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# CHRISTMAS IN ICELAND IN THE 40's and 50's.

by Gudren Jonsson



*Laufabrauð (Leaf Bread)*

A big part of Christmas in Iceland is the preparation.

It starts at Advent which starts on the 4th Sunday before Christmas.

At Jóns Arnar home on that Sunday, family and close friends came together at his parents house to make Laufabrauð (Leaf Bread).

It is almost like a cracker. You make circles from the dough, rolled very thin the size of a small desert plate, then people sit around the dining room table and cut design into it like snow flakes.

Then it is deep fried. We have been making it here in Canada since 1974, Over 40 years.

We would invite different people of Icelandic decent to come and make it with us.

Then we would have Litlu Jól (Little Christmas) in the evening with Hangikjöt, (Smoked lamb) and all the trimmings and the Laufabrauð with butter. The drink would be malt and appelsin, In Canada we used Dark beer and Orange Crush.

A delightful custom was

putting children's slipper in the window sill on December 12th, that is when the 1st of 13 Icelandic Yule Lads arrives, His name is Gluggagæir ( Window Peeper ) You had to be very good to get something in your slipper, every night until Dec 24th. Usually you got New Slippers in the end. We were the best behaved children on the planet during this 13 days.

Then there was a lot of baking made. Usually always the same traditional baking, which I still do at our house, now with Haukur's help.

Aðfangadagskvöld (Christmas Eve) is the Big Day. In our homes the Christmas tree was decorated in the evening of the 23rd. Þorláksmessa (St. Thorlakur's Day). The presents were placed under the tree.

On Christmas Eve we had the mouth watering Ptarmigan supper with caramelized potatoes, green peas, red cabbage and gravy to die for. For desert in my home we had Danish Trifle. Many people had

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Linda Wacker

We are now about 9 months into this pandemic with only guestimates as to how much longer it will be before we are able to meet together. When something is taken away, one realizes the true value of it. I have missed the summer barbecues and now that December is approaching, I am missing our Christmas party.

Thanks to Alice Barth from Saskatoon, Krista Christensen from Speers Funeral Home, and our grant from Sk. Culture and Saskatchewan Lotteries, we were able to hold 2 Rosemaling Workshops this fall. We also held 2 Hardanger instructional evenings with Hardanger expert, Francoise Kenny. We have included some pictures of our projects.

Due to the numbers of COVID-19 infections in Saskatchewan, at this time, it seems that we will be limited to virtual gatherings. If you have a skill, passion, or hobby you'd like to share with your fellow members, please let us know and we will work with you to make this happen. We could set up a virtual event using Zoom,

## President's Musings

Facebook Live, or another online forum of your choice and share what you know.

I have run across some virtual learning opportunities that might be of interest to you. Lefsa Classes are offered on line at [www.lefseking.com](http://www.lefseking.com) or you can contact [glegwold@lutfisk.com](mailto:glegwold@lutfisk.com). Our club owns 2 lefsa griddles and we can make them available to you. The Folk-Art School at Vesterheim, Decora Iowa, is offering some online sessions in various areas. More information about these classes can be found at [jtorkelson@vesterheim.org](mailto:jtorkelson@vesterheim.org). Our club has oil and acrylic paints, as well as Hardanger supplies to share should you enroll in such a class online.

I have spent more time than enough in my house this fall and have discovered things on shelves that I have not noticed for years. One such item is a book I acquired a decade ago, titled, "Viking, the North Atlantic Saga" by William Fitzhugh and Elisabeth Ward. It is a treasure trove and will probably take me the entire pandemic to get through, but I am becoming increasingly impressed with our ancestors. Our club owns a 5-volume set, "The Complete Sagas of Iceland". Greg Swanson has provided information on this set. These are available to borrow

for any member wanting to learn more about the history of the Viking Age.

By the time we get this newsletter to you, we will be heading into the Christmas Season. It looks like it will be a different Christmas this year as we stay safe. It is our hope that this newsletter provides some Christmas cheer. We have asked a few members to provide some memories of their Christmas traditions and we greatly appreciate their stories.

Kari Mitchel writes that her family on Christmas Eve danced around the Christmas tree to her favorite piece: "På laven sitter nissen tekst". I'm thinking it will be a fun song to learn and dance on Christmas Eve, after all, given the pandemic, some of us will probably be celebrating alone. If you are interested in learning the words, in Norwegian of course, they can be found at <http://www.julesanger.no/>.

I want to take this opportunity to wish you all health and happiness. Like you, I am looking forward to the vaccine and to our lives returning to normal. In the meantime, I hope we can stay safe, connected and helpful to each other.

Linda Wacker



*Peace on earth will come to stay, when we live Christmas everyday"*

*Helen Steiner-Rice*





*Cont. from Page 1 - Christmas in Iceland*  
homemade ice cream.

Following supper and after the dishes were done we joined hands and walked around the tree singing popular Christmas hymns and childrens Christmas songs where you sang and acted out. We sang until our childish patience ran out and we could no longer wait to open the presents.

In those long ago days, when

there was only radio and not many toys, the most common and welcome presents were books, books and more books. It was not uncommon for us to receive 13 or 14 books. To this day we enjoy getting at least 1 book to peruse over the holidays.

We went to a clean bed with a stack of books, a stack of baking and a glass of milk. We read into the wee hours of the morning.

Christmas day we stumbled out of bed and continued reading - remember there was no TV.

Often close family came for visits and enjoyed each others company, coffee and good baking.

