

# California Rosemaler Newsletter



December 2011

[www.califrosemaler.org](http://www.califrosemaler.org)

No. 110



Kris Andrews, right, and the knife she made at Vesterheim, above.

Coming in March, 2012:  
More rosemaling pictures  
from Vesterheim.



## Rosemaling to Knife Making?

Well, the Scandinavian craft traditions are well-represented at Vesterheim, the Norwegian American Museum in Decorah, Iowa, and CRA's Kris Andrews loves the challenge of their intense classes. So this year she studied knife making, and came to convention sharing her beautifully burnished knife and her new Sami national costume, along with great adventures.

See [www.vesterheim.org](http://www.vesterheim.org)  
for class information.



Inside:  
Convention Pictures  
Member News  
A Tribute  
Membership

Detail from a trunk in  
Vesterheim's collections,  
courtesy and ©  
Kris Andrews

# From the President...

Dear Rosemaling Friends,

As I write this, Thanksgiving is past and Christmas is around the corner. Is everyone inspired to do some rosemaling for gifts? I know that I was inspired by our wonderful teachers Patti Goke, VGM and Nancy Schmidt, VGM. Patti taught us a mangle board with Telemark on it. Nancy taught an Os piece on a plate. Its really a privilege to be able to learn from these teachers that have worked so hard to learn the traditions of rosemaling, and then pass that knowledge on to us.

I'd like to thank the board for their hard work this past year. Special thanks to Yvonne Thomson, Vice President, for organizing our convention for us with all that entails with arranging our teachers, projects, and our hotel. (The Double-tree was a great place again for our convention.) Thanks also for doing the ornament for members renewing their membership. Thanks to Astrid Fisher for taking notes at our meetings, and Carol Ganzi, Committee Chair, for organizing our raffle prizes. (Had some fun raffles this year!) Jurene and Richard While worked the trade floor and sold us lots of goodies. Thanks to Joyce Field, Treasurer, for always keeping our books straight. Thanks to Rebecca Nelson-Harris for being Membership this past year and keeping track of our members. (Next year, we'd like to add cell phone #'s to the directory. Please send that info to Joyce Field, Membership, for 2012. Membership info will not be printed in the newsletter since the newsletter is on the website.) As always, I can't say enough about our fabulous newsletter. Karen Willman makes it like a magazine for us to read. I'd also like to thank Karen Gibson for taking on the job of Nominating Chairperson, and installation of officers. I'd like to wish next year's board much luck and success. Thanks to everyone that helped and to everyone that supported CRA by attending.

We had a fun banquet with our raffle prizes being given out. Thanks to all who donated prizes. Particularly Wendy who donated so many painted pieces, and I was lucky enough to win one of them. I was so happy to receive a President's gift from CRA, and even happier to see that it was an Os mirror painted by Nancy Schmidt! (I was also very happy to win a raffle prize that was a necklace painted by Patti Goke in a box painted by Hildy Henry.) I DID give back a bunch I won--but not the painted pieces. I thanked our board and I am pleased to make a personal donation to Vesterheim, "In honor of the California Rosemaling Association Board to further the study of rosemaling."

Next year our convention will be in northern California. Karen Nelson is the new Vice President and she is working on the location and the teachers and will let us know when she has that info to share with us.

It's been a difficult year with the illness and subsequent passing of my mother. Now the sad news of the passing of Ethel Kvalheim, VGM. She painted lovely things and is considered by many to be the mother of rosemaling in America. It is a time of reflection and I think we all need to be painting and following our dreams!

Arlene Rounce  
CRA President

## 2011 CRA Board

President (949) 726-1947	Arlene Rounce arounce@aol.com
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## 2012 CRA Board

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# Tips Shared at Convention

## Free Ornament Pattern for 2012 Dues Paid by 12/31/11

Members who pay their CRA dues for 2012 by December 31, 2011 will receive a free ornament pattern. Yvonne Thomson — between organizing and putting on the CRA convention this year— also designed the ornament for CRA's year-end membership incentive. The membership form is on page 14.



