



Bridging the Generations

Sju-Lag Stevne
University of Wisconsin-River Falls
June 25 — 28, 2009





JEFF MUELLER

Speaker, General Session

Friday, June 2, 7 p.m.

Jeff is a Business Growth Advisor with Enterprise Minnesota working with small and mid-sized Minnesota companies enabling them to achieve their full potential in today's marketplace. Previous to this, Jeff spent thirty years in banking and finance, most recently as vice president of Client Relations with US Bancorp. Jeff is a graduate of Augsburg College with a degree in Political Science.

Jeff's involvement in the Norwegian-American community began more than thirty years ago when he served on the Norwegian-American Sesquicentennial Committee. Since that time he has been involved on the planning committees for five visits by members of the Norwegian Royal family to this region. In 2006 Jeff authored a strategic plan entitled "*Look to Minnesota*" for the Norwegian Consulate in Minneapolis. The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs subsequently used this report as a guide and model for other embassies and consulates around the world. One year later, in 2007, Jeff was a member of a delegation that went to Oslo to lobby the Norwegian government for the retention of a full-time career Norwegian Consulate in Minneapolis.

Jeff currently serves as president of the Upper Midwest Chapter of the Norwegian-American Chamber of Commerce, is secretary and board member of Norway House, member of the Norse Federation, Sytende Mai Minnesota Committee and Torske Klubben.

LEROY LARSON

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THE MINNESOTA SCAN NDINAVIAN ENSEMBLE SHOW BAND

Friday, June 26, 8 p.m.





LeRoy Larson grew up in a rather isolated Scandinavian community in northern Minnesota, Clearwater County. He was influenced by musical parents, relatives and neighbors who continued the folk music traditions of Norway and Sweden. He was soon playing with “home entertainment” adult bands, learning the standard repertory and styles of their dance music. Of special interest was the rich repertory of Scandinavian-American folk dance music created by fiddlers and accordionists. In the late 1960s LeRoy began recording this music throughout the state, culminating in a Ph.D. dissertation in musicology and ethnomusicology at the University of Minnesota in 1975.

In 1974 LeRoy created the Ensemble with friends Mel Brenden and Helge Lamo, both of whom had similar backgrounds and expertise. LeRoy’s grandparents emigrated from Norway, Helge grew up in Norway, and Mel’s parents emigrated from Norway. This powerhouse team coalesced an unparalleled wealth of Scandinavian and Scandinavian-American music and folk dance styles, resulting in the first of more than a dozen professional recordings. Featured are waltzes, polkas, schottisches, hambos, and walking tunes. Fiddlers who performed with the Ensemble are Craig Ruble, Dick Rees, and currently, Art Bjornjeld who grew up in a traditional and musical Norwegian family from Minneapolis and North Dakota.

For three decades the Ensemble has been researching, resurrecting, and recording traditional Scandinavian songs and folk dance music. Their specialty is music indigenous to the Midwest, original compositions, and humorous dialect songs. Their concerts include interesting historical information, anecdotes, humor, surprises, and a great diversity of sounds and styles resulting from various combinations of instruments: LeRoy Larson—banjo, mandola, ukulele, guitar, vocals; Mel Brenden — accordion; Art Bjornjeld — fiddle, guitar, button-box, vocals.

In July 2003 the Ensemble was invited to Washington, D. C. to perform concerts at the Library of Congress, and the Kennedy Center of the Performing Arts. That year they were filmed for the national cable food channel *Food Nation*. They have appeared on Norwegian National TV and Radio, several local stations, and in 1991 appeared on *This Morning CBS*. For a dozen years they performed on Garrison Keillor’s *A Prairie Home Companion* radio show, NPR.



Lefse Making with Kane Viesselman

Fri., June 26 , Sat., June 27

Kane Viesselman is from Hutchinson, Minnesota, where he works as a laboratory technician at 3M. As Kane expresses it, “My family is German, and for the most part we accept our heritage and don’t celebrate it. Twelve years ago I married Shirley Lambert of Norse-Swedish descent. She has shown me how you can live life with a ‘Norwegian Frame of Mind.’”

Ever since tasting the *lelse* at the *stevne* banquet table in Willmar, Kane has been mastering the art of making it. You will learn more this and about Kane as he demonstrates his art, relates a bit of history, and provides recipes and tasty samples.

