

NORWEGIAN TEXTILE LETTER

Vol. III No. 1

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CONFERENCE UPDATE

Laurann Gilbertson, Vesterheim

Planning is well under way for the Conference on Norwegian Woven Textiles on October 24 and 25, 1997 held at Vesterheim Museum in Decorah, Iowa. You'll find the workshop schedule in this newsletter along with a page on the conference that you can share with others as a poster or flyer. You'll see that we have lots planned with tours, and show & tell, and a book signing. The conference will be an excellent opportunity for you to use Vesterheim's reference library, and to prepare you, we will include bibliographies in the upcoming newsletters. The first list is on geometric and pictorial tapestry.

The emphasis of the conference is on sharing information and meeting other Norwegian weaving enthusiasts. The planning committee (Laurann Gilbertson, Betty Johannesen, and Lila Nelson) invite you to participate and enjoy! Note: registration packets will come out in May or June.

It's not too soon to make housing arrangements. We have a block of rooms at the Super 8 Motel in Decorah. Rooms start at \$32 for a single. Call (319)283-8771 and be sure to tell them that you are with the weaving conference. Additional motels: Heartland Inn 382-2269, Cliff House 382-4241. Bed & Breakfasts: Broadway B & B 382-2329, Montgomery Mansion 382-5088. Decorah has a beautiful, wooded campground with showers 382-4518. If you have trouble finding housing, please call Vesterheim at (319)382-9681 for assistance.



Lectures Twelve speakers are confirmed. You'll recognize many of the names from articles and bios in the Norwegian Breakfast Letter. Amy Lightfoot is looking forward to attending and speaking on the textile traditions of coastal Norway. Aagot Noss will bring films on weaving, dyeing, and pleating *vadmål* (homespun) for men's and women's folk dress in Setesdal, Norway. She will also talk on band weaving. Marion Nelson will speak on the migration of weaving traditions to America at our banquet. That will be a breakfast banquet, of course!

← Sara Kadolph and Lila Nelson conserve a 17th century *billedvev*. Sara will discuss the practical and ethical considerations involved with the project.

Workshops You may have seen or heard about *dansk brogd* and Vestfold technique, but have you tried them? Vesterheim Museum is offering seven special workshops at conference time. Four workshops teach coverlet weaves from across Norway: double weave pick-up from the north, *dansk brogd* and Vestfold technique from the south, and *rutevev* from the west coast. Intermediate tablet weavers can learn brocade. Weavers, spinners, felters, and other fiber workers can dye

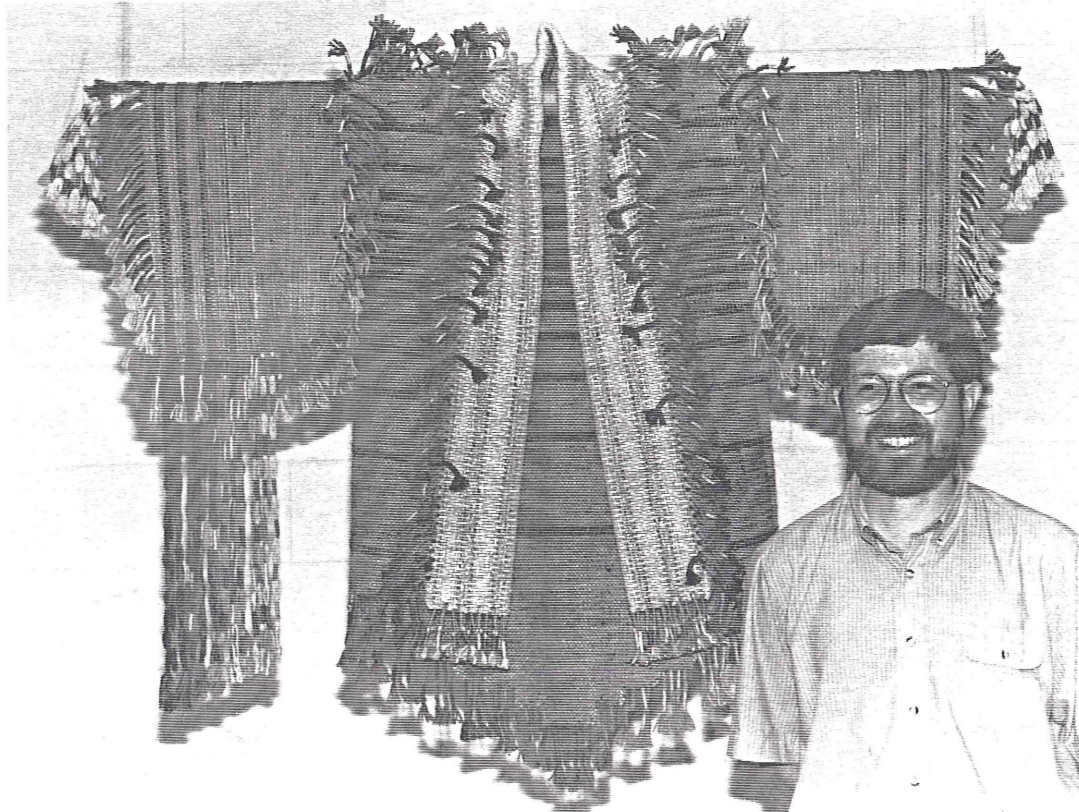
with lichens. And anyone with heirloom textiles (or textiles that will become heirloom) will appreciate advice on preserving them.

