

# St. Pauli News in Detail



## Greeting and Ushering

May 2	Craig Torkelson
May 9	Wally Torkelson
May 16	Chad Torstveit
May 23	Val Torstveit
May 30	Myles Alberg

**Cleaning:** Clean prior to your Sunday to usher.

### Sunday Service:

- Light altar candles before service and put out flames after church.
- Act as Greeters and hand out bulletins.
- Usher for offering and communion.
- Tidy up pews after church to make it ready for the next Sunday's services.

**Altar Preparation:** Virginia Anderson

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## May Milestones

### Birthdays

May 3	Barb Smith
May 8	Inez Mathson
May 8	Shelley Mathson
May 15	Tammy Haugen
May 18	Becky Stickler
May 21	Virginia Anderson
May 28	Ivette Garrett



### Anniversaries:

May 7	Craig and Sally Torkelson
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## In-Person Worship Services

We are so happy to have in-person worship services once again that began on Easter Sunday. Masks are required and we have blocked off alternate pews to accommodate social distancing.

For Holy Communion, we use disposable bread and wine goblets and remains in our pews.

## 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration

Due to COVID-19, we were unable to celebrate St. Pauli's 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2020.

Will we be able to celebrate it this year?

The Church Council will make that decision at their May 20<sup>th</sup> meeting based on COVID guidelines.

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## New 2021 Handbooks!

Now that we are back to in-person gatherings (with restrictions), the 2021 Handbook is ready and hot off the press.

Please pick up your copy in your church mailbox.

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# Minutes of the Church Council

March 18, 2021

The St. Pauli Church Council met on March 18, 2021 at 7:00 PM at St. Pauli Church. Board members present: Virginia Anderson, Wade Benson, Craig Folkedahl and Pastor Carl Hansen.

The meeting was called to order by President Craig Folkedahl. Pastor Carl opened the meeting with prayer asking for wisdom and guidance for council members and for the leaders of our country.

Secretary's Report: M/S/C (Benson/Hansen) to approve the February 2021 Secretary's Report.

Treasurer's Report: M/S/C (Folkedahl/Anderson) to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented:

Total church balances at the end of February 2021 were \$134,670.00. Cemetery Association Funds at the end of February were \$58,469.31. Wade reminded the Council that a large portion of expenditures from the church funds was the fulfillment of our annual remittance of \$7,850.00 to the NW Minnesota Synod including ELCA Disaster Response.

Pastor Carl's Report: Pastor Carl will not be here on Sunday, May 16<sup>th</sup> as he will be traveling to Nebraska to attend his granddaughter's high school graduation. Council will need to find pulpit supply for that day.

Report of members in sickness or distress: N/A

New members or interest in membership: N/A

Reports:

- WELCA – there has been no activity
- Board of Education – N/A
- Other Reports – N/A

Old Business: Any progress on church and cemetery signs? Craig will contact Arlo as he was familiar with that project.

New Business:

- Discussion took place as to when we plan to open for Sunday church services. Suggestion followed that Easter Sunday would be a good date as most people, by this time, have been vaccinated. Council tabled the idea for

one week and will address it again via email and make a decision at that time. Proper guidelines will need to be followed upon opening. Pastor Carl will check with Trinity Church to obtain prefilled communion supplies for immediate use.

- An order was placed for a quantity of prefilled communion cups but will not come until shipment is available due to high demand at this time. The order was placed for an amount to carry us through an extended period of time should we need to follow guidelines for a safe way to distribute communion.
- Council decided to address the possibility of having the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration this summer at the April council meeting.

The meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Motion to adjourn M/S/C (Benson/Hansen)

Virginia Anderson

St. Pauli Church Council Secretary

## St. Pauli Treasurer's Monthly Report: March 2021

Checking Acct. Balance End of Feb 2021	\$5,994.56
Mar 2021 Revenue:	\$2,740.00
Mar 2021 Expenses:	(\$2,747.60)
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Checking Acct. Balance End of Mar 2021:	\$5,986.96
Other Account Balances End of Mar 2021:	
Education Fund	\$1,100.40
Edward Jones	\$75,082.47
Memorial Fund	\$13,635.75
Mission Grant	\$4,434.01
Savings	\$36,573.90
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<b>Total Account Balances End of Mar 2021</b>	<b>\$134,813.49</b>
Cemetery Assoc. Balance End of Mar 2021:	\$59,150.23

# Minutes of the Cemetery Association

March 18, 2021

The St. Pauli Church council met on Thursday night, March 18<sup>th</sup> at the church for the Cemetery Association meeting. Council members present: Virginia Anderson, Wade Benson, Craig Folkedahl and Pastor Carl Hansen.

Meeting was called to order by President Craig Folkedahl.

Approval of Agenda - No formal Agenda was presented

Secretary's Report - No previous report was available at this time, may be due to the change in secretary's position.

Treasurer's Report – M/S/C (Anderson/Hansen) Transaction was made by Wade to transfer cemetery association funds held by Edward Jones into the Franklin MN Tax Free Fund .

Old Business

- Signs for Church Cemetery – Craig will contact Arlo because he was working on that project.

New Business

- Subject of the very old, damaged pine tree at the church cemetery was again brought up from the last cemetery council meeting. It is a hazard to the high line wires to the south and to the good oak tree to the north as well as gravestones should it blow down. Removal would improve the overall appearance of the cemetery. Virginia will contact REA to see if they would take it down.
- Cemetery mowing was brought up. Danita Torkelson has been faithfully mowing the past years. Council will bring it up again at the April meeting and ask if she is interested in mowing for another year.

Motion to adjourn meeting. M/S/C (Benson/Folkedahl)

Virginia Anderson

St. Pauli Church Secretary

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## THE TOUCH OF THEIR HANDS

By Laurie Kay Sommers, *Currents*, Winter 2020

Imagine a pioneer church on the prairie, its steeple a beacon for miles around. Or a church serving workers in the iron and copper mining regions of the Upper Midwest. The exterior is clad in wood or sheathed with local brick or stone,

constructed by local craftsmen who are church members. The bell summons the congregation to services that bind them with ties of faith, ethnicity, and community. The building is a place for worship and socializing, but it is also something more.

Churches are places where communities invest precious resources in decorative arts. They express local aesthetics and heritage through textiles, paint, glass, wood, stone, and metal.

In historic Norwegian-American churches, decorative arts and artisanship typically reflect a mix of sources. Congregations often used professional artists and architects. They purchased mass-produced items like pews, altars, pulpits, light fixtures, and stained glass from the catalogs of companies catering to churches. But they also used local folk artists and craftspeople whose work more directly expressed longstanding community ideas of what was useful, appropriate, and pleasing.

