



Norseman News

Leif Ericson Viking Ship *Norseman*

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Spring 2010 Edition

www.vikingship.org

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Save the DateCover

LEVS

Mission Statement

1. To educate Americans about Leif Ericson as the first European to discover and settle on the North American continent.
2. To promote knowledge and a realistic historic image of Viking people as merchants, navigators, shipbuilders, artists, explorers and warriors.
3. To provide sail training and practice in recreating the experience of traveling on water as Vikings did a thousand years ago.

Distributed 3 times a year

Spring Has Sprung & Work Has Begun

After our season ended last fall, the crew inspected the *Norseman* for wear and tear, as the ship is nearing 20 years old. We found that there were some soft spots on the deck, the rigging rope needed to be replaced along with the dead eyes, the mast fish (the base that holds the mast to the ship) had some rot, and the crew boxes have also shown wear. So, this spring, the crew - mostly Dave Segermark, Steven Clarke, and Dave "Wolf" Sutton - set out to make the needed repairs.

Steven was the deck master - he cut out the area of the deck that needed to be repaired, replaced the support beams, cut a new board for the deck, sealed and fiberglass coated the patch. It should be leak-proof at this point! The only remaining work on the deck of the ship is to thoroughly clean and repaint the interior of the ship.

Dave stripped the 200' of rigging rope. The new rope is going to be coated with "net-dip" to make it look aged, and we have two volunteers (Kristopher Lundgren and Len Gustafsson) lined up to help us splice it. Dave also met with Ron Brown who has volunteered to rewire the *Norseman* to meet Coast Guard specs. We familiarized him with the ship, explained our needs and requirements for the ship. He will present a plan to Dave soon.

The three re-rigged the hoists for the



Steven, working on the deck.

oars, yard and mast, using better pulleys and new rope. The mast fish was also repaired, and will be replaced on the deck once the deck has been painted. Dave Sutton is working with a relative to create crew box "kits" - we hope to soon announce a work party in which people can build their own box (and perhaps decorate it as desired)!

There is still much to be done, though, and we need YOUR help!! If you can, please help with:

- painting the deck of the ship
- sanding/varnishing the mast & yard
- sanding and painting the shields
- cleaning/reinforcing our old crew chests until the new ones are built
- cleaning the hull so the *Norseman* looks good again
- plus other work around the shipyard (cleaning out our shed, etc.)

If you're interested in helping, please look at our calendar on our website for work party dates and verify with Dave Segermark (info@vikingship.org or 410-275-8516) to confirm before going.

LEVS

Norseman News

The Norseman News is distributed 3 times a year through mailings, our web site, and handouts at events. Our readers consist of mainly Scandinavian-Americans including members, friends and others who have shown interest in our mission, Vikings and Leif Ericson.

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Newsletter Editor

Karen Johnson

neditor@vikingship.org

If you would be interested in downloading current issues of the Norseman News from the website after an email notification, please email the editor.

LEVS & The Norseman In Numbers

Number of events over five years (approximately 14 events/year)



Approximately 40,000 visitors per year (50-150 per school event, 6,000 per multi day events & 20,000 in Brooklyn alone!)

Plus: countless pit stops made, brochures handed out, interesting questions asked, new friends made, restaurant & fair food eaten, pictures taken, and fun had!



Average of 3,150 miles driven a year. (18,800 miles total in 6 years)

Average of five volunteers per event



A Note from the President

[Editor's Note: The following letter was sent out to our members in the beginning of the year, but since our newsletter reaches a wider audience, we've decided to reprint the letter here. We are pleased to say that we've received \$2080 so far from generous donors, which has enabled us to get started on our repairs. Thank you to those that have contributed, especially in this tough economy.]

Dear Viking Friend,

It is hard to believe, but our beloved *Norseman* is approaching her 20th year!

Even though her condition is fairly good, we have taken a critical look at her and determined that we will need to spend some time and money in order to keep her in the condition that you have come to expect to see.

Our inspection shows that we need to do some major maintenance on our rigging, the deck and many smaller parts of the *Norseman* and hull painting, not to mention our trailer and truck, which always must be maintained for safety and to meet state requirements.

So we must appeal to you - our members and supporters - to help us support the needed work to be done on the *Norseman*, some of which is listed [below]. Thank you for whatever you can give.

