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News for Descendants
of the Telemark Region
of Norway

Volume XXVIII Number 1

May 2025

A Summer to Celebrate Your Heritage!

If ever there was a time to dive into your Norwegian-American ancestry - this summer is it! The various events are highlighted in this issue.

WELCOME New Members!

Carolyn Burkhart — Bellingham, WA

Randi Douglas — Portland, OR

Karla Engebretson —

Black River Falls, WI

Rob Erickson — Edina, MN

Christopher Flaatt — Redmond, WA

Darlene Jondahl — Charlottesville, VA

Torgeir Nordal — Nissedal, Norway

Lawrence Sorli — Carlisle, MA

Michael Sween — Long Beach, MS

Peggy Vigoren — Ranier, MN

Ingred Forsberg — St. Paul, MN

Donna Kallem — Ames, IA

join us!

May

Norwegian-American
Fellesraad.com

Est. in 1916
29 active bygdelags

Next Annual Meeting

May 2-3, 2025

The theme this year will be “Crossings – A 200th Year Celebration.”

Friday, May 2nd will be virtual only (Zoom). The two presenters will be Dr. Lawrence Moe speaking on “New Life, New Land” and Jeff Svare from FamilySearch speaking on “Indexed Passenger Lists and Migration Records.”

Saturday, May 3rd *Fellesraad* Business Meeting will be in-person only at *Mindekirken*. There will be an announcement by President, Elaine Hasleton, regarding *Fellesraad/Bygdelag* and the Norwegian-American Historical Association (NAHA).

Besides the Annual Business Meeting, we will have a presentation on “The Role of Churches in Immigrants’ Lives” by Gracia Grindal. A tasty Norwegian lunch will be provided.

The **deadline for registration is April 19th** so we have time to prepare and send you your Zoom link.

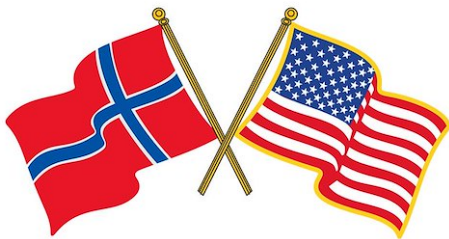
Registration, schedule, and information is available at www.fellesraad.com website. All *Lag* members are invited to this two-day event.

2025 Syttende Mai

In Norway, Constitution Day is a national day and is observed on 17 May each year. Among Norwegians, the day is referred to as *Syttende Mai* ("Seventeenth of May").

Syttende Mai is celebrated in many Norwegian migrant communities throughout the world. Click on the city to be taken to their website:

- [Decorah, Iowa](#)
- [Minneapolis, Minnesota](#)
- [Sunburg, Minnesota](#)
- [Spring Grove, Minnesota](#)
- [Westby, Wisconsin](#)
- [Stoughton, Wisconsin](#)
- [Brooklyn, New York](#)
- [Seattle, Washington](#)
- [Chicago, Illinois](#)
- [New York Cabaret @ 54 below](#)
- [London, England](#)
- Orkney, Glasgow & Shetland Islands Scotland
- [Stockholm, Sweden](#)
- [Norsewood, New Zealand](#)



Hey Telelagers – If it's not April 15, it's not too late to register for "A Patchwork of our Ancestors Lives" mini-stjerne in Spicer MN.!

April 24-26, 2025

[Click here for more information and registration](#)

June



CROSSINGS AND
CONNECTIONS



JUNE 18-22, 2025 • ST. OLAF COLLEGE
NORTHFIELD, MN, USA

This [new event](#) will explore causes and affects of Norwegian migration. Geared toward the public and open to all, the gathering will include opportunities to explore Norwegian-American music, film, historic sites, and more.

The conference is organized and presented by the Norwegian-American Historical Association (NAHA), the Norwegian-American Historical Association – Norway (NAHA-Norge), the Norwegian Teachers and Researchers Association of North America (NORTANA), and the Norwegian Department at St. Olaf College. Resources about this Crossing, visit crossings.norwegianamerican.com.

Stay Up-to-Date At These Social Media Sites....

www.facebook.com/Restauration1825

www.instagram.com/restauration_ship/

www.youtube.com/@restauration1825

July



Norwegian Crossings 1825-2025

Austin, Minnesota

July 9-12 2025

at [Doubletree by Hilton](#).

[Landingslag](#) is the host lag

Registration

You may have already received an email with the registration form. Registration also available on the [TOA website](#).

The event will be held at the [Double Tree](#) by Hilton & Austin Conference Center located at 1701 4th Street NW in Austin, Minnesota. There is a block of rooms reserved for the *stevne* at this location. Mention the 7+Lag *Stevne* when making reservations.

