

## Santa Visits SCoR Christmas Potluck



*Santa was hard at work handing out gifts to excited kids including Keeara, her brother, and toddler Gunnar. (Photos courtesy Kelly Nelson.)*

The SCoR held its annual Christmas potluck December 3, 2017, at Whitmore Park United Church.

Greg Swanson presented a video/photo montage of the SCoR bicycle trip to Denmark. He encouraged people to sign up for the next trip to Finland in 2019.

Sarah Greenwood volunteered her story-telling talents to entertain the kids upstairs.

It was touch and go whether the man in red would make an appearance. But finally we all heard the “ho, ho, ho” and Santa made his grand entrance.

The children were thrilled and went up one at a time for their gifts. A couple of extra large kids also received gifts.

As usual, the potluck was a delicious combination of authentic Scandinavian main courses and desserts, along with mainstream foods.



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## Lefse-Making Workshop



*Tobi Lampard and Laurie Carlson-Berg learn the art of making lefse.*

Lylah Gess organized a lefse-making workshop, December 15, to help all of those SCoR aspiring lefse-makers learn the Norwegian flatbread tradition in time for Christmas.

The idea of the workshop started with a conversation between Lylah and Heather Goranson, Saskatchewan's Honourary Norwegian Consul, at the reception she hosted in October. She volunteered to host the lefse workshop at her home so she could keep up the tradition she remembered from her childhood.

About 10 people participated, and judging by the amount of flour spread across Heather's kitchen, a lot of lefse learning took place!

## Norway's Ambassador Visits Regina

Norwegian Honourary Consul, Heather Quale Goranson, invited SCoR members to attend a reception on October 26 to meet the Norwegian Ambassador, Her Excellency Anne Kari Hansen Ovind.

The reception was held in the rotunda of 10 Research Drive - part of Innovation Place-Regina.

Ms. Ovind became Ambassador January 2016. She has worked in the ministry of Foreign Affairs for more than 20 years. Most of her career has been in the field of security policy, including Arctic affairs, bilateral relations with Russia and NATO affairs.

As one of her first endeavours upon arriving in Ottawa, she completed the 51 kilometre Gatineau Loppet cross-country ski race in February 2016. A true Norwegian!



*Mavis de Bruin, Fay Johnsen, June Petersen, Laurel Josvanger, Norwegian Ambassador Anne Kari Hansen Ovind, and SCoR president Blair Hudyma.*

# Norway Gifts Canada the First English Translation of Roald Amundsen's Northwest Passage Diaries

By Nick Walker

At noon on June 1, 2017, the bells in the Peace Tower in Ottawa played *Oppå Fjellet* (Up in the Mountains) by Norwegian composer Edvard Greg in honour of explorer Roald Amundsen's 1903-06 journey through Canada's Northwest Passage.

At the same time, 90 metres below, Anne Kari Hansen Ovind, Norway's Ambassador to Canada, presented the first-ever English translation of Amundsen's expedition diaries to the Speakers of the House of Commons and Senate. A gift to Canada for its 150th anniversary, the volumes were placed in a special location in the Library of Parliament.

Later that evening at 50 Sussex Drive, the Norwegian embassy joined the Royal Canadian Geographical Society to celebrate the Canadian release of the journals and the countries' historically strong diplomatic ties as pioneers in polar exploration and science, as well as modern Arctic nations and policy-makers.

"It is essential to understand the past, but also to prepare ourselves for the future," Ovind told the 100 people gathered at the Society's new headquarters. "The Arctic is undergoing immense change. Equally important is engaging with the representatives of local and regional authorities and Indigenous peoples and ensuring sustainable economic development."

The English translation is a multi-year undertaking that began with the painstaking transcription of the original 1,200-page handwritten record that chronicles Amundsen's three-year expedition to become the first to navigate the Northwest Passage. The most valuable legacy of



*Norway's famous explorer Roald Amundsen 1872-1928: the first person in the world to reach both the North and the South Poles.*

the voyage is the crew's friendship with and dependence on the Netsilik Inuit families of the central Arctic.

The translated record of this relationship provides a truly rare insight into the day-to-day life of the Inuit at the turn of the century, explained Geir O. Kløver, director of the Fram Museum in Oslo, Norway. Amundsen recognized that traditional Inuit knowledge was crucial to his success in locating the North Magnetic Pole and crossing the Northwest Passage and even aided in his team's survival.

Amundsen did not forget this hospitality – nor the skills he acquired in Canada's Arctic, which he later used to help him reach the South Pole in 1911. (Editor's note: he borrowed

the Inuit practices of dressing in animal skins, which resisted cold and moisture better than European winter clothing, and the use of dog sleds for transport.)

