concordia College in Moorhead, and the U of M in Minneapolis. She served in the Peace Corps in the Philippines and Kazakhstan and was a teacher in China and the Ukraine. Kristina formed a passion for telling stories of history, publishing two books about Polk county people and places. She wrote an article about S. A. Olsness for the *Telesoga*. Kristina is survived by her parents, Glen and Lucile Torkelson, and her husband, Ken Gray of Crookston, along with three step-children and other relatives and friends.



Arne Brekke, 90, of Grand Forks, ND, passed away on Monday, June 25, 2018. Born on a goat farm in rural Norway, the seventh of nine children, he came to America on scholarship to study at Luther College in Iowa and eventually earned a PhD from the University of Chicago. In the mid-1950's he started leading tours to Norway to fund his trips to visit family back in Norway. Over the years, Arne was able to pursue both his academic career and start a successful niche travel agency helping Norwegian Americans find their roots in Norway. In recent years, he started a collection of books at the University of North Dakota Chester Fritz Library related to Norwegian genealogy and cultural history. It is the largest collection of *bygdebøker* in the world and is named after him. View a documentary about his work with the library at <https://vimeo.com/29745327>.



New Mission Book for those interested in Mission and Church life in America

This new book, *To the Ends of the Earth*, by Torbjørn Greipsland, shows clearly how seriously the missionaries took their service. They knew that it could cost them their own life and health, persecution, kidnapping and murder. But they went. They

saw some of the results, we see great results.

Two missionary families from Telemark are presented. Two siblings, Thea and Halvor Rønning, from Bø in Telemark said "yes" to God's call and became pioneer

missionaries in China in a difficult time, but the mission work bore fruit. Kittil Braaten from Telemark and his wife, Anna Marie (Stenseth) from Etnedal, Valdres also became missionaries. The book has the names of more than a thousand missionaries, and articles about, or interviews with, 30 of them. It is exciting reading.

One reason for writing the book is that the extensive missionary commitment that existed in many churches, and still continues, has not been given any important place in the central and general history books about the Norwegian America. These missionaries deserve a book!

Order the book today from James B. Olson, 3016 S. 10th Avenue, Sioux Falls, South Dakota 57105.

E-mail: jimolson@midco.net. Phone (land line) 605-332-1321, cell phone 605-359-4150.

Price \$19.95 + \$2.63 in shipping (US \$22.58 in total), 2-4 copies free shipping. 5+ 10% discount + free shipping.



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JULY 10 - 13, 2019

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Available for Purchase

Telelaget published a three-volume set of Norwegian-American history books. The first volume focuses on Norwegian history and its people, Telemark emigration, and settlement history in general. Volume II is a collection of histories and stories gathered by Torkel Oftelie from Telemark settlements in the Midwest. Volume III includes settlement histories from Northern Minnesota, North Dakota, and Washington.

Telelaget to America:

Volume I – Emigration;

Volume II – Settlements;

Volume III – Settlements,

Biographies, & Telemark Lore.

\$20 each or \$50 for the series.

Telelaget of America celebrated their 100th Anniversary in 2007 and published **Telelaget, The First One Hundred Years**. The contents of this volume includes the history of the *bygdelag* & *stevner*, the history of board members and translator, the *Telesoga* and *Telenews*, group tours to and from Norway, and Telelaget's age of technology. The cost of the book is \$20, or it is free for a limited time to new lifetime members!

A Year on Haugo Farm — \$20.

Author Ingebjørg Draugedal tells of her life as a girl growing up on a Telemark farm during the Nazi occupation. You can read two letters

from this book in the current issue of *Telesoga*.

Back issues of the *Telesoga* are available for \$5.00 per issue, and a DVD containing the complete set of all *Telesoga* printed from 1909 through 2017 is \$30.00.

Mugs and miniature Telelaget fane are available for \$5.00 each, and totebags are \$10.00 each.

These items can be purchased on the website or by contacting Shelley Jerviss, email smjerv@goacentek.net, tel: (507) 459-2143, mail: P. O. Box 292, Houston MN 55943. Each of them would make great gifts — for Christmas or any time!



"TeleMail" is being revived! Members will receive the latest news and updates at least two times during the year. To keep updated on the Telelaget Tour, *stevne*, and other *lag*, *Fellesraad* and Norwegian interest happenings, be sure that we have your current email address on file! Send it to telenews@telelaget.com.

Donate

- Telelaget of America is a 501(c)(3) organization making your donation tax deductible. Donations to Telelaget can be used in a number of ways, including books for our library, repair of books in our collection, offsetting printing and mailing costs, and more.
- **Thrivent Choice** Dollars can be directed to Telelaget of America! To direct your Choice Dollars call 800-847-4836 and say "Thrivent Choice" or go to www.thrivent.com & click on "Making a Difference".
- When you shop on **Amazon**, start at smile.amazon.com. and select Telelag. Amazon donates 0.5% of your eligible purchases to Telelag. AmazonSmile is the same Amazon you know. Same products, same prices, same service.



- **Telelaget of America** -- news and pictures of Telemark and Telelaget
- **International Telemark** -- news about contemporary Telemark
- **Telemark Heritage & Genealogy**
Access by entering the name in the search field at the top of your Facebook page
- **Norwegian Genealogy** — learn how to research Norwegian heritage and find Norwegian ancestors and relatives using printed sources.



The membership year in Telelaget runs from January to December. **Check the mailing label on your *Telesoga* to see if your membership expires in 2018.** If it does, send your renewal today to Joan Niemiec, 4239 Harriet Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55409.