

NORWEGIAN TEXTILE LETTER

Vol. IX No. 1

November, 2002

A SOJOURN IN TELEMAR

by Lila Nelson

My intent from the moment of signing up for the course Artisan Clothing: Weaving and Design in Vadmel, to be held June 25-July 5, 2002, in Vinje, Telemark, Norway, was to engage in a serious study of vadmel, experience the actual production of a piece of vadmel, and then to document the entire process as carefully as possible. This article was to share that documentation through the NORWEGIAN TEXTILE LETTER.



Carol Sperling Wendy Sundquist
Eveleth, Minnesota Langley, Washington
Marianne Vigander Janet Meany
Norris, Tennessee Duluth, Minnesota
Lyn Day
Cleves, Ohio
Lila Nelson Betty Johannesen
Minneapolis, Minnesota South Bend, Indiana

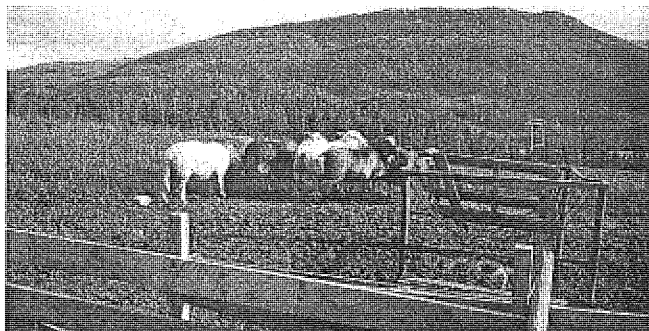
Participants model their completed vadmal garments.

But adhering to those rigid academic boundaries would actually have given an incomplete, arid, and even inaccurate account of what was a marvelous and unforgettable immersion in the richness of past and present traditions in Vinje, Telemark. My vadmel documentation is therefore going to be like the description of a grand feast, with vadmel being one of many courses contributing to the noble banquet.

As described by Carol Colburn, Professor in Theatre and Costume Design at the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls, the workshop would include planning a garment, weaving the necessary yardage and putting it through the stampa (stamping mill) to produce vadmel, and then fitting, cutting, and sewing the garment. Carol's professionalism was immediately evident as through correspondence with individual participants, she guided each in deciding the nature of her garment and eventually providing early sketches and helpful suggestions. Then decisions were made regarding weight of wool (local wool from the spelsau sheep would be used for warp and weft), color choices for materials, possible trims, and lining. Later, from measurements provided by each participant, Carol made muslin patterns for fitting and cutting guides.

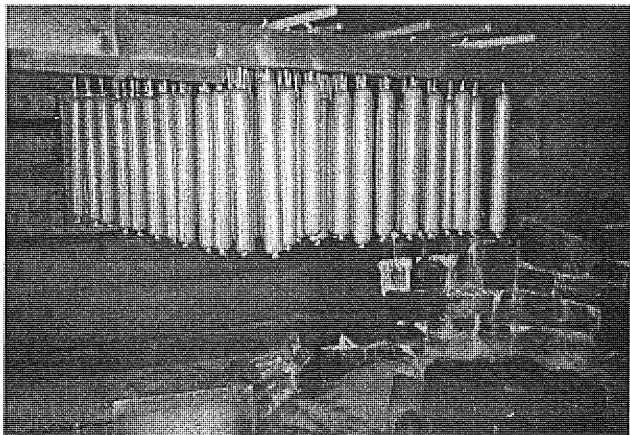
Seven participants arrived in accordance with their respective schedules. For most people this included a comfortable four-hour bus ride from Oslo to Vinje through a landscape of green forests, farms, and winding lupine-lined roads, the bus climbing gradually toward the distant snow-topped mountains. At Vinje, 550 meters above sea level, we were met by car and whisked off to Vesaas farm, the location of our workshop and living quarters.

The Vesaas name goes back several hundred or more years in Telemark history, and Olav Vesaas, the present farm owner, is a direct descendant. Vesaas people were distinguished poets, historians, and craftsmen; Olav carries on the illustrious reputation in his production of the highest quality traditional Telemark jewelry, which he creates in his studio in the main house. His wife Eli is an accomplished weaver, an excellent teacher, a skilled manager of the weaving studio in which we worked, and above all a warm, generous, and welcoming hostess.



Spelsau sheep graze at Vesaas farm

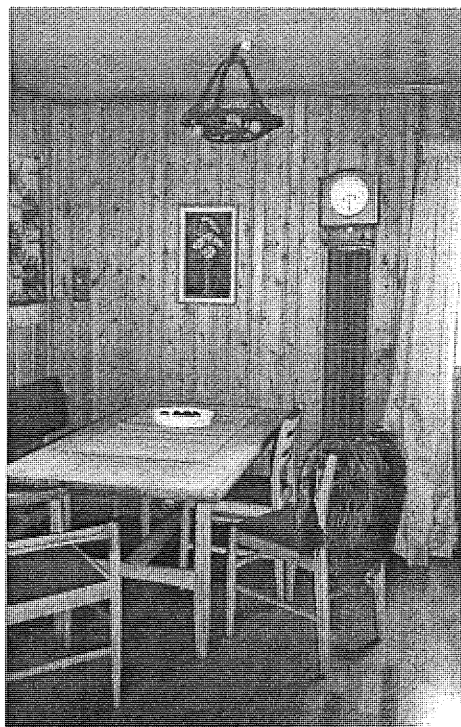
The present farm is fully operational with around 40 spelsau sheep, and also supplies the community with smoked lamb sausage, which Olav smokes with damp juniper branches in one of the ancient log storage buildings on the farm. Living and weaving in this historic atmosphere was indeed like walking on hallowed ground.



Smoking sausage at Vesaas farm

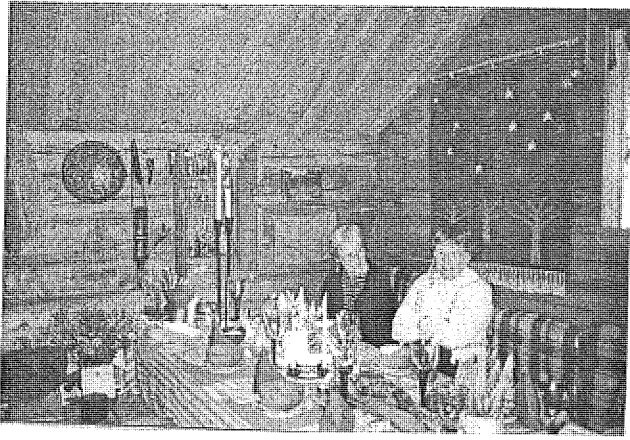
Most of us lived in old but internally modernized and comfortable buildings on the farm. On the edge of the surrounding woods, a salt lick visible with binoculars provided us a view of the moose who quite regularly stopped by, a reminder of the

deer, foxes, and other wild life sharing the area with us. The old sheep barn's totally updated and outfitted second floor was our workshop location. The looms were primarily modern counter-march Scandinavian, some of which had been loaned temporarily by weavers in the community.