"The gift made by Norway to Canada is a gift of knowledge, much of it transferred by the Inuit to Amundsen and his crew," said John Geiger, CEO of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society. "It speaks to geography, exploration and the important lessons that needed to be learned then and now from the Inuit."

*This article was re-printed with permission from the Scandinavian Club of Saskatoon's newsletter.*

## News Shorts

By Kari Mitchell

### Iceland's tallest volcano is waking up



*Öræfajökull – Iceland's tallest volcano*

Öræfajökull, whose name translates to “Wasteland glacier” due to its destructive past, is stirring after 290 years of slumber. The glacier is located in southeast Iceland and is part

of the great Vatnajökull glacier. It's not only dangerous because it had the most massive explosive eruption since Iceland was settled, but because of the immense flooding that occurs when

it melts the ice on top of it. The flood waters can reach the coastline in just 20 minutes, possibly not enough time for people in the area to evacuate. A few farmers live in the area, around 200 people, but it's estimated that up to 2,000 to 3,000 tourists can be in the area, depending on the season.

Until June 2017, earthquakes in Öræfajökull were a rare occurrence. But since then, earthquake frequency has been escalating. The Icelandic Meteorological Office is monitoring Öræfajökull carefully, and authorities are in a rush to complete an evacuation plan for the area.

*Source: Ice News*

*Photo credit: Gummao via Wikimedia Commons*

### Church of Sweden to stop referring to God as ‘he’ or ‘Lord’

The Church of Sweden [Svenska kyrkan] is urging its clergy to use gender-neutral language when referring to the supreme deity, refraining from using terms such as ‘Lord’ and ‘he’ in favour of the less specific ‘God.’ The move is one of several taken by the national Evangelical Lutheran church in updating a 31-year-old handbook setting out how services should be conducted in terms of language, liturgy, hymns and other aspects.

The decision was taken in November 2017, at the end of an eight-day meeting of the church's 251-member decision-making body, and takes effect on May 20, 2018, on the Christian holiday of Pentecost. The former state church, headquartered in Uppsala, 37 miles north of the capital, has 6.1 million baptized members in a country of 10 million. It is headed by a woman, Archbishop Antje Jackelén.



*The church in Åre, Sweden*

Jackelén told Sweden's TT news agency that a more inclusive language had been discussed as early as the 1986 conference. “Theologically, for instance, we know that God is beyond our gender determinations, God is not human,” Jackelén said.

The change has met with some criticism, however. Christer Pahlmblad, an associate theology professor at Sweden's Lund

University, told the Kristeligt Dagblad newspaper in Denmark that the move was undermining the doctrine of the Trinity and the community with the other Christian churches. “It really isn't smart if the Church of Sweden becomes known as a church that does not respect the common theology heritage,” he said.

*Source: The Guardian*

*Photo: Kevin Rushby, The Guardian*

## Norway's first Emmy



In November, Norwegian Broadcasting (NRK) was starting all its morning newscasts with the news that its television drama *Mammon 2* won Norway's first Emmy Award for best international drama series. The coveted Emmy was described as a new milestone for Norwegian television production.

"This is so much fun, completely wild!" exclaimed Vegard Stenberg Eriksen, who created the series along with his brother Gjermund for NRK. The Eriksens, who come from the small town of Mysen southeast of Oslo, were in New York to receive the award at the Emmys .

The series' second season was up against tough competition from other drama series produced in Australia, Brazil and Japan.

It's the latest recognition of Norwegian television's rising star abroad as well as at home. After achieving international success with its *Lillyhammer* series, NRK had another success with *Skam* [Shame] which is now being copied worldwide. The Eriksens likened Norway's new Emmy to winning a world championship for TV series.

*Source: newsinenglish.no*

*Photo: NRK*

## Danish companies to grow cannabis

Companies have begun applying to Denmark's medicines regulator to grow cannabis plants ahead of the drug becoming legalized for medicinal purposes next year. Thirteen companies have already submitted applications for growing cannabis plants to help treat Danes suffering from painful illnesses such as cancer and multiple sclerosis.

As of January 2018, the drug becomes legalized as part of a four-year trial, and patients in the country can obtain cannabis on prescription, the Copenhagen Post reports.

But parliament is still working on the specific details of how the regulations will work, meaning that some horticulturalists have chosen not to apply, "a very complicated set of rules" to grow the plant.

Some companies, however, are hoping to cultivate a Danish cannabis industry and export the drug to other regions where it is legal, to help drive down costs for domestic patients, Danmarks Radio says.

*Source: BBC*

## Edible insects in Finland

Finland has changed the law to allow insects to be sold as food. As of November 2017, insects can be sold as food in Finland. The move prompted Finnish food safety authority Evira to publish a 44-page booklet of guidelines for safe insect consumption, including the important information such as a warning to those with a shellfish allergy to be careful about crunching crickets. It's a burgeoning industry, with a trade lobby group already established for Finnish producers.

