

Big event for SCoR !

The AGM in April decided that we will make preparations to host a dinner party for Scandinavian teams in next year's World Men's Curling Championship in Regina. **Volunteers will be called for!**



Upcoming Events

- **Corn Roast**

Don't miss the 2010 Corn Roast which will take place on Sunday August 29 at 2:00 pm. in Candy Cane Park. Bring your families and friends to this Late Summer Get-together!

- **Fowl Supper**

Make room on your calendar for the main SCoR event this Fall! The annual Fowl Supper (or is it Fall Supper?) is booked for Sunday October 24 at the Austrian Club, 320 Maxwell Crescent; doors open at 5:30 and supper will be served at 6:00. If there is interest, a dance will follow.

- **Christmas Party**

The SCoR Christmas party is booked for Sunday December 5 at St Mark's Lutheran Church. Details in Midnight Sun no. 04.

Midnight Sun Issue 03 July 2010

Quarterly Newsletter for the Scandinavian Club of Regina

2010-2011 Board of Directors

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Membership Fees

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

Remember to pay the SCoR 2010 membership fee! Payment by mail is accepted—or take advantage of the next members' event and pay there and then!

Website

Use the SCoR website, give your feedback!
<http://www.scandinavianclubregina.com/>

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Midnight Sun

Sailing away—for good...

The wooden barque **Drafna** was built in Christiansand, Norway in 1836. Dimensions: Length 31.2m/102.5ft, width 8.3m/27.2ft, depth 5.4m/17.8ft. Owner was H.Kjær & Co. of Drammen. Captain H. Eckersberg was master on board the **Drafna** for many years. On this particular crossing they left the port of Drammen on May 22nd and arrived in New York harbour on July 15th. The ship's manifest of departure shows that all 185 emigrants came from Hallingdal, from places like Gol, Hol, Hovet and Ål.



This Issue Theme: Immigration

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A fourth generation Norwegian in Regina

Midnight Sun has talked to SCoR member Lois Lageson Gibson about her many years of writings on Norwegian immigration in general and genealogy in particular.

Lois' ancestors on both her parents' sides came from Norway to USA in the mid 19th century. She has been visiting The Old Country many times, seeing places where several of her ancestors emigrated from. Her articles have been published in *Hallingen*, a magazine of *Hallinglag of America* in Grand Rapids, Minn. where she has been a member for over thirty years. The *Hallinglag* is an organization formed in 1907 by immigrants from *Hallingdal* and their descendants. Lois' latest contribution was inspired by her getting to see copies of the immigration ship's manifests from her great grandparents' long voyage to North America. The article will appear in the July issue of the journal.

Emigrated from Norway in 1852

The grandparents were Elling Sanderson Mehus and wife Kari Siversdatter, née Øvermyro from Hol

in Hallingdal – both of them born in Napoleonic Europe and before Danish colony Norway had got its first constitution. *Øvermyro* was the name of a farm, meaning Upper Marsh – so named because it was situated on the hillside above the



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Solje raffle!

The club is raffling a solid silver handmade Swedish *solje* to wear on your favourite *bunad*. Tickets are \$2 each or 3 for \$5 and will be for sale at the Corn Roast and Fall Supper. The draw will be made at the end of the Fall Supper evening. On a trip to Norway, Larry Bristol recently researched soljes and estimates the value of this beautiful piece at about \$400. A Swift Current family donated it to SCoR in the late 1980's and has agreed to it being raffled to club members.

Editor's comment:

This is an interesting example of how immigrant language changes. In Swedish this is called *brosch* or *lövaspänn*. *Sølje* is the Norwegian word, and we here in the New World call it *solje*.

Midsummer Events 2010



After a spring of rain and clouds, the **Midsummer Fest Picnic** on June 13 had the fortune of a wonderful sunny, warm and calm day. About 60 club members and their families gathered at Candy Cane Park to enjoy an afternoon of friendship and food, a barbeque of

burgers and 'dogs served up by club president John and his spouse Joanne. Also, two members celebrated their birthdays on that day. *Trigvi the Troll* made an appearance, attracting interest by members and non-members alike, and scaring away mosquitoes.

Kelly Nelson

Mildred Ihlen Honoured by SOHL



Club member **Mildred Ihlen** has been presented a special Honorary Language Teacher Award by the *Saskatchewan Organization for Heritage Languages*. Mildred, first generation immigrant from Norway, has been teaching Norwegian language classes for more than 38 years, thus contributing to keeping the Scandinavian cultures alive on the Prairies. **Congratulations, Mildred!**



Happy SCoR members at the June 20 **Midsummer Campout** at Buffalo Pound Provincial Park. There is room for many more members at next year's event!



