



THE
SCANDINAVIAN
CLUB of TOLEDO

Gott Nytt År!
Godt Nyttår!
Onnellista uutta vuotta!
Godt Nyttår!
Happy New Year!

OLAV GJESDAHL, founder

JANUARY, 2017

ERIC SLAWSON, editor

Hygge New Year

Our first meeting of 2017
will be held at Secretary
Katherine Thompson's home.
on Sunday, Jan. 22nd, at 2 PM.

Program :: Dr. Jan Wahl will present a Danish film from 1916 called "**A Trip To Mars.**" This is one of the first science fiction films ever made — in the entire history of the world!

Menu :: This is a **Potluck** affair in Katherine's home. Please bring a dish to share for the smörgåsbord. Hot coffee and tea will be provided. This will be a smörgåsbord, with plenty of hygge!

Reservations :: Please let us know if you're coming. Contact our treasurer, Kris Johnson, at cjohnson143@woh.rr.com or at 419-836-7637. Give your name and how many of you will be attending, so that we know how many to expect. If you know what dish you'll be bringing, leave that information too.

Location :: **Katherine Thompson's house**, is located at 2132 Sherwood Ave., in Toledo, south of the Toledo Zoo, between River Rd. and the Anthony Wayne Trail.

DIRECTIONS: From the intersection of the Anthony Wayne Trail and Glendale Ave., drive south on the Trail to the next traffic light, which is Sherwood. Turn left (east) onto Sherwood, and go about eight houses down on the left side. There is a big tree in the front yard, while the neighbors have no trees. The driveway is to the left of the tree, or street parking is available on the opposite side from her house, or on a nearby cross street a few houses down.

Hygge

—noun /Danish Culture/

Pronounced: (Hww-geh) (not hew, hyou, hoo, hue, hug, nor hig)

—a state of being induced by relaxed, easy going, comfortable, cozy surroundings. Modifiable to be adjective or verb.

If you're reading this in a comfortable chair, surrounded by tasteful soft furnishings and perhaps even a candle or two, that sense of cosiness you're feeling might just be **hygge**. The latest fashionable export from Denmark, following on from interior design and high quality TV drama, hygge is the Scandinavian country's latest gift to the world.

But this particular export is a concept. Roughly described as a feeling of cosy contentment, tips on how to achieve a sense of hygge fill lifestyle and fashion magazines. As is often the case with lifestyle concepts, an older cultural practice has been commodified. Real hygge can happen anywhere: in Denmark or somewhere else, alone or in company, indoors or outdoors, with or without candles or hand knitted socks or stylish furniture.

And after a turbulent, less than cosy year, it's not hard to grasp why hygge has usurped mindfulness as the well-being trend of the moment. One might say hygge is "a soothing balm for the traumas of 2016."

The Danish dictionary traces the verb form back to the Old Norse *hyggja* and Old English *hycgan*, whereas the modern meaning (to comfort or give joy) comes from Norwegian. But the word peppers contemporary Danish conversation in ways that are highly context-specific. Compound nouns can indicate seasonal variations with associated activities (julehygge at Christmas or påskehygge at Easter, for example). The verb form, at hygge sig, is often used as a casual goodbye – *kan du hygge dig*: "have fun", or "all the best". At hygge sig med – to do hygge with someone – can simply mean to enjoy a fun or cosy experience together, but can also be more intimate.

—read more at theconversation.com

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Gott Nytt År to all, and I hope yours has started off better than ours did. Whatever happens to be going around we got and have been trying to get rid of since Christmas. I want to thank everyone for the success of Julfest. I believe that a good time was had by all and Inverness was a quality location again. Please join us at Katherine Thompson's on January 22 at 2:00 pm for some new entertainment from Jan Wahl and a potluck. Also, the book club will be meeting January 10 at 7:00 to discuss "A Man Called Ove."

Tack så mycket,
John

Club News

Scand Book Club: Join us for a discussion of this month's selection: "*A Man Called Ove*" by Fredrik Backman, at Second Hand Books, on Tuesday, January 12th at 7pm.

Member News: Long-time Club member, Willard Misfeldt has broken his arm in a fall. All the best in your recovery.

Club Meetings

Jan. 10 — Scand Book Club

Jan. 17 — January Meeting: Movie classic

Feb. 21 — February Meeting: Copenhagen

Upcoming Movies

Jan. 22nd — *A Trip to Mars* at our January meeting at Katherine's (see above).

February 17th — *The Seagull's Laughter* is an Icelandic film, at Perrysburg Library. 7 pm.

March 16th — *The Great Man Votes* (1940), presented by Dr. Jan Wahl, at Perrysburg Library, 10 am.

Club Board

ScandClubToledo@gmail.com

President: John L. Jacobson

Vice President: Lois Staber

Treasurer: Kris Johnson

Secretary: Katherine Thompson

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

Scandinavian Winters of Old were less Hygge, more Noir

This winter, *hygge* has replaced Nordic Noir as a favorite Scandi-import. But the festive season in the Nordic world has not always granted an opportunity for cosy mindfulness. Medieval sources offer a decidedly more terrifying vision of Christmas, or *jól* (yule, Jul), its proximity to the winter solstice puts it at the heart of icy nightmares.