On Christmas Day the supper was Hangikjöt (smoked lamb) potatoes, peas, carrots, laufabrauð and white sauce. With this meal was malt and appelsin.

On the second day of Christmas was a day of relatives and friends coming to visit.

The supper was leftovers of Ptarmigan and gravy, Hangikjöt and sauce. This also had veggies and was served in puffed pastry with fish in tomato sauce also added in puffed pastry. This is a custom we have kept for the 56 years we have been in North America.

We wish you all Gleðileg Jól og farsælts árs.

## Hardanger

Thanks to Sandra Demeter for sharing her hardanger and rosemaling projects. The rosemaling was completed following our workshop. The hardanger is a project Sandra brought to our evening Hardanger Workshop.

At the workshop Sandra worked on a decorative hemstitch that involved mitering corners. I am reminded that this craft is life-long learning. We are so fortunate to have club members with such ability!

While the Hardanger classes ended early due to the spike in community infections, we look forward to the last 2 sessions post vaccine.



## Thank You to Dorothy Carlson

“The Scandinavian Club wishes to thank Dorothy Carlson for her years of service to the Club. She was on the phoning committee for years - so many that no one remembers when she started. It predates all of us! We are indebted to her for her work and want her to know that it was greatly appreciated.

We look forward to seeing her and Charles at events once we are able to meet again.”



## Rosemaling with Alice

Mackenzie Delaney



My name is Mackenzie Delaney. My grandma, Lynda Delaney, invited me to attend a rosemaling workshop with her earlier this year and am I ever glad I did. I had so much fun! When it was announced that

a second workshop was planned for October, I couldn't wait to sign up again. We made trays both times. Everyone's trays turned out differently and all were beautiful. I was the only guy registered and I was much younger than everyone



Mackenzie Delaney

else (I'm 20), but it didn't matter at all.

Linda Wacker did a great job organizing, Krista arranged for us to use Speers family centre which is a great venue, and Alice from Saskatoon was an amazing teacher.

Thank you Scandinavian Club of Regina for this awesome opportunity.

Mackenzie Delaney

## Yule Traditions with Pagan Origins

by Linda Wacker

Speaking of Christmas traditions, I have done some reading about Yule traditions, thought to have pagan origins. I've written about only 3 of these traditions: Krampus, Santa Clause, and Mistletoe. I hope you find them as interesting as I have. I need to acknowledge Holly McWhorter, whose article in Inhabitat, (12/08/2017), "Santa and the Shrooms: The real story behind the "design " of Christmas", and Arith Harger

and his You Tube lectures on Pre-Christian Paganism.

### Krampus

Krampus is a pagan creature whose job it is to punish naughty children. He is reported to come from Germanic folklore. He is known to beat children with sticks and even has been known to eat children. Krampus Night is December 5th. It's a noisy celebration. It is said that burning Yule logs will protect one from



Krampus

Continued on page 5





*Continued from page 4 - Yule Traditions*

this creature, and that children born during December 5th and the end of the year will be trouble, so giving birth during this time is to be avoided.

## Santa Clause

In regard to Santa Clause, St. Nicholas dates back to the 3rd and 4th century in Turkey when it was part of the Roman Empire. It is accepted by many that he is the fore runner of Santa Claus, but there is also thought that Santa Clause had his origins in an older deity called Father Winter.

Father Winter's roots are in Shamanism. This tale also involves some very intense mushrooms. In Siberia, the Shamans wore red and picked and distributed mushrooms to people who hung them at Christmas. Now, these were magic mushrooms and the reindeer loved to eat them, resulting in their urine containing psychotropic chemicals. The reindeer were able to become quite intoxicated and able to nearly fly.

Magic mushrooms became less toxic when dried. They grew under pine trees and their spores hitched themselves to pine seeds. It was



believed that these mushrooms were the fruit of the pine tree. The shamans often hung them on the pine branches to dry before delivering them. Another option was to put them in a sock and hang them over the fire to dry.

Toxins could also be removed by feeding the mushrooms to reindeer. The reindeer loved to eat them. Their digestive systems would filter out much of the toxins, making their urine safe for humans to drink, while still inducing a high.

It is also said that on the night of the winter solstice, the Shaman delivered the mushrooms to people's houses or yurts. Often the snow was so high that he couldn't open the door so would climb up to the roof and come down the chimney.

Now these traditions were passed down to various cultures and became intertwined with Germanic and Nordic myths involving Wotan (a Germanic god) and Odin, his Nordic counterpart, or another great god going on a midnight solstice run named Hudon.

During Christmas, Hudon would fly with his 8-legged horse. Children would leave food for it. Hudon is portrayed like Santa, with a beard, who always knew which children were bad or good. He flew through the sky. He gave gifts. It is said that Santa Clause took on the attributes of Hudon.

It is also said that as Hudon and his horse flew through the sky, flecks of red and white blood would drop from the horse, as well as foam, and where ever these drops fell, magic mushrooms

would appear the next year. Over time, the story of a horse with 8 legs, united with the story of reindeer flying and prancing on the same night, melded together into 8 prancing, flying reindeer.

## Mistletoe

Mistletoe was included in pagan tradition. It was a symbol of fertility. It would blossom even in the frozen winter – a symbol of veracity. It was hung over doorways to protect against evil spirits. It is associated with the pagan goddess Frigga, wife of Oden, king of all the Norse gods. She had dreams that her son, Balder, the god of Peace, would die and he was killed by an arrow made of mistletoe. It is said that Frigga's tears resulted in the white berries found on the mistletoe. Balder's life was restored at the request of other gods and goddesses, with the mistletoe being given to the goddess of love to prevent such from happening again. She deemed that everyone who passed under it should receive a kiss to show this plant was a symbol of love, and not hate.





