

## **Sixteen Years of Progress with Synnøve-Nordkap Lodge, #008, St. Paul, Minnesota**

Dynamic activities characterize the core of Synnøve-Nordkap's progress in the last sixteen years. These activities focus on service to others, learning about Norwegian heritage, celebrating Norwegian culture, wellness with programs and lodge trips just for fun. In 2002 Synnøve-Nordkap celebrated our 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. We are especially proud of being awarded District One "Family Lodge of the Year" in 2006 and again in 2008!

Serving others, in Synnøve-Nordkap terms, involves our elementary school partnership with North Height Christian Academy. Members from our lodge spent many hours volunteering at the Science Museum of Minnesota at the Viking exhibit. Others have volunteered to demonstrate at the Scandia Fest at the Landmark Center in St. Paul, ring bells for the Salvation Army each Christmas season, or visit lodge shut in members. Members enjoy helping with the Ski for Light program too.

Learning more about Norwegian heritage is part of the ongoing study of Norse before each meeting and an additional language lesson mid-month. Synnøve-Nordkap has a genealogy group seeking their family histories through digitalarkivet.no via the computer. More experienced lodge researchers have been helping those just starting. Many members brought family treasures for a Norwegian style "Antiques Roadshow" to find out more about the history and value. All this research has led to two wonderful programs sharing fascinating biographies of our Norwegian ancestors.

Celebrating Norwegian culture with Synnøve-Nordkap has meant celebrating the author Henrik Ibsen with a Syttende Mai program, children's parade and speeches near the Ibsen statue in Como Park. Our lodge has commemorated Leif Erickson's discovery of the North American continent in October for many years at the statue across from the Minnesota State Capitol building. We share our Norwegian culture at the Festival of Nations at the St. Paul RiverCentre every year. Two popular festivals for our lodge are the Torsk and Meatball Dinner in October, plus the Julebord in December.

Wellness is an important factor in Synnøve-Nordkap. The lodge has hiked in the woods with orienteering goals, or in a state park following a letter boxing trail. Many members are fulfilling hiking, skiing, biking and fitness medal programs. Activities just for fun are part of the congeniality of Synnøve-Nordkap. We relish our summer trips together to the Hjemkomst Center in Moorhead, MN, the Nordic Fest and Vesterheim in Decorah, IA, the Ibsen Play at the Lanesboro, MN theater, the Peer Gynt ballet at the Ordway Theater in St. Paul, MN, and an excursion to see fjord horses and the Odden's wood carving studio near Barronett, WI.

Synnøve-Nordkap supports youth programs through college, and Skogfjorden Norwegian Language Village scholarships. We are proud to have a very active junior lodge which was chartered in 1981. The children, ages 7 -18, meet monthly to learn language, crafts and culture. The Peer Gynt Dancers of the junior lodge perform locally throughout the year with the highlight being The Festival of Nations in May.

Our members keep informed through the monthly SynNor Brevet, the online version of the Brevet, or from the Synnøve-Nordkap website <http://synnove1.com> . There's always something interesting planned whether it is service to others, learning about Norwegian culture, celebrating Norwegian heritage, wellness activities, junior lodge fun or time to enjoy the wonderful members of Synnøve-Nordkap.