



THE
SCANDINAVIAN
CLUB of TOLEDO

OLAV GJESDAHL, founder

FEBRUARY, 2016

ERIC SLAWSON, editor

Half Way to the Pole

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

As I sit writing this new President's Corner it seems odd that tomorrow is the First of February. Time does seem to go much faster the older you get.

Plans have now been made for the February meeting, and book-clubbers have a new work to delve into. I must admit that I have never read **Pippi Longstocking**, but now I have my chance to read a real Scandinavian classic.

There have been a few suggestions for our March meeting, most especially another cooking class. So give some thought to what you would like to learn and we will discuss it.

A reading of the new Ann Arbor Observer tells me that a new outdoor and clothing store has opened, **Fjellraven**, selling Swedish-made goods on Main Street in Ann Arbor. I intend to check it out and will report back.

Also, those of you who like science fiction or fantasy may appreciate the website, **Stand Still and Stay Silent**, which is a graphic novel site (comic book) that takes place in Scandinavia.

Well, those are my musings for February and hope to see you all at the Grape Leaf Diner on February 21.

Tack så mycket,

John

Nordic News

>> [Sweden to Deport Migrants](#) // Immigrants to Sweden whose Visas have been denied will be deported, according to the Swedish Interior Minister. An estimated 60- to 80,000 will be deported in an action expected to take years. Sweden has taken in a higher proportion of asylum-seeking migrants than any other country. BBC News 1-28-2016

>> [After Living in Norway, America Feels Backward. Here's Why](#) // <http://billmoyers.com/story/after-living-in-norway-america-feels-backward/>. This is a good read by a journalist who spent some years reporting in Afghanistan, then Norway, and now sees the U.S. in a new light.

Contributed by Kris Johnson

>> ["Occupied"](#) // A show on Netflix about a Norway forced to keep producing oil even though they don't want to anymore. (In reality, Norwegians are leading the way in the use of electric cars and other renewables.)

*Our February meeting
will be held at
The Grape Leaf Diner.
on Sunday, Feb. 21st, at 4 PM.*

Program :: The Top of Norway will be our program, presented by **Laura Schetter**, who spent a few days in **Oslo**, then worked way up in **Svalbard** last summer with *National Geographic*. Don't miss this rare chance to experience life so close to the North Pole.

Menu :: We will have our own buffet of their delicious Lebanese foods, from chicken kafta, to kibbee, to hummus and much more. Its their standard group fare that we've had before — no one will leave hungry. Everything is included in the price of \$20 per person. Children under six are free.

Reservations :: Reservations are required this month. Please contact our treasurer, Kris Johnson, at 419-836-7637 or at cjohnson143@woh.rr.com. Let Kris know your name and how many of you will be attending, so that she can let the restaurant know how many to expect. **Reservations due by Noon, on Friday, February 19.** Make your check out to Scandinavian Club of Toledo, and give to Kris at the door.

Location :: The Grape Leaf Diner, is located at the corner of Angola Rd. and McCord Rd., on the South-East corner.

DIRECTIONS: In Holland, Ohio, near the Spring Meadows shopping area, Angola Rd. is one road north of Airport Hwy. There is still construction blocking McCord Rd., so you must go around it somehow. From Airport, you could take Holland-Sylvania north to Angola Rd., turn left, continue under highway, and then turn left at restaurant this side of McCord Rd. The Grape Leaf Diner is in a small strip mall on the SE corner. We will meet in their meeting room, to the left as you walk in the front door.

Club News

Scandinavian Book Club: "Pippy Longstocking" will be discussed at Encore Books (Heatherdowns and Key) on Tuesday, March 8th, at 7pm. Join us!

Long-time club member, **Willard Misfeldt**, will hold an exhibition of his theatrical design work at the Four Corners Center (former Huntington Bank) in downtown Bowling Green, at 130 S. Main St. (near the main intersection of town). Willard has designed more than ninety sets for Community theater productions and has received a number of awards. The show is free and runs Feb. 22 to Mar. 18, 2016. Mon-Fri 9am to 5pm.

Club Contacts

scandinavian-club@hotmail.com

John L Jacobson, President
Lois Staber, Vice President
Kris Johnson, Treasurer
Katherine Thompson, Secretary



Life at the Top of the World

SVALBARD — This **Norwegian** archipelago in the Arctic Ocean is situated north of mainland Europe, about midway between continental Norway and the North Pole, (or two-thirds the way from Oslo, Stockholm or Helsinki to the North Pole). **Svalbard** is the northernmost settlement in the world with a permanent civilian population — few other settlements are farther north, but are populated only by rotating groups of researchers. The islands were first taken into use as a whaling base in the 17th and 18th centuries, after which they were abandoned. Coal mining started at the beginning of the 20th century, and several permanent communities were established.

