



Message from the Chair

Leslee Lane Hoyum

A Time for Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving, originally the day of giving thanks for the harvest, is celebrated in various ways on different days throughout the world, and it reflects diversity of cultural and religious tradition. In North America, we are most familiar with the United States' Thanksgiving held the fourth Thursday of November, or the

Canadian Thanksgiving celebrated the second Monday of October. But Norway, too, has a celebration of thanksgiving, and it is called Høsttakkefest, which most easily translates to "Harvest Thanksgiving Feast." Its roots are old and reflect both religious and secular tradition.

Although Christianity did not come to Norway until around 1000 A.D., the roots of Høsttakkefest predate it. However, once the country was christianized, it followed much the same timeline as Mikkelsmess (Arch Angel Michael's Mass) celebrated by the Catholic Church since 380 A.D. It normally took place in September to celebrate the end of the harvest. In 1770, the celebration was abolished as a public church holiday in Norway and Denmark. However, in 1918 it was reinstated in the Norwegian liturgical calendar, and from 1999 the Church of Norway made it an optional celebration.

The secular roots of Høsttakkefest are agrarian and tied to the practice of transhumance or pastoral migration, the seasonal movement of people and their livestock. In rural Norway, Høsttakkefest is traditionally the autumn day on which a farm's livestock and its tenders move from a higher summer farm, or seter, to the main farm in the valley below. Nonetheless, the season is full of thankful thoughts and celebrations.

To me, Thanksgiving is more than the harvest, turkey, cranberries, candied yams, stuffing, mashed potatoes, pumpkin pie or parades. It gives me time to reflect about my life, family, friends, freedom and the world. I have had a blessed life and have much for which I am thankful. But for this column, let me choose one blessing — Sons of Norway.

Upon returning from the Oslo International Summer School in 1969, I knew I had to stay rooted in my Norwegian heritage. Cindy Ruona Olson, a college classmate and past Foundation director, encouraged me to join Sons of Norway. I did — 50 years ago! Sons of Norway has opened so many doors for me. I have had the great fortune to participate in and help lead numerous related organizations, including Ski for Light, Skiathons for Vinland Center and Ski for Light, Sports for Health, Scandinavia Today, Nordisk Tidene and Norwegian American newspapers, Mindekirken, Julefest, Julebord, Norwegian American Chamber of Commerce, Leif Eriksson International Festival, Lakselaget — and more. All the connections were made because of Sons of Norway. The people I have met, the people whom I call friends I know because of Sons of Norway. For that I am eternally grateful.

Today, one of my blessings is being elected to the Sons of Norway Foundation Board of Governors. The gift is twofold: feeling the joy of the scholarship and grant recipients and the kindness of all of you — the donors. Without the generosity of our donors we would have nothing to give. Therefore, we will continue to hold true to our mission of preserving Nordic tradition and education to keep your trust and commitment.

So how have you enriched the Foundation this year?

1. You have donated \$538,637 — 256 percent of our goal;
2. You have donated \$41,630 to our unrestricted funds, which is 65 percent of our goal; and
3. You have allowed us to award more than \$103,000 in scholarships.

Thank you. The Foundation is so grateful for your unselfish giving and encourages your ongoing support. You make the difference. Have a blessed Thanksgiving.

Nordic American Thanksgiving Breakfast Celebrates Freedom, Faith, Family & Friends

There is no better way to kick off the season of joy than with the Nordic American Thanksgiving Breakfast. Now in its 35th year, the event brings together people to celebrate freedom, faith, family and friends, values that the United States shares with the Nordic countries. The event supports three deserving nonprofits: Second Harvest Heartland, Minnesota Military Family Foundation and the Sons of Norway Foundation — and you are invited.

More than 1,000 people attended last year and were stirred by uplifting messages and music. This year's speakers include, Joan T. A. Gabel, University of Minnesota president; Dan Collison, First Covenant Church of Minneapolis, lead pastor; and Peggy Flanagan, Minnesota lieutenant governor. The Augsburg University Cedar Singers will perform. We are encouraging attendees to wear their Nordic sweaters so we might have the largest group of Nordic sweaters ever seen in one place.

