



THE  
**SCANDINAVIAN**  
CLUB of TOLEDO



OLAV GJESDAHL, founder

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ERIC SLAWSON, editor

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

We gathered last month at Uncle John's Pancake House, and viewed a couple of DVD programs of Rick Steves in Denmark and Copenhagen, thanks to Eric for the programs. We also considered what it means that Denmark is a Schengen country: The Schengen Agreement is a treaty signed on June 14, 1985 (recently!) near the town of Schengen in Luxembourg that has created the "Schengen Area" within which there are little or no border or visa controls. The Schengen Area operates like a single state for international travel with external border controls for individuals travelling in and out of the area, but with no or minimal internal border controls. According to Wikipedia, it currently consists of 26 European countries, covering a population of over 400 million people and an area of 4,312,099 square kilometers (1,664,911 sq. mi). The Danish government website stated: In some countries where Denmark does not have an embassy, an agreement has been made with another Schengen country to handle visa applications on behalf of Denmark.

This month, on Sunday, February 24<sup>th</sup>, we will meet at the Bob Evans restaurant at Levis Commons in Perrysburg. The Food Editor from the Toledo Blade newspaper will be our speaker, sharing his "Confessions of a Food Editor." As you can see, our dinner-meetings are packed with interesting topics. Please pull out the recipe of a favorite Scandinavian food, and join us for a "tasty" afternoon.

With warm regards,

Eva Slawson,  
2012-2013 President,  
Scandinavian Club of Toledo.

## February

*Our February meeting will be held at  
**Bob Evans at Levis Commons**  
on Sunday, February 24, at 4 p.m.*

**Reservations** :: Please contact Kris Johnson with your name and number attending at 419-836-7637 or [cjohnson143@woh.rr.com](mailto:cjohnson143@woh.rr.com) so that the restaurant has an idea of how many of us will be there. Reservations should be in by Saturday, Feb. 23rd.

**Location** :: **Bob Evans at Levis Commons** is located on Rt. 25, just south of I-475 in Perrysburg. We will meet in the far back corner of the restaurant.

**Program** :: **Dan Neman**, food editor at The Blade, will give us a talk entitled "**Confessions of a Food Editor.**" Mr. Neman will give his presentation **starting at 4pm**, then we'll order off the menu individually, and eat dinner following the program.

**Menu** :: We will be ordering individually off the menu, and will eat after the program.



## Semla

noun  
plural: Semlor, (Sweden)

— a traditional sweet roll associated with Lent and especially Shrove Tuesday, though now eaten from just after Christmas all the way up to Easter. Enjoyed in all Nordic countries.

ALSO known as *fastlagsbulle* (southern Sweden & swedish-speaking Finland), *laskiaispulla* (Finland), *fastelavnsbolle* (Denmark & Norway).

ORIGIN from German *Semmel*, originally deriving from the Latin *semilia*, which was the name used for the finest quality wheat flour or semolina.

More than just a bun, the **Semla** — a small, wheat flour bun, flavored with cardamom and filled with almond paste and whipped cream — has become something of a carb-packed icon in Sweden. The traditions of semla are rooted in *fettisdag* (Shrove Tuesday, or Fat Tuesday) when the buns were eaten as a last celebratory feast before the Christian fasting period of Lent. At first, a semla was simply a bun, eaten soaked in hot milk (known as *hetvägg*).

At some point Swedes grew tired of the strict observance of Lent, added cream and almond paste to the mix and started eating semla every Tuesday between Shrove Tuesday and Easter.

Today, no such reservations exist and *semlor* (the plural of semla) usually appear in bakery windows soon after Christmas.

But, increasingly, not just any semla will do. Every year, at around the same time that the bakeries fill with semlor, the Swedish newspapers start to fill with semla taste tests. Panels of "experts" dissect and inspect tables full of semlor to find the best in town.

One such expert is *semmelmannen* (the semla man): an anonymous Stockholm-based blogger who has become the go-to source for semla tips in the capital of Sweden. His results are reported in almost fanatical detail, but he doesn't pick one favorite; he awards his points and lets his readers decide.

So what makes the perfect semla? According to *Semmelmannen*: "good raw material, a tasty almond paste, but most of all a good composition; the proportions have to be perfect."

For those newspapers and magazines that do name a favorite (and there are plenty) the effect is nothing short of miraculous. Agneta Brolin, head of the bakery *Vettekatten* in Stockholm, knows this for a fact. "If you're mentioned in the press it's the best advert you can get," "After we were voted Best Semla," says Brolin after a 2011 test by Swedish national daily paper *Svenska Dagbladet*, "our sales were double."

— from [www.sweden.se](http://www.sweden.se)