

# HGSSCS NEWS

VOLUME I, ISSUE I

SPRING 2004



## STAVANGER DAYS IN TEXAS 2004

### Editor's Corner

by Anne Brith Berge

It has been a rather long time since we published "HGSSCS News".

However, we now intend to publish newsletters on a quarterly basis.

As already indicated, a delegation from Stavanger will be here from March 26—April 3, 2004.

I know we are all invigorated and focused on the upcoming visit and with this good and dedicated group of people, the preparations and the carrying out of this visit should be in the best of hands.

Also, let me mention how grateful I'm to co-editor, Inger Tone Oedegaard, for her input and help with this newsletter.

### *Letter from the President:*

Dear Members and Friends of Houston/Galveston-Stavanger Sister City Society:

It's my pleasure to welcome you to our first official newsletter during the year 2004.

The newsletter, which will be published on a quarterly basis, will be circulated to members and friends in the Houston and Galveston area and to our friends in Stavanger, Norway.

Currently, we are busy planning the "Stavanger Festival in Texas 2004", which will take place in Houston and Galveston from Friday, March 26—Sunday, April 3. The event will attract altogether about 125 visitors from Stavanger out of which 80 are youth who will participate in choir, swimming, volleyball, and scouting. It's promising to be a very exciting program so please come out to the events.

Also, we are presently engaged in fundraising to support the festival, but since the economy still is very uncertain, this effort has proved to be rather challenging and difficult. We will, however, continue to work hard in this area as we depend on company support.

We are asking each and everyone of you to become a personal member of the society.

\*Please see "Membership Form", which is included in this newsletter. Make your check payable to HGSSCS and mail to the address listed.

Like all other membership organizations, this one certainly thrives and benefits greatly from participation and engagement by its members.

We love your contributions to future issues of the "HGSSCS News" and, as such, we would like to use the opportunity to point out the following guiding principles of the organization:

- Provide members with a forum for education and the discussion of topics of common interest to the people of Houston, Galveston and Stavanger.
- Provide the exchange participants with an opportunity to study and obtain a better understanding of the arts, literature, culture, and aspirations of the three cities.
- Instigate personal and friendly relations between the peoples of the three cities either when they meet as members or reside and/or travel in either region.
- Promote and foster scholarships, along with possible funding, which will benefit students attending educational institutions in either region.
- Seek to engender the goal of peace, progress, and prosperity for people the world over without concerning itself in any way with the internal politics of either region.



**We're on the Web!**  
[www.hgsscs.org](http://www.hgsscs.org)

Kind regards,

David S. Ottesen  
President, HGSSCS

**HGSSCS Executive Committee of the Board:**

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| David S. Ottesen      | President                                |
| Dr. Meherwan P. Boyce | Vice President, Business Exchange        |
| Edward (Ed) G. Stokes | Vice President, Business Support         |
| Zarine M. Boyce       | Vice President, PR & Advocacy            |
| Michael G. Gilbert    | Vice President, International Enrichment |
| Anne Brith Berge      | Secretary & Membership                   |
| Joanne Ashland        | Treasurer                                |
| Inger Tone Oedegaard  | Social Events & Membership               |
| Jan Kare Risbakk      | Assistant to the Executive Board         |

Dear Members, Sponsors and Friends of HGSSCS:

This is the first of what I hope will be a series of updates which will be sent to you on a regular basis to keep you abreast of what is going on in Houston/Galveston-Stavanger Sister City Society.

Speaking for myself, I'm honored to have been appointed president last fall, and because I'm looking forward to be part of the society for a long time to come, I would like to use the opportunity to tell you a little about myself.

Also, I will review with you some of the decisions we made in our board meeting on May 22, 2003.

Johnson, for all his dedication and contribution to the society. As I trust we will be able to lean on his vast experience, I am happy to report that Mike has confirmed that he will continue to be a member .