## Camp Norge

Just a reminder that there will be a Rosemaling Seminar at Camp Norge, the Sons of Norway Recreation Center at Alta, California, on April 28/29, 2012.

When registration information is available sometime in late January, early February, it will be on the camp Norge website at [www.campnorge.com](http://www.campnorge.com).

The CRA convention was wonderful and it was great to meet so many new friends who love Rosemaling.

Penny Joseph Knudsen

Patti Goke, VGM

- Good source for finding out of print rosemaling books is [www.antikvariat.no](http://www.antikvariat.no)
- For putting designs on wood, try carbonate of magnesia, a soft chalk You put it on the back of the pattern and then wipe off the excess. It's easier to remove from your surface if you need to make changes.
- Use wide straws to store brushes for traveling—a bit of kneaded eraser will close off the ends.
- The chalk cartridge set for quilting by Dritz has a nice point on the chalk for drawing designs on wood.

Nancy Schmidt, VGM

- Use a small jar for oil paint cleaner — put an old stocking in it to collect the debris. Don't keep using old — replace it periodically.
- Ikea kids chalk is good for drawing designs on wood.

Wendy Gilbert, CDA

In 1992 while working on my CDA board the three separate palettes I had mixed began to dry out after 3 months. I called David Jansen for advice. He gave me this great tip that I've used ever since: Add 8 to 10 drops of extender or retarder to the water in your spritzer bottle. I did it, covered the paint and overnight they had become moist enough to finish my board.



Child's Table and Chair set, above, with Os painting.  
Right, Gayle Oram's Valdres panel.  
Photos courtesy and © Gayle Oram



## New Projects

I was thinking of all of you at convention. I had such a good time with you last year and I surely missed being there.

I am finishing up Level III of my correspondence course and "Rosemaling in Valdres" DVD which I hope to have ready soon. Level III of the correspondence course covers Osterdal, Valdres and Os.

I painted the Os Child's Table and Chairs for my daughter's office this summer which was a fun project. I decided to make a packet for it which is available on my website: [gayleoram.com](http://gayleoram.com)

Happy Rosemaling to everyone,  
Gayle Oram



# An Artful Odyssey in Seattle



Sometimes you take a leap... Researching for the newsletter led me to the notice for a two-day program in September in Seattle. The Museum sounded wonderful and the program intriguing... And what treasures I found! The event was a focus on fashion and design: the Nordic Fashion Biennale, a cooperation between Seattle's Nordic Heritage Museum and Iceland's Nordic House in Reykjavik. The guest curator, Hrafnhildur Arnardottir (aka "Shoplifter") created an exciting exhibit of fashions and jewelry, juxtaposing trendy, imaginative and evocative designs with the museum's prized collections: chests, bowls, paintings, furniture and clothing, and the tableaus from "The Dream of America Exhibit."

"Looking Back to Find Our Future" graphically blurred the boundaries, bridging the gaps between the past and present and glimpses into a future. And while the presentations by top designers from Greenland, Iceland, Denmark, the Faroe Islands, Finland, Sweden and Norway addressed trends and issues in the fashion industry, much of their message can be woven into the realm of rosemaling (some similar threads of discussion were brought up at CRA's convention)... Challenges bridging the gap between past and present. Materials. Sustainability. Also, signs of a return to an appreciation of folk arts and a decorative environment and appreciation for hand crafting — emphasis on a "slow arts" movement: things that will last.

*Karen Willman*



Photos, clockwise from top center: mural on wall outside the Nordic Heritage Museum; NFB program; 1861 trunk from Molde, Norway painted by Knut Årestol in Vest Agder style; three other trunks and a painted box from Norway in the museum's collections; a Hallingdal panel painted by Norway's Nils Ellingsgard in 1978; ale bowl and painted cabinet; slide image from presentation on trends by Ragna Frodadottir of Edelkoort, Inc. Photos courtesy *Karen Willman*. Photo top left, designs from Gudrun & Gudrun; photo courtesy *BoraBoraStyle.com*.

