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Romerikslaget News

November 2016



Greetings from President Joel Botten



Happy Autumn!

I took a 12-hour bus ride to Minot, North Dakota to attend Høstfest, a big Scandinavian-centered festival with lots of music and plenty of lutefisk, meatballs, lefse and rommegraut. Two pop opera singers from Porsgrunn, Norway were my favorite entertainers. "Solli-tangen" is two brothers with great voices, well-received with standing ovations. Check them out on U-tube.

I recently had the privilege of flying to Florida to sing at the funeral for a long-time member of Romerikslag,

world traveler, Lillian Bolstad. Find her obituary in this newsletter.

Hudson, Wisconsin is your destination for the 2017 Romerikslag stevne to be held at the Hudson Grand Hotel 1616 Crestview Dr., telephone: 715-386-2394. Plans are being made to provide another interesting and informative meeting. A planning meeting will be held Saturday, February 18, at 10:00 am at the home of Eunice Helgeson.

Hudson is located in northwestern Wisconsin along the St. Croix River in St. Croix County. First settled in 1840 by Louis Massey and Pete Bouchea, Hudson was originally known as Willow River, then Buena Vista, before finally settling on its present name in 1852.

The region witnessed substantial growth in the 1850s and 1860s due in large part to the opening of prime forest lands for lumbering. With the lumber industry came sawmills that soon dotted the entire St. Croix Valley.

The coming of the railroad in 1871 gave Hudson direct rail transportation to the east and marked the end of the age of riverboat transport on the St. Croix River.

Hudson has grown as a tourist destination in recent years with its many shops and restaurants along the river in its historic downtown. In 1974, Congress designated the St. Croix River as a protected scenic river way, preserving the beauty of the shoreline for future generations.

We would appreciate any suggestions you have for speakers, entertainment and site visits for the Hudson stevne program. E-mail or telephone any officer. My e-mail address: joelbotten@gmail.com, telephone: 507-351-6712.

Make Hudson your September 2017 destination.

Hilsen,

Joel



Akershus Fylke
Ovre Romerike-
Eidsvoll, Feiring,
Gjerdrum, Hurdal,
Nannestad, Nes,
Ullensaker
Nedre Romerike -
Aurskog-Høland,
Blaker, Enebakk, Fet,
Hakadal, Lørenskog,
Nittedal, Rælingen,
Setskog, Skedsmo,
Sørums
Follo - Frogn, Kråk-
stad, Nesodden,
Oppegård, Ski,
Vestby, Ås
Vestre Akershus -
Asker, Bærum
Oslo Fylke

Genealogy News

As I watch the leaves rain down on my lawn, I wonder where the summer went and why I didn't do more research on my family.

Now I am back to seriously doing genealogy again and, as I peruse the plethora of interesting sites available online, I seem to be coming back to Family Tree Magazine's 25 best websites for beginners.

<http://www.familytreemagazine.com/article/25-best-genealogy-websites-for-beginners>

25 Best Genealogy Websites for Beginners - Family Tree ...

www.familytreemagazine.com

Sign up for our e-newsletter full of genealogy research tips, resources and news, and we'll give you a free, decorative family tree form PDF. Just download, type in ...

Some are paid sites but many are free.

One of my favorites is the BLM, or Bureau of Land Management, United States Department of Interior. They offer a searchable website for Federal land title records (Homestead) issued between 1820 and the present, survey plats and field notes dating to 1810, and other records.

After checking by name, you can see the actual document by clicking on the icon under "image". You can purchase a certified copy or download it for free by clicking on the downward pointing arrow in the gray

area right above the document. Not sure of the spelling?, use the % sign to search for anything starting with the name For example: Ris% will find Risberg or any other name beginning with Ris. Or substitute % for any letter that you're not sure of like Jacobs%n. <http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov/default.aspx> Home -

BLM GLO Records www.glorerecords.blm.gov
Welcome to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), General Land Office (GLO) Records Automation website. We provide live access to Federal land conveyance ...