Dining area where participants gathered for lunch

Our first evening set the pattern of warmth and hospitality which enveloped us throughout our stay. Locally baked bread in a wood trough and fish soup from a monumental tureen on the long trestle table with tea served in the dining room of the main house was followed by an introductory walk around the area, and culminated in a festive dinner at the nearby summer home of Ingebjørg Vaagen, a native Telemarken who would work with Eli and also, as official Husflid consultant on crafts for the Telemark region, would provide background information regarding the history and traditions of the area. As she shared her broad knowledge of her home region, she also exhibited a contagious and an unabashed pride in everything Telemark that made her a skilled representative in official circles as well as a delight to us.



Lyn Day and Carol Sperling view Ingebjørg's festive table.

A loose pattern was established on Monday morning. After making our breakfast we met in the studio at 9:00 a.m. for an introduction by Ingebjørg, located the looms assigned to each student, and worked until a late morning tea break, followed by weaving until lunch, an afternoon tea break, dinner at 6:00 and continued evening work in the studio. Interesting extra activities, studio visitors, or simply the lure of the natural beauty around us often added variety to that daily schedule.

The chosen warp yarns had been wound on warp beams for us, the modern Scandinavian looms ranging from Finnish Karelias and a Berga-Savonia to a Norwegian Tele-flid from the Seljord area. Some were provided temporarily by weavers in the community. The one old loom, an ingenious creation by a Vesaas ancestor, was used only by Eli and is described in detail in a separate article by Janet Meany. For every participant and the three teachers, each of us provided a final record of our specific garment, which included warp, weft, and lining materials, warp length and width before and after weaving, reed measurements, weaving pattern, weight before stamping, length of stamping time, and measurements after stamping. In addition, participants shared samples of the lining, of all yardage both before and after stamping, and butterflies of each yarn used. Warp and weft were two-ply spelsau wool and the linings a Thai silk from California provided by Carol Colburn in a variety of colors. The warp lengths averaged 8 meters, woven length about 7 1/2 meters, width about .80 meters before and .75 meters after weaving. Through stamping, the

material lost about one meter in length and 10 centimeters in width. Reeds were primarily 50/10 set at 1/1. The weaving patterns were a 3/1 twill with the exception of a 2/2 pattern for Janet Meany. Apparently 2/2 was traditionally considered a good weave for trousers because of its strength while 2/1 was a choice when shedding moisture was a factor, as in jackets, and 3/1 was chosen when pleasing draping was desirable. The stamping length varied but averaged about an hour. It was decided to limit the stamping time in order to produce a material that would lend itself to modern clothing; traditional material, especially for outer garments, was probably considerably more stiff and tight.

A break in the routine developed already on the first day, when shopping in a well-stocked Vinje market provided breakfast and lunch supplies for our kitchen. Fine quality fruits and vegetables were plentiful; we included Norwegian staples such as a variety of herrings, gjetost (goat cheese), and lefse, the fish supply later augmented by a fish vendor who visited the farm with shrimp, lox, and fish cakes. Ingebjørg also felt that we should see the Oleana sweater shop with its superb examples of that company's modern sweaters based on the earliest of sweater styles in Norway.

Our evening meals were generally provided at nearby Mjonoy Handicraft and Cultural Center, owned by a Vinje foundation, which included cabins, a bakery, cafe, conference facilities, exhibition areas; and, of major import to us, it was the locale of the mountain stream on whose banks the stamper was located.

At this point we had only a brief glimpse after dinner of a small open wood hut, a large water wheel beside it, and a long sluice for diverting part of the flowing water when needed. The water wheel obviously powered the device which activated vertical boards that pounded the wool, but we had no time to examine the specific stamping mechanism more carefully.

Our dinner site was one of the log structures with the usual high entry step and low door typical of

the old buildings. A fireplace gave welcome in the cooling evening air as did the wood trestle table and benches which held us all plus our three teachers and various casual guests. This evening we were welcomed by songs from Mjonoy's director Ellen Nordstoga and her young granddaughter. Our meal, served family style, was wholesome and delicious, including products raised in the area and baked along with the breads in the huge oven of an adjoining building. This evening it was lamb sausage, mashed rutabagas, boiled potatoes, cream sauce, tomato salad, fruit juice, and, for dessert, a crepe-wrapped sautéed banana with huckleberry sauce. Returning to the farm, we worked long enough to sley our reeds and be prepared to start weaving the next morning.

Ingebjørg's introductory remarks covered the sparse nature of information about vadmél. The only book is TRADITION OCH FORNYELSE (1992. ISBN 91-971045-4-X) by Swedish author Kerstin Gustafsson who Ingebjørg surmised might be willing to come to America. Evidently Gustafsson had researched existing stampan, for she considered the example at Mjonoy to be the best one remaining. Dating back at least to the 17th century, stampan had evidently been a common sight near mountain-fed streams. Prior to that time, stamping was done with the feet. The impression received was that modern efforts to reproduce the early stampan had been less than successful. One which dates from 1750 is said to be in the Eidsborg Museum collection, but there is no nearby water source to activate it.

After two days of fairly concentrated weaving, we felt ourselves developing a hoped-for rhythm and control, and we cautiously entertained hope of actually being ready for the historic stamping to occur on Saturday, June 28, as scheduled. (Some participants, already skilled production weavers, were confident from the start, but I was not among that number.)

Fortunately, a cooperative rather than competitive spirit was present from the very beginning, and helping hands from both teachers and other participants were always extended

when needed. Ingebjørg, for example, was christened the bobbin lady because she kept us supplied much of the time. Little sheepskin pads were mercifully available when bench fatigue hit. Brief respites of coffee, tea, and tasty treats by Eli broke many morning and afternoon sessions. Nature also cooperated; simply walking outside to look up at the high hills and not-distant mountains with areas of visible snow, or to admire the wild flowers growing everywhere was a rejuvenating exercise.

