



Volume XXVIII

August 2025

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2025 7+ Lag Stevne Reflections

by Naomi Nowland

All of us who attended the 2025 *Stevne* would like to thank Eric Goplin and *Landingslag* for a wonderful, fun, and informative *Stevne* that took place in Austin, Minnesota in July. The following is not an exhaustive account, but I

I took advantage of the first day's Bus Tour, and it did not disappoint. We visited two churches that had Norwegian roots. St Olaf was established in 1867 and is a big church in downtown Austin. We ate a box lunch there.



Bear Creek (they pronounced it – crick!) was established in 1856. It is still a thriving congregation, but is more typical in that it was a white steepled building out in the country. It was interesting to hear their stories. I continue to be impressed at how many places here in the midwest can trace their origins back to Norway. The *Stevne* was completely contained within the Doubletree by Hilton. Hotel rooms were there as well as a very nice restaurant (that many took advantage of). There was a place for each *lag* to set up, a room for genealogy and several rooms for the presentations. And the presentations did not disappoint.



*Deanna Zentgraf, Joran Olson, Sara Gordon,
Wendi Storhoff at the Registration Table*



*Telelaget Genealogy Experts
Joran Olson & Darrel Johnson*

The keynote speaker spoke about the Norwegian's first crossing aboard the ship *Restauration*. I was not able to get to all the presentations as I had a few other duties.

demonstration. Two women showed how to make the Norwegian *Kransekake* (wedding cake). For nearly the full hour, I heard raucous laughter emanating from behind the closed door. Perhaps some future *Stevne* will have them. I sure hope so. Several of the speakers spoke during two different time slots, which meant you could pick and choose. Unfortunately, the *Kransekake* was only done once.



*Nancy and Karen + Krunsekake =
Comedy and a tasty treat!*

Multiple authors spoke, who also had books for sale. One spoke about Pastor Clausen, who established mission churches among the early Norwegian settlements. He had also written a book about the Haugean Movement. And then there was Gracia Grindal, who is known for her poetry and hymn collections. She talked about the importance of Norwegian pioneers who educated their daughters.

I dragged myself to the presentation on Norwegian-American architecture (It was presented by Miranda Moen is a who is an Architectural Designer and Founder of MO/EN DESIGN PRACTICE, LLC, Austin, MN) and its influences from Norway. I thought it would be a good time to catch a few zzz's. Much to my amazement, it was incredibly enlightening. She had done her research well both in Norway and in Spring Grove, Minnesota. It's so evident when someone is talking about a passion area of theirs. I soon found myself caught up in her fascination. My nap had to wait.

Another presenter focused on Norwegian immigrant women in Brown County, Minnesota, where her grandmother's family from Valdres lived. But the one that impressed me the most was Kelly Herness, who grew up on a family dairy farm in rural Wisconsin. She is currently a student at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Kelly took advantage of a study abroad experience to Norway (Bø in Telemark). She talked about her time there and learning about how Norway cares for its land. It was refreshing to see Norway through the eyes of 'one so young'! Her youth and enthusiasm confirmed that it isn't all about faraway and long-dead relatives. Today's young people, who can trace their roots to Norway, are still finding very real and very current connections to this country that rises forth, weathered and storm-beaten over the water. Young people are falling in love with Norway and cherish both the land and its people.

Friday evening included the banquet, *bunad* parade, and entertainment. More entertainment was provided on Saturday morning after the closing session. The Norwegian Bachelor Farmers never cease to bring laughter through dialogue and song.



Cheryl Hove, Naomi Nowland, Dawn Heimer, Elaine Nordlie, David Floren, Reuben Armiñana and Marnie Olson enjoy each others company at the banquet.



Participants in the Bunad parade

I want to reach out to all the Telers who came to this *Stevne*. If you had half as much fun as I did, you were well served. Speaking of serving, there were delightful treats available during the whole *Stevne*, treats such as *lefse*, rosettes, *sandbukkels*, *kransekake*, cookies, and little sandwiches. Yet another opportunity to bond with others in attendance.

As we have come to expect of *Stevne*'s, this one had a full slate of activities where we could come together with others who have a common interest in Norway. A gathering that educates and entertains. A gathering that forges new friendships while it cements and celebrates old friendships. In other words, a time you don't want to miss!

