

# The Norwegian-American Historical Association

Northfield, Minnesota

# NEWS



# LETTER

*From the NAHA Office to the Association Members*

NUMBER 117

EDITOR, KIM HOLLAND

FALL 2002

## MEET THE NEW OFFICERS AT NAHA

**Lois Rand** served on the NAHA Board for 15 years and then took a 3 year break only to return in April as President of the Association. We are delighted she is willing to help NAHA grow and become stronger.

Lois has always had a strong interest in history, the written word, and her Norwegian-American heritage. Lois grew up in South Dakota and has lived in a variety of locations. She earned both her B.A and her M.A in music from Colorado College in Colorado Springs.

In 1975 Lois married Sidney Rand. Her interest in preserving Norwegian-American history was increased because she and Sidney were constantly representing a Norwegian-American college while Sidney was president of St. Olaf College. In 1980 President Jimmy Carter appointed Sidney to serve as the United States Ambassador to Norway. The Rands joined the diplomatic world and learned about life in Norway. Upon returning to the U.S., Sidney was a popular interim president for colleges in the upper Midwest. Happily the Rands are now living in Northfield again!

**John R. Tunheim** was elected Vice-President. Jack has been on the Board for 9 years and is a graduate of Concordia College in Moorhead and the University of Minnesota Law School. He is also the author of a book about the Norwegian Americans in his home county, *A Scandinavian Saga: Pioneering in New Folden Township, Marshall County, Minnesota, 1882-1905*. Jack is a U.S. District Court Judge who from 1994-1998 served as the Chair of the U.S. Assassination Records Review Board, an independent federal agency in charge of declassifying the government records of the Kennedy Assassination. He and his wife Kathy live in Stillwater, Minnesota, and are the parents of a daughter in college and a son still at home.

The NAHA Board members elected **Brian Rude** to serve as Secretary of the Association. Brian is a graduate of Luther College in Decorah and obtained his M.A in public administration and public policy from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. After many years of service in the Wisconsin State Senate, Brian recently entered life in the private sector with Dairyland Power. Brian and his wife Karen have two sons and live in Coon Valley, Wisconsin.

NAHA's Treasurer, **Layne Haugen**, brings his years of financial experience in the Luther Seminary business office and years as a Certified Public Accountant to assist NAHA. Layne is a Luther College graduate and lives in Eagan with his wife Garnet. A son and daughter have made them proud grandparents.

## NAHA NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT

By this time you have probably received a letter from NAHA's new president, Lois Rand, asking for your support of NAHA. We hope that you consider her request and give generously to NAHA. In case you have misplaced your letter and brochure we have included a return envelope for your convenience with this newsletter. These are challenging times for any non-profit organization, so we ask that you keep in mind the important work NAHA does in locating, collecting, preserving and interpreting the contributions of Norwegian Americans to American life. Your help is necessary to continue the publication program and archives. Your gifts are tax-deductible. NAHA sends a receipt to you for your year-end records of charitable giving.

Also, a simple reminder - you may include NAHA in your estate planning. A request to your attorney will initiate a process that might be as simple as adding a codicil to your existing will. You will have the satisfaction of knowing you can make a difference to an important group doing important work!

## THE VIKINGS ARE COMING! THE VIKINGS ARE COMING!!

You have the opportunity to see *Vikings: The North Atlantic Saga* one last time before the well traveled exhibit ends. This popular exhibit opens **November 23, 2002** and runs through **May 18th 2003** at the Minnesota Museum of Science in St. Paul.

We encourage you to check out the Minnesota Museum of Science website [www.mms.org](http://www.mms.org) where the important details about the exhibit are located. This website has all the fine points you can imagine, from purchasing tickets to driving directions, parking and hotels. This is truly a special exhibit that arrives in Minnesota after being in Washington, D.C., Denver, Colorado and Ottawa, Canada.

