

Dear Siblings in Christ of the Northwestern Minnesota Synod of our ELCA

Grace and Peace from our Lord Jesus Christ who loves us with a love that will never let us go!

So here we are. The day will come when we will look back on “The great Pandemic of 2020” and share our best stories of how we shined or just muddled through. But now, I know, that day seems a long way off. I write to share a pastoral word and practical guidance for life and ministry in this moment.

We have all experienced times when the world seemed to be changing too fast. For me, that was last year when I learned that my father had fallen and was dying in a hospital in Florida. This is a time like that. What comes into focus for followers of Jesus in these times is this: the promise is not that we will be spared or that things will be easy, but that we will have the deep and abiding Presence and Peace of Jesus. (“I am with you always, even to the end of the age...” Matthew 18:20; “My peace I leave with you...” John 14:27). From this abundant storehouse of the Presence of Peace of the risen and eternal Christ, we find that we can move forward in faith. So, let’s do that by taking these steps together.

1. For a while now, we will have to find ways to stay connected spiritually while staying apart physically. The guidelines from the MN Dept of Health (not more than 50 and fewer than 10 in the at-risk population) effectively rule out gatherings for all of our churches. That means online, live-streamed, drive-in movie style or recorded worship services for all of us. It means giving our offerings via mailed checks, automatic giving or online giving. Our website provides resources for these matters as well as for funerals, meetings, etc. (nymnsynod.org/resources/covid19-resources/)
2. Take some time to lament. Something is being lost. It will feel like a long time. With the psalmist we may ask, “How long, O Lord, will you forget us forever?” (Psalm 13). Remember that lament eventually yields to praise of our faithful God: “But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation.” (Psalm 13)
3. Embrace this season as a Sabbath: Refraining from gathering, holy communion*, and physical contact need not be a deprivation, but can be a Sabbath: a time to listen to God, to dwell in God’s word, to speak with God. For a few weeks my staff will be sharing spiritual practices that you might embrace during this time. Simple “like” the NWMN Facebook page (facebook.com/nwmnsynod/) to receive these offerings.
4. Love our neighbor: Today, during a text study with pastors (all of us practicing physical distancing!), someone suggested we may be witnessing a miracle like that of the man born blind in John 9. Could the miracle be seeing our neighbors in need (children who may go without free/reduced meals, isolated elderly) and then finding creative ways to serve them? Could it also be the world around us seeing the true Body of Christ (that’s us!) present and active right here, right now? Stay tuned to our website and share your own ideas with Kristina Dernier, our Communications Director (krisdernier@cord.edu) so we can pass them on. We keep our COVID-19 resource website up to date with resources for you and your congregation.

Speaking for all of our staff: We want you to know how proud we all are of you. We see your courage, your creativity, your faithfulness. We thank God for you, and we pray for you every day.

In Christ our Brother,
Bishop Bill Tesch of our NW MN Synod of the ELCA

*From the Synod office: “Bishop Bill is speaking more to not having communion be part of a streaming/virtual worship service. You can include the information in your newsletter for home communion. The following page is from a booklet that Pastor Keith Zeh sent out to congregations this week on how you can serve Holy Communion in your home.

Holy Home Communion

The church is anywhere people gather in Jesus' name. Even though we may not physically gather in a church building, we can continue to gather as the Christian church. When you gather in Jesus' name, your home is church, too.

Holy Communion is a special meal we celebrate when we worship. The bread and wine are mysteriously the *real presence* of Jesus Christ. Because mysteries are, well, mysterious, we trust that Jesus is really with us in this meal.

When we cannot gather physically for worship due to an emergency such as COVID-19, it is acceptable to fast from Holy Communion until we can worship together once again or use the liturgy below which can be led by the head of household to celebrate Holy Communion in the home. We believe the meal is celebrated after God's Word is heard, so you might read a passage of scripture together and discuss how God is speaking to you in the biblical story, listen to a recorded sermon or tune into a live stream or radio service, before leading this liturgy. You can find a list of online worship services and other resources at:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1q8H4Evg9bMA5vCjQAgnUTHA53PC_gh_77IHRdVsTqTY/edit#gid=0

Setting the Table

Prepare a space for the meal of Holy Communion. Just as we do at church, consider setting out your best dishes because this is the most special meal we share. Churches often use unleavened bread to recall the Israelites hurried exodus from Egypt, however any bread will do. You may set out a small cup of wine or grape juice. Light a candle or two, and you have an altar.

Holy Communion Liturgy

Head of Household: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you.

And also with you.

When our congregation gathered for Holy Communion with all the saints from every time and place, we heard again the story of God's mighty acts and the love shown us in Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. The holy meal of the Lord's supper was shared.

Even though we gather separately, for now, we share this bread of life and cup of blessing - gifts that unite and strengthen the Christian community.

Let us confess our sins, all that we have done to hurt each other and ourselves, in the presence of God and of one another. *(Pause for a moment of reflection.)*

Most merciful God, **We confess that we have messed up. With our words and our hands, we have not been kind to others or to our own selves. We are hopeless without your love. We are afraid of running out of things, so we take more than we need. We are afraid of what could happen, so we forget that you are with us all the time to give us peace. We spend the night with worry instead of**

prayer. Forgive us again and fill us up with your abundant mercy.

God is rich in mercy and love. No matter how much you mess up every day, God's love never runs out. Just as God's love is for you, so is the meal set before us. You are forgiven and ready to feast at the table, in the name of the one who died to set you free from the power of your sin, Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

Words of Institution

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.

Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.

Do this for the remembrance of me. For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Lord's Prayer: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Or...

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Communion Distribution

Share the bread with each person, saying, "The body of Christ, given for you." Then share the wine or grape juice with each person, saying, "The blood of Christ, shed for you."

Prayer After Communion

Life-giving God, in the mystery of Christ's resurrection you send light to conquer darkness, water to give new life, and the bread of life to nourish your people and free us from fear. Send us forth as witnesses to your Son's resurrection, that we may show your glory to all the world, through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord. **Amen.**

In Memoriam



Donna (Helgeland) Kukowski was baptized at St. Pauli Church along with her twin sister, Dianne, on August 31, 1947. Her mother, Sophie (Torkelson) was confirmed at St. Pauli in 1929.

Donna Kukowski, 72 of Thief River Falls, MN passed away on Saturday, March 21, 2020 at Thief River Care Center in Thief River Falls, MN.

Donna Jean Helgeland along with her twin sister, Dianne, was born July 29, 1947, the daughter of Arnold Peder and Sophie Marie (Torkelson) Helgeland. She was baptized and confirmed at St. Pauli Lutheran Church south of Thief River Falls. She attended Washington Elementary and Lincoln High School in Thief River Falls.

In November 1965, Donna was united in marriage to Gary Boman and they made their home in St. Hilaire, MN. To this union three children were born: Sheri, Tracy and Kyle.

Donna worked at Arctic Cat until 1982 and then went to work as a Certified Nurse Assistant at Oakland Park Nursing Home for the next 30 years. After retirement, Donna worked part-time at Valley Home until February 2016.

On April 5, 1991, Donna was united in marriage to Daniel Kukowski in Sisseton, SD. Donna and Daniel made their home in Viking, MN. Together they enjoyed living on the farm, tending to their vegetable garden, ice fishing, traveling, and spending time with family.

Donna was a hardworking, kind-hearted and loving woman. She forged many strong relationships with her co-workers, residents, friends and family.

Survivors include her daughter, Tracy Boman, and son, Kyle Boman both of Thief River Falls; grandchildren: Ricky, Lainey, Braydon and Bryce; great-grandson, Sam; twin sister, Dianne Gilbertson; brother-in-law, Vincent Hesse; all of Daniel's family; and many other relatives and friends.

She is preceded in death by her husband, Daniel; parents; daughter, Sheri, and sister, Gloria Hesse.

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Malagasy church mourns loss of pioneer for women's rights and dignity



Lutheran churches around the globe are mourning the loss of one of Madagascar's leading theologians and gender justice advocates, Ms Hélène Ralivao, who was murdered on Sunday, 23 February, 2020 in the capital Antananarivo.

Well-known for her work to promote women's rights and dignity in the church and in society, the 63-year-old was one of the first female theologians in the Malagasy Lutheran Church (MLC). She represented her church as a delegate to The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Assemblies in Hong Kong in 1997 and in Winnipeg, Canada, in 2003.

"As women in Africa and in the global communion, we share the pain and anger at this senseless killing, but we don't lose hope or determination to continue the fight against violence against women," said LWF Regional Secretary for Africa Rev. Dr Elieshi Mungure.

In a letter sent to the MLC, Junge said: "Gender justice is a matter of life and death, as we have come to realize once more." Recognizing Ralivao's role as a leader within her own church and in the global LWF Women in Church and Society (WICAS) network, Junge said: "May this sad moment become a new day for congregations and the church at large to become a space to recommit to a firm NO to violence against women. Let church boards discuss how congregations can be a safe space for all: children, youth, women and men. Let pastors preach clearly and loudly that God has made us equal in Christ."

Ralivao served as WICAS secretary in Madagascar, before going on to set up and lead a women's center close to the MLC headquarters in Antananarivo. Church leaders are working with local police to investigate the killing. Rakotonirina has appealed to Madagascar's President Andry Rajoelina to restore security and protection for people on the island.

With over 3 million members, the Malagasy Lutheran Church is one of the fastest growing Lutheran churches in the world and one of the four main Christian denominations in Madagascar. It was established in 1950 from the merger of Lutheran congregations in the island's central and southern regions, including the first community founded in the early 19th century by members of the Norwegian Missionary Society.

An important announcement

In light of the recent travel restrictions put in place by various national governments around the world due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the ELCA has requested that all U.S.-based mission personnel return immediately to the United States. This includes our Young Adults in Global Mission volunteers. Please pray for personnel and their families, for our global companion churches as they face this pandemic in their countries, and for our world.

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Allyson Bear, Lutheran World Relief's Vice President of Quality, Impact & Learning, is leading our global response to the coronavirus and said on March 23, 2020:

African governments are responding to COVID-19 just like every other nation — closing borders, stopping air travel, closing ports, promoting social distancing. But, due to low testing capacity and under-resourced health systems, Africa faces the same dilemma as the U.S. — too little, too late.

Community transmission is already occurring in most African capital cities, and it will rapidly move to smaller towns as people start to leave the cities for the countryside as the economies shut down and movement restrictions are put into place.

We anticipate that African countries are going to be hit very hard by COVID-19. Health care workers all over Africa will be identifying and treating cases with no gloves, no masks, no training and no medical equipment. Intensive care units rarely exist outside of capital cities, and medical specialists to run them are even rarer.