# Swedish Christmas Traditions

by Lynda Delaney

## The Christmas Goat

In Scandinavia, decorating your home with straw goats, so-called “julbock” is a very popular tradition. The goats have been a part of the tradition for such a long time that many might have forgotten exactly what they represent, but it is believed that the goats were an homage to Thor and the goats that pulled his carriage across the skies, Tanngnjóstr, and Tanngrísnir.

The Gävle Goat (Swedish: Gävlebocken, Swedish pronunciation) is a traditional Christmas display erected annually at Slottstorget (Castle Square) in central Gävle, Sweden. It is a giant version of a traditional Swedish Yule Goat figure made of straw. It is erected each year



*The Christmas Goat*

by local community groups at the beginning of Advent over a period of two days.

In the 19th century, the Yule goat preceded Father Christmas as the giver of gifts at Yuletide; many men dressed up as the Yule

goat to give gifts to their families. Now, it is most commonly seen as a Christmas ornament, made of straw and bound by red ribbon

## Santa Clause

For the Vikings, Yule was strongly connected to Odin. Yule would be the time of year where you could see the God of Gods flying across the night sky visiting people in their homes. Odin was often depicted as an old, wise, all-knowing, fatherly man and he would fly across the sky on his eight-legged horse, Sleipner. Sounds familiar? Yep, it is widely believed that Odin is, in fact, the original version of Santa Clause.

# Finnish Christmas

by Darlene Harrison

Just as in the other Nordic countries Finland loves to celebrate Christmas!

The celebrations begin with “Pikku Joulun” (Little Christmas). The celebrations can start as early as the beginning of November. However, most often the celebrations begin on the first Thursday of December. It is the darkest time of the year that is brightened by music, dance, Christmas lights and with a traditional Christmas drink, “glögi” (mulled wine), served hot and spiced with cardamom and cinnamon and sometimes served with raisins and almonds in it.

The highlight of the Finnish



Christmas celebration is Christmas Eve. In the old town of Turku, the former capital of Finland, a special ceremony is held to declare the beginning of “Christmas Peace” starting at 12 o’clock noon on Christmas Eve and lasting for 20 days. The tradition of declaring Christmas peace is known to date back to the 13th century. At one time it was common to all the Nordic countries, but only in

Finland has it been maintained almost uninterrupted up to this day. In the declaration, the citizens are wished a Merry Christmas and are asked to spend the Christmas time peacefully, avoiding noisy and rowdy behaviour.

Some people attend the Christmas Eve church services and many visit cemeteries to light candles on the graves of their deceased relatives and loved ones. Towards the darkening evening,

*Continued on page 12*





# Christmas traditions Drammen, Norway in the '40s and '50s

by Kari Mitchell

As soon as the first snow had fallen, we started asking: "Is Christmas coming soon?" The parents were in for a long countdown – most likely two months or more. But there were preparations to be done, and we children (my sister Astri and I) had to contribute.

Once the snow fell and stayed on the ground – that was the start of the førjulsvinter - 'pre-Christmas winter'. Lots to do outside while there was still daylight, but also indoor chores. Some of which were not that bad – as e.g. helping mother with the baking. Never less than seven types of cookies: Smultringer, sandkaker, sirupssnipper, berlinerkranser, goro, krumkaker and serinakaker. And lots of them



Father made fun of it, asking whether the intention was to have them last until Easter.

Then came kakelinna – 'cookie thaw' – the short period in early or mid-December with above zero temperatures when the snow all but melted away during the day. Walking outside (we didn't have a car) became risky, but the way I remember it, come Christmas Eve, the snow covered everything again.

Here in Norway it has always been the tradition to celebrate on Christmas Eve. Father would bring home a tree from the market (always too late, mother complained), and she would decorate it late in the evening of December 23rd. The food would always be roast ribs of pork with a nice, crispy rind, surkål – a variety of sauerkraut, and potatoes; for dessert riskrem – rice pudding, with red berry sauce.



*Svineribbe or Roast ribs of pork*



*Surkal made with red cabbage*



*Rice Pudding with Berry sauce*

A blanched almond was hidden in the pudding, with the promise of an extra gift for the one to receive it. There would always be many people around the table, as relatives would come to share the festivities.

For us kids, the meal took for ever. Afterwards, over coffee and cookies (after all that food!) we started asking (i.e. nagging) about julenissen – Father Christmas. We knew he was our neighbour Halvorsen, of course, and we knew he would scare us stiff with his grotesque mask, but we couldn't wait to hear him stomping the snow off his boots outside the entrance door.

Julepresanger – Christmas gifts! Looking back on those years after WWII, five years of war and occupation, it was not



*Halvorsen's grotesque mask*

*Continued on Page 8*





*Norway Traditions - Cont. from Page 7*

a time of plenty. "Everything" was rationed. But unwrapping gifts was always magic, from last year's Christmas wrapping which had been stored for a year along with the decorations. Sports equipment would always be there, we had grown out of most things that we used the year before. Our neighbour Andersen made my first pair of skis, but I'm not sure I can remember getting them (the year before I turned three).

Then we would hold hands



and walk around the tree. Singing songs with m-a-n-y verses. Some hymn-like, many like dance songs. I particularly liked På låven sitter

nissen med sin julegrøt, when we would run off and hide at the end of the last verse.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dGla-r5Co3I>

Our Christmas celebrations now may be somewhat different from what they were more than 60 years ago, but it really comes down to the same: Preparations, tree, decorations, special foods, gifts, family togetherness. We have given up on julenissen, though.