Telelaget of America – Annual Meeting

Date/Time: Thursday, July 10 – 5:30 pm

Location: 7+ Lag Stevne in Austin, MN

Attendance: 21 members

- Meeting called to order by President **Marne Olson**
- **2024 minutes** approved

Board Reports

- **President (Marne Olson)**
 - Thanked Sandy, Lila, Elaine for successful Spicer mini-*stevne*
 - Two issues of *Telesoga* and *Telemail* published this past year
 - New logo and banner introduced
 - Recognized Amber Walters for website/merch updates
 - Telelaget to host **next 7+ Lag Stevne**
- **Treasurer (Wendi Storhoff)**

- **Membership (Naomi Nowland)**
 - 282 individual + 46 couple memberships
 - Thank-you email/letter sent to all new and renewing members
- **Genealogist (Darrel Johnson)**
 - Thanked Joran for *stevne* support
 - Needs backup for transporting books from Norway House
 - Requested new genealogist recruitment for future *stevner*

Elections

- Nominees: **Joran Olson & Anna Haugen Wagn** (replacing Marne Olson & Doug Framness)
- No other nominations; elected unanimously

New Business / Reports

- **Fellesraad Annual Meeting** Haugo Library highlighted for genealogy resources
- **Mini-Stevne (Spicer)** – “Patchwork of Our Ancestors’ Lives”
 - 8 classes, genealogy sessions, play, revy, bunad parade, tours, show-and-tell, raffle, food, Sioux Falls excursion
- **7+ Lag Stevne 2026 location** – to be announced 7/11/25
- **Publications** – Telelaget-related books available (*Red River Girl*, etc.)

Program

- **Presentation by Sharen Storhoff** – painter/photographer Herbjorn Gausta

Closing

- Adjourned 7:00 pm

Telelaget Board Meeting -- August 2, 2025

The Board met for the purpose of electing officers for the coming year. The results are as follows:

President -- Naomi Nowland
 Vice-President -- Amber Walters
 Secretary -- Sara Gordon
 Treasurer -- Wendi Storhoff

The Patchwork of our Ancestors' Lives

**Another Successful Telelaget Mini-*Stevne* at Little Crow Resort and Hotel,
Spicer, Minnesota April 2025**

By Elaine Nordlie

Telelaget's mini-*stevne*, "The Patchwork of our Ancestors' Lives" was indeed a colorful patchwork quilt. Twenty-nine people registered plus a couple of walk-ins. The venue was perfect for our guests, offering a large gathering room for classes and entertainment, a dining area large enough to accommodate our genealogy and raffles, staff who answered all our requests with a smile, and last but not least, clean and spacious hotel rooms.

Lila Burmeister, Sandy Gilbert, and Elaine Nordlie cooperatively planned more than just a few patchwork pieces for this mini-*stevne*. It became a finely stitched multi-colorful event. Below is a summary list of most of the activities & pleasures:

- Registration package for all, which included not only *stevne* schedules, but information on local historic sites collected by Sandy Gilbert.
- Genealogy research guidance by genealogists, Darrel Johnson and Joran Olson
- A total of eight classes with varied topics of great interest (see below)
- An entertaining historic play by the local "Old Log Church Players"
- A *Revy*, with several entertainers, including local singers and a fiddler
- A *Bunad* and Norwegian Sweater Parade
- "Show and Tell"—members brought historic items to display and shared their story.
- A raffle table filled with varied & interesting Norwegian items – oh, what fun! Thanks to Jerry Burmeister hosting the table.
- Delicious meals with some Norwegian specialties provided by Max's on the Green on-site restaurant and Jacob's Lefse in Osakis.
- Good spring weather – several had time to enjoy a walk on the bike path by the hotel.

A major highlight was the presence of one of our five Telemark liaisons, Anne Haugen

included the topics "Norway at the Time of Emigration," "East Telemark Bunader," and "Crossing 200 Celebration in Norway."

Several Telelag board members did much research on their presentations: Naomi Nowland spoke on "Norwegian Bunader", Jim Skree about "Tradition and Acculturation," Marne Olson about "Norwegian Søljer" displaying several of her beautiful söljer, Amber Walters presented on "Navigating our Telelag Website" with a fun website scavenger hunt (with prizes!), and last was the "Show and Tell" time presented by Amber Walters and Elaine Nordlie.