There will be no specialty care available for the majority of Africans.

Normally the international community would parachute in with hospital tents, medical workers and planes full of supplies. That is unlikely to happen this time — at least not on a magnitude of what will be needed. Africa's underdeveloped health systems are going to be largely on their own, left to face the incredible burden of coronavirus on top of already unmet demands for skilled deliveries and care for malaria, tuberculosis, HIV, noncommunicable diseases and more.

Tonight, over most of Africa, no planes are flying. Commercial flights have been halted at the request of African governments. At the moment when we need to move people and supplies towards African capitals, there is no way in, and there are no supplies for them. In many parts of Africa and elsewhere, this pandemic will move through communities without any access to modern medicine. The human toll is going to be high.

This is not a time to panic but to take swift action. IMA World Health and Lutheran World Relief have deep experience mobilizing effective responses to emergencies, including the recent Ebola outbreaks in West Africa and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

But we need your generosity to bring critical support to Africa. To health care workers on the frontlines, and to vulnerable families. In partnership with Christian health associations across Africa and trusted local partners, we are doing everything in our power to reduce the impact of COVID-19.

With your donation right now, you'll:

- Rush equipment and supplies to health facilities to keep patients and hero health workers safe.

- Equip churches, schools and community leaders to educate families about coronavirus prevention, symptoms and treatment.
- Support local tracing of those who have come in contact with the disease to track and contain its spread.
- Provide our partners on the ground with up-to-date guidelines and best practices for COVID-19 response.
- Support data collection so that governments and public health experts can more accurately track and respond to the outbreak.

Additionally, everywhere we work, Lutheran World Relief and IMA World Health are taking measures to protect our staff, partners and the communities we serve during this pandemic. We are in this together, and my hope is that, during this time of widespread social distancing, the world will understand just how much we really need each other.

Daniel Speckhard, president and CEO of Corus International, parent of Lutheran World Relief and IMA World Health, says:

“Faith leaders are often among the most trusted members of a community and enlisting them in providing accurate information and encouraging cooperation among members of their congregations is extremely effective. In chronically under-resourced African nations, faith-based institutions provide services, including health care, where governments sometimes can't reach. For example, Lutheran World Relief and IMA World Health are working in partnership with Christian health associations in several countries to provide information on the virus, technical assistance and equipment and supplies to implement infection prevention and control in health facilities.”

“In the recent Ebola outbreak in the DRC, we worked with church networks to provide technical assistance, equipment and supplies to help prevent the spread of infections, as well as to help the global health community track where cases of the virus were spreading.”

“Covid-19 poses a particularly dire threat to sub-Saharan Africa, given its generally weak health systems -- and too many people already suffering the effects of living in extreme poverty. And in urban slums in cities like Lagos, Nigeria, where people are crowded into cramped housing and pack into minibus taxis to travel to work they can't afford to miss, social distancing is all but impossible.”

“But the African continent can draw from significant experience dealing with epidemics. The continent is currently waging battles against epidemics of measles and cholera, just to name a few. And the lessons learned in controlling and containing viruses such as Ebola can inform the fight against this novel coronavirus.”

10 of the Worst Pandemics in History

By Owen Jarus, *Live Science* contributor, March 20, 2020

Cholera, bubonic plague, smallpox, and influenza are some of the most brutal killers in human history. And outbreaks of these diseases across international borders are properly defined as pandemic, especially smallpox, which throughout history, has killed between 300-500 million people in its 12,000-year existence.

Throughout history, disease outbreaks have ravaged humanity, sometimes changing the course of history and, at times, signaling the end of entire civilizations. Here are 10 of the worst epidemics and pandemics.

HIV/AIDS Pandemic (at its peak, 2005-2012)

Death Toll: 36 million

Cause: HIV/AIDS

First identified in Democratic Republic of the Congo in 1976, HIV/AIDS has truly proven itself as a global pandemic, killing more than 36 million people since 1981. Currently there are between 31 and 35 million people living with HIV, the vast majority of those are in Sub-Saharan Africa, where 5% of the population is infected, roughly 21 million people. As awareness has grown, new treatments have been developed that make HIV far more manageable, and many of those infected go on to lead productive lives. Between 2005 and 2012, the annual global deaths from HIV/AIDS dropped from 2.2 million to 1.6 million.

Flu Pandemic (1968)

Death Toll: 1 million

Cause: Influenza

A category 2 Flu pandemic sometimes referred to as “the Hong Kong Flu,” the 1968 flu pandemic was caused by the H3N2 strain of the Influenza A virus, a genetic offshoot of the H2N2 subtype. From the first reported case on July 13, 1968 in Hong Kong, it took only 17 days before outbreaks of the virus were reported in Singapore and Vietnam, and within three months had spread to The Philippines, India, Australia, Europe, and the United States. While the 1968 pandemic had a comparatively low mortality rate (.5%) it still resulted in the deaths of more than a million people, including 500,000 residents of Hong Kong, approximately 15% of its population at the time.

Asian Flu (1956-1958)

Death Toll: 2 million

Cause: Influenza

Asian Flu was a pandemic outbreak of Influenza A of the H2N2 subtype, that originated in China in 1956 and lasted until 1958. In its two-year spree, Asian Flu traveled from the Chinese province of Guizhou to Singapore, Hong Kong, and the United States. Estimates for the death toll of the Asian Flu vary depending on the source, but the World Health Organization places the final tally at approximately 2 million deaths, 69,800 of those in the US alone.

Flu Pandemic (1918)

Death Toll: 20 -50 million

Cause: Influenza

Between 1918 and 1920 a disturbingly deadly outbreak of influenza tore across the globe, infecting over a third of the world's population and ending the lives of 20 – 50 million

people. Of the 500 million people infected in the 1918 pandemic, the mortality rate was estimated at 10% to 20%, with up to 25 million deaths in the first 25 weeks alone. What separated the 1918 flu pandemic from other influenza outbreaks was the victims; where influenza had always previously only killed juveniles and the elderly or already weakened patients, it had begun striking down hardy and completely healthy young adults, while leaving children and those with weaker immune systems still alive.

Sixth Cholera Pandemic (1910-1911)

Death Toll: 800,000+

Cause: Cholera

Like its five previous incarnations, the Sixth Cholera Pandemic originated in India where it killed over 800,000, before spreading to the Middle East, North Africa, Eastern Europe and Russia. The Sixth Cholera Pandemic was also the source of the last American outbreak of Cholera (1910–1911). American health authorities, having learned from the past, quickly sought to isolate the infected, and in the end only 11 deaths occurred in the U.S. By 1923 Cholera cases had been cut down dramatically, although it was still a constant in India.

Flu Pandemic (1889-1890)

Death Toll: 1 million

Cause: Influenza

Originally the “Asiatic Flu” or “Russian Flu” as it was called, this strain was thought to be an outbreak of the Influenza A virus subtype H2N2, though recent discoveries have instead found the cause to be the Influenza A virus subtype H3N8. The first cases were observed in May 1889 in three separate and distant locations, Bukhara in Central Asia (Turkistan), Athabasca in northwestern Canada, and Greenland. Rapid population growth of the 19th century, specifically in urban areas, only helped the flu spread, and before long the outbreak had spread across the globe. Though it was the first true epidemic in the era of bacteriology and much was learned from it. In the end, the 1889-1890 Flu Pandemic claimed the lives of over a million individuals.

Third Cholera Pandemic (1852–1860)

Death Toll: 1 million

Cause: Cholera

Generally considered the most deadly of the seven cholera pandemics, the third major outbreak of Cholera in the 19th century lasted from 1852 to 1860. Like the first and second pandemics, the Third Cholera Pandemic originated in India, spreading from the Ganges River Delta before tearing through Asia, Europe, North America and Africa and ending the lives of over a million people. British physician John Snow, while working in a poor area of London, tracked cases of cholera and eventually succeeded in identifying contaminated water as the means of transmission for the disease. Unfortunately the same year as his discovery (1854) went down as the worst year of the pandemic, in which 23,000 people died in Great Britain.

The Black Death (1346-1353)

Death Toll: 75 – 200 million

Cause: Bubonic Plague

From 1346 to 1353 an outbreak of the Plague ravaged Europe, Africa, and Asia, with an estimated death toll between 75 and 200 million people. Thought to have originated in Asia, the Plague most likely jumped continents via the fleas living on the rats that so frequently lived aboard merchant ships. Ports being major urban centers at the time, were the perfect breeding ground for the rats and fleas, and thus the insidious bacterium flourished, devastating three continents in its wake.

Plague of Justinian (541-542)

Death Toll: 25 million

Cause: Bubonic Plague

Thought to have killed perhaps half the population of Europe, the Plague of Justinian was an outbreak of the bubonic plague that afflicted the Byzantine Empire and Mediterranean port cities, killing up to 25 million people in its year long reign

of terror. Generally regarded as the first recorded incident of the Bubonic Plague, the Plague of Justinian left its mark on the world, killing up to a quarter of the population of the Eastern Mediterranean and devastating the city of Constantinople, where at its height it was killing an estimated 5,000 people per day and eventually resulting in the deaths of 40% of the city's population.

Antonine Plague (165 AD)

Death Toll: 5 million

Cause: Unknown

Also known as the Plague of Galen, the Antonine Plague was an ancient pandemic that affected Asia Minor, Egypt, Greece, and Italy and is thought to have been either Smallpox or Measles, though the true cause is still unknown. This unknown disease was brought back to Rome by soldiers returning from Mesopotamia around 165AD; unknowingly, they had spread a disease which would end up killing over 5 million people and decimating the Roman army.

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Let Me Tell You a Story *By Tony Campolo*

I belong to a black church in West Philadelphia. I've been a member of that church for decades, and for me, Mt. Carmel Baptist Church is the closest thing to heaven this side of the pearly gates. I preach to a lot of congregations, but I have to say that no other group of people fills me with excitement like the congregation of my home church. People in my congregation always let me know how I'm doing. Whether I am good or bad, they let me know how they feel about my message.

One time when I was preaching, I sensed no movement of the dynamism of God. I was struggling, as you have seen ministers struggle, and seemed to be getting nowhere. I had gotten about three-quarters of the way through my sermon when some lady on the back row yelled, "Help him, Jesus! Help him, Jesus!" That was all the evidence I needed that things were not going well that day.

On the other hand, when the preacher is really "on" in my church, they let him know that, too. The deacons sit right under the pulpit, and whenever the preacher says something especially good, they cheer him on by yelling, "Preach, brother! Preach!" And I want to tell you that when they do that to me, it makes me want to preach!