Sincerely,

David O. Segermark, President

Rigging

Quick Fact: We have spotted some rot in a very important piece of our "rig" on the boat. **Our need:** to replace the "mast fish", where the mast is supported when it is rigged for use. *Est. cost: \$500 +*

Quick Fact: Our mast is raised and lowered for each event we attend... about 15 - 16 per year and is exposed to the weather and sun. **Our need:** to replace our rigging this year. In consultation with the Kalmar Nyckel Foundation, we have determined that we should use a different type of material than what we have now, and they will assist us in finding a rigger to make all the splices required for our rigging. *Est. cost: \$2000 +*

Deck

Quick Fact: Our deck is exposed to sunlight, rain and wear and tear from walking upon it. **Our need:** to replace some areas of rot and to strengthen its support in a couple of places. *Est. cost: \$1000 +*

Mast & Spars:

Quick Fact: Our mast and yardarm were made from Spruce, a strong, yet flexible material. They are stored on the deck, exposed to weather and sun and need annual maintenance and care. Every year we sand them down and recoat them with polypropylene varnish. **Our need:** This year is no different; however we should take all the hardware off to do a complete job. *Est. cost: \$200*

Crew Boxes:

Quick Fact: The original boxes were quickly built by our volunteers between March and July of 1992! They have held up remarkably well, considering that they are not only used for storage, but as rowing seats, ladders (to get in and out of the ship) and display supports! They are starting to come apart and we need to replace them.

Our need: Material to use with a design we have to make kits so we can have a chest-making work party.

Est. cost: \$1000

Fuel Tank:

Quick Fact: We set up the fuel tanks in 1999 in anticipation of our trip to Labrador and the voyage from Labrador to Newfoundland. We have since determined that a smaller tank will suffice for most of our trips. **Our need:** to install a below deck tank while we have the deck open for repairs (listed above). *Est. Cost: \$500+/-*

Wish List

Hydraulic lifts for the rear stanchions on the trailer \$2000+/-; Marine radio: \$200+/-

Calling All Readers - Members or Not!

We wanted to thank you for your interest in our organization, and the mission we strive towards - to promote knowledge and a realistic historic image of Viking people and educate the American public about Leif Ericson. Without an audience, we would have no one to educate! However, without our VERY dedicated (but small in number) group of volunteers, we couldn't go to our events to fulfill that mission either...

If you would translate your interest in our organization into actual membership and/or activity, we could reach so many more people!! You don't need to have an already extensive knowledge about Vikings - even the current crew is still learning. If you're not able to join the crew and dress for the events, please still become a member - help "behind the scenes", become a board member, or just invite your kids, your

neighbor, or your workout buddy to an event - who knows, THEY might be interested!

Also, if you are or recently have been a member of our organization, please see the following note from our Membership Chair, Hilde Linstrom:

"While I endeavor to send reminders when your memberships expire, please be considerate when I send a reminder e-mail or a letter with a self addressed stamped envelope to respond. I try very hard to keep up with the membership roles, but I do need your help too. All of you members are extremely important to us at this time especially..."

We all understand the effect the economy has on most of us, so IF you are unable to continue being a member...we understand. Please just let us know that you are no longer interested."



Find us on Facebook!!

We're getting more in step with today's online lifestyle - we've created a page on Facebook to help reach a younger (or older, yet "hip") audience. So far we have 41 members! If you're on FB, look us up - our page name is "Leif Ericson Viking Ship, Inc." We'll post up & coming events, pictures, etc.

A Review of the SON Event on October 9, 2009

The October meeting of the Sons of Norway Lodge Restauration was held in Media on October 9th - Leif Ericson Day. The guests were the members of the Leif Ericson Viking Ship *Norseman*. Their presentation last year was so successful that they were asked to return to show the members the exciting saga of Leif Ericson to North America, the life of the Viking was as a trader, farmer and craftsman as well as a pirate.

The presenters, Steven Clarke and Dave "Wolf" Sutton, showed

the weapons used as well as the tools for shipbuilding and ordinary life. Blacksmith, jewelry and pottery tools are similar to those used today.

The grandchildren of the members asked very specific questions and received some humorous answers. History is a part of geography as these ancestors looked for land and better living conditions to raise their families. The artifacts shown were an example of their lives and are a part of our living history. Hilde

Linstrom and Charlotte Berg were also in period dress with the story of the role of the Viking woman.

The audience said they could have listened for many hours to the tales from Steven and "Wolf" - the story was basically of Norway Via Iceland and Greenland and North America but the era included the Swedes Danes, Irish, Scots and English. The crew were welcomed to return again next year to an even bigger group.

By Charlotte Berg, Cultural director Sons of Norway

Come to the Shipyard - We're Having a Party!!

You're invited to come to the Kalmar Nyckel Shipyard in Wilmington, Delaware for a party - a work party, that is!! You provide the helping hands, we'll provide the lunch! The more the merrier, so bring your family or friends, too. We can use all skill levels and all ages! Wear grubbies, and bring along hand tools if you'd like.