## NAHA OFFICE HOURS

We remind you to call ahead before you visit the NAHA office. Please call 507.646.3221 to find out our hours on the day of your visit. Our staff is composed of three part-time people. We don't want you to be disappointed if you discover we are not open after you have driven some distance to Northfield. We also enjoy meeting our members, so please let us know when you are planning to visit/use the archives! In general the NAHA archives are open Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m.-12:30 and 1:30 - 4:00 p.m. We can better assist you if we know you are coming. Many NAHA resources are located and cataloged in the Rolvaag Library which, during the school year, is open evenings and weekends.

## HELP NAHA WHEN YOU GO SOUTH THIS SEASON

Should you be away from home for an extended period of time, **PLEASE** include NAHA in your list of those you notify for a "hold" on your mail. If we are not notified of your absence and NAHA sends out a book, NAHA ends up paying postage on the book three times!! (We pay for the initial mailing, we get billed for the return trip back to Northfield AND we send the book to you again after your return.) In the future, we will make our best efforts to have books go out before Thanksgiving and/or in the spring when most "snowbirds" have returned home. Like any non-profit, we need to make the most of our very limited dollars. We appreciate your assistance!

## AUTHOR SEEKS BLIZZARD STORIES

Weather writer David Laskin is looking for family stories about the Great Blizzard of January 12, 1888, that hit the Upper Midwest. Laskin is writing a book about this storm and how it affected the lives of people in the region. Please contact him at: 18757 Ridgefield Rd NW, Seattle, WA 98177, tel. 206-546-8856 or e mail to [d.laskin@verizon.net](mailto:d.laskin@verizon.net).

## IBSEN FESTIVAL - FIELD TRIP OPPORTUNITY!

The Commonwealth Theatre Company in Lanesboro, MN, continues the tradition of celebrating one of history's greatest playwrights - Henrik Ibsen - with their 6th annual **Ibsen Festival**. To open the 2003 season they will present *The Master Builder*, the story of Halvard Solness, a brilliantly successful but aging architect whose towering ego is shaken by the arrival of a beautiful young woman come to collect on a decade-old promise. Her surprise visit sparks new life in Solness' home, as well as his heart, while rekindling painful memories of the past. Youth and experience, illusion and reality, collide with powerful results. *The Master Builder* runs February 13 through May 17. Tickets are \$15. Discounted group rates are available for parties of 10 or more. Contact the box office at (800) 657-7025. Groups of 30 or more can arrange a special performance by contacting Jill Underwood at (507) 467-2905 x206. For more information, call (800) 657-7025 or see their website at [www.commonwealththeatre.org](http://www.commonwealththeatre.org).

## DID YOU KNOW?

NAHA received a request for information from a new television program on the Home and Garden Channel. The program is called "How's That Work?" and is about common household appliances. Every time we take a warm shower, run the dishwasher or do laundry we can thank Edwin Ruud, a Norwegian American, for inventing the water heater! In 1897 Ruud established the Ruud Manufacturing Company, which became one of the largest water-heater manufacturers in the United States. Ruud was born in Askim, Norway in 1854 and came to America in 1880. The University of Pittsburgh conferred a Doctor of Science degree upon Ruud in 1927, and the Norwegian government awarded him the Order of St. Olaf. Ruud died in 1932. The company eventually became the Ruud/Rheem Company and has recently been sold to a Japanese company. Thank you Mr. Ruud!

## COUNTRY CHURCH TOUR - A SUCCESS AND GREAT FUN!

On the 21st of September NAHA members and members of the Northfield Nordmanns Forbundet chapter joined together for an educational trip to Gol and Holden churches in nearby Goodhue County. Dr. Joseph Shaw discusses these and sister congregations in his book *Bernt Julius Muus*. Before we boarded the bus NAHA Editor Todd Nichol presented an overview of these early congregations. Garrison Keillor would have been envious of the wonderful hospitality and lunch provided by the ladies of Gol and Gol's pastor, the Reverend Keith Homstad. Let us know if you have suggestions for future NAHA tours. We would be pleased to join forces with members and potential members in areas where there are sites of historical interest to Norwegian Americans.

