



# Midnight Sun



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## On the Scandinavian Trail

by Andrea Ashton

Now that spring has sprung - and is it about time - you may be thinking about taking a trip somewhere – just to reward yourself for what has been a long, hard, cold winter.

If you feel like you could use a little dash of Scandinavia without having to get on a plane, then The Scandinavian Trail in Central Alberta may be just what you need.

The Scandinavian Trail itself hosts four wonderful sites within half hour of each other that showcase authentic Scandinavia in Alberta, but there is much more of Scandinavia to discover than just those four sites. Those are just the beginning.

So what can you expect to find on this “mini” Scandinavian journey? A lot.

Icelanders, Norwegians, Danes and Swedes came to these areas searching for a better life and the communities they built have left lasting legacies.

### Dickson Store Museum

1928 – 2nd Ave, Dickson, AB.



*Dickson Store Museum in Dickson, AB.*

Dickson was settled by a group of Danes who came north from Omaha, Nebraska in 1903. It is considered the oldest Danish settlement on the Canadian prairies.

In 1909 Carl and Laura Christiansen built and opened the General Store in Dickson. The store was instrumental in building the community of Dickson. Today, the Dickson Store Museum is a 1930's restoration of the general store, post office, cold room and living quarters.

Open May 20 to Sept. 4, 2023  
[Click here](#) for more information on hours and special events.

### Historic Markerville

114 Creamery Way, Markerville AB



*Historic Markerville Creamery*

In 1875 families began to leave Iceland in search of a better life in America. By 1888 the first of these settlers began to arrive from North Dakota to what was then called Tindastoll (named after a mountain in Iceland) The name was later changed to Markerville.

These Icelanders built the community from nothing, creating farms, homes, business and even a library where they could read and debate various topics and issues of the day. Markerville now boasts a number of historic places to visit including a creamery.

Open May 15th to Sept 4th.  
[Click here](#) to confirm their hours of operation and special events.

*Cont. on page 2*



On the Scandinavian Trail .....	2	Norwegian Author Lars Mytting .....	6
Rosemaling .....	3	The Bell and the Lake.....	6
FinnFest 2023.....	4	Rosettes Recipe .....	7
Atlantic Crossing.....	5	The Reindeer Hunters .....	8
Upcoming Events .....	5		

Scandinavian Trail - cont. from Page 1

## [Stephansson House](#)

2230 Twp Rd 371, Red Deer County, AB



*Stephansson House*

Stephansson House is a one and one-half storey log and wood frame cottage built by Stephan G. Stephansson, Stephansson, who was born in Iceland in 1853, brought his family to the Markerville area in 1889 where he homesteaded with his family by day, and wrote his poems by night. Stephansson House offers a snapshot of what life was like for them on the prairies in 1927.

Open May 20 to Sept. 5 2023, Wednesdays to Sundays, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

## [Danish Canadian Museum](#)

35544 Range Road 31, Red Deer County

Located near Dickson, Alberta. The Danish Canadian National Museum invites you to explore the rich history of Danish immigrants in Canada - a saga that began over 1000 years ago. Come check out the museum and take some time to shop in their gift shop.

They have a number of exciting events planned this summer so [click here](#) to read their 2023 Flyer.

Open May 18 to Aug. 29, 2023

The following businesses are not listed on the official Scandinavian Trail website but are

located within the Red Deer area and are well worth a visit if you are in this area.

## [HolmeHus Antiques](#)

See website for hours of operation and directions.

If you are looking for antiques or farm fresh food, look no further than HolmeHus Antiques for they specialize in both.

Susan Manyluk, a native of Denmark, regularly travels to Scandinavia in search of rare Scandinavian and other European antiques to stock their showroom, as well as items from North America and other countries.