Carol Colburn was to play a similar helpful role, but she was forced into temporary solitude by an allergy which affected her throat and demanded complete silence. So she worked on muslin patterns and was able to take over when her expertise was demanded for the sewing of our garments during the last week.

To reward our efforts late Thursday afternoon, Eli appeared with tea and Norwegian vaffler (waffles) which we ate at the outdoor picnic table. Then well fortified, we were driven to the foot of a respectably challenging hill and a tree and flower-lined dirt path which led to Vinje Billedgalleri, a severe stone structure looking nearly like a natural outcropping in the surrounding forest. It is a shrine to the artists Henrik Sorensen and Harald Kihle who lived and painted in Vinje nearly every summer from 1927 to 1961. The gallery is devoted exclusively to their works, which reflect the rich color, rugged terrain and austere life that drew them back to the area. Situated at the entrance to Smorklepp Valley, it was built by local craftsmen under the direction of Sven Sorensen, who donated it to Vinje township upon its completion in 1991. Used also as a community center, we heard a violinist and a female stæv singer as well as a homily from the local minister.

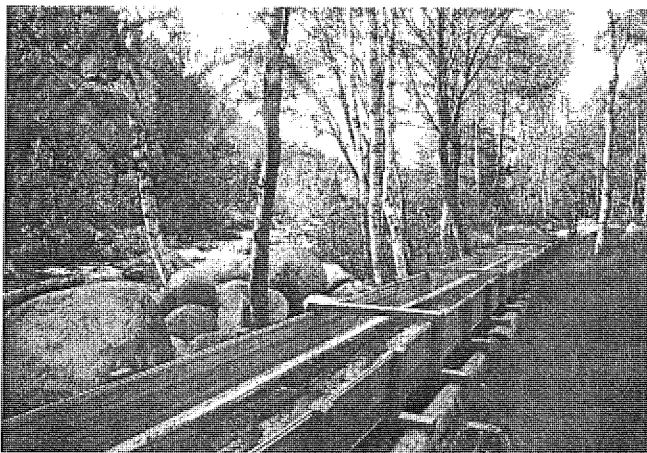
Back at Mjonoy during our evening meal, a man of ninety plus years told us stories of the area and sang old songs. From him we learned something of the wood Vinje church built on the site of a dismantled 12th century stave church. Olav Vesaas' mother had helped paint the church interior. We were not able to see that interior,

but we noted the large graveyard around the church and the Vesaas names on many stones.

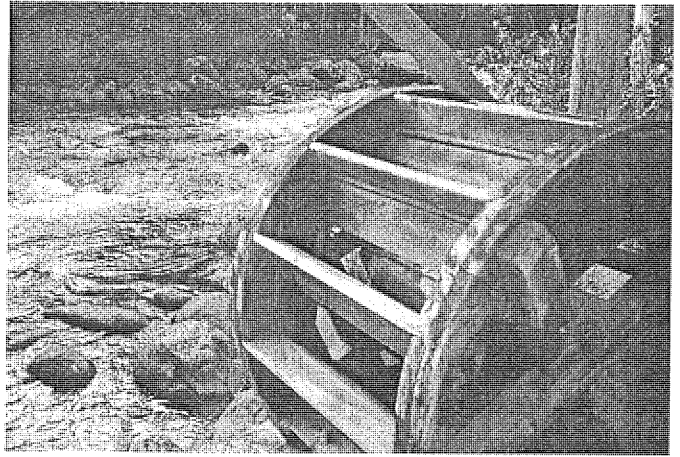
Friday, June 28, marked a day of individual and communal jubilation as at various times each weaver reached the end of her warp and, with cameras flashing, ceremoniously cut her weaving off the loom. At a cleared path along the floor for the entire length of the room each piece was carefully measured, examined, photographed, admired back and front and then rolled up for its transport to the stampa the next morning.

A still silent but smiling Carol did my fitting of her muslin pattern. I will have a long tabard-like garment in muted gray tones for wear over black slacks and warm colorful turtle-neck sweaters. It will be below calf length with closures only at waist front, sleeveless with high slits at sides and back. Other weavers were choosing jackets of varied lengths with differing neck and sleeve treatments as well as closures and trims. Other color choices will also be evident, ranging from reds to blues and browns.

Saturday arrived sunny and rainless as we carried the rolls of woven cloth to Ingebjørg's car trunk and then to the stampa site. We were augmented for the first time by male helpers, the owner of the stampa and also Eli's husband Olav. They had opened the sluice gates and heated a good supply of water in a huge iron tub for wetting the wool. Though the healthily moving stream looked active enough to power the water wheel,

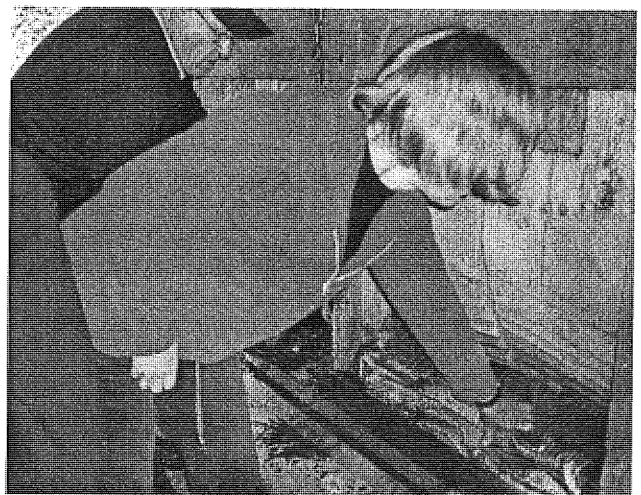


Sluice to provide water wheel power



Water wheel that drives stampa.

an auxiliary motor was on hand and was indeed put to use at some later part of the stamping process. Eli and Ingebjørg carefully layered the yards of cloth one on the other into the two deep troughs, soaked them with the steaming water, and then the stampa was activated. The turning water wheel set in motion a beam with heavy wood projections which in turn forced vertical action from projections on the wood walls that moved the solid stamping boards to slide forcefully down on the cloth beneath. Stepped cuts in the base of the four stamping boards caused the cloth to rotate slowly. This action was constantly and closely monitored by Ingebjørg, Eli, and the men. The cloth sometimes rotated unevenly or tended toward spilling over the trough edges; then it was cautiously prodded back with a long pole, or action stopped to allow refolding of the cloth.



