

Tre Lag Stevne Steering Committee
At the Pleasant Hill Public Library, Hastings, MN 55033
11:00-3:30, March 7, 2020
Meeting Notes

Attendees: Barry Dahl (T), Robert Fossum (T), Chris Falteisek (NH), Dixie Hansen (via Skype, NH), Dick Lundgren (G), John Peterson (G), Nancy Pickering (G), Joy Shong (NH), Marilyn Sorenson (G). Absent: Ron Helstad (NH) and Sam Christenson (T).

- A. Open meeting – Joy Shong. Opened meeting at 11:10 a.m.
- B. Minutes of Last Meeting. High-level review since revisions had already been made in the days just after that meeting on January 11 via email. Approved.
- C. Treasurer’s Report – Review from the minutes of the last meeting. No changes since January.
- D. Site Selection Committee Report. After reiterations that Duluth and Bemidji won’t work for 2021 because of pricey high season for them and lack of conference spaces, there were two presentations.
 - a. Dick had contacted Grand Stay Hotel & Conference in Apple Valley, MN and brought his packet of information. The room rates are usually \$139 for a 1BR, with a 2BR option regularly at \$199/night, which could fit 4 people to share. Discounts quoted at \$119/\$177 respectively. Rates include breakfast. The property is easy to find, they have good parking and food choices nearby, which is important since they have no kitchen. They had an AV schedule and room layout diagrams, and space for vendors. However, we felt overall that the spaces were tight.
 - b. Barry presented information about the Empire Event Center in Rochester. The building is actually the remodeled Kahler Apache. The remodeling has repurposed the former restaurant into an additional meeting room, and there is an attached small space “Wild Wings Sports Bar” at the back. (Nearby is an oriental buffet.) The floorplan shows there’s a Continental Breakfast Room and 5 large meeting rooms, easy to divide for Genealogy and Vendors and Seminars. There is AV equipment available, and prices quoted include \$1500 for 4 days, \$4000 food minimum not including alcohol, and \$119/night room rate, including Continental Breakfast. Rochester seemed to be favored of the two cities; next step is to negotiate pricing.
 - c. Willmar was suggested as well; requires more research. If we can finalize our choice in time, we can include a presentation at this year’s 2020 Stevne about our location for 2021.

E. Stevne Planning

Note: Dixie reports that she has been informed that the \$1,900.00 Grant check from Middleton has been sent but not yet received.

- a. Vendors. Jeri Johnson is already contacting the names on the list. We have room for more vendors this year than last year. Some won’t come this far since they also have to pay for pricier lodging than other years, but we already have positive responses from Julie Backus of Ole & Lena’s Gifts and Nordic Nook of Stoughton.
- b. Theme. Reviewed the ideas from last meeting, since both “Norwegians in Motion” and “Norway on the Move: The Sequel” were favored but in which order? Nancy’s notes indicated “Norwegians in Motion” was favored. Nancy asked for image ideas to create the logo and poster, and suggestions included photos of various types of transportation, including skiers.
- c. Program Schedule. Joy has filled in more of her spreadsheet grids and shared them.
 - i. Topics and Speakers. Joy is working through the list of possible speakers and her Excel grid schedule. We went over the speaker list of those “Requested” and “Confirmed.” Confirmed include:
 - Glenn Borreson (several topics to choose),
 - Robert Fossum (*Fru Muus’ Klage*: Marriage Scandal)
 - Dana Kelly (Executive Dir. at NAGC)
 - Ann Rue, Center for the Study of Upper Midwest Culture
 - Troy Reeves (Badger talks) – Oral History Program

- Lori Bessler (WSHS) – 3 topics, Ancestry.com, Family Search, Organizing Materials
- Robin Carlson (WHS) – Preserving Family Treasures
- Lee Grady (WHS) – Using Maps for Genealogy
- Simone Munson (WSHA) – Unpublished Resource
- James Willaert (WSHS) – History of Transportation in WI

Jan Hansen said no, so a Keynote is still needed, unless we use that first slot for a “regular” speaker (rather than “keynote” subject). Still to contact: Jeff Svaare (sp?) in Salt Lake City.

There was also a suggestion to get a person from Norway to be a speaker.

- ii. Tour. Dick presented pricing scenarios from area bus companies. Jones and Elkhorn have similar rates for 65-person capacity buses (our average number of riders is 70). Badger Bus has “Large buses” with space for 56, at a rate of \$540 to \$600, but if we have more riders than that, we’ll need 2 buses which means paying 2 drivers. They do have a double-decker bus for 81 riders, but some riders won’t be able to climb the stairs to the upper level, and we need to confirm the rate. Dick will continue the research.

Places to see: The Koshkonong Historical Society (in the Old School Museum in Cambridge) could begin a trip that then goes to Livsreise in Stoughton. Another place to see: Near the arboretum is a place devoted to the natural prairies, which we could drive by with a description of what we’re seeing (and that early settlers would have seen something similar.)

