

Alaska: America's Last Frontier!

Alaska, the 49th State of the Union, is often called "the Last Frontier" and for good reason. Over half of the wilderness areas of America are in Alaska. The beauty of its wilderness is famous throughout the world.

Alaska and Norway: Two Areas with a lot in common

Norway and Alaska have a great deal in common. They share the same latitudes, and the benefits and challenges shared by residents of northern lands, including the ones posed by climate change. The residents of both lands are both known for their intense love of their rugged, beautiful homelands. They share many of the same industries: oil, fishing and tourism. One might say that one way to learn about Norway is to learn about Alaska.

Petersburg: Alaska's "Little Norway"

Petersburg, Alaska's "Little Norway" was founded more than 100 years ago by Norwegian fishermen. Petersburg was named after Peter Buschmann, a Norwegian immigrant who arrived in the late 1890s and homesteaded on the north end of Mitkof Island. He built a cannery, a saw mill, and a dock between 1890 and 1900. His family's became modern day Petersburg and for many years was populated largely by people of Scandinavian descent.

Petersburg continues to celebrate its Norwegian heritage. On the third full weekend of May, travelers from all over Alaska flock to Petersburg for its "Little Norway Festival" or "Mayfest." The five-day festival is one of the biggest Syttende Mai celebrations in the world.

Alaska: One of the Four States in District 2

District 2 of the Sons of Norway consists of lodges from four states: Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Alaska. Members from lodges in Alaska usually have to travel to the lower three states to attend district events but that is not going to be the case in August of 2017!

Field Trip Destination: Alaska!

August 12th-19th, 2017, a group of Unge Venner and youth from lodges all over District 2 will participate in an education field trip to Petersburg, Alaska. There they will learn about how Petersburg became "Little Norway," the history of Norwegian-Americans in Petersburg and Alaska, explore the wildlife and natural areas of Mitkof Island and the surrounding waters, participate in cultural workshops, and get to know fellow members of the Sons of Norway in Petersburg. They will fly to Petersburg on Saturday, August 12th via Alaska Airlines, stay at the homes of Fedrelandet Lodge #23 members, learn about the area, perform an important community service project on Wednesday, August 16th, and return home on Saturday, August 19th with memories and new friends that will last a lifetime.

So, what do I have to do to go?

Fill out the enclosed application and return it with a \$100 deposit by March 1st. Please make check payable to "District 2" and write "Alaska trip" on the reference line. If there are more applicants than space available then a committee designated by the District 2 president will decide. The total cost of the trip will be \$1,000 per participant, including travel by Alaska Airlines, but could ultimately prove lower when we know how much of a trip discount we will receive. (The final discount will be determined when we have informed Alaska Airlines knows exactly how many participants will travel from which airport.) Participants need to be from ages 13-23, members of a District 2 lodge or children, grandchildren, stepchildren, nieces or nephews of one. There will be one chaperone for every four trip participants. Chaperones and host home providers will undergo background checks if they have not already had one recently through District 2. Participants are welcome to seek help from their lodges.

How can I help?

You can donate to make the trip possible or more affordable for the young participants. If you want to donate, please make the check payable to "District 2" and write "Alaska trip donation" on the reference line. Please send the check to the address as follows: Vicki Nelson, District 2 treasurer, 8724 209th Place SW, Edmonds, WA 98026

You can also apply to serve as a chaperone. We need one chaperone for every four participants ages 13-23. Chaperones will need to agree to a background check if they have not had one through District 2 recently. Sorry, chaperones will need to pay their own way but it will be worth the trip. The District 2 President and Youth Director will serve as chaperones.

Finally, lodges are encouraged to help their young people and chaperones participate in this field trip. It is hoped that not only will the participants benefit from the learning experience but so will our lodges, District 2 and the Sons of Norway as a whole. Who knows? The lessons learned and benefits derived from this trip might help inspire other trips in the future to other locations, including Norway itself. The feeling of accomplishment just from successfully executing this trip will inspire our members, lodges, district and organization and show that our best days are in our future, not our past.

Please contact me at 971-284-4175 or norseherodotus@hotmail.com if you have any questions or want to help in any way.

Fraternally,

David Champion
Youth Director
District 2-Sons of Norway