Another one I like is the **USGenWeb Project**. Search by state and county for information submitted locally. Many offer searchable databases and are loaded with information you won't find elsewhere, some are sketchy but still worth checking out.

<http://usgenweb.org/>

Hope you had a fruitful summer, happy searching.



Deb Jarvar

20th Annual Norwegian Christmas Tree

DC's holiday season kicks off with the region's earliest Christmas tree lighting ceremony: the 20th annual Norwegian Christmas tree at Union Station, 6:00 p.m., Wed., Nov. 30.



In a beloved DC area family tradition, Norway will present a Christmas tree to the people of Washington, in recognition of the strong friendship between the two nations. The tree symbolizes Norway's gratitude for the United States' assistance during and after World War II.

Santa Claus will attend with gifts for the children in attendance. A choir will sing Christmas carols in both Norwegian and English. The 32-foot tree will be decorated with U.S. and Norwegian flags and 20,000 lights. This year's celebration highlights Norwegian-U.S. partnership in the polar regions. Many of the first discoveries in the Arctic and the Antarctic were made by Norwegian and American explorers working together. A poster exhibition, "Norway-USA. Partners in the Polar Regions," by Oslo's Fram Museum, will be on display. The tree will remain on display in Union Station throughout December.

Romerikslaget News is the official publication of Romerikslaget i Amerika and is published each March/Jul/Nov. Members receive the newsletter, stevne registration packet, access to records of Norwegian government and church records, Membership Directory and the help of our genealogist.

Romerikslaget i Amerika is a Norwegian American association whose members have ancestral roots or present-day ties to the area that nearly surrounds Oslo, Norway, called Romerike. The lag was founded in September 1990 to honor the unique culture of Romerike and to strengthen the bonds with the parishes of our ancestors.

Romerikslaget Stories

Honored Charter Members of Romerikslaget Tell Their Story



Earl Wold

It is now year 2016 as I, Earl K. Wold, am writing my early memories about the startup of Romerikslaget. It is hard for me to realize that 27 years have passed.

I think that it was back in the year 1989 when I was first invited to take part in the formation of the Romerikslag. I am blaming my 90 years of living as

being the reason that my

memory is slipping. So please forgive me if there are errors in what I am about to share with you.

My memory is that Mrs. Priscilla Sorknes was a major force in getting Romerikslaget started. Another major player was Eunice Helgeson. She started out as our secretary and still continues to this very day which is a remarkable record of service. Another individual that was part of the organizing group was Julian Sandsness who first encouraged me to join the group. Julian and I have known each other since we were little kids going to grade school in our little one room school house in SE Minnesota. Julian was familiar with my family background and so called me and encouraged me to join this start up group.

One of my first duties, as a board member, was to work on developing a constitution. We gathered constitutions from other lags and from other organizations and we developed a constitution for the Romerikslag.

Our first stevne was held in La Crosse, WI. My major memory of that stevne was the Saturday tour. We loaded up a bus and headed out for the Highland Prairie Lutheran Church, its origin dating back to 1854. This is the home church for Julian and me. Many church members had ancestor going back to the Nannestad area and other Romerike areas of Norway. Before arriving at the church we stopped in Rushford, MN for lunch. Julian introduced Priscilla Sorknes who gave a bit of the history of the area and of the church.

After lunch we drove 8 miles out to the Highland

Prairie Lutheran Church which has many features that are different from other country churches. It has a park in which celebrations were held including 4th of July. It has a very unique band stand built by a member to the congregation using local creek rock. The congregation had its own band at one time. It has a log cabin that serves as a pioneer museum. On the church grounds is a sink hole, a geologic feature, not uncommon in this area. The congregation made an amphitheater out of it. The sides were terraced using local limestone on which benches for seating were built. A big concrete platform was placed in the bottom. Summer church services are held there plus pageants, guest band concerts and choir concerts. It is called the Highland Prairie Bowl.