Would we have box lunches? (some negative feedback here about quality for the price), or how about asking a local church or Sons of Norway (Mandt Lodge in Stoughton?) to help us get dinner? Or perhaps no meal at all, but coffee and treats (such as rømmegrøt) between one location and the next?
- iii. Entertainment & Music. The Stoughton Dancers are unavailable, as our Stevne dates are in their off season. We did note that local SON lodges (Idun in Madison and Mandt in Stoughton) might have resources, as might the Chamber of Commerce. Darlene, Secretary of Mandt, could have some suggestions. John Peterson volunteered to make contacts and find Entertainment.
- d. Genealogy Lab. Trønder and NHOH are set. John Peterson has volunteered to drive/transport the Gudbrand genealogy book boxes to Stevne since the usual transport is no longer available. He’ll have to arrive in Minneapolis a day early to do so, so that Marilyn and Nancy (and whoever else can help) will also have to pack a day early. Marilyn suggested that our room layout would work best if the rectangular tables are against the inside perimeter against the walls for stacking books and bookcases, while the nine round tables be placed more in the center of the room. There was discussion about bringing the copy machine, which we didn’t do last year; much depends on whether it is still possible to purchase the toner cartridge needed, and at a reasonable price. Also some discussion that some people are not paying for the copies they make, so use of the “Shot box” with photos is gaining in popularity.
- e. Publicity. We do not yet have a Publicity Coordinator as previous invitations to Shirley Schoenfeld and Dorothy Zimmerman have been turned down, although Dorothy can help contact SON lodges up until June. Nancy volunteered to write an article, but there is need for someone to contact newspapers (local and area, large and small) and radio stations in the area, something that Joy started, using information handed down from Nancy Hawkinson and John Reindl but needs completion. Also, local historical societies should be found and contacted. Chris Falteisek will post a message on the Gudbrandsdal Facebook group page, other sources mentioned were Norwegian-American newspapers.

This sparked a discussion of the Fellesraad Stevne Database file that Nancy prepared for Fellesraad and is now a spreadsheet on Google Docs. Previous locations may have had information placed there regarding community resources of various types. Each city has space to record Publicity contacts. Nancy noted she would send an email link to the file to the TLSSC members when she returned home.
- f. Hospitality. Diane Clouch has accepted the Coordinator invitation and has already begun planning and looking up past records. We discussed whether to include decaf coffee this time, and agreed a small pot was in order. Once again we reiterated that the coffee is NOT to be poured into someone’s thermos, so that we need to monitor the pot. We will make our own coffee since the hotel charges way too much money to provide it.

- g. Meals.
We had already discussed coffee breaks and meals on the Tour. For the banquet, there was much discussion about choices.
 - i. Joy's worksheet shows that the choices are pricier than in other years, largely because the required Service Fee is steep at 23%. We also include lefse for everyone. The 2020 estimate is about \$46 per person to cover all costs. The least expensive entrée is Roasted Chicken Breast at \$33 each. We considered just having one entrée choice instead of two, or asking about a vegetarian choice.
 - h. Evaluations. Joy is contacting Sam Christenson about the form to use and what type of content to include.
 - i. Budget. Looking at figures, which are higher overall than last year:
 - i. Registration: Based on the 2020 projected program costs in Joy's spreadsheet (Hospitality/food/supplies [last year was \$319, this year projected at \$740!], Publicity & Printing, AV Equipment, Photographer), and based on 135 attendees, we're looking at a registration fee of \$35.00 per person. Note: We still need to rent a piano.
 - ii. The Tour was \$40 last year. 2020 may be higher or lower. Could be as low as \$27 if we only use one bus.
 - iii. The Banquet meal is estimated at \$46 or \$47 per person.
 - iv. There is a concerted effort to get speakers from Badger Talks and the Wisconsin State Historical Society – talks given by them are given for free. Our estimate this year is \$1,900 at \$100 per session speaker (\$150 for Keynote), compared to \$2,650 last year.
 - j. Other. Inclusion of other Lags in the Tre Lag Stevne? Especially after the reorganization of several fylker in Norway? Discussion. It was mentioned that the Fellesraad will broach the subject at the Annual Meeting to get lags to start thinking about options. Tre Lag is open to discussions with other lags who may be interested.
- F. New Business. Discussion of whether to have a Cancellation Policy for Stevne, in light of the coronavirus? That opened a discussion about insurance as a nonprofit and our tax status. John Peterson will look up more information and send it to the committee members. It was noted that we have by-laws as a big group but are not incorporated as a big group; each lag is a 501(c)(3) separately and incorporated on its own. (As a sidebar, we do have insurance for our genealogy collection.) Trønderlag has insurance that covers liability at its meetings and the content of its collections, even if stored at members' homes.
- G. Next Meeting. Communication moving forward for the 2020 Stevne will be through email communication, unless something major develops.
- H. Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 3:20 p.m.