



Scandinavian Club of the Southeast Valley

Meeting at the Sun Lakes Country Club, Arizona Room



December, 2012

The 2012/2013 Club year got off to a great start in November. Some new faces and some familiar faces as well. And we were treated to some **lute-fisk** by Vernice Golden here on the right with Dennis.



Richard (Dick) and Dorrine Johnson, (above left) were sitting at the same table as were the familiar faces of Rick and Marty Roberts. If you get a chance, you need to ask Rick about his hockey days. Lee and Marcy Lundgren were another couple of familiar faces in November.

We didn't get the camera focused on everyone, but Susan and Art Darby were some new members sitting at the same table as the cameraman. We also caught up with a couple of North Dakotans, Willard and Ruth Pedersen who had arrived for the winter solstice (and a perhaps a little bit more).



After we had our fill of the smorgasbord offerings, the Veterans Day program included a mesmerizing telling of his Korean experience 62 years ago by Chaplain Walter Hiskett, retired U.S. Navy Chaplain and retired veteran of over 30 years of service. Walter is a member of our Club.



CHRISTMAS IN SCANDINAVIA

Christmas is traditionally celebrated on the 24th of December in Scandinavia. But it starts way before that with preparations of food and shopping.

In ancient times, long before Christianity came to Scandinavia, “Jul” or “Yule” was an observation of the winter solstice. It was a mid-winter celebration of the transition from the dark winter to spring and the time to celebrate harvest, fertility and birth. December is the darkest month of the year but it is also when the sun turns and the days start to get longer again. So what used to be a pagan tradition slowly converted into a Christian custom celebrating the birth of Jesus.

In Scandinavia Christmas is celebrated on the 24th of December rather than on the 25th like in most other English speaking countries. The reason is related to the fact that the Scandinavian countries practice a mainly Protestant Christianity. While most Scandinavians do not actively follow any religion, Christmas is still a religious celebration. Part of the tradition is to go to church on Christmas Day, light candles and lay wreaths on family graves.

ADVENT

The Christmas season traditionally starts with the first Advent, which falls on the first Sunday of December. This is followed by the second, third and fourth Advent on the following Sundays leading up to the 24th of December.

Adventus is a Latin term, which refers to the countdown to Christmas and the birth of Jesus.

Advent is officially the time to start decorating your house and garden with an abundance of tinsel, lights, Santas and anything that belongs to the season. Every window is lit up with an Advent candlestick; in the gardens you will often see trees and bushes decorated with thousands of little light bulbs, carefully placed to spread light even throughout the densest twigs and branches. And despite December being a very dark month every home, house or apartment, seems to spread a warm and welcoming light.

Advent is highlighted in different ways throughout Scandinavia. In Denmark for instance the Advent wreath plays a big part in the celebration. The wreath carries four candles, one of which is lit on each of the four Sundays leading up to Christmas Eve on the 24th December. In Sweden the Advent candle holder serves the same purpose. On every Sunday a new candle is lit together with the ones from previous Sundays. Whether it is a wreath or a candle holder they are often decorated with spruce twigs, red berries, moss and ribbons.

SANTA CLAUS

Santa Claus is the most famous of all the figures associated with Christmas. The tradition of Santa Claus has always been strong in the Nordic region and in the evening of the 24th of December he visits homes throughout Scandinavia. Often it is the father of the family who goes to “buy the paper” and instead dresses up as Santa Claus.

Santa Claus (jultomten – Sweden, julenissen – Norway, julemanden – Denmark) is believed to be a cross between the garden gnome, who has a strong history in Scandinavia, and the Greek saint Nikolaus whose generosity has been the inspiration for today’s Santa Claus.

Exactly where he lives is also disputed. Some say the North Pole is his real home, but in Scandinavia it is almost common knowledge that he lives in Rovaniemi, Finland. Mind you if you ask a Dane, they might say he is from Greenland

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SCANDINAVIAN CLUB OF SOUTHEAST VALLEY

2012/2013

Sunday dinner/meetings

Sun Lakes Country Club, Phase I
25601 N. Sun Lakes Blvd., in the Arizona Room.
Maynard Iverson, President 802-6993

Social Hour 5:00, Dinner 6:00, Program 7:00

December 16, 2012/ANNUAL CHRISTMAS DINNER

Dobson High School Madrigal Choir

January 20, 2013/Musical Program

Mike and Gayle Riggert-Harris

Harp and steel drums

February 17, 2013/Exchange Students

March 17, 2013/Treble-Makers/Chandler High School

Girls barbershop chorus

Christmas, 2012 – can you believe it?! We are truly blessed! However, during this season of celebration and giving, let us not forget our friends, neighbors and relatives who have not yet discovered the benefits of belonging to the Scandinavian Club of SE Valley!!! Invite them to join us! They will thank you and we will greatly appreciate the influx of new members.

