Reunion 2015 Plans Are Being Made

by Iris Othrow

Registration packets will be mailed in April 2015 for the July 31, August 1 and 2, 2015 Benrud Family Reunion. Extensive plans are underway! There are both new events and activities from the past for your participation.

The theme for our reunion is Honoring Our Roots. We will be paying a special tribute to Ole Christian who was the brother of Anton, Lena, Carl, Olava, and Maren and died at the age of 23 leaving no immediate heirs. As usual T-shirts and other goods with this theme will be available for you to order ahead of time. Watch for a picture and description in your registration materials.

Friday night will bring a return to the La Crosse Queen Steamboat cruise on the Mississippi river. This will run from 7:30 - 9 pm and include pizza, beer, and soda. This has proven to be a fun activity for all ages but, there are limited spaces available (149) so send your registration in as soon as possible after you receive it in April.

At the headquarter hotel, Days Hotel and Conference Center, you will find the history displays, swimming at the hotel pool, the silent auction and most activities on Saturday. These will include Kubb, heritage classes, genealogy, children’s games and more. The bus tour with stops at family farms, local churches, and Norskedalen will include a box lunch, and special tour of the Benrud Little White Chapel. It will leave from the hotel. Saturday evening will include a casual supper with a choice of a taco bar with all the trimmings or an American burger, or hot dog with accompanying sides. After supper Hans Peterson and Hannah Kalisch will entertain us. We will also have a short family business meeting and live auction in the evening. We’re also working on Norwegian beer tasting and a young people’s electronic game room.

Sunday will begin with a church service at North Coon Prairie Lutheran Church in Newry. Rev. Edith Roberts is working with Hans and Hannah on the service. Ole Christian is buried in the cemetery here, and we have arranged for a new marker for his grave. Pictures will be taken and lunch will be catered by Borgen’s of Westby. And there will be more to come!

As you can see there is ample variety and we aim to have something for everyone to enjoy participating in. Come for the fun and get to know your extended family. One more special thing about this reunion...there will be no registration fee! We will count on your donation to cover the extra expenses. Where there are direct costs involved (food, class expense etc.) you will be asked to pay those charges. Watch for all these details on your registration forms in April.

We have secured a good price of $84.00 that includes breakfast at the Day's Hotel, and hope you will plan to stay there. However, there is an abundance of alternative lodging in the La Crosse area. Please check the following website http://www.explorelacrosse.com/places-to-stay/ for a variety of accommodations. Some family members are looking at the Stoney Creek Hotel and Conference Center as a place to spend the night and join us during the day at Day's Hotel. Again, there will be more information in your registration materials in April.

I look forward to seeing you at our Benrud Family Reunion 2014, “Honoring Our Roots.”

This poster was posted by Diane Piper on Facebook and reminds me of our 2015 reunion theme. If you haven’t joined the Benrud Family Facebook Page, please do so. Reunion information and other family information and pictures can be posted there by anyone who is a member. Check it out!
Dan Kobler has launched our new Benrud Family website. He has added content and pictures as he has received them. Please send him news and pictures from reunions at dan@dakobler.com. Check it out at http://benrudfamily.org/
Mike and Iris Othrow recently returned from an enjoyable trip on a catamaran to some of the islands in Greece. Katie Kildahl graduated December 13, 2013 from UW Oshkosh (left). She is shown here with her grandparents Joan and Russell Stenslien. Picture on right is Hannah Kildahl with her mother Paula at her graduation June 8, 2014 from Twin Lakes High School.

Eighteen-year-old Tripp Soma, right, holds a 46-inch muskie caught by his brother Carter, 6, on July 9 on Lake Waubesa in McFarland, WI.

Erin Othrow and PJ Mee are engaged. They plan to be married May 24, 2015. They are living in Sun Prairie, WI. Erin is the daughter of Jon and Kitty Othrow of Menasha, WI.

Stacey Leiback and Matthew Swanson were married Saturday, August 16, 2014 at Calvary Community Church, St. Cloud, MN. Stacey is the daughter of Edward and Christine Leiback of Swansboro, NC. Matt is the son of Wayne and Carolyn Benrud Swanson of Crystal, MN. The couple are making their home in St. Cloud. Stacey is employed at Camp Lebenon, Upsula, MN where she works with Women’s Ministry and Matt is the Bible teacher for grades 7 – 12 at St. Cloud Christian School, St. Cloud, MN.

David and Joslyn Benrud were married August 23, 2014. They reside in Stoughton, WI. Paul and Martha Benrud are David’s parents.

