

Club celebrates all things Norwegian

Immigrants, admirers find a home in Sons of Norway.

By Karen C. Wilson
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A group that has been uniting Norwegian immigrants in the United States since the late 1890s is gaining popularity in the Charlotte area.

The Norsk Carolina Lodge 3-679 became an official chapter of the Sons of Norway a year ago. It now has about 80 members who meet monthly to celebrate their heritage, work on crafts such as woodcarving, cook Norwegian recipes and meet others of Norwegian descent.

The group met recently for a traditional Norwegian Christmas celebration and will meet again this month. "The exceptional interest people have shown in this area is truly inspirational," said Mette Anderson, a member of the Charlotte lodge. "It ranges from fourth-generation Norwegian-Americans to people like me - born and raised in Norway but spending time in the U.S. for the time being."

Anderson said the focus of the group is to give the children of Norwegian parents a glimpse of Norway as it is today, and to teach and share Norwegian culture and heritage to all those interested in it, she said.

Carol King, the lodge president, said the organization is new to the area but there are more than 400 lodges nationwide.

King, who is of Scots-Irish descent, said she married into the Norwegian culture and fell in love with everything about it. About two years ago, she attended a meeting for people interested in starting a chapter of the Sons of Norway in the Charlotte area. King was elected president.

"There's been a lodge in Raleigh for three or four years, and there's one in Myrtle Beach that has been there for about 15 years," King said.

<http://www.charlotteobserver.com/breaking/story/1168840.html>



The Norsk Carolina Lodge 3-679 tries to pass along Norwegian culture and customs such as Rosemaling, a traditional form of painting done in Norway. This work was done by Isabella Wiel. COURTESY OF METTE ANDERSON

More Information

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The local Sons of Norway group will have its next meeting from 1 to 4 p.m. Jan. 17 at the Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 1900 The Plaza. The group will cook winter stews at the meeting. For more information, For more information, call Carol King at 704-674-2778, e-mail her at president@norskcarolina.org or visit the lodge's Web site at www.norskcarolina.org/5101.html.

King said the members enjoy cooking traditional foods and preserving other cultural heritage.

"We do cultural things like Rosemaling so that people will not lose that skill of that specialized painting," King said. "There is a type of embroidery called Hardanger that we do."

Rosemaling is a form of Norwegian decorative flower painting that originated in the lowland areas of eastern Norway around 1750, when baroque, rengeny and rococo styles were introduced to Norway's rural culture, she said.

Hardanger embroidery is a form of embroidery done with white thread on white, even-weave cloth. It became popular in Norway between the 1650s and 1850s.

The local lodge also participates in Scan Fest, providing the Scan Fest Norway Exhibit each November. Members visit schools and civic groups to present facts about Norway and cultural items.