The Pioneer Monument is also located in the park, designed and built to honor the early Norwegian pioneers who settled in this area. Built using local rock, it is topped with an immense nearly spherical boulder. Bronze plaques are attached with names of the early pioneers. My Grandpa, being the oldest living pioneer at the time was given the privilege of unveiling it at the dedication. Even if I was only 4 years old, he insisted that I be with him as he uncovered this Pioneer Monument. I remember well the tarp fell over my head as he gave it the uncovering fling. As we stopped this day for a moment at this monument, Priscilla Sorknes gave a short prayer honoring the early pioneers, many which came from the Romerike area of Norway.

Our second stevne was in Hudson, WI and I conducted the memorial service. I remember guests from Norway attended this stevne. The plan was for all these guests to meet at the Mindekirken for services on Sunday morning. Because of the distance from Hudson to Minneapolis, it was decided that our guests would come home and stay overnight with Twin City lag members and we would bring them to the Mindekirken Norwegian Church Sunday morning. I remember that my wife and I had a very lovely couple come and stay overnight with us.

Romerikslaget turned out to be an especially wonderful organization which gave me the opportunity to meet people with similar background and with many things in common. I was comfortable being with them and they have added so much to my life. I have no regrets and only thanks.

Romerikslaget Stories

Honored Charter Members of Romerikslaget Tell Their Story

Doris Michelson's Story written about 2004.

In the fall of 1990, Mike and I heard of a meeting in La Crosse of persons of Norwegian ancestry from the area of Norway that my paternal grandparents came from. It sounded interesting, so we decided to attend an afternoon meeting.

We learned that the organization was recently formed and named the Romerikslag for those whose ancestral roots or present day ties were in that particular area of Norway known as Romerike. The l-a-g or "lag" at the end of the name means a group of people that came from a particular area of Norway. The gathering for the three-day event was known as a Stevne.

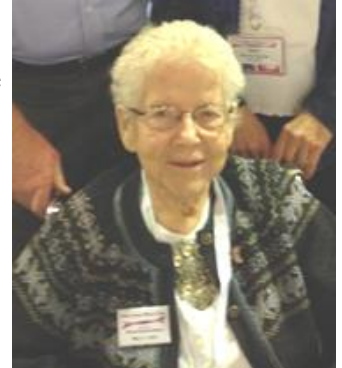
At this first meeting we joined up, and became charter members. We learned that I had two distant cousins attending, Donald and David Ackley of Pigeon Falls, WI. Their mother and my father were first cousins. From this first meeting we had a closer relationship with them. At a family reunion in Iowa, and later in 1993 in Norway, David especially became closer to us. We did not attend all the programs of this first meeting, but we did attend a banquet.

The Stevne was to become an annual three-day event in a different location each year. They also publish a newsletter three times a year with articles about Norway or articles members have written about family. The most interesting part is the genealogy help. Available are microfiche machines, microfilm machines, and the films from Norway, and many bygdebok (books from the various areas in the Romerike that tell the names of the farms and the persons living on them, ages, etc.) and a copy machine, and at least one person knowledgeable in genealogy who would help find the information. I have used this help but not as much as many people. A native Norwegian relative had done genealogy work beginning with the family farm in 1693, so I already had much information.

We attended the annual gatherings of the group. We heard interesting speakers, some very entertaining, others informational. We heard very good singers and

watched excellent Norwegian dancing, and other musical entertainment.

Probably the best part is the friendships. Though we see one another only this one time each year, there is a bonding because of our common roots. Many people have traveled to Norway, some several times, and perhaps know some relatives of others in the lag. It was expressed well by one member when she said the group was much like a family caring for one another.



Doris Michelson

Each year we have a brief memorial service for members who have died during the year, usually held at a church with ties to early Norwegian settlers. We do have two members that are pastors.

I am writing this shortly after attending the 14th Annual Stevne in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. I have attended eleven of the fourteen gatherings. It was a most enjoyable time renewing friendships and making some new ones, learning more about the lives of the members and of the early settlers of that area of our country and making me rather proud of my Norwegian heritage on my paternal side of my family tree.