Folk artists and artisans created work that was familiar rather than groundbreaking. They used cherished, time-tested forms and motifs, some with roots in Norway and others from America. The skills they shared with their congregations were learned informally by trial and error; by imitating examples created by friends, neighbors, or family members; through apprenticeships; or at a folk school that was part of the Romantic Nationalism sweeping 19<sup>th</sup>-century Norway. These artists donated their talents or received pay from church members to create something both beautiful and functional. Perhaps most important, their work reflected the touch of their hands.

(The article goes on to examine the folk artisanship found in four historic Norwegian-American churches, but only two will be included here: Old Muskego and Bethania.)



Osten Pladson poses with his foot-treadle scroll saw and altar for Bethania Lutheran, circa 1903. The Bethania frame church was originally in Northwood, ND and is now at the Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum in Decorah, IA.

## Old Muskego Church

(Originally at Wind Lake, WI; now at Luther Seminary, St. Paul)

“Folk architecture” describes building types and designs that emerge from a particular geographic or cultural region and use local materials. The designs and methods are transmitted by observation, imitation, and practice. Few Norwegian-American folk churches still exist. One notable exception is Old Muskego, a rare example of traditional Norwegian log construction and woodworking.

Old Muskego dates to 1843-44, not long after the first groups of Norwegians arrived in Wisconsin Territory. Those involved in its simple two-story log construction – more like a gabled-roof house than a church – used familiar hewn log techniques (*laftet tømmer*) learned from erecting farm outbuildings and homes in the Old Country. Of note are the extended log ends at the corners—a Norwegian characteristic—and the so-called *meddrag*, the practice of scribing or grooving logs longitudinally so that they fit tightly together without mortar.



**Example of a log building with Norwegian-style extended log ends at the corners. Scandinavians brought log building with them to America and used horizontal logs. French colonists who settled in the Mississippi Valley in the 18th century used vertical-log construction. French Canadians also built upright-log structures along fur trade routes in the St. Croix River Valley.**

The master craftsman supervising Muskego’s construction was likely Halvor Nelson Lohner, a native of Telemark. The immigrant farmers of early Norwegian-American communities knew how to make tools, cabinets, and other utilitarian objects. Those with special expertise—such as Lohner—took leadership roles.

The sanctuary also replicated Norwegian tradition. What we see today is a reconstruction from 1904, when the old log church was moved to its present site in St. Paul. The combined altar-pulpit is particularly striking. As Kristin Anderson notes in “Altars in the Norwegian-American Church,” altar-pulpits originated in 18<sup>th</sup>-century Germany and spread to Scandinavia. The Old Muskego altar (right) is a vernacular interpretation of the Empire style of cabinetry then popular in Norway, with clean lines, solid massing, turned corners, and smooth finish. The barrel-shaped pulpit, with vertical boards in contrast to the horizontal ones found elsewhere in the sanctuary suggests the craftsmanship of a cooper.

Old Muskego was a sacred space that would have felt familiar, functional, and pleasing to immigrant worshippers on the Wisconsin frontier. Newly arrived, they had yet to incorporate influences from America.



The reconstructed altar-pulpit at Old Muskego.

## Bethania Lutheran Church

(Originally in Northwood, ND; now at Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum, Decorah, IA)

This vernacular frame church (1900-03) is not a folk design but rather a local builder’s interpretation of the then-popular Gothic Revival Style. Architecturally, little distinguishes it from countless Norwegian heritage churches across the Midwest. What sets Bethania apart is the remarkable carved altar by the prolific Norwegian-American carver, Osten Pladson (1846-1914). A native of Nes, Hallingdal, Norway, who emigrated in 1868, Pladson was a carpenter and cabinetmaker of exceptional skill. He designed churches and built the furnishings for as many as 65 churches in parts of Minnesota, Iowa, and the Red River Valley, according to his biographers.

Some of the best examples of Norwegian-American religious folk art involve carved pulpits, altars, and altarpieces. The *Norwegian-American Wood Carving of the Upper Midwest* exhibition catalog is still the best single source on these works. As the authors note, the most distinctively Norwegian style of altar carving comes from the acanthus tradition, a type of folk carving adapted from the Baroque acanthus. It features variations of relief-carved scrolled acanthus leaves and palmetto. Acanthus carving originated in Gudbrandsdalen and spread throughout the country. (Note: Acanthus feature prominently in some styles of rosemaling as well.) Norwegian-American carvers used their creativity to make decorative pieces for churches and homes based on memories of acanthus carving in Norway. Pladson was among the most creative, using “turned work, bandsaw work, moldings, and fretwork” to produce what the authors describe as “the Byzantine opulence of [his] church interiors.”

Pladson's crowning achievement was the altar frame and railing he built in 1904 for Bethania Lutheran. Here, acanthus motifs appear in the fanciful finials and in the side panels. His artistry and woodworking process are illustrated in the remarkable photo that shows Pladson with the treadle-powered scroll saw that he used to shape his masterpiece. Although he imaginatively created his own variant of acanthus motifs, the Bethania congregation would have recognized and understood his use of this Norwegian folk tradition.

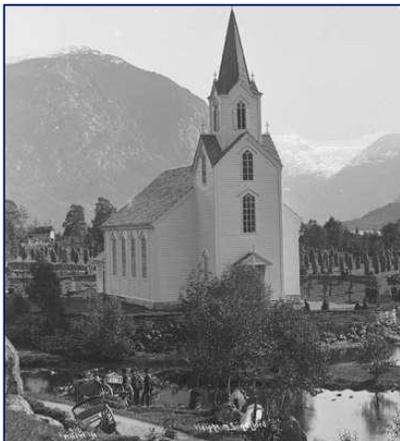
Many churches lack records on the artisans who built their beautiful furnishings, but at the time of construction those craftspeople were known and valued members of the community. Their work appealed to their neighbors and fellow worshippers. It was meaningful, and remains so today, because of its human touch and local connection.

*Laurie Kay Sommers is an independent consultant in folklore and historic preservation and was project manager for the Preserving Nordic American Churches Project.*

**Editor's Note:**  
This article from NAHA (Norwegian-American Historical Association) causes us to pause and reflect on our own beautiful St. Pauli Church and the craftsmen who built it and created its beautiful furnishings.



**Bethania Lutheran Church.**  
Its altar is in the photo below.



**Helgheim Church in Sonnfjord, Norway**

An example of church styles being built in Norway around the time that St. Pauli immigrants came to America. You can see the influence on our church's construction.

The earliest existing historical records of the Helgheim church date back to the year 1322, but the church was not new at that time. The original Helgheim Church was likely a stave church. The medieval church was torn down during the first half of the 1600s and replaced with a timber-framed church. In 1876, construction of a new church began beside the old church (and slightly overlapping the footprint of the old building). The old church was torn down as the construction progressed. The new church (above) was consecrated in 1877.