Doubletree ph. number 507-433-1000, press 1 for room reservations, then ask to be connected to the front desk at the Austin, MN location. Room rate around \$140/night

The Days Inn is close to the Double Tree. Additional rooms have also been set aside at the [Days Inn, 700 16th Avenue NW, Austin MN, 55912](#), Phone: 1-507-299-5675. Room rate around \$120/night.

Event Schedule

Wednesday, July 9th

The *stevne* will begin with a tour and lunch starting at 11:00 am at [St. Olaf Church in Austin](#). After lunch, participants are expected to carpool to the town of Grand Meadow, Minnesota for guided tours of the Bear Creek Norwegian Lutheran Church, The GAR (Grand Army of the Republic Hall), also known as Booth Post No. 130, and the Grand Meadows Chert Quarry. Return time is estimated at 5:00pm.

Thursday, July 10th

Will begin at 8:00 am with registration and genealogy.

The Opening Session begins at 9:00 am and features a Keynote Address by Dale Goodman

arranged through the Vesterheim Museum in Decorah, IA. This presentation follows the story of the 1825 "Restauration Sloop" from its voyage across the Atlantic, the reception in New York City and ends with the first Norwegian Settlement in Kendall, NY.

Classes begin after lunch and the evening is set aside for individual *Lag* meetings.

Friday, July 11th

Expect a full day of genealogy and classes. There will be a banquet with entertainment to follow by the Norwegian Singing Bachelors.

Saturday, July 1st

Closing session (9:00-11:30 am) features George Olson and his presentation entitled "They Brought More Than Lutefisk and Lefse." A mixture of light history, traditions, some humor and song, both traditional that our immigrant ancestors brought with them and "immigrant" songs. A *Bunad* Parade and entertainment will officially end the *stevne*.

Event Speakers

Dean Uland – Instructor at Riverland Community College, Austin, MN. His areas of interest are agriculture, including local and regional Minnesota history, as well as topics in immigration and World War I.

Miranda Moen – Architectural Designer and Founder [MO/EN DESIGN PRACTICE, LLC](#), Austin, MN. Miranda has done research on Norwegian-American architecture and its influences from Norway. She will provide background on regional building customs in Norway and then transition into its relationship to the houses built by Norwegian-Americans, specifically her ancestor's house in Spring Grove, MN.

Karen Fried & Nancy Gulbranson, food demonstrators. Nancy is a retired Family & Consumer Science teacher/HS Principal. Karen is a retired Spring Grove School District employee and member of the SG Sons of Norway Lodge. Both are members of the Spring Grove Giants of the Earth Heritage Center. They will be making Norwegian Kransekake (Norwegian Wedding Cake) and also a fun demonstration.

Thomas Jacobson will speak on Pastor Clausen who worked on establishing mission churches among Norwegian settlements. He was the pastor who was active at Beaver Creek.

Caitlin Sackrison recently received her PhD in Norwegian studies and can speak on a variety of topics with an interest in women settlers.

Candace Simar is a renowned author from Pequot Lakes, MN and is the grandchild of Scandinavian immigrants. She enjoys a passion for Minnesota history and how things might have been. She will have her books on sale.

Gracia Grindal - author and presenter

Kelly Herness is a UW-Madison graduate who recently studied in Norway.

Hospitality

It was decided each lag will provide a specific Norwegian cookie/desert.. *Telelaget* will provide rosettes. Other baked goods will be appreciated.

2026



Telelaget of America hosts next years summer event.

Help Wanted Lag members help needed

The board welcomes any help with this future event. If you are interested in assisting in the planning and/or helping with activities at the future event, please reach out to one of the members below.

Naomi Nowland —
nowland.naomi@gmail.com

Marne Olson — marne.olson@sonoma.edu

Sandy Gilbert — sandyfgilbert@gmail.com

Wendi Storhoff - wendistorhoff@aol.com

Gift A Membership!

A gift membership is unique - especially to someone who shares your ancestry. Something to consider! Younger generations are interested in experiences vs. "stuff." If you're senior, a gift membership creates a travel buddy - someone to share a *stevne* or Syttende *Mai* celebration.

TOA Website Updates

Telesoga Web Enhancements

The *Telesoga* Table of Contents Index is back. Newly updated and searchable by issue.

Keep an eye on our [Telelaget Store](#)! You will soon be able to buy merchandise with our new *Telelaget* of America logo directly from the TOA web site.



Telesoga digital downloads are available in the *Telelag* Store for \$3.50 per issue.