The women in my church have a special way of responding when the preacher is "doing good." They wave one hand in the air and call out to the preacher, "Well, well." Whenever they do that to me, my hormones bubble. But that's not all. When I really get going, the men in my congregation shout encouragement by saying, "Keep going, brother! Keep going!" I assure you that you'd never hear, "Keep going!" from a white congregation. They're more likely to check their watches and mumble, "Stop! Stop!"

One Good Friday there were seven of us preaching back to back. When it was my turn to preach, I rolled into high gear, and I want to tell you, I was good. The more I preached, the more the people in that congregation turned on, and the more they turned on, the better I got. I got better and better and better. I got so good that I wanted to take notes on me! At the end of my message, the congregation broke loose. I was absolutely thrilled to hear the hallelujahs and their cries of joy. I sat down next to my pastor and he looked at me with a smile. He reached down with his hand and squeezed my knee. "You did all right!" he said.

I turned to him and asked, "Pastor, are you going to be able to top that?"

The old man smiled at me and said, "Son, you just sit back, 'cause this old man is going to do you in!"

I didn't figure that anybody could have done me in that day. I had been so good. But the old guy got up, and I have to admit, he did me in—with one line. For an hour and a half he preached one line over and over again. For an hour and a half he stood that crowd on its ear with just one line: "It's Friday, but Sunday's comin'!" That statement may not blow you away, but you should have heard him do it. He started his sermon real softly by saying, "It was Friday; it was Friday and my Jesus was dead on the tree. But that was Friday, and Sunday's comin'!"

One of the deacons yelled, "Preach, brother! Preach!" It was all the encouragement he needed. He came on louder as he said, "It was Friday and Mary was cryin' her eyes out. The disciples were runnin' in every direction, like sheep without a shepherd. But that was Friday, and Sunday's comin'!" People in the congregation were beginning to pick up the message. Women were waving their hands in the air and calling softly,

“Well, well.” Some of the men were yelling, “Keep going! Keep going!”

The preacher kept going. He picked up the volume still more and shouted: “It was Friday. The cynics were lookin’ at the world and sayin’, ‘As things have been, so they shall be. You can’t change anything in this world; you can’t change anything.’ But those cynics didn’t know that it was only Friday. Sunday’s comin’!”

“It was Friday! And on Friday, those forces that oppress the poor and make the poor to suffer were in control. But that was Friday! Sunday’s comin’!”

“It was Friday, and on Friday Pilate thought he had washed his hands of a lot of trouble. The Pharisees were struttin’ around, laughin’ and pokin’ each other in the ribs. They thought they were back in charge of things, but they didn’t know that it was only Friday! Sunday’s comin’!”

He worked that one phrase for a half-hour, then an hour, then an hour and a quarter, then an hour and a half. Over and over he came at us, “It’s Friday, but Sunday’s comin’!”

By the time he came to the end of the message, I was exhausted. He had me and everybody else so worked up that I don’t think any of us could have stood it much longer. At the end of his message, he just yelled at the top of his lungs, “IT’S FRIDAY!” And all five hundred of us in that church yelled with one accord, “BUT SUNDAY’S COMIN’!”

That’s the Good News. That is the word that the world is waiting to hear. That’s what we have got to go out there and tell the world’s people. When they are psychologically depressed, we have to tell them that Sunday’s coming. When they feel that they can never know love again, we’ve got to tell them that Sunday’s coming. When they have lost their belief in the miraculous so that they no longer expect great things from God, we must tell them that Sunday’s coming.

We must go to a world that is suffering economic injustice and political oppression and tell them that Sunday’s coming. The world may be filled with five million hungry. People may find their rights abridged and their hopes under stack. The world may be filled with people who are frightened of the latest pandemic.

But I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, because to all of those who are on the brink of despair, I can yell at the top of my lungs, “IT’S FRIDAY, BUT SUNDAY’S COMING!”

KEEP THESE THOUGHTS WITH YOU

If God had a refrigerator, your picture would be on it.

If He had a wallet, your photo would be in it.

He sends you flowers every spring
and a sunrise every morning.

Whenever you want to talk, He’ll listen.

He could live anywhere in the universe,
but He chose your heart.

What about the Christmas gift He sent you in Bethlehem,
not to mention that Friday on Calvary.



Those of you who have seen Ken Burns’ “Country Music” series will know most of the following, but there is a quiz at the end that could have you stumped.

- Folks have been listening to the Grand Ole Opry for close to 95 years! The live radio show, America’s longest-running radio broadcast, aired for the first time in November 1925.
- The broadcast was originally called “The WSM Barn Dance,” and aired from a studio built by the National Life and Accident Insurance Company. The company chose their station’s call letters “WMS” as an acronym for “We Shield Millions.” The first artist to perform on the program was a fiddle player named Jimmy Thompson.
- It wasn’t until December 1927 that the name “Grand Ole Opry” was first used. The show was preceded each week by an hour of classical music and opera selections. On December 10, the program’s announcer, George D. Hay, declared, “For the past hour, we have been listening to music taken largely from Grand Opera. From now on, we will present the ‘Grand Ole Opry’.” And the name was born!
- The showcase was an immediate success and before long, the hallways of the National Life building were jammed with more fans than the space could accommodate. The company built a new auditorium with a capacity of 500, which remained the broadcast’s home until 1934.
- Once the fan base outgrew the seating capacity of the National Life building, the broadcast relocated to the Hillsboro Theater, a former silent movie venue, with another move in 1936 to the Dixie Tabernacle. The Dixie may have been able to seat 3,500, but its wooden benches, sawdust floor, and lack of dressing rooms made it less than desirable. The Opry’s next home was the 3,200-seat War Memorial Auditorium, where it remained from 1939 to 1943.
- In 1943, the Opry moved to the famous Ryman Auditorium, its home for the next 31 years. Built and financed in 1892 by Nashville businessman and riverboat magnate Thomas Ryman, the auditorium started out as the Union Gospel Tabernacle, designed as a house of worship. But the construction costs greatly exceeded the budget; the tabernacle was already \$20,000 in debt (\$557,704 in today’s dollars) when it opened. As a result, events such as speakers, concerts, boxing matches, and entertainers were scheduled to help it remain solvent. The first sold-out event at the Ryman was a lecture by Helen Keller in 1913. Other early performers included John Philip Sousa, Enrico Caruso, Will Rogers, and W.C. Fields, along with lectures by two U.S. presidents, Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft.
- The Ryman soon became known as the “Mother Church of Country Music,” as more and more artists made their debuts there. Earl Scruggs had his first performance there in 1945, and in 1949, 25-year-old Hank Williams performed “Lovesick Blues” at the Ryman in his first stage appear-

ance. Hank set a record that night, when he was called back for six encores.

- In 1954, 19-year-old Elvis Presley took to the Ryman stage for his first live performance on a national radio broadcast, singing “Blue Moon of Kentucky.” The Opry manager and most of the patrons were not impressed with his rockabilly rhythm and blues, and he was told that he should concentrate on his truck-driving career. That was the King’s one-and-only performance at the Opry, as he vowed to himself never to return.
- Patsy Cline debuted at the Ryman in 1955 and continued performing until her tragic death in 1963 at age 30. Several scenes from the 1985 movie based on her life, “Sweet Dreams,” were filmed at the Ryman.
- Johnny Cash’s debut at the Ryman occurred in 1956. That night wasn’t just a great night for his career; it was also the night he met his future wife, June Carter, backstage at the Ryman. Cash went on to host his own variety show taped at the Ryman, which aired from June 1969 to March 1971.
- As Nashville’s downtown began to decay in the late 1960s, the Ryman began to deteriorate as well, and National Life & Accident sought a space for a larger, modern home for the broadcast. They considered the Ryman too small, and the lack of air conditioning and dressing rooms called for a change. The company bought farmland nine miles east of the downtown, and a new complex, including a theme park and hotel, was constructed. A six-foot circle was cut from the corner of the Ryman’s stage to be inlaid on the stage of the new Opry House, enabling all artists to perform on the same spot where early country legends had stood. The new home featured air conditioning, lots of parking, and a seating capacity of 4,000. It opened in March 1974.
- Opening night at the new Opry included a performance by then-president Richard Nixon, who played the piano for the audience.
- Meanwhile, the Ryman sat mostly vacant for the next 20 years, further deteriorating. Several advocated for its destruction, using its bricks to build a chapel at the Opry’s new location, which was met with resounding opposition. In 1994, an \$8.5 million restoration began that returned the landmark to its original glory. Since 1999, the Ryman has hosted the Grand Ole Opry every year during the slower winter months, from November to January.
- In May 2010, the Cumberland River flooded Nashville, and the Opry House was severely damaged. The stage was under water, including the circle of wood from the Ryman. The building received a major renovation, the stage was replaced, and the Ryman circle restored and returned to its place of honor center stage. During the restoration, the Opry was broadcast from two of its former homes: the War Memorial and the Ryman.
- Each show features multiple guest artists and Opry members. To become an Opry member, the artist must be invited by an existing member, usually during one of the live episodes. Selection is based on the artist’s commercial success, their respect for the history of country music, and a commitment to appear on the program. The artist must commit to appearing on a least 12 broadcasts a year in order to remain a member. Failure to do so can result in loss of membership. The members can perform any time they like. A typical Grand Ole Opry broadcast features between five and seven artists.



In the Minnesota Air: Spring—and formations of Canada geese

*The geese follow when weather hits a
35-degree stretch of days.*

By Jim Gilbert Special to the Star Tribune, March 12, 2020

Few of nature’s early spring events are more thrilling to behold than a V-formation of Canada geese, heading north, flying at speeds of up to 45 miles per hour, in honking communication with each other.

Last spring the first returning Canada geese arrived March 19. In 2018 they first returned Feb. 28 to the Twin Cities area. The geese are returning from states south of Minnesota.

Waterways start to open up when the average temperature reaches 35 degrees for several days running; the geese follow that 35-degree isotherm. We look for the first V-formations returning in early to mid-March in southern Minnesota. They join with the wintering-over goose clan, whose members then become more active.

Canada geese are easily identified by their size and 5-foot-plus wingspans. They are the only geese that have black necks, black heads and white chinstraps. Males and females look alike, but there are several races that vary greatly in size. The metro area geese are a group of the giant race, with males weighing 14 to 16 pounds and females 10 to 12 pounds. Canada geese mate for life and pairs stay close to each other as much as possible.

Nesting sites are usually chosen in March. Eggs (numbering five to six in a clutch) are laid in late March or sometime in April. Egg laying is connected to open water. The female chooses the nest’s location, sometimes close to where she herself was hatched. The nest might be on a small island, muskrat house or beaver lodge. Only the female incubates the eggs. Normally 28 days after the last egg appears, the young hatch and are ready to leave the nest. Last year, Canada goose nest-building began March 29, and the first goslings were spotted May 2.