ANTON BRANCH

CARL BRANCH
Engwal Grant Vevang and Mary Jean Vevang (nee Wiesen) celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on October 3, 2013 while on vacation in Minocqua, Wisconsin with their children and grandchildren. Grant is the son of the late Grace Olson Vevang, daughter of Peter Olson, son of Maren & Carl Olson. Grant & Mary Jean reside in Palatine, IL.

It is with sadness that we also tell you that E. Grant Vevang died on Oct. 5, 2014. He served on the Benrud Family Board of Directors in the 1990's. He is survived by his wife, Mary Jean, children Marianne (Robert) Groenland, Jo Anne (Michael) Kumar and Karen (David) Bell seven grandchildren and four great-grandchildren, and brothers Gordon and Curtis. Grant will be remembered by all for his friendliness, sense of humor, generosity and devotion to family. He was a WWII Navy Veteran and co-owner of Midwest Shipping Supplies. Find full obituary at: http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/dailyherald/obituary.aspx?pid=172726557

Greg Olson and Karen Markwardt were united in marriage October 18th in La Crosse, Wisconsin.

Danielle Piper spent the past summer traveling and studying in Peru before returning to study at Edgewood College in Madison, WI. She will study in Germany from February until July 2015.

Dustin Piper graduated from Bangor High School on May 25, 2014. He is attending Western Wisconsin Technical College and is the son of Diane and Dale Piper.

Conrad Anton Backus, 7 lbs. 11 oz., 21 inches, was born August 14, 2014, to Chris and Sophorn Backus in Seattle, Washington area. Julie and Lane Backus are Conrad's grandparents.
Q & A With Kaia Lee Seefelt and Hans Peterson

Those who attended the Benrud reunion in 2010 may remember the song that Hans Peterson wrote and performed to represent the Olava branch. Roger Benrud and Dorothy Twesme asked him to record that song and were generous in helping make that happen. *Olava’s Song* is one of 17 songs on his forthcoming album entitled *Every Breath I Sing.*

Here Kaia Lee Seefelt asks Hans about his new project:

**KLS:** At what age did you start playing music/instrument and under what circumstances? At school, at home?

**HP:** I have a photo of myself as a toddler playing ukulele with my Grandpa Lindy Peterson (grandson of Olava). I didn’t start playing piano until 5th grade. My younger sister was going through chemotherapy for bone cancer. With so much focus on Kari, a woman from our church in Anchoroge, AK wondered if I might be interested in trying out piano. She gave lessons for free for the first year. I ended up studying piano for 5 years. When my mom said that I would quit if I didn’t take lessons, I set out to prove her wrong.

**KLS:** Were there any family members who had influence on you regarding music & learning to play?

**HP:** Singing was a big part of growing up. Dad sang in several choirs. We all sang in the car on road trips. Mom played the piano, both by ear and by reading notes.

**KLS:** Tell us about the songs on this CD.

**HP:** This new CD is my 5th solo recording project and is filled with story songs. Besides Olava’s journey from Norway to Wisconsin, these are some of the themes that run through the album: taking care of Grandma in her last days, delighting in a child as he grows, and Olava’s grandson running a little grocery store in Cashton. The CD also has three beautiful instrumentals, including two of Scandinavian origin: Midsommarvalsen (Swedish) and Josefín’s Dopvals (Josefin’s Baptismal Waltz – Norwegian).

**KLS:** I can tell you are excited about this project. Say more.

**HP:** This project contains some of my most mature songwriting. Scott Jibben, who engineered and co-produced the album is a pro. I really like how the musical arrangements unfold. Some are sparse with minimal instrumentation (ie piano and violin). Other songs have the entire band including drums, bass and percussion. The project has some fabulous musicians involved too. Hannah Kalisch, who toured with Lori Line, plays some phenomenal fiddle. Peter Mayer, one of Jimmy Buffet’s guitar players is a friend; he sings and plays guitar on a couple songs. Many people are familiar with Peter Ostroushko because of his amazing mandolin playing and frequent appearance on Prairie Home Companion. These outstanding players add finesse and mastery to the solid base of players with whom I normally work.

**KLS:** What advice do you have as a musician and as a parent to instill a love of music in our children?

**HP:** We approach music in our household as a passion to nurture and a routine to establish. Our two boys are expected to take private music lessons until they graduate from high school. It is becoming more difficult with our 16 year-old, Nelson, due to academics and their children. For example, I sent the picture of my grandparents, Ole and Mae Olson and their children. Send your photos to Dan Kobler: dan@dankobler.com or to his home: 2325 Humboldt Street, Denver CO 80205.