**Early photo of St. Pauli Church**  
It is remarkably similar to Bethania.



INSPIRED BY ACANTHUS CARVING, OSTEN PLADSON USED HIS SCROLL SAW AND BAND SAW TO PRODUCE "THE BYZANTINE OPULENCE" OF HIS CHURCH INTERIORS.



**For more on Nordic churches**

Launched in 2017, the Preserving Nordic-American Churches project has catalogued the history, architecture and decorative arts of more than 2,000 historic churches, including 430 of Norwegian heritage, in six Midwestern states.

Search the database of churches at [nordicamericanchurches.org](http://nordicamericanchurches.org) to view details and images.

Note: Your editor was dismayed to find very, very few NW Minnesota churches included in the database, so she posted St. Pauli's photo and info after reading this article.

National Book Award winner Mary Szybist, lost her father to Covid-19 on February 3, 2021. Her poem appears below.

### At the Vaccination

When the needle went into my arm I swear  
the light went cool – the shadows  
of the orange cones mazing the parking lot  
deepened – and the ghosts in my throat rushed  
closer to my blown-down heart.

I was not going to die like my father,  
said the needle, stitching me to my life.  
I kept replaying it, the virus in him –  
my mind like the screen on which I watched  
its cruel slowness.

In my rearview, a line of cars,  
longer than I could see.  
Here I am, I thought, becoming someone  
*seeable* again, someone safe for someone else  
to see again.

I lifted my face toward the sun,  
closed my eyes until I could see  
the wavelets behind my eyelids  
begin to move again.  
I don't know how to multiply that prayer.

\* \* \* \* \*

### Princess Märtha risks it all to defend Norway in new drama

Norway's royal family thought that neutrality would protect their nation from hostile takeover, but they were caught unawares when the Germans invaded in 1940. A new historical dramatization, *Atlantic Crossing*, recently debuted on NRK, Norway's National Broadcasting Corporation.

The epic Norwegian-American production finds Crown Princess Märtha (played by Sofia Helin of *The Bridge*) and her three children fleeing Norway to find political refuge in the White House. Märtha forges a close friendship with Franklin Delano Roosevelt (played by Emmy-nominated Kyle MacLachlan of *Twin Peaks*) and helps steer Norway's destiny.

Not content to settle for her own safety while her country is under occupation, the glamorous and politically-savvy princess delivers stateside speeches against the Nazis and charms FDR, enlisting his reluctant support on behalf of Norway and eventually Europe. Both Eleanor Roosevelt (Harriet Sansom Harris) and Crown Prince Olav (Tobias Santelmann) are tested as they witness FDR's affection for Märtha and the influence she wields with him.

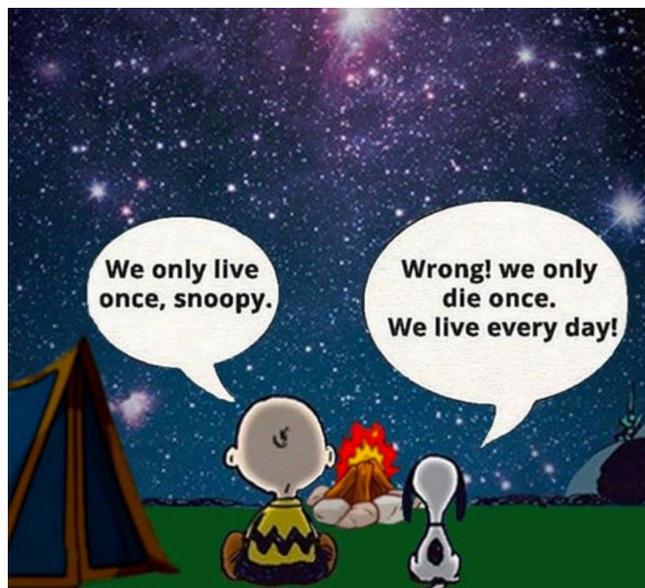
Screenwriter Alexander Eik said that when he first learned of the little-known friendship between FDR and the Crown Princess, he thought the series could offer a fresh perspective on World War II. Set in the US, UK and Norway, the show takes viewers on a voyage across the Atlantic and back with the royals, offering a chance to view key historical figures portrayed as real people. Shot in Norwegian, English and Swedish, the film has the highest-ever budget of any Scandinavian TV series.

Sofia Helin said that she prepared for her role by studying Norwegian for over a year. As there was limited archival footage of the Swedish-born princess' expressions and body language, Helin trained on royal manners and comportment at the palace in Stockholm.



PBS Masterpiece has picked up the 8-hour series for US release in Spring 2021. *Atlantic Crossing* will appeal to fans of historical dramas.

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## P. T. Barnum

Part 2 of a three-part series on Jenny Lind and P.T. Barnum

On the other side of the world from Jenny Lind, Phineas Taylor Barnum (1810–91), the self-proclaimed “Prince of Humbug,” used his talents for publicity, investment, excitement, and a feel for the uncanny to entertain the public.

A childhood of farming, shopkeeping, trickery, and creativity had prepared him for a future of entrepreneurial showmanship. One example of shrewd dealings as a store clerk at age fifteen had Barnum trading some unsalable store items for a peddler’s wagonload of green bottles, and then advertising a lottery game in which there would be 500 winners for the 1000 tickets sold. Long story short, he ended up with zero of those unwanted green bottles, which were awarded as prizes, and he got rid of those unsalable store items, ending up with plenty of money collected from the lottery tickets.

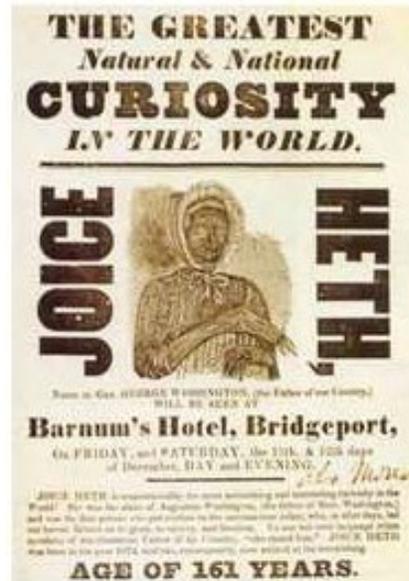
He explained that “my disposition is and ever was, of a speculative character, and I am never content to engage in any business unless it is of such a nature that my profits may be greatly enhanced by an increase of energy.”

Barnum mused about his self-descriptive term, the “Prince of Humbug,” and stated the following: “Webster says that humbug, as a noun, is an ‘imposition under fair pretenses’; and as a verb, it is ‘to deceive: to impose on.’ With all due deference to Doctor Webster, I submit that, according to present usage, this is not the only, nor even the generally accepted, definition of that term.”

Barnum gave examples of this train of thought, contrasting evil forging, pickpocketing, swindling, and cheating with good-natured spoofing and trickery. He justified his activities by saying that “I don’t believe in ‘duping the public,’ but I believe in first attracting and then pleasing them.”

