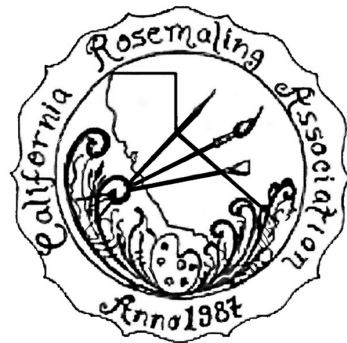


California Rosemaling Association Newsletter

Summer 2026

August 2026

Number 153



THE PURPOSE OF CRA is to promote the traditional art of Norwegian rosemaling. Our members are committed to preserving rosemaling as a unique art form.

Presidents Message:

I hope everyone is enjoying their summer! It's really getting hot here in Redding. At least in September I can cool off in Alaska!

Pennie has been working hard, congratulations on receiving 2 ribbons at Vesterheim! Also congratulations to our two other ribbon winners, Elizabeth Estep and Jill Willems.

I'm looking forward to the CRA Convention in October. The mitten bowl is looking beautiful that Nancy Oladen is painting for us. Some wonderful things will be there for the silent auction.

Also, the zoom classes have been a great way of keeping your brushes moving and creating wonderful things. See you soon!

Janice Acosta



Dear Readers:

Our talented and trusted Newsletter editor, Sherri Tafel, is vacationing in Alaska now, so this newsletter's format is a one-off. We can't replicate her style. However, we hope you are looking forward to her returning for the next newsletter. We hope she has a lovely vacation camping in Alaska and doesn't meet any polar bears up close! Some features she usually adds in will come back with the next newsletter. Hope you all had a wonderful vacation.

Best, Katie Allen

Zoomin' Along with CRA

We are delighted to announce there is still space for the upcoming **September 8-10, 2026 Adventures in Telemark Rosemaling with Julie Anderson** held from 8:30am- 11:30am daily (Pacific time).

It's a great class for beginners and intermediates to take and learn how to turn Julie's design into the cute box or use it as a spring board to your own design or redesign of her piece on a piece of wood of your choosing. She will be helping us understand the differences in creating the design on a light and dark background and the subtle changes you can take in choosing colors or changing up the design. Julie is great at explaining the basics of changing a design to make it your own.

We hope to see you at the class, but if you're on vacation or busy, the class is recorded and you can watch it on your own time for up to 6 months. [Register online today](https://www.califrosemaler.org) before registration closes (Sept. 1).

Cost of Class:

\$60: 2026 Members

\$75: all others (2026 membership is included)

Registration online: www.califrosemaler.org



2026 CRA BOARD

PRESIDENT: JANICE ACOSTA (E): janiceacosta19849@yahoo.com

VICE PRESIDENT: PENNIE WILKINS (C): 530-949-7187

SECRETARY: MICHELLE GRAHAM (E): chelzz@gmail.com

TREASURER: SHAUN SASAKI (E): sasakigs@comcast.net

MEMBERSHIP: DIANE EDWARDS (E): diaedwards@cs.com

NEWSLETTER*: SHERRI TAFFEL (E): sherritafel@yahoo.com

TRADE FLOOR*: JOYCE FIELD (E): jafiield@verizon.net

ZOOMER*: KATIE ALLEN (E): katie.d.allen68@gmail.com

** these are non-elected officers*

2026 CRA CONVENTION: 10/28-11/1

Sacramento Here We Come!

TEACHER: NANCY ODALEN

It's almost time to complete your October plans for going to convention. If you have already signed up, you should have received confirmation of payment. Any balance due will be due to be received by Shaun Sasaski, our treasurer by September 21, 2026. She will be mailing you an email with those details if it pertains to you shortly. Please send in money at least 10 days ahead for this to reach her in time.

For those still not signed up, we invite you to sign up immediately (go to our website: https://www.califrosemaler.org/conv26/conv_main.shtml for this year's convention held at the Hilton Garden Inn Sacramento Airport Natomas, 20 Advantage Ct., Sacramento CA. Hotel information for the CRA rate (\$159/ night +) is also online with a link to booking the hotel. If you have questions on convention or hotel booking call/text Pennie at: 530-949-7187 and leave a message with your name, CRA Convention and issues you want resolved. She also has someone who is interested in sharing a room, so call her if you are looking for a roomie.

