

Sons of Norway District 5 Adult Culture Weekend October 3-5, 2025
“Celebrating Norwegian Immigration - The Sloopers 200th Anniversary”

Schedule – Information

2025 is the 200th anniversary of the first organized emigration of Norwegians to the United States. The single mast sloop”, “Restauration,” sailed from Stavanger, Norway on July 4, 1825 with 52 passengers on board. This group, often referred to as the “Sloopers,” left Norway for religious freedom and new opportunities. They arrived in New York City harbor on October 9, 1825.

The New York Quakers set aside land in upstate New York, near Rochester. After nine hard years of clearing heavily forested land to farm, they sent Cleng Peerson out west in search for better farmland. He and his group of Norwegian settlers traveled to Illinois and followed the Fox River down to LaSalle County Illinois.

Polar Star and Cleng Peerson lodges are planning to celebrate Norwegian immigration and the 200th anniversary of the Sloopers arrival in America, by presenting a 3-day culture weekend October 3-5, 2025. We will honor the history and culture of the early Norwegian-American pioneers who settled and established farms and communities on the Prairie of LaSalle County, Illinois.

Join us for a weekend of Norwegian fun featuring Sloopers and Fox Valley Settlement Pioneer history, Norwegian culture and craft presentations, Norwegian games, a fun Sloopers walk, a Norwegian barn dance with Norwegian folk music, a traditional Norwegian worship service, and a chance to meet descendants of those Norwegian-American immigrants at their Sloopers Society Annual Meeting.

The Culture Weekend begins at 1:30 p.m. on Friday, October 3 at the Community Center in Norway, Illinois, 3667 E. 2603rd Road, Sheridan (Norway), Illinois. The schedule below provides information about:

- Pages 1 and 2: ***On your way driving*** to the Culture Weekend in Norway, Illinois, some **extra** activities you might want to check out on Thursday, October 2 or the morning of Friday, October 3.
- Page 3: Weekend activities on Friday afternoon, October 3
- Pages 4 and 5: Weekend activities on Saturday morning and afternoon, October 4
- Page 5: Weekend activities on Sunday, October 5
- Information about Lodging and Food/Restaurant Ideas

Details on all events and activities will be updated as appropriate on:

- Polar Star Lodge website: www.polarstarlodge.com
- Norsk Museum website: <https://norskmuseum.org>

Questions: Contact Barb Johnson at barbJJohnsonB@aol.com or 630-632-2329.

If you decide to travel on *Thursday October 2, the DAY BEFORE* the weekend events, you may wish to check out one of these interesting experiences on Thursday, October 2, on your way to Norway, Illinois:

- Spend the day in Geneva, Illinois. First, see the amazing Viking ship replica at the “Friends of the Viking Ship” Museum at Good Templar Park, 529 E. Side Drive in Geneva. <https://vikingship.us>. Tours on Thursday from 11-12 a.m. and again 2-3 p.m. Donation \$7 at the door but **pre-registration is required on Weekend Registration Form**. “Viking,” an exact replica of the Gokstad Viking ship discovered in the 1880s, was built in Norway, then sailed across the Atlantic Ocean, up the Hudson River, through the Erie Canal and the Great Lakes to Chicago for the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition (Chicago World’s Fair). Don’t miss the ship’s splendidly-restored dragon head and tail on display in the Geneva Public Library, 227 S. 7th Street, Geneva. Then maybe have lunch at Stockholm’s Restaurant and Brewery at 306 W. State Street <https://stockholmsbrewpub.com>, and perhaps go shopping for Scandinavian gifts next door at The Gift Box www.genevagiftbox.com at 310 W. State Street.

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- Visit beautiful Starved Rock State Park in Utica, Illinois. <https://www.starvedrocklodge.com> In the Visitors Center, see the movie on history of Starved Rock, take a scenic hike up to the top of Starved Rock or to the waterfalls, take a tram ride, have lunch in the Starved Rock Lodge.
- Visit the LaSalle County Genealogy Guild, 115 W. Glover Street, Ottawa, Illinois. <https://www.lscgg.org>. Information about descendants in the area (newspapers, probate, obituaries, marriages, and more, on computer records, books, microfiche, etc.) Visit their website first to see what resources are available online. Donation at the door, but **pre-registration is required on the Weekend Registration Form**. Open Thursday from 9 to 4, and Friday morning from 9 to noon.
- Visit LaSalle County Historical Society, 101 Canal Street, Utica Illinois. Call 815-667-4861 for hours. Donation at the door.

