



# Midnight Sun

ISSUE

2

VOLUME 25

April 2012



On this April day of 2012, Norwegians are still shaken by the terrible bombing and shootings which happened on 22nd July last year.



## What other Canadians see

In the interesting article 'Welcome to Utopia', Tim Johnson wrote this in [Canadian Family](#) last year:

With full-pay maternity leave, subsidized daycare, tuition-free university and excellent universal health care, Norway tops the charts when it comes to the highest quality of life for families. *Canadian Family* takes a trip to see what we can learn from these civilized Scandinavians.

*Canadian Family*; April 2011; pp. 50-55



## Theme: Life in Norway

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## Norway in the 21st Century



Norway's population reached 5 mill. on 19 March 2012. The country is one of the world's smallest nations, with a total area just two thirds of the size of Saskatchewan. To many of us here, it is "The Old Country", whether we have lived there or not. What is it like today? Here is a peep at a few aspects.

Norway's development from rags to riches - from colony to oil producing country - has happened over a period of a little more than 100 years. Obviously the discovery of oil offshore has had the over all most important impact in this process. Also, the uninterrupted period since the end of WWII of a

"[Nordic model](#)" in politics, despite several changes in government "colours", has been instrumental in creating the welfare level of Norwegian society.

**Health and social services** are among the best in the world - but that doesn't mean they cannot be better. Norway in a global society is facing challenges related to e.g. immigration, realizing that it represents a work force the country

cannot function without.

**Communications:** There isn't much you can do about topography, but bridges and tunnels tie together valleys, fjords and islands to allow people to live in remote areas. Norwegians will always complain about roads, but when you look at something like the Atlantic Highway,



it's obvious that it's taking you somewhere! And railways are still an important means of transporting people.

**Education:** Like in most western countries, young people flock to universities and colleges. With free tuition this can be an easier choice for students, but Norway still lacks qualified staff at many levels.

See also statistics on page 6

# Members' Matters



## From the SCoR Board

### Missing volume found!

A member read in the newsletter about the missing volume one of the Sagas of Iceland and contacted Kelly Nelson. It is back in SCoR care, ready to be borrowed by any interested member.

### SCoR Membership

At the Board meeting last month Kelly Nelson reported that as per 8th of March the club has **160 members**. Check your notes to see whether you could be in the risk group of members with outstanding fees!

### No Response to Challenge

SCoR artists chose not to take us up on the challenge to create a poster for promoting the club. No entries were received.



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## An Event That Did Not Happen



Where have all the bowlers gone? Have they taken up Wi-bowling, gone on vacation or settled in to a good Sudoku puzzle? Regardless of the reason, the bowling event which was planned for Sunday March 4 was cancelled before the first frame due to too few bowlers.

All told we had about eleven members interested in the game, and a smaller

group who wanted to carry on the great Norwegian tradition of ..... getting together to talk! Given that the last bowling event went over so well (almost a perfect game), the Board was a bit surprised that this one ended up in the gutter.

Do we need to change the format or jazz it up a bit - maybe having members wear

traditional Scandinavian clothing, or no clothing, maybe have a shot of aquavit after each game or bowl blind-folded? Or, more seriously, how about a card games night with bridge or cribbage or hearts or poker or canasta or some other event?

Let us know - contact a Board member and give us your thoughts.

*Kelly Nelson*

## Club Activity That May Happen

In two previous issues of Midnight Sun we have written about the cooking class initiated by **Greg Swanson**. After four successful classes Greg reports that he has had a brief conversation with a local community association about the possibility of having cooking classes in partnership with SCOR. They have had cooking classes in the past at a school's cooking lab with work space for up to 24 people.

This should be something for the SCoR Board of Directors to follow up on to create an activity for our members.



## President's Corner

Spring is just around the corner! I love this time of year, it holds so much potential. Just like our club. I'm happy to tell you we have a growing membership and great events planned throughout the year. We have just participated in Spring Free From Racism at the Italian Club on March 25th. That is a wonderful annual event that brings together the cultural communities of Regina to celebrate our uniqueness and our similarities. In May we are having our annual bottle drive to collect money for the club's children activities throughout the year.

