

The Norwegian-American Historical Association

Northfield, Minnesota

NEWS LETTER



From the NAHA Office to the Association Members

NUMBER 119

EDITOR, KIM HOLLAND

SUMMER 2003

UPDATE ON TOMSON CHALLENGE

We appreciate the support given to NAHA by our members and friends in the first six months of the Tomson Challenge. As you remember, O.J. Tomson has challenged us all to think about NAHA in charitable ways we may have overlooked in the past. To encourage all of us Tomson offered to make a dollar for dollar match (up to \$100,000) on the gifts the NAHA Board, friends and members make to NAHA in the calendar year 2003!

The first two quarters are in and NAHA is on track to meet the goal! Please consider making another gift in the second half of this year. *We need your help to make the full reality of the challenge come true for NAHA.*

We publicly thank those of you who have helped so far. Please contact the NAHA office if you wish to learn more about how including NAHA in your estate planning can benefit you and NAHA. Pledges are also accepted if you would like to help NAHA over time! (See page 2 for NAHA's list of Tomson Challenge Supporters!)

NORWEGIAN-AMERICAN COUNTRY CHURCH TOUR

Back by popular demand - NAHA and the Northfield chapter of The Norsemen's Federation will host a tour of Norwegian-American country churches on **September 20, 2003**. We invite you to join us for a tour of **Old Trondhjem Norwegian Church and Vang Lutheran**.

Old Trondhjem was awarded the 2002 Preservation Alliance of Minnesota Award. You need to see what this group of dedicated volunteers has done to restore the church to its intended glory. Vang Lutheran has an interesting history and a recently restored organ. We have arranged for a short organ program to be performed for our group. The Vang church ladies will serve lunch. Those who attended last year know the gracious hospitality of rural church ladies! Space is limited. Please send in your checks to reserve your place. Bring a friend - you'll have fun and learn details about our past as Norwegian Americans.

MEET: 10:15 a.m. at St. Olaf College, Buntrock Commons. The bus will transport us to Old Trondhjem Church and to Vang. Return to St. Olaf by 3:00.

COST: \$25 per person. Includes transportation and the lunch
DEADLINE: September 12, 2003.

END OF AN ERA

NAHA has lost a link to the past and a true supporter of our work. Ella Valborg Rolvaag Tweet died in July at the age of 92. The daughter of Ole and Jenny Berdahl Rolvaag, Ella remembered her father's efforts in getting NAHA organized and his trips around the countryside to collect written material for the NAHA archives. In the fall of 2000, to underscore her support of NAHA and its mission, Ella made a \$75,000 gift to NAHA to commemorate the Association's 75th Anniversary. We will miss this fine woman and philanthropist. When you make a gift to NAHA for the Tomson Challenge you may note that it is in honor of Ella Rolvaag Tweet and we will be happy to highlight those gifts in a future newsletter.



Norwegian-American Country Church Tour

September 20, 2003 • 10:15 a.m.

\$25/each Person

Name(s): _____

Amount Enclosed: _____

UPDATED WEBSITE

The volunteer spirit is alive and well at NAHA. Gary Hillman, a NAHA docent and computer wizard, has updated the NAHA website. Exciting new changes abound. Please go to www.naha.stolaf.edu. You will find photos from the NAHA digital archives with an internal search engine based on the wealth of information from the NAHA manuscript file. Photos and letters remind us that history is about individual people and their stories. Check it out and be amazed at what talented volunteers can accomplish with technology!

CALL FOR PAPERS

Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum is accepting proposals for papers for an upcoming symposium, "The Art of Rosemaling: Tradition Meets the Creative Mind", to be held April 23-25, 2004 in Decorah, Iowa. The event will be dedicated to the past, present and future of rosemaling. The goal of the symposium is to discuss Norwegian rosemaling as an art form that continues to evolve through the meeting of tradition and innovation. Papers may come from a number of perspectives: art history, folklore, Scandinavian studies, material culture studies or other fields.

Proposals must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. on October 1, 2003. Papers should not exceed 30 minutes in length unless the author is specifically invited to expand on the topic. Two or more people may collaborate on a panel presentation, not to exceed 75 minutes. Details about the papers and the symposium are available at www.vesterheim.org