If you decide to travel on Friday October 3, the first DAY of the weekend event you may wish to experience one of these adventures during the morning on your way to Norway, Illinois. **(But be sure you get to the Norway Community Center in time for opening remarks at 1:30 p.m.)**

- Pre-register for the “Immigration Textile Workshop - Sheep, Spinning and Småkaker” and sheep farm, from 9:00-11:30 at Esther’s Place at 201 Galena Street (Route 30) in Big Rock, Illinois. www.esthersplacefibers.com Learn about the pioneer art of turning wool into yarn at Esther’s Place! Starting with visiting the farm and meeting the sheep, you’ll walk through the steps of dyeing, carding and spinning the fibers. Then create your very own felted "småkaker"- using yarn as "icing", you’ll draw a design on the cookie with needle felting, and then create a sachet ornament that is scented with glögg mulling spice and hung with a ribbon. <http://www.esthersplacefibers.com>. **Pre-paid, pre-registration is required on Weekend Registration Form. Fee is \$35.**)
- Stop in Geneva, Illinois and see the Viking ship replica at the “Friends of the Viking Ship” Museum at Good Templar Park, 529 E. Side Drive in Geneva. <https://vikingship.us>. Join a tour from 10-11 a.m. Donation \$7 at the door but **pre-registration is required on Weekend Registration Form**. “Viking,” an exact replica of the Gokstad Viking ship discovered in the 1880s, was built in Norway, then sailed across the Atlantic Ocean, up the Hudson River, through the Erie Canal and the Great Lakes to Chicago for the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition (Chicago World’s Fair. Then, maybe have an early lunch at Stockholm’s Restaurant and Brewery <https://stockholmsbrewpub.com> at 306 W. State Street, or find lunch somewhere else on your own.
- Visit the Norsk Museum at 3656 E. 2631 Road, Sheridan (Norway), Illinois. <http://www.norskmuseum.org> Open 9:00 to 1:00 Friday morning. Housed in the historic Hauge Lutheran Church, the museum was recognized in the Illinois register of historic places in 2015. Donation at the door.

Be sure to get lunch on your own, on your way to Norway, Illinois.

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The Culture Weekend begins at 1:30 p.m. at the Norway Community Center in Norway, Illinois, 3667 E. 2603rd Road, Sheridan (Norway), Illinois.

In addition to the scheduled weekend activities, there will be several Norwegian cultural displays along the walls of the Community Center Main Room, all day Friday and Saturday.

- Bunad/Norwegian Folk Costumes
- Norwegian American Genealogy Center and Naeseth Library
- Animal Breeds Originated in Norway
- Stave Churches
- Trolls
- Sons of Norway Book Club

Friday, October 3 – Afternoon

<p>Community Center, Main Room</p> <p>1:30: Opening Remarks: “Welcome to the Fox River Settlement” (Ken Johnson, Polar Star Lodge President)</p> <p>1:45 – 2:45:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Norwegian American Women and their influence on Illinois Communities. (Ken Johnson, Connie Kross, Barb Johnson) <p>3:00 – 4:00:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking at Norway Culture, History and Beauty Through Its Postage Stamps. (Arthur Andersen) <p>4:15 - 5:45:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ship called “Viking”. Origin, History and Voyages of the “Viking”, the 1892 exact replica of the circa 900 A.D. Gokstad viking ship. (Karen Oswald) 	<p>Community Center, Back Room</p> <p>1:45 – 2:45:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Norwegian Rosemaling. Demonstration and Display. (Kathy/Kass Mufich) <p>3:00 – 4:00:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needle Felting. Make a needle felted Juletrepynter (Christmas tree ornament). Materials are free to registered participants. Starter kits also available for purchase on-site. (Connie Kross, Barb Johnson) • Demonstrations of traditional Norwegian hand crafts by local artists. • Demonstration: Norwegian Waffles With Lingonberries 	<p>Norway United Methodist Church 2642 N. 3650th Road Norway Sheridan (Norway), Illinois</p> <p>2:00 – 4:00:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stamping Norwegian Christmas Cards. Make 2 Christmas cards and 2 gift tags. Class kit includes one set of stamps, pre-cut paper, and instructions. <i>Pre-paid, pre-registration required on Weekend Registration Form. Fee is \$40.</i> (Connie Aiello)
<p>6:00 - 7:00: Dinner – Traditional Norwegian boiled codfish dinner with boiled red potatoes, polse, cole slaw, peas/carrots, bread, lingonberry bars. <i>Pre-paid, registration required on Weekend Registration Form. Fee is \$20.</i></p>		
<p>7:00 - 9:00: Norwegian Game night and movie; free popcorn; bottled water/snacks available for purchase.</p>		

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Saturday, October 4 – Morning

Breakfast on your own.