## LAGS UTILIZE NAHA

NAHA was pleased to have many members of thirteen bygdelags, meeting as the Vestlandslag and the Seven Lag Stevne, use the archives during their annual meetings at St. Olaf College this summer. By meeting at St. Olaf College the Lags were able to supplement their own extensive resources with those of NAHA and NAHA collection within the Rolvaag Library.

While NAHA may not have exact information about your particular ancestors we can place your information into context and make your information more engaging. Don't you want to know why your relatives left Norway, what was going on in Norway that prompted their departure? Don't you want to know what it was like in the county in which they first settled? Don't you want to know what it was like to be an immigrant wife with nine children under the age of 12 and be miles from your nearest neighbor? NAHA has the stories and background that can add life to the basic information of dates for "born," "married," and "died".

More information about the Lags is available at their website which has links to the 20 various Lags. Check out [www.fellesraad.com](http://www.fellesraad.com).

## WHERE IS HE NOW?

We often receive mail addressed to Lloyd Hustvedt, and visitors ask us about Lloyd when they come into the office. Recently, I came across a book that looked interesting. Lo and behold, it contained an essay by our very own Lloyd Hustvedt!! The book is now out in paperback and is entitled, *I Thought My Father Was God: And Other True Tales From NPR's Story Project*. Those of you who have appreciated Lloyd's storytelling and writing will be pleased to know he is doing well. Still writing and making stories come to life as only a true master can do!

## ADDITIONS TO THE NAHA OFFICE

We want to let you know there is a pleasant new voice answering the phone at NAHA. We are very pleased to have Catherine Cleland in the office on a part-time basis, helping with the membership records, book orders and supervising the student workers. Catherine lives on a farm outside of Northfield and has a husband and two young sons who keep her

on her toes. Please stop in and introduce yourself to Catherine. It is always a treat to meet the people attached to the names on our membership lists!

## USED BOOKS AND OUT OF PRINT NAHA BOOKS

Our members have listened to the message about NAHA making a home for our earlier publications. This summer we received many books and in turn we are able to send them to eager homes all across the United States and Norway. NAHA maintains a "waiting list" for those of you seeking a difficult to find book. Please email us or write the NAHA office at [naha@stolaf.edu](mailto:naha@stolaf.edu) after checking the list below. We will be happy to add your name to the waiting list and contact you when the book(s) become available.

**Out of print books are \$15.00 plus \$3.50 postage for first book - \$1.00 each for each additional book -MN residents add 6.5% sales tax.** Title/number available: *Chronicle of Old Muskego* (2), *A Folk Epic: The Bygdelag in America* (2), *The Immigrant Takes His Stand: The N-A Press* (5), *In Their Own Words: Letters From Norwegian Immigrants* (7) Laur. Larsen (7), *Makers of an American Legacy: Essays in Honor of Kenneth Bjork* (3), *Pathfinder for Norwegian Emigrants* (1), *Rasmus Bjørn Anderson* (1), *Diary of Elizabeth Koren* (1), *West of the Great Divide* (1), *Vivacious Daughter* (4), *The Klondike Saga* (3), *N-A Studies and Record Vol. 13* (5), *N-A Studies Vol. 14* (7), *N-A Studies Vol. 15* (4), *N-A Studies Vol. 24* (1), *N-A Studies Vol. 30* (4)

**In print, used books are \$8.00 plus \$3.50 postage for first book and \$1.00 for each additional book, 6.5% sales tax for MN residents.** Title/number available: *A Long Pull From Stavanger* (8), *Immigrant Idealist: Waldemar Ager* (8), *Kristofer Janson in America* (6), *John A. Johnson* (5), *Material Culture and People's Art* (2), *On Both Sides of the Ocean* (7), *Saga in Steel and Concrete* (4), *The Changing West* (2), *The Colony That Rose from the Sea* (6), *Studies Vol. 11* (3), *Studies Vol. 16* (12), *Studies Vol. 17* (3), *Studies Vol. 18* (4), *Studies Vol. 19* (4), *Studies Vol. 20* (1), *Studies Vol. 21*(2), *Studies Vol. 22* (2), *Studies Vol. 23* (4), *Studies Vol. 26* (5), *Studies Vol. 31* (12) *Studies Vol. 33* (10)

## SNOWSHOE THOMPSON FOLLOW UP

O.J. Tomson, of NAHA's finance committee has given NAHA a striking sculpture of John A. "Snowshoe" Thompson. The artwork is a miniature of a sculpture dedicated in 2001 at a ceremony in Genoa, Nevada, where "Snowshoe" was buried 125 years earlier.