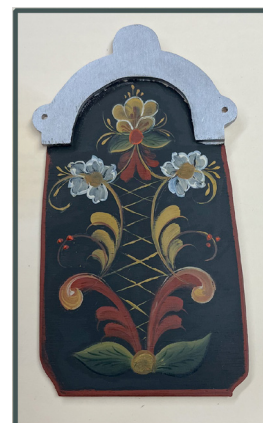
Nancy Odalen's, VGM, main piece will be done in the Ryfylke style. It is a lovely large wooden catch-all or mitten bowl that measures a bit taller than this: 16.25", 10.5" wide and 5.25" deep at deepest part.

The website has a list of what to bring for convention, a schedule, trade floor information, and details about the class and piece Nancy Odalen, VGM, will teach. Other links on that page are also useful. **NOTE: THE REGISTRATION DESK WILL OPEN AT 10:00 AM ON THURSDAY!**

This year we have a lot of bang for your buck! The \$300 convention package price includes the woodenware, a Sat. banquet, 2 box lunches (Friday and Saturday), instruction, paints, patterns, mediums, our Fri. business meeting and the trade floor.

The optional extra BYOB Sip N' Paint Ornament Class from 3-6 p.m. Thursday, taught by Nancy is offered for \$30. (see photo at right to see ornament).

We look forward to seeing you all and welcoming Nancy!.



CONVENTION 2026 Continued:

TRADE FLOOR – Buy & Sell Rosemaling Things

One of the benefits of convention is the chance to shop and/or sell things (rosemaling, supplies, packets, wood, etc.) at the Trade Floor. A portion of the sales goes to CRA to help with the cost of putting on the convention. Vendors pay 10% to CRA, and all donations to CRA yield a 100% income to CRA. Purchases at convention are Cash or Check Only. Joyce Field (jafield@verizon.net) is in charge and will be open Thursday, and at non-painting times during the convention. She will list the sale hours at convention and be able to help you only during those times.

RULES FOR THE TRADE FLOOR

- *Items for sale must have something to do with Norway or Rosemaling.*
- *Fill in the Inventory Sheet with your item's name/number/price. If you have multiplied of the same item, each one needs a separate number.*
- *All items must be tagged with your name and the above info. Turn in a copy of your items when you get your table assignment.*
- *CRA will send a check after the Convention.*

TRADE FLOOR INVENTORY FORM

At the convention all vendors are required to have, an Inventory Form (on next page) to give to Joyce. You will find this online or can use the one included in the newsletter. Print out the Inventory Form (PDF format fillable online at our convention website). Fill out the form and bring it to the CRA Convention.

Proposed Slate of Officers for 2027

President: Janice Acosta

Vice President: Pennie Wilkin

Treasurer: Shaun Sasaki

Secretary: Michelle Graham

Membership: Diane Edwards

If you wish to run for an elected office contact: Janice Acosta (janiceacosta19849@yahoo.com).

Opportunity to Help CRA

Katie Allen is hoping someone will step up to transition into doing the Zoom Classes. We usually offer 3 per year and she would be glad to answer any questions you have on the fun you can have in this role! You will need to be able to use a computer (Microsoft word, email, Zoom), coordination skills; and a desire to enrich members skills. Katie is glad to help you as she can. If you are interested or wanting to know more, contact katie.d.allen68@gmail.com.

CRA RIBBON WINNERS AT THE 2026 VESTERHEIM NORWEGIAN AMERICA FOLK ART EXHIBIT

Congratulations Vesterheim Ribbon winners!

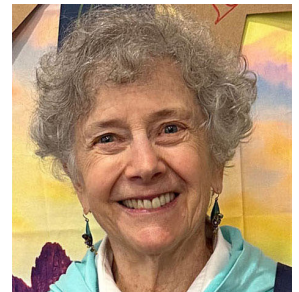
Amongst CRA's many talented painters, some boldly submitted their pieces to this year's Vesterheim's National Norwegian American Folk Art Exhibition. We are so very pleased and delighted to have many of our members represented. Elizabeth Estep, Pennie Wilkins, and Jill Willems won ribbons. Their works represent hours of preparation, toil, perfecting strokes and dots, etc. as well as a thorough understanding of design, color and balance principles used in our folk art. They studied many original works to come up with their own designs. Hats off to these winners. Hip, Hip, Hurrah!