Vesterheim Museum members will not be getting the workshop schedule for another three months, so take advantage of the advanced listing. Registrations should be sent directly to Vesterheim. Please send newsletter subscriptions and submissions to Betty Johannesen.

→ Betty Johannesen's *dansk brogd* wall rug received a blue ribbon at the 1994 National Exhibition of Weaving in the Norwegian Tradition. Betty will teach this bound weave pick-up technique at Vesterheim from October 26-28, 1997.

Exhibits Because only a small number of Vesterheim's 6,000 textiles are on view in the main museum at any given time, the temporary galleries will be filled with three special exhibits. "*Håndveving / Handweaving: Norway and America*" is the title of three exhibits that look at the processes and products of weaving in Norway and in America by immigrants. Tools involved with "Creating the Tradition," such as spinning wheels, heddle makers, shuttles, looms, and mangles, are functionally and aesthetically beautiful. Contemporary weavings by Vesterheim Gold Medalists will be displayed with historical examples with similar design, technique, or end use in "Nurtured by Tradition." Some of Vesterheim's finest handwoven artifacts are featured in "Preserving the Tradition."

↓ Gold Medalist John Skare of Bricelyn, MN with one of his coats/hangings, which won best of show in the 1991 National Exhibition of Weaving in the Norwegian Tradition. John's weavings will be part of the "Nurtured by Tradition" exhibit.



20th Century Tapestry

Anniken Thue. **FRIDA HANSEN (1855-1931) EUROPEEREN I NORSK VEVKUNST.** Oslo: Kunstindustrimuseet. 1973. 78 pp. Exhibit catalogue. NK3060 .A3 H34

Albert Steen. **HANNAH RYGGEN.** Oslo: Aschenhoug. 1986. 95 pp. Study of the tapestries of Hanna Ryggen. Color photos. English translation of photo captions. NK3060 .A3 R9337

Katja Walden, et al. **HANNAH RYGGEN 1950.** Trondheim: Keller & Toft. 1963. 61 pp. Articles on Hannah Ryggen, her reflections, and poetry. Numerous full and detail color photos. NK3061 .R93 H3

Peter Anker. **SYNNØVE ANKER AURDAL, TRE GENERASJONER.** Oslo: Kunstindustrimuseet. 1974. 16 pp. Exhibition catalogue. NK3181 .N67 S96

Ragna Breivik. **BILLEDTEPPER.** Bergen. A.S. John Griegs. 1957. 17 pp. Tapestries woven by Ragna Breivik after illustrations by Gerhard Munthe. NK3060 .B54 B73

Marta Hoffmann. **1880-ÅRENES NYE BILLEDVEV I NORGE.** Veslandsk Kunstindustrimuseet Årbok offprint. 1963. 1963-1968. 39 pp. Revival of 17th century tapestry traditions in the 20th century. NK3060.H647

Østein Parmann. **NORSK BILLEDVEV.** Oslo: Dreyers. 1982. 116 pp. History of 20th century picture weaving in Norway, with reference to historic influences. NK3060 .A1 P3