The Lives of Sondre & Rannei Norheim David Gunderson

Friday, June 26

Dave Gunderson is the genealogist of the Hadeland *Lag*. He recently was lauded both in the USA and in Norway for his work in uncovering the mystery of Rannei Norheim’s final years. He was instrumental in having a memorial plaque placed next to that of her famous husband in the Norway Lutheran Church Cemetery in Denbigh, North Dakota, where a special dedication service was held September 30, 2008.

Dave is a native of Austin, Minnesota. He has BS and MS degrees in history from Minnesota State University at Mankato. He has served in the United States Army and for most of his life was employed by the Social Security Administration and the Collection Division of the Internal Revenue Service. He retired as a revenue officer in 2004.

Dave’s Norwegian ancestry comes from Bjonerøa of Hadeland in Oppland, Ådalen in Buskerud, Glemmen in Østfold, and the Lårdal – Kviteseid areas of Telemark. He currently lives in Fergus Falls where he is a member of Zion Lutheran Church..



Norwegian Folk Dancing With Elaine & Kjell Nordlie

Saturday, June 27

Kjell Nordlie and Elaine (Lea) met each other when they were paired off according to their height in a folkdance class during the year that Elaine was a college exchange student at Oslo Teacher College. The year after they finished their college educations on each side of the Atlantic, Kjell and Elaine were married in a country church in southern Minnesota. Elaine moved to Kjell’s home community in Østfold, Norway, where they lived for fourteen years before moving, with their three daughters, to Minnesota in 1983. Shortly after they

moved to Dassel, they started a Scandinavian folkdance group. The Dassel *Leikarring* has performed and entertained crowds for over twenty-five years. Kjell and Elaine have been folk dancing together for over forty years.



Norwegian Vocabulary for Beginners With Verlyn Anderson Saturday, June 27

Merlyn grew up in a Norwegian-speaking home in Otter Tail County, Minnesota, so Norwegian is his first language. He has visited Norway many times and because there is no American accent to his Norwegian, he is inevitably asked, "When did you immigrate to America?" He explains that he grew up in a "Norwegian ghetto" in Minnesota where the everyday language was Norwegian, so he learned early how to pronounce all those difficult vowels. He also explains that he has a Norwegian accent in his English so he does not need an American

accent in his Norwegian.

Dr. Anderson has had a very distinguished career, serving on the faculty of Concordia College for thirty-six years, as well as on numerous organizations, societies, and institutions promoting a knowledge of Norwegian history and culture. Last year he received the St. Olav medal "in recognition of his great service to Norway." He, his wife, Evonne, their three daughters and three sons-in-law all traveled to Norway where the award was presented. What a thrill this must have been!



The Immigrant's Tale Told by Roger Hellesvig Saturday, June 27

Roger R. Hellesvig portrays Ole Oleson in his program on 19th Century Norwegian Immigration. Hellesvig is the third generation of Americans who came from Norwegian roots. These ancestors settled in Western Minnesota, the southwest corner of South Dakota, and around Devils Lake, ND. Growing up around the Scandinavian customs and foods Roger has merged these experiences, along with his family

history, into this program.

Hellesvig grew up in the Twin Cities area. He received his BA in Education from Concordia College in St. Paul, MN. He has taken courses for his Masters in Curriculum Development from Mankato State and Hamline University. He has taught elementary school for 15 years, but now is traveling with his program, "An Immigrant's Tale." He has spoken at numerous Scandinavian festivals, *Stevner*, local Scandinavian groups, schools, museums, community events, senior groups, etc. His program has been well received by all ages.

Hellesvig and his wife, Leona, have been married for 32 years. They have no children, but have found pleasure in working with and educating children throughout their lives.



Writing a Family History

Saturday, June 27

Internet Access to Norwegian Church and Census Data

Saturday, June 27

Presented by John Haugo

John is a full-blooded Norwegian with Telemark ancestors from Lårdal, Mo, Nissedal, Rauland and Vinje. His Telemark ancestors include the well-known Mandt and Vesaas families. Just last year John completed the writing and publishing of his family history entitled, *The Haugo Family History: Our Norwegian and Midwest American Roots*. It is an in-depth descriptive and factual account of each of his four grandparents' branches of the family.

John is a graduate of Minnesota State University-Moorhead and has an M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota. He is recipient of distinguished alumni awards from both universities and has been named to the MSUM Athletic Hall of Fame. John has worked as a math teacher, football coach, and CEO of three software companies: Minnesota Educational Computing Corporation, Serving Software, and, most recently, SearchAmerica, Inc.

