

Juhannus In New Finland

by Linda Wacker



Above: St. John's Lutheran Church

It's amazing the sites that exist in our back yard. Attending the summer solstice in New Finland was a remarkable experience. Firstly, the countryside was breathtaking. I had not travelled north of the TransCanada at Whitewood and was delighted by the eastern end of the Qu'Appelle Valley. It is treed and rugged and in the aspen woods, sits St. John's Lutheran Church. It is the first Finnish agricultural settlement on the Canadian prairies. The congregation dates to 1888 and was formally established in 1893. The church was hand-sawn in two and moved by steam engine and gas tractor to the present location. The

steeple was added in 1945 and what an impressive steeple it is with its 4 gables and arch windows. St. John's continues to be the oldest surviving Finnish congregation in Canada. It is also the home church of our president, Darlene Harrison.

While the church is surrounded by grain fields, it seems to sit apart from farm homes but that June day, seeing the church grounds filled with cars, licensed from across Canada and even some from the United States, it seemed to be the centre of the community. I'm estimating that there were about one hundred people, gathered on the lawn, enjoying the guitar music of Eric, husband of Pastor Vivian. Hot dogs, hamburgers, ice cream and so many pies were available to enjoy. There were games as well, the most prominent being a boot throwing contest. People lined the highway and cheered on the contest participants. The wife carrying contest was cancelled this year and maybe every year going forward.

It is evident that this is a community that values and takes care of each other, as well as the church and cemetery. I learned about "SISU" (It's a Finn Thing).



Above: Boot throwing contest

I'm told that it could mean stubbornness. According to *Legacy of Worship*, Hryniuk & Korvemaker, page 139, it is because of sisu that New Finland exists. Juhannus is held every year. This year, Darlene Harrison, Greg Nelson, Ernie and I represented the Scandinavian Club of Regina. I suggest we make it an annual event.



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President's Message



Darlene Harrison

It's hard to believe that summer is over and the season of autumn begins.

I hope you had a life-giving, love-filled summer with opportunities to connect with family and friends and plenty of time doing the things you love to do.

The 50th anniversary of the Scandinavian Club of Regina will be celebrated on October 3. The planning

committee is hard at work to ensure that we have a grand celebration.

What is the importance of honouring our roots? It means remembering where we came from, appreciating those who came before us and recognizing the people, places, traditions, and values that have helped shape who we are today.

Our roots give us a sense of identity and belonging. Just as a tree draws strength from its roots, we can draw strength from our family stories, our heritage, our communities and all that has been handed down to us.

Honouring our roots does not mean that we must live exactly as previous generations did. Rather, it means remembering with gratitude those who came before us. We can reserve the wisdom and traditions that are meaningful while also growing and making our own contributions.

We honour our roots when we tell the stories of those who came before us and when we give thanks for the sacrifices and gifts of previous generations.

We honour our roots when

we preserve meaningful traditions and customs and teach younger generations where they came from.

We also honour our roots when we remember the faith and values that have sustained our families.

We can look forward toward the future without forgetting the past. A good question for us to ask is: what have I received from those who came before me that I can carry forward with gratitude and pass on to those who come after me?

May we receive the past with thanksgiving, live faithfully in the present and leave a blessing for those who come after us.

I am anticipating a wonderful celebration of 50 years of honouring our roots. I hope that you will be able to join us!

**Scandinavian Club of Regina**
is
Celebrating

Years



Come join us as we celebrate this milestone event.

Location: St. Mark's Lutheran
3510 Queen St.

Date: Saturday, October 3, 2026

Time: Reception: 4 p.m. **Dinner:** 5 p.m. **Program:** 6:30 p.m.

Cost: \$40/person

RSVP: scoreventsregina@gmail.com to reserve your spot.

Payment: E-transfer to scoredeposit@gmail.com or cash at the door

For more information send your questions to scoreventsregina@gmail.com.

If you are not already a member and are interested in joining the Scandinavian Club of Regina check out our website at www.scandinavianclubregina.com



After the 2026 SCoR bicycle trip, Pam Bristol and Sylvain Rheault stopped in Norway to visit former club members Michael and Kari Mitchell. (l-r Sylvain, Michael, Kari, Pam)

An Interview with Art and Mary Opseth

by Linda Wacker

Arthur and Mary Opseth are listed in the 40th Anniversary listing of founding members. I will refer to Arthur as Art in this article as that is what he is called in the printed material I found.

I hoped to interview Art and Mary for an article in this newsletter, but Art told me that being 90 years of age and having some health issues, he preferred to talk on the phone and gave me permission to use information online and published by The Canadian Society of Senior Engineers (CSSE).

