



2013 *Julfest* at Lois's clubhouse

Sunday, December 15, 2013. Beginning at 4 pm.

Our traditional Christmas celebration begins with catching up with old friends around the fireplace. We'll have Glögg and delight our senses with a Smörgåsbord of Scandinavian Hard Breads & Swedish Limpa Bread, along with a variety of Scandinavian Cheeses, Gravlox (Cured Salmon), Pickled Herring and Pickled Cucumbers. For something hot, we'll also have Meatballs and Potatoes, with Lingonsilt to go with it. We'll have Lucia and sing Yuletide carols. Then for dessert, we'll have Finnish Rice Pudding with our very own Cookies. And we'll wrap it all up with our annual Raffle. It's the same fun-filled evening you're used to, so bring some friends!

See back page for details on Reservations.

Glögg

Our traditional holiday drink will be on hand. After you put your coat away, come in and warm up your innards!

Raffle

Please be sure to bring something Scandinavian or holiday-related in nature to donate to our Raffle Table.

Cookies

Also, please remember to bring some home-baked Cookies for our Dessert!

Location of Julfest

We are pleased to have access, again, to the lovely clubhouse owned by our VP Lois Staber's condo association, in Perrysburg, where we were last year. —Thank you, Lois!

Directions: From I-75 or 475, get yourself to Perrysburg, exiting I-475 at exit 2, which is Dixie Hwy (Rt. 25). Turn north onto Dixie Hwy. Turn right at first intersection, at the Circle K gas station, which is Eckel Junction Rd. Drive almost half a mile, turning right onto Turnbury Lane. Turn right at the first little driveway and park in the parking lot. Lois's condo-association's clubhouse is on the right.

Club Contacts

scandinavian-club@hotmail.com

Eva Slawson, President 419-534-2230

Lois Staber, VP 419-872-7232

Kris Johnson, Treas. 419-836-7637

Katherine Thompson, Sec. 419-385-0081

Membership Dues

If you have not yet renewed your membership for this fiscal year (July through June), please make your check out for \$15 per person to "Scandinavian Club of Toledo", and send it to our treasurer at: **Kris Johnson, PO Box 355, Williston, OH 43468.**

MEETING CALENDAR

December 15 — **Julfest** at Lois's.

January 17 — "Ancient Greek Sites" at Katherine's house.

February 21 — Cooking Class: Swedish Meatballs

March 21 — Ancestry program

April 18 — ?

May 16 — ? (elections)

June 22 — Midsummer Festival

Traditional Wood Carver

The well-known Scandinavian flat-plane style carver **Harley Refsal** will appear on PBS's "Craft in America" on Friday, December 30, 2013, at 10pm.

www.woodcarvingillustrated.com.

Lucia & Starboy at right >>>>



RESERVATION FOR JULFEST

Name(s): _____
 Annual Membership Dues per **Adult**: _____ @ \$15 each = \$ _____
 Julfest Number of **Adults**: _____ @ \$25 each = \$ _____
 Number of **Children 6 to 15**: _____ @ \$10 each = \$ _____
 Children 5 & under are free **Total** \$ _____

Please make check payable to:
SCANDINAVIAN CLUB OF TOLEDO and mail to:
KRIS JOHNSON, PO Box 355,
WILLISTON, OH 43468
 Reservations with checks due Thursday,
 December 12th. Members may email
 reservations to **cjohnson143@woh.rr.com**

Christmas in the Nordic Countries

Before Christianity, people of the North celebrated Midwinter with the Winter Solstice usually on Dec. 21 or 22, marking the time when days would at last begin to get longer, or when the sun would begin to return at all for those far above the Arctic Circle. Historically, **Jul** was the name of the time of year when all the work of autumn was accomplished and it was time to celebrate. Ancient is the Midwinter celebration of the Harvest and eventual return of the life-giving sun, in this frozen north, but today, it has incorporated the celebration of the birth of Jesus.

Today, the five Nordic countries of Iceland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Finland are largely Lutheran, and celebrate Christmas mainly on **Christmas Eve**, the 24th of December. But Christmas in Scandinavia is not just a one day affair; it remains a long joyful time that begins in early December and extends into January. A variety of traditions have developed, many of which began in one country or culture and have spread to another. Let's look at some of them.

Advent calendars are popular, marking each day of Advent with a new door to open on the calendar — or a little bit more each day to burn of an Advent candle (at right). Advent wreaths, or candle holders, burn a candle for each Sunday in Advent.



Glögg, a mulled wine, is the drink of choice during the holidays. It is served warm (not hot), with slivered almonds and raisins in it.