TAPISseries NORVEGIENNES. Paris: Manufacture Nationale des Gobelins. 1971. 48 pp. Catalogue for exhibit of 20th century Norwegian tapestry weavers. In French. NK3060 .A1 H63

Instructional Books

Bjørge Kristiansen White. **BILLEDVEV.** Oslo: Gyldendal. 1980. 115 pp. Excellent diagrams of techniques with some cartoons folded in back. TT 848.W46

Maria Brekke Koppen. **INNFØRING I BILLEDVEV.** Oslo: Universitetsforlaget. 1978. 104 pp. Excellent technological information of traditional picture weaving techniques. Slip-sheeted English translation. TT850 .K66 I56

Maria Brekke Koppen. **VIDERFØRING I BILLEDVEV.** Oslo: Universitetsforlaget. 1981. 130 pp. Same technological information as in the above but with added contemporary techniques and photos of contemporary works. TT850 .K66 V52

Swedish Tapestry

Stina Carlsson, et al. **BILDVÄVNING.** Västerås: ICA. 1967. 48 pp. Introduction to tapestry weaving. Swedish. TT849 .C38

Maria Collin. **FLAMSKVÄV OCH FINNVÄV.** Stockholm: Åhlen & Akerlunds. 1927. 26 pp. History of Swedish tapestry and double weave. Brief technological information. NK3000 .C64 F52

Ernst Fischer and Gertrud Ingers. **FLASKVÄVNAD.** Västerås: ICA. 1961. 68 pp. The history of tapestry weaving in Sweden. Several chapters in English. TT850 .F57 F64

Vesterheim Museum Bibliography - Geometric and Picture Tapestry Books

Rutevev

Marit Wang. **RUTE ÅKLÆR**. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget. 1983. 184 pp. Study of Bergen Museum's coverlet collection (the largest in Norway). The first contemporary study of the square weave coverlets. 137 color photos and numerous diagrams. NK2860 .W3 R87

VESTLANDSK VEVKUNST. Bergen: John Griegs. 1929. 28 pp. Rutevev and billedvev from the west coast. 24 additional pages of plates, some color. NK8960 .L67 V47

Early Norwegian Tapestries

Hans Dedekam. **BALDISHOLTÆPPET**. Kristiania: Alb. Cammermeyer. 1918. 60 pp. Discussion of derivation of the Baldishol tapestry. NK3060 .D42 B3

Thor Kielland and Peter Anker. **NORWEGIAN TAPESTRIES**. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian. 1959-1960. 42 pp. Exhibit catalogue. Picture tapestries woven in Gudbrandsdal in the 17th century. NK3060 .A5

Thor B. Kielland. **NORSK BILLEDVEV 1550-1800**. Oslo: Gyldendal Norsk Forlag. 1955. Major study of traditional Norwegian picture weaving. English summary. (Vesterheim only has two of the three volumes.) NK3060 .K5

Vol. 2 Bøndenes Billedvevninger 1600-1800. 135 pp.

Vol. 3 Bruksvevninger I Bygdene. 120 pp.

Thor Kielland. **NORSK BILLEDVEV GJENNOM 400 ÅR 1540-1940**. Oslo: Kirstes. 1946. 46 pp. Catalogue for an exhibit of tapestries at the Kunstindustrimuseet in Oslo. NK3181 .N67 K53

H. Grosch. **GAMMEL NORSK BILLEDVÆVNING IN THE KUNSTINDUSTRIMUSEET, KRISTIANIA**. Berlin: Asher & Co. 1889. 26 pp. Picture weaving in the collection of the Applied Arts Museum in Oslo. NK3060 .K76 G76

H. Grosch. **GAMMEL NORSK VÆVKUNST**. Kristiania: Mittet & Co. 1913-1922. Vols. 1-10. Color plates of the pillow collection at the Kunstindustrimuseet. Weaving techniques are primarily billedvev and halv-flossa. NK3060 .K7 G35

Karin Mellbye. **BILLEDVEVNINGEN I NORGE UNDER RENESSANSEN**. Oslo: Kunstindustrimuseet. 1932. 149 pp. Renaissance pictorial tapestries at the Applied Arts Museum. NK3060 .M34

Aase Bay Sjøvold. **NORSK BILLEDVEV**. Oslo: C. Huitfeldt. 1976. 88 pp. History of Norwegian picture weaving. Some color photos. NK3060 .S68 N67