Eli layering the yards of cloth

This action was also monitored by Carol, seven intent and fascinated students, and by three Telemark newsmen. On the scene early was Stein Olav Lie for his first major assignment after a career change led him to journalism and the Vest-Telemark Blad. He covered this one with enthusiasm equaling our own and thereafter became a welcome onlooker who followed our continued progress through to the final day of modeling the completed garments. The other two perhaps more blase veterans represented Varden, Telemark's major paper, and focused primary interest on the 150 year-old loom back on Vesaas farm.

The stamping process varied in length from under an hour to nearly two for the various pieces, averaging about sixty minutes. Each piece was first hung briefly, dripping, over a beam. Then care was taken at all points in the entire important drying process to keep the warp and weft in alignment. Each was carefully and evenly rolled over and around a series of dowels on a wood rack, culminating on the top roller, where it was carefully smoothed and evened as it accumulated. Then with equal care, it was unrolled to its full length and, with one person on each corner, stretched firmly and with even pressure. This was followed by rerolling on the rack and preparation for the return ride in the trunk of Ingebjørg's car.

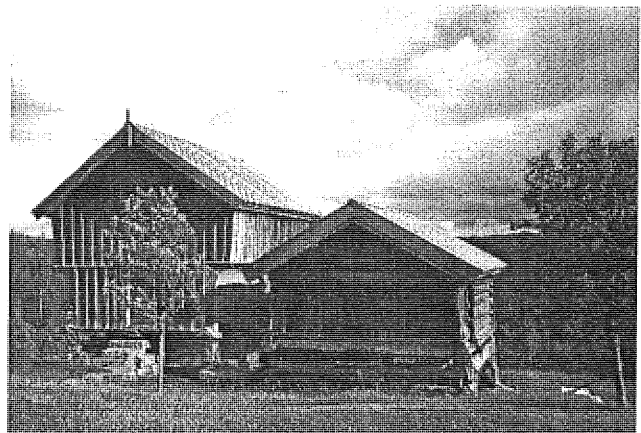


Ingebjørg, Marianne & Eli smoothing vadmél

Back at the farm, there was a growing awareness that a significant bulk of solid and very damp wool had to be totally dry before the next major step on Monday morning. We had also

experienced a week of typical Vinje weather; it was pleasantly cool and damp but it was definitely not for drying. So, between other activities, we were deeply involved in coaxing our cloth to demoiaturize. Some was spread out on the lawn, some nailed full length across one barn wall, and others were repeatedly unrolled, gently smoothed, and then rerolled. Finally, the classroom floor and loom castles ended up totally draped with yards of vadmél. I think that supplementary electric heaters may even have been involved. At any rate, on Monday morning every yard was nicely dry, and we felt a little like having climbed another mountain or forded yet another stream.

Eli and Ingebjørg with great insight hit upon a sure way of getting our minds off the wet wool; they opened for us the stabbur (storage buildings) which housed the textiles and other objects from hundreds of years in Vesaas family history. In the clean air, unlighted space, and



Stabbur at Vesaas farm

buildings on rock foundations with extended upper floors to discourage rodents, they could well last for hundreds of years into the future. The examples of bunader (dress for special occasions) nearly covered the history of changing styles in the Vinje area of Telemark. Three had been made by Olav's mother, a skilled seamstress who had made nine altogether. Dresses from the 1900s showed an Art Nouveau influence in the nature of roses and silk embroidered trims. Limited sources of dyes during World War I led to limited varieties of reds for embroidery, but later there was a desire

for return to designs from previous centuries. Ingebjørg stressed the variety allowed and enjoyed in bunader, but she said there were still people who tried to establish a right and wrong in the modern bunad. Vesaas bunader were stored draped over poles, a traditional way, or hung from tabs sewn at the waistline.

Among many other textiles were leather throws with fur on one side and stamped designs on the other; krokbragd coverlets with black bands between the designed areas, which was typical for Vinje; fine woven linens; back packs made from a full sheepskin, the legs providing shoulder straps; and large booties in nalbinding which fitted over outer shoes to provide extra warmth and moisture protection.

Sunday was also a day for exhibitions, one at nearby Mjonoy of their sale and exhibit areas, serving artists and patrons around Vinje, and the other to Rauland Academy, a folk school which invites teachers from abroad (we were delighted to meet Harley Refsal from Decorah, Iowa, about to begin a wood carving course the next day). A drive farther north and west took us to the beginning of the Hardangervidda, the largest in northern Europe, with its flat, stark, treeless terrain and unique animal and plant life adapted to the high windswept land.

Monday found us making the first dubious cuts into our precious vadmél, excepting for the small squares we clipped from one end to provide samples for each other. Carol with rejuvenated speech focused on the joy of being able to forget about raveled edges since the vadmél process erased this usual concern with handwoven materials. She guided us in choosing lining colors, possible trims, proper shades of sewing thread for handwork, and instructed us in the first steps of laying out and cutting our garments. Sections of the pattern were laid out with right sides together, and the lining was cut with a 5/8 additional width because no seam allowance was made in the muslin guide. The right sides of the lining and vadmél were facing each other and joined by sewing with one of the very fine modern sewing machines provided us. A small slit was left open for reaching the hand into the

interior and turning the whole section inside out (a system Carol referred to as bagging). Lining seams were trimmed first, and then the wool. To deal with corners, they were rounded off after turning. Then, sticking an index finger inside, the seams were folded forward and held with the thumb while turning the material. To work out the seam edges, muslin was placed over a cloth above which the steam iron was held without allowing the weight of the iron on the material beneath. The iron was lifted up and down; then the seams were gently flattened with the palm of the hand. Carol called our attention to such concerns as being sure that open side seams would meet at the hemline, that underarm and shoulder seams would mesh, and that closures would function evenly. She also taught ways of doing hand stitching of the lining and then the wool seams to give a professional final appearance to our work. She introduced some methods of cording to provide functional as well as decorative edgings. Her keen eye and sensitivity to personal style were key factors in the final finished look our pieces achieved.