The male is on guard during the nesting time, making sure that late-arriving geese do not enter the territory, and that potential predators like raccoons are driven off. Soon after hatching, the brood of four-ounce, downy yellow-and-brown goslings are led to a safe, grassy hillside to graze.

Jim Gilbert taught and worked as a naturalist for 50 years.

QUIZ BITS

1. Sarah Cannon always wore the same hat on the Grand Ole Opry stage. What was her stage name?
2. What comedian made his Opry debut in 2009 playing the banjo?
3. In what decade were Eddy Arnold, Minnie Pearl, and Hank Williams inducted into the Grand Ole Opry?
4. Who was the oldest signer of the U.S. Declaration of Independence?
5. Which famous 1960s movie featured the theme song "Everybody's Talkin'?"
6. Which epic rock band started out with the name "Smile?"
7. For what movie did Tom Hanks score his first Academy Award nomination?

Answers

1. Minnie Pearl
2. Steve Martin
3. The 1940s
4. Benjamin Franklin (70)
5. "Midnight Cowboy"
6. Queen
7. "Big"

SPORTS QUIZ

1. When was the last time before the 2019 season (Gerrit Cole, Justin Verlander) that the major leagues had two pitchers with 100 or more strikeouts in a season?
2. Between 2001 and 2019, how many years were there in which the No. 12 seeds in men's basketball failed to win at least a game in the NCAA tournament?
3. Patrick Marleau is the all-time leader in goals scored for the San Jose Sharks. Who is No. 2?
4. Golfer Steve Stricker set a U.S. Senior Open 72-hole record in 2019 with a 19-under 261. Who had held the mark at 264?
8. The Los Angeles Chargers' Philip Rivers set a record in 2018 for most consecutive completed passes to start an NFL game. How many was it?

Answers

1. It was 2002 (Arizona teammates Randy Johnson and Curt Schilling).
2. Three times: 2007, 2015 and 2018.
3. Joe Pavelski, with 355 goals scored (2006-19).
4. Kenny Perry, who did it in 2017.
5. 25 consecutive passes.

In 2020, St. Pauli's "quasiquicentennial" year (125th anniversary), a few recipes are included here from the 100th anniversary celebration cookbook. Your editor has had Barb Nelson's recipe for Two-Hour Rolls for decades and Marie Iverson's was very similar in the cookbook, so both ladies are given authorship. They are simple to make and simply the best ever!

Two Hour Rolls

Marie Iverson and Barb Nelson

1/2 c. sugar
 1 tsp. salt
 1/2 c. butter, shortening or oil
 1 c. boiling water
 2 eggs
 1 c. warm water
 2 pkg. yeast
 6 c. flour

Mix first four ingredients with egg beater. Add eggs. Dissolve yeast in warm water and add to first mixture. Add flour and stir with spoon. Let stand 1 hour. Form into rolls. Raise for 1 hour. Bake at 350-400 degrees for 25-30 minutes.

Frozen Bread Caramel Rolls

Sharon Bugge and Evie Johnson

2 loaves frozen bread dough
 1/2 c. butter
 1 c. brown sugar
 1 large pkg. vanilla pudding mix (not instant)
 2 tbsp. milk
 1/2 tsp. cinnamon

Thaw bread, but do not let rise. Grease a 9x13 inch or round baking pan. Tear 1 loaf into pieces and drop helter skelter into pan.

Melt butter. Add brown sugar, pudding mix, milk and cinnamon and beat until smooth. Pour over loaf. Tear second loaf and place on top, putting pieces in empty spots. Let rise about 2-1/2 hours. Bake 30 minutes at 375 degrees. Turn out on waxed paper. (Nuts may also be added to the filling.)

Finally, who remembers when you would even say this...

"The Next Best Thing to Robert Redford"

1/2 c. butter 8 oz. Cool Whip
 1 c. flour 1 large pkg. instant vanilla pudding
 1 c. fine chopped pecans 1 large pkg. instant chocolate
 8 oz. cream cheese pudding
 1 c. powdered sugar 3 c. milk

Mix together the butter, flour and pecans; press into 9x13 inch pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 15-20 minutes; cool. Beat together sugar and softened cream cheese. Fold in 1/2 of the Cool Whip. Spread on cooled crust. Beat the puddings together with the 3 cups milk; put on top of cheese layer. Top with remaining half of the Cool Whip. Refrigerate.

How the potato was brought to Norway

Famine, prohibition and war contributed to the potato's popularity in Norway. It all started with the priests.

By Jens Helleland Ådnanes, Article from University of Bergen

Translated by: Sverre Ole Drønen

[Editor's note: I have left the translation as is, so you can enjoy the slightly stilted American English.]

The potato originated in the Andes in Latin America. They had been growing potatoes for 10,000 years when the first Europeans arrived. These early explorers brought the potato to Europe.

First to Portugal, from where it spread. This was in 1567.

"But it took a while before the potato arrived in Norway, around 1750," says Kirsti Lothe Jacobsen. She is the Senior Academic Librarian at the Law Library of the University of Bergen (UiB) in Norway. In 2008, when the United Nations declared the International Year of the Potato, she curated an exhibition about the potato's history in Norway.

The potato priests

Mainly priests and the military, who travelled around Europe and picked up that the potato was both delicious and nutritious, brought the potato to Norway

"The priests grew potatoes in their parsonage, which was the norm in Western Norway in the early days of the potato in Norway. This is how the expression potato priests arose, because they spread the message of the potato from the pulpit," Lothe Jacobsen says.



This was often their most important message, as there was plenty of scurvy and vitamin C deficiency in Norway at the time. Potato is a great cure for this. In addition, the potato is easily cultivated in Norwegian climate and soil.

"The potato priests knew how important the potato was for the survival of their congregation," says Lothe Jacobsen.

However, most people at the time did not see it this way.

At risk of leprosy

In the beginning, there was fierce resistance against the potato. Rumor had it that potato eaters were at risk of leprosy.

"The priests gradually convinced people about the merits of the potato," Lothe Jacobsen says.

But it was only during the Napoleonic Wars in the early 19th century that the potato got fully integrated in the Norwegian diet.

The British navy blocked the seas around Norway, which led to reduced grain imports from Denmark – and a subsequent famine. The people learned that they could grow potatoes instead.

"The Norwegians love affair with the potato was born," says Lothe Jacobsen.

Alcohol and war

Not the least when it turned out potato was excellent for producing alcohol.

In 1816, the Norwegian parliament, The Storting, passed a law prohibiting the production of liquors – except for grain-based variants. This led to a flourishing of potato cultivation.

Then, during World War II, the potato once again saved many people,

"During the war, most people used their gardens for potato cultivation. Those who didn't have a garden cultivated potatoes indoors, using pots and pans," Lothe Jacobsen says.

The potato in the future

Today, the potato fights it out with modern imports, such as rice or pasta, in the shopping aisles. Some nutrition experts have also made the potato the villain in the fight against obesity.

Norwegians do eat far less potatoes now than in the past. In 1959, the average Norwegian consumed about 88 kilos of potatoes a year (194 pounds!). By 2007, this number had fallen to 22 kilos (50 pounds) annually per person.

"Personally, I believe that the potato will always remain a staple of the Norwegian diet. If another food crisis occurs in the future, I believe that the potato will always come to the rescue and ensure the health and wellbeing of Norwegians," concludes Lothe Jacobsen.

* * * * *

How many ways can you prepare Potatoes?

Mashed, baked, boiled, pan fried, roasted, potato cakes, Bombay potatoes, cheesy mashed, Duchess potatoes, French fries, fried mashed potato balls, gnocchi, grilled potatoes, hash browns, Hasselback potatoes, Patatas Bravas, Pommes Dauphine, potato chips, Potato Dauphinois, potato salad, potato skins, scalloped potatoes, potatoes au gratin, potato soup, tater tots, twice-baked, Potatoes Anna, and *potet klub*.

Can you think of any more?

Do American Robins Migrate?

By Joe Lowe, *American Bird Conservancy*, January 27, 2020

Springtime singer or snowy sentinel? The American Robin may be one of North America's most familiar songbirds, yet its wintering patterns raise a common question: Do robins migrate?

The answer is yes and no. We associate robins with spring for good reason: In many places, they arrive with the warm weather. But that doesn't mean all of these birds escape winter's bite.

Winter Strategies

Unlike long-distance migrants and many hummingbirds, which head south *en masse* during the fall, robins react to winter's onset in two ways.

Many retreat southward. Northern Canada empties of robins, while areas far to the south like Texas and Florida receive large winter flocks. But those making the journey are not lured by warmer temperatures: Robins can withstand extremely cold temperatures, adding warm, downy feathers to their plumage. The real motivation is food, or rather the lack of it. As their warm-weather diet of earthworms and insects wanes, robins begin searching for fresh supplies.



American Robin. Photo by Torin Sammeth/Shutterstock

But declining invertebrate numbers aren't a problem for all robins — and a good number stay up north, which is the second way robins react to winter. They have been observed in every U.S. state (except Hawai'i) and all southern Canadian provinces in January. They're able to remain, thanks to several important adaptations.

First, they change their diet, transitioning from protein-rich invertebrates to vitamin-rich winter fruits and berries, including junipers, hollies, crabapples, and hawthorns.

They also begin moving. In the spring and summer, robins aggressively defend their territories and raise young. In the winter, they become nomadic, searching widely for their favorite cold-weather fare. Weather also influences robin movements. A heavy snowfall that persists for more than a few days may send them on their way, searching for better conditions.

Robins also form flocks in the winter. These flocks, which can number in the hundreds or thousands, stand in contrast to the birds' territorial pairings in spring and summer. Flocking offers critical benefits: Larger groups mean more eyes and improved chances to spot — and avoid — predators. They also increase the odds of discovering food.

Finally — and this is generally true throughout their range — robins make little noise during winter months. Although some males begin singing toward winter's end as spring approaches and mating hormones kick in, they typically maintain a subdued presence.

Taken together, these changes dramatically lower robins' profile in the northern part of their range, making sightings much less common, and leading some people to assume they are absent.



American Robin. Photo by Kenneth Keifer/Shutterstock

To Stay or To Go

So how do Robins decide whether to stay or go during the winter?

There is not yet a good answer, but gender may play a role, as males are more likely to remain than females in northern areas. This offers an obvious territorial advantage, allowing males early access to the best breeding grounds.

When spring arrives, northern flocks of robins disperse and resume their invertebrate diet, picking earthworms and other invertebrates from the ground. Around the same time, migrating robins return from the South, with males arriving a few days to two weeks before females. In both cases, males sing vigorously as they begin defending territory. The result? Robins seem to be everywhere once again.