F. P. Thomson. **TAPESTRY, MIRROR OF HISTORY**. New York: Crown. 1980. 224 pp. Basic history of western tapestry up to the 20th century. Includes references to Scandinavian tapestry. Appendix of tapestry marks from known European ateliers. NK3000 .T65 T38

COVERLETS IN NORWEGIAN MUSEUMS

Last summer on our family trip to Norway, we found some museums that may be of interest to other weavers and lovers of Norwegian textiles. We visited the Vest-Agder Fylkesmuseum, just a short bus ride east of Kristiansand, to look at the two Danskbragd coverlets in their collection. I was especially interested in these since I am coordinating the NBC study group on this unusual weave structure. I was thrilled to walk into the main building exhibit area and see the walls covered with wonderful coverlets including five rutevev or square weave rich in color and design. There was also a krokbragd and rya coverlet, a combination monk's belt and krokbragd and one of the Danskbragd coverlets that included bands of krokbragd on a dark brown background. Much of the weaving at this exhibit seemed to me to be quite innovative and unusual. The staff at this museum were very gracious in honoring my interest in Danskbragd, finding the other piece in their collection in the storage area, and allowing me to photograph and document both pieces.

When in Bergen we traveled to another county museum. The Hordamuseet was at a gorgeous location between a fjord and a sheep farm. There we saw the remarkable

tapestries of Ragna Breivik. Included in this collection is a set of 10 very large tapestries that tell the Norwegian folktale of Åsmund Frægdegjeva and his rescue of a princess from Trollbotten, the home of the trolls. Ragna spent 25 years on these tapestries, woven after the watercolors by Gerhard Munthe. All of the wool was dyed with natural dyes, then carded and spun to produce many different colors and shades. Ragna's apostle series is also on display at Hordamuseet. These lifesize tapestries are also made with hand dyed and spun yarns. What an incredible exhibit!

While in Trondheim, we visited the Nordenfjeldske Kunstindustrimuseum or the National Museum of Applied Art, located within a block of Nidaros Cathedral. The highlight for me was seeing 13 tapestries woven by Hannah Ryggen. Her work was woven without the aid of a cartoon. It is often opinionated and heroic. She fiercely defended individual freedom and free thought. During WW2 she wove protest tapestries under the noses of Norway's occupiers who only regarded her art as women's work. In addition to the work of Hannah Ryggen, the museum has a very extensive exhibit of Norwegian weavings arranged chronologically, including wise and foolish virgin billedvev, coverlets, transparencies, contemporary tapestries and much,

much more. There is also a large exhibit area, with changing exhibits that featured interesting contemporary weavings when we visited. What an exciting and heavenly place for a weaver! I hope that other weavers who have the opportunity to visit any of these museums will enjoy them as much as I did.

Jan Mostrom

TRANSLATIONS DONATED TO VESTERHEIM

The translations given to Vesterheim's archives by NBC member Joan Nilsson of Seattle, WA, provide valuable information and insights into the history of billedvev weaving in Norway.

THREE PICTURE TAPESTRIES FROM GUDBRANDSDAL: AN IDENTIFICATION (1961) by Alfred Boe discusses the probable relationship among three billedvev, one with an unknown history, a 1960 purchase by Nordenfjeldske Kunstindustrimuseum from a London art dealer and the other two well-known objects in the Norsk Folkmuseum and the Oslo Kunstindustrimuseum. Through a close investigation of format, weaving techniques, colors, inscriptions, and estate records, Boe presents an impressive argument for all three tapestries having been woven in 1760

in one atelier, if not by one individual weaver.

BIBLICAL MOTIFS IN NORWEGIAN PEASANT TAPESTRIES FROM THE 17TH AND 18TH CENTURIES (1989) by Hakon A. Andersen argues that the picture tapestries played an active religious role. He sees their Biblical motifs as all connected with the corporal and spiritual aspects of marriage and the tapestries as depicting the relationship between the bridegroom Christ and his bride on earth.

THE WOVEN TAPESTRY FROM GUSTAFSBERG'S ORPHANAGE; A CONTRIBUTION TO THE DISCUSSION, (1963) by Ernest Fischer, attempts to establish the origin of a tapestry with many biblical motifs, a central Tree of Life dividing scenes of the Old Testament on the left from the New Testament on the right. His exhaustive research leads him to the conclusion that the work derives from a professional source in the Schleswig-Holstein areas of northern Europe, possibly at the beginning of the 17th century.

