



THE  
**SCANDINAVIAN**  
CLUB of TOLEDO



OLAV GJESDAHL, founder

JUNE, 2017

ERIC SLAWSON, editor

— News and Culture of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden —

# Midsommar

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Hej to everyone on this beautiful Swedish Flag Day, June 6. As I left the house this morning I had my flag flying, a small one, just to let the neighbors know. I am sorry that some of you missed our May meeting and did not have the opportunity to see *A Man Called Ove*. A very poignant film, and clearly a good nominee for the Foreign Film Oscar. Carol and I had an opportunity to hear author Jo Nesbø in Ann Arbor talking about the writing process and his detective character Harry Hole. Nesbø's book, *The Redbreast*, is the current read for the Scandinavian Club book group, whose next meeting is June 13 where it will be discussed. We have set June 24 as the Club's Midsommar Fest. This year it will be held at Kris Johnson's home, out in the country. Looking forward to seeing many of you there.

Tack, John

*Midsommer Fest*  
will be held at

**Kris Johnson's home**  
**Saturday, June 24, at 4 PM**

**Program** :: Come on out to help us celebrate the longest day of the year: Midsommar!

**Menu** :: Potluck — bring a dish for our smörgåsbord, hot or cold, savory or sweet. The Club will provide the basics of chicken and potatoes. If you have a recipe from the old country, we'd love to try it out!

**Reservations** :: Free. But call or email Kris to let her know how many we should expect at 419-836-7637 or [cjohnson143@woh.rr.com](mailto:cjohnson143@woh.rr.com).

**Location** :: Kris Johnson's lovely back yard, where we were in 2014.

Directions: From I-280, exit at Rt. 51 (Woodville Rd.) in Northwood, near the Northwood High School. Head southeast on Woodville Rd for about a mile. Turn left where the old Woodville Mall used to be, onto SR 579 (Williston Rd.). Drive six miles straight east on Williston. Kris's house, on the right, is the second house after the Williston sign. It is a brick house with a split rail fence and a "wild" front yard, and is just after an old white barn on the right. Driveway is after the house.

## 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 Alteneider, Jan Wahl, and Judy Nickoloff

## The New Board

Elections were held at last month's meeting. All members will continue on in their respective positions for our 2017-18 fiscal year.

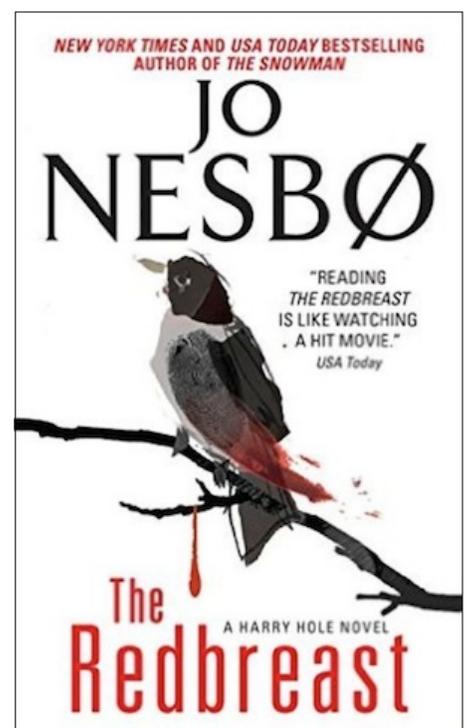
## The Redbreast

Our next **Scandinavian Book Club**, June 13 at Encore Books, will be a discussion of *"The Redbreast"* by Jo Nesbø. It was voted best crime novel by Norwegians, and in its memories of WWII and its aftermath explode into particularly ugly violence. This is the third Harry Hole novel, and Nesbø's most popular book, selling more than a million copies. It's essentially the story Nesbø's father never wrote.

**A bit of context:** During World War Two, nearly seven thousand Norwegians fought *with the Germans* against the Russians on the eastern front — which is about the number of Norwegians that fought with the Resistance *against the Germans*. In 1940, many Norwegians felt that they

had a choice only between the two big powers of the time, Hitler or Stalin — as both France and England were bankrupt, and the US was staying out of the war. Nesbø's father was jailed for writing something against the Nazi's, but then was released to go fight at the eastern front against the Russians; he spent three years in prison after the war for this but had felt he had done his time. Jo was fifteen when his father finally told him about all of this, which came as a shock because the history of Norwegians fighting against the Russians was not taught when Jo was in school in the 1960s and '70s.

—Listen to the full interview with Nesbø at [BBC World Book Club](#) from April 1, 2011. Listen to the full interview.



## Constitution/National Days

*Denmark and Sweden celebrate their Constitution Days this month, on June 5th and 6th, respectively, while Iceland's National Day is celebrated on June 17th.*

In **Denmark**, June 5 is **Constitution Day** (Grundlovsdag), which commemorates the anniversary of the signing of the Danish Constitution of 1849, which established Denmark as a constitutional monarchy, and honors the constitution of 1953, which was adopted on the same date. Almost all workplaces and shops close at noon on this particular day, and political rallies and meetings are traditionally held.