The party is from 10:00am through 4:00pm (or earlier, if we get the work done). Please RSVP to Dave Segermark at info@vikingship.org or 410-275-8516 so we can plan for lunch. If the weather doesn't cooperate, Dave will contact those that have RSVPed. We hope to see you there!

New Merchandise: A Viking Ship Model!

We have found a company that can create a beautiful Viking ship model that is similar to our *Norseman*, complete with a customized sail that replicates the beautiful design on our sail painted by Steven Clarke (not shown in the picture). The ship model dimensions are: Height 11cm (4.3"), Width 6 cm (2.4"), and Length 20 cm (7.9").



The only thing holding us back is the initial cost needed to purchase the ships in bulk. Our solution - we will be taking pre-sale orders! We need to get 50 orders before we can purchase the bulk amount. If you are interested in placing an order, please fill out the form below and mail it in with a check. The cost of the ship is \$20, plus \$5 for shipping.

We will keep you informed about the status of the order, so please make sure that you give us valid contact information! (If for some reason, we cannot get the initial 50 orders by October of this year, we will refund your money in full.)

Viking Ship Pre-Order Form

Yes, I'd like to place my order for _____ Viking ship models at \$25 each including shipping.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

(Please send this along with your check to: LEVS; P.O. Box 393; Swarthmore, PA 19081)

Book Review by Dennis Johnson

Axe of Iron: The Settlers by J.A. Hunsinger

Writers have long been interested in the history of the Greenland settlement by Norse colonists beginning in the last decade of the tenth century. This interest was greatly sharpened by the discovery in the 1960's of the remains of Norse settlements and artifacts at L'Anse Aux Meadows, Newfoundland. Anne and Stine Ingstad, Norwegian archaeologists, investigated and authenticated this evidence proving that Norse from Greenland and Iceland had visited this area and built dwellings in about the year 1000.

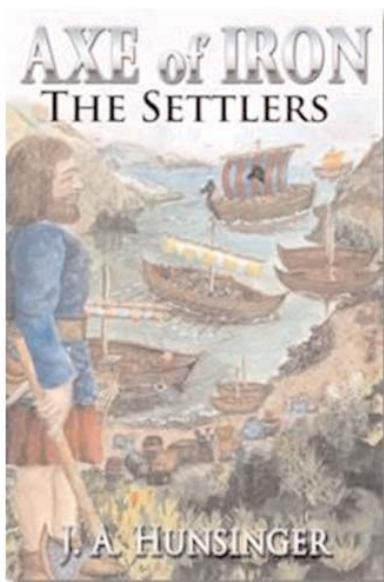
This evidence strongly reinforced the stories by Snorri Sturlusson, written several hundred years after the actual events. Other evidence of Norsemen in North America has surfaced over the years, some authenticated and some highly controversial, have added to this stimulation of interest in the subject.

This new first novel by J. A. Hunsinger is the most recent of a series of novels prompted by these discoveries in North America, by writers who have imagined a variety of adventures undertaken by Viking visitors to the new world. The novel is intended to be the first of a series under the title *Axe of Iron*. The second in the series, titled *Axe of Iron, Confrontation*, was scheduled for publication this year (2009), but as of this writing is not yet available.

The author is a retired commercial pilot and aviation writer. As an amateur historian, he is a Viking enthusiast and has studied extensively the research and archaeological evidence from sites in Greenland and the new world to assist in crafting this novel. It is a gripping story about the adventures of a large party of Norsemen who undertake to find a suitable place for settlement in North America shortly after the visits of Leif Ericsson and his relatives to the Newfoundland area. The period of the novel is about the year 1007, a time when the climate was generally relatively mild and hospitable to human occupancy in these northern lands. The book is dedicated to the some 4000 Norse

who disappeared entirely from Greenland by the middle of the fifteenth century. By that time, the "little ice age" had slowly descended on most of the northern hemisphere and continued until well into the 19th century. Views differ on whether the last Greenlanders slowly died out from starvation, intermarried with local native Inuit people, migrated elsewhere, or some combination of these factors.