Enjoy their work! I've asked winners to share their story if they wish to and will add them to whatever newsletter is upcoming as they arrive in my inbox. We hope they inspire others to join the next exhibition! We may soon have new VGM's in our midst if they keep submitting pieces. We are rooting for all who enter!

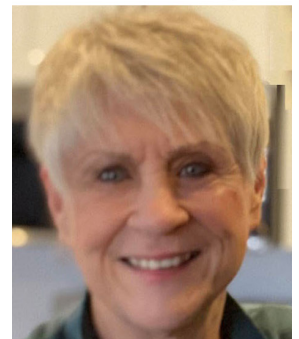
Winners and their Prizes:

- 1 Red Ribbon: Elizabeth Estep with her Adger-style *Melkar* (flour container)
- 2 white Ribbons: Pennie Wilkins a. Telemark-style Ambar; b. Telemark-style Compote
- 1 Red Ribbon and 1 White Ribbon: Jill Willems: Telemark-style Plate (red) and Hallingdal-style plate (white); plus a Hallingdal-Style small trunk received an honorable mention

To see additional winners and their pieces from all who entered, go to this web-



Elizabeth Estep



Pennie Wilkins



Jill Willems



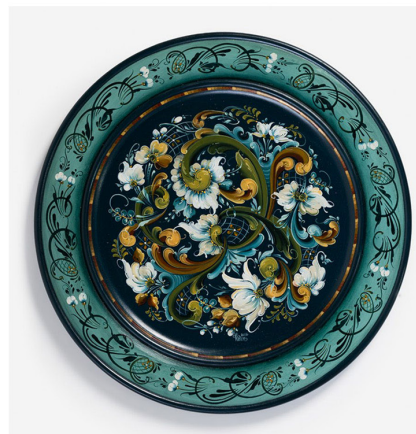
CRA Ribbon Winners 2026



Pennie Wilkens two piece above



*Elizabeth Estep
Flour Melker*



Photos are compliments of Vesterheim and the artists. They may not be used publicly or on social media.

site: <https://vesterheim.org/national-norwegian-american-folk-art-exhibition-winners-2026/>. Also, if you are interested in learning more about what it takes to enter your work into the Norwegian-American Folk Art Exhibition in the future, complete rules for this year's competition are found here: <https://vesterheim.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/2026-Exhibition-Rules-2.pdf> . We suggest you check back with Vesterheim for any updates if you decide to enter for another year.

Getting to Know our Ribbon Winners Better

Elizabeth Estep:

Elizabeth and I met at one convention as we both thought about purchasing the same book that Marley was selling. We had communicated via email prior to that but until you say, *Hello, I'm* (add name) and the other person responds with their name, you have no idea who they are other than an email address. I've since learned more about her as I see her on other Zoom classes from various organizations. I didn't realize she had submitted any of her works to Vesterheim and is three points away from being a VGM.

As you may know, she lives in Tacoma, Washington and belongs to Western Rosemaling Association and has been instrumental in that group for some time. She has been a member of CRA for years and comes to many of our conventions, and we always look forward to seeing her at CRA events.

Here is Elizabeth Estep story:

Agder Melkar (flour box) submitted to the Vesterheim Folk Art Exhibit

Submitting my first piece to the Vesterheim Folk Art Exhibit in 2016 was at the suggestion and encouragement of a dear rosemaling friend. I was thrilled to receive a white ribbon for the Vest-Agder horsehead tray and found the remarks on the critique very useful as I strived to improve my rosemaling. Over the intervening years, I have submitted various items and was delighted to receive a red ribbon for a Hallingdal style box several years ago.

My rosemaling journey has been a wonderful experience as I continue to learn the beautiful folk art of Norway and share the special friendships. Over the years, I have been fortunate to participate in numerous in-person classes taught by instructors through conventions and seminars held here on the west coast and two marvelous trips to Vesterheim. In the past few years, with the start of Zoom classes being offered, this has provided an additional means to continue to learn, including some of the lesser-known styles.

*The Agder style seems to be one of my favorites. In designing this Melkar (Norwegian flour box), I was inspired by a trunk, which is currently in the Norsk Folkemuseum. The photo I used is shown in the book **Rosemaling i Vest Agder** by Nils Ellingsgard.*

Hopefully, many more rosemalers will be encouraged — as I was by my friend — to submit pieces to the Folk Art Exhibit held at Vesterheim. I have, indeed, found it to be a wonderful learning experience and am very grateful for the opportunity.