Over the past year, I have been collecting recipes to create a Scandinavian cookbook. I'm a firm believer in the idea that food is the best way to keep a memory alive. I know the club published a cookbook many years ago, but this new cookbook will include other Scandinavian communities in Saskatchewan. I think this is a great way to work with our sister clubs and learn from each other. I unfortunately have not received many recipes from our club members, but have received recipes from other clubs. **Please consider sharing your recipes**, I know there must be many excellent



Images By Gillies

recipes out there.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a Happy Easter and a joyous spring. I look forward to seeing all of you at our upcoming events.

Kim Gillies



## Meteorite through roof



The owner of a small cabin in an urban holiday garden (*kolonihage*) in Oslo got quite a surprise when he visited his cabin over the weekend. He discovered a hole in the cabin's roof, and then what looked like a stone nearby. It turned out to be a meteorite. Only 14 meteorites have been found in Norway since 1848, the last one in Moss in 2006, so the one that hit *Rune Thomassen's* cabin has caught some attention.

*Knut J. Røed Ødegaard*, an astrophysicist at the University of Oslo and Norway's most enthusiastic promoter of astronomy, thinks the meteorite probably hit during some meteor sightings observed several places around Norway on March 1. "We [have taken] in hundreds of tips and have been searching for bits of meteorites," said Ødegaard after examining *Rune Thomassen's* discovery at their cabin. "And then we find this right here in Oslo!"

The meteorite can yield valuable information to researchers, and private collectors may want to pay highly for it.

Source: Norway News

## Editorial



### Life in Our Old Countries

This issue is the first out of five where we will focus on life in our Old Countries, one at a time, as seen by people who lived there or have visited and have a story to tell. It has been very encouraging to see how readily people respond to the challenge of contributing, either when addressed personally, or simply triggered by the invitation on the SCoR Facebook page. Many of the interesting stories will likely never reach history books. Still, they are important to us because they can give us a glimpse of conditions in our countries of origin unknown to us here on the prairies. The Scandinavian Club of Regina aims at maintaining

"the Scandinavian traditions of people who trace their ancestry to the northern countries of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden" (Bylaws, Schedule 1). To secure continued interest among new generations, it is important to realize that traditions are not something that was created in a faraway past. Traditions are being continuously developed and built, layer upon layer, in art, working life, cooking, writings. Saskatchewan has more than one hundred thousand citizens of Nordic descent. Knowing our roots as they were, and our countries of origin as they are, adds a unique quality to our lives as modern Canadians.

**Come forward with your stories!**

# Living "på Torshov"

By Ernie Nicholls

## Serendipity

An almost incredible coincidence: When Ernie and his family lived in the Torshov area in Oslo, it was in



that same building in Krebs gate where I have my Oslo apartment — just one entrance down. One of my neighbours, Bjørn Olsen, was the Nicholls' nearest neighbour back then!

*Kari Mitchell*



City of Oslo Coat of Arms

Observations by a Canadian family (a couple with 3 small kids) living in Oslo some 40 years ago. So many things that were beautiful and inspiring and, at the same time, strange and very different! We very quickly came to love Norway, Oslo, the people, and the *norsk* "way of life".

Our apartment was part of a housing co-operative in the typical "blue collar" residential area at [Torshov](#). It was heated with electricity. This was supplemented by having a small coke-burning stove (koksovn) in the corner of the living room. The koks was available by the sacksful from a small coal yard just down the Trøndergata, down from the [Vinmonopol](#) (Liquor store) and [Soria Moria](#) (movie theatre).

There were no large "box stores" for groceries so shopping was done at small shops along Vogts gate. Bread was bought at one shop, meat at another, groceries at another. Prices for meat were prohibitive so we ate more fish. Dining out was out of the question — far too costly — and there were no fast food joints (McDonalds, Pizza places, etc.). Alcohol prices were also prohibitive — two or three times what it was in Canada - although my neighbour's home brew ("cognac") was pretty powerful.

