



NEWS FOR DESCENDANTS OF EMIGRANTS FROM THE TELEMARCK REGION IN NORWAY
VOLUME XXVII NUMBER I MAY 2020

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.

COVID - 19 Pandemic Cancels 7-Lag Stevne and Norway Tour



It was deeply disappointing to all those planning this year's 7-Lag Stevne, but concern for lag members coupled with the continuing uncertainty about the timeline and path that coronavirus (COVID-19) would take over the next few months led them to cancel this year's 7-Lag Stevne, scheduled for July 9-12, 2020 in Duluth.

If you were looking forward to learning more about the Vikings and participating in all the *stevne* was going to offer, plans are to present this program at the *stevne* in 2021. Dates will be July 15-18, 2021. Hadeland Lag will again be in charge of the 2021 *stevne*, and are working to secure all the venues we had reserved for this year - Harborside Convention Center, Holiday Inn & Suites, UMD dorms, Harbor cruise, North Shore Tour, etc. etc. Hope to see you next year in Duluth!!

Brekke Tours recently sent the following email to tour participants: "With concerns pertaining to your safety and in consideration of continued uncertainties such as elevated travel restrictions and government advisories, it has been determined to suspend the operation of your tour in 2020. Upon consultation with your group organizers, the tour is being rescheduled for July 26-August 8, 2021."

The tour next year will follow as close as possible the itinerary that was planned for the 2020 tour. If you were unable to travel with us this year, but are interested in the 2021 tour, please contact Elaine Nordlie or Jeff Huset for more information. Details will be posted to the website as they become available.



The bylaws of Telelaget of America state that an annual meeting must be held each year, normally done at the *stevne*. Due to the cancelation of this year's *stevne*, our Annual Meeting will be held via Zoom on Saturday, July 18, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. You will receive an invitation to the meeting via your email. **If we have your current email, you will receive a copy of this newsletter in a PDF format. If you do not receive that email by June 1, please send your current email to lilajsb@gmail.com so you will receive the invitation to attend the meeting electronically.** More details are inside this issue of TeleNews.

Locating the Grave of Vidkun Quisling

The *Tur til Telemark* in 2016 included a stop in Skien. It is one of Norway's oldest cities, with an urban history dating back to the Middle Ages, the Administrative Center for Telemark and was part of the old Grenland area of Telemark.



The sign above is located at the Gjerpen Church as reads: *Gjerpen Church is a stone church from the Romantic period which was dedicated to the apostles Peter and Paul in 1153. The naves were built in 1871-73. The family Løvenskiold made it possible to accomplish an extensive restoration in 1919-20. At that time the church got its present form.*

My relative, Dag Vågslid met my grandson Kyler and me at the *Brekkeparken* Museum in Skien for lunch, followed by a tour of the Skien area. I had jokingly asked him about Vidkun Quisling, the Nazi collaborator during the occupation of Norway during WWII.

Most people of Norwegian descent know who he was. The name has become a synonym for Traitor! Quisling was descended from a long line of priests in Telemark with roots in Fyresdal. I had assumed that he may have been buried in an unmarked grave after he was executed! To my surprise one of our stops was at the Gjerpen Church. It was a surprise to see Quisling's grave marker on his parent's monument!

It is always interesting to make local contacts and meet relatives in Telemark. They know the local history and places of interest that the average visitor is not aware of. My late relative, Eilev Tveit also took me to many places!

Sandy Gilbert provided some background information on Quisling. He was the Minister of Defense for Norway, and he met with Adolph Hitler in Germany before World War II. During that meeting Quisling gave Hitler secret

and proprietary information about Norway's military and its national defenses. As a result, Germany felt emboldened to attack and invade Norway. Germany wanted Norway's heavy water to make an atomic bomb as well as Norway's strategic location from which to attack Russia and England. Quisling also took over the Norwegian government from its elected officials and helped Germany run the country as a dictatorship. As a result of these offensive acts, the name Quisling means traitor in Norwegian. Some of our Telemaget members in America have been surprised to learn they are distantly related to Quisling.

Quisling's father Jon was a Lutheran bishop in Fyresdal. He was a genealogist who traced his family roots back to Denmark.* He was said to be a rather stern man. Perhaps his son inherited his stiff and unbending character from him.

A side note on Quisling! The Military History Channel had several programs on The Nazi Collaborators in different countries. It mentioned that he was on a relief mission to the Soviet Union during the 1920's famine caused partially by drought, Bolshevik incompetence and mismanagement! He became very Anti-communist after seeing the results of a Communist government! Not an excuse, but interesting!



Vidkun Quisling is buried in the same grave as his parents.

*Several of the Lutheran ministers in Telemark had Danish roots.



The membership year in Telemaget runs from January to December. **Check the mailing label on your Telesoga to see if your membership expires in 2020.** If it does, you can send your renewal to Joan Niemiec, 4239 Harriet Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55409. If you know someone who may enjoy being part of Telemaget, consider a gift membership for them!

Annual Meeting Agenda!