Anne Haugen Wagn presented programs on emigration from Norway, boulder and the crossing celebrations in Norway.

Judy Hoberg surprised us with some of her late husband, Bill Hoberg's, wonderful woodcarving and rosemaling which she had painted. Bill served on the Telelaget board in several positions from November of 2010 to May 2018.

All in all, the *stevne* was well received by attendees; the mood was friendly and fun, and the classes very interesting!

According to our treasurer Wendi Storhoff, we had an income of \$225.00, due mostly to wonderful raffle offerings and participation, along with a \$250 Thrivent Action Team grant.

We wrapped up the "patchwork quilt" with the option of a Sunday afternoon performance of the Pulitzer Prize- winning opera "Giants of the Earth" in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. The mostly sold-out opera was attended by six Telelag members. It was fascinating to see the beloved novel transformed into a gripping musical performance.



Naomi Nowland presented a program on her mother's bunad and woodcarving traditions in her family.



Shelley Jerviss and Jim Skree - presented a program entitled "Ole Comes to Houston, Tradition and Acculturation."



Elaine Nordlie and others presented an interactive discussion about what immigrants brought to America in their trucks.



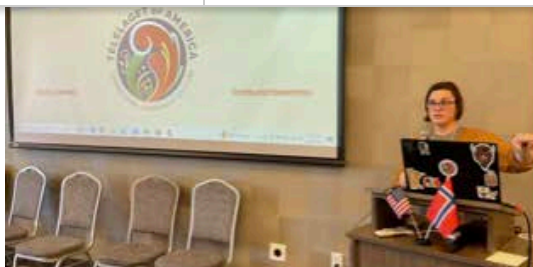
Elaine and Carol demonstrating traditional dances.



Carol and Amber danced a traditional Telemark dance.



Mary Klockeman and Carol in their bunads!



Amber Walters updated the group about the amazing information available on our website.



Marne Olson presented on her Norwegian silver sole collection.



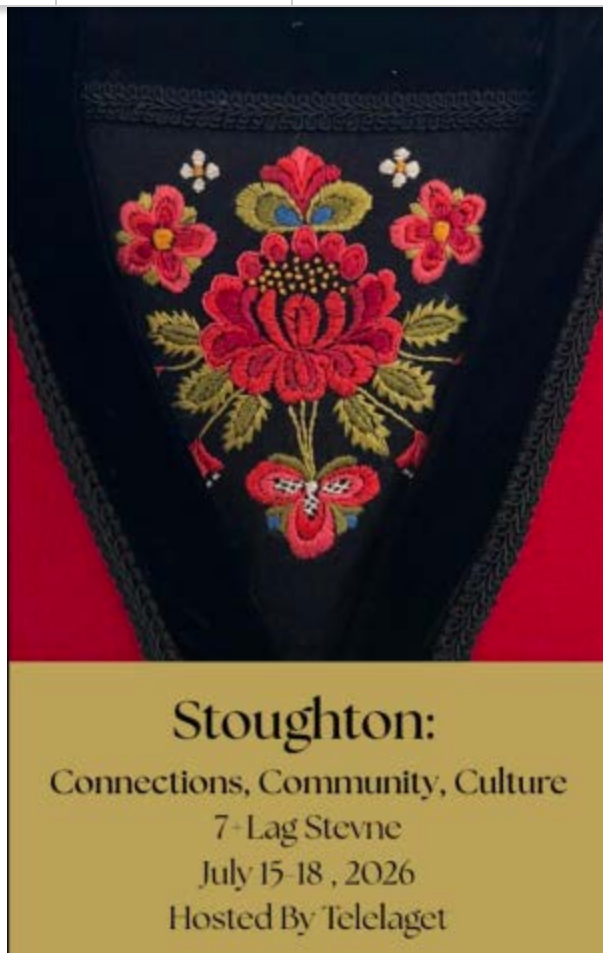
The Old Log Church players.



Our entertaining fiddler.



Telelaget members sharing a meal and discovering more about each other.