Torshov in those days did not have an abundance of English-speakers, so we learned the language pretty quickly. Children started elementary school at age 7, so only two of ours attended Lilleborg skole. Within two months they spoke Norwegian at school and at home. We had a small out-door pre-school/kindergarden (barnehage) just on the corner and children attended year-round. People in Torshov were rather conservative at first, but soon showed us that they were the most welcoming and friendly folks in the country!!!!

Television in Norway then was very limited. It was on the air daily from early in the afternoon and went off the



air after 7:00 or 8:00 p.m. Local productions seemed to dominate schedules — mostly talk shows, weather, and such "thrillers" as, How to Change the Oil in Your Car.

For many, free time was used to hike in the forest which rings Oslo ([Nordmarka](#)), hike in summer and cross country ski in winter from the edge of the city to one of the many lodges in the forest. A drink of warm Black currant toddy (solbærtoddy) and a Kvikklunsj chocolate bar, and then back to the city.

Weekends were "sacred" family times, when the entire family would hike or ski or go off to their cottage in the woods.

Sports clubs were prevalent and these too were often a family affair. In order

*(Continued on page 6)*

# Navigating roundabouts in Norway



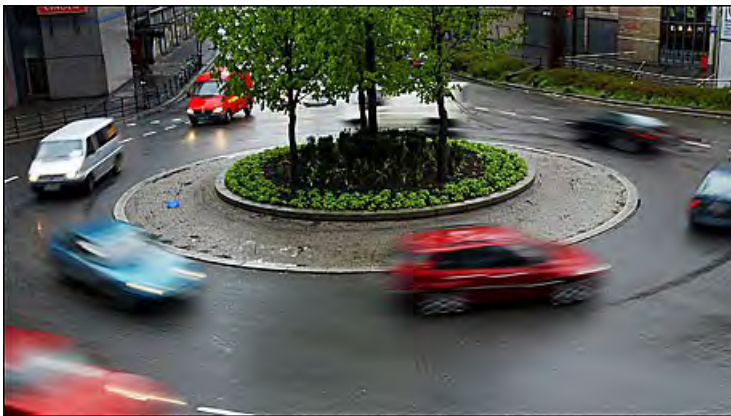
I became Canadian years ago and have lived in various western provinces for the last 43 years. We visited my birth country Norway over Christmas last year, and I invite you to share some of our experiences on the roads.

By Kaare Askildt, Preeceville

Due to the high cost of fuel, more than double of what we pay in Canada, most vehicles in Norway are small European models. It amazes me how the tall *Norskies* manage to get in and out of these puny cars without rubbing off all of the hair on top of their heads!

We quickly learned that there are roundabouts everywhere. The roads around Oslo are in decent shape by Canadian standards, but get off the beaten track and you find yourself on a winding two way road no wider than one lane in Canada with a speed limit of 80km!

We rented a car to get around - a peppy little Audi. Our nephew kindly lent



us his GPS which was preprogrammed for our destination. I was in my early twenties when I left Norway, and I used to drive here, so this should not be a problem. Yeah right! **Lesson number one:** Don't hesitate, not even for a millisecond, or you will be cut off or blocked!

I know how to drive in a roundabout, or so I thought. Half way around I should use the outside lane, three quarters way around I should use the inside lane (or was it the other way round?) **Lesson number two:** Don't ever under any circumstance use the inside lane! We got stuck there going around and around, and I had visions of having to spend our entire vacation there! Finally I braved up and said to my wife: *When in Norway do like the Norwegians!* I put on my signal

light and just drove out! Phew!

Our next experience was to drive to Drammen to visit family. Sounds simple enough and we had the GPS. The voice on it spoke Norwegian, which didn't help us much as it was too low for me to hear. In any event the GPS showed us which way to drive. Half way through the longest tunnel we lost the signal and I had to guess which exit to take. I guessed right, and we kept on going towards Drammen. Two lanes each direction, this is easy!

