



Club Elections!

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Kära Vänner! Dear Friends,

Election Day was Tuesday, the first Tuesday in May, which reminded me of how fortunate we are to live in a democracy. Our cultural homes in Scandinavia are also democratic societies, even where there are thriving monarchies.

Here, in the Scandinavian Club of Toledo, we do strive to follow democratic processes, as much as we can. The Club's Constitution (some would say they are actually functional by-laws) states that the President should have general supervision of the work of the club, working with a board comprised of a Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, and three appointed Members-at-Large. As the out-going President, I will be rotating out, and others will assume the reins. It has been my pleasure, over the past eight or so years, to lead this fine board, and to explore our Scandinavian culture and heritage with all of you.

In anticipation of elections of Club officers to be held at the May meeting, our Nominating Committee has met and will be presenting their slate for our vote. Many thanks for their efforts! We hope you will show up to participate. In addition to the wonderful social and educational aspects of our dinner meetings, "voting" is our duty as members of this little democracy. Voting helps assure that the organization will continue to thrive. As in the larger public arena, even your vote counts in the total mix.

We'll gather at a new venue for this month's meeting. I look forward to seeing you on May 16th.

Eva Slawson.

Club Board 2013-2014

scandinavian-club@hotmail.com

President: Eva Slawson

Vice President: Lois Staber

Treasurer: Kris Johnson

Secretary: Katherine Thompson

Members at Large: Jan Wahl, Ruth

Alteneder, and Judy Jokinen Nickoloff

Our April Meeting

will be held at

Honey Diner

Friday, May 16, at 6 PM

Program :: Club Elections, and then we'll enjoy a classic video of Finland.

Menu :: We will be ordering off the menu, individually. Honey Diner features American and Mediterranean cuisine.

Reservations :: Please contact our treasurer, Kris Johnson, at cjohnson143@woh.rr.com or at 419-836-7637. Let Kris know your name and how many of you will be attending, so that she can inform the restaurant of our number.

Location :: **Honey Diner** is located at 7250 SR 795, east of Perrysburg, Ohio.

DIRECTIONS: From I-75, exit at Rt. 795 in Perrysburg, near the Ohio Turnpike, and head East on 795 for about 2 1/2 miles. Restaurant is on the Left side of the divided highway. If you can't turn left there, proceed to the next traffic light for a U-turn and come back.

Club News

IT'S ELECTION TIME

Please make a point to attend our May meeting and cast your vote for next year's Board. **Some major changes have been proposed**, which would require a change to our Club's Constitution, requiring approval by voting Members at the meeting, and we want to hear from as many Members as possible at this important time of change.

Baby in a Box



Finnish Babies Come with Cardboard Boxes Full of Goodies

The infant mortality rate in pre-World-War II **Finland** was high — too high. And something had to be done about it. To aid in combatting this, the country began a social program in 1938 that was directed squarely at making babies healthier. One aspect of it was a special cardboard box.

Finland's expectant mothers have received a maternity box from the State since 1938. Packed full of things new babies need, the box is like a starter kit of clothes, sheets, bathroom items, and toys, which, when emptied, can even be used as a **bed or crib** for the new baby. It was designed to give all children in Finland, no matter their background, an equal start in life, and some say the **Kela Baby Box** has helped Finland achieve one of the lowest infant mortality rates in today's world.

This maternity package is available to all expectant mothers, and contains bodysuits, a sleeping bag, outdoor gear, bathing products for the baby, as well as nappies, bedding and a small mattress. With the mattress in the bottom, the box becomes a baby's first

bed. Many children, from all social backgrounds, have their first naps within the safety of the box's four cardboard walls. Mothers do have a choice between taking the box, or a cash grant, currently set at 140 euros, but 95% opt for the box as it's worth much more.

Finland was a poor country in the 1930s, and infant mortality was high: 65 out of 1,000 babies died. But the figures improved rapidly in the decades that followed. Mika Gissler, a professor at the **National Institute for Health and Welfare** in Helsinki, says the maternity box and pre-natal care for all women in the 1940s, followed in the 1960s by a national health insurance system and the central hospital network, were largely responsible for Finland's drastic cut in infant mortality rates.

"Not only was it offered to all mothers-to-be, but new legislation meant in order to get the grant, or maternity box, they had to visit a doctor or municipal pre-natal clinic before their fourth month of

pregnancy," says Heidi Liesivesi, who works at **Kela**, the **Social Insurance Institution of Finland**.

So the Baby Box provided mothers with what they needed to look after their baby, but it also helped steer pregnant women into the arms of the doctors and nurses of Finland's nascent welfare state.

The Box, now, has also become a symbol of equality, and of the importance of children. Its been so successful that Kela is now considering selling it outside of Finland.

Today, only just over three babies in a thousand don't make it, which is about the norm for the Scandinavian countries. As a comparison, the USA loses just over five babies per thousand, while the world average is in the 40s.

MORE: [BBC article](http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-22751415) <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-22751415>

The Box provider [Kela](http://www.kela.fi/web/en/maternitypackage) at <http://www.kela.fi/web/en/maternitypackage>

Infant [Mortality](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_infant_mortality_rate) on Wikipedia at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_infant_mortality_rate

[List_of_countries_by_infant_mortality_rate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_infant_mortality_rate)

Parental Leave

FINLAND — Expectant parents all over the world considered moving to Finland last week after the BBC's report Why Finnish babies sleep in cardboard boxes went viral. What new mother wouldn't want this care package: A cardboard box that doubles as a bassinet, and comes packed with bodysuits, a sleeping bag, outdoor gear, bathing products, diapers, and bedding — all care of the Finnish government. And that's not all Finnish mothers get. Perks of having a *pikkuvauva* (little baby, in Finnish) include 105 days of paid maternity leave, 158 days of parental leave that can be shared between new parents, and then shortened hours until the child is two. Plus, paid child-care leave and free daycare. OK, sure, Finns pay pretty high taxes that can reach beyond 50% in some instances. It's still little wonder Finland is the 9th happiest country in the world.

ICELAND — Iceland has one of the most generous parental leave systems in the world, experts say. In 2000, Iceland passed a law providing equal parental leave for mothers and fathers. Parents get nine months paid leave at up to 80% of their salary. Three months is set aside for the mother, three months can be taken by the father, and the couple can share the remaining three months. The three allowances are nontransferable between mother and father. However, this will be extended to 10 months in 2014, 11 months in 2015, and 12 months in 2016, with five months to be taken by each parent and two months to be decided between them. One stipulation: Parents must have been working or studying for six months prior to taking the leave. The two-parent leave system has been well received by the public, with over 90% of fathers opting in, according to Icelandic sociologists Guðný Björk Eydal and Ingólfur V. Gíslason.



X-rated?

Donald Duck comics were once banned in Finland because he never wore pants!

—from Scandinavian Press, winter 2013-14

—from <http://www.marketwatch.com/story/6-best-countries-for-new-moms-2013-06-13>