

## Viking Lodge reaches out to younger generation through Leif Erikson-based contest



By Jan Hogan VIEW STAFF WRITER

Sure, they dress up in chain mail, carry swords and wear helmets with horsetails attached, but to understand the Sons of Norway's Vegas Viking Lodge members, one must look to the foundation of their upbringing.

Scandinavian children learn the Viking approach to life, drawing on four components: imagination, vision, collaboration and fearlessness.

The lodge and member Christian Schoyen are looking to foster that spirit in schoolchildren in the Las Vegas Valley with a drawing competition. Students in grades one through five can participate. The deadline is Dec. 5. For more information, visit [leiferiksonday.com](http://leiferiksonday.com).

"Leif discovered America and beat Columbus to it by 500 years," said Erik Pappa, president of the lodge. "He and his 35 men displayed remarkable bravery and courage in crossing the ocean to get here. While the holiday (Leif Erikson Day, Oct. 9) has significance for the 52,000 Scandinavians who call the Las Vegas Valley home, everyone can take pride in Leif's triumph, which has inspired generations of Americans."

Schoyen, who is a psychologist and bestselling author, hails from a farming community of about 3,000 in Norway. His home was surrounded by the graves of Vikings. As a little boy, he was given a plastic sword to play with, and his room was covered with anything Viking.

Also in his area were excavated ships from centuries ago. They'd been buried, as were sailors and servants, as each conqueror was laid to rest in preparation for the afterlife, known as Valhalla. It served to inspire him.

"Think of it. They traveled in open boats ... without knowing where they were going, if they had enough food, if they were going to be attacked, if they were ever going to return," he said. "So they took great chances. And if you put that into perspective of how to live life today it makes you look at challenges a different way."

Schoyen, a Summerlin resident, studied psychology at Harvard University and has his own company, assessing potential employees for major companies. A 17-year human behavior and predictability study was the basis for his book, "Can People Change? When Trapped in a Bubble."

Belief becomes a person's reality, he said.

"If we can influence young minds, especially when they're the most open (under age 12)," he said. "Eighty-five percent of your conditioning is fixed before you're 12."

The lodge is working with the Clark County School District to send costumed representatives to as many grade schools as possible to further the understanding of what it meant to be a Viking and how that approach to life can apply to their lives.

"Stories are what people remember, so if we can share stories from the Viking time, we will have an impact on their mind-set, how they think," he said. "The Vikings represent role models, and we believe everybody needs role models what stops people is fear; if you can overcome fear, your potential as a human being is much greater; it can open doors."

The lodge plans to host its 18th annual Scandinavian Holiday Bazaar from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Nov. 10 at Community Lutheran Church, 3720 E. Tropicana Ave.

Expect Scandinavian baked goods, lefse, a soft Norwegian flatbread, and vafler, Norwegian heart-shaped waffles. Children's crafts are planned from 10 a.m. to noon.

For more information, call 702-869-5775.

The lodge was established in 1992. Vegas Viking assists local charities through donations.

The 2000 U.S. Census showed 52,000 Scandinavians in Clark County --- 20,000 Norwegians, 20,000 Swedes, 10,000 Danes and 2,000 who called themselves Scandinavian.

The lodge meets at 6:30 p.m. the first Thursday of the month at Christ Lutheran Church, 111 N. Torrey Pines Drive.

For more information, visit [vegaskviking.com](http://vegaskviking.com).

Drawing competition rules  
Students in grades one through five can participate. The drawing needs to be 11 inches by 17 inches and must be about the Viking Leif Erikson and his men traveling to America. Four key words must be represented in the drawing: imagination, vision, collaboration and fearlessness. Entries can be in any medium. All entries must include the child's name, address, school, grade and home phone number. Mail entries to Christian Schoyen/Leif Erikson drawing competition, 1930 Village Center Circle, No. 3-311, Las Vegas, NV 89134. Entries must be postmarked no later than Dec. 5. Awards for each age group are: first place, \$100 gift card; second place, \$50 gift card; third place, \$25 gift card. Winners will be notified and their names posted at [leiferiksonday.com](http://leiferiksonday.com) on Dec. 14.

Contact Summerlin/Summerlin South View reporter  
Jan Hogan at [jhogan@viewnews.com](mailto:jhogan@viewnews.com) or 702-387-2949.