He defended his “humbugging” by pointing to audience satisfaction and their entertainment at being humbugged. Any publicity was better than none. A ticket seller for one venture said: “First he humbugs them, and then they pay to hear him explain how he did it. I believe if he should swindle a man out of twenty dollars, the man would give him a quarter to hear him tell about it.” He proudly proclaimed himself as the Prince of Humbug and became so well known that in 1851, H. L. Stephens even painted a caricature of him as a literal bug, an insect.

Barnum’s career was astounding. His activities have influenced cultural norms in the two centuries since his birth. He revolutionized popular culture through his museum and as an impresario through his efforts in publicity, marketing, and showmanship, all of which is unsurpassed to this day.



At left: Joice Heth, the 161-year-old Slave Nurse of George Washington (PT Barnum Images 2019)

Barnum first gained attention with traveling exhibits through the unsavory use of Joice Heth, an enslaved African-American woman. He rented her from a Kentucky friend who owned her and was “trumpeting her around Philadelphia as the 161-year-old former nurse of George Washington.”

In 1835, Barnum successfully displayed Heth at Niblo’s Garden in New York City and then took her on a profitable tour all over the east. He found the public eager to see and meet this “freakishly old woman.” He remarked how he “taught Joyce a few anecdotes of Washington as a boy . . . which Joyce became quite perfect in, after some good drilling.”

When Heth died two years later, Barnum thought of yet another money-making scheme: he sold tickets to 1,500 spectators at fifty cents per ticket (\$15 in 2019) to witness her autopsy performed in the New York Saloon. Her age of 161 proved to be a grand hoax, as the autopsy revealed that she was “seventy five, or at the utmost, eighty years of age!” Far from ruining Barnum’s career when he was caught in such an egregious lie, he gained notoriety that propelled him into additional—as well as profitable—humbuggery.



Barnum’s American Museum, New York City (P. T. Barnum Images 2019)

A few years later, Barnum purchased the Scudder Museum after its owner died. It housed various specimens, such as an American bison, an 18-foot snake, a lamb with two-heads, miscellaneous curiosities, and the first American flag hoisted over New York City on the day the British departed. Barnum opened his new purchase as the American Museum on January 1, 1842 at a ticket price of twenty-five cents per visitor [\$7.75 in 2019].

In addition to the exhibits already there, he expanded his offerings to include more attractions, such as Chang and Eng the Siamese Twins, a Bearded Lady, a three-legged man, and the Fejee Mermaid (humbug—a bogus combination of two stuffed specimens).

Appalling as this would seem in the twenty-first century, Barnum's marketing in his popular freak shows of people born with abnormalities was highly successful. Indeed, these people voluntarily agreed to be displayed, were paid for doing so, and some even became wealthy. The Museum also provided natural history exhibits, social history, drama and more. It was a respectable venue to a wide range of social classes.



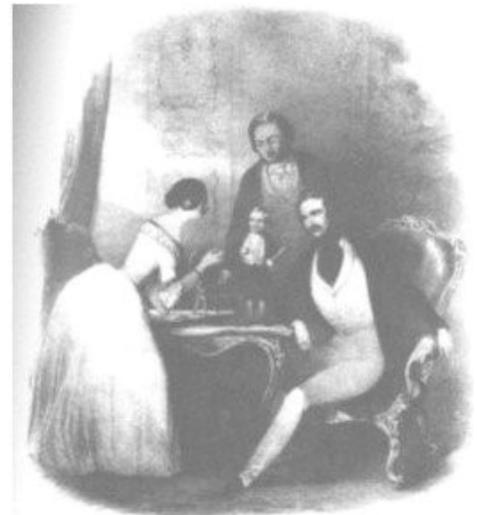
*Siamese Twins, Bearded Lady, Three-legged Man, Fejee Mermaid (PT Barnum Images 2019)*

The same year in which Barnum opened the American Museum, he noted that he had heard of “a remarkably small child in Bridgeport, CT . . . .” Barnum goes on to say that he “was the smallest child I ever saw that could walk alone. He was not two feet in height and weighed less than sixteen pounds. He was a bright-eyed little fellow, with light hair and ruddy cheeks, and was perfectly healthy.” This small child was Charles Stratton. Barnum discovered him at age five, renamed him General Tom Thumb, and paid his parents \$3 per week to be on display at the American Museum. By the time Tom Thumb reached the age of fourteen, Barnum was paying him \$10,400 per year (approx. \$350,000 in 2019).

Tom Thumb captivated audiences by singing assorted songs, such as “Yankee Doodle Dandy,” in his high, clear voice, posing as Napoleon or Cain or a Scottish Highlander, and performing a hornpipe dance or a blackface routine. He was enormously popular. Barnum began to wonder about the amusement prospects in London and ventured in 1844 to Europe with Tom Thumb in tow, along with his parents, a tutor, and others.

In Europe, General Tom Thumb performed for dignitaries the likes of whom Barnum had never met before. He describes one visit: “Last night the Baroness Rothschild sent her carriage for us. We spent two hours in her mansion, which eclipses everything in the shape of luxury that I have ever seen. Some twenty lords and ladies were present, and on taking our leave an elegant purse, containing twenty sovereigns [\$2,500 in 2019], was quietly slipped into my hands. . . good evidence of the high favor in which Tom Thumb stands in London among the nobility.” And a bit later he states: “I have been twice with Tom Thumb before Queen Victoria, at Buckingham Palace, . . . have exhibited the General to the Queen of Belgians, Prince Albert, the Duchess of Kent, the Prince of Wales, the young Princess Royal, the Duke of Wellington, and thousands of nobility.” Through these visits he became enthralled with a segment of society not present in America.

*Tom Thumb Performing for Queen Victoria and Prince Albert*



Barnum also visited Paris to see the Grand Exposition, the gigantic fair on the Champs-Élysées taking place once every five years. Thrilled by the exposition, he later made subsequent trips to Europe to collect curiosities for his American Museum and to ponder new exhibits. A significant impression for him was that “a New Yorker soon begins to look upon Gotham [New York City] as a little village.”

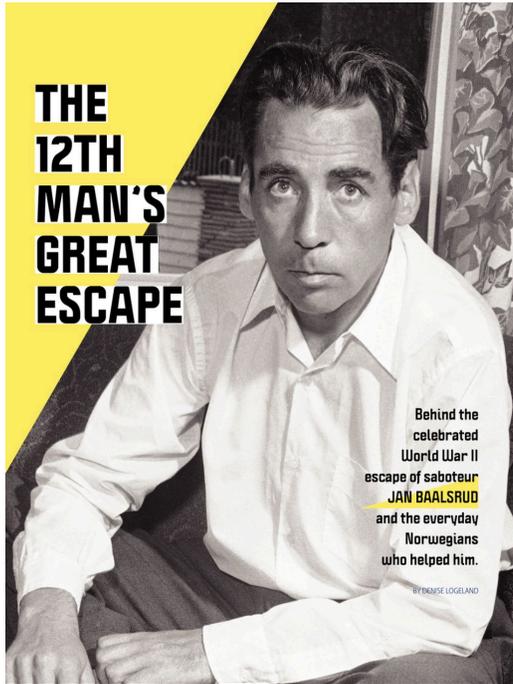
Following several visits to Europe and quite a few successful years at the American Museum, Barnum decided to build himself a luxurious mansion he dubbed “Iranistan” in Bridgeport, CT. He purposely built it close enough to the railroad tracks so that everybody could see it on the way to New York City.