Jill Willems:

Jill hails from Iola, WI and has been in many of the online classes being taught since the pandemic. I have followed her and think you would like to hear a bit about her. Here is what she has shared:

I've been interested in art my whole life, literally since I could hold a crayon. I was an elementary art teacher for 34 years and am now loving my time for my own art in retirement. Rosemaling has been a fulfilling journey and there is still much distance on that path to travel.

I started Rosemaling nearly 10 years ago. I wasn't sure I wanted to learn but 4 other friends wanted to take lessons, and I thought it would be a fun girls' night activity as I had just become an empty nester the month before. Well, I was gripped by Rosemaling fiercely from my first lesson. I came home and started re-searching Rosemaling artists online and found Andrea Herkert and a class she was teaching in Stoughton. That started my connection with Wisconsin Rosemalers. I've taken classes from many instructors since then and had apprenticeships with Andrea Herkert and Vesterheim. I traveled to Norway with my family in 2023 and met with Norwegian artists Anne Hesvik and Geir Kasastul. I started painting for competitions in Stoughton and Vesterheim and have now taught Rosemaling classes for Wisconsin Rosemalers, Rosemaling Coast to Coast and Illinois Norsk Rosemaling Association. I was awarded two white ribbons, 2 points, at the National Folk Art Show at Vesterheim in 2024 and received a red and white this year for 3 more points. I'll be excited to try for more in 2028!



This was the description that went along with my Telemark piece that won a red ribbon.

"The color palette was the main inspiration for this Telemark plate. The warm white and cream flowers with the deep blue central shading have almost become a signature of my work."

This was the description for my Hallingdal plate that won a white ribbon.

*"This piece has not been inspired by one source but rather hundreds of old pieces studied in Nils Ellingsgard's book **Rosemaling in Hallingdal** and historic pieces from Norway in online sources. I've chosen Hallingdal motifs that I've filtered through my creative voice to create something new inspired by the original greats."*

[I asked her this next: “Was it stressful or did you do your work on just your own schedule. Some wait to do it and then rush. Was the plate from the WI win the same one or another one?”]

Oh I forgot to say, yes, the same Telemark plate won best of Show in Stoughton this past May and the Hallingdal plate won a blue ribbon in Stoughton in 2025.

I was on a tight schedule to get the Telemark plate done because I spent so much time on a mini trunk I was painting. I was still painting finishing touches two weeks before the Syttende Mai show in Stoughton and I’m an oil painter!

The Hallingdal plate I painted the year before and that took immense time, especially designing that complicated border. I’m attaching a picture of a Hallingdal shallow bowl that received a red ribbon in Stoughton this past May. I wanted to submit it to Vesterheim but I became aware of the rule about not being able to submit something you’ve taught a little too late. This made me one piece short at Vesterheim because I didn’t have time to design and paint a piece to replace it.



Pennie Wilkins:

Most of us know Pennie as she has headed up Conventions for many years in Northern California. I knew that Pennie was doing her work earlier this spring and after hearing how much she puts into the pieces she does and the time it takes, I know this has a lot of meaning to her to win her ribbon this year for both pieces. If you know Pennie she is doesn’t like to write articles, so I’ve tried to get some details from her in a phone conversation. Here is what I took away from our recent conversations post ribbons.

Besides enjoying life and fun, Pennie has entered Vesterheim’s competition 9 times so has kept busy painting. Pennie is determined to get the Gold Ribbon soon! She has not won a ribbon every time she enters yet now is only 4 points away from that Gold Medal—she hopes to win one of each color by the time she is done. Pennie says she has learned a lot each time she’s entered and the input she received was most excellent. So far she’s entered two styles of Rosemaling: Vest Agder and now Telemark. She found that by switching up her style to a new one, she has grown as an artist and believes that has helped her succeed and grow as an artist. She will offer you inspiration at convention to take up the challenge of entering the competition in two years.

Pennie's journey into art began as a young girl seeing her cousin Judy painting in her room. Her cousin gave her a paint by number piece when she asked if she could help. Then, her mother kept giving her more until High School when she started watercolors. In the 1970s she got into the fine arts and was doing oil paintings of landscapes and seascapes. A friend asked her to paint a decorative piece and so she did. Then, she began her journey into decorative arts. Along the way, she tried Rosemaling and fell in love with it. Her first class in design was with Jo Sonja in 1983-4. Rosemaling challenged her more than the fine arts and she was hooked. Pennie is versatile in either oils or acrylics. With over 40 different artists she has studied since then and being a regular at Jo Sonja's., she is a talented painter and has even taught rosemaling.