Now, let me introduce myself. I'm 52 years old. I was born in Stavanger and brought up on Stokka (in the Stavanger area). I'm married to Conni, who is Danish. We have three boys; Bjørn (22) and Anders (19) who both live in Esbjerg, Denmark. Philip (11) lives with us here in the Woodlands. We have lived here for three years. Prior to moving here, we lived in Tananger, outside of Stavanger, for 7 years, where I held the position as Region Manager for Baker Hughes INTEQ, a division of the Baker Hughes company. Prior to last week, I held the position as Eastern Hemisphere Vice President for the same division, whereas I have now moved to the same position in the Western Hemisphere covering North and South America.

**The Houston/Galveston-Stavanger Sister City Society (HGSSCS)** wants to make a difference for its stakeholders, which we term to be the three cities by which we are established, its members, the sponsors and all those who are directly effected by our activities, e.g. youth, parents, youth leaders, business leaders, and politicians.

**Our focus is youth and education**, upon which we will continue to expand. Clearly, we want to continue to explore those common areas which exist between the three cities. Today, the oil and energy sector is an obvious area of common interest, whereas we believe that culture, the medical environment, as well as the culinary cluster, likewise represent areas of interest to the society.

**The festival**, the earmark of the society, will continue to be the cornerstone of our activity. Consequently, we have already started preparations for the next festival, which will take place in Houston and Galveston from March 26 – April 2, 2004, and to which we expect the participation of at least 80 -100 students and leaders from Stavanger.

In the meantime, we will explore additional activities, which come naturally to the society. These activities can, for instance, be social, cultural or professional events which are tied to the foundations governing objectives.

**To manage the society**, it was agreed to meet once a year with our two additional committees, the Board of Directors and the Advisory Board, to discuss progress and obtain ideas. In addition, we will, on a regular basis, give an update of our activities to the three cities and at the same time seek guidance and support.

**Membership**

We will intensify our efforts to expand the membership. It is important for a non profit organization to have a solid member base to draw from. With the number of individuals and companies which are and have been involved with the three cities, our objective should not be very difficult, despite the fact that our current membership is low. A membership committee is being established and will work actively with the board to make this happen. You can help us here too by including us in your conversations with your friends and colleagues. The committee has not yet set a target with respect to the number of members we think we can get, but the board is ambitious in this regard. Consequently, your assistance in this matter is very much appreciated.

**Fundraising**

The fundraising committee is currently working hard to draft and mail letters asking for donations. All the while, we will anxiously await and hope that as many of you as possible will help us with donations. To set our ambitious goals, we definitely depend on generous support from donors and sponsors. At the same time, we will work hard to develop activities which will be of special interest to our sponsors and then make sure that they are duly recognized. Again, we please ask you to respond positively to our fund raising requests whether it is at your place of work or you are asked as a private person. We certainly need to engage our entire network in order to draw attention to our situation in today's financial environment. Finally, to those of you who have supported us in the past, a sincere thank you from everyone associated with HGSSCS and all its stakeholders.

**HGSSCS Web Site**—[www.hgsscs.org](http://www.hgsscs.org)

**Do you want to become an active participant in HGSSCS?**

As this is an open invitation to all of you to actively participate in HGSSCS, please don't hesitate to contact Anne Brith Berge, e-mail: [nacc@net1.net](mailto:nacc@net1.net)

In closing, I'm very honored for the opportunity to serve as president of this exciting organization. Also, I'm very grateful to our members and sponsors for all the support in the past and hope that the society also can count on you in the future.

David S. Ottesen, President, HGSSCS

[david.ottesen@inteq.com](mailto:david.ottesen@inteq.com) (Don't hesitate to give me feedback!!)

DSO/ABB



Mari Horve

Inger Tone Oedegaard, who's position is chairing "Social & Membership" on the Executive Committee of HGSSCS, has been in contact with a young lady in Stavanger, Mari Horve (picture on the left), who at 24 is a bachelor student in journalism at Stavanger University College.

As a journalist student, Mari's main interests are economy and politics. When she graduates as a journalist next summer, she plans to work as a freelancer for newspapers and at the same time study economics.

Mari has contributed the following article regarding the Stavanger University in Stavanger, Norway.

