



THE  
**SCANDINAVIAN**  
CLUB of TOLEDO

OLAV GJESDAHL, founder

APRIL, 2017

ERIC SLAWSON, editor

## Maya Survival

*Our April Meeting will be held at  
The Toledo Museum of Art  
Friday, April 21st, 5:30 & 7:00.*

**Menu** :: Before the discussion, we will gather in the **Museum's Café** for Dinner at **5:30** pm. Join us!

**Program** :: Join us in the **Little Theater** at **7:00** pm for a program presented by **Guido Pezzarossi**, professor at **Lund University** in **Sweden**. He will discuss the collapse of the Maya civilization and how it was underscored by the arrival of the Spanish conquistadors, distancing modern Maya populations from their glorious past. But, as Mr. Pezzarossi explains in this lecture, the collapse was not complete. Archaeological remains in the highlands of Guatemala illuminate the tenacious persistence of ancient Maya communities, traditions and cultural practices through the colonial period and up until the present day.

**Location** :: The **Toledo Museum of Art**, in the **Little Theater**. Park behind the TMA in their partially covered lot, which costs \$7 when you exit unless you are a TMA member. Parking in the church lot next door is allowed if they're not using their lot, but it is not monitored by TMA security. Lecture is free.

**Reservations** :: No reservations this month, but if you would like us to keep an eye out for you, contact our treasurer, Kris Johnson, at [cjohnson143@woh.rr.com](mailto:cjohnson143@woh.rr.com) or at 419-836-7637.

### Scand Book Club

"**The Long Ships**" by **Frans G. Bengtsson** is our book this month. Meet on Tuesday, April 18th at 7pm at Encore Books (Key & Heatherdowns).

### Ashville Viking Festival

An annual festival featuring Viking and other historic reenactment. Just south of Columbus in Ashville, OH, this is a two-day festival held in Ashville's town center. Admission is one or two canned food items for their shelter, so grab something from the kitchen cabinet to donate. Once inside, you'll find booths with a variety of historic items on display or for sale, and other cultural organizations, as well as frequent cultural performances and presentations. They may also have their sailable Viking ship on a trailer for inspection. Food is also available, or there are one or two restaurants nearby. Festival runs Saturday and Sunday, April 29 & 30. Saturday 10am-7pm, Sunday 10am-5pm.  
— [ashvillevikingfest.com](http://ashvillevikingfest.com)

### Happiest

The annual UN survey of the happiest countries is out: 1) **Norway**, 2) **Denmark**, 3) **Iceland**, and 4) **Switzerland**, 5) **Finland**. 10) **Sweden**. 14) **United States**.

### PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Happy Spring to everyone, although it may not seem like it from day to day. Winter put a stop to our attempt at a meeting at the Museum in March, but we have another planned for April 21 for the talk on the Maya which is being given by a Professor from the University of Lund in Sweden. Hope that everyone can join us for dinner in the Museum restaurant at 5:30-6:00, followed by the lecture at 7:00. At a meeting of the Board in March we discussed having Julfest on December 10 this year, and after a review of the finances it was determined that the Club support for the charges at the Inverness Club came to about \$12.00 per person. I was going to prepare a separate questionnaire for the membership regarding returning to Inverness, but if anyone has any objections to the Club cost they may email or contact me directly. My email address is [swedej@aol.com](mailto:swedej@aol.com), and phone number is 419-356-9442. Feel free to express your opinion, whatever it may be. Hope to see you at the Art Museum.

Tack, John

### Julfest 2017

As John stated above, our Board met recently to plan upcoming meetings, and is entertaining the idea of returning to Inverness Club again this year for our annual Julfest in December, but it was decided to get feedback from our members before a final decision is made. If you are a current Club member, and get this newsletter by email, you may email John directly from the email link above. Please let us know what your thoughts are on this important Club meeting!

### Club Contacts

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

**President:** John L. Jacobson

Vice President: Lois Staber

Treasurer: Kris Johnson

Secretary: Katherine Thompson

Members at Large: Ruth Alteneeder,  
Jan Wahl, and Judy Nickoloff



## What you don't know about the Vikings

Yes, they were brutal. But they also had redeeming factors: they had women leaders, coveted luxury, and encountered more than 50 cultures from Afghanistan to Canada.