"Snowshoe" carried the U.S. mail across the Sierra Nevada mountains from Genoa to Placerville, California, during the Gold Rush days when no other means of transportation was successful. Having emigrated in 1837 from Tinn, Telemark, Norway, to Wisconsin and Illinois, "Snowshoe" farmed near Mt. Horeb, Wisconsin, prior to heading for California in 1851 with his half-brother, Tore. Married and with a son, Snowshoe supplemented his gold-mining income by responding to an ad by the U.S. Postal Service. Crafting skis like he remembered using in Norway, Snowshoe soon became a hero by saving stranded pack trains, rushing medicines to needy residents, and keeping relatives and businesses in touch until the east-west railroad link was completed.

St. Olaf emeritus professor of history Kenneth Bjork devotes one chapter of his *West of the Great Divide* to Snowshoe's remarkable exploits. Many others have studied Snowshoe's impact upon early California history as well as his roots in Tinn, Norway. NAHA and St. Olaf are indebted to O.J. Tomson for his gift of the Snowshoe Thompson sculpture prominently displayed in the Heritage or Norway rooms within Buntrock Commons, the student center. Be sure to ask to see it when you visit St. Olaf's campus.

## RECEIVED AT THE ARCHIVES

Received from Delores Thorson Lewis, the centennial and 125th Anniversary books for Centennial Lutheran Church in Des Moines, Iowa. Approximately 40 pages each, soft-cover. Founded in 1876 by Norwegian immigrants, this congregation shows the important groups within the congregation and the shift to a more urban congregation now serving a non-Scandinavian population. Photos of former pastors are included.

Received from Gary Morgan, *Foto Cavalcade Bilder fra Norges Frigjøring 7 Mai- 30 Juni 1945*. Soft-cover approximately 50 pages with photos showing the jubilation upon the liberation of Norway. Descriptions in both Norwegian and English.

Received from Marlys Lien Holth, *From Sod Breaking to Space Flying-the Anderson Families*, Soft-cover, 93 pages. This family history looks at the five children of Anders and Oline Mikkelsdatter Kristensen. Photos add to the family stories.

Received from Marlys Lien Holth, *Roots and Branches, - Slaatstuen and Lundsten Families*. Soft-cover, 142 pages. This family history traces the relatives of Anton Gjestvang and Susanna Lund Gjestvang. Includes photos and addresses.

Received from Marlys Lien Holth, *Asprusten Heritage*. Soft-cover, 197 pages. Asprusten is the name of the farm near Åmot and Rena in Østerdalen Norway where the family lived before they settled in the United States. Includes photos and addresses of living descendants.

Received from Kirsti Alette Blomvik, *Døtre af Norge - Heritage, Sisterhood, and Self-reliance: The Evolution and Significance of the Daughters of Norway 1897-1950*. 171 pages, soft-cover. This is a thesis presented to the Department of English, the Norwegian University of Science and Technology. A statement made in 1924 by Dr. Ingeborg Rasmussen, "It is the Daughters of Norway and the other women's clubs which most of all keep Norwegian-ness alive in America" provided the inspiration for this study. The author examines the creation of the Daughters of Norway in the Midwest and its expansion to the West Coast states before the merger with Sons of Norway in 1950.

Received from Garth Ulrich, *Dovre - 75 years (1914-1989)* soft-cover, approximately 80 pages. 75th Anniversary publication of Dovre Lutheran Church, Spalding, Saskatchewan. All baptisms, parents and sponsors are listed, as well as the confirmation classes. Pastors, marriages and funerals are also listed. Church Women Executives are listed for each year. Brief histories are also included for the smaller congregations of Big Stone Lutheran, Bethany English Lutheran, and Good Hope Lutheran, all of which had dissolved decades earlier.

