



THE SCANDINAVIAN CLUB of TOLEDO



OLAV GJESDAHL, founder

NOVEMBER, 2016

ERIC SLAWSON, editor

Fire, Ice and Sushi

Our November Meeting will be a Fika at Perrysburg's Way Public Library Sunday, November 6, at 2pm

Program — Long-time Club member Chris Weisfelder will present a travel program she's calling "Fire, Ice and Sushi". Join us as we get up close and personal with the raw elements of nature.

Menu — It's a Fika! This means you should bring a little something light to share (cookies, coffee-cakes, cheeses, crackers, etc.), the more Scandinavian the better. Hot coffee and tea will be provided.

Location — The Way Public Library is in downtown Perrysburg, Ohio, on Louisiana Ave., three blocks from the river. We've been there before, meeting in their very nice downstairs meeting rooms, where we'll have plenty of tables and chairs to utilize. Park your car in the library's parking lot, and take the elevator to the basement.

Reservations — Please contact our treasurer, Kris Johnson, at cjohnson143@woh.rr.com or at 419-836-7637 so we have an idea of how many chairs to set up. This is a casual affair, as Fikas usually are. Join us if you can. Family friendly event!

Dues for 2016-17

If you're new to our club, we operate on a fiscal calendar, beginning in July and running through June. This fiscal year is well under way now, but you can still become a member, or renew your membership, to our Scandinavian Club of Toledo. Dues remain the same as last year, at \$15 per adult; children are free. With your membership, comes this newsletter, chock full of news from and about the five Nordic countries; as well as social access to a network of scandinavian-minded people with whom you may share cultural distinction, regard, and friendship. We are a non-profit, all volunteer social club, and we concentrate all of our efforts on Scandinavian culture, news, and history. We meet each month, from September through June, and we'd love to see you! Please send your dues to our treasurer today. Details are at the top of the next page.



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

I'm sorry we missed a number of members at the Toledo Museum of Art for the talk on The Archaeology of Beer. It was very interesting and discussed the findings that beer had been made in both South America and the Middle East at about the same time. The lecturer was a Professor from the University of California, Berkeley. In November the Club will be meeting at the Perrysburg Library for a travel talk which should get us prepared for the coming winter season. The meeting is scheduled for Sunday November 6 at 200pm and will be considered a Fika. So bring those temptations which go well with coffee and contain zero calories. We currently have 26 paid members and I would very much like to see a strong turnout since we are giving much more notice than we usually do, generally because Eric has to kvetch me into providing a President's Corner. The meeting should also give us some time to discuss Jul Fest, which is not all that far off.

Tack så mycket, John

MEMBERSHIP DUES

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**

Club Contacts

ScandClubToledo@gmail.com

President: John L. Jacobson

Vice President: Lois Staber

Treasurer: Kris Johnson

Secretary: Katherine Thompson

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



A Man Called Ove by Fredrik Backman

Step aside "Girl with the Dragon Tattoo", a grumpy old man may soon be taking your place as America's favorite fictional **Swede**.

The grumpy man at the center of *A Man Called Ove* (pronounced Ooo-veh) is the kind of guy most of us try to avoid: He picks fights with storekeepers, and prowls his housing complex making sure gates are locked and people are following the rules, especially dog owners. But it is the gradual unfolding of Ove's life story that has made the novel by author **Fredrik Backman** a best-seller in Sweden, and a New York Times best-seller here.

Peter Borland, editorial director from Atria Books, had never heard of the book, but fell in love with it over a weekend. "Ove is such a curmudgeon, then as you learn his back story, you just sort of melt," he said. A modest initial printing has now caught fire.

Hannes Holm, film director, was offered the chance to direct a movie version, but turned it down flatly, saying "Thanks, but no thanks." But after reading it over night, he called the producer back to say he'd changed his mind, he was so moved by the story. Now, *A Man Called Ove* is **Sweden's** official entry for an Academy Award for best foreign language film.