In a [Vanity Fair](#) interview, published late December, Icelandic musician **Björk**, pictured above, voices her fear that if the Icelandic government's plans are realized, within five or ten years, "there will be no more highlands." Björk has relentlessly fought to save the **Icelandic highlands** for the past 15 years, and along with a group of other environmentalists, she would like to see the highlands designated as a national park. She describes her attachment to the country, which is her source of inspiration: "This is where I started writing my melodies. This is where I come from, what I'm made of. I feel I owe it to the highlands. That's my personal story to fight [for] them."

Her main opponent is the Icelandic government, which she says is intent on developing the highlands by constructing dams to further economic development. In Björk's words, "We have a very small but very greedy group of rednecks who want to privatize all the land in the highlands and just build. Right now they have planned 50 projects in the highlands."

More at: <http://icelandreview.com/news/2015/12/21/bjork-there-will-be-no-more-highlands>

Longyearbyen, on its western flank, is the largest settlement, and has an elected local government. Other settlements include the Russian mining community of Barentsburg, the research station of Ny-Ålesund, and the mining outpost of Sveagruva. There are no roads connecting these communities; only snowmobiles, aircraft and boats can be used in this rugged terrain. Research and tourism have become important supplementary industries, with the University Centre in Svalbard (UNIS) and the Svalbard Global Seed Vault playing critical roles.

The Svalbard Treaty of 1920 recognizes Norwegian sovereignty, and the 1925 Svalbard Act made Svalbard a full part of the Kingdom of Norway. They also established Svalbard as a free economic zone and a demilitarized zone.

The Svalbard archipelago features an Arctic climate, although, thanks to the gulf stream, with significantly higher temperatures than other areas at the same latitude. The flora take advantage of the long period of midnight sun to compensate for the polar night. Svalbard is a breeding ground for many seabirds, and also features polar bears, reindeer, the Arctic fox, and certain marine mammals. Seven national parks and twenty-three nature reserves cover two-thirds of the archipelago, protecting the largely untouched, yet fragile, natural environment. Approximately 60% of the archipelago is covered with glaciers, and the islands feature many mountains and fjords.

—Wikipedia, and Scandinavian Press, Winter 2015-16, p. 28

THE SCHENGEN ACCORD

Unrestricted travel between two dozen European countries has become a cornerstone of business, leisure, and everyday life in today's European community, made possible by the **Schengen Agreement**, of which all five Nordic countries are signatories. But the overwhelming wave of asylum-seeking migrants from the troubles in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan is stressing the social systems of northern Europe. 30,000 migrants entered Norway last year, while 160,000 entered Sweden, the highest per capita in Europe.

The recent terror attacks in Belgium and Paris, and Germany's New Year's Eve mass-rape has run a spike through the generous heart of Europe, and the reaction is now threatening this decades-old, open-border agreement. There was alarm that killers had so easily slipped into Paris from Belgium, and that some had entered the EU with crowds of migrants via Greece.

Recently, **Sweden** imposed full checks at its border with Denmark, prompting **Denmark** to institute limitations at its border with Germany. For the first time in 50 years, these two nations are demanding ID to cross borders, and four other countries have now followed suit. Danish Parliament passed a law that will charge migrants \$1,500 to enter, while **Norway** said it will tighten its rules and turn back asylum seekers without visas, making it one of the Europe's toughest immigration systems.

Sweden's new identity-controls target travellers crossing by train, bus or ferry from Denmark over the five-mile Öresund Bridge. Some 17,000 commuters cross between **Copenhagen** and **Malmö** daily. People are up in arms, on both sides of the issue: It is a significant inconvenience for commuters, and the Danish Transport Minister has said the new measures are "extremely annoying." But at the same time an

anti-immigrant sentiment is spreading quickly.

The new controls are not just a reverse of the 1995 Schengen accord, but also a setback to the post-1945 **Nordic Council** tradition of open borders that includes the five-nation **Nordic Passport Union**, which came into force in 1957.

So how does this affect U.S. travellers? Vacations or business travel is still possible. Travel within a Schengen area is still visa-free, for up to three months (within each six months). But be sure that your passport has at least six months validity remaining whenever you travel abroad.

SOURCES: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-13194723> and NPR News, 1-26-2016. and independent.co.uk and US State Dept.