Long before the time of the Vikings, disaster struck. So dire was this disaster that it seems to have given birth to one of the darkest of all world myths — the **Nordic legend of Ragnarök**, the end of creation and the final battle, in which all gods, all supernatural beings, and all humans and other living creatures die. Ragnarök was said to begin with Fimbulwinter, a deadly time when the sun turns black and the weather turns bitter and treacherous — events that eerily parallel the dust veil that began in the year 536.

When summer at last returned to the north and populations rebounded, Scandinavian society assumed a new, more truculent form. Leaders surrounded themselves with heavily armed war bands and began seizing and defending abandoned territory. In this real-life Game of Thrones, a militarized society arose in which men and women alike celebrated the virtues of warfare — fearlessness, aggression, cunning, and strength under fire. On the Swedish island of Gotland, where archaeologists have found many intact graves from this period, “almost every second man seems to be buried with weapons,” notes John



A statue of Leif Erikson stands before the Hallgrímskirkja Church in Reykjavik, Iceland. The Viking is believed to have reached the Americas five centuries before Columbus.

Ljungkvist, an archaeologist at Uppsala University.

As this weaponized society was gradually taking shape, a new technology began revolutionizing Scandinavian seafaring in the seventh century: the Sail. Skilled carpenters began constructing sleek, wind-powered vessels capable of carrying bands of armed fighters farther and faster than ever before. Aboard these ships, northern lords and their restless followers could voyage across the Baltic and North Seas, exploring new lands, sacking towns and villages, and enslaving inhabitants. And men with few marriage prospects at home could take female captives as wives by persuasion or force.

All of this — centuries of kingly ambition, a seeming abundance of wifeless young warriors, and a new type of ship — created a perfect storm. The stage was set for the Vikings to pour out of the north, setting much of Europe on fire with their brand of violence.

—There's much more in the March issue of National Geographic, and at: <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/2017/03/vikings-ship-burials-battle-reenactor/> also at <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/2017/01/viking-beyond-northlands-norse-saga-barracough/>

## Far-Flung Realm (map)

The seafaring Vikings made their dramatic entrance into the annals of European history by plundering the British Isles in the late 8th century. By the 11th, Viking raids, trade, exploration, and influence spanned much of the Northern Hemisphere, from North America to eastern Europe and Central Asia.

— Text and Map from National Geographic story called “The Realm of the Vikings”.

## Tidbits

**NORWAY** — Each year, the remote northern island of Svalbard has a champagne glass made of ice that they put out on an island. The residents then bet on the day that the stem will melt and the ice glass will topple. The winner gets a real champagne glass and everyone celebrates the first day of arctic spring.

—Neil Gaiman, in a book interview, Sept. 2013.

**ICELAND** — President Gudni Thorlacius Johannesson set off a firestorm of debate about presidential power last month. In an off-hand comment at a high school in Akureyri, he suggested he would ban pineapple on pizza if he could. The backlash was swift, garnering 82 signatures on an online petition calling for his resignation over his “extreme views.” Johannesson struck back, saying that in his position, a largely ceremonial role, he had no authority to change Iceland's laws about pizza. “I like pineapples, just not on pizza. I do not have the power to make laws which forbid people to put pineapples on their pizza. I am glad that I do not hold such power. Presidents should not have unlimited power. I would not want to hold this position if I could pass laws forbidding that which I don't like. I would not want to live in such a country. For pizzas, I recommend seafood.” To his credit, Johannesson is a former history professor at the University of Iceland, and in December, after five months in office, his approval rating was at 97 percent.

—from Visit Iceland

## More on Happiness

**Norway** has jumped from 4th place in 2016 to 1st place this year, followed by **Denmark**, **Iceland** and **Switzerland** in a tightly packed bunch. All of the top four countries rank highly on all the main factors found to support happiness: caring, freedom, generosity, honesty, health, income and good governance. **Norway** moves to the top of the ranking despite weaker oil prices. It is sometimes said that Norway achieves and maintains its high happiness not because of its oil wealth, but in spite of it. By choosing to produce its oil slowly, and investing the proceeds for the future rather than spending them in the present, Norway has insulated itself from the boom and bust cycle of many other resource-rich economies.