## [Norwegian Laft Hus](#)

4402-47 Ave., Red Deer, AB



*Laft Hus*

Laft Hus is a small cultural museum dedicated to preserving the culture of Norwegian-Canadians. The museum is a one room log house with a sod roof and is an opportunity for guests to experience a 17th century farmhouse. The museum is full of artifacts and has a gift shop should you wish to take home a little piece of Norway. An Annual Craft and Bake Sale, Laft Hus Festival and various classes help to make Laft Hus the little gem that it is.

For more information about all their events and their hours of operation check out their website.

Finally, if you are on the Scandinavian Trail and are willing to travel just a little further north-east, be sure to check out Lefse House.

## [Lefse House](#)

5210 51 Ave, Camrose, AB



*Lefse House*

After you travelled the Scandinavian Trail, don't forget to visit The Lefse House, located in Camrose, Alberta – a community whose settlers came largely from Scandinavia. Just an hour and a half north-east of Red Deer, Lefse House is a Scandinavian specialty bakery with a quaint coffee shop and gift gallery. And if you are in need of any lefse equipment they may just have what you need. Call first though.

Stop by and check out their large Scandinavian menu. You won't be disappointed.

I hope some of you will be able travel the Scandinavian Trail soon. Terry and I will definitely be checking it out this summer! Bon Voyage!

*Click on the blue, underlined links in this article to go to each of the businesses websites.*



# Rosemaling

by Linda Wacker

The Scandinavian Club is offering a rosemaling class on May 13th with Alice Barth, rosemaler extraordinaire from Saskatoon. She is once again willing to come to Regina and instruct us in this artistic craft.

Rosemaling is an art form that took hold in Norway in the mid 1700s. Through out the middle ages and well into the 1800s, Norway's population was largely rural, engaged in farming, hunting and fishing. Houses were single story log buildings, dark and windowless. The Norwegians found a way to bring the outside in during the dark and sunless days, through the art of rosemaling. Rosemaling translates to rose painting and flowers dominated the designs. Entire interiors were painted with rosemaling designs, from window sills, walls, ceilings, cupboards, and chests.



Various styles of rosemaling developed throughout Norway, depending on the region. and since there was little interaction

between regions, the styles had distinct characteristics, Telemark, Hallingdal, and Rogaland being predominant designs. Immigrants to North America brought their rosemaling skills. Trunks carrying their possessions were often rosemaled. The art form took hold in America and continues to this day. The variety of classes being offered today by Vesterheim Folk School, in Decora, Iowa, demonstrates the fluidity of the art. The following classes being offered include Hordeland, Os, Aust Agder and Gudbrandsdal fra Lesja.



Swedish Dalmalning is similar to rosemaling and developed in the 1800s in Delarna, Sweden. It features ribbons, and large figurative flowers and plants. Swedish dalmalning often features an imaginary kurbits gourd while Norwegian rosemaling features more recognizable flowers. The

Dala horse is the best example of Swedish dalmalning, with its brightly colored ribbons on a background of a red horse.

There is no surface immune to rosemaling. While it tends to be done on wooden or metal surfaces, rosemaling designs may also be present as body rosemaling. It may be offered by local tattoo parlors. It is not known if the Vikings were rosemalers, but their designs often resemble rosemaling. Rosemaling temporary tattoos are available on Etsy.

These pictures were taken in a relative's home in Al, Norway while visiting there in 2011. On a trunk, is a book written by Nils Ellingsgard, painter and author, who was born in Al and has chronicled the journey of rosemaling.



# **FINN FEST**

July 26-30, 2023 Duluth, Minnesota

**By Brenda Niskala**

## **F**innFest USA 2023

It's billed as "North America's premier experience of Nordic culture and learning"

Hmm. We'll see.

The first Finnfest was in 1983, in Minneapolis, with about 1,000 attendees. Since then it has been held in many locations, including at least one in Canada, and attendance has gone up to 7,000. Which is too many people in my opinion. I suspect it would be for most Finns.