## The Complete Sagas of Icelanders

by Greg Swanson

The Complete Sagas of Icelanders is a five volume set that contains the first complete, coordinated English translation of forty "Sagas" and forty-nine shorter "Tales of Icelanders".

The Scandinavian Club of Regina owns the complete set.

In 2013, my wife, Dianne, and I visited Iceland for almost three weeks. Prior to the trip, I borrowed these books from the then custodian, Kelly Nelson, and read bits and pieces of them. Doing so, helped to give me a bit of a feeling for the country. Since then, I have been the custodian of the books (7 years).

Some of the information that I learned before heading off to Iceland included:

1. The name "Iceland" was part of a massive negative advertising campaign. Iceland had an abundant supply of fish and the founders wanted to keep the fish for themselves.

The name "Iceland" sounds cold and uninviting, intended to keep people away. This was the opposite approach for the naming of Greenland which is actually cold and uninviting.

2. Iceland has the oldest Parliament in the world (according to Wikipedia). Once a year, the lawmakers would meet at Thingvellir (þingvellir) to, among

other things, settle disputes among the citizens of Iceland. Thingvellir is about 50 kilometres north-east of Reykjavik. We visited Thingvellir on our trip and saw some of the ruins of the historic structures. Thingvellir sits on the



*Thingvellir National Park*

rift between the North American and Eurasian tectonic plates. These plates are separating by about 2.5 centimetres each year. It is the only place in the world where the rift is above sea level. Thingvellir is a National Park.

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*Saga of Icelanders - cont. from page 8*

Now, about the books.  
(Extracts from the Preface,  
Forward and Introduction to the  
books)

Saga literature has been a national treasure in Iceland for centuries, although it remained unknown elsewhere until it began to be printed in the 17th century. Only then did Scandinavian scholars begin to realize that these accounts, which had been preserved on calfskin manuscripts on an island half-way across the Atlantic, had particular value for their own cultural heritage. Since then, the Sagas have been acknowledged as one of world literature's most remarkable achievements.

The settlers who moved to Iceland from Norway in the ninth and tenth centuries established an independent state with a unique political structure. Power was originally in the hands of 39 chieftains of equal standing from all over the country, who shared some of their authority with farmers of lower status. In this way, power was spread and diffused down to the lower echelons of society. This new state was to some extent dominated by the ancient warrior ethic of the Viking Age, but tempered with humanitarian laws and notions of social justice. Several decades after settlement, Christianity reached Iceland and superseded the old heathen belief.

The Sagas describe the events surrounding the discovery and settlement of Iceland. In them one reads about the establishment of the parliament of Thingvellir and

the Icelandic commonwealth, the way chieftains mustered support and struggled to win power and renown.

The setting for the Sagas is not only Iceland, but the whole of Europe from the White Sea to the shores of Spain, from Constantinople to the glaciers of Greenland and the shores of the New World.

The Sagas contain fictionalized accounts of events that took place during the time of the Vikings: from shortly before the Settlement of Iceland in 874 to somewhere after the conversion to Christianity in the year 1000.

The Sagas differ from European "epics" like Beowulf and Homer's Iliad and Odyssey in two ways. They do not have the "epic" formality of verse, but, instead are straightforward, clear prose. And, culturally they are not about kings, princes and semi-divine heroes but about wealthy, powerful farmers and outlaws. Most of the Saga heroes are just barely on one side or the other of the law.

Sagas differ from romance, the other great medieval narrative mode, by focusing attention on actual social types of people in a historically and geographically precise context, with little apparent interest in fantasy and the spiritual and psychological experience of what is sometimes called "courtly love". There are lovers in sagas, but far less frequently do they end happily ever after than do their counterparts in romance.

The Sagas are a completely objective narrative. They never describe the thoughts or feelings

of the character; instead, the characters portray themselves with their words and actions. Everything is observed from the outside, and only those events are related which could have been seen or reported. Events and characters are taken directly from reality or its stylised representation, which creates a wealth of personalities, some of them complex and enigmatic, just as in life itself.

The five volumes are organized by subjects: 1 – Vinland – Warriors and Poets, 2 – Outlaws – Warriors and Poets, 3 – Epic – Champions and Rogues, 4 – Regional Feuds, 5 – Epic – Wealth and Power.

Most of the Sagas and Tales range in length from 20 pages to 50 pages with a few Sagas that are from 100 to 220 pages. So many are a very quick read.

The books are available to borrow. And if you borrow them, you do not have to be the custodian for the next 7 years. You can return them to me at any time.

“Christmas is not tinsel and lights and outward show. The secret lies in an inner glow. It's lighting a fire inside the heart. Goodwill and joy play a vital part. It's higher thought and a greater plan. It's glorious dream in the soul of man.

Wilfred A. Peterson,  
The Art of Living

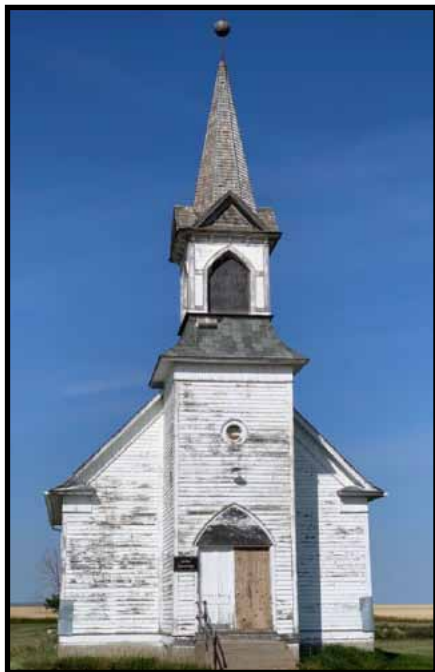


# Bethesda Church Update

The Bethesda Lutheran Church Committee consists of Darcy Phillips, Robyn Makelki, Gene Hval, Reid Kvisle and Kyle Kvisle. Jenna Kvisle coordinated a 50/50 Lotto Draw that raised additional funds.