As I write this, I am serving as the Historian for the organization, as well as being on the Board of Directors for a two-year period.

Romerikslaget Members: Tell Your Genealogy Story

Members, whether you are new or have been with us for awhile, are welcome and encouraged to tell your genealogy story. It is how we get to know each other and who knows, our ancestors might have been neighbors. We won't make that discovery until you have shared your story.

Please send your story to the newsletter publisher.

Dorothy Mehl,
2111 E North Crescent,
Spokane, WA 99207

Member News



Lillian Bolstad

Lillian Nelson Bolstad passed away at the age of 97 in Oviedo, Florida, after a long, happy, and interesting life.

A young Lillian was active in the Norwegian Folk Dance Society in Brooklyn, New York, where she met her husband, Bjorn. Through their 63 years of marriage, they never missed an opportunity to dance. Throughout her life, dance, needlework and travel were Lillian's joys, second only to the love and care she provided for her family.

After retiring at age 48, Lillian and Bjorn traveled the country for 5 years taking pictures along the way. They entertained audiences with slide shows and lectures of "Americana." Aristotle Onassis hired them to produce a travelogue of Israel. Lillian starred in the film.

The couple founded Penguin World Films and set off around the world to become international travel photographers. Lillian traveled to 7 continents and 126 countries. She was the first woman to set foot on Antarctica.

After Bjorn passed away, Lillian and her daughter took many cruises and marked the 70th anniversary of her first trip across the ocean. At age 87, Lillian planned and directed a family trip to Norway.

Lillian is famous for her Hardanger embroidery, lace and other needlework learned from her mother. She taught Hardanger. One exquisite piece was showcased in a statewide folk art exhibition.

Born in the United States, raised in a Swedish family, Lillian married a Norwegian-born husband and blended the traditions of both cultures. She was especially known for her Norwegian and Swedish Christmas cookies. Lillian was a long-time member of the Romerikslaget of America.

Edna Carlson

Edna Handson Carlson was born on August 28, 1920 near Frost, Minnesota. Edna married Truman Carlson June 7, 1948 in Solon Springs, Wisconsin.

Edna's formal education began in a rural school and continued in the public school in Kelliher, Minnesota where she graduated as the class valedictorian. Edna graduated with from Concordia

College Moorhead. Her 22 year teaching career was interrupted to raise a family of five children. She and Truman shared an avid interest in genealogy, which led to a re-acquaintance with distant relatives in Norway.

In her retirement years she and Truman enjoyed many years of quiet solitude at their family lake home near Vergas, Minnesota. They also enjoyed traveling in the U.S. and two treasured trips to Norway – meeting relatives there for the first time. Participation for nine years in the Scandinavian folk dance group, the Norskfödt Danseringen, added zest to their retirement years.

She is survived by her husband, Truman, Morris, MN; five children, one brother; six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. Edna and Truman were Romerikslaget members for about 20 years. Their ancestors came from an area about 25 miles apart and they eventually discovered they were 8th cousins. Truman said they thoroughly enjoyed research and the fellowship with like-minded Norwegians!



Winfield Arneson Age 86.

March 14, 1930 -
July 1, 2016. He was a loving husband for Karin and father for Christine Nolan and Lincoln Arneson, and a grandfather for Christopher and Kaitlyn Nolan.

Win attended Beloit College in Wisconsin where he received a degree in anthropology. He did archaeological field work in Alabama for the National Geographic and in Mexico for Beloit College. Win was Chief Curator at the Dearborn Historical Museum for nearly 42 years where he was involved with the restoration of the museum's 1833 Commandants Quarters. Being very interested in the signers of the constitution and Declaration of Independence, he did research on them at various locations and published a series of articles on them in the Dearborn Historian Magazine for Dearborn's 200th anniversary celebration of the events.