For the first time since 2019, Finnfest will be in person. I've been catching as many of their free online seminars as possible – two hour sessions monthly since early 2020 on accordion recording artists, ancient singing, linguistic issues, Sami history, rag rug weaving, NATO, Finnish education system, and much more. They have been very good.

The in-person Finnfest will be in Duluth, Minnesota, July 26-30, 2023. Why Duluth? There are a lot of Finns in that area. I must have relatives near there! That Genealogy class will really come in handy now!

July on the Great Lakes is hot

and humid, right? Not Duluth, apparently. Average highs of 27°C and a cooling breeze off Lake Superior.

Should I stay or should I go? This is the first year of five Finnfests to be held in Duluth. Should I wait until they get all the bugs out? Until all the bugs have settled down?

I'm weighing my options.

Regina to Duluth return. Bus and train are not possible. It's a 12 hour drive. 7 hours to Grand Forks, and then into Duluth in the afternoon. That's 4 tanks of gas, or about \$400. Plus hotel. Flights are 10 hours minimum with significant layovers in Toronto and Chicago (17 to 21 hours travel time if you want a less expensive flight). Best return is \$1,000, 14 hours each way.

There must be an easier way.

The program: see the website at [2023.finnfest.us](https://2023.finnfest.us) The draft schedule is very impressive. Tours to natural and historical features of interest. (Including the first co-operative in North America, which my great aunt was involved in, and the remains of the iron ore mining enterprises where my great uncles and great grandparents

worked, and the forests where my grandfather and my father made winter money to support their farms in Saskatchewan.) After the tours, there are lectures on health, education, social programs, architecture. There are films daily. Music, everything from symphony to folk. Literary performances in Finnish and in English. Food, including sessions with Beatrice Ojakangas, the grand dame of Finnish food in North America. A marketplace. Children's programming. Finnish lessons. Dance lessons. Church services. Saunas! And in the theatre, a burlesque troupe from Finland.

Of course I want to go.

Where to stay. Well, if I can't find relatives to stay with, the Festival does line up hotel rooms, or if one likes, rooms at the university at a discounted rate, and they will also provide information to registrants on the camping available. So once I get there, I'll be taken care of.

Will I take the leap and register? Will I fly or drive? Will I meet Beatrice Ojakangas, find my distant cousins, attend a burlesque show? Stay tuned. More to follow in the next newsletter.

## TV Series Reviews

### “Atlantic Crossing”

Review by Linda Wacker

The series “*Atlantic Crossing*” is a PBS Masterpiece. During the pandemic I read about this series and the story behind the production in an October 2021 issue of “*The Viking*”, a magazine published by Sons of Norway. The television series may be available elsewhere, but I found it on YouTube – 6 episodes for \$9.99. It’s a gripping story that I recently revisited.

Crown Prince Märtha is the daughter of Carl, King of Sweden, and Princess Ingeborg of Denmark. She married her cousin, Prince Olav of Norway, and became Crown Princess of Norway, a title she retained until her death. In 1954. She played a vital role when the Nazis invaded Norway in 1940. The series is

“inspired” by true events, but the authors take some creative license to make the story into a TV series.

Martha and her 3 children go into hiding in Sweden, at the Swedish palace, home of her parents, the King and Queen of Sweden. The King seems more interested in appeasing Hitler, however, and Martha soon realizes she is not safe at the Swedish palace. According to the series, the Germans were trying to locate the princess and her son, heir to the throne of Norway. The King of Sweden, her father, encouraged Martha to return to Norway with her children. Martha’s husband, Prince Olav, who had escaped to England, contacted the American government. President Roosevelt (FDR). personally arranged for a



ship, painted with a large US flag, to bring Martha and her children to the US.

While the extent of the relationship between FDR and Martha is not known, the authors of the series are confident that FDR had romantic feelings for Martha and influenced the US support of Norway during the war.

