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Volume XXIX - April 2026

ATTENTION: Your digital copy of the May Telesoga issue will arrive soon in a separate email.



Stoughton:
Connections, Community, Culture
July 15-18, 2026
Host: Telelaget of America



2026 Stevne Bus Tour

Wed., July 15 10:30 - 3:45

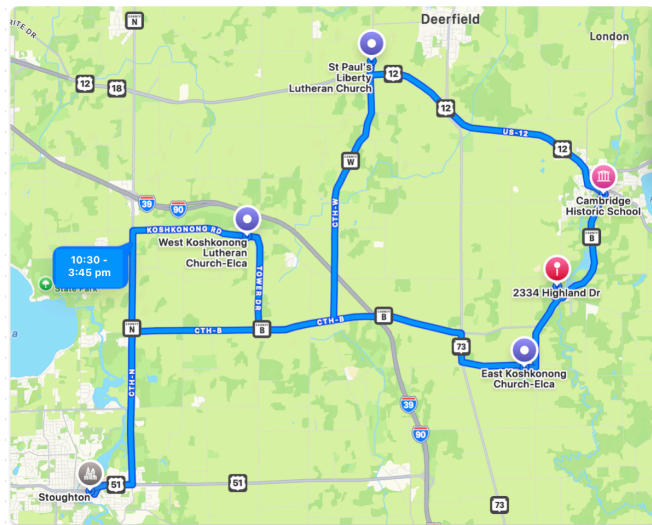
by Naomi Nowland

There are so many worthwhile activities to choose from in our 7+ Lag Stoughton Stevne! For this newsletter, I'd like to feature a specific part of Wednesday morning's bus tour around the Koshkonong Prairie. The first European settlers to the area were predominantly of Norwegian descent and Koshkonong became known as "The Queen of the Norwegian Settlements."

Our narrated bus tour starts at 10:30 in Stoughton. We will first visit the West Koshkonong Church where we will be served lunch. From there, we will travel to the East Koshkonong Church, the Rockdale Beer Cellar, the Cambridge Historic School Museum and end up at St. Paul's Liberty Lutheran Church before returning to Stoughton about 3:45pm.

The specific part I'm going to highlight is the Rockdale Beer Cellar. It's in a hillside ravine, about 50 feet from a gravel recreation trail that runs along a former millpond and Koshkonong Creek between Rockdale and Cambridge.

The limestone beer cellar was built in 1865 by the owner of a local Rockdale brewery to keep barrels of beer cold during the summer. Thousands of years of glacial meltwater had eroded a quarter-mile-wide gap in the ridge, exposing limestone bluffs on both sides of the valley. The builders used horses to drag stones down the hill to the site. Mortar came from limestone pulverized into powder and burned to alter its chemical composition. It was then mixed with sand and water to make a strong cement.



The original cellar consisted of three chambers that extended 40 feet into the hillside. Limestone rocks stacked one by one form the arched opening that is five feet wide by seven feet high. This entrance tunnel leads to the cellar proper. Its vertical walls are from 18 to 24 inches thick. Its length is 15 feet into the hillside. The cellar itself is a continuous arch about 15 feet wide at the base and 15 feet high at the top. The remaining ceiling extends into the hillside 20 feet, about half its original length. The rear half of the cellar was blasted with dynamite for safety purposes back in the early 1900s.

The brewery is believed to have operated through the 1870s. As stories go, the cellar was also used during prohibition to hide beer. Because of a three-acre land donation in 1994, the cellar is now part of the county park.

The cellar has been preserved to prevent further deterioration. Keystones were carefully selected for function and form to support the entrance arch. Sidewalls three to six feet high and 30 feet long were discovered, repaired or rebuilt, and extend another 15 feet on each side. The approach area has been expanded from a narrow raven to a welcoming, gravel and graded area 15 feet wide by 50 feet long. The gentle slope allows walking ease for visitors with mobility-challenges. I can't wait to experience the cellar in person!

Other stops on the tour...

West & East Koshkonong Churches, Cambridge Historic School Museum, and St. Paul's Liberty Lutheran Church.

Deadline for registration: June 15
Space is limited, cost is \$25.00

To see the entire event schedule and to register go to
<https://www.telelagetofamerica.com/stevne#stevne2026>

We hope you will join us at this special annual gathering.

Your *Stevne* Planning Committee

Naomi Nowland — president@telelagetofamerica.com

Amber Walters — vicepresident@telelagetofamerica.com

Wendi Storhoff — treasurer@telelagetofamerica.com

Stoughton Stevne Presenters

Derek Brabender. Derek is a craftsperson and educator that has been creating domestic woodenware from freshly felled local wood sourced from arborists or storm-fallen trees (green wood). This work relies on hand tools, skill, and the living knowledge of pre-industrial woodturning and wood carving traditions. Derek is committed not only to preserving these techniques but also to helping others find wellbeing and a sense of creative agency through creating with their hands and simple tools.

Derek's current focus is exploring historical woodturning traditions and bringing their stories and methods into contemporary craft conversations. This pursuit was recently supported by an Artist Fellowship from the American Scandinavian Foundation to study with Jarrod Dahl, an internationally recognized expert in pole lathe turning. Through Jarrod's mentorship in advanced techniques and pedagogy, Derek has become a torchbearer carrying forward, and contributing to, the living knowledge of pole lathe turning.



Presentation: P4 Wood Turning

Derek will share insights about early bowl turning in Norway and demonstrate how it was done with his spring lathe.