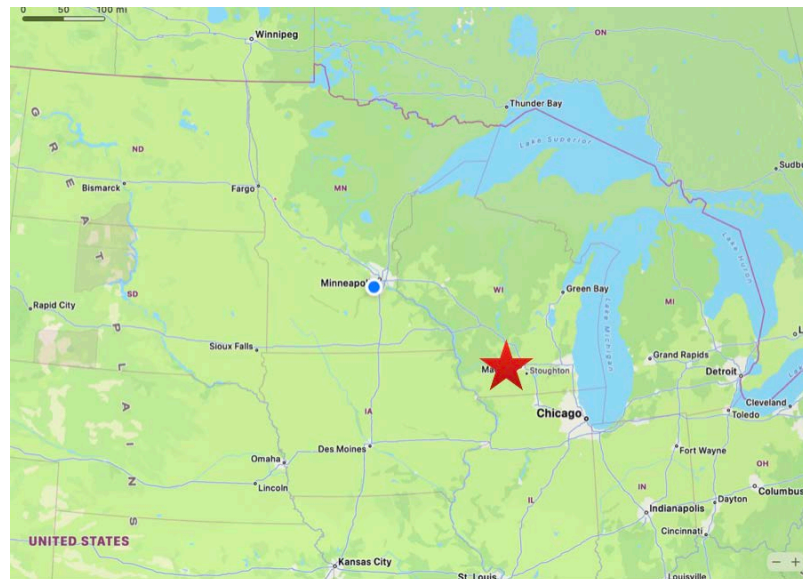
2026 7+Lag Stevne

*The planning committee
has chosen
Stoughton Wisconsin
as the location for next years
7+Lag Stevne!*

***Your Telelaget Stevne
Planning Committee :
Naomi Nowland, Wendi
Storhoff, Amber Walters***

Note: The logo for the 2026
7+ Lag Stevne is the bodice
inset of Stoughton's own certified
bunad.

Stoughton is located just 15 miles south of Wisconsin's capital city of Madison. Stoughton has over 13,000 residents and is built along the banks of the scenic Yahara River. The town is named for a man who bought land there in 1847.



But it wasn't until after the Civil War that Stoughton became a predominantly Norwegian community. A Norwegian immigrant from Telemark by the name of T. G. Mandt founded a wagon company in 1865, which ended up employing hundreds of Norwegian immigrants. Even today, Stoughton is known

Norwegian Constitution Day. A block of rooms will be reserved at a local hotel, as well as a Chamber of Commerce-generated list of B&Bs and Vrbos.

We'll start the *Stevne* with a bus tour on Wednesday morning hosted by Dana Kelly, the executive director of the Norwegian American Genealogical Center and Naeseth Library in Madison, Wisconsin. We are still working out the exact specifics, but the tour will probably include visiting and hearing the Norwegian history of the East Koshkonong Church, West Koshkonong Church, Liberty Church, and maybe the Cambridge Historic School Museum. In addition, we just might have to stop in Rockdale to see the restored beer cellar!

On Thursday, we'll have our opening session, and then the presentations and demonstrations begin. These will be held in the Sons of Norway Mandt Lodge 5-314. This handicapped accessible two story lodge is located right next door to the Norwegian Heritage Center called "Livsreise," which translates into 'Life's Journey.' It has five different interactive kiosks that examine Norway's social and economic conditions, which led to emigration. In addition, it has a handicapped accessible movie theatre which will be showing different videos throughout the *stevne*.

Directly across the street is the Stoughton History Museum, housed in the former Universalist church, which was the first building in Stoughton to be placed on the National Registry of Historic Places. It also has a display of *Bunads*, including the City of Stoughton's own certified *bunad*. Just steps away is the Chorus House, which will 'house'



Sons of Norway Mandt Lodge



Livsreise, Norwegian Heritage Center



Stoughton Heritage Mural

Stoughton's historic downtown Main Street has many places on the State and National Register of Historic Places and is extremely walkable, which is a good thing because you'll want to check out the following:

- The Nordic Nook, an incredible, two-level store loaded with all things Scandinavian. One visit is not enough to take in everything they have.
- Viking Brew Pub has a smoke breathing dragon that you need to see to believe. Dessert Café has delicious and decadent cheesecake bombs.



Stoughton's own certified Bunad



Inside the Tru by Hilton Hotel

- Cheesers has cheese (duh), wine, meats, craft beers, fresh cheese curds every Thursday and of course, 'brunost.'
- Fosdal Home Bakery's very aroma is enticing. I would be remiss if I didn't mention the 1901 Opera House. It is one of only four original two-story opera houses still in use today!