Märtha’s story is well worth learning about. She passed away as a heroine at the age of 53 years. As Scandinavians, it becomes our story too.

## Upcoming Events

### Genealogy Workshop

A three-part Genealogy Workshop is being held on Zoom on Wed. April 19th at 7:00 p.m., Wed. April 26th at 7:00 p.m., and Wed., May 3rd at 7:00 p.m. The sessions are 1 ½ to 2 hours in length. The cost is \$20/participant. If you are interested and have not registered, contact Linda Wacker at [lindawacker@myaccess.ca](mailto:lindawacker@myaccess.ca).

### Rosemaling:

When: May 13th, 10 am-4 am  
Alice Barth from Saskatoon will instruct participants in rosemaling a napkin/letter holder. The class is limited to 8 people. Cost is \$50 and includes materials.

This class currently has a waiting list but you can contact [lindawacker@myaccess.ca](mailto:lindawacker@myaccess.ca) in case a space becomes available.

### Annual General Meeting

When: Friday May 5

Where: Ricky’s All Day Grill in Harbour Landing

This event is going to be held in conjunction with Fishy Friday. As with Fishy Friday those wishing to eat should be there by 5:00 p.m. Those wishing to attend only the meeting should be in attendance by 6:30 p.m. Coffee and a dessert will be provided. Watch for details in email.



# Norwegian Author Lars Mytting

by Linda Wacker



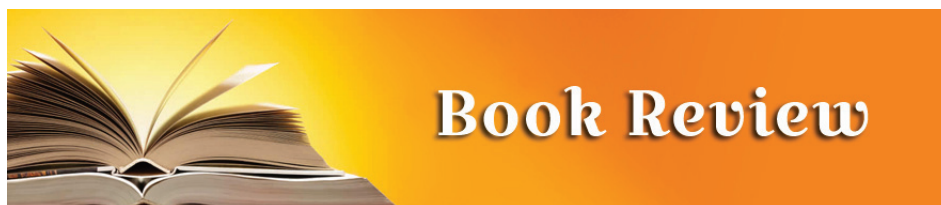
Lars Mytting

Our family has a tradition of spending the week adjoining Labor Day weekend camping or cabining at Riding Mtn National Park. Last year our daughter and son-in-law rented a house in Erickson, Manitoba, 6 kilometers from the Park. The house was circa 1920 and was “held together with paint”, according to our son-

in-law, who spent considerable time killing wasps that somehow made their way in. It did have one redeeming feature, however, and that was a book titled, *Norwegian Wood, Chopping, Stacking, and Drying Wood the Scandinavian Way.* by Lars Mytting . It is a how-to manual on the art of selecting, felling, chopping, stacking, drying, and burning wood in Scandinavia. It provided hours of pleasure at the campsite as the fire-makers in the family tried to copy methods outlined in the book.

Shortly after returning home, I was delighted to find an article featuring Lars Mytting in an issue of “*The Viking*”, a Sons of Norway magazine. The article described his many books, from chopping wood to fiction. His

first book, *Hestekrefter* written in 2006 sold out in its first 3 weeks. In 2010 he wrote *Vårøffere*. In 2014, Mytting wrote a historical thriller, *The Sixteen Trees of the Somme*, a story of a young man who travels from his family farm to the Shetland Island and then to France to pursue family secrets and his own identity. In 2015, he wrote *Norwegian Wood*. It has been translated into 21 languages and has sold over a million copies to date. And, for 7 years, Mytting has been working on a 3 volume Trilogy, inspired by an old oral narrative about sister bells. The *Bell in the Lake* is the beginning of the trilogy, *The Reindeer Hunters* is the second book, and Volume 3 is still being written, I believe, or I should say, I have not found it on Amazon.. Mytting said that he is almost in a state of despair as he works on the 3rd volume, but it is this despair that sparks his creativity.