After two years of construction, Barnum opened it to the public on November 14, 1848. It contained his family's living quarters and, more importantly, presented to the public a mansion the likes of which had never before been seen in America. Its design was inspired by King George IV's oriental-themed Royal Pavilion at Brighton. Hence it is no surprise that it was given its exotic-sounding name.

Iranistan would prove significant in Barnum's later negotiations with Jenny Lind to bring her to the US. She commented to Barnum on a letter from his agent written upon a sheet headed with a beautiful engraving of Iranistan: “It attracted my attention. I said to myself, a gentleman who has been so successful in his business as to be able to build and reside in such a palace cannot be a mere ‘adventurer.’ So I wrote to your agent, and consented to an interview, which I should have declined, if I had not seen the picture of Iranistan!”



*Iranistan (PT Barnum Images 2019)*



Oslo 1955. Jan Baalsrud (pictured left) stands with four of the Norwegians who helped save his life during World War II: Are Armandus Lillevoll, Olaf Lanes, Alvin Larsen and Marius Gronvöll. Baalsrud survived thanks to people who transported and nursed him during his two-month journey to freedom.

From the Sons of Norway *Viking* magazine, July 2019

**Editor's Note:** Norway is divided into administrative regions, similar to our counties, called *fylke*. Troms is a fylke in very northern Norway and should not be confused with Tromsø, which is a city in the Troms fylke.

**Tore Haug met his famous war hero relative just once.**

It was 1956. Haug was about 14, and Jan Baalsrud, his second cousin, had come to town to give a talk.

"We expected, of course, that he would talk about his escape from the Gestapo," Haug says. Instead, he recounted an earlier journey: his six-month trek eastward from Norway to Scotland, where he joined up with Kompani Linge in 1941. The Norwegian military unit trained in Scotland under the British Special Operations Executive (SOE), which prepared soldiers for sabotage operations in German-occupied Europe.

But in March 1943, on a mission in Troms in northern Norway, he met even greater adversaries than German soldiers. In the epic ordeal that would make him famous, he fought brutal cold, punishing terrain, and the longest of odds to survive. He was at times snowblind, and after weeks on the run, emaciated. To keep gangrene from spreading beyond his frozen feet and killing him, he used his knife to amputate nine of his own toes.

That wasn't what he came to discuss, however, that day in 1950s Eidsvoll. So Haug could only take note of what he saw.

"I noticed he was a slim, very good-looking man with black hair, but he walked a little strange."

**In Search of the Real Story**

Baalsrud was never eager to describe himself as a hero. He died in 1988, and the stone at his modest gravesite in Manndalen in Troms gives "thanks to everyone who helped me to freedom in 1943." His ashes are buried where he wanted them – in the grave of Aslak Aslaksen Fossvoll, one of his rescuers.

But others have told the story of how Baalsrud escaped when his mission in Troms was found out by the enemy. Most famous among

them was David Howarth, the British SOE veteran and BBC journalist who wrote "We Die Alone" in 1955. More recently was Harald Zwart, director of the 2017 film "The 12th Man." That film was based on Haug's own retelling of his second cousin's escape, a book bearing the same title, which he published in collaboration with the late Astrid Karlsen Scott as translator and co-author.

What set his work in motion, Haug says, was an older film. Like many Norwegians, Haug watched "Ni Liv" ("Nine Lives") when it aired for the umpteenth time on Norwegian television in 1995, marking the 50th anniversary of World War II's end. Released in 1957, "Ni Liv" has become a classic in Norway and is largely based on Howarth's book. Though Haug had seen and read the story many times, he found himself wanting to know more. So, with his family, he made a trip to

Troms to visit the sites and the surviving witnesses along Baalsrud's escape route.

"They told me a quite different story from what I had read in 'We Die Alone,'" Haug says. Resentment had lingered in northern Norway over help that the British hadn't provided late in the war. Locals didn't want to share what they knew with Howarth, the Brit who showed up a few years later with his hat and his briefcase and his questions, one man told Haug. He added, "I wish someone would write the true story."

Over a period of six years and more than 20 trips back



to Troms from his home in Jessheim (near Oslo), Haug interviewed witnesses and gathered the story of what happened during Operation Martin.

### **A Phone Call from Bromnes**

The operation began when Baalsrud and 11 other men crossed from Scotland on a fishing boat, the *Brattholm*, and sailed into Toftefjord at the end of March 1943. They would deliver explosives and radio equipment for resistance leaders, and work to organize and support members of the resistance in northern Norway.

Howarth's book and other narratives say that Operation Martin's goal was to blow up the airport at Bardufoss. But Olav Bogen, a historian and senior staff member at Norway's Resistance Museum in Oslo, says that's not the case.

"It was originally planned as a sabotage mission, but then it changed," Bogen says. "The building up of the resistance was more important." In fact, the instructions for Operation Martin, dated March 20, say nothing about Bardufoss, and talk only about equipping people who wanted to form a guerrilla organization for action against the enemy.

The Martin operatives went to the general store at Bromnes, whose owner they knew to be trustworthy. They realized too late that they had revealed their presence to the wrong person – the store owner had died. The man who had taken his place was too anxious and unsure if his visitors were really the Norwegian fighters they said they were; maybe they were German sympathizers testing his loyalties. He called the sheriff after they left and reported the unfamiliar boat and crew anchored on Toftefjord. The next day, a German patrol boat closed in on the *Brattholm*.

To leave no evidence of their mission, the men on the fishing boat lit a seven-minute fuse, pushed away in lifeboats, and rowed for shore as the *Brattholm* detonated. German gunfire and small boats followed them. For 11 of the men, it was the end: one was shot dead on the beach, two died from torture while in German custody at a Tromsø hospital, and eight more were captured, interrogated and tortured in Gestapo headquarters in Tromsø, then shot and pushed into a mass grave.

Baalsrud alone, the 12<sup>th</sup> man, escaped. He'd been shot in the leg. He was missing a boot. And he would be on the run for two months, trying to reach neutral Sweden.