Pennie never uses a pattern anymore—she sketches directly on the piece and will take off any parts she doesn't like and repaint it again the next day. Her ending vision is what she really had envisioned. We will share one of her finishing tips. To finish each piece, she uses paste wax adding 3-4 rubbings (in between which she will use very fine steel wool to rub over each layer) to achieve her desired finish for the piece.

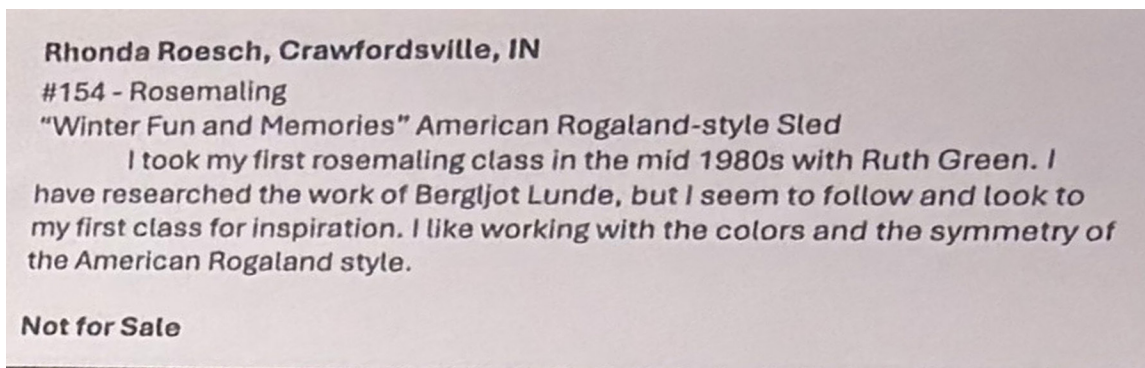
In the plate, she chose a monochromatic palette that is very pleasing to the eye, and for the other piece she had more color—always hoping to add pops of color to it. Colors you choose for this competition must be in the original rosemaling colors used during the time period Vesterheim has asked you to (1700-1875).

Because Pennie has always loved challenges, she got interested in the Vesterheim competition. This year's ribbon work took up a lot of her time. About a year before she started trying to decide what she might paint (style, colors, etc.) and what piece she might use. This included looking at a lot of her rosemaling history books to decide what bits she would include in her piece from artists famous during the heyday of rosemaling and talking to people who did encourage her to do a Tele-mark piece. This process took about 6 months. Then between Jan. and April she worked on her first piece. This was the most difficult to do. After completing this, her second piece didn't take very long as she was in the zone! She had that done in 3 weeks. So, inspiration and vision and execution, takes a variable amount of time.

She loves learning from all the different judges and artists who review her work and each year Vesterheim has different judges. Pennie and her husband Dave went to Vesterheim in Decorah, Iowa this year for the festival and to visit. Pennie said she got the VIP treatment and loved meeting Nancy Odalen, one of this year's judges and our Convention teacher who we will really like. We all wish her the best in coming up with her final points at the next competition.

OTHER CONTESTS AND OTHER WINNERS

Also, we are pleased that another member of CRA has won a Ribbon at WSRA (Wisconsin State Rosemaling Association) this past year, Rhonda Roach. She won a Blue Ribbon for a most lovely sled painted. Congratulations Rhonda! Here is the label for her piece and a photo of piece:



***CRA MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL
for 2027 (calendar year)***

Your membership renewal fee (\$15) is due November 30, 2026 and is past due December 31, 2026.

You may pay this at the Sacramento Convention with **Cash or Check*** and pick up your CRA 2026 ornament packet.

Also, you may register online at califrosemaler.org, you may pay with **Zelle or Check***. In this case, if you wish to have the free 2026 CRA ornament packet (while supplies last in the 2026 calendar year], please send a SASE (self-addressed stamped envelope) to:

**Diane Edwards, Membership Chair
3208 Snowbrush Place,
Fort Collins, Colorado, 89521**

* Checks payable to CRA in all instances.

Tusen Takk . . .

to all the members who helped make this newsletter possible! We look forward to hearing from more of you in the future!