

Norsk Carolina Lodge 3-679
Officially formed January 24, 2009

2008 and 2009 were years of many “firsts” for our lodge:

District SON Officers held SON information sessions at a local hotel where we identified several volunteers to help us get started; our first real meeting was held on February 23, 2008 in the Fellowship Hall of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Charlotte. Carol King, Mette Andersen, Ron and Nina Olszewski and Deb McConghy as well as several others started working to get our first meetings and Lodge formation planning underway.

We had a great meeting with maps of Norway so we could show where we were from or where our ancestors were from. We all shared information about our heritage and stories about our connections to Norway. We are lucky to have lodge members that are great bakers and we enjoyed Kranscake! We had a great time making Surkaal and shared it with everyone at the meeting.....and so the Norsk Carolina Lodge began!

We held and participated in many events during 2008 (see below) gathering members as we went along, culminating with our official Institution on January 24th 2009 and Installation of Officers!

2008 Events

Our first event was at the Harrisburg Elementary School Diversity Extravaganza where we had an information table with lots of information on Norway and Sons of Norway.

The first Syttende Mai was on May 17, 2008 where we had over 80 people at Reedy Creek Park. We were lucky to have people from all over the Southeast: Florida, South Carolina and well as various cities in North Carolina. We served hot dogs, ice cream, krumkake and kringle and even had our first parade. Our SON Lodge start up was beginning to get attention around the area.

We participated in the International Festival at UNCC on September 27 where we had on display various heritage and cultural items, including two pairs of unique seal and reindeer boots from Norway graciously donated to our lodge by member Rune Rolfsen. We had cards and events calendars to pass out.

In November we participated in the 2008 Scandfest in uptown Charlotte with lots of Norwegian items for sale as well as a beautiful display of cultural and heritage items representing Norway. Many Lodge members donated time and talent to cover the tables. We also had a memorable cheese tasting for the community with a great deal of cheese donated by Norseland that included an 18 lb round of Jarlsburg, Snøfrisk and Ski Queen Gjetost. As always we had our Sons of Norway brochures and pamphlets to hand out and were able to recruit several new members.

Our Big event was our very first Jultrefest, with over 100 people in attendance. For the children the most important person was the Nisse that came with gifts for all of them. We had a very popular crafts table for the children to create decorations through out the evening. We had an excellent piano player, a Norwegian choir and

everyone enjoyed singing around the Christmas tree. The food was excellent with real Pork Ribbe, fresh Salmon, herring and fresh gravlox just to name a few of the items. We had many members and guests in Bunads which made for a very festive evening. Several guests signed up as new members that night as well.

2009

We are now officially a lodge! We were very lucky to have many visitors and officials from near and far help us with the Institution ceremonies (other Lodges, the District and International). Washington DC Lodge sponsored our Institution. We used the District antique "Traveling Gavel" for our special meeting and we were presented with a beautiful engraved gavel from Washington Lodge to use for future Lodge meetings. We had a large reception following the ceremonies where we served open face sandwiches and treats made by the lodge members; everyone had a very enjoyable and memorable evening.

The activities of the Institution weekend included a District Idea Exchange facilitated by D3 International Director Barbara Berntsen. Representatives and members from multiple Lodges in VA, NC, SC, GA and FL gathered for information sharing and presentations on SON resources, best practices and ideas to grow lodges, maintain memberships, provide programs and fun events. It was a great exchange of ideas and empowering meeting for all of us.

We are proud to have 66 Charter and Heritage members as of February 2009 for Norsk Carolina Lodge! We have an exciting calendar for 2009 as we use this first year as a real Lodge to learn, grow and share. Visit our website <http://www.norskcarolina.org/> and join us!!!