**Sweden** celebrates its **National Day** on June 6, a date that is associated with significant events in the nation's history. It was on June 6, 1523, that Gustav Vasa was proclaimed king. This signified Sweden's withdrawal from the Kalmar Union with Denmark and Norway that had existed since 1397, and laid the foundation for a unified, independent nation.

Three centuries later, on June 6, 1809, the Swedish Parliament signed a new constitution that established important rights such as freedom of religion, speech, and the press, and began Sweden's conversion from an absolute monarchy into a democracy.

Nevertheless, despite these historical milestones, the selection of June 6 as the National Day ultimately stems from the work of one man, Artur Hazelius, who founded two of Stockholm's most important ethnographic institutions: the Nordic Museum (Nordiska Museet) in 1873, and the Skansen open-air museum in 1891. In 1893, Hazelius organized the first spring festival at Skansen, ending with a ceremonial flag-filled celebration on June 6. This eventually evolved into more widespread celebrations, culminating in the designation of June 6 as the official Swedish Flag Day (Svenska flaggans dag) in 1916.

Though it was not until 1983 that Swedish Flag Day finally became Sweden's official National Day, and not until 2005 that the day became an official holiday rather than a regular work day.

June 6 has not yet achieved the importance of many other national days such as Syttende Mai (May 17) in Norway or the Fourth of July in the United States. Instead, it's Midsummer and Christmas (including St. Lucia Day on December 13) that are the festive highlights of the Swedish year.

**Iceland's National Day** (Þjóðhátíðardagurinn) on June 17 is an annual holiday which commemorates the foundation of The Republic of Iceland on 17 June 1944 and its independence from Danish rule.

Many Icelanders will today wear their national costume and celebrate their independence on a national scale, with a parade led by a brass band. Riders on Icelandic horses often precede the brass band and flag bearers from the Icelandic scout movement traditionally follow the brass band.

After the parade several speeches are held out in the open. One of the speeches is held by a woman, as Fjallkonan (the woman of the mountain). Dressed in a gown and wearing a distinctive crown with a veil, she represents the fierce spirit of the Icelandic nation and of Icelandic nature which she shares through a poem. There is plenty of family entertainment, too, with open theaters, music, and treats for the children.

—from <http://realscandinavia.com/swedens-national-day/>

—Iceland from <https://www.littlecandinavian.com/2015/06/17/icelandic-national-day-17th-june/>

—this animation ran on Google on June 5th: <https://www.google.com/doodles/denmark-national-day-2017>



## More Sweden and Russia

You read here in March about Russia's increased presence in the Baltic and in Swedish waters.

Here's a video that aired on the PBS News Hour on May 25th, stating that Russia has exercised a mock-nuclear attack on Sweden, and shows Sweden's response of building up its military.

<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/long-neutral-sweden-beefs-military-defenses-face-russia-threat/>

## NORWAY'S

### Right to Roam

Outdoor recreation is an important part of our cultural heritage in Norway. Since ancient times, we have had the right to roam freely in forests and open country, along rivers, on lakes, among the skerries, and in the mountains – irrespective of who owns the land. We are allowed to harvest nature's bounty – which means not only saltwater fish, berries,

mushrooms and wildflowers, but also our sensory impressions of the whole outdoor experience.

The main principles of the right to roam are legally enshrined in the Outdoor Recreation Act of 1957. The right to roam applies to open countryside, where the following activities are permitted:

- Free movement on foot and on skis
- Resting and overnight camping
- Riding and cycling on trails and roads
- Swimming, canoeing, rowing and sailing
- Picking berries, mushrooms and wildflowers
- Fishing without a license for saltwater species

### Camping

In open country in the lowlands, you can pitch a tent and camp overnight for up to 48 hours in one location without prior permission from the landowner. In the mountains, and in remote, sparsely populated areas, you may camp for longer than 48 hours. Unless local bylaws provide otherwise, you must never pitch your tent within 150 meters (500 feet) of an inhabited house or cabin. Always take care not to damage young trees. Remember, you must not camp on fenced land without

the landowner's permission. You may light a fire in open country, but not in or near woodland between April 15 and September 15. Don't damage trees when gathering wood for your fire – use old, dry branches and twigs. If you build a bonfire on the shore, don't place it directly on rock, as this may cause the rock to split.

More guides are listed on the website below for Hiking and Skiing; Cycling; Horseback Riding; Canoeing, Rowing and Sailing; Fishing; Picking Berries, Mushrooms and Plants; and more General Information the Right to Roam.

—from the Norwegian Environment Agency at <http://www.miljodirektoratet.no/Documents/publikasjoner/M86/M86.pdf>  
—contributed by Beverly Miner