<p>Community Center, Main Room</p> <p>9:00 – 10:00:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Ørkenen Sur” (The Bitter Desert). Norwegian documentary film about a 1930’s Brooklyn shanty town of destitute Norwegian seamen and craftsmen during the Great Depression. (Arthur Andersen - his grandfather Karl Holm was important in helping them and documenting their plight.) <p>10:15 – 10:45:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of Norwegian Rosemaling. (Lynn Sove Maxson) <p>11:00 – 11:45:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reindeer in Illinois. Learn about raising reindeer on a ranch in Illinois; meet and take pictures of a live reindeer. (Randy Espe; Whispering Pines Reindeer Ranch, Shabbona, Illinois) 	<p>Community Center, Back Room</p> <p>10:15 – 11:45:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needle Felting. Make a needle felted Juletrepynter (Christmas tree ornament). Materials are free to registered participants. Starter kits also available for purchase on-site. (Connie Kross, Barb Johnson) • Demonstration: Norwegian Waffles With Lingonberries <p>11:00 – 11:45:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Norwegian Rosemaling. Demonstration and Display. Some items available for purchase. (Lynn Sove Maxson) • Nordic Walking, Running, and Cross Country Skiing. Norway’s year-round activities. Learn basic skill techniques, equipment, and seasonal clothing. Opportunity to try it yourself. (Coach Tom Sisulak) 	<p>Norsk Museum</p> <p>9:00 – 10:00:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Sluppen” Around Norway, Illinois. An educational, approximately 1 mile, fun walk around the village of Norway, Illinois. Pre-paid, pre-registration on the separate “Sluppen” Registration Form is required by June 30, 2025. Fee is \$15. (Covers bib numbers, medals, and snacks.) <p>9:00 – 11:45:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Norsk Museum open. <p>9:00 – 11:45:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hardanger Embroidery. Demonstration and Display (Linda Floyd) • Krumkake Demonstration. (Myrtle Duvick) <p>Norway Methodist Church 2642 N. 3650th Street, Norway (Sheridan), Illinois</p> <p>9:00 – 11:45: Making Sami Bracelets. Pre-paid, pre-registration required on Weekend Registration Form. \$45 Fee covers both morning and afternoon sessions. (Dawn Gunderson)</p>
<p>12:00 - 1:00 Lunch - American lunch: pulled pork, coleslaw, chips, bottled water. Pre-paid, pre-registration required on Weekend Registration Form. Fee is \$20.</p>		

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Saturday, October 4 – Afternoon

Norsk Museum - Open 1:15 – 4:00. Donation at the door.

<p>Community Center, Main Room</p> <p>1:15 – 2:45:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> History of the Sloopers and the Fox Valley Settlement. (Dave Johnson, Steve Tanda) <p>3:00 – 3:45:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Music and True Stories of Norway Illinois. (Rob Borchsenius) <p>4:00 – 4:45:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vikings. Discussion of Vikings in historical fiction; a global overview of Viking Age trading, raiding, and settlement; Viking artifacts display and commentary. Book signing opportunity. (David Mullaly) <p>5:00 – 5:45:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “The Fox Valley Settlement: April 1840” A short original play. 	<p>Community Center, Back Room</p> <p>1:15 – 3:45:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Norwegian Rosemaling. Demonstration and Display. Some items available for purchase. (Lynn Sove Maxson) Demonstration -Norwegian Waffles With Lingonberries 	<p>Norway United Methodist Church 2642 N. 3650th Street, Norway (Sheridan), Illinois</p> <p>1:15 – 4:00: Continue Making Sami Bracelets. Pre-paid, pre-registration covers both morning and afternoon sessions. (Dawn Gunderson)</p>
<p>6:00 - 7:00: Dinner - chicken/pork chop, coleslaw, bun, baked beans, vegetable, potato, dessert. Pre-paid, pre-registration required on Weekend Registration Form. Fee is \$20.</p>		
<p>7:00 - 9:00: Norwegian Barn Dance with folk dancing and authentic Norwegian music.</p>		

Sunday, October 5

Breakfast on your own.

<p>Stavanger Lutheran Church, 2904 N. 32nd Road, Seneca, Illinois</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10:30 – 11:30: - Norwegian church service, followed by Norsk Kaffe og Bakverk (coffee and pastries)
<p>Community Center, Main Room</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12:30 Noon – Annual Meeting of the Sloopers Society of America. Anyone with an interest in Norwegian American history, culture, and delicious food is welcome to attend. 1:00 - Sloopers Luncheon. Includes kumla, ham, meatballs, cabbage casserole, lutefisk and cod, red potatoes, butter, pickled and creamed herring, cheeses, Gomme (Norwegian caramelized, sweet cheese), water, coffee, and kringla. (Pre-paid, pre-registration required on Weekend Registration Form. Fee is \$20. <p>Program: Vesterheim Museum photos of the upcoming 2025 reenactment of the Sloopers ship replica leaving Stavanger Norway in July 2025. (Polar Star and Cleng Peerson lodge members)</p>
<p>Norsk Museum: Open immediately following the Sloopers Program. Donation at the door.</p>

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Lodging:

Make reservations on your own. Blocks of rooms have been reserved at these two hotels:

- **Holiday Inn Fox River Resort** in Sheridan, Illinois. Block of 15 two-bedroom/two-bathroom suites with full kitchen (no breakfast provided.) Rate is \$169 plus tax and fees per night. Two night stay required. One night deposit will be immediately charged to your credit card. Only 1 mile southwest of our Norway, Illinois event location. Use Group Reservation Code “SON” when making reservation by phone at 866-545-5112. Cut-off date is September 1, 2025.