Joan Nilsson has provided Xeroxes of three other articles on Norwegian tapestries which we would very much like to see translated:

“Hoffet i haven och Salomos visdom”
by Ernst Fischer

“Gamle tepper -- ny inspirasjon” by
Else Halling

The above are from ARBOK 1972-75,
Kunstindustrimuseet i Oslo

“Omkring et billedteppe fra Skjak by
Roar Huglid from ARBOK 1961,
Foreningen til Norske
fortidsminnesmerkers bevaring.

If you know of translations or of a
possible translator for one or all of
these articles, please communicate
with us. In fact, if you know of
translations on any aspect of
traditional Norwegian weaving,
tell us!

Lila Nelson

Karen Diadick Casselman's article on
Celtic and Norse lichen dyes appeared
in the fall 1996 issue of Handwoven
magazine, and she has just published a
monograph, LICHEN DYES: A
SOURCEBOOK, that also contains
information on Norwegian lichen dyes.

FOR THE LOOM

SKILLBRAGD

SMÅLANDVEV

Skillbragd “This weave is very old.
Samples have been found in Viking
burial ships dating back to 850 AD.
There are many surviving pieces of
skillbragd dating back to 1100 AD.

and 1200 AD. It was used for
coverlets, and table runners that had
bands of pattern across a ground of
linen tabby.” ... Ulla Suul, Norwegian
weaving teacher at Vesterheim.

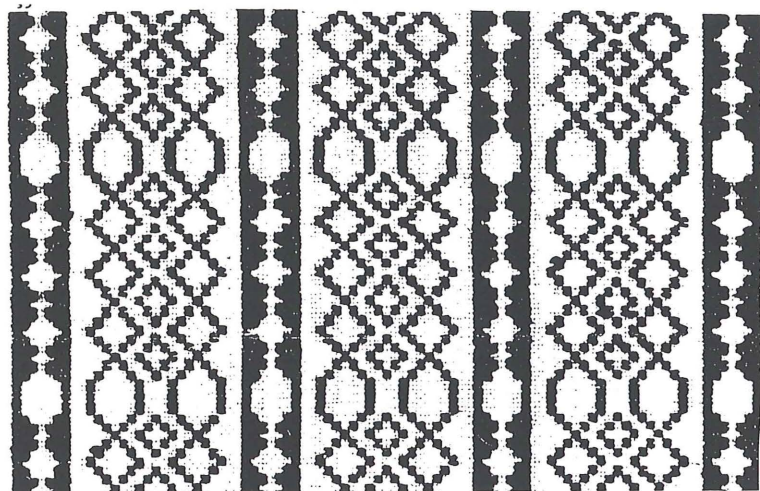
“Smålandvev, actually the name of a
woven cloth, has today become the
term used to describe a special
weaving technique. It's a variety of
opphämta with special and regular
patterning. The number of pattern
shafts can vary from 3 to 5.

This type of weave can be found in
many different places in Sweden and
under various names. It can be called
Västgöta coverlet, Härjedal weave, Li
coverlet, Mora coverlet, Spröta
coverlet, Åseda weave, American
coverlet and Vunka coverlet. It can be
traced back to the 1500's.”
.....Lillemor Johansson, DAMASK
AND OPPHÄMTA

Members of our Ethnic Study Group
demonstrated this type of weave at
Iron World in 1989 and again in 1992.
We used a 2 shaft loom with long-
eyed heddles threaded with tabby for
the ground cloth. Three or 4 pattern
heddle sticks behind the tabby shafts
created the pattern sheds which were
kept open with a weaving sword while
the pattern weft was inserted. On this
loom, it meant standing up to lift and
weave each pattern row. . . a lot of up
and downing, and very slow.
However it created beautiful runners
and it was fun to demonstrate how a

simple 2 shaft loom can be stretched to do complex weaves.

Pattern threadings are given below for our two efforts:



- Repeat for center of cloth - | Border



1989 . . . Pattern adapted from a weaving magazine. I can't remember which one . . . probably Weavers Journal .



| Center



1992 Pattern designed by Carol Sperling, part of which is used in the sample.

The pattern lifts go under the white areas. Two ground threads per square.