American Robin. Photo by Michael Stubblefield

Robin Conservation

Unlike many other birds, the American Robin seems to have benefited from urbanization and agricultural development. Although its populations are increasing, it remains vulnerable to many of the same factors threatening less adaptable species.

Pesticide poisoning remains an important threat, since American Robins forage on lawns and other open spaces that are often sprayed with toxins. Although DDT has been banned in the United States, other toxic chemicals such as neonicotinoids, chlorpyrifos, and glyphosate (used in the familiar weed-killer Roundup) are still in use. Pesticides can

also affect populations of earthworms, a major food source for this bird.

Since American Robins often forage and feed on the ground, they are especially vulnerable to predation by outdoor cats. Collisions with windows, communications towers, and car strikes are other common hazards.

* * * * *

THE FUGITIVE

His feet froze solid. An avalanche buried him up to his neck. Villagers risked death to hide him. How Jan Baalsrud escaped the Nazis and became a Norwegian folk hero.

By Robert Kolker, *New York Times*, March 16, 2016,

The young soldier was frightened and freezing. He'd just swum 70 yards through frigid water, fleeing the burning wreckage of an exploded boat. Climbing ashore, he heard gunfire, glanced backward and saw his friend on the ground, blood rushing from his head. Farther away, others in his unit were being rounded up or killed by the Germans. He was sure he would be next.

He ran. He heard more gunfire. He spotted a gully, a long, lightning-shaped sliver in the snowy hillside, and climbed into it, taking cover behind a large rock. As he watched four soldiers climbing toward him, he took stock. He was alone, trapped in enemy-controlled territory. His soaked uniform was crystallizing, hardening into a shell of ice. He had just one boot, having lost the other in the water. He had no map, no food, no water and no plan.

He did, however, have a gun: a small Colt, still snapped in its holster. From behind the rock, he saw the soldiers getting closer, within range. He aimed and pulled the trigger. The gun jammed. He kept trying; it kept jamming. He yanked out the magazine and tossed out the first two rounds. Then he fired again, twice.

One soldier threw up his arms and dropped to the ground, dead; another fell wounded. The others drew back, buying him time. He turned up toward the hill, planted one bootless foot in the snow and ran.

On March 29, 1943, with the brutal Norwegian winter not yet waning, Jan Baalsrud and 11 commandos and crewmen slipped into a secluded cove in the northern fjords. Their fishing boat, the Brattholm, carried a secret cargo of bombs and explosive devices. Baalsrud was a 25-year-old son of an instrument maker who escaped his country after the German invasion in 1940 and returned three years later as a saboteur. He joined Linge Company, a group of young Norwegians who trained with the Allies in special ops and then sailed back on stealth missions, across the North Sea from Shetland, Scotland, and into occupied Norway, using the maze of fjords as cover. Their mission that March was to establish a presence near the northern port city Tromsø, where they would sabotage anything the Germans were using to fortify the Axis troops on the Russian front. Baalsrud's assignment was to swim underwater and fasten some of the explosive devices — limpets, or magnetic bombs — to seaplanes in order to sink them.

Small efforts like these, put together, made history. Winston Churchill had always maintained that control of the North Sea would be essential to any Allied victory. This particular effort, however, was a complete failure. Someone in the next village alerted the Germans within a day of the team's arrival. When Baalsrud spotted German ships moving into the cove, he knew the mission was finished. Their only option was to scuttle the boat. The men lit a fuse, waiting until the last minute to jump before the Brattholm exploded. Baalsrud swam ashore, shot the two German soldiers and then ran, staggered, hobbled, skied and sledged for nine weeks through Norway's frozen fjords, the target of a nationwide manhunt.

What happened over those nine weeks remains one of the wildest, most unfathomable survival stories of World War II. Baalsrud's feet froze solid. An avalanche buried him up to his neck. He wandered in a snowstorm for three days. He was entombed alive in snow for another four days and abandoned under open skies for five more. Alone for two more weeks in a cave, he used a knife to amputate several of his own frostbitten toes to stop the spread of gangrene. He spent the last several weeks tied on a stretcher, near death, as teams of Norwegian villagers dragged him up and down hills and snowy mountains. By the end, Baalsrud was less a hero than a package in need of safe delivery, out of Nazi hands. For decades, his escape made him into a Norwegian national folk hero, even as the man himself remained frustratingly opaque, almost unknowable.

Norway has a mild reputation, now, as a beneficent social democracy, so rich with oil that it's almost unseemly, its finances largely walled off from the calamities within the European Union. The war and the occupation aren't prominent parts of the national identity the way they once were; and yet up in the fjords, there are signposts marked with a red letter B that are left unexplained to hikers.

They mark a path that begins more than 350 miles inside the Arctic Circle, in the cove called Toftefjord. From there, the route zigzags south 80 miles, up and down mountains and across rivers, concluding at last at the border Norway shares with Sweden and Finland. It remains all but impassable in winter. Two Norwegian commandoes tried it just two years ago; when a storm came, they had to be airlifted out. But in warmer weather, anyone can walk the trail, or most of it.

I arrived in Toftefjord on a bright, cool late-summer morning, the sun above the clouds casting stark shadows on still water.

It's a silent, tiny bay, bordered on three sides by stark moss-green outcroppings. The motorboat captain had a location saved on his GPS, and he guided the boat there. His little dog, a brown mutt, ran to the bow, his nose poking over the edge, aiming down. I looked, too. A few feet beneath us, at the bottom of the bay, still lay some of the wreckage of the Brattholm.

The captain cut the motor. The quiet was unnerving but not unusual in the fjords, where a tranquil sense of isolation easily coexists with all the intense, momentous visual drama around you: brilliant green and turquoise rivers, as smooth as glass, reflecting the sun so that you can barely see; craggy, sharp-angled, purple-capped mountains erupting straight out of those rivers at right angles. Everywhere you turn and everywhere you look, you're in both the middle of nowhere and the center of the universe.

Guiding us through the fjords was Tore Haug, a distinguished-looking 74-year-old sports-medicine doctor and former commercial pilot who may be one of the last living authorities on Baalsrud's escape. He met me in Oslo, and together we took a two-hour flight to Tromsø, where we got a car and drove along the fjords to the ferry to Rebbenesoya, the island where Toftefjord is. Haug is Baalsrud's second cousin, but he met the man only once, as a boy; he remembers Baalsrud refusing to talk with his relatives about his wartime experiences. Like his famous relative, Haug is reserved. On our drive, he allowed that he might be drawn to the story less because of the blood connection than because of a certain awe that some men his age often come to feel about those who fought in the war. "These guys were unspoiled in '43," Haug told me softly as the motorboat reached the shore. "Most young people, they don't know the story."

Haug is among the many Norwegians of his generation who grew up on the tale of Baalsrud's escape. "We Die Alone," the first book-length account, published in 1955 by the British journalist David Howarth, became an instant classic in Norway. Two years later, a movie based on the book, "Ni Liv" ("Nine Lives"), was nominated for an Oscar for best foreign film. Not satisfied with these versions of the story, Haug spent several years working on a book of his own. In 2001, he and a co-author, Astrid Karlsen Scott, published "Defiant Courage," a day-by-day reconstruction of Baalsrud's story that exhaustively praises the people of the fjords who smuggled him past German patrols, ministered to his frostbitten feet and hid him in lofts, barns and sheds. "My intention was to honor all his helpers," Haug told me, "because that was what Jan wanted."

One of the first of those helpers was waiting for us in Toftefjord, on the porch of a modest green cottage, a short walk from the shore. Dagmar Idrupen is one of the last people still living who saw Baalsrud during his escape. She was 10 when Baalsrud tore through Toftefjord. When I spoke with her, she was 82 and peppy, if a little bashful. Inside on her kitchen table was an array of food that she had spent the morning preparing for her visitors: hard-boiled eggs and dark goat cheese, jam and bread and cured sausages.

To Dagmar and her family, Baalsrud's escape represents the moment idyllic childhood and World War II collided in the middle of her kitchen. She remembered the sound of machine-gun fire outside her window. She remembered her

mother weeping, certain that they needed to surrender or else they would all be killed. Fleeing up the hill, the family heard an explosion — Baalsrud, scuttling the Brattholm — that sent flaming debris flying up in their direction, seemingly following their path. They kept running, to the shore on the east side of the island, and shouted for help. Dagmar's aunt sent a small boat to fetch them to her own place across the fjord. That was where, later that night, Dagmar's sister and cousin left the house in the dark and came back with the blue-eyed stranger.

Baalsrud was handsome, as Dagmar recalled, her face reddening at the memory. He was also ice-cold and soaking wet, his Norwegian commando uniform frozen solid. He had been bold enough to swim in the same icy waters that they **had crossed by boat. He had been running from the same** gunfire. Dagmar saw the man's gun — the snub-nosed Colt — and a shiver of fear ran through her.

Everyone in the room understood the danger he was putting them in. If the Germans ever caught this man, he would be tortured, then killed. But the family promised to help him. He seemed grateful and relieved; his sensitivity, along with his courtesy and bravado, was what so many others would remember about him in the decades to come.

But this is what Dagmar remembered most: Before he left, the handsome stranger leaned down, looked her squarely in the eye and declared, with stone-cold certainty, that if she ever told a soul that she'd seen him, everyone she loved would almost certainly be killed.

Baalsrud knew the fate of Norway didn't hinge on whether he made it out of the country alive. He wasn't holding secret information that could win the war; he had no special value to the military. Howarth, in "We Die Alone," proposed what would, for Baalsrud, be the essential question: "Was he right, as a soldier, to let women and children put their lives in such terrible danger?"

Baalsrud settled on a method for minimizing the risks he presented to every new person he met: Never tell anyone who else he saw along the way and never confirm where he would be going next. He headed south, knocking on doors when he was out of strength or in danger of freezing to death, never knowing if the people on the other side of the door would turn him in. None of them did, as Haug and Karlsen Scott recount in their book, and many did more than just offer shelter. There was the midwife who offered to hide him upstairs, disguising him as a woman in labor. (He did not accept the offer.) There was the man who warded off a neighbor known to be on the German payroll who came by while Baalsrud was inside. There was a young girl who was the first to get a close look at Baalsrud's frostbitten feet and tried to bandage them as best she could. There was the fisherman who outfitted Baalsrud with new boots and a pair of skis. There was the father, still mourning the loss of his young son, who rowed Baalsrud in a dinghy through rocky waters in the middle of the night, avoiding German sentries, to deposit him on another shore.