Stoughton is an experience you don't want to miss. We'll be using a lot of local talent for our demonstrations and presentations since Stoughton has...three living Gold Medal rosemalers. Hardanger fiddlers, carvers, historians and its own special charm.

Let me end this article by quoting directly from the Visit Stoughton webpage, where they encourage everyone to explore this unique city - "As you wander through our town of Stoughton, you will uncover local art, unique shops, rich history, delicious treats, and a vibrant celebration of Norwegian heritage and music."

We hope to see you there next July 15-18, 2026.



Telelaget Looking for Membership Chairperson

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.

Membership Chairperson Job Description

- Membership is from Jan-Dec each year. This individual is responsible for soliciting members for renewing. 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 termination 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.

Interested In Tracking the Restauration's Voyage?



<https://www.restauration.no/en#map> provides information and a map to follow the current voyage of the Restauration.

On July 1, 2025, the Restauration began its adventurous voyage towards New York, or America, as they said in 1825, when 52 hopeful people started their 98-day journey towards a new and unknown future, arriving in New York City on October 9th.

The crossing will be the largest historical event of the bicentennial commemoration of Norwegian emigration to North America in modern times.

Check out our online store!



Telelaget of America Merchandise Now For Sale!

Check out the items available to purchase through the [Telelaget Store](#). If you were at the *stevne* in Spicer, you got to see (and maybe even won!) some of the merchandise we have available! Take a look at our store for hats, shirts, mugs, bags, and more!

Red River Girl — our Most Popular Book is also available. The text is both in Norwegian and English. Orabel Thortvedt, granddaughter of pioneer Olav G. Geitestad/Thortvedt, devoted much of her life to 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.

Telelaget has published a set of Norwegian-American history books, the Telemark to America Series. 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.



Harald Omnes



Telelaget recently received word that one of our long-time liaisons, Harald Omnes has died.

Harald was known to many in Nome and Midt-Telemark. Through both his working career and his volunteer efforts and involvement in cultural life, especially folk dance, he had a large network in and outside the region.

Our November issue of the Telesoga will contain a tribute to Harald and the work he has done for Telelaget.

Sherrie Lynn Anderson-Framness

Sherrie Lynn Anderson-Framness, 75, the wife of former Telelaget Vice-President, Doug Framness, passed Tuesday, July 1, 2025, from this world peacefully into Jesus' presence at the Marshfield Medical Center in Marshfield, Wisconsin, with her family at her side.

Born April 20, 1950, in Oconto Falls, Sherrie was the daughter of Ralph and Cora (Witzke) Anderson. She married Douglas Iver Framness on May 25, 1974, at Bethel Lutheran Church near Cecil.



more Norwegian than she was. Sherrie and Doug were avid participants in their local Sons of Norway Lodge, Norwegian Lags, and made several trips to Norway to visit distant cousins and old home-places. Sherrie was an avid genealogist, and her children remember helping with crayon-rubbings of headstones and time spent in genealogical reference libraries.

Sherrie's full obituary can be found at this [link](#).

James Duane Hasleton



James Duane "Jim" Hasleton, husband of Fellesraad president and Telelag member, Elaine Hasleton, passed away August 5, 2025, at home with his family by his side after an extended battle with Alzheimer's. He was born April 8, 1945, at St. Luke's Hospital in Alexandria, Minnesota, to his parents Hubert Clifton Hasleton and Ardes Oma Juliette Shulstad Hasleton. Jim grew up in Alexandria, Minnesota, and graduated from Jefferson High School, Class of 1963. Even though he lived the majority of his life in Utah, he always regarded Alexandria as home and was proud to be from Minnesota.

Jim attended Fergus Falls Junior College and then graduated from Brigham Young University with a B.A. Degree in Graphic Arts. He utilized these talents in the newspaper production business at the BYU Daily Universe newspaper and the Boulder, Colorado, Daily Camera. He also prepared beautiful, graphically-designed family histories for others, including his own and his wife's genealogies.

Proud of his Norwegian heritage, he traveled with Elaine to Norway multiple times, primarily visiting ancestral farms and meeting previously unknown relatives in Hedmark and Telemark counties, as well as Hallingdal. He took numerous high-quality photos there.

Jim's full obituary can be found at this [link](#)

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