Art said that he and Mary got involved with the Scandinavian Club

because of their friends, Sig and Lola Hoff. Mary was very involved with Mosaic, working in the kitchen and making food items such as krumkake and lefse. Mary is of German descent so her involvement in Scandinavian cuisine is commendable. They remember those days as enjoyable.

I found it interesting that Art was a Rosemaler. He got into this art because of Sig Hoff, who was an accomplished artisan. Art used oil paints and painted mainly on wood. On numerous occasions he demonstrated the craft for the club. He recalls a student suggesting that his rosemaling skills were due to his

being an engineer. He didn't agree that his rosemaling ability had any relationship to being an engineer, but he found the thought amusing.

Art had a long and impressive career as a Professor in the Systems Engineering Program at the University of Regina. An online article, put out by CSSE, states that Art was Assistant Dean, Acting Dean, and led in the development of the Cooperative Education Program. He received several awards and was awarded an Honorary Doctorate Degree and Professor Emeritus from the University of Regina.

We are grateful for the contributions Art and Mary made to the Scandinavian Club. It is hoped that they can join us in celebrating our 50th Anniversary on October 3rd.

Movie Reviews

The Secret Woman (Den hemmelige kvinde)

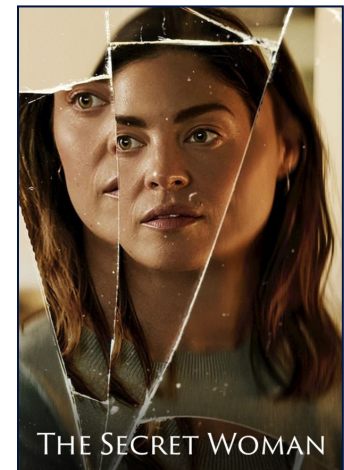
Review by Andrea Ashton

The Secret Woman is a 2026 Netflix thriller about identity—what we remember, what we bury, and what refuses to stay hidden. Louise Andersen, living quietly on a Norwegian island with her partner Joachim, appears settled until a stranger insists she is Helene Söderberg, a missing Danish woman. Found two years earlier with injuries and amnesia, Louise has no memory of this past, and her confusion feels genuine as she begins questioning her own history.

In Denmark, she uncovers pieces of Helene's life: a husband,

Edmund; a young son, Alexander; and a position as CFO in her family's shipping empire. Her return is tense, marked by suspicion that her disappearance was not accidental. As the story unfolds, illegal operations tied to the shipping business emerge, placing Louise in renewed danger and giving the film a slow-burn psychological intensity.

Edmund's charm masks manipulation, culminating in his attempt to have her institutionalized. His mother, Caroline, shifts between ally and adversary, adding a chilling generational layer. Joachim represents



the life Louise built without knowing her origins, making her search for truth more tragic. Alexander, innocent and fearful, anchors the emotional stakes.

Though twist-driven, the film's strength lies in Louise's resilience and her need to protect her son. It is a character-rooted thriller where uncertainty lingers until the end.

SCOR Bike Trip - Sweden 2026

Thanks to Greg Swanson for organizing the 2026 SCOR Bike Trip

Day 1 - September 5 Helsingborg to Ängelholm

Beautiful scenery, sunshine, rain and wind...but all good at our wine stop at Kullabergs Winery. We ended Day 1 ready for a rest and a shot of Aquavit, a Swedish alcohol made of dill and long pepper. Rode 63 kms today.



Day 2 - September 6 Ängelholm to Halmstad

Off to a late start due to one of the bike locks that would not open. There was a brisk wind but the scenery was amazing - dairy farms and vegetable crops. One large hill but majority of terrain is manageable. Rode 75 kms today.



Day 3 - September 7 Halmstad to Falkenberg

A peaceful ride, minimal winds, sunny skies, and a gently rolling countryside. Today we had a dip in the Baltic sea. Today's theme was horses, crops, campgrounds, and ocean side. Rode 60 km.



SCOR Bike Trip - Sweden 2026

Thanks to Denise Nelson for photos and daily commentary

Day 4 - September 8 Falkenberg to Varberg

A cloudy day riding along the Baltic sea for a good part of the trail. Rode through small villages and along the highway. Varberg is known as the spa city - thanks in part to Kallbadhuset, a bath house built in 1903. Rode 40 kms.



Day 5 - September 9 Varberg to Kungsbacka

This was a good day - even with the rain. Lots of up and down hills, with a highlight dipping into the Baltic Sea. Especially fun was zooming downhill with no pedalling required. Rode 61 kms.