Congratulations to the Kim Arneson Family and the Marsha Watamanuk Family who won the selfie contest. The Bethesda Lutheran Church Committee was awarded an Affinity Credit Union District Council Funding grant of \$1434 and a Genesis Coop grant of \$450. The donations, grants and coordination of projects are a result of the committee's efforts. Gene Hval has been maintaining the church and the grounds.

We are thankful for all the people who took time out of their busy lives to come visit the church! Here is a breakdown of how the funds were distributed:



*Bethesda Church (Before)*

## Completed Work

### The Roof - \$29,362.26

The roof was completed by Mark Beital, Logan Beital and Brad Meggison (Upper Deck). They donated \$1,000 worth of work.

### Doors, Windows and Entrance Floor - \$2,764.63

Two doors were replaced by Reid and Kyle. The windows glass was replaced by Duane Treble. The entrance floor was replaced by Roy and Gene. The material was \$2764.63 and the labour was donated.

### Exterior Paint - \$9,990.00

The exterior was painted by Supreme Regina Home Painters.

### Church Improvements - Donated

A solar light was installed to the gutter and above the sign to light it up at night. Roy & Darcy Phillips donated the material and labour.

### Site Improvements - Donated

The old fence was removed. The blow dirt ridge was plowed. New property line posts were installed. New dirt was added to improve the grading around the foundation. A church sign was installed. An information box with a guest book to sign was built and installed. The material and labour for these improvements were donated by Roy Phillips, Robyn Makelki, Marsha Watamanuk & Family, Shawn Thue & Family, Reid Kvisle, Gene Hval, Aaron Ward and the RM of Caledonia.

### Work To Be Completed

We are very proud of our

progress so far and extremely grateful for all the donations that we received. Besides the donations of funds and grants, we received several donations of material, labour and time.

But we still have lots of work to complete. The interior needs to be painted. The foundation needs to be repaired. The roof in the entrance needs to be re-built.

## Future Fundraising

We are currently developing two more fundraising projects. The first, is photo sessions outside the newly renovated church. The second, is a calendar with wonderful pictures of the church taken over the span of several decades. Both will be announced shortly.

We are very appreciative of the donations of funds and also of material, labour and time. Please share and help our future projects come to life. Thank you all so much!



*Bethesda Church (After)*





## Book Review

### “Britt-Marie Was Here”

by Fredrik Backman

*Book Review by Dianne Swanson*

**B**ritt-Marie Was Here is a amusing novel by Fredrik Backman, who wrote the Swedish bestseller “A Man Called Ove”

When I started to read this story I found it difficult to like the main character Britt-Marie. Britt-Marie is a 63 year old woman who has fled a one-sided and loveless marriage. Lacking friends and relatives, she spends her time cleaning and ordering her surroundings. Her ‘ex’ has labelled her socially incompetent. But as I continued to read, I came to admire her courage and her attempts to function in a world in which she has had so little interaction.

After hounding the employment office in the city, Britt Marie finds herself in the tiny town of Borg as the temporary custodian of a recreational centre. So very few people are left in Borg as the trucking company which was the main employer has shut down. Those that are left are ‘making do’ and the kids have very little to occupy themselves

except for a rag-tag football team that plays in the parking lot of the rec centre.

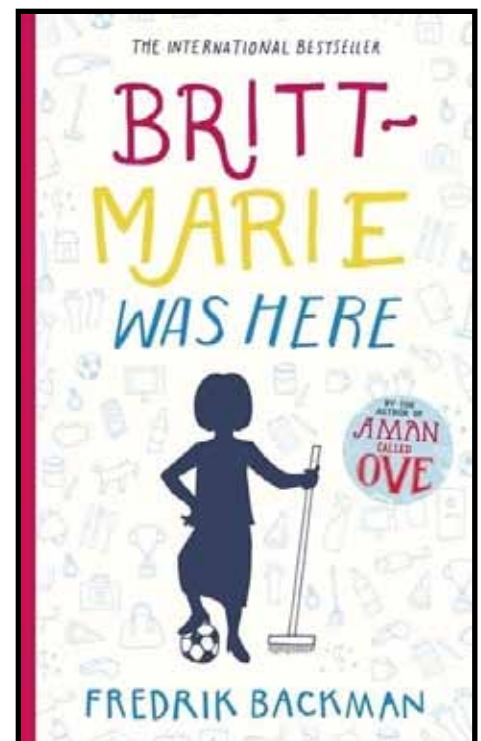
Britt-Marie knows NOTHING about football, but she agrees to sign a paper making her the Coach of the team so that Borg can enter a tournament in the nearby town. She has no knowledge of even the most basic of drills, but she can clean the jerseys and take attendance! She is committed to the daily practices and though progress on the pitch is deadly slow, the kids build a relationship with Britt-Marie.