John is president of Telelaget and coordinator of this year's *stevne*. He and his wife, Sharon, live in Hudson, Wisconsin.



Family Treemaking Software

Presented by Joran Olson

Friday, June 26 & Saturday, June 27

Joran Layton Olson grew up in South Dakota, attending all 12 years of school in Rosholt, South Dakota. She attended Concordia College (Moorhead, MN) and Northern State University (Aberdeen, SD) and received a bachelors in education, majoring in Art, English and Social Sciences.

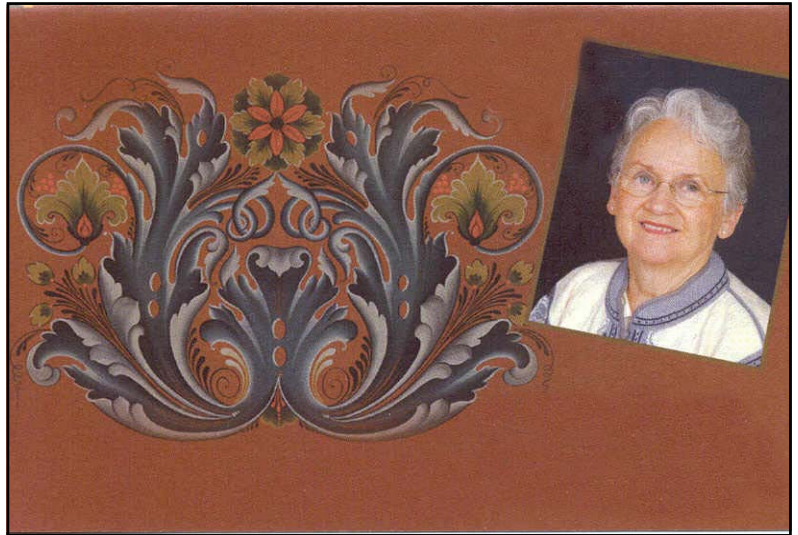
Joran has been employed as an educator and also in management of long term care facilities throughout her career. She has also worked as a florist for many years.

She is retired and lives in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, where grandchildren, painting, writing, and volunteer work occupies much of her time.

Joran has had a life-long interest in family history, genealogy and the history of England and Norway. She enjoys helping others find their family histories in all parts of the world, especially Norway. The computer has opened a very large window in the field of genealogy and Joran works with many programs that help her in her searches.

**Rosemaling
History and Design
Judy Ritger**

**Friday, June 26 &
Saturday, June 27**



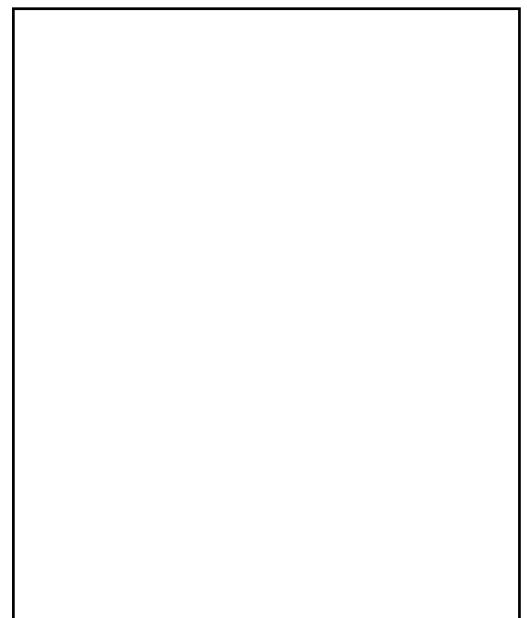
Judy has been interested in the Norwegian Folk arts ever since her family moved to River Falls, Wisconsin, thirty-three years ago when a friend suggested a class in rosemaling. Having never heard of it, Judy wondered what she was getting into. Judy is of German and English heritage and at the time lacked information on the Nordic culture, but she has always had an interest in art. "That class," Judy says, "was the beginning of life-changing interests for me." She has since taken many classes in rosemaling, mainly at Vesterheim Museum in Decorah, Iowa, and also in Norway on three different study programs sponsored by Vesterheim. She has been teaching rosemaling classes at Vesterheim and also around the country for many years.

About fifteen years ago her interest expanded to include wood carving. She has done figure carving, chip-carving, and acanthus carving. She has worked hard to stimulate an interest in kolrosing, an old Norwegian form of decorating small articles with incised line design. She has a video/DVD out on kolrosing calling "Kolrosing: Reviving a Lost Art." At present she mixes the various forms of carving and painting together on one piece. Judy earned a Gold Medal in Rosemaling in 1989 and in Woodcarving in 1995.