On Wednesday afternoon, Ingebjørg issued a surprise invitation for a visit to the museum at Eidsborg. People made a difficult choice between more final attention to their garments and making the trip. Having heard of this small but exquisite site, I opted for Eidsborg, as did several other people. The Museum is just one attraction, which includes the Eidsborg farm buildings and a stave church as well. The 12th century stave church was enlarged in two later periods, and a partially exposed ceiling reveals the changes in each. Because at one time the lively 12th century painting covering the walls was modestly covered by boards, which fortunately preserved its amazingly strong colors. A candelabra from the 15th century and a medieval wood crucifix together with a more modern altar painting of the head of Christ by a local unknown painter all fit harmoniously into the interior.

Ingebjørg related that the church was probably consecrated to St. Nicholas and that an early statue of him as a boy stood before the choir door. Yearly the statue was gently bathed,

paraded around the church grounds three times and then returned to its niche. Some time in the 19th century, the statue was moved to the Oslo University Collection of Antiquities and a replica put in its place. The mayor of Eidsborg was said to have taken ill and died shortly after having effected this change, and Ingebjørg said that the people have continued to work for the return of St. Nicholas. She was confident this would eventually happen because people from Telemark are the most independent in all of Norway. This characteristic, she related, went back to the days of domination by Denmark from around 1400 to 1800, when the tax gatherers for the Danish king managed to bring in the revenues from all the interior rural areas excepting Telemark. After the continued disappearance of every tax gatherer who entered the region, it was decided to leave Telemark strictly alone.

The farm buildings, showing that the owners were prosperous members of the area, were a pleasure to visit, but the most memorable place to me was the building that housed the museum artifacts. Small and modest, it focused total attention on the objects themselves. The well lit cases, which made things easily visible, were painted a neutral noncompetitive shade. The objects rested against pieces of gray whetstone, an ideal way of calling attention to this important export of the area without detracting from what was being displayed. The collection was a marvelous and unforgettable one.

The return drive to Vinje was via the community of Dalen, which meant a drop to sea level after a near constant series of hairpin turns all the way. We marked a definitely warmer climate as we descended. There was time to walk through the foyer of Dalen's exuberantly Victorian hotel before returning in time for our dinner at Mjornoy.

We observed July 4 by doing our best to complete our workshop goals and begin to clean up the area. But enjoyable interruptions were constant. The afternoon was filled when a half-dozen or more weavers and friends from the area came to call, bringing with them lefse, kringla,

and bars to supplement Eli's already generous waffles, tea, and coffee. It took very little coaxing to get all of us to model our creations and then pose for endless photographs. The wool sorter for the area, who carries on the work begun by his father, came with his wife and told us something of his work. He explained that spelsau sheep are sheared in September for wool of the best quality. The next coat, of lesser quality, grows quickly, and the sheep are sheared again just before lambing, when they are kept in the barn. If I understood him correctly, farmers get paid individually for their own wool.

At a final festive dinner in the main house the mayor joined us, as well as Per Hochfeldt-Lüund from Norsk Kunstvevgarn and his wife together with our journalist friend Stein Olav Lie. Sarah Granskou, a sparkling young woman studying in Canada and working as a summer tour guide in Vinje, in a talented, imaginative, and totally individual rap style, entertained us with a musical portrait of a Canadian mailman.

Our last major challenge was closing suitcases now filled with hefty vadmél garments and considerable remaining yardage in addition to mementoes and other purchases. This was accomplished early the next morning, giving us time to visit the charming farm home of Ingebjørg's cousin and see the fine linens, weavings, and bunader in still another Vinje storehouse.

After a final valedictory lunch at Ingebjørg's nearby summer home, we separated to travel again on our individual journeys.

I hope that this experience will be just the beginning of a continued interest in and experimentation with vadmél. Vesaas farm plans to continue future vadmél classes, and the Vinje stampa appears to be an excellent example of what the early mills were like. Ingebjørg points out that the reproduction of that mill for teaching in America would be a logical direction for a museum like Vesterheim in Decorah, Iowa, where a water supply nearby was used for the

early grain mill there. Producing vadmél was familiar to immigrants coming from Norway to this country as late as the mid 1800's; we know that the mother of the famous economist Torstein Veblen was frustrated in her weaving activities in this country by having to resort to fulling material by hand and footwork because she could find no stampa available.

"Artisan Clothing: Weaving and Design in Vadmél"

Welcome to Vinje, Telemark from May 25 to June 6, 2003

This is a specially planned course for weavers from North America and Norway to come together and enjoy the old craft of weaving vadmél at the Vesaas farm in Vinje, Telemark. Vadmél (Norwegian) is also known as Loden (German), or fulled woolen cloth (English). It can be woven in different weights and fulled to meet the needs of a variety of types of garments. Each weaver will take a project from woolen yarn to a designer-made garment. Make your own design or have a design specially created for you.

The course will be divided into two parts:

WEEK ONE: WEAVING AND FINISHING THE CLOTH

Part one includes the weaving and the processing of the woven fabric into vadmél cloth. Master weavers Eli Vesaas and Ingebjørg Vaagen are also master teachers, and will lead this portion of the course in English or Norwegian as needed by the members of the class. At the Vesaas farm you will weave your special fabric that through the water fulling process will turn into the beautiful woolen cloth ready for creating clothing. The old technique of turning the fabric into vadmél is done at a reconstructed outdoor fulling mill run by a water wheel. This is located on a stream not far from the Vesaas farm at the Mjonøy Handcraft and Cultural Center in a beautiful natural setting. The finished vadmél cloth in colors of your choice will be perfect for a garment for Fall or Winter.

WEEK TWO: DESIGNING AND CREATING YOUR GARMENT

Part two will include finalizing your design and constructing your garment. Carol Colburn, Professor of Costume Design at The University of Northern Iowa will prepare and cut a muslin pattern for your individual measurements and incorporating your personal design while you weave and finish the cloth. As leader for this part of the course, she will guide your work as your cloth is crafted into Clothing. She has researched and published on the topic of Norwegian handwoven clothing and has crafted reconstructed garments for Vesterheim: The Norwegian-American Museum in Decorah, Iowa. She will work with you to incorporate traditional and contemporary construction techniques and garment details appropriate for your design.

COST FOR FEES AND MATERIALS

Participants in the course should have intermediate weaving experience and some sewing experience. Each will weave approximately 6 meters of cloth, depending on the garment planned.

Costs per student for classes, lodging and dinner every night will be Nkr. 14500.-

(Check for current exchange rate. At this writing in November, 2002 the rate is 7.33, so the cost for the course would be approximately \$1,980.)