### **No One Said No**

Baalsrud knew his presence would endanger others – the Germans declared aid to the enemy a crime punishable by death – so he avoided homes and people as much as he could, knocking on doors only when he thought he would succumb to cold or hunger. He swam in icy waters, his uniform freezing into a hard shell on his body afterward. He scaled mountains and was buried up to his neck in an avalanche. He sheltered for days in a small crevasse and for weeks in a hole in the snow under a boulder.

In interviews years later, he called the people of Troms the real heroes. When he did ask them for help, no one ever said no.

One family gave him a boot for his bare foot and bandaged his wound. Some cooked him a hot meal. They offered hiding places in lofts and outbuildings. They rowed him across the fjord in the dark of night and skied for days to arrange the help he needed. As he grew weaker, he had to rely on a network of volunteers to pull him on a sledge and deliver food to the remote spots where they had stashed him. A group of Sami took him on the final leg of his journey into Sweden for refuge and medical care.

"My main message in writing the book was to put forward his helpers, these 81 helpers that were direct in connection with Jan," Haug says. "That was also not of Jan's wishes before he died."

Haug says being a history and script consultant for the movie had its pros and cons: gala screenings in Norway and Los Angeles on the one hand, but on the other, some fictionalizing of the story to create dramatic tension. "I had worked six years to get the truth, all the details, and then to throw some of them overboard was a kind of fig for me," he confesses.

The Hollywood treatment of Baalsrud's story calls to mind a film about another mission carried out by Kompani Linge soldiers. But "The Heroes of Telemark" ultimately succeeded in their efforts. Their sabotage of heavy water supplies at Tinnstjø crippled the Germans' nuclear weapons program. Ironically, it's the failure of Operation Martin that became legendary for what it revealed.

Baalsrud had "remarkable survival skills and will to survive," Bogen says. That's central to the story, but so is the help he received. The legend is "his personal character, but also that of the people in the north who helped him."

**Snorre Lodge of Sons of Norway was hoping to show the Norwegian film "The 12<sup>th</sup> Man" this year during Nordic Fest in May, but it is also available on Netflix.**

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.

# A WILD JOURNEY

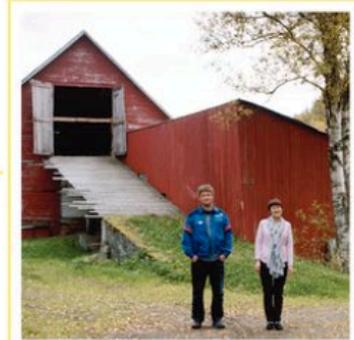
In the spring of 1943, Jan Baalsrud made a perilous nine-week journey through occupied Norway to freedom. He swam icy fjords, was buried in an avalanche and amputated his toes. Many local villagers risked their lives to save him along the way.



**1** On March 29, 1943, the *MS Bratholm* is attacked by a German warship in Toftefjord bay. Of the 12 men, only one, Jan Baalsrud, gets away.

**2** Hunted by Germans, Baalsrud is shot in the leg and finds cover in a gully. He dives into the icy water and swims to two other islands. Two girls walking along the beach rescue him.

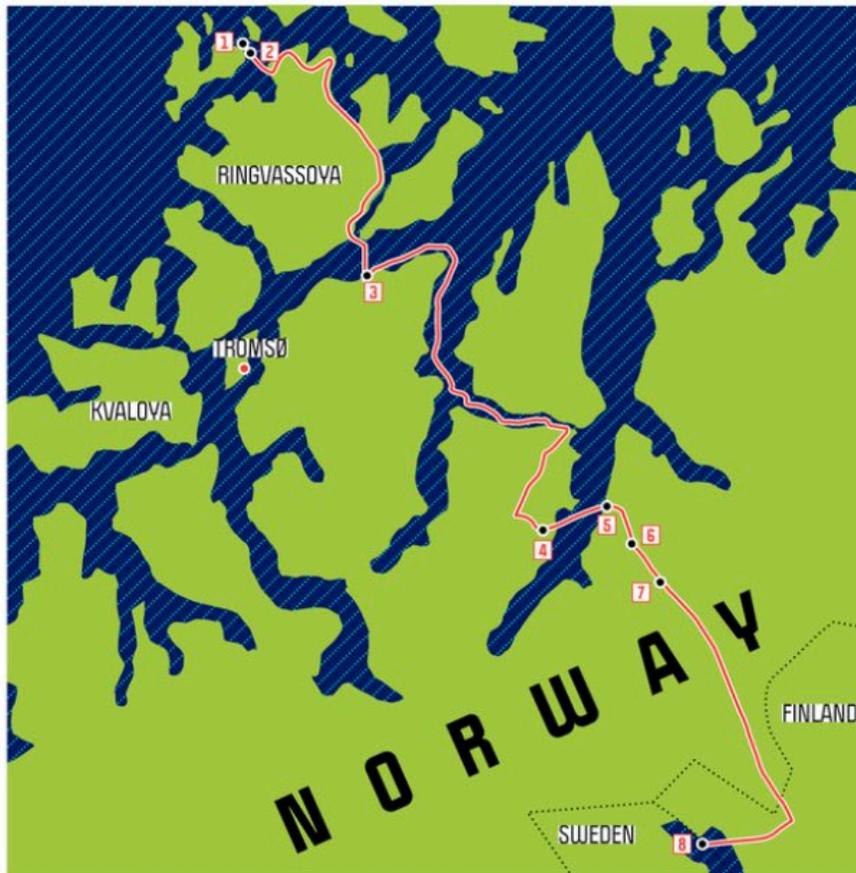
**3** He's helped to one of the larger islands 10 miles away and attempts to ski toward the Swedish border. German soldiers shoot at him. A blizzard hits, and Baalsrud suffers snowblindness. He tumbles down a mountain slope and an avalanche occurs.



**4** In the village of Furufaten, Baalsrud stumbles into the home of the Gronvøll family. He hides in their barn for four days to recuperate. The frostbite is so intense that Baalsrud can't walk on his own.



**5** Marius Gronvøll and a few other locals put Baalsrud on a stretcher to sneak him past the Germans into a rowboat and take him across the fjord. But the terrain is too steep. Baalsrud hides in a small shed until the others can return. Alone with gangrene eating at his leg, Baalsrud amputates several of his frostbitten toes with his pocket knife.



**8** A group of Sámi with reindeer sleds take Baalsrud across the border to Sweden. He weighs just 80 pounds. A Red Cross seaplane flies him to Boden. After several months in the hospital, he returns to England.

**7** A team of helpers find Baalsrud and take him farther south into the Skaidijonni Valley where he spends 17 days in a cave awaiting transport across the Swedish border. He amputates more of his toes.

**6** Unable to walk, Gronvøll and three men haul Baalsrud up a mountain on a sled in the middle of a storm. They set up a shelter for him and leave to find more help. Due to bad weather, they don't return for 10 days.



