

# Fellesraad & Norway House Update

## 25 Oct 2017

The Fellesraad Board recently met to discuss the working partnership with Norway House. Several years ago, Fellesraad and Bygdelag were involved financially to support the construction/remodeling of the current building which was just dedicated as the Albert H. Quie Center (former Governor of Minnesota). Norway House sees itself as a support for Norwegian organizations, including the Bygdelag.

Now we have the opportunity to participate financially to build the Cultural Center, a second building. The Fellesraad will match the amounts which the individual Lags donate. That total amount will then be matched by a \$500,000 Challenge Grant by an anonymous donor. That in turn will be matched by the \$5 million in bonding matching funds from the State of Minnesota. So, Lag contributions will be matched three times.

Why has the Fellesraad chosen to support this campaign for Norway House?

- Both organizations will benefit. How? A portion of this building will be designed as a Norwegian Research Center/Bibliotek (Library) to hold the Lag Genealogists' collection of bygdebøker and other research materials. As a library, the collection will be overseen, so that the materials can be used more than once a year at Stevne but will remain secured in a climate-controlled facility.
- This is a way to verify that our Lag genealogical collections will be preserved!
- All individual Lag will be able to take its collection for use at its Stevne. Other individuals visiting the Bibliotek will be able to tap into the Lag collection throughout the year.
- Research assistance will be provided at the Bibliotek.
- There will be movable shelves in the Library storage, which will save on space.
- There would be charges for shelf footage of each genealogical collection which the Lag would pay. This will help to maintain this part of the facility.
- This facility will have state-of-the-art classrooms with technology capabilities, so that webinars could be viewed and recorded. Skype could also be utilized etc.
- There potentially could be access to Norwegian databases in the Library.
- The facility will be 15,000 square feet with banquet space for 250-300 guests.
- This facility could serve as a place to hold Stevner or mini-Stevner or board meetings.

Timeline:

- The state of Minnesota has indicated that Norway House needs to match their \$5 million grant within five years.
- Norway House tentatively plans that the new building would be completed in 2020.
- We (Fellesraad) have set our deadline to have our funds turned in by Dec 31, 2017.

- We are participating in a “campaign within a campaign” to insure we will have a Norwegian Research Center/Bibliotek. Our total campaign lasts from now until the end of 2018 Stevner. We will provide a status report at the May 2018 Annual Meeting.
- Our campaign is two-fold:
  - Each Lag should try to donate by Dec 31.
  - Lag individuals are encouraged to donate until the May 2018 Annual Meeting, but they may continue to the end of Stevner Season. Donations can still be sent after this time.

#### Funding:

- Lag donations will be matched by the \$500,000 Norwegian Research Center/Bibliotek incentive fund and Fellesraad up to an amount set by the Fellesraad Board.
- Dollars donated by individuals will be matched by the Norwegian Research Center/Bibliotek Incentive Fund.
- All donations will be matched to the \$5,000,000 State of Minnesota Bond to Norway House.
- All donors will be acknowledged on a donor wall in the Norwegian Research Center/Bibliotek at Norway House.
- When a Lag elects to send funds to Norway House, they should write in the Memo Line of the check: Norwegian Research Center/Bibliotek & Lag name (if not on check).
- We will send an email to the Treasurers with the details of the Tax ID # and address of Norway House.
- Lags should notify Fellesraad Treasurer, Bob Torkelson, the amount the Lag is submitting. He needs to record this in an Excel spreadsheet, so that the Fellesraad will know what Lag amounts to match.

#### Understanding Fellesraad’s Funds:

- Stock dividends provide our funding to continue as the umbrella organization for our Bygdelag.
- The remaining funds are treated as an endowment and used for projects that benefit all the lags such as providing training, lowering the costs for the annual meeting, and funding for Norway House, including matching funds.
- We will use these funds judiciously to benefit all Lags and not just one Lag. Thus the board currently has decided that individual grants are not available.
- Fellesraad does not have the capacity to earn funds as the Lags do through their membership dues and Stevner. So, these funds are carefully guarded.

Fellesraad is partnering with Norway House to support the Cultural Center in a matching campaign as this is beneficial to all the Lags. We are planning for the future of the Bygdelag in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.