Day 6 - September 10 Kungsbacka to Gothenburg

Last cycling day - sunny with a strong headwind. After a flat tire experience we finally get off - an hour late! We celebrated the end of the trip with Aquavit shots and Geisha chocolates. Rode 41 kms.



Ancestry Virtual Seminar: “Contacting and Collaborating with Cousins” – July 15, 2026

by Gordon Knight

This presentation was irresistible hook bait, arriving at exactly the right moment. I have been trying to contact cousins through every method available, with only modest success. I hoped presenter Nicka Sewell Smith might offer a few new strategies. Although her session focused on North American cousins—tools that may not apply to my Scandinavians—I continue to pursue “Grandma’s First Cousins – the Seven Annas” (see Family Musings Part 2 in this Midnight Sun) and welcomed any fresh ideas.

Cousins offer a valuable angle in family research. Depending on their generational distance, they may hold information unknown to others, particularly if they descend from the eldest children. They may possess family artifacts, the family Bible, or be caretakers of photographs because they still live on the farm or in the original family home. Some may have already researched a branch that interests you, but without knowing whom to contact, that information remains inaccessible.

Nicka encourages researchers to become “funeral crashers”—with the courtesy of informing someone in the family beforehand. Such gatherings allow you to show concern, demonstrate humanity, and subtly remind attendees that relatives exist beyond the immediate group. Bringing along family information can be useful if an opportunity arises to share discoveries. When leaving, thank the family for allowing your

presence and exchange contact information with anyone willing to talk further, join a virtual meet up, or collaborate on an unresolved part of the family. Trust is essential. To build it, be prepared to share your family tree—on paper, in software, or online through Ancestry or MyHeritage. Offer updates on your latest findings, assist with others’ research, and most importantly, aim to make a genuine personal connection rather than limiting interactions to genealogy.

Nicka also described her frustration when distant cousins decline to share information. She consistently offers her own research, yet some show no interest in reciprocating. Although she could obtain details through less than honest means, she refuses to risk damaging future relationships. Some cousins guard information carefully—and rightly so, as much of what they hold may not pertain to you. Family truths can be uncomfortable, and outsiders may not understand the shame or sensitivity involved. Approach these situations with empathy. There may be ways to share essential details without revealing an entire family tree. Keep communication positive, and patience may eventually be rewarded.

If contact leads to collaboration, establish a clear research question to guide the work. Be respectful and accommodating. Collaboration can be enjoyable, especially with offline genealogy outings to courthouses, Family History Centres, or other

repositories. Digitize records and store originals in archival boxes for preservation and easy retrieval.

Should collaboration result in a self published book, acknowledge all contributors with a complimentary copy as a well earned thank you.

Overall, the webinar was worthwhile. I gained several new tools to try as I reach out to descendants of Nils Pedersen Moen’s sisters, Anna and Marit. Their arrival in Minnesota paved the way for another wave of emigration—siblings Anders, Gunhild, Arne, and Tore, my great grandfather—and for that, I remain deeply grateful.

Upcoming Events

Scandinavian Club of Regina Celebrating 50 Years

When: October 3, 2026

Where: St. Mark’s Lutheran
3510 Queen St.

When: Sat. Oct. 3, 2026

Cost: \$40/person

RSVP to reserve your spot and for more information:

scoreventsregina@gmail.com

Nordic Dining Group

Watch your email for information about the next date and place for this event.

Family Musings - Part 2

by Gordon Knight

I first heard about the “Seven Annas” as a fourteen-year-old, listening to Grandma Myrtle explain why so many cousins shared the same name. They were named for their grandmother Anne, and with four of Nils Pedersen Moen and Anne’s children remaining in Norway, four cousins there carried the name: Anne Skaret, Anne Moen Fløene, Anna Bjordal Moen and Anna Moen Kvålshaugen.

Four of Anne’s children moved to North America, giving Grandma three Anna cousins here. Grandma wondered why she wasn’t named Anna, too. She recalled her parents saying, “There were already too many Annas!” Young Myrtle was unaware of the hardships each Anna endured – losing a parent, gaining a step-parent, and marrying young to escape difficult home situations. Myrtle herself lost her mother early, though her father Thore never remarried.

By the time Myrtle reached adulthood, the Annas were married and living far from the Briercest-Hearne area. Their visits became infrequent, though reunions were joyful when they occurred. None of these families attended the 1980 Moen Reunion in Moose Jaw. I recall meeting the youngest Anna at her sister Alma’s funeral in 1996, but her ten children were largely strangers. Between 2019-2023 I constructed Anna’s branch, not knowing my uncle had solved this mystery in 2002.