Nordic Settlements on the Prairies

In Midnight Sun no. 02, Michael Mitchell in a Letter to the Editor asked for information on Scandinavian settlements on the prairies. We challenged him to contribute with an article on the subject

When people from Nordic countries came to Saskatchewan they tended to live in ethnic bloc settlements. This is understandable. They wanted to be able to speak their language and practice their religion among their fellows.

Even though most Nordic peoples came to Saskatchewan from the United States, they generally congregated in group settlements. Settlers from the United States came to escape economic depression and difficult lives. When the agents of land companies and the railroads came to advertise the Prairie Provinces, many Scandinavians were eager to start a new life.

The first major settlement was Swedish called New Stockholm, south of Melville. It was populated from 1885-1887. Two Icelandic bloc settlements were formed in 1886 and 1887, called Thingvalla-Logberg and Vallar-Holar. The first Finnish settlement was New Finland in 1887, north of Moosomin.

Birch Hills was the first Norwegian settlement in 1894.

It was the in first decade of the 20th century that Nordic settlement in our province really flourished. In 1901 there were 1,452 people of Scandinavian origin in Saskatchewan. In 1911 there were 33,991. Most of them came from the northern United States, and the major part of these were of Norwegian origin.

One interesting place to find out where the ethnic bloc settlements are in Saskatchewan, is The Atlas of Saskatchewan. It was published in 1999 by the University of Saskatchewan and it has a very informative map on page 56 that provides a visual overview of ethnic bloc settlements. The map is available on this website: <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~cansk/maps/ethnic-bloc.html> and shows the major Nordic settlements.

Michael Mitchell

Finland:

Uncertain future for classic cafés

The future of three famous Helsinki cafes is uncertain. The lease of **Café Strindberg**, a favourite among the city's celebrities and the fashion-conscious, is being cancelled. And two other cafés have to leave a familiar venue: **Café Kafka**, much favoured by the Swedish-speaking culture crowd, and **Café Engel** on Senate Square, are not sure if their leases will be renewed.

Helsingin Sanomat

Picture credits

P.1 (Ship): Courtesy of Fredrik Sandström.
 (Couple): Courtesy of Lois Gibson.
 P.2: (Events): John Edwardson.
 (Solje): Larry Bristol
 P.3: Photo by K. Mitchell
 P.5: Photo by M. Mitchell
 P.6 margin: Photo by Vibeke Hjønnvåg.
 P.7: Courtesy of BI Norwegian School of Management.
 Other: Public Domain.

Immigrants' place of origin

Hallingdal is a valley district in Buskerud County, Norway. The inhabitants are often called *Hallings* (a *Halling*). Ancient routes (more than 1,000 years ago) between Eastern and Western Norway went through the valley, and it was originally populated by migrants from the West. From early on, Hallingdal prospered from trading with iron, produced from local marshlands. In later centuries, the valley's farmers traded cattle over the mountains. As the soil in the valley could be barren, trading was necessary for life support. In Norway, Hallings reportedly have a knack for trading even today. The river *Hallingdalselva* flows into the river *Drammenselva* and meets the sea in the fjord at the seaport city of *Drammen*.

(Source: Wikipedia)



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(older) farm of Myhre, a common, distorted spelling of Myre – *The Marsh (or Bog)*. The couple emigrated with all their children – the son Erik was born in Drammen just before they embarked for the long voyage to The New Country. One of the daughters, Karoline Isadora, became Lois' maternal grandmother.

Port of departure: Drammen

The ship was the barque **Drafna** (*drafn or drófn is Old Norse, meaning 'wave' – the same word which had developed into the place name of Drammen*) and left home port with emigrants carrying all their earthly belongings in what came to be called *Amerikakister* – America chests – often with rounded lids to make it easier for them to have them stowed on top. They had to bring their own beddings and all the bread and other necessities they would need for the seven weeks' Atlantic crossing. The **Drafna** arrived safely in New York, and the manifest of arrival reports of 187 immigrants, accounting for two children who were born during the voyage.

Migration in North America

Many of the immigrants travelled to Rock Prairie, Illinois where they spent the first winter. Then the men went ahead by covered wagon and oxen, mostly walking on foot, to Iowa and via Decorah to Allamakee County where they eventually homesteaded in Lansing on the Mississippi. The Norwegian immigrants did well in their new country and later built a college at Decorah.