On skis, Baalsrud thought, the rest of the trip would be easy. He even boldly whizzed past a group of German soldiers on their way to breakfast, vanishing from view before they thought to wonder who he was. Then came a blizzard. His eyes frozen shut, gasping for air, he became so disoriented he couldn't tell if he was ascending or descending. He

devised a technique to keep from falling: He threw a snowball, and if he didn't hear it hit the ground, he went in the other direction. Without realizing it, he was climbing Jaeggevarre, an almost 3,000-foot mountain. But he was all right, more or less, until the avalanche. Baalsrud tumbled some 300 feet down into the valley, destroying his skis and losing his poles and satchel. When he awoke, he was still snow-blind. By his third day wandering alone, he was hallucinating, hearing the voices of the men of the Brattholm he had left behind.

On the fourth day, he found his way to lower ground and a small village called Furuflaten. He saw a house and stumbled inside. This turned out to be Baalsrud's great stroke of luck. The house belonged to the sister of Marius Gronvoll, an active member of the resistance. A building nearby was a German military headquarters; he just as easily could have barged in there, and his story would have ended.

Instead, in a remarkably coordinated effort, many in the village came together to help harbor the fugitive and get him on his way, all without the Germans noticing. The Gronvoll family stashed Baalsrud in their barn for four days as he tried to recuperate. According to Haug and Karlsen Scott, two German soldiers searched the barn once but walked out before checking the loft where Baalsrud was hiding behind a bed of hay.



Are and Kjellaug Gronvoll outside the barn where their family hid Baalsrud in the hayloft. Credit...Jon Tonks for *The New York Times*

Slowly, the Gronvolls brought Baalsrud back to life. But the frostbite had taken hold, and Baalsrud was no longer able to walk on his own. Marius recruited three others to help put Baalsrud on a stretcher, sneak him past the Germans into a rowboat and take him across the fjord, pretending to fish the whole time. When the terrain on the other side proved too steep to negotiate with a stretcher, Marius hid Baalsrud in a small shed and returned to Furuflaten, where he convinced a local schoolteacher with carpentry skills to make a sled — no small feat, considering the school was where all the soldiers

congregated. The teacher made it in pieces, and it was assembled on the other side of the fjord.

Today, Furuflaten is still very small, with about 250 people. Along the main road is a little museum devoted to Baalsrud — really just an alcove inside a community center, a wooden barn-style building with a stage for assemblies and community theater. It's open only a few days a week, and there is no sign outside to tell anyone that it exists. There are Baalsrud's wooden skis, recovered by a local resident in the bottom of the valley in the summer of 1943 and hidden until the end of the war. There is Baalsrud's gun, the snub-nosed Colt, which Baalsrud's brother had given to a museum near Oslo before it was transported back to Furuflaten. There are four little dioramas, each depicting a scene in Baalsrud's escape in an almost twee Wes Anderson fashion. And there is a replica of the sled that transported Baalsrud, with a mannequin of Baalsrud himself lying on top. A few feet away is a stuffed fox, with a paper sign hanging around its neck. The message, in Norwegian: "I saw him, but I didn't say anything." This is a museum devoted to the successful keeping of a secret.

The Gronvoll family's barn, where Baalsrud, snow-blind and lame, recovered after the avalanche, is still standing just up the road. After the war, Marius married a young woman named Agnete Lanes, who had helped him tend to Baalsrud. They had seven children, three of whom met me at the barn: two sons, Are and Dag, and a daughter, Kjellaug. They are all at least 50 now, decades older than their parents were when Baalsrud came into their lives. Kjellaug still lives in Furuflaten, working as a nurse in a neighboring town. Dag works in the pharmaceutical industry in Tromsø. Are, who has an uncanny resemblance to the pictures I saw of his father, works in the local fish-feed industry.

Staying silent about helping Baalsrud, keeping the secret, took a toll on the Gronvoll family. In a very real sense, it fractured them. "My father had two sisters," Are said, "and he sent them away" for the duration of the war. "If the Germans found out what happened, at least his sisters would survive." Their heroism, like Baalsrud's, was of an ambiguous kind, and Howarth's question occurred to me again. Even years after the war — despite the book, the movie and the indomitable legend — some of his neighbors, Are said, still thought of Marius and his family as troublemakers, the ones who had endangered their community, who put everyone at risk.

From Furuflaten, Marius and his three friends had rowed Baalsrud across the fjord to a hamlet called Revdal. A few dozen yards from the shore is a small shed, about 6 by 9 feet, where they left him on a wooden platform, unable to walk, but within reach of food, water, a knife and a bottle of homemade hard liquor. Baalsrud joked to them that it was every bit as nice as the Hotel Savoy. Marius came to visit and meant to come back again, but a storm delayed him for another five days. This was when Baalsrud's journey took its grimmest turn yet. Sometime during those days, Baalsrud took the knife and cut into several of his toes, hoping to bleed out the frostbite-caused infection that he feared would spread up his legs. He also amputated one of his big toes.

On the drive to Revdal, Haug told me that he wanted me to experience the "Hotel Savoy" alone — to leave me there for several minutes in silence so that I could imagine what it must

have been like to stay in there, day after day, expecting Marius and his friends to come, but them never coming, to be experiencing incredible pain from gangrene, to start to think that this would be the place where he would die. When we arrived, we almost missed the place: The Hotel Savoy is almost an afterthought, sitting along the side of a highway, unmarked. The little hut that is there now is a replica; the original one was burned down by some kids several years ago.

Haug opened the door for me. Inside the hut was a wooden platform, like the one Baalsrud was lying on when, half-mad with agony, he took a knife to his own feet. “No one else knew about him,” Haug said. “He wondered, if Marius is caught, who should help him?” Baalsrud sterilized the knife in the flame of the lamp, then washed his feet with liquor and took a swig before cutting.

Haug shut the door. Slivers of light beamed through the cracks. All I could hear was the howling of the wind, blasting between the planks of wood. A minute or two later, I was more than ready to leave.

Glad for air, I walked with Haug below the high ridge where Marius and his friends, once they did come back, painstakingly pulled Baalsrud, still strapped to a sled, up to another hiding spot, 2,700 feet higher than the Hotel Savoy, where they had to leave him again. At the top of the ridge, Haug said, there was a large boulder, nicknamed the Gentleman’s Stone, about 15 feet high, 18 feet wide and flat on one side, as if it had been cut with a knife. This was where Baalsrud lay for nine more days, buried in a cave of snow most of the time, waiting for help to return. Even the most devoted and informed people about the story have had difficulty determining which boulder it is. “My stone is the right one,” Haug said proudly.



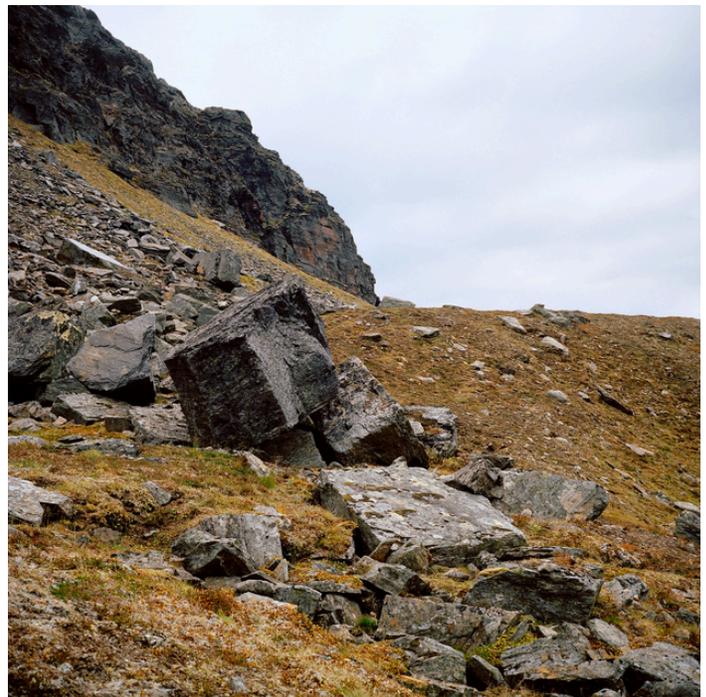
The Hotel Savoy. Credit...Jon Tonks for *The New York Times*

When the next group of helpers finally found Baalsrud, they still couldn’t take him all the way to Sweden. Instead, they traveled a bit and then set up another shelter for him while they went to find more help. Even now, it’s a 90-minute walk from the nearest village. Again, there is nothing marking the spot, just a steep mountainside with a little overhang, but

open to the elements. This is where Baalsrud’s story loses all recognizable shape. He spent five days under the open sky, growing confused, despondent and finally hopeless. At one moment in Howarth’s book, Baalsrud puts a gun to his head, but the trigger had frozen, and he didn’t have the strength to pull it; in Haug’s, he merely tells his rescuers they would be better off if they just left him there to die.

A team of helpers finally found him again, taking him farther south to the Skaidijonni valley, where he would spend another 17 days in a cave, awaiting another team to transport him across the Swedish border. During his weeks there, Baalsrud completed the amputation of the rest of his toes. Meanwhile, a local farmer named Nils Nilsen had skied 40 miles to Sweden and 40 back to round up more help for Baalsrud. By the time a group of Sami, Norway’s indigenous people, came to take him across the border, Baalsrud weighed just 80 pounds. The Sami harnessed the sled to a team of reindeer and, racing through a corner of Nazi-aligned Finland, they finally crossed over into neutral Sweden by way of a frozen lake, with the Germans following close behind.

It took six months in a hospital in Sweden for Baalsrud to climb back from the brink, overcoming the loss of his toes, putting weight back on, regaining his eyesight. He went to Scotland and, after learning to walk again, helped to train Allied soldiers in marksmanship. At the end of the war, he returned to Norway to witness his country’s liberation firsthand. Then he returned to his old life, outside Oslo. “I had forgotten the whole story, or rather I had tried to forget it all,” Baalsrud said in a radio interview years later, “and it was completely forgotten when David Howarth came.”



The Gentleman’s Stone, where Baalsrud lay for nine days. Credit...Jon Tonks for *The New York Times*

Howarth, a journalist and Royal Navy officer, wrote “We Die Alone” based largely on the Norwegian military report on the escape that Baalsrud filed during his recovery and interviews with Baalsrud himself. A lyrical writer with a great feel for suspense, Howarth strained to understand Baalsrud — not just his astounding resilience but also his essential

melancholy. The books are but one reflection of how Baalsrud's story has aged into an inspiring parable about the character of all Norwegians: their resilience, their selflessness, their devotion to community. "He became the symbol and the hope for the resistance," said Harald Zwart, a prominent Dutch-Norwegian film director who works in Hollywood (he made the "Karate Kid" remake and "The Mortal Instruments: City of Bones") and is currently shooting a long-planned remake of Baalsrud's story as a snowy version of "The Fugitive." "They needed to keep him alive in order to keep the dream of freedom alive. He grew to be bigger than himself."