The story line of this novel is about a large party of about 300 Norse men, women, and children from



Greenland and Iceland who embark in five Viking ships for the new lands to the west that had recently been discovered by Leif Ericson and others. The group takes with them sheep, cattle, and all the essentials to establish a new colony wherever suitable lands can be found. They are aware of the native population and come fully armed and prepared to protect their colony, but are determined to avoid confrontation if at all possible. They sail west in the wake of Leif Ericson's route, following the coast of Greenland north, crossing to Helluland (Baffin Island), Markland (Labrador) and head for Leif's houses on

present Newfoundland. A fierce storm blows them west into the straits leading into Hudson Bay, however, causing them to explore the eastern coast of that great bay before returning to their originally intended destination. After reassembling their fleet after the storm, they pause to consider and then decide to sail further south along the coast to see what the possibilities are for a colony in the lands ahead. Various adventures occur along the way, with both peaceable and violent encounters with the native population. By novel's end in late summer, the group has chosen a location near a river's mouth in what apparently now is named James Bay at the southern end of Hudson Bay. Part of the colony begins the job of building shelters and a settlement, while a part embarks on four ships for a trading journey back to Greenland and Iceland. A final chapter gives a brief hint of the novel's sequel,

Continued on page 7

Axe of Iron: The Settlers Book Review Continued

Confrontation, to whet the reader's interest in continuing to read the series.

The location chosen by these colonists remains in the 21st century a remote part of North America. There are now several small villages in the area, the largest of which has a population of about 2000 people, most of whom are Native Americans. There are also a few hundred non-native Canadians in the area, mostly involved in mining. The climate is harsh, resources are few, and access to the area is limited. The Native people no longer rely only on hunting and fishing, but are dependent on assistance from the Canadian government. Most now live in new, modern houses built by the government. Game and fish are abundant in the area, and camps and outfitters cater to recreational hunters and fishermen from more urban areas to the south.

In this novel, the story is told mainly through the words and actions of Gjudbjartur Einarsson, the principal aide to the leader of the expedition. The leader is Halfdan Ingolfsson, endowed with all the qualities of a strong leader, and Gjudbjartur is his loyal supporter and defender. Along the way, through many incidents and adventures, numerous details of Viking age life, culture, and practices are revealed. Most of this is plausible and generally fits with my own understandings and knowledge about this period in history. The author also displays some knowledge of the Native American tribes encountered by the Norsemen, with a balance between the violence and savagery of the times and a more modern sensitivity toward their conflicting cultures. Character development of the principal protagonists by the author is somewhat limited, perhaps a little more in the style of a technical writer than that of a skillful novelist, but this is not a serious flaw and the story still draws the reader along with great interest and curiosity about the outcome.

The only implausible aspect of this interesting story that struck this reviewer was the improbability of the makeup of the expedition. The author portrays the group and its leaders as the young adventure-seeking

segment of established Greenlanders and Icelanders who have little chance of inherited lands or fortunes at home, who must seek their fortunes in new lands. Somehow, these sparsely endowed people managed to acquire five substantial Viking ships capable of carrying them on the open seas to North America. A seagoing ship at that time was roughly equivalent in cost and rarity to a modern jetliner today, and only the wealthiest leaders could hope to afford to build or acquire a ship such as this. For the sake of the story, I am willing to set this unlikely circumstance aside and go on to enjoy the novel for all its other good qualities.

This new first novel by J. A. Hunsinger is the most recent of a series of novels prompted by these discoveries in North America, by writers who have imagined a variety of adventures undertaken by Viking visitors to the new world. The novel is intended to be the first of a series under the title Axe of Iron.

For the sake of the sequels, I believe the author is setting the scene for events leading to intermarriage of the Norse colonists with Native Americans, a theory held by more than a few historians about the fate of the Greenland settlements. Rumors continue to emerge about certain "tall, blond and blue-eyed" people found among various tribes in North America, among them the Mandan tribe now in the Dakotas but earlier found in the Northeast. This was reported in the

Lewis and Clarke exploration journals from the early 19th century. No certain evidence, DNA or otherwise, has yet turned up to confirm these rumors, however, and later intermarriages in the 19th and 20th century make this a difficult quest.

J.A. Hunsinger has created a story of interest to not only Viking enthusiasts but to readers at large about a possible but fictional adventure of Norse colonists in North America. An adventure which preceded by six centuries the later colonization of the Delaware Valley in 1638 by a similar-sized group of Norse (Swedes and Finns) who landed in the wilds of the Delaware Valley. This was a location also peopled by Native American tribes (in a more moderate climate) with, initially at least, a peaceful relation with the native people. It will be interesting to follow the fictional destiny of these earlier Hudson Bay settlers through the novels that follow in the Hunsinger's *Axe of Iron* series.

[Written by Dennis Johnson and originally published in the Swedish American Genealogy Journal (SAG Journal) in 2009.]

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Spring 2010 Edition!

Clear Your Calendar! (Or At Least Save Some Time For Us)

We haven't finalized our travel schedule yet due to the early spring maintenance on the ship, but we DO plan on going to events, and we'd love to see you there! We are tentatively scheduled for our "regular" events.



So please check out our calendar on the website (www.vikingship.org) for the most up-to-date information about where we'll be, or contact Dave Segermark at info@vikingship.org. We look forward to seeing you there - wherever we might be!!