I found this book to be the perfect read during COVID isolation; laugh out loud funny but touching too. This book pulls no punches about how hard it is to manoeuvre through life. The people in Borg struggle with crime and addiction, family break-downs and tragic deaths. But the book also demonstrates the strength of a community with a common goal.

As the book nears its end, the reader is decidedly on Britt’s side, hoping desperately that she makes

the best decision about her future, by herself, and most importantly, “for herself”.

This book is available at various branches of the Regina Public Library in regular print, large print and Audio books. I also own a copy which I am willing to lend.



“A reader lives a thousand lives before he dies . . . The man who never reads lives only one.”

*George R.R. Martin*

If you enjoy this book then you can [click here](#) to see some of the other titles Fredrik Backman has written.



*Cont. from page 6 - Finnish Christmas*

the cemeteries are glowing with a sea of twinkling lights.

Most Finns have a tradition of going to the sauna to bathe and relax before attending the celebrations of the evening. Warming up in the sauna on Christmas is an ancient custom in Finland. Among the rural folk, it was believed the spirits of dead ancestors came to bathe in the sauna on Christmas Eve. The sauna was regarded as a holy place where many important acts of life were carried out – from giving birth to dying and treating and healing of sicknesses. The sauna in Finland is the symbol for purity.

Feeding small birds at Christmas is an old tradition and a ritual that brought good luck to farming. A barley or oat sheaf was set out and it was supposed to keep the birds away from the crops in the summer. Ancient Finns believed birds to bring good luck to the home.

The giving and receiving of gifts is of course an important tradition. As everyone knows the one and only Santa Claus lives in Lapland in northern Finland. He is known as “Joulu Pukki.”

Traditional Christmas dinner would include mashed rutabaga,

carrot and potato casseroles and often ham or pork. Salmon is also very common.

The traditional Christmas decorations are “himmeli” (a hanging decoration made of straw). The decoration combines elements of geometry and architecture into graceful patterns and shadows. It is made with hundreds and hundreds of straws



*Himmeli*

(usually rye straw). The decoration originated from the Swedish word for “sky or heaven.” In the olden days they were hung over the dining table to ensure a good crop for the coming year and they stayed on display until mid summer.

In the Finnish community (New Finland) where I grew up, Christmas was a wonderful celebration. As in many communities, the little one-room school house was the scene of the Christmas concert. What an

exciting event which culminated with the visit of Santa! Every child received a paper bag with peanuts, hard candy, and of course, an orange!

On Christmas Eve the Lutheran church in the community would be packed with folks gathering to wish each other a Merry Christmas and to watch the children perform their Christmas program. Every child played a part and of course the highlight was the nativity scene! A massive tree graced the front of the church and everyone brought Christmas cards addressed to their neighbours and friends, even though they would be seeing them in person. (I believe the tradition continues to this day). And real candles burned on the windowsills!

Christmas dinner was a time to gather families together. In the early years turkey was not served, instead homegrown chickens were butchered and served with pride! There was always pickled herring to enjoy with traditional Finnish thin bread. Sometimes we were lucky enough to have ice cream for dessert!

Hyvää Joulua ja Onnellista Uutta Vuotta!

## Rømmegrøt

Rømmegrøt is a Norwegian dish of warmed pudding.

- 4 cups milk (heat in microwave to a simmer). This can also be cream. Whipping cream is delicious.

Blend together:

- 1/2 cup butter or margarine

- 3/4 cup flour
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1/2 tsp salt

Blend dry ingredients as for pie crust, trying to remove all lumps.

Add some hot milk to this mixture and blend until smooth. Add all at once to hot milk, return to microwave stirring until smooth



*Continued on Page 13*





Cont. from Page 12 - Rømmegrøt

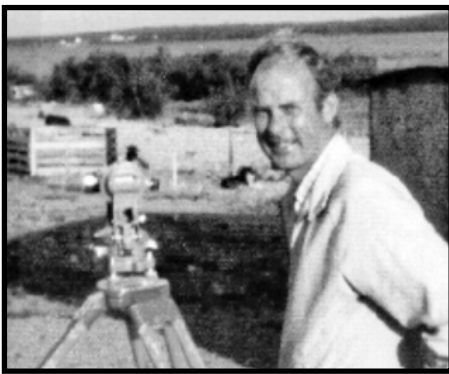


and return to a slow simmer for a few minutes.

Serve with cinnamon and sugar, a dab of butter perhaps as well.



## Obituary of William Wayne Stockton 1935 - 2020



We're sad to announce the passing of Wayne Stockton on Friday, October 23, 2020 at the age of 85 years. He passed away peacefully with his family by his side. Wayne is survived by his loving wife of 59 years, Marie; his sons Paul (Ursula Meier) of Ingleside, ON and Brian (Tobi Lampard) of Regina, SK; grandsons Keaton and Emmett Stockton; sisters Marna Stockton of Regina and Kathleen McKay of Whitehorse, Yukon; as well as sister-in-law Olga Routley of Prince Albert, SK; brother-in-law Ralph Black of Rolling Hills, California; and many nieces and nephews. Predeceased by

his parents Bill and Edythe (nee Erickson) Stockton; brother-in-law Don McKay; sister-in-law Gladys Black; and brother-in-law Fred Routley.

Wayne was very proud to have grown up in Maryfield, SK, where his parents ran the general store. He was always happy to regale people with stories of his childhood in Maryfield.

Wayne's early career included work with Saskatchewan Highways, Rowe Engineering and UMA engineering in locations all over Saskatchewan. He articulated under George Bennett and was commissioned as a Saskatchewan Land Surveyor in 1968 and a Canadian Land Surveyor in 1981. Wayne was passionate about his work as a land surveyor, working well into his 80s. For most of that time he ran his own company, Stockton Surveys.