But the urge for seeking new pastures must have been rooted in the immigrant families, and many moved on to Canada when cheap land was offered. Lois' father John D. Lageson grew up in Minnesota and met her mother Klara Aschom, Kari and Elling's granddaughter, in Iowa. Klara used to write for the Lansing newspaper, so it's obvious where Lois has her writers' genes from. John set off in a northerly direction and came to Canora, Saskatchewan in 1902. Klara followed in 1906 when they got married.



Elling died in 1897, aged 90. Kari lived to be 89 and passed away in 1902
This inscription can be found on their tombstone:
SALIGE ERE DE BARMHJERTIGE THI DEM SKAL VEDERFARES BARMHJERTIGHETEN
Matthew 5-7: Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy
HER HVILER STOVET AV ELLING S MEDHUS FODT DEN 26 APRIL 1807 DOD DEN 7DE OCT 1897
HVO SOM TYKKES AT STAA, SE TIL AT HAN IKKE FALDER
1 Cor 10-12: Let him that thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall
HER HVILER STOVET AF KARI MEHUS FODT DEN 16 OCT 1813 DOD DEN 25DE AUG 1902
Here sleeps the dust of... Born on... Died on...

President's corner

I would like to take this opportunity to wish our membership a safe enjoyable summer. We, the executive, have a couple of issues to bring forward



The first is the A.G.M. There were only 17 members in attendance. We cannot conduct business if our members do not attend this very important meeting. There are issues that arise that require a majority vote. This cannot be done with so few in attendance. So, please attend the next annual meeting!

For your information, we have approached the Mens' World Curling council for permission to hold a special supper evening for the Scandinavian Teams, their coaches and guests at the World Curling Championship that will be held here in Regina in April 2011 (see p. 8). At this point it appears that we have a good chance to hold this evening. We will know more in the near future. Which teams will be coming, will be decided in December 2010. It will give us three

months to plan and finalize the event. If we are able to hold this evening, we will give the membership first chance to purchase supper tickets and then sell to the general public. We will keep you informed as we learn more.

I would like to thank Kari Mitchell for taking over the Midnight Sun from Ida. Our paper is still in good hands. Takk!

Have a great summer. Don't forget the Corn Roast in August and our Fowl Supper in October!



Editorial

Immigration

Newcomers to Saskatchewan and elsewhere in Canada often are fascinated by the story of immigration in North America. Thousands of people broke up from their Old Countries and took weeks to cross oceans in their seeking a better life on another continent. We have talked to Lois Gibson about the story of her great grandparents who came over from Norway in 1852. Groups from the same countries of origin frequently found new homes in the same districts where some of them might keep their mother tongue well into the second generation. The pattern might even follow some of them primarily settled in the USA in their moving further on – from south of the 49th parallel on to the prairies of Western Canada. In Saskatchewan there are many communities with a major part of the population having their roots in the same country of origin, and many of these communities are "Scandinavian". Across the province we find place names bearing witness of the founding fathers' (and mothers') district of origin in the country where they were born. Many places are even named after a person with a typical Nordic name playing an important role in the establishing of the towns. Starting here, Midnight Sun will feature examples of our national and cultural roots in issues to come. Your own stories are welcome as input!

Norway:



Song Contest

Norway being last year's winner, the 2010 Eurovision Song Contest finals were arranged in Oslo on May 29th. Artists from 39 countries participating in the Eurovision Broadcasting Union compete in this world's biggest TV music event. Germany was this year's winner, whereas Denmark's Chaneé & N'Evergreen made it to 4th place with the song 'In A Moment Like This'. Iceland and Norway obtained places 19 and 20. Finland and Sweden did not make it to the grand finale this year.

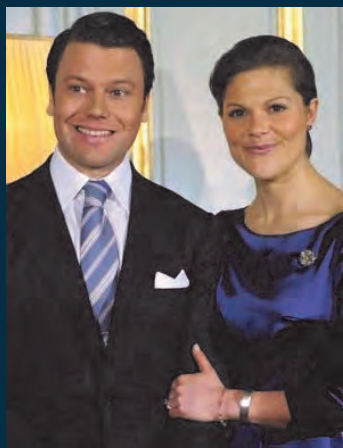




Royal Wedding

When Crown Princess Victoria married commoner Daniel Westling in Stockholm Cathedral on June 19th in Sweden's first royal wedding since 1976, the fitness trainer gained the title of HRH Prince Daniel, Duke of Västergötland. The 1200-strong guest list included heads of state of the other Nordic countries.