Romerikslaget Membership

Lag Officers and Directors

President • Joel Botten (2015-2018)

1314 Pine Pointe Crv., St. Peter, MN 56028
507-351-6712; e-mail joelbotten@gmail.com

V. P. for Membership • Susan Waldera (2016-2019)

N6062 N Skutley Rd., Taylor, WI 54659
715-662-2661;
e-mail LSWALDERA@centurytel.net

V. P. for Genealogy • Deb Jarvar (2014-2017)

9405 Murphy Ln., Eau Claire, WI 54703
715-874-6678; e-mail djarvar@wwt.net

Secretary • Eunice Helgeson (2016-2019)

5541 Woodlawn Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55417
612-724-7202; e-mail EuniceHelgeson@aol.com

Treasurer • Mary Gross (2015-2018)

401 S. 1st St. #1822, Minneapolis, MN 55401
507-640-1417; email maryfrancesgross@gmail.com

Director • Melvin Slettehaug (2016-2019)

5701 Orchard Ave. N., Crystal, MN 55429
763-535-3616; email mslatts30@comcast.net

Director and Historian • Julie A. Clauson (2015-2018)

22 14th Ave. S.W., New Brighton, MN 55112
651-633-3600; email jollyjac@aol.com

Director • Bev Slettehaug (2014-2017)

5701 Orchard Ave. N., Crystal, MN 55429
763-535-3616

Director • Linda Curtis (2014-2017)

2422 Marquette St., Eau Claire WI 54703
715-839-7876; e-mail LCURT651@sbcglobal.net

Director • Mary Baumgartner (2014-2017)

433 E. Maple St., River Falls, WI 54022
715-425-7117; e-mail baumgam@yahoo.com

Director • Alberta Rupert (2015-2018)

220 N. Ilwaco Rd., River Falls, WI 54022
715-425-7064; e-mail Bertlr@hotmail.com

Past President • Marcia Hamilton

4312 Zenith Ave. N., Robbinsdale, MN 55422
763-535-2642; e-mail mhamilton917@comcast.net

Publicity Coordinator • Linda Curtis

2422 Marquette St., Eau Claire WI 54703
715-839-7876; e-mail LCURT651@sbcglobal.net

Newsletter Editor • Dorothy Mehl

2111 E. North Crescent Ave., Spokane, WA 99207
509-489-3868; email DorothyMehl112@msn.com

Past Presidents: Priscilla Sorknes†, Andreas Jordahl Rhude, Cathryn Berntson Huntsman†, Earl Grefsrud†, Eileen Gulbranson, Marcia Hamilton

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Romerikslaget i Amerika

To continue membership, or become a new member, complete and mail this form.

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Lag ancestral area: _____

(from listing on back page of Newsletter)

Name (2): _____

Lag ancestral area: _____

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___ Please mail ___ email ___ me a sample newsletter

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___ I am renewing my membership for 2017. Enclosed is my check.

Payable to: Romerikslaget

Mail form & check to:

Susan Waldera

N6062 N Skutley Rd

Taylor, WI 54659

An ad policy has been adopted by the Board of Romerikslaget. It reads as follows: Individuals or companies can submit articles that include contact information but do not include any prices. The lag Board reserves the right to edit or reject any submissions and will suggest to non-members that they join or make a donation to the lag.

Postmaster: if undeliverable
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Spokane, WA 99207

Romerikslaget and Solørlag America Joint 2017 Stevne

September 13-16, 2017

Hudson Grand Hotel

1616 Crestview Dr.

Hudson WI,

telephone: 715-386-2394

[Www.hudsonhousegrandhotel.com](http://www.hudsonhousegrandhotel.com)



Set on the banks of the St. Croix River, Hudson invites you to enjoy the amenities of a quaint river town, built on rich history, and is often thought of as the Western Gateway to Wisconsin. Among the fastest growing areas in the state, Hudson has managed to grow and develop while maintaining its historic charm and panoramic beauty. It is located just 27 miles from downtown Mpls.