Breakfast and lunch will be at individual expense. (You have your own kitchen.)

Material costs will be added and will vary depending on your garment design. Approximate materials cost for the vadmél cloth will be Nkr, 250. (about \$35.00) per meter.

Travel expenses and arrangements to and from North America to Vinje will be the responsibility of each individual. Local transportation in Vinje will be provided and is included in the cost of the course.

FROM VESTERHEIM

Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum's fourth annual Weavers Banquet was held on November 9th. In addition to a delicious meal, good company, and a fascinating program on vadmél, we enjoyed slides of entries to the 2002 Exhibition of Weaving in the Norwegian Tradition, and celebrated with two weavers who won the highest award. A complete list of exhibition ribbon winners appeared in the August 2002 issue of *Norwegian Textile Letter*. Here are photos of the entries by the new Gold Medalists.



"Fragments of Life"

Wall hanging in rutevev technique
Robbie LaFleur, * St. Paul, MN
White Ribbon, Traditional category



Robbie LaFleur* (*right*) receives her Gold Medal from Gold Medalists Betty Johannesen* (*left*) and Laura Demuth* (*center*) at the Weavers Banquet. Priscilla Lynch also accumulated enough ribbon points to receive a Gold Medal in 2002.



"Wise and Foolish Virgins"

Tapestry wall hanging
Priscilla Lynch, Saugatuck, MI
Blue Ribbon, Contemporary category

◆ Vesterheim is pleased to announce that Priscilla's "Wise and Foolish Virgins" tapestry has been acquired for the museum collection. The purchase of the tapestry was made possible in part by a gift from Ann Blager Collen for the Acquisitions Fund. ◆

* Norwegian Textile Guild member

Norwegian Textile Guild and
Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum

2003 Textile Study Tour to Norway

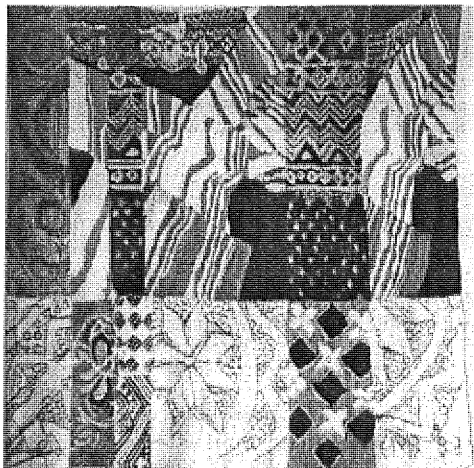
– UPDATE –

Twenty-four people have already registered for the Textile Study Tour to Norway, June 19 to July 8, 2003. As of Nov. 19th, there are two spaces remaining in the west-coast style warp-weighted loom weaving workshop taught by Marta Kløve Juuhl. Åshild Fjose Kløve's skillbragd (complex overshot) workshop is full. The billedvev (tapestry) workshop taught by Ingebjørg Vaagen is full. We have room for nine more people who will not take a weaving workshop and, instead, enjoy free time in Voss.

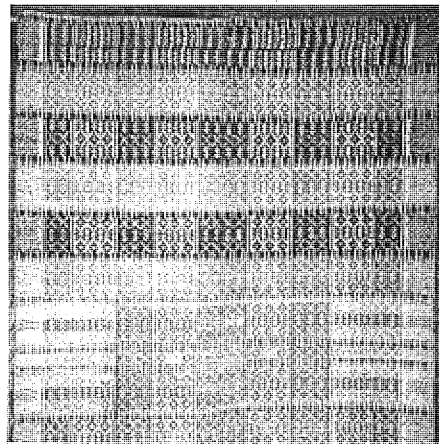
We will have the final tour cost in December. The estimated price of the tour (double occupancy) with airfare through Minneapolis/St. Paul and weaving workshop is \$4,500. Land only, non-workshop, and single-room options are also available. An updated, though still tentative, itinerary appears in this newsletter and soon will also be on the Vesterheim website, <www.vesterheim.org>.

Join us as we explore the incredible textiles of Norway's past, present, and future!

- Laurann Gilbertson



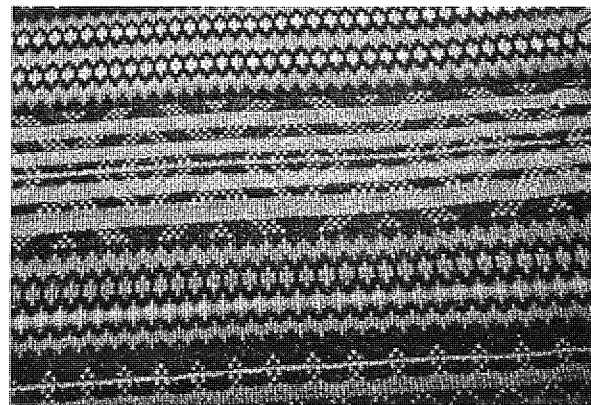
Tapestry by Else Marie Jakobsen, Kristiansand, 1993. Her inspiration was Setesdal folk culture. Setesdalsmuseet, Rysstad.



Old Voss christening blanket woven in the *skillbragd* technique. Finnesloft, Voss.



View from the Voss Folkehøgskule dormitory. Below is one of the classroom buildings and the lake (Vossevatn).



Traditional *dansk brogd* (boundweave pick-up) coverlet. Vest-Agder Fylkesmuseum, Kristiansand

The new **Lusekofte Center** in Bykle exhibits traditional Setesdal “lice” sweaters in old buildings. We’ll enjoy a traditional lunch here in the charming dining room. The next stop in Setesdal is **Valle** to visit Husflid Central. We’ll also have time to learn about the Setesdal tradition of silversmithing from Ørnulf Hasla.

DAY 14 – Wed., July 2 RYSSTAD – OSE – MANDAL B,L,D
Setesdalsmuseet in Rysstad is filled with incredible textiles used “from cradle to grave.” **Ose Ullvare** houses the studio of weaver/knitter/textile historian Annemor Sundbø. She has a wonderful collection of old knit objects and she’ll tell (and show) us the history of knitting in Norway. **Sjølingstad Uldvarefabrikk** in Mandal is a working textile mill museum that interprets the history of commercial spinning, dyeing, and weaving.