Oldest Anna and her husband Carl moved from Moose Jaw to Meadow Lake between the 1926

and 1931 censuses. Carl later worked in Alberta, and visits home ceased. Their sons eventually relocated to Quesnel, BC. Annie lived alone in a log cabin six miles from Meadow Lake, supported by her daughter’s family. Most of what I know about her Meadow Lake and Quesnel connections came from sister Mabel. I need to contact Annie’s eldest great-granddaughter with a “cold” Facebook message.

Middle Anna and her husband Arne were well-known to family in both Canada and Norway. Our family knew of their three children, but their last surviving child passed away in 2022. In late 2024, I reached out to distant Westrum stepcousins for help contacting Anna’s granddaughter. An unexpected email address led to a successful connection eight months later. She is the custodian of Anna’s memory trunk, and encouraged me to contact her



Anna, Gunhild and Henry

brother. A message to Henry’s granddaughter soon followed, and she has shared valuable information and photos. A collaboration for a Gunhild-Anna-Henry project is forthcoming.

The youngest Anna married Tom, ten years her senior. They



The Saga of Tom and Anna

lived in several Saskatchewan and Alberta communities. My mother stayed in contact with Alma’s youngest son, who knew Anna’s children well. Through him, we learned of a family publication, *The Saga of Tom & Anna*, and obtained copies. It remains a treasured resource.

Inspired by Nicka’s suggestion of a virtual gathering, I am considering hosting an online Moen Family Reunion later this year, hoping Norwegian, American, and Canadian cousins will join. The event will focus on introductions and gauging interest in future in-person meetings, family history work, and a dual-language Bokmål-English Moen Family Book. I may enlist the Valdres Samband to help reach Norwegian relatives. This virtual reunion is a shift from the Christmas letter proposed by distant cousin John Nilson from SCoR, which may still proceed for those unable to attend.





Aina Viola Baker



It is with profound sadness, yet deep gratitude for a life filled with love, that the family of Aina Viola Baker (née Erickson) announces her peaceful passing on June 26, 2026, in Regina, Saskatchewan, at the age of 89.

Born on February 23, 1937, in Kinistino, Saskatchewan, she was predeceased by her parents, Rudolph and Alice (née Spearman) Erickson; her husband, RCMP Staff-Sgt. Gerald Gordon (Gerry) Baker; her daughter, Alene; her grandson, Jason; her brother, Adolph; and her sister, Ruby.

Left to cherish her memory are her sister, Rita; her children, Jason, Nadine (Carey), Denise, Coleen, and Lauren; her grandchildren, Candace, Derek, Matt, Kelsey, Ryann, Taylor, Torsten, and Kisara; and her great-grandchildren, Chris and Caleb, Aidan and Annika, Kaelan and Eliana, Brayden, Yui-Rae, Autumn,

In Memoriam

and Hudson.

A Celebration of Aina's Life was held on Thur., July 2, 2026. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Saskatchewan Cancer Foundation or to a charity of the donor's choice.



could to help. She worked at the post office during this time and it became her job to care for the pig they had hidden in the basement of the post office, ensuring it was well fed and was not detected by the Germans or it would have been confiscated.

Shortly after the war Martin and Mildred were married and had two children. Inger and Thor were born in Spydeberg, Norway.

1958 saw the four of them immigrate to Canada, setting up residence in Southey SK where Martin started an auto repair shop. Two more children Kevin, then Leanne were born and now the family was complete.

Mimi loved people. She was a nurse's aid for nearly 30 years at Pioneer Village nursing home in Regina, she babysat throughout her adult life and taught Norwegian to many for more than 20 years.

Predeceased by her husband Martin and son Thor, Mimi is survived by her eldest daughter Inger, son Kevin (Norma), youngest daughter Leanne (Chris), 10 grandchildren, 14 great grandchildren, and 4 great great grandchildren.

A service was held at Glenwood Funeral Home in Sherwood Park, AB on August 29. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Souls Harbour Rescue Mission at shrmsk.com.

Mildred Ihlen



Mildred (Mimi) passed away peacefully July 21, 2026 into the arms of her Lord Jesus Christ in her 98th year.

Born in Norway in a small coastal town of Kristiansund she became the woman of the house at an early age at the passing of her mother. She helped her dad with keeping house and raising her siblings through her younger years.

As a young woman she lived through the Germany occupation of Norway. It was a challenging time for all Norwegians, and she did what she

The Scandinavian Club of Regina's newsletter *Midnight Sun* is published three times per year.

The editors of this publication are comprised of a committee. Ideas and stories are always welcome and can be share with us at: scoreventsregina@gmail.com

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