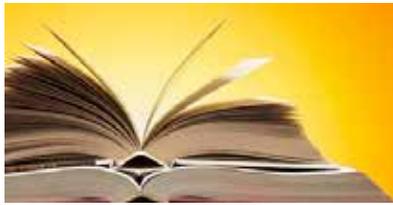


*EntoCube CEO Perttu Karjalainen*

Finland may be a little ahead of the curve when it comes to eating bugs. According to a Finnish survey conducted in 2016, 70 percent of 585 respondents said they'd be interested in insects as food.

EntoCube, a startup company based in the southern city of Espoo, has been quietly marketing its edible cricket and mealworm snacks for the past three years. Its product range – which includes lightly-salted roasted crickets, peanut-cricket chili snacks, cricket-fortified granolas – is carried by a handful of specialty shops around the country. The company has four active container grow-rooms which are each able to produce about 70 kg of crickets over a 35 day cycle. CEO Perttu Karjalainen says the company has immediate plans for further expansion.

*Source: Yle News*



## Book Review

### Swedish Writer Inspired by Her Own Wolf Winter

By Pam Bristol

I will never forget the day the school's secretary let me out the backdoor at 10 a.m. to find my way home through the large field behind the school so my mom could take me to a dental appointment. I was in grade 2, it was January and in the middle of a blizzard. As the school building receded, I found myself gradually swallowed up. I could see nothing but snow all around me with the wind driving the flakes into my face. I kept walking, gradually realizing the danger I was in. Fortunately, 45 minutes later, I spotted a section of school yard fence, was able to reach it, find the gate, and exit onto the street.

Reading Cecilia Ekbäck's mystery novel, *Wolf Winter*, brought me back to that memory. One of the book's themes is the power of nature over humankind, despite our best efforts to tame it. In one of the most gripping scenes, the main character Maija, her two daughters, and the local priest get caught in a blizzard skiing back through the wilderness to her family's homestead. Despite English being her second language, Ekbäck expertly uses the language to create the feeling of surprise and urgency as the storm envelops the skiers, their relief upon making it back to the cabin, and the severe consequences they find nature has inflicted – the frost-bitten toes of Maija's youngest daughter.

*Wolf Winter* takes place in the north of Sweden during the winter of 1717. At that time, the area was called



*Cecilia Ekbäck*

Lapland and stretched over northern parts of Norway, Sweden and Finland. The story focuses on one pioneer family who move from their coastal town in Finland to a homestead at the foot of Blackåsen Mountain. There they encounter two main dangers – nature as personified by the brooding, mysterious mountain, and their fellow homesteaders who are hiding dark secrets of their own.

Ekbäck examines the role of women in pioneer life – their lesser status in society contrasted with their importance in carving out a life for their families in that harsh environment. She explores the role of religion in sustaining the pioneers through their travails but subjugating them to the will of the Church and of the Swedish king. She also depicts the interactions between the pioneers and the Sami – Scandinavia's Indigenous people – and how important the Sami's knowledge of the wild was to

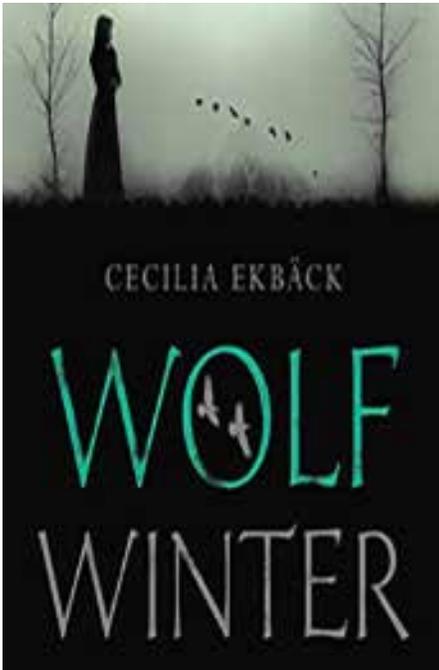
the early pioneers.

Reading the book, I couldn't help but compare the lives of these pioneers to those of my own ancestors in Saskatchewan. Ekbäck said she also saw the parallels, when she spoke me by phone in September from her home in Canmore, where she moved with her husband and young twin daughters in 2014. The impetus to write *Wolf Winter*, which was published in 2015, came from a desire to explore her family's Lapland roots. Although she grew up in a city in northern Sweden, her parents were born in small villages in Lapland. During her childhood, she often visited her grandparents who still lived there.

"*Wolf Winter* was inspired by my father," she explained. "He was my best friend. Even when I lived abroad he would call me every morning. Then he was diagnosed with terminal liver cancer. To pass time, I interviewed him in the hospital about his past. It was the possibility of owning him and his memories one last time."

