



## **Celebrate the end of winter at Danish-style *Mardi Gras*:**

### **A festival of cultural sharing for children of all ages**

The Danish winter carnival, *Fastelavnsfest* (*fahs-tah-launs fest*), will be celebrated on Saturday, February 27, in the Scandinavian Cultural Center at Pacific Lutheran University located on South 122nd Street and Park Avenue in Tacoma. Doors open at 2:00 PM. Admission is by free-will donation. The Danish Sisterhood of Tacoma-Olympia co-sponsors the event with the Scandinavian Cultural Center.

With the coming of Christianity in Denmark, the celebration was named *Fastelavn* (borrowed from the German "*Fastel-Abend*") and marked the eve of Lent when all enjoyed the "feast before the fast." Rooted in ancient pagan rituals, the celebration is meant to usher out the long, dark days of winter and hasten springtime. In olden days, people took turns beating a barrel with a stick until it broke. The breaking of the barrel released a black cat who immediately ran away, symbolizing another year of triumph over the winter season. These days, the barrel contains a toy black cat along with candies and other goodies to delight the children who come dressed in colorful costumes and participate in a costume parade. Delighting the taste buds of all, the traditional *fastelavnsboller* (special Danish pastry) are served along with hot chocolate. Children of all ages and ethnic backgrounds are invited to this festival of cultural sharing.

In Denmark today, children dress up and go door to door-to-door singing the *Fastelavn* song (below) and collecting candy and money, similar to the American tradition of "trick or treating."

### **Fastelavn Song**

*Fastelavn er mit navn  
boller vil jeg have  
Hvis jeg ingen boller får  
så laver jeg ballade*

Fastelavn is my name  
I will have some buns  
If I don't get some  
Trouble I will make

*Boller op boller ned  
boller vil jeg have  
Hvis jeg ingen boller får  
så laver jeg ballade*

Buns up buns down  
I will have some buns  
If I don't get some  
Trouble I will make



The children are trying to "*slå katten af tønden*" or knock the cat out of the barrel. If a boy succeeds in breaking the barrel, he is crowned "Cat King" and gets to choose his "Cat Queen." If a girl breaks the barrel, she is crowned and chooses her "Cat King."

For more information, contact

Event Chair Inge Jones 360.956.9007

Or President Katie Eby 360.491.2271

## **News from the SCC Council President**

### *Smuler fra den SCCC Presidenten . . .*



Happy New Year to the many members and friends of the Scandinavian Cultural Center here at PLU. Speaking for both the SCC and me, 2009 was definitely a roller-coaster ride! Concluding the twentieth year of the SCC was an amazing milestone and I'm so pleased to be a part of kicking off 2010 with an outstanding exhibit, a film series that just began in December, and great prospects for programming and lectures in the weeks and months ahead.

First, I'd like to make a special point to thank the SCC Council for all their work. They are each listed on the back cover of the newsletter and each of them has played a significant role in the success of the SCC. Secondly, I would like to thank the Docents who we rely on to represent the SCC during our public hours and for all the extra ways in which they provide their support... like changing exhibits, assisting with photo displays, making coffee, and countless

other chores that make the SCC such a great place. Finally, our Director, Susan Young, who works to enhance the quality of the SCC at each and every turn.

If you love coming to the SCC for the great events that we have, well great, tell everyone you know, and get them to consider membership. If you have not *loved* an event, tell me, I want to know how we can enhance and improve. Thank you for your membership and continued support of the SCC and let us know if you'd like to participate more actively either as a docent, or a council member. I invite your thoughts on any related topic.

Blessings to all for a fabulous 2010! ~ *Hilsen*, Lisa Marie



### **Annual Nordic Christmas Fest—A special evening with good friends, fantastic food, and great entertainment**

Nearly a hundred guests attended the Nordic Christmas Fest on Saturday, December 19, to partake in the sumptuous buffet dinner prepared by PLU Catering Services. The evening's entertainment was provided by *The Folk Voice Band* featuring Phil Marc Ages, Birgit Teuwen Ages, Chris Luquette, and Jim Noyes. Patty Guerrero was the lucky name

drawn for this year's door prize, a lovely four-piece crystal Aquavit serving set, generously donated by PLU's Garfield Book Company.

*SCC member Karin Stuen (daughter of Betty and Ed Larson) discovered the dinner almond in her dessert and proudly took home the traditional marzipan pig.*

Good friends Alice Govig, Claudia Berguson, Gail Sawyer, Kerstin Ringdahl, and Joanne Klein spent an enjoyable evening together.





White tablecloths and royal blue napkins coupled with gorgeous Christmas trees in the background provided the perfect holiday atmosphere.

## “Nordic Imagery: Pastels and Watercolors”

by local artists Sharon Aamodt and Bob Dexter

The masterful artwork of two talented local artists will be on display in the Scandinavian Cultural Center through April 30. Sharon Aamodt Dexter (right) has teamed up with her husband of 50+ years, Bob Dexter, a retired graphic and contemporary computer artist in his own right, to present the wonderful history of the Scandinavian culture through their artwork. Sharon and Bob are proud of their Nordic heritage (Norwegian and Swedish) and are members of Prillar Guri Lodge #30, Daughters of Norway, Hovedstad Lodge #2-094 Sons of Norway, and Nordlyset Nordlandslaget.