The historically popular *Kommune* pages have also returned. Each of the 17 *Kommune* pages features historical information, *bygdebøker* references, maps, photos, and updated informative links that detail each region thoroughly.

Telelaget's Elaine Nordlie on Herbjørn Gausta's Legacy

Elaine's presentation of Herbjørn Gausta's charcoal sketches from an 1919 *Telesoga* come to life [in this video](#). Elaine translated the original *Telesoga* to English in 2017 at the request of past TeleNews editor Alice Kirn. The video is 42 minutes and delightful to watch.



Promoting Our Lag

Joran Olson (left) and Trudy Koepsell (TOA Director) were featured on KELOLAND Living promoting Telelaget of America! If interested in viewing, go to this [link](#) to view (approx. 8 minutes).



TeleNews Archive

If interested in viewing old TeleNews documents, PDF versions can be found on Telelaget website.

TeleNews Distribution Changes for 2025

We're adapting our communications distribution during 2025. Expect to see TeleNews in your email in the future. Change can be challenging, especially for seniors.

As we look at our membership data, 88% of our members have an email address and 27 members have not shared their email address or they don't have one.

We believe that distributing TeleNews via email will make our communications more relevant, timely and cost the organization less over time.

We know that other *lags* are migrating to email for their communications as well.

Telelaget has sent out two emails in the last few months, if you didn't see them - please check your spam or junk email folders. If you find them there, move them to your inbox so future emails will arrive properly.

If they're not there, maybe our email address for you is not correct. Please [email our editor](#) to update.

Telelaget of America will continue to print and distribute our cherished Telesoga publication twice a year.

We will continue to archive TeleNews as we have been. If you follow us on FaceBook or Instagram - expect the posts to be generic in nature, not the details you might receive as an active member.



Did Your Norwegian Ancestors Settle in Utah?

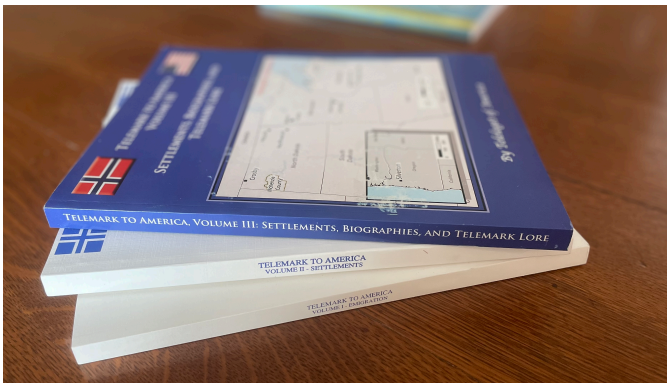
Brenden Rinsing, PHD at BYU

Greetings from the Charles Redd Center for Western Studies at Brigham Young University! This semester we are hosting genealogist Liv Marit Haakenstad as our visiting fellow. She is working on a book about Norwegian immigration to Utah and the American West. As a part of this project, Haakenstad is actively searching for records on Norwegian immigration to Utah between 1825-1920.

There is a form on this page where people can submit information and make contact with Haakenstad:

<https://www.norwegianamerican.com/norwegians-in-utah/>

Publications for Sale



Telemark to America Series Available to Purchase from [Telelaget Store](#)

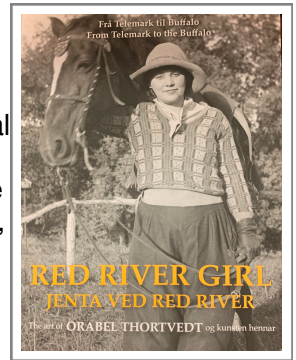
20 % off at Mini-Stevne in Spicer!

Telelaget has published a set of Norwegian-American history books. The first volume gives an overview of *Telemark* and its immigrant settlements in America. The second book in the series (which has been updated and re-published) is a collection of articles from the *Telesoga* and 1926 *Årbok* about *Teler* settlements in America. Volume three adds more about settlements, plus biographies and *Telemark* lore.

Red River Girl — our Most Popular Book

The text is both in Norwegian and English. Orabel Thortvedt, granddaughter of pioneer Olav G. Geitestad/Thortvedt, devoted much of her life

exploring and depicting her story. She was a trained artist, loved animals and was inordinately interested in local history. This beautiful, coffee table style, book portrays the work of this fascinating artist, while at the same time telling a touching family saga.



To see where Orabel lived, and hear of her life in Houston County, visit the display at the Houston County Historical Society. Available to purchase from the [Telelaget Store](#).

Any Historical Stories You Want to Share?