Our Annual Meeting will be held via Zoom on July 18. The following items are on our agenda:

1. Elections for Board of Director Positions — There are three positions open on the Board of Directors. The second term for both Elaine Nordlie and Lila Burmeister are up this year, and they are not eligible to run again. The first term for Jeff Huset is also up, and he is eligible and will run for a second term. If you would be interested in filling a position on the board, please contact Jeff Huset. Contact information is in the Telesoga.
2. Board Reports from your current Board of Directors.
3. Update on plans for 2021 *Stevne*.
4. Update on 2021 Tour of Norway

We must have your current email address to send you the invitation to the Zoom Board Meeting. The meeting will be held on Saturday, July 18, 2020 at 10:00 a.m.

Welcome to our New Members

Welcome to the following new members who have joined since November, 2019:

Pam Ashenmacher, Knife River MN
Robert Barrington, Georgetown TX
David & Sharon Borg, Maple Grv. MN
Larry Jensen, Tucson AZ
Joan Meyer Kice, Memphis MO
Dana Miller, Marshall MN
Becky Orr, Olney MD
Ken & Barbara Root, Plymouth MN
Janice Somerfeld, Madison WI
Kristi South, Huber Heights OH
Jeanne Sparlin, Georgetown TX
Robin Thomas, Dayton OH
Larry & Janet Weber, Savage MN
Kathleen Wendland, Chanhassen MN



There are a number of pages and groups on Facebook that can give you great information and photos about Telemark and Norway. Access by entering the name in the search field at the top of your Facebook page. You are welcome to post and comment on all of these sites. Click on “See Translation” in any post to instantly translate to English.

- **Telelaget of America**
- **International Telemark**
- **Telemark Heritage & Genealogy**
- **Norwegian Genealogy**
- **Visit Telemark**
- **I Love my Norwegian Heritage**
- **Norwegian-American Genealogy Help Here**



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! If you are a Thrivent member and would like 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 Telelaget. Amazon donates 0.5% of your eligible purchases to Telelaget. AmazonSmile is the same Amazon you know. Same products, same prices, same service.

Do You Have a Famous Norwegian in your genealogy?

Elaine Hasleton, president of the Bygdelagenes Fellesraad, sent the following update on the Bibliotek and Archive at Norway House in Minneapolis.

- There will be two components of the Haugo Bibliotek and Archive in a 21st century plan.
- The first component is the Living Bibliotek/Discovery Center, which will have numerous activities or stations such as DNA; Emigration/Immigration; My Famous Norwegian Relatives; My Famous Norwegian-American Relatives; Are We Related; My Heritage: Vintage photos, Ancestry photos, Then and Now photos; and other topics. This Living Bibliotek will have a new interactive appeal.
- The second component is the Archive which will include the *Bygdelag* collections and tech workstations. We want to integrate what guests initially learn in the Living Bibliotek/Discovery Center to stimulate interest in the Archive and to continue their learning and research. Of course, individuals will also come strictly to do research.

Each of the *Lags* were requested to ask their members to contribute to the Famous Norwegian-Americans Project. Telelaget has formed a committee to gather information on famous, deceased, Norwegians and Norwegian-Americans. If you have a family member or know of someone who should be included in the Bibliotek Discovery Center, please contact one of the committee members: Elaine Nordlie, Jeff Huset, Madelyn Krinke or Jim Skree. Their contact information is on page 4 of your Telesoga.

Going Viking Award Winner



The Going Viking Awards celebrate individuals and organizations “who embody the adventure-some and bold spirit of the Vikings by inspiring their communities to explore and discover new frontiers with courage and determination.” Honorees are nominated by the public and selected by the Norway House Board of Directors and Founders’ Council. 2020 marks the awards’ 13th year of conferment.

One of this years’ recipients is Dr. John Haugo, former board member and President Emeritus of Telelaget. Others receiving the award in 2020 are Liv Arnesen and Ann Bancroft, *Lakselaget* as Honored Norway House Affiliate Organization and Stephan Quie, Going Viking Young Professional.

John is a native of Waubun, MN where he attended high school. He is a graduate of Minnesota State University-Moorhead (MSUM), with graduate degrees from the University of Minnesota.

John was a math teacher and football coach at several Minnesota high schools, then headed MECC, the statewide educational computing services organization. Most recently, he has served as CEO of two Minnesota-based, national healthcare software companies. John is now retired and serves on several boards of directors. He is in MSUM’s Athletic Hall of Fame and is a recipient of the Distinguished Alumni Awards at MSUM and at U of M where he recently received the Board of Regent’s Outstanding Achievement Award. John and his wife, Sharon, have three adult children and eight grandchildren. They live in Hudson WI and Green Valley AZ.



Telelaget has several items for sale that would make great summer reading! We 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 its 100th Anniversary in 2007 and published **Telelaget, The First One Hundred Years**. The contents of this volume includes the history of the *bygdslag* & *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!

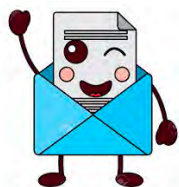
A Year on Haugo Farm — \$20.

Author Ingebjørg Draugedal tells of her life as a girl growing up on a Telemark farm during the Nazi occupation. You can preview a chapter on our website.

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* (flag) 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.



“TeleMail” is an email newsletter that is sent 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 teleneews@telelaget.com.

The Post Office does not forward bulk-rate mailed pieces, even if you have a forwarding order on file with them. Please be sure to send us any change of address, including your winter and summer address so that you will continue to receive Telelaget mailings.

In keeping with our by-laws, we will not share your email address with anyone else.