- **Holiday Inn in Yorkville, Illinois.** Block of 10 rooms with two beds/one bathroom. Rate is \$165 plus tax and fees per night, with two night stay required. Breakfast provided. Located 18 miles northeast of Norway Illinois (20 minute drive). Use Group Reservation Code “BJW” code when making reservation by phone at 866-545-5112. Cut-off date is August 15, 2025.

Food / Restaurant Ideas: *(includes distance to the Norway, Illinois venue)*

Geneva, Illinois (if traveling through Geneva on Thursday or Friday) (38 miles): Stockholm’s Restaurant and Brewery, 306 W. State Street; also other restaurants in downtown Geneva or main roads entering downtown.

Big Rock, Illinois (if going to Esther’s Place Friday morning) (26 miles): Big Rock Café, 103 Galena Street.

Yorkville, Illinois, near the Holiday Inn (17 miles):

- Station One Smokehouse (BBQ café serving), 524 E. Kendall Crossing, Yorkville
- Grace – Café and Wine Bar, 42 W. Countryside Parkway, Yorkville
- Burnt Barrel Social, 508 Central Parkway, Suite A, Yorkville
- Hacienda Real, 585 E. Kendall Drive, Yorkville
- Several fast food restaurants are on nearby Route 47
- <https://www.yorkvillechamber.org/yorkville-area-dining-guide/>

Newark, Illinois (6.7 miles):

- Newark’s Country Kitchen, 307 IL Route 71, Newark (closes 8:00 p.m.)
- Geo’s Pizza, 1 Main Street, Newark
- Subway, IL Route 71, Newark

Norway, Illinois (0 miles):

- Norway Store, 3654 IL Route 71, Norway/Sheridan (café breakfast and lunch only)
- Francesca Pizza, 3653 E. 2631st Road, Norway/Sheridan

Sheridan, Illinois (6 miles):

- Calico Café, 215 N. Robinson Street, Sheridan
- Old Mill Tavern, 4194 E. 2603rd Street, Sheridan

Between Norway and Ottawa (6 miles):

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- New Oasis Family Restaurant, 3074 IL Route 71, Ottawa
- Hank’s Farm Restaurant, 2973 IL Route 71, Ottawa

Millington (8.6 miles):

- Jimbo’s Place, 310 S. Church Street, Millington
- Last Chance Saloon, 102 S. Church Street, Millington

Wedron (9.8 miles):

- Wedron Office Bar & Grill, 2005 N. 35th Road A, Ottawa

Marseilles (11 miles):

- Marseilles Family Restaurant, 550 East Bluff Street, Marseilles
- Ziggy’s Bar & Grill, 278 Main Street, Marseilles
- The Family Taco, 329 Main Street, Marseilles
- Bobaluk’s Beef & Pizza, 458 Main Street, Marseilles
- Ryan’s Eatery, 442 Main Street, Marseilles
- Sam’s Pizza, 240 Washington Street, Marseilles
- Subway, 237 Commercial Street, Marseilles
- El Patron Mexican Restaurant, 485 Main Street, Marseilles

Ottawa (13.7 miles):

- Cracker Barrel, 4119 Columbus Street, Ottawa
- Culver’s, 3001 Fairfield Lane, Ottawa
- Sunfield Restaurant, 2754 Columbus Street, Ottawa
- New Brite Spot Family Restaurant, 801 E. Norris Drive, Ottawa,
- HiWay Restaurant, 210 W. Norris Drive, Ottawa
- B.A.S.H. Burger & Sushi House, 1012 N. LaSalle Street, Ottawa
- The New Chalet Restaurant, 514 State Street, Ottawa
- R Grotto Ristorante, 710 LaSalle Street, Ottawa
- Bianchi’s Pizza Downtown, 607 LaSalle Street, Ottawa
- The Beach House Seafood, 700 LaSalle Street, Ottawa
- Lone Buffalo by Tangled Roots, 812 LaSalle Street, Ottawa

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Sponsored by
Sons of Norway Polar Star Lodge 5-472
Sons of Norway Cleng Peerson Lodge 5-525
Norsk Museum
Sloopers Society of America