Judy is married, has four children, thirteen grandchildren and one great-grandchild. She keeps herself busy "with involvement in their lives and creating pieces for them." Judy does not sell anything other than some commissioned work and a few pieces at Vesterheim during the Nordic Fest.

**A Norwegian American
Family History
With
Lloyd Svendsbye**

Friday, June 26



Dr. Lloyd Svendsbye is the son of Norwegian immigrants who homesteaded on a farm near Hamlet in northwestern North Dakota in 1904. There he grew up and completed high school. He holds a B.A. from Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota, a B.Th. from Luther Seminary in St. Paul, and a Th.D. from Union Theological Seminary in New York. He also studied at Columbia University in New York and the University of Erlangen, Germany. In 1958 he married Annelotte F. E. Moertelmeyer from Beausejour, Manitoba, Canada, whom he met while both were working for the Lutheran World Federation, he for the Third Assembly of LWF in Minneapolis and she as secretary to the Executive Director of the LWF in Geneva, Switzerland.

After brief periods as assistant pastor of Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in Minneapolis and the LWF Assembly, Dr. Svendsbye launched his academic career in 1957 as a member of the Religion Department of Concordia College. In 1966 he became editor-in-chief of Augsburg Publishing House in Minneapolis until he was named vice president and dean of St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota, in 1971. Three years later he was elected president of his alma mater, Luther Theological Seminary, and in two years was named president of Northwestern Lutheran Theological Seminary, also in St. Paul. He served as president of both institutions until 1982, when they united to form Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary which he served as president until 1987 when he was elected president of Augustana College in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. He retired in 1992 when he and his wife moved to St. Louis Park, a suburb of Minneapolis, where they have lived ever since.

In his retirement, Dr. Svendsbye began his genealogical studies. First he wrote a memoir. That did not satisfy his desire for accuracy; therefore, he and his wife traveled to Norway three times to research family history, during which time he located 150 relatives and was able to visit the homes, schools, churches, and communities which were a part of that history. Those travels made it possible for him to understand better the geographical parts of Norway from which his family came. From these studies he wrote and privately published a 200-page family history for his immediate relatives. He is currently revising that publication into a story of Norwegian immigration to northwestern North Dakota. Dr. and Mrs. Svendsbye are active in several Norwegian activities in the Twin Cities. He is a member of the Norwegian-American Historical Association, Torske Klubben, the Steering Committee for Tuesday Open House at Mindekirken and is on the Board of Directors of Norway House.

IMMIGRATION OF NORWAY SEEDS

ÅSMUND BJØRNSTAD

Friday, June 26

Asmund Bjørnstad, a noted Norwegian agronomist, is a 2008-2009 Fulbright Visiting Scholar at the University of Minnesota where he is working on a book project on the biological and human history of the grains we eat. Born in 1951 in Rjukan (Tinn), he is Professor of Plant Breeding in the Norwegian University of Life Sciences, with a wide experience in breeding research in small grain species. He is an elected member of the Norwegian Writers Association, and has previously had six books published, including a collection of translated poems. A new collection of poems will be published by Aschehoug in Oslo next September.



**TONE JORUNN TVEITO, FOLKSINGER FROM WEST TELEMAR
and
TORGEIR STRAAND, HARDANGER FIDDLE PLAYER FROM BØ
In Concert**

**Opening Session, June 26; Banquet Program, June 27
Mindekirken, June 28**



Anne Haugen Wagn and Harald Omnes, Norwegian directors of Telelaget have planned a ten-day tour, visiting Minnesota and Wisconsin. The tour, which includes forty-five people, will begin with a garden party at the home of Kjell and Elaine Nordlie in Dassel, MN and will conclude at Telelaget's *stevne* in River Falls, Wisconsin.

The tour will include two of Telemark's most prominent musicians. The nationally recognized Norwegian folksinger Tone Jorunn Tveito, and hardanger fiddle player, Torgeir Straand, will appear in three concerts while here. As Harald Omnes expressed it, "We don't want to just travel, but also to offer culture."

Both Tveito and Straand have been in America together before — in 1996. Their program will include not only singing and fiddling, but, to use Harald's words, "a combination of pure total Norwegian cultural expression."

We are greatly looking forward to hearing these gifted musicians. When searching for tour participants, Harald said, "we looked for talent on the 'top shelf'."