Sample: Warp: 22/2 cotton

Weft 22/2 cotton for the ground, pattern thread is 2x the size of the ground weft.

EPI 24

Woven as overshot

Carol Sperling

Note: Carol is a member of the Ethnic Study Group, Range Fiberart Guild.

TABLET WEAVING - IN TRUE NORDIC TRADITION

Sonja Berlin has written a Swedish book about tablet weaving in the Nordic area, with a good English translation .

NBC member, Ruth Beck supplied the following information for ordering the book:

From USA:

Price of book + bankcharge + postage

Example:

236 +65 +104 =405: Swedish crowns

Paying through the bank:

Swedbank S-105 34 Stockholm

Swiftaddress: SWEDSESS

Brickvavnad, Sonja Berlin AB

Box 2117, 390 02 KALMAR, SWEDEN

account: 8169-5-663 013 651 0

Ruth suggests that the book can also be ordered directly from Vav Magasinet. Each issue has a form in the back for ordering books.

The Norwegian Breakfast Club's
Conference on Norwegian Woven Textiles
October 24-25, 1997

Hosted by Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum
Decorah, Iowa

Formal Papers

Keynote speakers

- Amy Lightfoot (Hitra, Norway) on the textile traditions in coastal Norway, • Aagot Noss (Norsk Folkemuseum - retired) on band weaving and "homespun" folk dress in Setesdal, • Kari-Anne Pedersen (Norsk Folkemuseum) about the textiles at Norway's national museum [invited]

Historic and contemporary handwoven Norwegian textiles

- Carol Colburn (Univ. of Northern Iowa) on historic Norwegian fashionable garments of handwoven fabric, • Sara Kadolph (Iowa State Univ.) on the conservation of a 17th c. tapestry at Vesterheim, • Lila Nelson (Vesterheim - retired) on registering *åklær* in private and museum collections, • Barb Schweger (Univ. of Alberta) on Norwegian textiles in Canadian collections

Fibers, and the processes and equipment used to prepare and weave them

- Karen Casselman (Cheverie, Nova Scotia) on *korkje*, a Norwegian lichen dye, • Janet Meany (Duluth, MN) with an old looms discussion, • Patricia Hilts (Marshall, WI) on Norwegian spinning wheels in America, • Kate Martinson (Luther College) on teaching basic college-level weaving with an emphasis on Norwegian techniques [invited]

The role of textiles in everyday life and on special occasions

- Kay Larson (Bainbridge Island, WA) on Norwegian *åklær* (coverlets), • Jo Nilsson (Seattle, WA) on 17th century picture tapestry [invited], • Kathleen Stokker (Luther College) on protective symbols on Norwegian textiles and looms [invited]

Informal reports / Show and Tell

- Ann Haushild (St. Paul, MN) on *krokbragd* with rags, • Jan Mostrom (Chanhassen, MN) with a report from the *krokbragd/dansk brogd* study group

Workshops

Rutevev (geometric tapestry), Lichen Dyeing, Tablet Weaving and Brocading, Double Weave Pick-up, Textile Conservation, *Dansk brogd* (bound weave pick-up), Vestfold Technique (tabby with inlay)

Breakfast Banquet - Authentic Norwegian Frokost

- Marion Nelson (Vesterheim - retired) on the migration of Norwegian weaving traditions to America

Book signing Kay Larson and "The Coverlets of Norway"

Guided tours of the museum, conservation lab, and textile storage

Exhibits "*Håndveving/Handweaving: Norway and America*" is made up of three exhibits of handwoven textiles. "*Creating a Tradition*" includes tools for preparing fibers and weaving cloth. "*Nurtured by Tradition*" combines contemporary weavings by Vesterheim Gold Medalists with historical compliments. "*Preserving the Tradition*" highlights Vesterheim's collection. There will be an exhibition catalog to accompany "*Preserving the Tradition*."

Contact person: Laurann Gilbertson, Vesterheim Museum, 502 W. Water, Decorah IA 52101
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CLASSIFIEDS?????

Karen Casselman has suggested that we might include a small classified section in the NORWEGIAN TEXTILE LETTER. if you are interested contact Betty Johannesen.

NEW MEMBERS

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