For more on the Nordic Fashion Biennale, go to [www.nordicmuseum.org](http://www.nordicmuseum.org) or the NFB Facebook page



# 2011 CRA Convention in Culver City



*Both teachers and classes were great — with study of Os and Hallingdal painting.*

## Random Notes from Nancy Schmidt's Class

A true artist never stops learning. I always tell students to study old things — the movement, flowers. Look at the old, but don't copy. Use your own interpretation.

When I started out (in the late '70's) it was "don't change styles." But now, you look at things like Turid Fatland's burl bowls. They're not traditional — she's taking rosemaling and going in a new direction.

I usually just sketch with chalk (Kids chalk from Ikea is good) Old painters would even add powdered chalk to their paint to make it more transparent.

It's not just size and placement that draws your eye, it's also color. For Os, always think about changing the colors a bit. For example, don't keep all the center dots the same — you can vary with a white blend; you can vary the greens for stems.

Never go by color in a photocopy of a photo — your colors won't be accurate.

Usually you don't have lettering on an Os plate, but you do on baskets or trays or chests.

I like to use zinc oxide or zinc white — it makes the letters more transparent, more interesting.





## Random Notes from Patti Goke's class:



What I'm teaching you here is out of the tradition... It doesn't make what we're doing wrong — it makes it contemporary.

I want you to be critical — think critically of the color mixes, of the elements... I encourage you to question things. I encourage you to do your own things. Don't let any voice discourage you. Stay true to yourself.

Tove Ness from Norway is an awesome teacher. She teaches freehand Hallingdal, and draws from the tradition. It's all from that magical period, but it's made the leap.

It was never done to work from patterns. The old rosemalers in Norway traveled, so often elements are found elsewhere than where they may have originated.

A "real" rule: Paint the C stroke first. It defines the space. If you start with the S stroke, it can become a sea serpent... Go back to the root. It makes painting more interesting, makes it flow. Every time there's a change of color, you stop the movement. Some painters prefer to have different color scrolls, I prefer to just paint with 3 families of color and can add white to lighten if I want. I like to do the mid-value first.



Keep the brush elevated as you do stroke work — that way you get as much movement as you can with the brush. Rosemaling is stroke work — not putzy. Support your hand.

For crisp liner or shade color, start it on the wood, not over your rosemaled color. Next to it keeps it clear.

When painting, don't think so much. You need to feel it. Just do it.





Photo, left: CRA President Arlene Rounce thanking Nancy Schmidt and Patti Goke for teaching at convention; above, CRA's 2012 board: Ruth Ann Petro, Karen Nelson, Astrid Fisher, Onya Tolmasoff, Joyce Field and Arlene Rounce. As for the other pictures — looks like a pretty happy gathering of rosemakers!





Many thanks to, Yvonne Thomson, for putting the convention together (center photo, above).

And thanks to all who contributed photos to this issue: Onya Tolmasoff, Karen Nelson, Jurene While, Astrid Fisher, Kris Andrews and Karen Willman.



Many thanks to Richard and Jurene While (photo far left) for hosting the Trade Floor at convention. We appreciate your efforts—and the opportunity to shop!

# CRA Raffles and Auction... Oh My!

Many thanks to Carol Ganzi and Astrid Fisher (photo top right) for gathering donations and handling all the Door Prize and Raffle details.

Some of the lucky—and very happy—winners of the painted items.

Thank you to all our donors!