TOMSON CHALLENGE SUPPORTERS

\$1-50 • Walter Barthold • Roger & Hannah Ostby • Robert A. Olsen • Michael L. Olsen • Marjorie Mickelson • Lloyd L. Hanson • John V. Lovell • Everett Everson • Elaine Schulstad • Cheryl Larson Freitag • Anne & Arvid Bidne • Aaker Family • Robert & Mary Anne Espeseth • Grace Birkestol • Thomas C. Wollan • Sharon Loe • Ruth Gjerde • Robert Tollefson • Robert & Ruth Paulson • Richard Nordland • Richard Graving • Richard F. Lundgren • Rachel Knudsen • Phillip Thorson • Philip & Eve Overby • Odd & Anna Eiesland • Norman Vinnes • Mitchell L. Taylor • Mary Loftness • Mardeth Dorre • Mardell Blaufarb • Leslee Hoyum • Leland Christensen • Leland B. Sather • Katherine Hanson • Karen Nasby • Karen & John Cullen • Julien & Marilyn Hansen • Joyce Madole • Joy Pahl • John Karevoll • John & Kathryn Tunheim • John & Evelyn Lund • James & Patricia Johnson • Jacob Stampen • IBM Match • Helen Egerton • Frederic Schaefer • Franklin & Hildred Norman • Eric Hallen • Eric & Grace Lund • Dr. Magne & Judith Olson • Dr. & Mrs. James W. Debnam • Donald Stubb • Donald Horganson • Dixie Hansen • Darrel Johnson • Bjorn & Eva Holthe • Astrid Scott • Astri K. Olsen • Arthur Huseboe • A. William Hogle • Walter T. Hovey • Stan Reep • Arland & Gerda Fiske • The Caxton Club • Robert & Lois Jorstad • James Pederson • Gary & Susan Thorson • Antigone Twidt • Ansgar & Muriel Sovik • Rodney Johnson • Robert Tengdin • Rebecca Morgenson • Merton & Irene Stommen • Marilyn Applequist • Karl Johnson • Harry Iverson • Esther Alcom • Dorcas Doraw • Dee Anna Grimsrud • Alice Olsen
\$51-100 • Torild Homstad • Todd Nichol • Thomas & Barbara Quinn • Stan Hultgren • Robert S. Duxstad • Norwegian-

American Genealogical Association • Michael & Erlaine Seeger • Lowell E. Boyum • Lois Drews • Lloyd Svendsbye • Lloyd Anderson • Layne & Garnet Haugen • Kathleen B. Schmidt • Judge Derwood Johnson • John Hogenson • Janet Pultz • James Belugum • E.L. Fevold • David & Marguerite Monson • Dan Nikuls • Bygdelagenes Fellesraad • Ardis H. Nier • Amy Narvestand • Allan & Eunice Sortland • William Melton • Sara Miller • Lorraine Neuger • Karen Annexstad Humphrey • Joseph Meland • John & Debra Wilkinson • Jerrol Tostrud • Jean Hanson • Fritjof & Helen Lokensgard • Einar Vallevik • Doris Kornfeld • Julie Kay Peck • Dianne Snell
\$101-250 • Solveig Steendal • San Francisco Foundation • Roy Harrisville • David Hardy • David A. Holt • University of Illinois • S/N Norsota Lodge in memory of Lenore Larson • Marilyn M. Jones • Brynhild Rowberg • Brian Rude • Barbara Bauman • Kim Holland • Gordon & Charlotte Rassmussen • Allan & Imogene Nelson • Minnesota Historical Society • Paul & Carol Hasvold • Julie Pavr • Clayton L. Johnson • Judith Stoutland
\$251-500 • William & Mary Seeger • Everett Everson for the Whitehall Public Library • Raymond Hanson • Pam Risvold • Nils Lang-Ree • Doug & Ruth Crane • David Hill • Carole Stempfle • Adrienne S. Morrison • Scott Keimig • Dean Buntrock • Orrin & Charlotte Helstad • Norman Erickson • Lew Linde • Keith & Zay Lenaburg • Joan Buckley.
\$501-999 • Solveig Zempel • Oscar & Carroll Palrud
\$1,000-4,999 • Marian Aaker • Mary Ann Olsen • Kristin & Michael Garey • Sidney & Lois Rand • Karen F. Davidson • Robert Kittleson • Elmer & Ethel Paulson. Lloyd & Ester Hustvedt
\$5,000 • Pearl Husby
5 yr. pledges of \$10,000 • Todd & Kristin Nichol • Lloyd & Anne Svendsbye
From the 2002 Annual Fund: we mistakenly omitted Jim and Sonja Hillestad- \$250

SOGNEFJORDLAGET VISITS NAHA

It seems that each summer has brought a different *lag* (regional society) to NAHA. This year we had the pleasure of meeting many members of the Sognefjordlag. NAHA resources were a treasure for the *lag*, many of whom were first-time visitors. We look forward to meeting most of the different *lags* in the upcoming years.

WHAT'S NEW IN WHITEHALL WISCONSIN?