Baalsrud himself rejected that myth, time and again. After consulting on the production of "Ni Liv," Baalsrud returned to the life he had started with his wife, Evie, an American from a wealthy family. Their daughter, Liv, told Haug that her father never wanted to talk about what had happened in the fjords. "Jan was also depressed after the war; I heard from his brother," Haug said. The folk hero would not return to the fjords again until 1987. The Gronvoll children, now all grown, invited me for lunch in their home in Furufalten, where Baalsrud made his final visit. Marius and Agnete's daughter Kjellaug served rolls with cheese and jam, then cake, then coffee. A few framed black-and-white photos of Baalsrud's earlier visit in the 1950s, during production of "Ni Liv," hung on the wall of the parlor. The later visit was less triumphant, more poignant.

Baalsrud was visibly frail. Marius was no longer alive, but Agnete was. When Baalsrud left, Agnete was bereft. "She said afterward that he was in such bad shape that it would have been better if he was dead than still alive," her son Dag said.

Back home, Baalsrud fell and fractured his hip, and X-rays revealed a cancerous tumor that had already metastasized. An ambulance plane took him to Oslo University Hospital, but it was too late. Before he died on Dec. 30, 1988, he was moved to a rehabilitation center near Oslo that his own donations and support had helped to create. His last wish was to be buried in the fjords, in the village of Mandal, alongside the grave of Aslak Fossvoll, a Norwegian resistance leader who visited Baalsrud in the cave at Skaidijonni, only to die of diphtheria four weeks after Baalsrud made it safely to Sweden. Even at the end, Baalsrud's thoughts were never far from the capriciousness of fate: Who lives and who dies, who survives and who doesn't, who is most deserving of honor and praise.

That visit to Furufalten was the only time Marius and Agnete's children met the man who so profoundly shaped the lives of their family. Their son Are remembered standing with Baalsrud outside their house, next to the barn where he once hid for days. Together, he and the old man stared out at the valley where, 44 years earlier, he had staggered, snow-blind, after an avalanche, making his way to the safety of Marius's farm. Are, just a teenager, had to ask the great man a question: "Of all the homes in the valley, how did he find his way here?"

"I don't know," he said. But then the old soldier grinned grimly, gritting his teeth, and glanced at Are.

"I can tell you something, youngest son of Marius," he said. "Next time it's war, it's not me coming down this ice. It's you."

* * * * *

In 2018, producers in Norway made another film about Jan Baalsrud called "The 12th Man."



See this film (with subtitles) *pending Covid-19 outcomes* as part of NORDIC FEST activities in Thief River Falls.

Tuesday, May 12, 7:00 pm. NCTC Auditorium.
Freewill offering.

Two books to read about Jan Baalsrud:

- Howarth, D. (1955). *We Die Alone: A WWII Epic of Escape and Endurance*. Guilford, Connecticut: Lyons Press
- Scott, Astrid Karlsen and Haug, Tore (2001). *Defiant Courage - Norway's Longest WW2 Escape*. Olympia, Washington: Nordic Adventures

Below is from *Farm Girls* —Reflections and Impressions of
Candace Simar and Angela F. Foster

(Candace Simar spoke at the TRF Public Library on March 10th. She has authored several books in addition to this one, which was written with her sister Angela. They grew up in Otter Tail County, MN.)

Where I'm From

I'm from butchering hens in the forenoon and eating fried chicken for supper. Once a week baths and the old upright piano with the middle C that clanged an empty thump. Fore forenoon coffee and afternoon chores. Dinner at noon and supper after milking. Meat and potatoes at every meal. Whole milk fresh from the bulk tank, cream rising to the top. From fried bacon, fried ham, fried steak, fried eggs, fried potatoes and Mom's homemade doughnuts. Beet pickles, head cheese, pickled pigs feet, dumpling soup, and cream and bread with a little sugar sprinkled on top. From cooking for threshers and cooking for silo fillers. *Swatter*, not swather. *Warsh*, not wash. *Not'n*, not nothing. From Norwegian swear words and a grandpa who drank, covering the smell with Sen-Sen candies. From Auntie Ruby with her tightly curled hairdo and house dresses, who pinched my cheeks with hands so chapped it hurt. From Great Uncle Louie who chewed snus and always stuck *out* his finger for me to pull and fat Grandma Inga who warned me not to. I'm from lefse, krumkake, and rhubarb gritty with soil, sour in my mouth. Ripe wheat chewed into gum. Apple pies, mud pies, cow pies. The smell of manure and the such of a baby calf's mouth. From hay bales that made you sneeze and straw of pure gold. From "Come Boss!" to the cows and "Sic 'em" to the dog. A two-holer outhouse and a one-room school house. Pump-Pump Pullaway, Red Rover, Red Rover, and Anti-I-Over. Climbing trees, skipping stones and hopscotch. From hay fields and pastures spotted with hardwoods and rocks the size of melons heaved up in the soil. From dirt, dark as blackstrap molasses, and crops sprouting like new hair in the spring fields. From coffee in a jar carried barefoot through the fields to my father's waiting hands. From salt and sweat and dirt-creased skin. From all of this. From home.

-Angela F. Foster

Third Cousins in Norway

I would have been the one who stayed behind. Timid, afraid of oceans choosing familiar over precarious caring for parents and sickly aunts safer than uncertain wilderness.

I would have written letters with news of deaths or sickness births and weddings tucked pansy seeds inside envelopes to homesick brothers on North Dakota prairies and Minnesota pineries read their stores from afar, stroking blond curls of nephews' hair pressing their locks to my lips knowing I would never see their faces.

I would have been the last of my Generation left in Norway The only one to speak with tenderness Connect a face with names, share memories from childhood answer questions why they left and what they gained or lost by leaving

I would be the one standing on the other side of the door, flatbread and lefse baked and waiting hand-woven cloth with Hardanger lace reindeer sausage, gjetost brown cheese everything to perfection. welcoming distant cousins from America astonished they could travel so far yet find their way home.

-Candace Simar

Galloping to America

I would have been the dreamer, scoffing at my sister's fear. Naming her ignorant. Unimaginative. Boring.

I would have counted my kroners hoarding them as dreams. Ironing for the Nobleman's widow. Sitting in childbed for the neighbor. Never spending on dresses or foolery. Saving, always saving, Building passage to America.

I would have waved away my mother's clutching hands. Refused to practice the Hardanger lace stitches. Scorned the work of women. Learned to plant and harvest fields. Spent time teaching my tongue the strange English words.

I would have painted my name on a travel trunk sturdy enough to cross oceans and the sea of prairie. Folded and packed the fine linens stitched for my dowry. Filled the empty spaces with the practical—aprons, metal pots, seeds for the new land, imagining black ribbons behind my plow.

I would have pushed aside the offers of marriage from timid men. Scorned their thin arms. Dreamed instead of a Viking. Broad shouldered. Adventurous enough to cross the seas.

I would have longed for blond haired sons bold like their father who would push the plow and protect the homestead. And daughters tall and lithe, who would marry into money.

In my daydreams we prospered. Letters home bragged of riches. Servants no more. Landowners.

In my night dreams I sailed across the seas. My phantom husband beside me, galloping the ocean waves, our faces turned toward America.

-Angela F. Foster

Considering Your Bucket List

Dave Hill editorial, The Times

[Your editor always reads Dave Hill's editorials. They are always food for thought and shouldn't be missed.]

Oliver Wendell Holmes is quoted as saying, "Many people die with their music still in them. Why is this so? Too often, it's because they are always getting ready to live. Before they know it, time runs out."

I've done a lot of fun and challenging things in my life and, to be honest, I really don't have a long list of things I'd like to do. Lately, however, I've had that feeling that a "best used by" date has suddenly appeared on my forehead.

This past week, I visited with four men from New Brunswick, Canada. They had recently ridden their snowmobiles from New Brunswick to Thief River Falls. It was a journey of nearly 2,800 miles that took a little over two weeks to complete. These gentlemen called their trip "Bucket List Tour 2020."

My visit with these men made me begin to wonder whether I still have "any music left in me," and whether I should be thinking about doing something ... well, extra challenging.

**I AM PROUD TO SAY
I HAVE COMPLETED
THE 1ST ITEM ON MY
BUCKET LIST**



I HAVE THE BUCKET

What could that be? I know a lot of people who have a bucket list. You know, a list of things people would like to do before they die. That's kind of a sad or morbid thing to think about.

One person suggested that instead of a bucket list, people call it a challenge list. I like that. Isn't that what it is anyway? Aren't you challenging yourself to do something you wouldn't normally do?

Ideally, I suppose, bucket lists should be or could be considered a kind of personal growth experience. However, they could also be big, audacious, difficult, expensive, and even crazy things.

I'm leaning toward something crazy. Jumping from a perfectly good airplane at, oh, 13,000 feet might be one of those things.

To some of the people in my life, these are the sorts of things that make them think I should start to question whether this is something I really want to do or if it's just plain crazy.

I think I may know "one or two" people in my life who if I told them I wanted to skydiving might look at me and say, "No, you're not, dumb" They just might also say the same thing about bungee jumping off a cliff or bridge. Now, a hot air balloon ride, on the other hand, might be another story, but these people always ask "what if" and that what if includes a slight risk of being blown into electrical lines.

I've discovered one thing you shouldn't do when contemplating scratching something off your bucket list—asking practical/sensible people. They generally begin by suggesting that you look at your savings account and estimate how much you can afford to spend, and then divide that by the number of loved ones in your life.

That's unfair. There's not much you can do on \$5.

I would share a quote with them from T. S. Eliot that says, "Only those who risk going too far can possibly find out how far they can go."

But, I'm fairly certain said practical/sensible people may or may not suggest that those who go too far, go alone.

Party poopers.

* * * * *

Ole and Lena had an argument while they were driving down a country road.

After a while they got tired of repeating themselves and neither wanted to back down, so they drove along not saying a word.

Then, as they passed a barnyard of mules and pigs, Ole sarcastically asked, "Relatives of yours?"

"Yup," Lena replied. "In-laws."

* * * * *

A Sunday School teacher asked her preschool class if they knew where God lived. One little girl stood up and quietly said, "He lives in Heaven."

"Is that correct, Johnnie?" the teacher asked a little boy in the back row.

"No, ma'am," said the boy. "He lives in the bathroom at our house."

"The bathroom?" asked the teacher incredulously.

Explained the boy, "Every morning my dad stands outside the door and shouts, 'My God, are you still in there?'"

* * * * *

A priest, a minister and a rabbit walk into a bar. The rabbit says, "I think I might be a typo."