There are several exits for

Drammen, and ours was the second one. Off to the right, then left under the bridge and into a

roundabout. I took the wrong exit and we were headed back to Oslo. Bummer! We eventually came to an exit that would turn us around. I get my second chance at the same roundabout. *This roundabout will not get the best of me this time*, I thought as I made another wrong exit. So, after we got turned around again I called my niece to tell her where we were. She wondered why we were coming from that direction. I told her that it was a long story.

Going back we got out of Drammen without any further delays and headed for Oslo. When getting off the freeway in Oslo, suffice it to say that I had a problem following the GPS directions? From then on we took the most reliable public transportation, called "Transported by Relatives!"

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Saskatchewan became a province

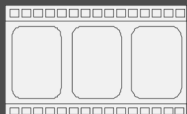
in 1905

Norway became an independent nation

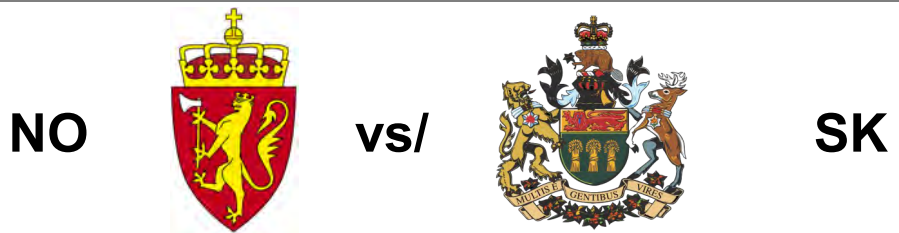


Picture credits

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P.4: (Building): K.Mitchell (Ernie Nicholls) K.Nicholls
P.5: (Roundabout) T.Solberg, VGnett
P.7: (Paintings) Photo © National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa
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Some comparative Statistics



Here are a few areas of statistics that may be of interest. The numbers are taken from different years, but they still give a good comparison between Norway and Saskatchewan.

Table with 4 columns: Year, Metric, Norway, Saskatchewan. Rows include Population (2011), GDP per capita (2008), Unemployment rate (2009), People living in cities (2008), and Households with broadband internet access (2008).

Michael Mitchell compiled the statistics

(Continued from page 4)

Ernie Nicholls

for me to referee basketball I had to join a sports club. Not many families owned automobiles and most autos on the roads were smaller, compact cars. Gas (bensin) costs were around \$1.60 to \$1.80 per litre. Driving into the Centrum (downtown) was permitted, but parking was an enormous problem. There were few traffic lights. Yield signs were controls when entering priority/main roads. Elsewhere drivers yielded ONLY to cars on their right – drivers became fearless and we, too, soon learned to “apparently” look only to the right at intersections.

In Oslo many people travelled by buses or by trikk (street car/tram). They ran on tracks right down the centre of the street, powered by overhead electric lines, usually two coaches, operated by a driver and one ticket-taker/conductor in each coach. Folks seemed to be very interested in politics – there were almost a dozen political parties – 3 to the left of the Labour Party. Elections must have been exciting! But, has Norway changed much in these past 4 decades? Have the riches of the North Sea oil “made a difference”? What is life in Oslo and Norway like today?

## "Painting Canada" - in Oslo, Norway



**In 1912-1913 an exhibition of works by contemporary Scandinavian artists was shown in New York and other cities in the US. It had considerable impact and drew large audiences. Canadian artists took inspiration home to share with their colleagues. They were later to form the famous "Group of Seven"**

The exhibition **Painting Canada: Tom Thomson and The Group of Seven** opened at the National Gallery in Oslo in January with 120 works from leading Canadian collections. It was organized by The National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa and the Dulwich Picture Gallery in London, UK. *Midnight Sun's* reporter was invited to the press preview, and in her welcome address Media and Press Manager Elise Lund referred to us as "Canadian Press" - no less!