In the tenth century, King Hákon the Good (c. 920-961) ordered that the pre-Christian festival of yule should be observed at the same time Christians celebrated Christmas, Icelandic historian Snorri Sturluson (1179-1241) tells us. The word *jól* was not replaced when it came to designate the Christian feast, and related terms are still used in the modern Scandinavian languages. Both festivals involved drinking and feasting. But Old Norse texts also make a firm correlation between yuletide and the supernatural.

Understandably in such a northern climate, Norse mythology associated wintry weather with hostile forces. It was said that a mighty winter lasting three years would lead up to *ragnarök*, the apocalypse. The giants that constantly threaten the civilization of the gods are associated with rime and frozen altitudes — one even has an icicle-beard that tinkles as he moves. It's no surprise that in "Game of Thrones" those living north of the Wall are referred to as "wildlings" by the citizens of the Seven Kingdoms, or that the truly terrifying

White Walkers come from the "Lands of Always Winter" in the Far North.

In the Icelandic sagas, hauntings are particularly rife at Christmas, with draugar, the corporeal ghosts of the deceased, returning to wreak havoc in their former households.

In latitudes where midwinter offers at best four or five hours of daylight, it is natural that beliefs imbued with a fear of the dark should transpire. It has been suggested that the association of revenants with winter may have been heightened because solidly frozen ground or heavy snowdrifts could hamper normal burial procedures, leading to a consequent fear that the dead could more easily rise.

The medieval period didn't have a monopoly on creepy Christmases. Iceland's *Grýla* may be a giantess known to Norse myth, but her tendency to devour naughty children

at Christmastime — and her pet cat who gobbles up those without new clothes — are recorded hundreds of years later. Modern-day figures have become more good-natured, though: *Grýla's* sons, known as the "Yule Lads", are now more likely to be found distributing Christmas gifts than scaring the population into behaving.

"Winter is coming" still resounds with menace in modern storytelling, but we can all sleep snug in our beds knowing we no longer have to contend (hopefully) with the supernatural or undead while we hang our Christmas stockings.

—by Hannah Burrows, Lecturer of Scandinavian Studies, U. of Aberdeen. Dec. 2016.

—more at <http://theconversation.com/scandinavian-winters-of-old-were-less-hygge-more-nordic-noir-69386>

It's Not Too Late to Join!

Name(s): _____

Country: _____ @ \$15 per adult = \$ _____

Please make check payable to: **SCANDINAVIAN CLUB OF TOLEDO** and mail to: **KRIS JOHNSON, PO Box 355, WILLISTON, OH 43468**

Katherine's Ginger Snaps

Katherine Thompson's famous recipe which she says dates back to the '50s.

Preheat oven to 350°

Combine in large bowl:

2 1/2 c. Sugar

1 1/2 c. Corn Oil (refrigerated, for better results)

1/2 c. Blackstrap Molasses (House of Herbs brand)

2 Eggs, beaten.

In another bowl, combine:

4 c. Flour

4 t. Baking Soda

1 t. Salt

1 t. Ginger

2 t. Cinnamon

Add dry mixture into wet mixture.

Dough will be stiff. Katherine usually makes a half recipe and works in flour mix by hand.

Roll into 1 1/2 inch balls and roll in Raw Sugar.

Bake on ungreased cookie sheet 10 minutes. After baking, leave on cookie sheet for one minute to crisp. The longer cookies are left on sheet the crisper they get.

Makes 6 dozen cookies.

Danish Hygge or Swedish Lagom?

Has the concept of *hygge* recently entered your consciousness? You're not alone.

Hygge, or the **Danish** idea of "coziness," can be found in anything from a roaring fire to a perfect pair of lumpy socks, and it has long been a vital aspect of Scandinavian culture. And 2016 was the year in which it moved west. *Hygge* became a full-blown phenomenon in England, and to a lesser extent, in the U.S. More than 20 books on *hygge* were published last year in America alone, and more are due out on this side of the Atlantic in the coming months, including Meik Wiking's *The Little Book of Hygge: Danish Secrets to Happy Living*, which is already a best-seller in the U.K.

But **lagom**, the **Swedish** concept of "not too much, not too little," may dominate 2017 instead. *Lagom* translates to "enough, sufficient, adequate, just right." Unlike *hygge*, which aims to capture a feeling, *lagom* is an ethos of moderation. A Swedish friend explains the concept with one clever, everyday example: milk. In Sweden, 1.5 percent fat *mellanmjölk* is beloved; it's not a super-lean skim, but also not a fatty whole. Or consider the ever-

popular Scandinavian design: practical and functional but never overly adorned.

If you need proof that *lagom's* moment is imminent, look no further than England. The epicenter of the *hygge* trend is turning its attention to this Swedish way of living. *Lagom*, a magazine that focuses on leading a balanced life, was founded by a Bristol-based couple in 2014. In addition, Ikea, the Swedish furniture company, recently released its Live *Lagom* project, which focuses on sustainable pieces in the brand's signature simple, clean designs. So before you go all in on cashmere throws and tea cozies in the name of *hygge*, consider adjusting your larger living philosophy instead. As appealing as it is to curl up in your one-piece pajamas these days, given the current state of the world, the more apt course of action may be to live a frugal yet fruitful existence. If nothing else, it's a great way to start the New Year fresh.

—by Madeleine Luckel for *Vogue Magazine*, Jan. 5, 2017.

<http://www.vogue.com/13518715/hygge-trend-lagom-2017/>.

PS. *Lagom* was the word of the month in this newsletter in April 2015.