Lucia has become quite popular; having begun in Sweden, and now spread to much of Scandinavia, **St. Lucia** is celebrated on **Lucia Day**, on Dec. 13. Santa Lucia is an ancient mythical figure with an enduring role as a bearer of light in the dark winters. Each community, school, institution, and home selects a young woman, or girl, to have the honor to be Lucia. In Sweden, the celebration represents one of the foremost cultural traditions, with its clear reference to life in the peasant communities of old: darkness and light, cold and warmth. Garbed in a white gown with a red sash and wearing a crown of blazing candles on her head, she gracefully parades singing the Lucia song. The Lucia celebrations also include ginger snaps and sweet, saffron-flavored buns (*lussekatter*) with raisin centers, eaten with coffee or glögg.

In **DENMARK**, Christmas plates and seals (stamps) are collected, children light the Advent candle, which burns for a short time each day of December until

Christmas. After an early church service on Christmas Eve, Danes sit down with family to a dinner traditionally consisting of roast duck, goose, or pork, along with caramelized potatoes, and rice pudding for dessert — and whoever finds the almond wins a small marzipan pig or other gift. Then the tree is lit, often with real candles, the family dances around the tree singing Christmas songs, and presents are opened.

In **FINLAND**, “Christmas Peace” is declared in a live broadcast from Turku, the oldest Finnish city, at Noon on Christmas Eve, to harken in the rest and relation of the season — a tradition that dates back to the 13th century. Finns might visit the sauna before sitting down to their traditional meal of raw salmon, pickled herring, vegetable salad, and a dessert of pureed plums with cinnamon biscuits. Children delight when Santa knocks on the door and asks, “Are there any well-behaved children here?” —Naturally, there are! Candles are lit at the graves of loved ones. Christmas Day is for relaxation, so not until St. Stephen’s Day on Dec. 26 do Finns begin to visit family and friends.

Folklore abounds at Christmas time in **ICELAND**. While other children are dreaming of Santa, Icelandic children are dreaming of Gully Gawk, Window Peeper, Bowl Licker, Pot Scraper, and Door Slammer, among others. These are a few of the **13 Yule Lads**, elf-like spirits who live in the mountains and descend on the people of Iceland during the holiday season, causing general mayhem and mischief. For the 13 days before Christmas, children put shoes in the window behind the curtain and hope for a small gift from the Yule Lads (and to be spared from the cauldron!). During the Christmas season, light is everywhere in Iceland, decorating trees, buildings, and lampposts, adding a holiday glow to an otherwise dark time. In olden times, candles were rather expensive, and it was quite a special occasion when children were given their own candle, thus punctuating the importance of light. Also, much cleaning, knitting, and other preparations had to be done in rural settings before the big day, and so workers would receive a new set of clothes and new sheepskin shoes for Christmas for the extra hard work. Today, on Christmas Eve, everyone gathers for a traditional meal of hangikjot (smoked lamb) and laufabraud (thin bread) with lots of cookies and kleinur (fried bread) for dessert.

With its huge forests of pine trees, **NORWAY** has more Christmas trees available than anywhere, and supplies most of Iceland’s needs, as well as a quite large one to London each year. Christmas time (Juletid) is a celebration of traditions and family, and many families cut down their own trees and decorate them with

straw ornaments and tiny Norwegian flags. Much Julefryd (Christmas cheer) is shared around them and the fireplace with family and friends. On Christmas Eve, at five o’clock, everything stops and the church bells start ringing, calling everyone to services. After church, families go home for a dinner of pinnekjøtt (salted, dried sheep ribs) and a dessert of rice pudding with an almond, like in Denmark.

Afterwards, the *julenisse* (Santa) arrives to give out presents to all the good children of the house.

In **SWEDEN**, Lucia is such a big deal that even a national Lucia is chosen, along with all the other local ones. Christmas trees are put up the day before Christmas Eve. These days, the *Juletomten* (Santa) knocks on doors and gives presents, but in the past, the Christmas goat would just throw a sack of gifts in through the front door! Many Swedes attend a midnight service, called *julottan*, in churches lit up with hundreds of tiny candles — a sight to be seen. The Christmas Eve dinner is a *smörgåsbord* of pickled herring, gravlax, paté, knäckebröd (hard bread), ham, meatballs with beetroot salad and lutefisk, and, of course, glögg. Swedes like this meal so much that it is available at restaurants all through December. Knäck is a Swedish toffee that is made at Christmas time. **Julgransplundring** is the final celebration of Christmas in Sweden: On January 13, the family sings and dances around the tree; it is stripped of its decorations, edible ones like apples and candy are eaten, and the bare tree is thrown out! And that is the end of Christmas.



Sources — <http://www.nordicmuseum.org/docs/HolidaysInScandinavia.pdf> and <http://sweden.se/traditions/lucia/> and visitsweden.com and <http://www.thjodminjasafn.is/english/for-visitors/christmas/christmas-traditions/> and <http://www.iceland.is/the-big-picture/news/celebrating-christmas-with-13-trolls/7916/> and <http://finland.fi/Public/default.aspx?contentid=180470> and <http://vermontdailybriefing.com/?p=1189>