Wayne always had time for his family. He coached many minor hockey and baseball teams including two league

championships in hockey. His favourite place was Kenosee Lake, first as a child at his parent's cottage, and then at his own cottage, which he has owned since 1968. The family spent summers there, hiking, canoeing, fishing, and waterskiing. Wayne always enjoyed researching family history and genealogy, tracing his ancestors back to the United Empire Loyalists. He and Marie hosted numerous Stockton family reunions at Kenosee Lake.

Marie and Wayne also loved to travel. They spent many a winter visiting the Caribbean, but also took numerous trips and cruises to Europe, South America and the Pacific.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the charity of your choice. A celebration of Wayne's life will be held at a future date.

This obituary is copied from the [Speers Funeral Chapel Website](#).



## Obituary of Eldon Marion Jensen 1927-2020



We are saddened to announce the passing of Eldon Jensen of Regina, SK at the age of 93.

Eldon lived a long, full life. He enjoyed family, friends, music, dancing, travelling, baseball, curling, card playing, camping, and playing his fiddle. Eldon was a skilled carpenter and built beautiful oak furniture That will be treasured forever by family and friends alike. He loved camping and owned many trailers. The first one was built right in his garage.

Trips to Kenosee and Penticton became annual rituals.

The story of Eldon's early life was written in his book "Shinny on the Slough" from his days growing up around Ogema. He worked most of his life with Firestone Tire ending his career in Winnipeg. Eldon was a key member of the Prairie Ramblers. They performed all over Saskatchewan and they recorded two CDs which were loved by many. He was actively involved and took leading roles in the United Church, the Central Lions Club and the Lions band. He and Jean enjoyed many trips together. They travelled all over Canada, the USA and Europe. They even went to Hong Kong to represent the Lions Club at an Annual Convention as the District Governor.

Eldon was predeceased by his wife Beatrice Jean; his parents, Johanne and Ester; siblings Helen, Margaret, James, Douglas, Wilfred, Laverne and Allen;

grandson Alexander Lalonde; and great-grandson Jimmy Walker. He is survived by daughters Shirley (Don) and Lois (Joseph); grandchildren Justin (Lindsay), Matthew (Val), Kristin (Chris), Richard (Georgie) Katherine (Lincoln); great-grandchildren Evan, Brett, Caleigh, Jason and Daniel; as well as his by brother Robert and very special friend Marion. He had numerous nieces and nephews who will remember him with loving memories – especially Dwight who spent many hours with him.

He lived his last two months at College Park because his cancer had made it difficult for him to continue living on his own.

A family interment will take place in Ogema in the near future. Donations in Eldon's memory may be made to the Canadian Cancer Society or Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides ([www.dogguides.com](http://www.dogguides.com)).

## Denmark's Mink Disaster

The Denmark government has called for the culling of up to 17 million mink after finding a mutated strain of the coronavirus on its mink farms, leading to concerns that the mutated virus poses a "risk to the effectiveness" of a future Covid-19 vaccine. This is devastating news for Denmark which is the worlds largest producer of mink. The call to cull the mink has been met with protest in parliament.



After days of legislative gridlock, the government announced on November 17 it had a parliamentary majority backing a law to cull the minks and suspend mink farming through 2021. A vote to solidify the plan has not yet been held.

Other countries, including the Netherlands, Spain, Italy, Ireland and the US are also now dealing with coronavirus on some of their mink farms. Spain and the

Netherlands have culled almost one million mink and Ireland is also planning to cull 120,000 mink on its farms as well.







# Covid-19 in Scandinavia

Since Covid-19 began spreading throughout the world in early 2020, the Scandinavian countries have, for the most part, done relatively well in handling the pandemic. Iceland has often been held up as an example of “what to do” while Sweden has found itself at the height of controversy – early on being held up as an example of “what could be done” and more recently being held up as an example of “what should not be done”.

The total number of infections in Sweden is nearing 209,000 in a country with just over 10 million people. With 1 in 5 people in Stockholm testing positive and hospitalizations rising faster than

any other European country. Sweden’s death rate is over 20x that of neighbouring Norway and 17x that of Finland, even though its population is just over twice the size of both these countries. The rising discontent in Sweden is growing daily.