Received from Garth Ulrich, *The Mortensen Family from Grue, Solør, Norway: the Descendants of Morten Olsen and Kari Paulsdatter*. Spiral-bound, approximately 250 pages. Includes photos, copies of records, obituaries, 50th and 60th Anniversary accounts and much more.

Received from Garth Ulrich, *The Descendents of Gulbrand and Siri Anderson*. Three-ring binder, approximately 400 pages. Gulbrand and Siri left Valdres in 1881 and came to the United States. Over time they had 12 children. Each of the 12 children and their descendants have a chapter dedicated to their expanding numbers. Includes photos, biographical sketches, important dates, and copies of newspaper articles.

Received from Charles Akre, *The Akre Family*, compiled by Charles Akre in 2001, soft-cover approximately 30 pages. The publication lists the resources available within the family and some of the ancestors who left Norway and the descendants who have grown up in America. Also includes memories and stories from Pastor Charles Akre.

Received from Aldora Lee, *My Childhood Memories*, soft-cover, 52 pages. Includes charming, daily accounts of growing up on a farm near Kenyon, Minnesota, with all the work that needed to be done. The detailed accounts of laundry days, party phone lines, mowing the lawn, greasing the windmill, taking milk to the creamery, rendering lard, butchering chickens, and the multitude of steps involved with cooking and preserving food for a larger family make this an educational booklet.

Received from Lloyd Svendsbye, *Valdres Bygdebok: Gardar og slekter i Vang, Books A, B, C*. Published in 1985, 1990 and 1991.

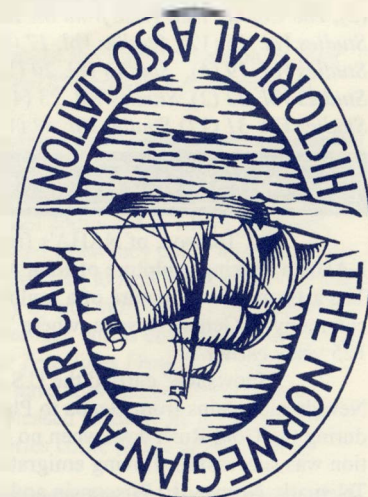
Received from Lee Rokke, *The Sigdalslag 1949*. This is the English translation of sixth book of the Sigdalslag, originally published in 1949. Hard-cover, 198 pages, with information about people from Sigdal, Eggedal and Krødsherad in America. Includes some photos, letters and stories written by people before and after WW II.

Received from Chris Rotto Hefte, *Rotto*, approximately 400 pages, Three-ring binder. The family history follows the three Rotto siblings who came to America in the 1860s and 1870s. The book traces their descendants as well as their remaining family in Norway. Includes general information about Norway, English translations of articles written in Norwegian, copies of photos, plat maps, newspaper articles, copies of immigration records and much more.

Received from Chris Rotto Hefte, *You Should Know of My Life - A Collection of Family Letters about Reverend Isaac Rotto*. Spiral-bound, approximately 200 pages. Rotto was son of Norwegian immigrants and served Norwegian Lutheran congregations in various North Dakota parishes. Rotto died at the age of 51 and left nine children behind, all of whom are graduates of Luther College.

Received from Anita Hillesland Londgren, *Meet the Myrstøls and Look Back a Thousand Years*. Soft-cover, 40 pages. Includes copies of photographs, lists of descendants and stories of the life in the America. The life on the prairies was quite a contrast with their former lives in Norway. One relative farmed in Kansas until he went crazy from all the sun and was confined to a mental hospital before he died of a lung disease.

Received from Helen Lokken, *The History of Amund and Margit Ulsaker Bakke Family 1664-1998*. Approximately 400 pages, hard-cover. Includes maps, photos, copies of newspaper clippings, obituaries, family trees diagrams and letters.



Change Service Requested

Norwegian-American Historical Association  
St. Olaf College  
Northfield, Minnesota 55057  
www.naha.stolat.edu  
507-646-3221

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
FARIBAULT,  
MINN.  
PERMIT NO. 21