I'm not sure how many Norwegians would give a nod of recognition at the mentioning of The Group of Seven. This reporter was not familiar with them before coming

to Canada the first time. All the more embarrassing because they actually took inspiration to their style of landscape painting from Scandinavian modernists, the most important of whom no doubt being Norwegian Edvard Munch. They were also inspired by French impressionists and the Russian masters.

The exhibition shows big canvases with panoramic landscapes as well as more intimate landscape views. One of the artists, Lawren Harris, developed a very personal, Art Decoesque style inspired by his introduction to theosophy.

Norwegians are indeed lucky to be allowed to see these works in their capital. It is a very special event to be allowed to exhibit them in Norway. They show the influence from



**A.Y. Jackson: Winter, Quebec (1926)**

Scandinavia on artists abroad, quite the opposite of what had been observed earlier. These artists shared a love for their country, and in their exploration of vast, uninhabited areas they found motives for their landscape paintings, thereby helping to define a number of Canadian national parks. Some of their works have become icons of Canadian art.

The exhibition at Nasjonalgalleriet is fascinating for at least two more reasons: It juxtaposes Group of Seven paintings with works displayed in the USA in 1912-13, or with other works painted by Scandinavian

artists represented there, e.g. Edvard Munch and Thorolf Holmboe.

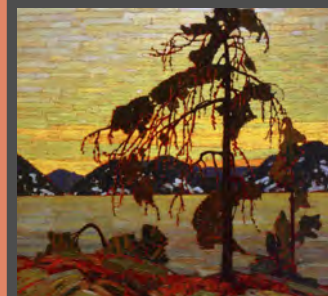
Another point of fascination is that the artists' sketches are on display next to the finished canvases. Earlier, sketches had not been given much attention, but around the time when these artists' works started appearing in galleries and art museums, the appreciation of sketches as pieces of art in their own right became evident.

A new exhibition could be seen at Scandinavia House in New York from October 2011 to February of this year. **Luminous Modernism: Scandinavian Art Comes to America, 1912** looked back at the 1912-13 exhibition and featured twenty of the same artists and eight of the same works presented a hundred years ago.

### Pictures at the exhibition:



**Frantz Johnston: The Fire Ranger (1921)**



**Tom Thomson: The Jack Pine (1916-1917)**

### Children and Art

I brought my six-year-old grandson Eirik on my second visit to the gallery, equipping him with a list of things to look for, like 'beaver dam', 'airplane', 'tent', 'horse', 'iceberg', 'canoe', etc. He was very observant and found every object in a very short time.

## Life in Iceland



Are you a first generation immigrant from

Iceland? Or do you have special recollections from a visit to The Old Country? For no. 3 we want your input to our theme series "Life in..."!

## Please observe

We would like to remind our members that guest numbers for catered events must be submitted one week in advance. The caterer will order the food and SCoR will be charged accordingly. If you are unable to attend an event after you have been included in the final numbers, the club will have to bill you for your meal.

Thank you for your understanding

# Upcoming Events

## Syttende Mai Celebration!



Thursday May 17th; 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Children's parade; Music; Soft drinks; Kransekake (Norwegian almond ring cake tower); Surprises!

Venue: 2047 Rae Street. Entrance fee: Adults \$ 10.00 Children free.

## 2012 Bottle Drive



Saturday May 25th.

Save your bottles and drink containers for the SCoR Bottle Drive! Details later on website and Facebook page.

## Midsummer fest



Sunday June 10th.

Details later on website and Facebook page.



Bring family and friends to SCoR events!

Midnight Sun Issue 2 April 2012

Quarterly Newsletter for the Scandinavian Club of Regina

### 2011-2012 Board of Directors

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SCANDINAVIAN CLUB OF REGINA  
P.O.Box 37182, Regina, SK S4S 7K4

### Membership Fees

Family membership \$ 30  
Single membership \$ 20  
Membership starts January 1, expires December 31.

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