

Marit Evjen's Silver Medal Comes to America

By Les Evjen

A silver medal earned in Selbu, Norway over 75 years ago by the sister of Les Evjen's grandfather Ole P. Evjen, is back in the family.

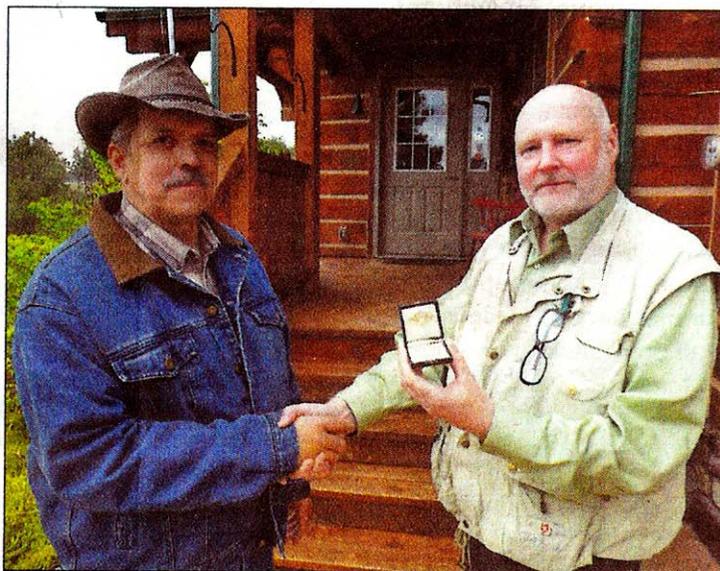
Marit Evjen never married but spent her entire life in Selbu Township helping her parents and all her neighbors with their crop, animal, and farm chores. Her very generous and unselfish contributions to the advancement of sound agricultural practices led to her recognition by the South Tronderlag Landholdings society. Founded in 1830, the society had a silver medal struck to mark their 50th jubilee in 1880. It was just this such medal that was given to Marit Evjen in 1934 when she was forced to retire from active farm work for reasons of age and health. This medal remained in the care of the John Evjen family, her neighbors to the south, from her death in the early 1940s until June of this year. That is when it was delivered to Les Evjen at the home shared with his wife Donna in the Black Hills of South Dakota. The honor of transporting the medal fell to Hans Olav Løkken, a regional historian, on one of his many trips to America to research the descendants of Norwegian immigrants. Les and Donna met Hans in the summer of 2010 at Mt. Rushmore when he was guiding two families of Norwegian visitors on an American tour.

Les and Donna became acquainted with John and Bjørg Evjen in 2005 when they joined a Tres Lag Stevne tour of Sor-Trondelag. John's knowledge of local history proved invaluable in Les's search for information about his grandfather, Ole P. Evjen, who emigrated to America in 1883 at the age of 25. John's grandfather and Ole had been "next door" neighbors and good friends. Pictures were exchanged and mementos shared. John did not remember Marit's silver medal until after Les & Donna returned home and so has been looking for an opportunity to deliver it since then. Hans Olav proved to be the perfect go-between for which both parties are deeply grateful.

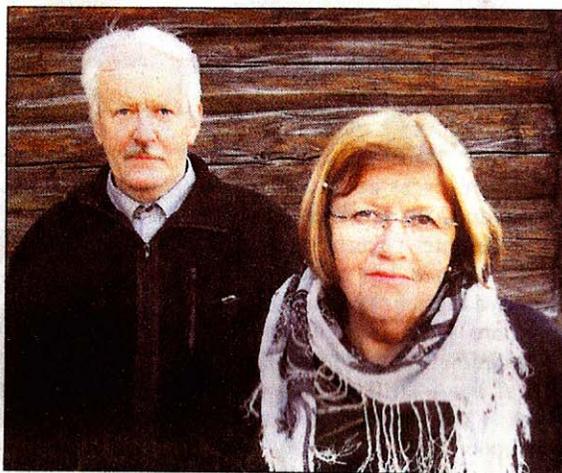
Medalje fra Selbu overrakt i Black Hills, Sør-Dakota

Den 18. mai i år ble en medalje fra Selbu overrakt til familien Les Evjen i Black Hills i Sør-Dakota. Medaljen ble i sin tid gitt til Marit, søster til bestefar til Les Evjen - som utvandret fra Selbu i 1883. Han het Ole P. Evjen. Tilbake i Selbu satt hans bror, Jon - som skulle overta den lille plassen rett ovenfor John Evjens gård i dag. Jon fikk mentale problemer, og det ble deres ugifte søster Marit som etter hvert tok seg av foreldrene og plassen. Samtidig tjenestegjorde hun på nabogårdene i alle år. I forbindelse med *Søndre Trondhjems Amts Landhusholdnings-selskaps* 100-årsjubileum i 1930, fikk Marit fortjenestemedalje i sølv for sitt virke. Æresbevisningen ble forøvrig første gang

utdelt under 50-års jubileet i 1880. - Marit ble syk i 1934, ble sengeliggende og døde åtte år senere. Medaljen har siden vært i familien John Evjens bevaring, og de ønsket at medaljen skulle tilfalle den opprinnelige slekta som i dag kun befinner seg i Amerika. Hans Olav Løkken (regional historiker), som har besøkt Les Evjen tidligere, og skulle på historisk research til Rapid City i mai, fikk i oppdrag å ta med seg medaljen til Les Evjen i Black Hills. I en enkelmen nok for Les Evjen følelsesmessig seremoni, kom medaljen atter i den rette families hender. Historien om bestefar Ole P. Evjens utvandring til Amerika kan du lese i *Stjørdalens krønike*, bind II (H. O. Løkken) - som kommer i november, eller muligens også i Selbyggen eller Stjørdals-Nytt.



LES EVJEN (til venstre) og Hans Olav Løkken.



JOHN OG BJØRG EVJEN.

Hans Olav Løkken