Friday 9:00-10:00

Nancy Odalen. I am drawn to rosemaling because it is a part of my heritage. I am the great granddaughter of a sea captain and the granddaughter of an adventurous sailor who left Stavanger, Norway and sailed around the world one and a half times before jumping ship in Australia and eventually ending up in the Midwest. I am the granddaughter of a woman who traveled to the Midwestern United States from Stavanger, Norway, by herself, at the age of 23. The palette that I use in my painting echo's the colors found in the shimmering clear coastal light of the west coast of Norway. The red from the brick of the church where my grandparents were baptized and confirmed, the ochre and the bright yellow of the sun as it reflects off the waters surrounding this city. The green in my painting is from the farmlands of Rogaland, especially the Fosse farm where the Vikings lived and were buried. The freedom and movement found in my rosemaling mirrors the traditions of my ancestors and the adventure that both my grandparents embarked upon as they left Norway to find a new life.



My journey in the study of rosemaling began with my first Vesterheim rosemaling class in 2001. I have taken and continue to take classes from instructors that have given generously of their time and talents to instruct me in various styles found in rosemaling. I have spent time in intensive individual study of five different rosemaling styles to gain a greater understanding of these styles. I traveled to Norway in the summer of 2014 and spent time studying the old rosemaling pieces found in the Rogaland area. In 2025, I visited Norway to meet with contemporary artists in the Telemark region, thanks to a fellowship granted by the American Scandinavian Foundation.

In 2022 I received a Gold Medal from Vesterheim. Although the highest award a rosemalar can achieve, I continue to value learning from exceptional instructors that are passionate about rosemaling and enjoy the free flow of ideas and discovery.

My journey continues as I learn from the old and create pieces that come from my soul. It is my true joy to share my passion, enthusiasm, and knowledge of rosemaling with my colleagues and those whom I teach.

Class C1/C4: Rosemal a Wooden Spoon

Thursday 12:30-1:30 (C1) or Friday 9:00-10:00 (C4)

\$5.00 registration fee, space limited.

Fellesraad News

2026 Annual Meeting May 1-2

“Connecting our Future with our Past.”

Go to Fellesraad.com for details



The sessions will be held on Friday, May 1st, (on Zoom only) and at [Mindekirken](#) on Saturday, May 2nd, (in-person only).

There will be no cost for the online Friday sessions (100 Zoom connections max).

Costs for the in-person Saturday session attendees will be \$30 each if registered before the April 18th deadline. After the 18th, registration is \$35.

Looking for Membership Chairperson!

Consider Joining Our Telelaget Team

Telelaget of America is looking for a person or persons to fill the position of Membership Chairperson. If you think you would like to volunteer with Telelaget in this capacity, or have questions, please contact President Naomi Nowland at nowland.naomi@gmail.com.

Job Description

- Membership is from Jan.-Dec. each year. This individual is responsible for soliciting members to renew. A mostly digital process is already available to handle this task.
- Maintain the Master Membership spreadsheet in Google Drive. This master list is also shared with the editor for organization communications to members.

- The spreadsheet also includes tracking various membership types.
- Manage requests for terminations or removals for non-payment and/or death
- Research returned/undeliverable mail and email addresses to update the master list
- Responsible for initial communications to new and rejoining members and contacting members whose membership has lapsed.
- Submit receipts to the Treasurer for reimbursement (i.e. for envelopes, stamps, and other supplies).
- Provide Membership Updates/Reports at Board Meetings on membership data changes.

[Link to current Telelaget Team](#)



Friends We've Lost

Hamlet A. Peterson, MD, a Telelaget longtime member passed away in August of 2025. Our condolences to his family and survivors.



From his obituary....

Hamlet loved the great outdoors. For over 35 years, he led numerous canoe-camping trips with family and friends to Minnesota's Boundary Waters wilderness and the Sierras. In retirement with Suzanne, he travelled extensively by ocean-going cargo ship, riverboat, bicycle, and on foot to adventure on 6 continents. At 80, he led family to the summit of Gaustatoppen, the highest mountain in Telemark, the ancestral home of his Norwegian forebears.

He was immensely proud of his Norwegian heritage, and of his small-town and agricultural roots. He was a trustee, lifelong member, and supporter of Vesterheim Museum in Decorah. He wrote extensively on genealogical topics and enjoyed ethnic food. With Suzanne, he produced Norwegian flatbread notable for its ineffable thinness, as well as excellent lefse. He consumed, with apparent relish, lutefisk at holiday time, without fail through his final years.

Hamlet contributed heritage stories in five Telesoga publications:

May 2010

“Hamlet E. “Coach Pete” Peterson by Hamlet A. “Ham” Peterson

May 2012

Hamlet A. Peterson M. D. by Kathy Peterson Ott.

Nov 2012

The Amazing Story of Henry and Annie Peterson by Hamlet A. Peterson, M.D.

May 2015

An unusual Path to Immigration - Hamlet A. Peterson, MD

May 2016

An Ultra Successful Telemark Descendent by Hamlet A. “Ham” Peterson, M.D.

Note: Past issues are available to purchase from the [Telelag store](#).



Celebrate May 17th!Norwegian Constitution Day is just around the corner. Many communities across the region will celebrate. Click on any location below for 2026 Syttende Mai information.

- [Decorah, Iowa](#)
- [Mindekirken, Minneapolis, Minnesota](#)
- [St. Olaf/Norway House, Minneapolis, MN](#)
- [Sunburg, Minnesota](#)
- [Spring Grove, Minnesota](#)
- [Milan, Minnesota](#)
- [Westby, Wisconsin](#)
- [Stoughton, Wisconsin](#)
- [Brooklyn, New York](#)
- [Seattle, Washington](#)


- [London, England](#)

Attention Norway Members!



Joining or renewing your Telelaget membership is easier than ever with our new, online system.

[Click here to join or renew!](#)

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