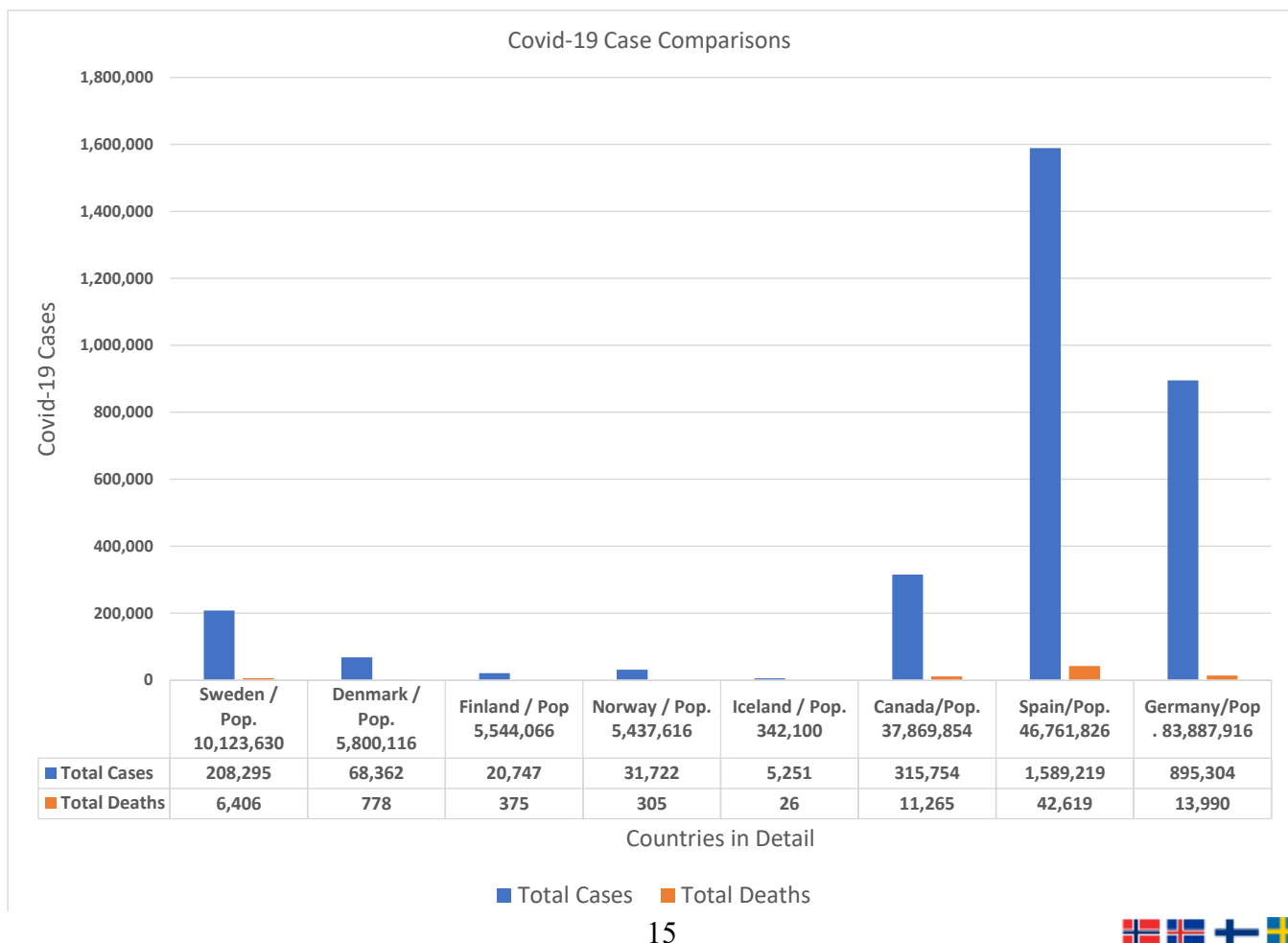
Sweden’s recent restrictions in gatherings, the new protective measures around nursing homes and bans on alcohol sales at restaurants and bars after 10 pm. is a clear signal that the government is reversing its approach to dealing with the pandemic.

“It is a clear and sharp signal to every person in our country as to what applies in the future,” Prime Minister Stefan Lofven said

during a news conference Monday November 16. “Don’t go to the gym, don’t go the library, don’t have dinner out, don’t have parties - cancel!”

“So far Sweden’s strategy has proven to be a dramatic failure,” Lena Einhorn, a Swedish virologist and vocal opponent of its strategy, told the Financial Times last week. “Four days ago, we had eight times higher cases per capita than Finland and three and a half times more than Norway. They were supposed to have it worse off than us in the autumn because we were going to have immunity.”

*Below: Chart shows how the Scandinavian countries are faring against each other and some of their European counterparts and Canada*





## Christmas Traditions of Denmark

by Andrea Ashton

In Denmark, Christmas Eve is called Juleaften. Juleaften is the biggest celebration of the year with families gathering around the tree singing songs and celebrations carrying on throughout the night.

Traditionally, the Christmas tree is decorated on Christmas Eve but the children aren't allowed to see it until supper. Adults will enjoy a warm drink consisting of red wine, spices, and raisins while the children will enjoy non-alcoholic sweet fruit drinks.

The Danish also have a special Christmas character called Nisse who is a mischievous elf. According to Danish culture,

Nisse is said to live in the lofts of old farmhouses and enjoys playing jokes on people. Nisse is generally described as being short, having a long white beard, and wearing a conical or knit cap in red or some other bright colour. On Christmas Eve, families leave Nisse a bowl of rice pudding or porridge to ensure he doesn't play jokes on the family.

Another tradition is the giving of Christmas Plates. In the early days wealthy Danes often gave plates filled with biscuits and fruit to their servants as gifts. These plates were special, and as such, have become collectables.



*Nisse*

## Special Thanks to Speers Funeral and Cremation Services

The Scandinavian Club of Regina would like to express our sincere thanks to Speers Funeral and Cremation Services for their generosity in letting us use their Family Centre for 2 Rosemaling Workshops this past August and October. We would

not have been able to hold these workshops without the use of their facility. The size allowed us to physically distance and the state-of-the-art audio/visual equipment freed the instructor to physically distance as well. The facility is lovely, well equipped, convenient,

and well designed. We thank you for sharing it with our club. It allowed 8 members to develop their rosemaling skills.

The Scandinavian Club of Regina's newsletter Midnight Sun is published quarterly.

This publication has been created by a committee which includes Linda Wacker, Lynda Delaney, Andrea Ashton and Rebecca Bayliss. If you have any ideas or stories you would like to share with us please contact [ashtona@sasktel.net](mailto:ashtona@sasktel.net)



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