An interesting request came to us through a life member and former resident of Whitehall, Wisconsin. Everett Everson has been a NAHA member for years and thought his NAHA books and Norwegian immigration books, collected over the decades, deserved a broader audience. Mr. Everson decided his collection of Norwegian American immigration history books should go to the Whitehall Public Library. Everson asked NAHA to help him check the Association's used book section and complete the gaps in his NAHA collection of books.

Everson's thoughtfulness did not end with the gift of NAHA books. His donation included a NAHA 25-year institutional membership for the Whitehall Public Library AND a monetary gift to the library for the shelving and housing of this Norwegian-American collection of resources. Whitehall Wisconsin area library patrons thank Mr. Everson for providing such a valuable source of material for future research.

We applaud Mr. Everson's generosity and his progressive thinking. We hope it inspires you to share your interest in Norwegian immigration and Norwegian American life with those who might be beginning their investigation of this fascinating topic!

GOOD NEWS & UPCOMING CHANGES AT THE ARCHIVES

We will soon have a bit more space available for NAHA's use as a reading room. By the start of the fall semester, our NAHA editor, Todd Nichol will have a new office with his St. Olaf History Department colleagues. This will allow NAHA to use the former editor's office as a multi-purpose reading room. With this extra space, we can take even better care of the unique, one of a kind documents that compile the terrific archives at NAHA. The Rowberg Files (over 200,000 obituaries and clippings) reference books, maps and overview material will be concentrated in the new space - across the hall from the NAHA offices.

We will also be asking you to sign in and out for the manuscript boxes. NAHA owes it to the future generation of patrons and members to keep things in order and be confident that folders and boxes are returned to their proper places. The delicate condition of certain documents may require that you wear cotton gloves when handling the papers. This will prevent any further deterioration of the already fragile paper.

Additionally, St. Olaf College has agreed to allow NAHA patrons to use a group of lockers to secure possessions so you can work without worrying about your purse/wallet and your jacket.

Due to limited resources NAHA's hours have been shortened. We can best serve you when we know your proposed date, time of arrival and the field/topic of interest you are seeking. We look forward to your visit and are excited for you to learn about the treasures in the archives. Please call 507.646.3221 or email us at naha@stolaf.edu and check our hours prior to your Northfield trip. We ask your cooperation and patience with the implementation of changes to our past practices.

IT'S ABOUT TIME!

The Norwegian-American women in San Diego have been busy on a project that makes us all wonder, "why didn't we think of that?" NAHA received a book from the Ladies of Valhall, titled *Bunads in America: A Norwegian Cultural Tradition in Southern California*, by author Anne Kløvnes Høidal. (180 pages, hardcover.) The book examines the Norwegian-American traditions in southern California as well as the bunad tradition of Norway. The book includes a glossary of bunad terms, detailed photos of buttons, sølje, aprons, collars and belts. Norwegian Americans in California are pictured in their bunads with a bit background on each of them, and how they acquired their bunad.

In a conversation with the author I learned that she had been receiving questions from sincere and well meaning Norwegian Americans interested in acquiring a bunad. She soon realized they hadn't grown up with the knowledge of appropriate times for an everyday bunad vs. the times for a dress bunad, how and where to place the sølje, and numerous other issues. Høidal also received questions about caring for a

bunad and she addresses some of these issues in the book. The bunad is a visible part of Norwegian nationalism that has come and gone in cycles. This is a current view of modern day Norwegian-American history! Books, including postage, sell for \$37.50. If you are interested in this you may contact the Ladies of Valhall, 5740 Lance Street, San Diego, CA 92120.

ADDITIONS TO THE ARCHIVES

Received from Lars and Roald Kindem, *Amerikabrev, Letters from America to "Hardanger" in Odda, Norway and other publications*, 190 pages, spiral bound. This will supplement the Anna Sekse Kindem papers already part of the NAHA collection. Kindem wrote letters to Norwegian publications informing them of living conditions in Minnesota. These descriptive letters have been translated from Norwegian into English for the period 1938-1976. Anna and her husband Ingvald reared eight children - three born in Norway and five born in Minnesota. Anna was a prolific writer and described life in Norwegian America in her letters back to family in Norway. World events, holidays, children's activities, church and ladies aid activities, funerals, school life, travel to the West Coast and Minnesota weather were all described so Anna's friends and family could share in the observations of a woman who loved Norway and her new country.

Received from Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum, *Ole Goes to War: Men From Norway Who Fought in America's Civil War*. Soft cover, 96 pages. This serves as the exhibit catalog for the Norwegians in the Civil War exhibit on display through September 1, 2003. Includes some photos, copies of records, letters and brief stories about some of the soldiers and their lives before and after the war.