It will be shown at the Michigan Theater in Ann Arbor starting October 28. In **Swedish** with English subtitles. PG13

—[NPR Morning Edition](#). Sept. 30, 2016. Thanks to Judith Davidson and Geoff Slawson.

Nobel Prizes 2016

The recipients of the Nobel Prize and the Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel were announced earlier in October.

For Physiology or Medicine:
Yoshinori Ohsumi

For Economic Sciences:
Oliver Hart, and Bengt Holmström

For Physics:
J. Michael Kosterlitz, Duncan Haldane, and David J. Thouless

For Chemistry:
Fraser Stoddart, Jean-Pierre Sauvage, and Ben Feringa

For Literature:
Bob Dylan

For Peace Prize:
Juan Manuel Santos

—See nobelprize.org for further details.



Alfred Nobel monument in New York City

Traveling on Trust and Couches

—by Robert Klose

A while back I caught a news report on something called "couch surfing" and the network of unbelievably trusting souls who make this phenomenon possible. They offer to put up travelers, free of charge, for one or two nights to give them a place to lay their heads and help them on their ways. At first blush, it sounded dubious. I mean, inviting strangers into one's home? For a sleeper? Gimme a break.

However, I was intrigued. I decided to investigate. I read profile upon profile of members of the couch surfing community, and then my curiosity went into overdrive and I decided that the only way to truly learn about this phenomenon was to dive in. And so I planned a trip to Finland, a country I've always wanted to explore. I would travel the length and breadth of the place by train, and I would couch surf at every stop.

If ever an anxiety existed — and there is always an element of anxiety when stepping into the unknown — it evaporated when my first host met me at the train station in Helsinki. Ari looked like my idea of a typical Finn: tall, blond, and blue-eyed. However, Finns were also supposed to be famously reserved. Ari was anything but. He was a live wire, giving me an effusive welcome and hiking

with me to his apartment, where he showed me the sleeper sofa, served me tea, and then engaged me in animated conversation. He also handed me a key with a directive to come and go as I pleased.

Who'd let a stranger stay with them? A lot of people, it turned out.

If this was what couch surfing was all about — trust and welcome — then I had gotten off to a spectacular start. I quickly discovered one of the bittersweet aspects of couch surfing: having to say goodbye so soon after getting to know somebody. But to paraphrase Robert Frost's famous words, I had miles to go before I slept, and so, after two days, I headed to my train and the coastal city of Turku, where my next host, Juri, met me.

Lean and wild-haired, Juri was the anti-Ari, but no less generous. He wanted to hang out and dedicated a big chunk of his day to showing me around his city and teaching me how to use the bus system for the forays I would make under my own steam.

As I boarded my next train for the north of the country, I began to dwell upon this couch-surfing idea. What impelled these people to open their homes to strangers? To hand over their keys? To want to spend time with these travelers? I concluded that there was an element of curiosity, but also desire to reach out and lend a hand to like-minded folks who might, at some level,

enrich their own lives. This came home to me in spades when my next host drove 30 kilometers — nearly 20 miles — to pick me up at the train station and take me to her family's home in a rural area of central Finland.

The family of five received me like a long-lost relative, showed me around, shared their food, and chatted with me into the night. The day before I was an unknown quantity, but now they were asking when I would be back.

The journey continued — to another Ari in Kokkola, to Jamma in Oulu, and Ville in Kuopio, where my host took me to a traditional Finnish smoke sauna on the banks of a mist-shrouded lake in the woods. As we cooled off by the lake after one of our rounds in the sauna's inferno, I spoke up. "Ville, this, as we say in English, is the icing on the cake."

Seven cities in 14 days. Seven hosts. Seven new friends. Before I left for my Finland odyssey an acquaintance back home remarked, "Aren't you afraid?" I wasn't sure of an appropriate response then, but I am now: Of what? If couch surfing taught me anything it's this: Most people are good. Most people are generous. And there is a basic human impulse to connect.

Where will couch surfing take me next? Who knows? But I can't wait to find out.

—Christian Science Monitor Weekly, Sept. 5, 2016. p.45.