The *Telesoga* focuses on preserving the stories of generations of Telemarkings on both sides of the Atlantic. Torkel Oftelie, co-founder of *Telelaget* and first editor of *Telesoga*, traveled throughout the Midwest documenting the lives of emigrants from Telemark.

In the spirit of Torkel and those who followed him, we are intent on keeping the memory of our Telemark ancestry and heritage alive with submissions to the *Telesoga* from our members.

Basics for submitting a story:

- Articles can be of any length but with a Telemark connection. This can be a past or current connection.
- Submission deadlines are mid-March for the May issue and mid September for the November issue
- If you have a story to tell, but aren't sure you have the skills to tell it very well, just write it up as best you can. We have several members in our *lag* who will help you "polish it."
- There is no monetary payment for your writing, but you will receive five copies of the *Telesoga* to share with family and friends.

Submit your idea to our [editor, Lila B.](#)

Introducing FamilySearch Labs

Written by Bob Taylor

At RootsTech 2024, FamilySearch spread the word about an exciting new venture on its website: the [FamilySearch Labs](#). At the current time, there are five experiments you can try, after signing in to FamilySearch:



- *Expand Your Search with Full Text* – There are a few collections that can now be searched with full-text capabilities and keyword searches. A video is available for explaining the search tips that are available.
- *Family Group Trees* – Family group trees let you share important family memories and information with close living family. You can create family groups and invite them to share your family group trees.
- *Find Help with AI Search* – Use AI queries to find answers in the Help Center, the FamilySearch Wiki, RootsTech videos, etc.
- *Together by FamilySearch* – Share stories, memories, activities, etc. across family groups and with an app on mobile devices.
- *Profile Quality Score* – Choose from a number of selected ancestor profiles in FamilySearch and see how the information is rated for quality, from low to high.

Sources are evaluated and potential data problems are identified so that profile information can be improved.

These new features are still in testing mode and should be finalized later this year. The Family History Guide will have documentation for the features when they are finished.

Consider A Bequest to *Telelaget of America!*

A bequest is a simple way to support *Telelaget of America* and ensure that the *lag* can continue to celebrate our Telemark Norwegian heritage.

Telelaget of America is a 501(c)(3) organization. Your donations are tax deductible in the U.S..

Are you a Thrivent Member?

Thrivent Choice Dollars can be directed to *Telelaget of America!* If you're an eligible Thrivent Financial member and have Choice Dollars available to direct, call 800-847-4836 and say "Thrivent Choice" or go to www.thrivent.com and click on "Making a Difference" for more information or to direct Choice Dollars.

Social Media

You are welcome to post and comment on all of these sites. Click on "See Translation" in any post to instantly translate to English or Norwegian.

Facebook Groups

Access by entering the name in the search field at the top of your Facebook page.

- *Telelaget of America* - 815 Members!
- There are 14 additional Norwegian-American Facebook lag sites. To view others visit the following [link](#) at www.fellesraad.com



Telelaget is now on **Instagram!**

[Click here.](#)

Friends We've Lost



Bill Hoberg

The Board of Directors of Telelaget of America is saddened to announce the death of William "Bill" Erick Hoberg, age 74, of Benson, Minnesota, who died Saturday, January 25, 2025, at CentraCare – St. Cloud Hospital in St. Cloud, Minnesota.

Bill served on the Telelaget Board from November of 2010 to May of 2018. He served loyally in several positions: director, vice president, president, and served as Telelag's auditor through 2023.

[Link to his published obituary](#)



This lovely decorated boxed-style urn was carved by Bill and now contains his ashes.



Sidney "Sid" Kjeldahl

Sidney A. "Sid" Kjeldahl, age 92 of Sauk Centre, passed away peacefully, surrounded by his family from complications of a stroke on Saturday, March 1, 2025 at the St. Cloud Hospital in St. Cloud, Minnesota

His love of music drove him to learn to play the fiddle at age 50, and he became a charter member of the Minnesota State Fiddlers Association. Sid enjoyed the outdoors, loved to hunt, and was an archeologist enthusiast. He was proud of his Norwegian heritage, had a wonderful sense of humor, and will be remembered for being a gentle man that could strike up a conversation with anybody.

Sid and his wife, Nancy, were lifetime *Telelaget* Members.

[Link to his published obituary.](#)

Please join us to celebrate the lives of Alice Stangeland Kirn and John Frederick Kirn, Sr.

The children of Alice and John invite you to celebrate their parents lives with tributes, reflections, memorabilia and laughter along with a lunch, dessert and coffee.

Saturday, May 3 2025. 11 am - 3 pm
[Dassel History Center & Ergot Museum,](#)
901 1st St, Dassel MN



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