Your Board of Directors has set a goal of 150 members during the 2012-13 activity year. We are a non-profit, volunteer organization –totally dependent on member dues to finance our programs. During the past few years, the Board has “ramped up” the quality and amenities of the Club’s meetings. We now have pickled herring/cheese/crackers provided during the

social hour and enjoyable music through the dinner hour.

We had music by Matt Burazin on his concertina in November. In December, Carlos Felix will be back with his exquisite cello. Looking forward, we will have organ music from our friends at Fletcher Music.

We have outstanding programs of speakers, dancers, singers, exchange students and others. Most of these cost money. The Club finished last year with less than \$100 in the bank! We “made do” by asking the Board members to pay their dues early; some of you stepped forward, too. The modest increase in dues voted for last spring has helped, but the real answer lies in increased membership. In this season of sharing, please help us to “spread the word” about our outstanding Club. If every member will bring in a new member, we can reach our goal of doubling our membership base! Together, we can!!!

May you and your extended family have a joyous Christmas, and a prosperous New Year!

Your Viking Chief, Maynard Iverson (President, SCSEV)

Click on this (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XI04NgrrD24>) to hear what Scandinavian Chatter sounded like at the November meeting. Be sure to turn the sound up.

We were able to capture the memorable poem “**I Am By Love Begotten, I Am Not Forgotten**” Click here: (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o_5TRA_8TBI)

SOME OF WHAT YOU MIGHT FIND ON CHRISTMAS SHOULD YOU VISIT A SCANDANAVIAN COUNTRY TODAY



CHRISTMAS RICE PUDDING The **Finnish Christmas** season begins very early in December when decorations become evident wherever you look. It is a family affair as it is pretty much around the world. It is primarily celebrated at home, although it has a religious dimension also. Schools & some businesses are on holiday from the day before Christmas eve and, at worst, the shops will close early on the 24th. Christmas day & St. Stephen's day are public holidays and schools will remain closed until after the New Year. Here you'll probably find Christmas ham, suckling pig or a whole roasted ham but modern families often eat turkey nowadays. Other traditional dishes include fluffy white boiled codfish, pickled herring & a variety of veggies. Desserts will include pastries, plum soup, rice pudding with cinnamon and, of course, sweets.



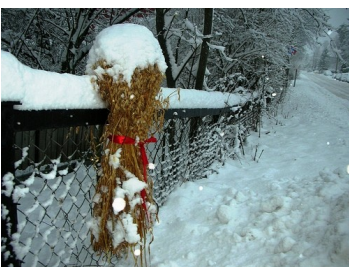
DANISH JULEKAGE The **Danes celebrate Christmas** on the 24th and it's called *Juleaften* and it's very traditional. The tradition of the Christmas plate originated when wealthy Danes gave biscuits & fruit to their servants using their best plates is continued to this day. Parents secretly hang handmade Christmas decorations on the Christmas trees & it's seen on Christmas Eve for the first time.



NORWEGIAN FISKERBOLLER (Haddock) Christmas is celebrated on the 24th here as well but it's a regular working day until 16h00 that afternoon but despite that, most stores close early. The Church bells start tolling between 17h00 and 18h00 and most people will go to Church. Norwegian families traditionally watch television later on Christmas Eve and many Norwegians absolutely have to watch the Czech-German fairy tale *Three Nuts for Cinderella* or the Norwegian fairytale movie, "The Journey to the Christmas star".



SWEDISH RED CABBAGE A thousand years ago, the Swedish King *Canute* decreed that Christmas would last from the 13th of December (*St. Lucia*) to the 13th of January (*Tjugondag Knut*, St. Canute's Day). The Sicilian Saint *Lucia* is much revered in Scandinavia because she cared for Christians hiding in underground tunnels; because it was dark, she wore a crown of candles to help her see the way. Eventually the government found out, arrested her and eventually she became a martyr. On her name day the eldest daughters in most families in Sweden wear a white dress, a red sash and an evergreen wreath with seven lighted candles on their heads; she has to serve each family member with coffee and sweet buns in their own bedrooms. It hardly seems fair, does it? To this day she's a symbol of light and of hope at a very dark time of the year.



Julenek is an Old Norwegian Christmas tradition: It begins in late autumn at harvest time. This wheat was attached to poles, making perches for the birds. A large circle of snow is cleared away beneath each perch. This provides a place for the birds to dance, which allows them to work up their appetites between meals. Just before sunset on Christmas Eve, the head of the household checks on the wheat in the yard. If a lot of sparrows are seen dining, it is suppose to indicate a good year for growing crops.