



THE
SCANDINAVIAN
CLUB of TOLEDO



OLAV GJESDAHL, founder

MARCH, 2016

ERIC SLAWSON, editor

The Sounds of the North

*Our March meeting
will be held at the
Toledo Museum of Art, Peristyle
Saturday, March 19, 2016.*

Program :: Join us for an evening of Scandinavian Classical Music, performed by the Toledo Symphony in the Peristyle of the Toledo Museum of Art. This concert, titled "The Inextinguishable", will feature Nordic composers **Sibelius, Grieg, and Nielsen**, conducted by **Mei-Ann Chen** with **Cornelia Herrmann** (sic) at piano. The concert begins at **8 pm** in the Peristyle, but join us at **7 pm** for a pre-concert discussion of the performance. For details, go to toledomuseum.org or toledosymphony.com.

Dinner :: Join us before all of it at **6 pm** in the Museum Café for a light dinner. Individual ordering off the menu.

Reservations :: Our treasurer, Kris Johnson, will purchase a block of tickets for all of us that want to sit together in the Peristyle for the concert. **If you would like to sit with us**, contact Kris at 419-836-7637 or at cjohnson143@woh.rr.com. **Reservations due by Noon, on Monday, March 14.** Let Kris know your name and how many of you will be attending. She will then buy the tickets on Monday and distribute them to us Saturday evening. Make your check out to Scandinavian Club of Toledo, and give it to Kris at the concert. She will then give you your ticket to the concert. But, on the other hand, if you already have your own tickets, or want to buy your own, that is fine. In that case, no call is necessary, but we hope to see you there beforehand to socialize. Don't miss this rare opportunity to experience the sounds of these three great composers in one sitting.

Location :: **The Toledo Museum of Art**, 2445 Monroe St., is located near downtown Toledo, just off I-75. Exit at Bancroft if coming from the south. Exit at Collingwood if coming from the north or northwest. Parking is \$5 upon exiting the parking lot, unless you are a museum member or you obtain a parking token. The Museum Café is near the rear entrance (parking entrance) to the museum.

Summary of the evening :: Meet at 6pm in the Café for dinner. Meet at 7pm for pre-concert discussion. Meet at 8pm in Peristyle for concert.



Club Calendar

March 17, 10am — Club member Jan Wahl will present a classic movie at the Perrysburg Library: "It Started with Eve" (1941). Free.

March 19, — **MARCH MEETING** — Evening concert at the TMA for Scandinavian Classical Music.

March 20, 2pm — Jan Wahl presents another classic movie, this time at BGSU's Gish Theater: "Hearts of the World". Lillian & Dorothy Gish. Silent with piano accompaniment. Free.

April 1, 5pm — Extracurricular gathering at TMA for an archeology program at 5pm, dinner in the Café at 6pm, Ragtime Rick in the Cloisters at 6:30, and a walk through the Indigenous Beauty show.

April 24, 2pm — **APRIL MEETING** — Baking Scandinavian Cookies! Join us at Ruth's house for another cooking class — but this time we'll be baking cookies! What could be more fun than that?

May Book Club Meeting — we'll discuss Jo Nesbø's "Blood On Snow"

May Meeting — Club Elections.

June Meeting — Midsummer Fest!

Club Contacts

scandinavian-club@hotmail.com

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

Club News

// **Scandinavian Book Club**: At our March book club meeting, we discussed **Astrid Lindgren's** classic, **Pippi Longstocking** — the playful story of the little Swedish girl who did whatever she pleased. Our next book will be "**Blood On Snow**" by Norwegian author **Jo Nesbø**. Get a head start on reading it now; we'll discuss it at our next book club meeting in May. Look for the date in the April newsletter.

// Club president, **John Jacobson**, is doing well with his new knee.

Festivals in Ohio

[World Culture Fest](#)
Cincinnati Museum Center
April 23 & 24

[Ashville Viking Festival](#)
Village Park, Ashville, Ohio
April 30 & May 1

[A World A'Fair](#)
Dayton International Festival
Dayton Convention Center
May 20, 21 & 22

Contact Esther Charlton for more information at esthersofn@aol.com

~ Astrid Lindgren's World ~



Pippi Longstocking

Astrid Lindgren's World is a theatre and theme park where visitors can experience characters from Astrid Lindgren's books in their true settings. Everyone can meet the characters, including Pippi Longstocking, as they perform scenes from the books and improvise situations involving the children in the park.

The park is in Astrid Lindgren's native town of **Vimmerby**, in the south of **Sweden**, and was founded in 1981. According to the park's charter, Astrid Lindgren's World shall encourage children to read and write. The park receives some 490,000 visitors

every year, of whom around 30% come from abroad.

Astrid Lindgren's World is open from May 13th to August 30th, and on weekends in September, as well as certain weeks in October (week 43) and November (weeks 44). During the peak season, the park has approximately 400 employees, just over 120 of whom work on the theatrical side.

Ownership: The limited company Astrid Lindgrens Värld AB had a turnover of SEK 164 million in 2013. The company is owned by Saltkråkan AB (88%) and the Municipality of Vimmerby (12%).