# NOVELIST EXTRAORDINAIRE

*As one of the best-known Norwegian authors of the 1900s, Sigrid Undset made her mark on the literary world with her powerful storytelling, which spanned a variety of settings and time periods. Here's a look at the life and legacy of this Nobel prize-winning author.*

By Christine Johnson, *Viking Magazine*, March 2021

Sigrid Undset was born on March 20, 1882, in Kalundborg, Denmark. She was the first child of Ingvald, an internationally respected archaeologist and history scholar, and Charlotte, a multilingual woman well-versed in Norse and European cultures.



When Undset was two years old, she and her family moved to Kristiania (renamed Oslo in 1925), Norway. Her father's health was deteriorating from what today is believed to have been multiple sclerosis, and he was forced to cease his scientific explorations in Europe. He took a job at the Museum of Antiquities at

the University of Kristiania, and Undset was sent to school to gain a quality education. She relished any opportunity to learn from her parents, especially Ingvald, who taught her about archaeology, history, the Norse sagas, and Scandinavian folk music.

When she was 11, her father died at age 40. Undset's mother took care of her and her two younger sisters, and times were difficult. The plan had always been for Undset to enroll in university, but that was no longer an option.

Instead, Undset took a one-year secretarial course, and was hired by an engineering company when she was 16. She disliked being a secretary but continued with it for 10 years. The job not only helped bring in money for the family, but also it taught her to be a skilled organizer and typist.

## A Budding Author

As an escape from the doldrums of work, Undset made time for herself during nights and weekends. She devoured books on Nordic and foreign literature, and read anything she could from authors like William Shakespeare, Geoffrey Chaucer, Henrik Ibsen and Jane Austen. Undset knew from a young age that she was destined to be an author, and she began penning her first novel at age 16. It was a historic story set in Denmark's Middle Ages, but she struggled with the subject matter and labored on it for years.

At age 22, she finally had a completed manuscript in hand. The voluminous piece was submitted to a publishing house and, crushingly, rejected. But Undset pressed on. Two years later, she wrapped up a second manuscript, this one much shorter at just 80 pages. Again, the work was rebuffed by the publisher.

A peer spoke up on her behalf, however, and in 1907 the manuscript was ultimately accepted. At age 25, Undset

officially made her literary debut, with a realistic story about a woman in contemporary Norway. The novel, "Fru Marta Oulie," (Marta Oulie) was scandalous for its themes of adultery and betrayal.

A buzz started to build. In 1908, she published "Den Lykkelige Alder" (The Happy Age). Undset's star slowly rose, and in Norway she was viewed as an up-and-coming young author. She published several other novels set in the same era as "Fru Marta Oulie."

While the decade she'd spent toiling as a secretary had been challenging, it had also given her a gift: She now had insight into the loneliness of ordinary, working-class people living a melancholy existence and struggling to find affection and love.

From the outset, Undset's book sales were impressive. By the time her third book had been published, she'd left her office job and set out to live on the earnings she made as an author.

She was granted a writer's scholarship and embarked on an extensive trip through Europe. She made quick visits to Denmark and Germany, and in 1909 she stayed in Rome for nine months. It was there she met Norwegian painter Anders Castus Svarstad, and the two began a relationship.

## Love and Writing

In 1911, at age 29, Undset wrapped up "Jenny," which many consider her breakthrough novel. A year later, her whirlwind romance with the 39-year-old Svarstad was capped off with a wedding. It wasn't exactly a smooth transition, however, because her new husband already had a wife and three children in Norway. (It took almost three years for Svarstad to obtain a divorce.)

Despite this snarl, the newlyweds traveled to London and



stayed for several months while Svarstad painted and Undset dove into the world of English art and literature. The couple eventually returned to Romve, and in 1913 their first child, a boy, was born.

In 1914 Undset released "Vaaren" (Spring). Like "Fru Marta Oulie" and "Jenny," it told a tale of a woman dealing with romantic entanglements while subsequently fighting for independence. In 1917, she released "Splinten Av Troldspeilet" (Images in a Mirror).

In 1915, Undset gave birth to a baby girl. That made for five children in the house, since the three from Svarstad's first marriage lived with them, too. Undset had the challenging task of looking after the children while also trying to find time to write. During the next several years, she delved into topics such as women's emancipation and the moral and ethical decline of society, which had crept into her consciousness following World War I.

In 1919, pregnant for the third time and seeking rest, Undset moved with her biological children to Lillehammer. Svarstad was to put the final touches on their new house in Kristiania, and she'd return when it was complete.

But things did not go according to plan. The marriage crumbled, and that summer she gave birth to a boy in Lillehammer, alone.

### Finding Her Voice



Over the next two years, Undset had a large timber dwelling erected, and she and her children moved in. She named their new home Bjerkebaek and built an impressive garden on the grounds. It was the quiet writing retreat she'd been longing for.

In the years following World War I and the final days of her marriage, Undset drifted away from the agnostic, skeptical views she'd had since childhood and slowly made her way toward Catholicism, which was fairly unusual in Protestant-leaning Norway. In 1924 she officially became part of the Roman Catholic Church, and her marriage was dissolved since her husband already had a wife at the time he and Undset wed.

She settled into her new oasis and commenced working on her newest novel, "Kristin Lavransdatter." It was set in the historical period she'd struggled to write about as a 22-year-old just starting out. By now, after years of research, learning and traveling, Undset was well versed in the Middle Ages, and had enough life experience to construct a character like the complicated Kristin.

This story of a woman making her way through life in 14<sup>th</sup> century Norway totaled 1,400 pages, which were published as a trilogy between 1920 and 1927. Mixed in during those years was "Olav Audunsson I Hestviken" (The Master of Hestviken), which was 1,200 pages and split into four books.

Undset's compelling accounts of life in Scandinavia during the Middle Ages garnered acknowledgement from the world over. Both serial novels became international best-sellers and were translated into several languages. In 1928, Undset was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. "The Swedish Academy have during their meeting the 13th of November 1928, in accordance with the provisions contained in Alfred Nobel's testament, decided to award the Nobel Prize for literature principally for her powerful description of Nordic life in the middle ages. Stockholm 10th December 1928." (J. Henrik Schück, E. A. Karlfeldt). At the time, she was the second-youngest author, the third Norwegian, and the third woman to receive the Prize for Literature.

Undset donated the 156,000 kroner prize to charity. In 1939, she gave her Nobel Prize Medal made of gold to provide income for Finnlandshjelpen (foreign support of Finland during

the Winter War). In 1929, "Gymnadenia" (The Wild Orchid) was published, followed in 1930 by "Den Braennende Busk" (The Burning Bush) and "Ida Elisabeth" in 1932.