Watch it here: <http://svt.se/detkungligabrollopet>



News from the Old Countries

Iceland:

Andrea Jóhannsdóttir in Reykjavík sent us this report in late May:

To our great relief we just heard on TV news that the horrible volcanic activity seems to have ceased, at least for a while. It started with a rather beautiful eruption in Fimmvörðuháls – quite a tourist attraction lasting a few weeks. Just after it stopped, came the Eyjafjallajökull catastrophe.

The volcano lies under the glacier (jökull), causing severe explosions and enormous floods, nearly wiping out bridges and roads, severely damaging fields and pastures. Then the ash came, leading to unfathomable destruction. There is no way of protecting yourself against ash – it penetrates everything. Windows and doors were taped. Everyone had to wear dust masks.

The biggest damage has occurred close to the volcano in one of the most luxuriant parts of Iceland with fields and pastures. The lambing was just starting, and all farm animals had to be kept indoors! Pastures have been fluoride poisoned, the ash is lying thick everywhere. The ash cloud caused darkness like the deep of winter – its consistency varying from powder to coarse gravel. Think about vehicle engines being exposed to something like that!

Evacuation plans and other emergency relief measures have worked reasonably well, managed by our Civil Defense. Volunteer organizations have helped



clear away the ash which turns concrete-like when drying after exposure to water. Relief centers offered refuge from the flood and other advice and assistance.

Icelanders have taken things as they came and lived through this with stoic attitude. Like often before, exposed to a catastrophe like this, we help one another and find solutions. However, this reminds us that even in today's resourceful society, people may plan, but other forces decide. People abroad don't understand how we can live in this country under such circumstances. It seems like we don't really think about this in our everyday life. I guess you get a bit fatalistic – que sera, sera. We know that we are reasonably well prepared and that some of the world's most experienced specialists on volcanoes and earthquakes have established a network of monitoring instruments in areas with high volcanic activity.

Keflavik International Airport has not been closed for long periods, whereas great parts of Europe have been hit time and again by the ash.



What's in a Name?

Scandinavian place names in Saskatchewan

The title is borrowed from William Shakespeare's 16th century tragedy *Romeo and Juliet*, but has also been used by E.T. Russel for his book on Saskatchewan place names. Anyone travelling in our province might be struck by their diversity. For a traveler of Scandinavian origin it is especially interesting to recognize names well known from the Old Countries. Let's take a look at just a few names in and around our part of Saskatchewan, in the districts of Regina, Moose Jaw, Weyburn and Yorkton.

Many towns were named after persons – e.g. the first postmaster, a prominent early settler, an official of the railway company. We find examples of this in Leinan (Regina), named after A.L. Leinan, family name from County Finnmark, Norway; Hallonquist (Moose Jaw), Swedish family name meaning Raspberry (hallon) Twig (quist); Bangsund (Moose Jaw), named after Olaf Bangsund, another family name from County Finnmark, Norway; Ibsen (Weyburn), named after the world famous Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906).

Congregations have chosen names connected with the Old Countries, such as the Danish Lutheran Congregation Dannevirke in Redvers (Weyburn): Old Norse Danavirki = work or achievement of the Danes; Lutheran church and cemetery Norrona (Weyburn): Norrøn = old name for Norwegian and Icelandic culture before the Viking Age.

But most of the place names of Scandinavian origin have been copied from the early immigrants' home districts. We will find Stockholm (Yorkton), named after Sweden's capital; Carlsberg (Weyburn), most likely named after a district in central Copenhagen, Denmark's capital; Lillestrom (Moose Jaw), with its name after Lillestrøm (Little Stream), administrative city in the RM of Skedsmo, County Akershus, Norway; Thingvalla (Yorkton), named after Iceland's largest lake, situated 30 km east of the capital Reykjavík; or Lajord (Regina), farm name from the RM of Vang in Valdres valley, County Oppland, Norway:

Immigrant ship 'Statsraad Vogt' arrived in New York on 3rd July 1848 from Bergen, Norway (dep. 5 May) with 92 passengers from Valdres, including two who were born during the crossing. Three of the immigrants bore the name of Lajord, Americanized on arrival to Lajordes. There are 42 entries for the name of 'Lajord' in the 2010 Norwegian phone directory.

Many other interesting name connections can be found in the sources used for this article.

Online sources

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