## Stavanger University - a year away

**Stavanger University College (SUC) is heading towards the important official status as a university. The school hopes to achieve the formal name by the summer of 2004, half a year before schedule.**

By: *Mari Horve*

The long way towards a university in Stavanger has almost reached its goal as Stavanger University College (SUC) is likely to achieve the important status by 2005. In 2002, a new act was passed in the Parliament that allowed learning institutions, such as University Colleges to apply for university status. But the struggle for a university in Stavanger dates back to the 60's.

### Years of work

The main person behind SUC's university strategy is Project Manager and Advisor, Mr. Odd Folke Topland. - Forces in the Stavanger region have worked for years to reach this point. But it is a difficult mission to achieve university status. In 1997, the government formed a committee that eventually led to the new act in 2002. The act allows higher education institutions that meet certain standards to apply for approval as universities, says Mr Topland. When the act was passed a year ago, most of the goals on the government list were already achieved, as the demands were clear long before the act was actually passed in parliament.

### Four Ph.D.s

One of the most important standards that had to be met was the demand of four Ph. D. programmes. The last two Ph. D. programmes, Special Needs Education and Resilience and Risk officially approved this spring. The University application was - Now, all that remains is paperwork. First, SUC has to go through to make sure that the school is good enough. An official delegation week, and the results will be ready in a couple of months. Then, has to assure that the necessary standards have been achieved in it is the King, along with the Secretaries of State, that approve the explains Mr. Topland.

If everything goes according to plan, Stavanger should have a University by the summer 2005. Nevertheless, a number of factors can delay the process, such as a change of government, summer vacation, or simply bureaucracy.

*"The Stavanger Festival in Texas" will take place from March 26—April 3, 2004*

Management were sent on June 1, 2002. a quality examination visited the school last another official organ the application. Finally, new university,

### Important change

But why is this change of name so important?

- As a University, we enter a new league. The students will not notice a big change at first, because SUC is already operating according to university standards. But internationally and financially, the advantages are huge. I see the status as a door opener towards a new world of contacts, cooperation and research.

The four existing universities in Norway share a common pot of money for research from the state. As a University, SUC will get it's share from the pot.

- All our education is supposed to be based on research. The governmental money is extremely important. But we also welcome cooperation in research with local and international companies, says Mr. Topland.

marihorve@hotmail.com

## HOUSTON/GALVESTON- STAVANGER SISTER CITY SOCIETY

Organization Address  
5219 Pine Arbor Drive  
Houston, TX 77066-2548

Phone: 281-537-6879  
Fax: 281-587-9284  
Email: nacc@net1.net  
Email: info@hgsscs.org



**To: Members, Friends, Sponsors, Colleagues  
of Houston/Galveston-Stavanger Sister City  
Society (HGSSCS)**

### **Stavanger festival in Texas from March 26—April 3, 2004**

*Houston/Galveston– Stavanger  
Sister City Society*

*We're on the Web!  
[www.hgsscs.org](http://www.hgsscs.org)*

### *Stavanger Days in Texas 2004*

(Short overview of “Stavanger Festival in Texas 2004”)

#### **Friday, March 26**

PM Stavanger Group arrives in Houston

#### **Saturday, March 27**

7:00 p.m. “Stavanger Festival in Texas”  
Official opening, choir and music performance at the Hobby Center

#### **Sunday, March 28**

11:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m. Stavanger Cathedral Choir performance during the church service at the Norwegian Seamen’s Church, 4309 Young Street in Pasadena

5:30 p.m.—6P:30 p.m. Official opening ceremonies at the Visitor’s Center in the Moody Gardens in Galveston

#### **Monday, March 29 through Friday April 2**

Stavanger Cathedral Choir performances in Houston and Galveston  
Volleyball games and swimming competitions in Houston and Galveston  
Chef from Stavanger will do Norwegian food dishes at hotel in Houston

#### **Saturday, April 3**

Stavanger Group departs for Stavanger, Norway

*A full schedule will appear in the next issue of HGSSCS NEWS—To be published in February/March 2004*