The CRA extends its grateful appreciation to the following donors whose generosity has helped to make our 2011 convention a success:

Hildy Henry — Rosemaled Items  
Diane Langill — Books and Patterns  
Gayle Oram — Wood Surfaces, Pattern & 2 DVD's  
Onya Tolmasoff — Tine  
Jurene While — Rosemaled Trunk, Plates and other Surfaces  
Marley Wright Smith — Rosemaled Plate  
Fern Duggan — 2 Painted Surfaces  
Wendy Gilbert — Painted Surfaces  
Arlene Rounce — Gayle Oram DVD, Pattern Packet  
JoSonja Jansen — Pattern Packets  
Sigmund Aarseth — Painting  
Kris Henderson — Fused Glass Bottlestopper  
Colleen Middleton — Paintable Journal, Tine  
DeeDee Skjervem — \$50 gift cards  
Marilyn Cram — Painted Plate  
Art Creations — Wood Surface  
Cheap Joe's Art Stuff — Tote bags, catalogs

Chroma Acrylics — Mini Paint Tubes  
Deco Art — 2 sets of Traditions Paint  
Liquitex Artist Materials — Paint Set  
Monska Woodworking Inc. — Large Plate  
Turns in Time/Wayne's Woodenware — Lazy Susan  
**Vesterheim Norwegian American Museum** — Rosemaling Books  
Walnut Hollow Farm — 20 Wood Pieces  
R & M Whatnots — Wooden Tray  
What a Blast — Metal Tray  
Andy Jones (DAC) — Book  
Royal Langnickel — Travel Brush Washers, Brush Sets, Display Easels  
Karen Willman — Gift Card  
Patti Goke — Painted Jewelry  
Nancy Schmidt — Painted Surface  
All whose time and energy is so appreciated!

If you are the recipient of one of these Donations, please thank the donor by dropping them a Thank You note.

Astrid Fisher



## Rosemaling Fun

Here are a few of the projects CRA members painted or sewed and brought to convention. Clockwise, top left, Hildy Henry, Debra Clark (machine embroidery), Astrid Fisher, Marley Wright Smith and Doris Webber in Marley's designs, and Shaun Sasaki with her painted and Swarovski crystal-embellished shirt and purse.

# *A Tribute to Ethel Kvalheim, VGM and CRA Honorary Member*

The remembrance below, from Norwegian Rosemaler Sigmund Aarseth, was read at Ethel Kvalheim's service.

**W**

hen I received the message that Ethel has left us, many good memories of time we spent together come to my mind. I realize how privileged I was to meet Ethel and become a friend of hers, on my many trips to Decorah and Vesterheim. Pleasant and fun memories also come back from time we spent together at a May 17 celebration in Stoughton, and the last time we met at the Rosemaling Symposium in Decorah.

In her quiet and humble way she was always a central person, in a classroom situation or where ever rosemalers and friends were congregated.

When Ethel received her well deserved St. Olav Medal, we, the rosemalers of Norway, used to neglecting and low status, applauded. She had lifted our native art up to a recognized level, and also in this way she was a great inspiration to all of us.

Now Ethel, the grand old lady and groundstone of American rosemaling has laid down her brushes for the last time, but what she was for me and so many of us will never be forgotten.

Blessed be her memory.

Sigmund



**Ethel Kvalheim, VGM  
1912—2011**

Ethel Margaret Nelson Kvalheim, age 99, passed away on Wednesday, November 16, 2011 at Stoughton Hospital in Wisconsin. She was born in the town of Pleasant Springs on March 5, 1912, the eldest child of John and Martha Bertina (Larson) Nelson. Ethel graduated from Stoughton High School in 1930. On May 21, 1933 she married Arthur Peter Kvalheim.

Ethel worked as a counselor at the Oregon School for Girls for 18 years. She was a member of the WI State Rosemaling Association, First Lutheran Church and was a life member of the Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum in Decorah, Iowa. In 1969 she was awarded the first gold medal for Rosemaling. In 1971 Ethel was awarded the King Olav Medal of Honor for preservation of Norwegian Heritage in Rosemaling. In 1981 she received the Stoughton Community Appreciation Award. In 1989 Charles Kuralt awarded Ethel the National Heritage Award Fellowship. In 1990 she was inducted into the Stoughton Hall of Fame.

