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VIKINGS OF THE SMOKIES

KNOXVILLE, TN

WWW.TNVIKINGS.ORG

President's Report

Hello All,

I trust you have had a fun and enjoyable summer. We've had an abundance of rain and recently, a long dry spell of elevated heat. Now, however, the true Autumn is fast upon us with the leaves beginning to change color, and time change on Nov 2nd.

Our Lodge has experienced a few changes this year. Dee Bumpers has officially moved back to Wisconsin in the care of her family and other active members have either suffered medical challenges or have moved from the East Tennessee area.

With the decline in membership, Lodge leadership made the decision in 2025 to reduce the number of lodge meetings from monthly to quarterly - celebrating our most populate and highly attended events including Syttende Mai, Independence Day, Leif Erickson Day, and of course, our annual Juletrefest. Unfortunately, we missed participating in the Farragut parade because we didn't have access to our float.

This month, the Lodge will be meeting on Sunday October 19th at Faith Lutheran church and we will be celebrating the 250 anniversary of the first Norwegians immigrating to America. Bonnie Peterson has organized a nice program to share with Lodge members, while we enjoy a light supper of soup and sandwiches.

On a personal note, I will be stepping down as Lodge President at the end of my term this December. As we look ahead, the Lodge is seeking some fresh faces to step into leadership roles. This is a great opportunity to get involved, shape the future of our Lodge, and continue the work we've started.

The time commitment is very manageable — just **eight board meetings** and **four Lodge events** per year. If you've ever considered taking a more active role, now is the perfect time!

Fraternally yours,

Paul W. Abelquist

Join Lodge Members on
Sunday October 19 at Faith
Lutheran Church at 4pm as we
celebrate the 250th
anniversary of the
first Norwegians
immigrating to
America.



To assist with meal planning, please RSVP to info@tnvikings.org by Friday, October 17th.

While there is no cost for the meal, we are asking for Lodge volunteers who may be willing to provide a crockpot of soup or a dessert. The Lodge will provide the sandwich platters, coffee, lemonade and iced tea.

Tusen Takk!

THE VIKINGS OF THE SMOKIES LODGE IS ONLY AS STRONG AS ITS MEMBERS.

In order to run meetings smoothly and share the work of the Lodge, we encourage everyone to help.

Many of these roles can be shared by more than one person, and most take no more than 2-5 hours per quarter with the bulk of the time spent participating in the monthly Lodge or Board meetings. Perfect attendance is not expected, and it is understood that other activities may arise from time to time prevent you from attending.

The Elected Board Officers & their duties:

President is the highest ranking Lodge officer, responsible for ensuring lodge compliance with the Sons of Norway Charter and Constitution while overseeing and guiding all Lodge activities

Vice President leads Lodge recruitment efforts and strategies while helping develop programming that encourages member retention.

Secretary takes minutes at Board meetings and keeps attendance records and completes yearly required SON forms.

Membership Secretary handles membership records and other business matters for the Lodge.

Treasurer oversees Lodge finances.

Social Directors plan social activities for the Lodge.

Cultural Directors work with Social Director to plan activities to encourage Lodge member's appreciation for the culture of Norway through the Cultural Skills Program.

“Leif Erickson Day ~ October 9th” Some Interesting History about Leif Erickson



Americans have an odd way of pronouncing his name. In Iceland and Scandinavia, the name Leif is usually pronounced “Layf” and rhymes with the English word safe (or like “life”, depending on the region). Yet, in America, people often say “Leef” instead.

Before Leif reached the Mainland, he probably stopped at Baffin Island. Baffin, Canada’s biggest island, is 932 miles long and home to lemmings, caribou, and polar bears (and people). It might also be one of the three North American areas that the Icelandic Sagas reference.

When Leif’s men begin their westward journey in *The Saga of the Greenlanders*, they soon discovered an icy countryside filled with large, flat rocks. “Now I will give the land a name, and call it Helluland,” Leif said in the text. Translated from Old Norse, the moniker means “stone-slab land.” Based on descriptions in the *Sagas of the Erik the Red*, and *Greenlanders*, most historians think Helluland was really Baffin Island. Some Norse artifacts have been found there.

The “Columbus vs. Erickson” Culture War started in the late 19th century. Christopher Columbus didn’t become a household name until Washington Irving published a wildly inaccurate biography of the explorer in 1828. Misleading as the book was the idea of celebrating Columbus really appealed to Italian immigrants. In 1892, President Benjamin Harrison publicly encouraged his fellow Americans to celebrate the 400th anniversary of Columbus’s arrival in the New World and at the urging of Italian residents, Colorado adopted Columbus Day as an official state holiday in 1907. Presidents began issuing Columbus Day proclamations in the 1930s, although it wouldn’t become a true federal holiday until 1968.

Not all Americans approved of that version of history, so 46 years after Irving published his biography of Columbus, Wisconsinite Rasmus Bjorn Anderson published a book called *America Not Discovered BY Columbus*, which pointed out that Leif Erickson was traversing North America 500 years before the Nina, Pinta, & Santa Maria crossed the Atlantic.

Anderson decided that Erik the Red’s famous son needed his own holiday to offset Columbus’s and settled on October 9 as the perfect date for it. On that day in 1825, a group of Norwegian immigrants landed in New York City, an event that is generally credited as starting organized Scandinavian migration to the United States. At Anderson’s urging, Wisconsin became the first state to recognize Leif Erickson Day in 1929.