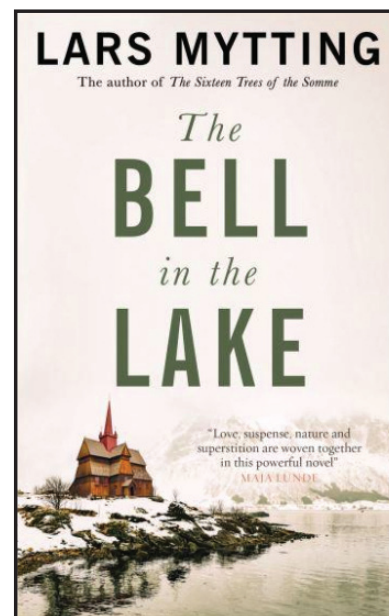
## The Bell in the Lake

by Lars Mytting

Review by Brenda Niskala

My first encounter with a stave church was in Minot, not too far from the home of the NorsehostFest. It is a building with heft and grace and presence. In Lars Mytting’s novel, the stave church in the village of Butangen,

near Lake Løsnes, holds the history of the families in the area, much more than their spiritual life. When one of the parishioners freezes to death during New Year’s mass of 1880, as the old timbers allow the winter winds to whip



Continued on page 7

*The Bell and the Lake - cont. from page 6*

through the building, the stave church's fate is sealed. Built in 1170, it is dismantled over seven hundred years later, to be hauled to distant Dresden and reassembled there. The sister bells that grace its tower have presence, power and character, as they spontaneously ring for the valley to celebrate, to mark joyous occasions, to recognize deaths, and to warn of disaster. They are the main metaphor in the novel, and their history is beautifully presented as the framework for this, the first in a trilogy.

The novel is also a history of the end of the stave churches, as the church elected to destroy the old and build new, plain pine ones, replacing the dark, small, old buildings with their serpent carvings on the roof and door, the weapon porch, and the low lying door frame that required the faithful to bend upon entering, the doors that opened inwards so as not to be blocked by heavy snow. These historic feats of architecture were replaced around the end of

the 19th century with modern buildings, unadorned and light. The stave church in Butangen is one of the last remaining, and one of the finest.

The author does not hesitate to point out the attitude of the urban to the rural people, the differences in language and dress and values. This gets more complicated as the German architect, Gerhard Schönaauer, arrives to plan the removal of the stave church.

The story focuses on Astrid Heknes, a descendent of the original sisters for whom the sister bells were cast. The sisters were co-joined twins who excelled at weaving, as their four arms and co-ordinated intentions produced exceptional weavings that enriched and beautified the homes and buildings for the entire area. Those were good times, when the area was thriving. By the 1880's the village is no longer wealthy, and starvation haunts every family. The contrast between the need for beauty and the drudgery of survival is a theme

that echoes throughout the book. Also the acceptance of magic, in all its forms, from superstition to miracles, weaves unquestioned throughout.

Just as these bells were exceptionally loud and seemed to have a life outside of their form and placement, so did Astrid, who dared to speak clearly on all things. The new pastor, Kai Schweigaard, is alarmed and comforted by such boldness, even through he foolishly sells the only things she holds dear.

The way the architect and the pastor interact, the way they finally try to correct their error, and their love for Astrid, is the heart of this novel.

It's a beautiful read, insightfully told, and I do not hesitate to recommend it highly. I look forward to the second book in the series, *The Reindeer Hunters*.

First published in Norwegian 2018, translated and published in English 2020



2 eggs  
1 1/2 tsp sugar  
1/4 tsp salt  
1 cup milk  
1 tsp lemon extract  
1 cup flour  
Confectioner's sugar  
oil

## Rosettes

*Copied from Scandinavian Heritage Cooking in Saskatchewan*

Beat eggs, sugar, salt and lemon extract very slightly with a fork. Add milk and flour alternately and beat until just smooth.