Received from Dolores E. Jorgenson, *The Brenna Book*, 195 pages, soft cover. Mathias Klemethaugen and Johanna Frydenlunde were married in 1878 and worked on Myrhaugen until purchasing Brenna, a farm of their own in 1902. Several older children found opportunity in the United States. When Mathias became a widower with 5 younger children, the chance to go to America was presented. All the possessions and the farm were sold in 1910. Watertown, South Dakota was the destination. Includes copies of letters, maps, smallpox vaccinations, land contracts and photos of life in the United States and in Norway.

Received from Forrest Brown, Richard Fretheim's, *Norske I Montana: Volumes 1,2 and 3*. Each book is soft cover and approximately 300 pages. Using federal census schedules, Norwegian Lutheran church records, and 70 county histories, this is a locator index for approximately 75,000 persons of Norwegian descent who lived in Montana before 1920.

Received from Carol-Jean Boevers, *A Psalmbook... and a Good Pair of Shoes*, 398 pages, a family history of the 13 generations of the Floren and Haugen family who emigrated from Norway. The title reflects the advice given to those wishing to leave Norway and come to the United States. Includes information about Norwegian emigration, life in Norway and farming methods.

Received from Lew Linde, his paper entitled, "Chief Justice Douglas K. Amdahl, Minnesota's Judicial Pioneer", 15 pages, prepared for the 2003 NAHA-Norge Conference in Bergen. Linde briefly reviews the influence of Amdahl's immigrant grandparents, Kjeran Bjorn Amdahl and Martha Mikkelsen Amdahl on Amdahl's legal career and his path to serving as the Chief Justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court

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Received from Anne Haugen Wagn, *Eg vandrar ut, ver med meg, Du! Telemarkeningar I USA*. Hardcover, 248 pages, mainly in Norwegian, but some English. The author reviews the life and destiny of those early Telemarkings who left Tinn in 1837 and settled in America. The average emigrant's own stories as well as those of remarkable emigrants are told in this book. Includes many photos, copies of letters, illustrations, some translations. Many interesting tidbits include information about the life of Henrik Ibsen's brother Nicolai who lived his adult life in America and is buried in Estherville, Iowa.

Received from Tom Sorenson, *From Hemsedal, Norway to Minnesota, the Sletto Family Story*, spiral bound, 282 pages. Includes high quality photos of people and places important to the family, copies of written letters, documents and records. For added background the author included portions of *The Sagas of the Norse Kings* by Snorri Sturluson.

Received from Roy F. Anderson, *Mary Rykhus's Family History*, spiral bound, 185 pages. Includes explanations of Norwegian naming customs, outlines of the farm in Norway around 1875, photos, recollections by family members, copies of documents, and more current information about the descendants of Mary Rykhus.

Received from Marit Martinsen, *Fembøringen På Prærien, Nordlandslaget af Amerika 1908-1945*. Soft cover, 176 pages. Author used NAHA extensively in her research for the University of Tromsø dissertation.

Received from Marit L. Lomen, a number of year-books of the Valdres Historical Society and many local history publications about that district; also copies of many standard works on Norwegian-American history.

Received from Richard W. Solberg, *Rev. Carl K. Solberg 1872-1954, Sketches of his Life and Career*. Spiral bound, approximately 200 pages. Carl Solberg was a Lutheran pastor whose professional life encompassed the great depression, two world wars, the transition of the church from Norwegian to English and the merging of Norwegian Lutheran Synods. From the 1890's until the mid-1940's Solberg kept a hand-written journal of his experiences in more than 50 notebooks, which were given to NAHA. There are few if any diaries with such detail and time frame. His son Richard has summarized these journals in a book spanning the life of a man who served the church and his family in many different capacities and during major times of transition in America.

Received from Iris Hemmingson, a copy of the Civil War diary (written in Norwegian and translated into English) kept by her great grandfather, Mikkel Tostenson Elgeraas, also known as Michael Thompson, who served in the 15th Regiment from Scandinavia, Wisconsin.

Received from Clarice and Keith Anderson, *From Hadeland, Norway to Greenwood Township, Vernon County Wisconsin and Beyond; The Story of Truls Erickson Western and Gudbjør Olsdatter Malkjearnseiet in America, Their Ancestors and Descendants*. 97 pages, spiral bound. The book explains the naming customs in Norway and follows each generation of descendants and how they spread throughout the country. A few photos are included.

Received from James Schlosser, *The Near Ancestry of Our Johnson Family*. Soft Cover 90 pages. Ole and Julia Johnson settled in Livingston County, Illinois. Includes pedigree charts, information from bygdebøker, photos of ancestral churches, pictures of ancestors and ancestral farms.