* * * * *

50 Interesting Facts about North Dakota

By Karin Lehnardt, Senior Writer, *Fact Retriever*, published February 14, 2017

1. At 3.2%, North Dakota has the lowest unemployment rate in the United States.
2. The world's largest hamburger was eaten in Rutland, North Dakota. It weighed 3,591 pounds and more than 8,000 people were invited to the meal.
3. Most of the pasta in America is made from North Dakota durum wheat. Grand Forks holds a huge pasta party each year in honor of the crop.
4. In 2012, North Dakota was ranked as the best-run state in the country.
5. It's illegal to go dancing in Fargo with a hat on. It is even illegal to wear a hat at a party where other people are dancing. It is also illegal in North Dakota to take a nap with your shoes on. After 11 pm, it is illegal to set off fireworks at Devil's Lake in North Dakota.
6. The smallest city in North Dakota is Maza, with a population of 5 people. North Dakota does not have towns or villages. Each place is officially a city, no matter how small it is.
7. North Dakota is the least-visited state in America.
8. The state that grows the most sunflowers is North Dakota.
9. Lying just under the surface of western North Dakota is about 25 billion tons of lignite, enough to supply the region's coal needs for over 800 years.
10. Dakota is the Sioux word for "friend" or "ally."
11. Famous people from North Dakota include musician and bandleader Lawrence Welk, baseball legend Roger Maris, news reporter and commentator Eric Sevareid, author Louis L'Amour, singer Peggy Lee, actress Angie Dickenson, and actor Josh Duhamel.
12. In 2008, Fargo, North Dakota, hosted the largest pancake feed in the world.
13. In 1987, North Dakota passed a bill making English the official state language.
14. North Dakota is the only state in the country with a state-owned bank, the Bank of North Dakota. It also has a state-owned flour mill.
15. By 2000, 99.5% of North Dakota's original grassland had been turned into farms and ranches.
16. Huge herds of bison once roamed the plains of North Dakota. By 1900, fewer than 600 were left. President Roosevelt spearheaded efforts to save the bison, and today about 90,000 live in there. True buffalo are found only in Asia and Europe. Early European settlers thought bison looked like buffalo and, hence, confused the names.
17. Lewis and Clark spent more time in North Dakota than in any other place they visited on their expedition.
18. North Dakota holds the Guinness World Record for the most snow angels made simultaneously in one place. On February 17, 2007, 8,962 people made snow angels at the state capitol grounds. They beat the earlier record of 3,784 set at Michigan Technological University the previous year.
19. In 1995 the square dance became North Dakota's official American folk dance. Square dancing combines elements of various European dances, including the quadrille of France.
20. North Dakota farmland would cover over 12 million city blocks. Farmers there produce enough wheat each year to make 12.6 billion loaves of bread.
21. North Dakota ranchers produce enough beef to make 113 million hamburgers each year. There are approximately three times more cattle than people in North Dakota and Angus is the most popular variety.
22. North Dakota's state capitol is 242 feet high. It is the tallest building in North Dakota and the 3rd-tallest capitol in the country. The original capitol burned to the ground on December 28, 1930.
23. North Dakota produces enough canola oil every year to fill the state capitol's 19-story tower 19 times.
24. North Dakota is the 19th-largest state in the United States. However, it is the 3rd-least populous and the 4th-least densely populated state in the U.S.
25. North Dakota has the highest percentage of church-going population in the country. It also has more churches per capita than any other state.
26. North Dakota's Jamestown, also known as Buffalo City, houses the "World's Largest Buffalo." The statue is 26 feet tall, 46 feet long, and weighs 60 tons. A herd of bison graze below the statue, including a rare albino named Mahpiya Ska, Lakota for "White Cloud."
27. North Dakota became the 39th state in 1889. It was admitted the same day as South Dakota. Because both states wanted to be the first state admitted, President Benjamin Harrison shuffled both statehood papers and signed them without knowing which one was first. However, because North Dakota is alphabetically before South Dakota, its proclamation was published first.
28. Comedian Red Skelton once quipped that North Dakota is "the only place I've been where I didn't have to look up to see the sky."
29. Less than 1% of North Dakota is forest, the smallest amount of any state.
30. Rhode Island, the smallest state in the US, could fit inside North Dakota 46 times.
31. French Canadian explorer Pierre Gaultier de La Vérendrye led the first group of Europeans to explore what is now North Dakota.
32. North Dakota is the nation's 3rd-top sugar producer.
33. North Dakota is part of tornado alley.
34. Between 1950-2004, an average of 21 tornadoes a year hit North Dakota. In 1999 alone, 65 tornadoes ripped through the state. North Dakota's deadliest tornado had winds of more than 300 mph (483 kph) in 1957. It struck Fargo, killing 10 people and injuring 103.
35. In 1887, North Dakotan David Henderson Houston invented a camera. He named it by scrambling the first four letters of Dakota and adding a "K" to make Kodak. He later sold the rights of the Kodak camera to George Eastman.
36. North Dakota has had several nicknames, including Flickertail State, Roughrider State, and Peace Garden State.
37. Temperatures drop below 0° F on average of 65 days a year near the Canadian border and 35 days a year in the southwestern part of the state, making it one of the coldest states in the nation. The western parts of both Dakotas are also the windiest area of the United States.
38. Rugby, North Dakota, claims that it is the geographical center of North America. However, experts say the true center is closer to Balta, which is 15 miles southwest of Rugby.
39. Movies filmed in North Dakota including *Dakota* (1945) and the documentary *My Father's Garden* (1996). None of the scenes in the popular movie *Fargo* was filmed there. Additionally, the movie was loosely based on two true events that happened in Minnesota, not North Dakota. But the wood chipper used in the movie is now on display at the Fargo-Moorhead Visitor Center.

40. North Dakota is home to the largest state-owned sheep research center in the United States.
41. In 2012, North Dakota was the fastest-growing state in the United States. The growth was largely due to an oil boom in the Bakken fields in the western part of the state. The state became the 2nd-highest oil-producing state behind Texas. Despite its oil boom, agriculture or farming is still North Dakota's top industry.
42. North Dakota has more national wildlife refuges (62) than any other state.
43. North Dakota has long, harsh winters and short, hot summers. Both of its recorded weather extremes occurred in 1936: -60° F in February and 121° F in July.
44. One of the quirkiest sports in North Dakota is lawn mower racing. By the time mowers are customized, they can reach speeds of 60 mph, compared to the 5 mph they might do in the backyard.
45. The J.R. *Simplot* potato processing plant in Grand Forks, ND, produces over 400 million pounds of French fries per year. McDonald's is its main customers.
46. Quirky city and place names in North Dakota include Antler, Buttzville, Cannon Ball, Concrete, Flasher, Medicine Hole, On-a-Slant Village, Ops, Three V Crossing, and Zap.
47. The most popular tourist spot in North Dakota is the Wild West town of Medora, which was founded in 1883 by the Marquis de Mores, a French nobleman. According to the 2010 census, its population is 112 people.
48. North Dakota produces more honey than any other state.
49. A North Dakotan highway sculpture named "Geese in Flight" holds the Guinness World Record as the largest metal sculpture in the world. Erected in 2001, it is 156 feet long, 100 feet tall, and weighs 75 tons. Retired schoolteacher Gary Greff, who wanted to break up the tedium on the highway, constructed it.
50. "Geese in Flight" is now part of the "Enchanted Highway," a collection of the world's largest scrap metal sculptures constructed at intervals along a 32-mile stretch of two-lane highway in the SW part of the state. The road has no highway number, although its northern portion is 100 ½ Avenue SW. Greff conceived the project to counter the trend toward extinction of small towns such as Regent. Each sculpture has a developed pull-out and several have picnic shelters. Regent is a popular pheasant hunting area and wild game is abundant. In 2012, Greff opened a motel, The Enchanted Castle, in Regent, which continues the theme of the Enchanted Highway.

* * * * *

Black Bear—*Ursus americanus*

from the Minnesota Department of Natural resources

The black bear is the only species of bear in Minnesota. They are generally restricted to forested areas. They follow their noses and use their mental maps of the landscape to locate food sources, which are in a constant state of flux, from season to season and year to year. Black bears usually try to avoid people, but sometimes come in conflict with humans when they eat crops, destroy apiaries, or break into garbage cans and birdfeeders.

These bears are a large black (or sometimes brown) mammal with a large head, small eyes, erect ears, stout legs, and a very short tail. They have reasonable eyesight and hearing, and an exceptionally keen sense of smell (better than a dog).

Adults can be five to six feet long and vary in weight from 150 (small female) to 500 (large male) pounds.

Bears make huffing, snorting, and jaw-popping sounds when nervous or distressed, trying to repel intruders; cubs make humming sounds when nursing (an indication of being satisfied), and squealing when frightened or uncomfortable.

Black bears mate during May-July. The fertilized egg implants in November and the cubs are usually born in January, while the mother is denning. Newborn cubs do not hibernate, but the mother provides all their nourishment while she is hibernating. In Minnesota, litters are most often of three cubs (average 2.6), which by mid-March weigh five or six pounds. They leave the den usually in early April and remain with the mother for 17 months, hibernating with her when they are 1 year old.



They eat green vegetation in spring, turning to ants and ant pupae in June, a variety of berries in summer, and nuts (primarily acorns and hazelnuts) in autumn.

Predators are other bears, potentially wolves (while bears are hibernating), and people, who hunt bears for their meat and fur.

Bears live in forests, swamps, and other areas with dense cover, but they also venture into clearings to feed. They are found mainly in the northern third of Minnesota, but range as far south as the interface between the forest and agricultural zones, where they utilize corn and other crops for subsistence.

There are roughly 12,000-15,000 black bears in Minnesota. Sport hunting is their main source of mortality. Minnesota hunters harvest an average of about 3,000 black bears annually.

Bears often roam long distances in the fall, looking for food-rich areas (especially acorns) where they can fatten for winter. Although they all don't move in the same direction, travel together, or even go on such excursions every year, they typically return to their summer home range to den, so this "fall shuffle," as it is commonly called, is actually a true seasonal migration. Bears hibernate in their dens during winter, for as long as six or seven months, living off their stored body fat. During this time they do not eat, drink, urinate or defecate, but recycle body wastes and arouse in spring with little loss of muscle mass or strength.



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Easter says,
"You can put
Truth in a grave,
But it won't stay there."

Easter is a promise
God renews to us each spring.

Let every man and woman count himself immortal.
Let him catch the revelation of Jesus in his resurrection.

Let him say not merely, "Christ is Risen,"
but "I, too, shall rise."

May the promise of Easter
Fill your heart with peace and joy.

Happy Easter 2020!