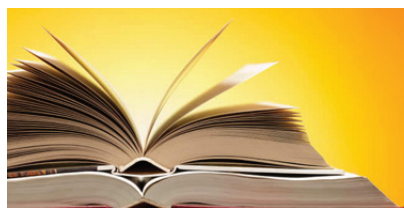
To deep fry, heat oil to 350 F. It will take a 1" bread cube 60 seconds to brown when the fat is at the right temperature.

Heat the rosette iron in the hot fat. Shake excess oil back into the pan; dip iron into batter to within 1/16" of top of iron. Return to hot oil, dip iron entirely, for 20-35 seconds

or until delicately browned. When browned, raise iron over the pan to drain off any excess oil. Using tip of sharp knife, carefully remove rosette from iron. Invert on paper towel.

Sprinkle with confectioners sugar.

HINT: If Rosette is difficult to remove from iron, it has not been fried long enough. If fat blisters are present, eggs have been beaten too long. If Rosette is not crispy, it has been fried in too hot a fat.



## Book Review

### The Reindeer Hunters by Lars Mytting

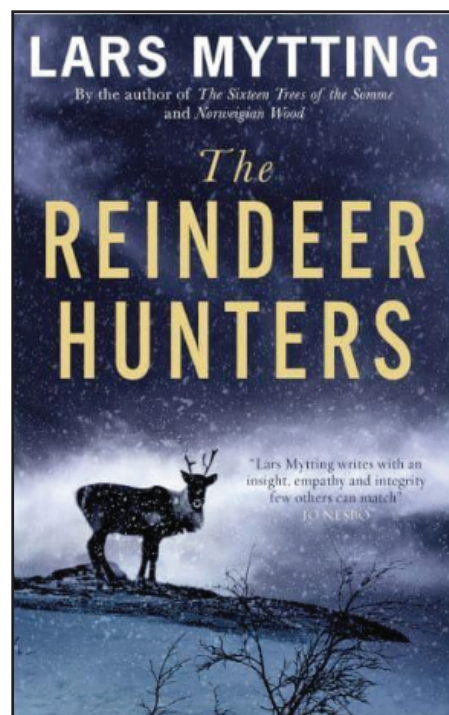
Review by Linda Wacker

This book is the second book in the Sister Bell Trilogy by Lars Mytting. It came out in English last summer. It is a compelling follow up to the first book in the series, *"The Bell in the Lake"*, which I think needs to be read prior to reading *"The Reindeer Hunters"*. The book grabs one's interest immediately and is "unputdownable".

The author continues the story of the Hekne family, living in the village of Butengen, Norway, and follows the fascinating paths of two men – Jehans and Victor, who meet by chance when hunting reindeer. It's beautifully written and illustrates the Norwegian culture with its folklore, myths, realities, and history. Somehow, the author captivates one's interest and transports one into the experiences of village life with its

relationships, trials, and joys.

Having read this book, I have a new-found connection to my grandmother, who lived on a farm in Norway during this period. In one of the chapters, Saskatchewan is identified as an emigration destination and speaks to why people felt a need to leave for North America. I had heard some things about her life in Norway prior to her immigrating, e.g. tending sheep, but never understood how her family could leave the beauty of Norway for the American prairies. This book gives one an understanding of the hardships of farming on sandy, rocky land, of what that life might have looked like, and why immigration was seen as necessary. There is also a bittersweet appreciation for the beauty and relationships that were



left behind.

It is an intriguing plot with captivating characters and spans the gap between a more primitive world and a more modern time. There is magic and mysticism which seems in order, and for which one is grateful. Reading this book is not only enjoyable, but consuming, and it is a disappointment to come to the end but there is the promise of a 3rd book, and I think I can speak for all readers of *"The Reindeer Hunters"*, when I say that we can't wait!

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

The editors of this publication are comprised of a committee. If you have any ideas or stories you would like to share with us please contact us at

[scoreventsregina@gmail.com](mailto:scoreventsregina@gmail.com)



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