Ethel is survived by two sons, Keith (Fannie) and Gary (Kathy) Kvalheim, both of Stoughton; five grandchildren, Scott (Toni), Kevin (Jenny), Jason (Jennifer) and Dan (Sarah) Kvalheim and Cindy (Rick) Armstrong; 10 great grandchildren; sister-in-law, Alice Nelson; and several nieces and nephews. .

Funeral services were held November 21, 2011 at First Lutheran Church, Stoughton, with burial in Western Koshkonong Cemetery. Memorials may be made to Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum, P.O. Box 379, 523 W. Water St., Decorah, Iowa 52101, or online at [www.vesterheim.org](http://www.vesterheim.org).

As rosemakers we all owe a debt of gratitude to Ethel Kvalheim for her efforts in the revival of rosemaling. Her joy of painting — and mastery of it — has set the bar high. But so she has in her way of living... and her sense of purpose and determination... Karen Willman

# An Amazing Tapestry of Life



Eulogy by Kathy Kvalheim,  
Ethel's daughter-in-law

**E**

thel was an amazing woman.

When people hear “Ethel Kvalheim”, their first thought is probably rosemaling. The two just seem to go together.

I admire Ethel greatly for her rosemaling achievements, but more than that I admire her for the person she was.

Throughout her life she knew both difficult times and times of reward. Her determination played an important role in both. In the difficult times, it was her determination that resulted in getting done whatever needed doing. It was her determination in meeting the goals she had set for herself that reaped the rewards.

Ethel never complained, either about circumstances or people. She always said “things are what they are.”

As a young girl growing up on the farm her work seemed never ending. She often told us she could still hear her father saying, “Ethel, get the cows,” or her grandmother saying, “Ethel, the chickens need feed,” or “Ethel, we need more wood”.

It was her job to go get the mail and many times she told us “it was a quarter mile to the mailbox and a quarter mile back and you knew if the north wind was blowing”.

In spite of her work Ethel found the time to go to her own special place, the woods. There she knew every flower by name and spent her most enjoyable times.

There was the time while walking home from school that

she saw a pack of wolves circling in the woods and afraid they might come after her, she ran to a nearby farmhouse where the lady then walked her home.

She told us of the time her father sent her to the neighbors to help with the tobacco. He set her upon the back of a large horse which she was to ride there and when finished for the day, the neighbor placed her back upon the horse for the return ride home. Soon after leaving, she had reason to jump off the horse and unable to get back on by herself, she had to walk the horse all the way back home.

At about the age of ten she was given the job of sitting on a bridge and watching to make sure the cows didn’t cross the road. She would take pencil and paper with her and sketch while watching the cows. This was the beginning of what would later result in her fame in the arts.

When the time came for Ethel to attend high school, she was sent to board with a family in town. On weekends her father would come for her and she would return home. One weekend there was a terrible snowstorm and unable to get home, the weekend had to be spent in town. Her roommate, Thelma Venden, invited Ethel to join her in visiting the home of her friends, the Kvalheim family. It was there that she met her future husband, Art. He invited her to the movies and as she said “he had his own car and that was pretty good for those times”.

On May 21, 1933, Ethel and Art were married and



later the family was completed with the addition of two sons.

It was while the boys were very young that Art began to experience difficulty in walking. Diagnosis of a spinal tumor was a long time in coming and made only after numerous doctor visits, tests and therapy.

Without the luxury of a babysitter, all of these visits were made with two small boys along.

Without any form of steady income in the household, putting food on the table became a challenge. She told of one day when there was no milk or bread in the house and only two cents in her pocketbook, she was able to sell a plate.

Soon after, Ethel's mother became very ill and bedridden. Ethel and her family moved into the home of her parents so that she could care for her mother. Ethel, Art and the boys lived in the upstairs of the large farmhouse. Each morning Ethel would assist Art down the stairs and each evening, back up the stairs. To accomplish this Ethel sewed a sling which she strapped around her neck and was used to help support Art's legs.

