

NEWS RELEASE



SONS OF NORWAY

For Immediate Release

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SONS OF NORWAY...

- ★ Is the largest Norwegian-American organization in the world
- ★ Works to preserve and promote Norwegian heritage and culture
- ★ Provides financial protection through quality insurance products
- ★ Awards scholarships and grants to support individual lodges in their studies, projects, programs and humanitarian efforts

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Get Ready to Ski!

Sons of Norway Celebrates 21st Barnebirkie

Minneapolis, MN--This February hundreds, and possibly thousands, of children, between the ages of 3 and 13, will be waiting at the starting line, nervously digging their ski poles into fresh snow and shuffling their feet back and forth on cross-country skis. They are waiting for their signal, the sounding of a Viking horn, to put them into motion and begin the United States' largest ski event for children--the 21st annual Sons of Norway Barnebirkie Ski Race in Hayward, WI.

The Barnebirkie, which has become one of the largest overall ski races in the nation, through volunteerism and sponsorship from Sons of Norway and Swiss Miss, will be held on February 22, 2007 at 1 p.m. in Hayward Wisconsin. The skiers, choosing from a 1-, 2.5-, or 5-kilometer course, are celebrating the historic tale of the Birkebeiners, who set off on a dangerous voyage in 1206. Making their way through treacherous mountains and forests, the Birkebeiners were charged with ensuring the safety of a two-year-old Norwegian prince, while taking him to Trondheim and ending Norway's civil wars.

In tribute to this momentous event in Norwegian history, Sons of Norway has partnered with the Viking Age Club, a group of Viking-age re-enactors. Members of the Viking Age Club, dressed in period clothing, will be on hand to take pictures with Barnebirkie participants and their parents, as well as officially starting the race with their sounding horns.

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The race will take the young participants through Hayward and ends at a finish line on the snow-covered Main Street. At the finish line, which is typically flanked by thousands of cheering parents and fans, every child will be a winner when they are presented with an Olympic-style medallion, which they can take home as a souvenir.

The Barnebirkie, meaning children's Birkie, was created in 1987 by Sons of Norway along with the Bill Koch Ski League and the American Birkebeiner Foundation. It is an official event of the Subaru American Birkebeiner. Swiss Miss is also a proud Barnebirkie cosponsor, which supplies the kids with plenty of hot chocolate to warm them up after the event. To make the perfect combination, Sons of Norway also provides thousands of homemade cookies for the participants. All organizations involved want young skiers to have a positive winter outdoor experience in the tradition of the American Birkebeiner.

Registration forms are available from Sons of Norway, at 1455 West Lake Street, Minneapolis, MN 55408, and on the web at *www.sonsofnorway.com or from the American Birkebeiner website at www.birkie.com/registration/barnebirkie.html*. On-site registration and bib pick-up will be on February 23 between 9:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. at St. Josephs Catholic Church in Hayward.

Sons of Norway is a Fraternal Benefit Society founded and based in Minneapolis with members in the United States, Canada, and Norway. As the largest Norwegian-American organization outside of Norway, Sons of Norway is dedicated to preserving and promoting Norwegian heritage throughout North America and Norway. Sons of Norway's 60,000 members serve as volunteers in humanitarian outreach programs and strive to strengthen community and family values. Sons of Norway programs include insurance, travel, sports, culture, and heritage.

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