DAY 15 – Thur., July 3 KRISTIANSAND – GRIMSTAD B,D
The **Vest-Agder Fylkesmuseum** (regional museum) has an exceptional collection of *dansk brogd* or boundweave pick-up coverlets. **Else Marie Jakobsen** has been weaving for 50 years, creating more than 500 tapestries. After we look at what is on her loom, she will take us around to see her many works in public buildings in Kristiansand.

DAY 16 – Fri., July 4 GRIMSTAD – GJERSTAD – SKIEN B,L,D
Per Hoelfelt-Lund, owner the family business, will be our guide through the spinnery in Grimstad that makes **Norsk Kunstvevgarn**. **Holmen Gård** is the folk art training school run by Norges Husflidslag. After a tour of the complex, we’ll travel to Skien and visit tapestry teacher **Ingebjørg Vaagen**.

DAY 17 – Sat., July 5 SKIEN – KONGSBERG B,D
The **Telemark Museum** exhibits both the rural and urban culture of the county. **Lågdalsmuseet**, the regional museum for Numedal has interesting and unique coverlets, called Flessbergplegg, in a bound rosepath technique. A curator will tell us more about them.

DAY 18 – Sun., July 6 TØNSBERG – ASKER – OSLO B
We’ll visit the **Vestfold Folkemuseum** to see the rare *Vestfoldsmett* coverlets. We’ll also stop in Asker for a tour of **Labråten**, the home of Hulda and Arne Garborg. Hulda played a significant role in the folk costume revival movement that began around 1900.

DAY 19 – Mon., July 7 OSLO B,D
The Museum of Applied Art (**Kunstindustrimuseet i Oslo**) is home to one of Norway's oldest textiles, the Baldishol tapestry. They also have an excellent collection of 17th-century *billedvev* (pictorial tapestries with Biblical themes). **Norsk Folkemuseum** is Norway’s national museum of cultural history. Textile curator Kari-Anne Pedersen will talk to us about the museum and its impressive textile collection. The afternoon is free.

DAY 20– Tues., July 8 OSLO – MINNEAPOLIS/ST. PAUL B
The group departs Gardermoen airport on an early flight home (SAS to Chicago via Stockholm, UA from Chicago to MSP). Extensions can be arranged. Indicate your interest in an extension when you register.

WEAVING TEACHERS & WORKSHOPS

BILLEDVEV (PICTORIAL TAPESTRY) with INGEBJØRG VAAGEN

A native of Telemark, Ingebjørg attended Statens Lærerskole i Forming in Oslo to train as a weaving teacher. She taught weaving in Norway and then in Botswana for nine years. Ingebjørg is now Husflid Consultant for Telemark. She taught tapestry for Vesterheim in Norway in 1997 and in Decorah in 1999.

Ingebjørg’s own tapestry work is inspired by her years in Africa. She often incorporates copper wire in the weft for accent. For our workshop, she will teach traditional *billedvev*, the tapestry technique with hatched joins that was used in Norway in the 1500 and 1600s.

Students will design their own tapestry from old motifs or new ideas. Bring a small tapestry loom or arrange with Ingebjørg to have a simple frame loom ready in Voss for you to buy for a small fee. Students will share the cost of linen warp and shop at Husfliden in Voss for weft.

Class limit: 10 A good understanding of the weaving process is required. Supplies: small loom, scissors, tape measure, beater or fork, several blunt needles with large eyes, paper, and colored pencils or watercolors. Supply fee: approx. 35 N. kroner for warp paid to the teacher. The cost of weft will depend on the number of colors and will be paid to Husfliden.

SKILLBRAGD (COMPLEX OVERSHOT) with ÅSHILD FJOSE KLØVE

Åshild was born in Voss. Her interest in folk art began with woodcarving, but after a sewing and weaving course at Voss Husflidskule, she switched over to textiles. Currently, she teaches sewing and weaving in the 9-month art program at Voss Folkehøgskule (folk high school).

Voss has a long tradition of skillbragd textiles used for special occasions, such as christenings and weddings. The Voss *tepper* are made with several different categories of patterns on looms with nine harnesses and with both regular and long-eyed heddles. Students will work with Irish linen warp and Norsk Kunstvevgarn weft to create a runner (about 11" wide) in their choice of traditional patterns. On the first day, students will work in pairs on three looms to put the warp threads through the long-eyed pattern heddles and finish tying on.

Students will use the school's counter balance floor looms and buy warp and weft from the teacher. Class limit: 6 Students must be intermediate weavers with strong warping skills. Supplies: scissors, tape measure, several thin boat shuttles or stick shuttles, tapestry needles. Supply fee: approx. 350 N. kroner for warp and weft paid to the teacher. \$25 fee for loom rental and warping paid to Vesterheim.

WARP-WEIGHTED LOOM WEAVING with MARTA KLØVE JUUHL

Marta grew up in Voss and now lives in Indre Arna, near Bergen, where she teaches art at the high school level. She attended Statens Lærerskole i Forming in Oslo and taught weaving for 20 years. She has been active in projects, particularly in Voss and Arna, to register and reproduce old textiles.

As opposed to Sami warp-weighted loom (WWL) weaving that starts with warps from a woven band, west coast or Vestland-style WWL weaving starts by attaching warp yarns directly to the beam. The weaver uses two sheds for a variety of patterns and can pick up for *krokbragd*. Students will use traditional looms, linen warp, and wool weft to weave a *voggeteppe* or cradle blanket, based on old textiles. After warping and working together on the first several bands, students can choose from *krokbragd* and various inlay and pick up weaves.

Class limit: 6 Students must be intermediate weavers. No previous WWL experience necessary. Supplies: scissors, tape measure, tapestry needles, optional colored pencils and graph paper. Supply fee: approx. 250 N. kroner for warp and weft paid to the teacher. \$45 loom rental fee paid to Vesterheim.

SMALL PRINT

Reservations can be made with a deposit of US \$250 mailed to Vesterheim. The balance and a signed waiver are due by March 21, 2003. The deposit is refundable (minus a \$25 fee) until February 28, 2003.

The cost per person (double occupancy) is approximately US \$4,500 and includes round-trip coach airfare from Minneapolis/St. Paul. There will be an additional charge for a single room. Two single rooms may have to share a bathroom at Voss Folkehøgskule. Companions and individuals who do not take weaving workshops receive a discount of approx. US \$200. A limited number of companion/non-workshop spaces are available. The tour is limited to 35 persons and 2 leaders. A "land only" option is available for those who prefer to make all their own airfare arrangements. If you select the land-only option, you receive a discount of approx. US \$950.