—from <http://www.alv.se/en/about-us>

Is the United Kingdom really in Scandinavia?

The UK has been caught in a long tug-of-war about its identity, which will only become more intense as the EU referendum approaches.

Where does the UK belong in the world? Is the strongest bond with major European economies like France and Germany? Or is there a stronger connection with the United States, with its free market instincts and English-speaking culture? Or maybe we should be looking across the North Sea.

It is surprising how often the UK seems to be more like the Scandinavian countries than anywhere else. This might seem a bit counter-intuitive, because the Nordic nations can feel very separate. They evoke images of chunky jumpers, dark nights, impassive detectives and depressive drinking. Or else you might think of a high-spec welfare system with more safety features than... well, a Volvo.

It feels very different — until you start looking at international comparisons.

Northern Neighbors

As an example, annual figures on overseas aid showed almost no one fulfilled the United Nations target of 0.7% of GDP. The exceptions were the UK and the Scandinavians.

But rather than thinking of this as a rather random grouping, look at the recurrent similarities. Employment figures show the UK in the top quarter of countries in terms of people in work, bracketed alongside Scandinavian countries, with Iceland at the top of the table. Corporation tax figures put Norway as the UK's most similar neighbor. In a league table of internet use, the UK is in the top quarter of countries online — along with the likes of Finland, Norway, Sweden and the top of the table

again, Iceland. For levels of online shopping, the UK leads the industrialized world, followed by Denmark, Norway and Sweden.

There might be a perception that the Nordic countries will be much bigger spenders on welfare, but the closest country to the UK in terms of social expenditure (as a percentage of GDP) is Norway.

Nordic Nirvana

Or we might like to think of Scandinavians as some kind of super-healthy liberal elite, living in a Nordic nirvana. But average life expectancy in the UK is 81 years, the same as Finland, with Denmark 80 and Sweden, Norway and Iceland at 82 years. The country closest to the UK in proportion of people smoking is Norway. Average paid leave in the UK is five weeks per year... the same as Sweden, Norway and Denmark.

Erik Berglof, director of the London School of Economics' Institute of Global Affairs, says there is a clear "like-mindedness" between the UK and Scandinavia. He says there have been some political attempts to cultivate this, such as the Northern Future Forum which brings together political leaders from the UK, Nordic countries and the Baltic states. And he points to the World Values Survey, which maps beliefs and values around the globe, as showing how close the UK is to Scandinavian countries.

But as a **Swede** living in London, Berglof says there can be some very outdated views.

"I've been struck by how both left and right use Scandinavian countries as a model, if not a utopia," he said.

On the left, it's used as an exemplar for a welfare system, while on the right it's used as a way of looking at welfare

reform. Or in education, for poaching ideas such as free schools from Sweden.

I came, I saw, Ikea

Nordic countries are often seen as being in a different league to the UK in school standards. But that is mostly driven by the stellar performance of Finland — Nordic not Scandinavian — in the international Pisa tests, which compare the test results of 15-year-olds. The other Nordic countries are rather unspectacular and middle ranking, in similar positions to the UK.

If this still seems like an improbable connection, is that because we've tended to idealize the northern neighbors? We want to think of their politics as being as clean and unfussy as an IKEA bookcase.

So it seems to go against the grain to read stories such as the Danes backing plans to confiscate the valuables of asylum seekers.

Less Equal

Of course there are big differences between the UK and the Scandinavians. Income inequality is much greater in the UK, with Nordic economies distinctive in the much narrower gap between the richest and poorest.

Obesity is more common in the UK, rates of imprisonment are far higher and more is spent on defense while the university fees (at least in England) are higher than anywhere else in Europe.

In many of these areas — obesity, prison rates, defense spending and high tuition fees — there are more similarities with the US. The US can feel familiar, because of such a shared culture in TV, film and music. But its sheer size, complexity and its social

extremes means that it is often unlike anywhere else. Whether it is health, guns or a Donald Trump rally, the US can be really very different from the UK.

Viking Legacy

Carolyne Larrington, a fellow of St. John's College, Oxford University, and an expert on Old Norse and Old Icelandic, says there are deep historical links across the North Sea. These connections of trade, culture and language between the north-east of England and Scandinavia, stretch back centuries. And there are even stronger links with Scotland, particularly further north in Shetland and Orkney.

But she says when it comes to these Nordic links, and the legacy of the Vikings, it has often been either seen in a negative light or overlooked. For centuries, any romantic ideas of the "good old days" before the Norman invasion were seen in terms of the Saxons, rather than the Scandinavians, she says.

Now, modern revisionism about the Vikings has softened their image. Perhaps it's gone too far, she says, with some accounts now depicting them not so much as warriors as "very sensitive and spending a lot of time writing poetry."

If only they had worn chunky reindeer pattern jumpers in their longships.

Pisa test scores 2015:

Mathematics: 12 Finland; 22 Denmark; 26 UK; 30 Norway; 38 Sweden
Science: 5 Finland; 20 UK; 27 Denmark; 31 Norway; 38 Sweden
Reading: 6 Finland; 22 Norway; 23 UK; 25 Denmark; 26 Sweden

—from bbc.com