Ethel's dream was to own her own home and by working hard and spending little, she was able to accomplish this goal. She had hoped to live out her entire life in that home. This wasn't meant to be but she was able to live there independently until the age of 98.

Ethel was known for her quick wit and one line zingers, as we liked to call them. At the age of 98, while being admitted to the hospital, she was asked that if the instance arose, would she like to be resuscitated. She asked me what they meant. I explained it to her. And her reply — "no, that would be like dying twice and that wouldn't be any fun".

Another time she was asked if she felt she could still make her own decisions. She asked, "how old am I?" When told that she was 99, she asked, "would you trust a 99 year old?".

And honesty? Sometimes she was a bit too honest. In our younger years, when sharing a meal, we were always told, "you must eat". Later, as we matured, that changed to "you're looking well fed" or "I can see you don't sit too far from the table" or "you're not missing any meals". Had I been as witty as she, I would have replied "you are what you are".

Ethel has left each of us with our own special memories of her. It might be her painting, her determination, her honesty or her wit. For me it's all of these and I have been blessed to have had her in my life.

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*As Kathy said, "For me it's all of these and I have been blessed to have had her in my life". I too will always be grateful for Ethel's presence in my life.*

*Karen Nelson*



*Many thanks to CRA's Karen Nelson  
and the family of Ethel Kvalheim  
for sharing these remembrances and photos.*

For more on Ethel Kvalheim:



Photo from: Barton, John R. RURAL ARTISTS OF WISCONSIN. © 1948 by the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System. Reprinted courtesy of The University of Wisconsin Press.

"Farm Girl Saga," by John Barton Rector,  
Rural Artists of Wisconsin; 1948

Online at University of Wisconsin Digital Collections:  
[www.digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/Arts.BartonRural](http://www.digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/Arts.BartonRural)  
[www.vesterheim.org](http://www.vesterheim.org)

Rosemaling in the Upper Midwest  
by Philip Martin; Wisconsin Folk Museum  
1989; ISBN 0-9624369-0-9



# California Rosemaling Association

*The purpose of the California Rosemaling Association is to promote the traditional art of Norwegian rosemaling. Our members are committed to preserving rosemaling as a unique art form.*

*CRA has approximately 140 members. Some are expert rosemalers, others are beginning painters, all with a love to study the art form.*

*Membership in CRA allows you to attend the annual convention featuring renowned rosemalers from around the world. Members also receive an annual membership directory and a subscription to the quarterly newsletter.*



The \$15 annual membership dues include a subscription to the California Rosemaler, published quarterly, March, June, September and December. We welcome articles, designs, photos and suggestions for future issues.

Classified ads are \$1 per line per issue. Business cards are \$5 for the first publication and \$2 per issue thereafter. Quarter-page ads are \$15 for the initial publication and \$10 per issue thereafter. Please send ad copy to the editor along with a check payable to CRA. Ads are screened for appropriateness, however, publishing them does not imply endorsement by the Executive Board.

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Comments and suggestions are always welcome. Send to Karen Willman, newvikings@sbcglobal.net.

## CALIFORNIA ROSEMALING ASSOCIATION

Membership Application: 2012 \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ New \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ May we print the above information in our membership directory? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Do you teach rosemaling? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, where? \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this application, **enclose \$15.00 dues** (check made out to CRA) and mail to:

Rebecca Nelson-Harris  
23942 Balsam Court  
Auburn, CA 95602

California Rosemaler Newsletter  
Karen Willman, editor

December 2011 No.110

*Thank You for Your Suggestions, Ideas and Photos in 2011*



*Wishing You  
Happy Rosemaling Adventures  
for the New Year*

*Look Forward to Hearing From You in 2012*

Check out  
CRA's website  
[www.califrosemaler.org](http://www.califrosemaler.org)

The CRA Newsletter is available in color  
in PDF format for email and is on our website  
Do we have your correct/current email address?



*Thank You  
Nancy Schmidt  
and Patti Goke  
for a Great Convention!*