The event takes place Tuesday, Nov. 26, 2019, 7:00-9:15 a.m. at the DoubleTree by Hilton, 7800 Normandale Blvd., Bloomington, Minnesota. Tickets are \$30 per person or \$300 per 10-person table. For tickets, go to www.sofn.com/natb or call Sons of Norway at 612.821.4640. Reservations are required.

Live in Canada? Not a problem!

The Sons of Norway in Canada also provides scholarships for post-secondary education in Canada for Canadian residents. Its scholarships and grants are available for Norwegian heritage activities and cultural exchanges, as well as humanitarian causes. The Sons of Norway Foundation in Canada was created in 1971 as a charitable corporation under the Canada Corporations Act. For further information, go to <http://www.sonfic.ca>.



District Foundation Directors’ outreach is in full swing!

By Jon Tehven, Foundation secretary

The Foundation Board of Governors (FBG) recently implemented a District Foundation Directors (DFD) initiative in the six USA districts. Its goals include:

- Implementing and maintaining district and local lodge foundation programs; and
- Widening the Foundation’s donor pool, and increasing its donations.

Foundation President Leslee Lane Hoyum appointed me to form a committee to implement the program; International Treasurer Elaine Nelson quickly volunteered to serve. We asked district presidents to seek candidates for the DFD positions, and the Foundation is truly grateful for the quick response and the eagerness displayed by the DFDs.

DFDs will be:

- Engaging district boards to actively support the Foundation;
- Helping lodges appoint and/or elect Foundation directors;
- Developing training for district board officers, zone directors, and local lodge Foundation directors; and
- Setting realistic goals for district and local lodges.

To facilitate implementation, former Foundation Director Corrie Maki Knudson created a “tool kit” to communicate the mission of the Foundation and how district and local lodges can better communicate the importance of the Sons of Norway Foundation. The tool kit soon will be available to local lodges on the Sons of Norway website.

At their respective district board meetings this autumn, DFDs had the opportunity to introduce themselves and the DFD program. Aided by a variety of Foundation materials, they explained how they will serve as a link between the Foundation, the district boards and local lodges and how they plan to instill and strengthen a culture of support for the Foundation.

The Foundation looks to you all to support the DFDs and lodge Foundation directors as we focus on the Foundation's mission, ". . . funding activities that preserve and promote Norwegian heritage, positively affect members, and make Sons of Norway communities more vibrant places to live."

Best wishes to Corrie Maki Knudson

For those of you who may not have heard, Foundation Director Corrie Maki Knudson resigned to move on to her next calling. Corrie's many talents brought the Foundation from the 20th into the 21st Century, and the Board of Governors is grateful to her. She offered a short and sweet parting note:

"I wanted to say again how much I enjoyed working with each of you individually and as a group. The Foundation has really grown over the last few years and I hope the momentum keeps going! It's really a privilege to work with such a passionate group of people so connected to their heritage. Thank you for letting me be a part of it." We wish Corrie continued success.

A position description for a new director is in the works. If you have experience in fund raising, such as gifts by will, revocable trust or beneficiary designation, charitable trust giving and the like, have documented experience driving charitable campaigns, are skilled in reaching out to supporters on social media, can properly collect, analyze and store donor data, and have proven interpersonal communication skills, you could be a contender. If interested, contact Sons of Norway Human Resources at 612.827.3611.

Grants and scholarships are awaiting application

Since 1966, the Sons of Norway Foundation has awarded scholarships and grants that focus on:

- Creating opportunities for higher education as a road to success;
 - Showcasing our unique Norwegian heritage to wider audiences;
 - Exploring cross-cultural exchanges; and
 - Providing humanitarian support to Sons of Norway members who are victims of natural disasters.
- Over its history, the Foundation has awarded \$1.4 million in scholarships, nearly \$400,000 in grants and more than \$500,000 in humanitarian aid.

In keeping with our commitment to life-long learning and service and funding innovative individuals and opportunities, the Sons of Norway Foundation awards approximately 25 scholarships to promising students each year. Since there is a wide variety of scholarships with varying qualifications for each, it is important to go to the website to determine which scholarship suits the applicant. The same holds true for grants.

So, if you're planning to study abroad in 2020 or have projects that may qualify for a grant, it's time to check out our website now! You don't want to miss the deadlines. Go to <https://www.sofn.com/foundation/>.



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