

**Our only remaining Charter Member remembers:**

It was during the winter of 1959 –60 that the idea of forming a Torske Klub was born. The originators and I were active in the Sons of Norway Bowling League, at the time.

A committee was formed to investigate the very successful Minneapolis Torsk Klub. It was the only club at the time. The committee of 15 or 16, some with their wives; boarded a train & spent a Friday night at the Curtis Hotel; were we were guests of the Club for lunch the following noon. My father Alfred Newgard and I roomed together; and split up to visit with the Minneapolis members.

They were most gracious. Our Boss at the time Andrew Highland and his son Irving, knew everyone there by name. The mayors of St. Paul & Minneapolis, & the Governor of the state were there. Sen. Hubert Humphrey had arrived but was called away and left.

As a young man of 25, I was blown away. The lunch was outstanding. Our Boss in his Rich Norwegian accent did the introductions of all from the Chicago land area. After the second Aquavit I relaxed. The rules of the club were tight & followed closely.

The Boss Roy Thorsev, fined two members of his club for the commercial given during guest introductions...Wow that caused us all to look around the room.

We returned home late that Saturday evening by train. The committee met the week after and set a target date in May 1960, for our first luncheon at the beautiful Norske Klub on Kedzie Blvd in Chicago. Members were signed up by time bowling was over. The list of Charter members is included in this souvenir booklet.

Our clubs Founding Fathers were all business or Professional people. Most were in there Mid- fifties or early sixties. Their names today bring great memories of men we knew, who were the makers and shakers of our early Norwegian Colony.

I had just finished College, and started my Chiropractic Medical Practice, at Belmont and Laramie Aves in Chicago. Now at 26, married 5 years, and expecting our first child, my schedule was full. I became the clubs first Assistant Boss & membership chairman. The thought was to use me to attract younger members. This we did. The clubs only rule then, was a male who was Norwegian. Later Swedes and other Scandinavians were welcomed. We even had a wild Swede on the board of Directors for many years.

The success of this Torske club has always been its fellowship, with good food and drink.

The format is organized, with officers and members who value and respect Norwegian traditions. The midday luncheon has survived, because it has allowed men to work, or take care of business in the morning; have a wonderful time with friends at lunch; and be home in the evening with their families.

For many years Madison, Stoughton, & Milwaukee, members carpoled and drove down to join us. Adjourning promptly at 3 pm, gave them daylight driving home safely. Our Boss currently Rob Alsaker holds to this firmly every month.

**My Special Memories** - will always be the warm friendships, and closeness of those men who made the club; and some no longer with us. Their legacy is continuing each month as men gather for our delicious Cod Fish dinner.

Our 5<sup>th</sup> District Sons of Norway President, came from Milwaukee each month with news of the mother country, or the USA; that made us all feel proud of our Heritage. Our second club Boss, Irv Highland went on to become International President of S of N.

The Cod Fish was always served Family Style at Norske Klub, and Norway Center. Everyone took two large pieces, as platter after platter of delicious Cod Fish was passed along the tables. 2 glasses of Aquavit were always served with the meal. I was a skinny kid then, and always managed to fuel up with my share.

We pledged to the flag, sang some songs, told stories, and appreciated each other. The only conflict we had in the first 30 yrs was when I proposed Mr Art Fitzgerald who had been my guest several times. The members howled “***An Irishman, as member***”. There goes the club. But everyone grew to love Art. He bought drinks, told stories, and won everyone over. Soon he joined the Board, brought ideas & new members.

We served the club as Assistant Boss for 29 years, for 3 outstanding Boss's. Currently I Serve on the Board, and Chairman the Programs and Speakers invited each month.

**In conclusion** - Running one of the luncheons while the Boss was away, was memorable because I lost complete control of the meeting at one point. Let me tell you what happened: A very large member with a big booming voice started telling stories of his fishing experiences. He went on and on. One story lead to another. The members were roaring with laughter. I tried to stop Ole Borgland, after the third lengthy story. But he continued. The men laughed harder. I rapped the gavel repeatedly. Finally we had to stand on the chair to get him to stop. I too had tears in my eyes from laughing so hard.

It was like a circus. Everyone congratulated me. Best meeting in along time they said.

The Boss upon his return, heard the news and made stories or jokes a regular part of all the luncheons. Recent bad taste & language has eliminated this from our luncheons.

As the lone surviving Charter Member (Lone Ranger); let me say it has been a pleasure to serve and be part of the wholesome monthly gathering of men, with their wives of our annual Ladies Day tribute. In May 2007 MaryAnn Childers as speaker drew 230 for us.

Best wishes, and Happy 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. From my wife Dorothy and I

Dr. Raymond A. Newgard - member 1960-2010