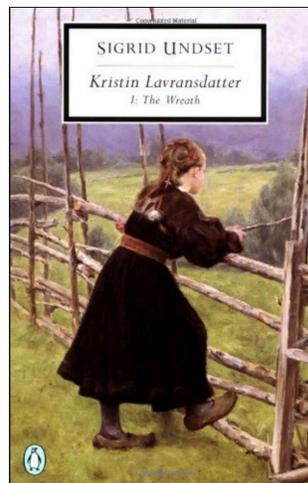
After this creative outburst, life quieted down. Undset wrote some heavier, history-driven pieces, and then in 1934 produced the autobiographical tome "Elleve År" (Eleven Years). In this, she discussed her childhood years in Kristiania, which were filled with learning, love, and the tragic loss of her father. Two years later, "Den Trofaste Hustru" (The Faithful Wife) was published.

As she neared 40, she set about writing a novel based in 18<sup>th</sup> century Scandinavia called "Madame Dorthea." It was released in 1939, but after the onset of World War II and the death of her daughter from illness shortly before the war began, her creativity withered and a planned follow-up volume never took shape.

### Finding Safety During Wartime

In April 1940, Germany stormed Norway and Undset's oldest son, an officer in the Norwegian army, was killed in action. Undset, who had vehemently opposed Nazism and Hitler since the early 1930s, fled with her youngest son to the neutral grounds of Sweden. Once there, she learned that her beloved Bjerkebaek had been taken over by German soldiers and used as officers' quarters.

Later that year, Undset and her son relocated to the United States. There, she unrelentingly advocated for Norway by writing articles and lecturing on the country's behalf. When the war ended in 1945 and her homeland was liberated, she returned, exhausted. For her patriotic undertakings, she was awarded the Grand Cross by The Royal Norwegian Order of Saint Olav.



But the damage of the previous five years had been done, however, as Undset never published another page. On June 10, 1949, she died at the age of 67.

Undset's wide-ranging writings, which include 36 books and countless literary essays and historical articles, continue to fascinate readers today. In fact, her novels – particularly "Kristin Lavransdatter" – remain some of the best-selling and most-read in all of Norway.

### New Releases

The University of Minnesota Press is publishing an English translation of the Olav Aundsson tetralogy, Sigrid Undset's epic story of medieval Norway. "Vows" is out now, and "Providence" will release in Fall 2021, followed by "Crossroads" in 2022 and "Winter" in 2023. All translations were done by Tiina Nunnally, an award-winning translator of Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish. She was born in Chicago and grew up in Milwaukee, WI and St. Louis Park, MN.

# THE BACK PAGE

## In Honor of Syttende Mai and Nordic Fest

Ole and Sven die in a snowmobiling accident and they end up in Hell. The Devil observes that they are really enjoying themselves. He says to them, "Doesn't the heat and smoke bother you?" Ole replies, "Vell, ya know, ve're from norderm Minnesoota, da land of snow an ice, an' ve're just happy fer a chance ta varm up a little bit, ya know."

The devil decides that these two aren't miserable enough and turns up the heat even more. When he returns to the room of the two from Minnesota, the devil finds them in light jackets and hats, grilling walleye and drinking beer. The devil is astonished and exclaims, "Everyone down here is in misery, and you two seem to be enjoying yourselves?" Sven replies, "Vell, ya know, ve don't git too much varm veather up dere at da Falls, so ve've just got ta haff a fish fry vhen da veather's dis nice."

The devil is absolutely furious. He can hardly see straight. Finally he comes up with the answer. The two guys love the heat because they have been cold all their lives. The devil decides to turn all the heat off in Hell. The next morning, the temperature is 60 below zero, icicles are hanging everywhere, and people are shivering so bad that they are unable to wail, moan or gnash their teeth.

The devil smiles and heads for the room with Ole and Sven. He gets there and finds them back in their parkas, bomber hats, and mittens. They are jumping up and down, cheering, yelling and screaming like mad men. The devil is dumbfounded, "I don't understand, when I turn up the heat you're happy. Now it's freezing cold and you're still happy. What is wrong with you two?"

They both look at the devil in surprise and say, "Vell, don't ya know, if hell iss froze over, dat must mean da Vikings von da Super Bowl!"

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Ole isn't feeling well so he goes to the doctor. After examining him the doctor takes his wife Lena aside, and says, "Your husband has a very sensitive heart. I am afraid he's not going to make it, unless you treat him like a king, which means you are at his every beck and call, 24 hours a day and that he doesn't have to do anything himself."

On the way home Ole asks with a note of concern, "Vhat did he say?"

"Vell," Lena responds, "he said it looks like you probably von't make it."

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*Toivo and Aino are common Finnish names and used for jokes popular amongst Finns and those of Finnish descent.*

Toivo and Aino head for the Motor City. When they get across the bridge, they see a sign that reads "DETROIT LEFT." So they turn around and go home.

Ole is walking through the mountains of Norway on his way to visit Lena. He is thinking more about the supper she has planned for him instead of where he is walking. All of a sudden he slips and slides over the edge of the cliff beside the mountain path. About 20 feet down, and with several hundred more feet to go, he frantically grabs onto a bush that moves but holds for the moment. There he is, hanging by a bush, above certain death, and his hands begin to perspire and tire almost immediately. "Is anyone up dere?" Ole hollers.

"I'm here Ole," comes the deep voice from above.

"Who's dere? Can you help me?" Ole yells back.

The voice answers, "It's the Lord, Ole. Let go and I will save you."

Ole looks down, and he looks up, and he looks at his slipping hands, and he looks down again, and he looks up again.

Finally, he yells back up the side of the cliff, "Is anyone else up dere?"

\*\*\*\*\*

One day Lena stops Ole and tells him that the outhouse is full and he has to do something about it. Ole comments that Sven is coming over the next weekend, and since he has been going to an engineering school he should have an idea of the best way to handle the situation.

That weekend Sven comes over and Ole explains his dilemma. "Sven, we got to do somethin' about the outhouse, it is full and Lena is getting very upset about it."

"Well, Ole, I have an idea. We will place several sticks of dynamite around the outside of the outhouse with a fuse just long enough to allow us to run behind the house before it goes off. The outhouse will be blown straight up, the crap in the hole will be blown out into the fields to fertilize them, then the outhouse will fall right back down to where it was."

Ole thinks this is a fantastic plan, so Ole and Sven get to work and set all the dynamite just right. They light the fuse and run for the house. Just as they get to the back of the house, Lena comes running out the back door and makes a bee line for the outhouse. Before Ole can stop her, she ducks into the outhouse slamming the door behind her and...

BOOOOM! the dynamite blows...the outhouse shoots straight up, the crap is blown out to the fields, and the outhouse drops right back down where it originally sat, just like Sven has planned.

Ole runs to the outhouse worried about Lena and reaches it just as she opens the door to come out. "Lena, Lena...are you alright?"

Lena is a little shaken up but responds .... "Ya, Ole, I am fine.....but I have to tell you, I'm sure glad I didn't let that one go in the house!"