Important: weaving workshops (WWL, skillbragd) are intermediate level; tour will involve walking and stairs, some long bus rides, and a boat trip; participants will carry their own luggage; some hotels may not have air conditioning; no refunds given for tour services not utilized.

Vesterheim Museum reserves the right to change the itinerary in the event of unforeseen circumstances.

Study Tour Features

- Round-trip coach airfare from Minneapolis/St. Paul
- Airport/hotel transfers for included flights
- Hotel and folk high school accommodations
- Buffet breakfast each morning
- Most lunches and dinners
- Ground transportation in a comfortable motor coach
- Six-day weaving workshop
- Entrance to sites described in the itinerary
- Guiding and lectures as described in the itinerary
- Packet of readings
- Tote bag

Not included

- Travel costs to connect with MSP
- Workshop supply fee and loom rentals
- Several lunches and dinners
- Travel and entrance fees for "time on your own"
- Companion travel and entrance fees for activities during class days
- Alcoholic beverages and a la carte meal items ordered during pre-planned meals
- Gratuities to bus drivers and Bergen city guide
- Travel and medical insurance, passport fees
- Expenses due to flight delays, strikes, bad weather, or other irregularities
- Airport taxes for those flying with the group.

* The final cost will be available in mid December.

June 19 to July 8, 2003

To hold your place for the 2003 Textile Study Tour to Norway, please complete this form and mail it with your payment of \$250 per person to Laurann Gilbertson at Vesterheim Museum, PO Box 379, Decorah IA 52101-0379. Registration is open first to Norwegian Textile Guild members, and is accepted on a first come, first served basis based on postmark date. Registrations accepted by mail only.

Please remember the following:

- ** Registrants for the skillbragd and WWL workshops must be intermediate weavers
- ** The tour will include walking and stairs, a few long bus rides, and a boat ride
- ** Tour participants will carry their own luggage

Please fill out one form for each person, copy form as necessary

Name (as it appears on passport): _____

Address: _____

Daytime Telephone: _____ Email: _____

_____ I prefer single occupancy (and will pay supplement).

_____ I would like to share a room with _____.

_____ I will not be taking a workshop (and will receive a discount)

_____ I would like to take a weaving workshop. Indicate order of preference.

- _____ Skillbragd
- _____ Warp-Weighted Loom
- _____ Billedvev

Brekke Tours of Grand Forks, ND, is the official travel agent for the 2003 Textile Study Tour to Norway. Reasonably-priced connecting flights and extensions in Bergen or Oslo are available.

_____ I would like to travel with the group through Minneapolis/St. Paul on June 19 and July 8 via NWA/KLM. My preferred home airport is: _____.

_____ I would like to work with Brekke to arrange extensions or different routes/airlines.

_____ I prefer to make all my own air travel arrangements and pay the "land only" fee.

_____ Check made out to Vesterheim Museum is enclosed for US \$250 per person

_____ Charge my credit card (Visa / MC / Discover) for the deposit of US \$250 per person.

Card number: _____ Expiration: _____

Signature: _____

The deposit of \$250 holds your place on the tour, applies toward the total tour fee, and is refundable (minus a \$25 fee) until February 28, 2003. The final payment is required by March 21, 2003. With your confirmation of registration, you will receive cost and cancellation information, workshop assignment, and a waiver agreement. Vesterheim must receive your signed waiver and full payment by March 21, 2003, for you to participate in the tour.

TWEEDS and FLEECE

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"ARTISAN CLOTHING: WEAVING AND DESIGN IN VADMEL"

Welcome to Vinje, Telemark
May 25 to June 6, 2003
Ingebjørg Vaagen, Eli Vesaas, Carol Colburn
Course Leaders

Each course participant should fill out a separate application blank. For your records, we suggest that you photocopy this registration form before sending.

Cost: Nkr. 14500.- per weaving participant. This includes fees for the course, lodging, local transportation during the course, and dinner every night. Breakfast and lunch will be at individual expense. (You will have your own kitchen.)

\$200.- (in U.S. dollars) deposit is due at the time of registration (\$100.- of this is non-refundable.) The amount of this payment will be subtracted from the total fee. The remaining amount will be due at the course start in Norwegian currency. Arrangements can be made in Vinje to exchange currency. A refund minus \$100.00 non-refundable charge will be granted if you need to cancel before May 1.

Material costs will be paid at the end of the course and will vary depending on the yardage required for your garment design. Approximate material cost for the vadmél cloth will be Nkr. 250 (about \$35) per meter.

Travel expenses and arrangements to and from Vinje, Telemark will be the responsibility of each individual. Vinje is accessible by express bus from Oslo. You will be picked up at the bus station. Enclosed please find my \$200.00 deposit for the course "Artisan Clothing: Weaving and Design in Vadrnel". I understand that the remainder of my course fee is due at start of the course.

SIGNATURE: _____

Please print

NAME: _____

STREET ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____ COUNTRY: _____

PHONE: (Home) _____ (Work) _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

My check # _____ or money order # _____ is enclosed payable to
Vinje Vadmél Course.

Please list any preferences that you have regarding accommodations:

WELCOME

We wish to welcome you to some exciting textile days in Vinje. The Vinje cultural area has a rich artistic past that is ongoing, and today has a central position in both Norwegian art and traditional crafts. Field trips to experience cultural offerings such as music events, fine art and craft exhibits will be included. The Vesaas farm has a weaving studio in a large converted barn. Weavers will share fully equipped houses on the farm or at a nearby farm. Olav and Eli Vesaas run the farm today with a combination of farming (Spelsau sheep), forestry, and traditional crafts such as blacksmith and silver work, weaving and knitting. Olav Vesaas is a silversmith and makes fine silver buttons, clasps, and jewelry in the Telemark style. These can be purchased at the farm to complement your garment design. The farm is beautifully situated at about 550 meter above sea level with a magic view of the mountains.

For more information contact:

Carol Colburn
1606 Merner Ave
Cedar Falls, Iowa 50613
Email: carol.colburn@uni.edu
Phone: (319) 273-2390

OR

Ingebjørg Vaagen
Husflid Consultant
Telemark, Norway
email: telemark@husflid.no

Deadline for Registration: February 15

Send Registration and Deposit Check to:

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Work: (319) 273-2390 Home: (319) 266-6386
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