To the Swedish, "wolf winter" has two meanings: an extremely cold, harsh winter; and an extremely dark period in a person's life. "It's a period where you feel fundamentally alone and are confronted by your mortality. My father's passing became my personal wolf winter," she said.

In the novel, Maija is confronted by her own wolf winter as she struggles to keep herself and her daughters alive through a brutally



*Cont. from page 6*

cold winter after she stumbles upon the murdered body of a neighbour.

Ekback ends the novel leaving the characters poised to start new lives which could go in many directions. I felt her next novel could be a sequel. However, while her second novel, the *Midnight Sun*, again takes place on Blackåsen, it is set in 1856 with no references to the first novel's characters. The main characters in the new novel are a geologist and his sister-in-law who journey from Stockholm to the mountain to investigate a murder and its possible link to an undeveloped deposit of iron ore.

Ekback told me the mountain is not done with her yet. She is currently writing a third novel, linked to Blackåsen but set elsewhere during World War II. Her fourth will take place on the mountain in present times.

“It has been a surprise to me to write historical fiction. I never had an interest. But now that I have started I can't stop. We all want to know more about our roots.”

## A Wolf Winter Birth Day

*By Kari Mitchell*

Marie Emilie Kildemo and Knut Alexander Næss were married in the vestry of Bragernes church in Drammen, Norway, on New Year's Eve of 1938. This was a serendipitous match: Marie had lived with her parents and nine siblings on a small farm in the north of the country all her life up till then; Knut was one of six children of the stationmaster at Galleberg railway station in the South-East. But that is a different story – this is about *Wolf Winter*.

The winter of 1942 was unusually cold. Norway had been under German occupation for nearly two years. There was a shortage of everything including fuel for heating – let alone for transport. The couple, now 28 and 31 years of age, was expecting their first child. Because their landlord wanted their apartment for his own relatives, Marie and Knut had moved to a very small place in the basement of friends of friends' house – not much more than a Granny suite. Knut's father Nils had just retired and moved with his wife Kirstine back to Hokksund where they had lived many years before. Both Hokksund and Drammen are situated on the banks of the Drammen River where icebreakers were keeping the water open for boat traffic serving whatever saw mills and paper and pulp industries were running. The harsh

cold felt even harsher along the river, what with the high humidity and the constant cold current of air.

On January 2, Knut's mother passed away. The frost was so hard and so deep in the ground they could not dig graves, so the funeral had to be put off until later, but there was still a lot for Knut to do, trying to catch a train to Hokksund to help his father, and back to Drammen for work. And then Marie went into labour.

The couple did not have a phone, but luckily the family upstairs did. Still, getting a taxi to go to the hospital was no easy task. During WWII, almost every motorised vehicle in Norway was converted to use firewood: wood gas cars. Taxis were no different, and there were not many of them running. Taking Marie, with contractions coming at fairly close intervals, to the maternity ward on a kick sled in *Wolf Winter* conditions was not an option, even though the hospital was only about three quarters of a mile away. Luckily, at long last, they managed to get a taxi.

Their first child was born not long after, a little girl who was given a name starting with “K” – after her grandmother who died just days earlier. Born into a *Wolf Winter*, she is now an old(ish) lady living in Regina, Saskatchewan.



*Editor's note: Thanks to Kari Mitchell for submitting her Wolf Winter story. If anyone has their own story of a hard winter from their ancestors or personal experience (maybe even from 2017-18!) please submit it for the next issue of the newsletter.*

## COMING EVENTS

### **Fishy Friday**

Feb. 2, and March 2  
4:30 - 6 p.m.  
Ricky's Grill, Seven Oakes Hotel  
Held every first Friday of the month

### **Nordic Knitters**

Feb. 2 and 16,  
March 2 and 16,  
7 - 9 p.m.  
2600 Arens Road  
Press top buzzer for entry.  
Event held in the activities room.  
Held every 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month.

### **Book Club**

7Feb. 13 (rescheduled from Jan.)  
7 p.m., 2600 Arens Road  
Book title: *The Year of Living Danishly*  
Country: Denmark  
Author: Hellen Russell

March 13  
7 p.m., 2600 Arens Road  
Book title: *Butterflies in November*  
Country: Iceland  
Author: Audur Ava Olafsdottir

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*Lylah Gess, with her cousin Dean Bakke (left) and his daughter Taren Bakke (right) at the Dec. 15 lefse-making workshop.*



*Sarah Greenwood leads story-time for kids attending the SCoR Christmas party.*

Midnight Sun is edited by Pam Bristol ([pam.bristol@sasktel.net](mailto:pam.bristol@sasktel.net)) with design by Andrea Ashton. Contact Pam with story ideas. We are always looking for book and movie reviews.

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