In the 2015 Family Tree, we plan to add a more detailed map of the family farms, churches and cemeteries, as well as stories from each of the family branches. The bus for a tour of the area on Saturday, August 1st, which includes a box lunch and a visit to the Benrud Little White Chapel at Norskedalen. If you prefer to “do the tour” on your own, there will be a packet of information at the registration table with maps for you to pick up.

If you have questions, comments or historical stories to share, please contact me. (See contact information for Historian.) I always enjoy talking with my cousins! Marie Peterson Marin
We Need Everyone’s Help for the 2015 Benrud Silent Auction!

It is not too early to start thinking about the Reunion Silent Auction. This event is our primary moneymaker and is SO important to the continued success of future reunions. We use the funds raised to help meet our many reunion expenses and to cover costs of the annual newsletter.

We depend on you to bring items for this event. Home made craft items, children’s art, or bakery are always great. The reunion in 2015 will feature baskets. Pictured here are two examples. Any theme works for an interesting basket.

If you’ve never participated in a silent auction, it’s great fun. You just put your name and bid on the accompanying sheet and then another person may come along and bid higher but you can then bid over them. The highest bid gets the item when the auction closes on the Saturday night of the reunion.

We are also planning a live auction on Saturday night of some special things. Please be thinking about whether you have an item to donate that will be suitable for this type of auction.

Enjoy creating a basket for the silent auction and looking for that special something for a live auction.

Diane Piper, silent auction chair

New and Fun Family's First Competitive Kubb Game

by Kristin Ott

Are you one of the last Scandinavians on your block not playing the ancient Nordic game Kubb??(Pronounced koob) This fun game is gaining wild popularity in the Midwest and the U.S. National championship is even in Eau Claire Wisconsin. Join us for a morning of learning and then playing this Viking game that has you throwing things and knocking stuff down. This is a game that can be played by any age, on any surface, and you don’t need to be an Olympic athlete to participate. You just need to be able to throw a piece of wood underhand, and then pick up the pieces and throw them again. The fallen pieces keep track of the score and there are no refs. As few as two can play, or 12, and the teams do not have to be even. Pretending to be a Viking is fun and good natured taunting at your opponent (or family member) that include Thor, Odin and Loki make it even more fun. If you do have this game, please bring it to the reunion and join in the merriment.

Go to usakubb.org or google Kubb to see pictures and learn more about this game.
Family Tree Update Form
Family Branch (circle one) Maren, Olava, Lena, Carl, Anton

Please use the form below, or or the form on our web site (www.benrudfamily.org) to send new information and changes only to:

Julie Backus
891 N. Roadrunner Rd.
Apache Junction, AZ 85119
You can call 414-745-4362 or e-mail to Jewelsdi@yahoo.com, too.

Name______________________________________________________________________________
First                                Middle                                Maiden                                       Last
Address____________________________________________________________________________
City                                          State or Province                             Zip or Postal Code                              Country
Phone _____________________________________________________________________________
E-Mail_____________________________________________________________________________
Occupation/Hobby___________________________________________________________________
Marital Status (Circle one) Single, Married, Divorced, Widow, Widower
Marriage/Divorce____________________________________________________________________
(Circle One)                                   Name of Spouse                 Birth date of Spouse                    Date of Marriage or Divorce
Birth/Adoption______________________________________________________________________
Name of child                                Location of birth                                  Date of Birth and adoption
Death______________________________________________________________________________
Name                                           Date                         Burial Location                              Cause of death

Give full names, including maiden name and dates, place of birth, cause of death, location of burial, complete data on new spouses and children, and any other information that will make your family records more complete. Also, send obituaries and other news printed information to Julie.

Optional Additional Historical Information  This can include the date and location of, Baptism, Confirmation, Retirement, Education, Schools attended and graduation dates, Church affiliation, Social organizations, Civic involvement, Volunteer Activities, any honors or awards, and anything else.
Benrud Reader (Iris Othrow editor)

Julie Backus
891 N. Roadrunner Rd.
Apache Junction, AZ 85119

at the Days Hotel.
Crosses, Wi area with our main headquarters.
The reunion will again be held in the La.
The theme will be Honoring Our Roots
July 31, August 1 and 2, 2015.
and interesting reunion for you.
We are working hard to plan an enjoyable
Happy Thanksgiving!
Your Benrud Board wishes you a

Update From
Kubb – Kristin Ott
Pp 2015 Benrud Silent Auction
Pp 5 Q&A with Hans Peterson
Pp 3 Family News
Pp 4 Benrud Family Website
Pp 2 Keep in Touch
Pp 1 Officers and Directors

In This Issue