Sharon’s creations often depict the beautiful costumes of Scandinavia. Many of these pieces are completed first in pencil sketches and then watercolor. Sharon’s years of experience in fashion illustration help her suitably recreate the historical clothing, jewelry, and headgear. She also paints still-life, nudes, landscapes, and portraits—whatever catches her eye. She has illustrated several books as well.



The couple’s work—or passion—is a true labor of love. Sharon’s prints are all on acid free paper using archival ink and quality Epson paper. They are produced with pigment colors, not dyes. An original watercolor is photographed or scanned into the print studio’s mainframe computer and then accentuated, based on geographical area or time period. Sharon and Bob rely heavily on research and their many Nordic connections in

order to accurately create scenes of Scandinavian culture. Their three-tiered library equipped with their own rolling ladder gives credence to the extent of their research. The couple's colorful pastels and watercolors are available for sale throughout the exhibition.

Using the latest state-of-the-art technology, Sharon's art is now being reproduced on colorful decorative tiles. The first tile offered (4.5x4.5"), *Dragon Hus* (lower left), is a screen printed (fired) version of her pastel painting by the same name. Through even newer technology, the company now offers *Mountain Morning* (center) and *Land of the Fjords* (lower right) on a 6x6 inch tile framed in wood. Unframed tiles can be used to create magnificent kitchen backsplashes, table tops, and anything the inventive mind might imagine. Tile are available at PLU's Garfield Book Company, 208 Garfield, Tacoma.

*The use of pastels began approximately 250years ago, although colored chalks have been used for thousands of years. Pastels, watercolors, and oil paints all share the same component—pigment. "Pastels, to me," says Sharon, "have immediacy—there is no drying time. Colors are laid upon each other instead of mixing on a palette. They are wonderful and wonderfully messy. The colors are vivid and rich, very exciting to the eye."*

For information about how to place an order, visit <[www.nordicfolklore.com](http://www.nordicfolklore.com)> or call business manager

Niki Dexter at 360.832.1244.

## **"God's Temples on the Dakota Prairie"**

A lecture by Rod Oppegard

Saturday, March 13, 7:00 PM

\$5.00 ADMISSION AT THE DOOR—PLU STUDENTS FREE—RESERVATIONS NOT REQUIRED

Rod Oppegard has a story to tell about the churches of North Dakota. Since 1996, he has been documenting church history, buildings, altar paintings, statuary, and furnishings as a volunteer for the Region III Archives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. He has visited approximately 350 sites, including viable Lutheran churches, home basements and garages, a plumbing warehouse, numerous museums, and a church building used for rummage sale storage. So far he has documented more than 100 pieces of art, but his work is difficult. As the population in rural North Dakota declines, congregations merge, realign and close. With each move, the original art may be sold or destroyed.



Although altar art has minimal monetary value, Oppegard's goal is to preserve its historical and sentimental importance for future generations. Just his appearance in churches makes members appreciate what they see every Sunday.

Oppegard's "real" job is at the public library in Valley City, North Dakota, where he is a circulation librarian. But on weekends and during his two-week annual vacation, Oppegard follows his passion. He loads his vehicle with two point-and-shoot Canon cameras, a small red and white Coleman cooler filled with notes, and a Mr. Coffee box containing photos. Unfolding a North Dakota map, he plots his journey in search of church history. One journey found him stepping behind an altar rail. After donning white gloves, he examined the Crucifixion painting closer. "It's not signed," he said with a twinge of disappointment. But after turning on the lights above the altar he discovered the initials S.K.R. in the painting's lower right corner. Rod will reveal the details about this piece and share other fantastic "finds" in his presentation on March 13.

*Altar art was common in Lutheran churches built between the late 1800s and mid-1900s. Scandinavian and German pioneers commissioned artists to paint works that reflected themes of Jesus as savior and comforter. The art was meant to edify and encourage those who were far from their homelands, Oppegard says.*

## **Scandinavian Book Club: A Time to Relax and Read**

By Karen Giguere, Garfield Book Company

A new young adult book has arrived from Sweden entitled [A Faraway Island](#) by Annika Thor. It is the story of two Jewish girls from Vienna in the summer of 1939. Their stay was to be only six months but as the war drags on it depicts the impact of displacement, the meaning of identity, and the universal joys and sorrows of growing up.

Come join us the first Monday of the month for the Scandinavian Book Club in the Fireside Lounge at 6:30pm. January's book is [Sonata for Miriam](#), followed in February with [The Girl Who Played With Fire](#). See you there.

## **The Nordic Road Movie—Theme for 2009-2010 Film Series**

**Showtime 2:00 PM! Free Admission! Free Refreshments!**

A **road movie** is a film genre in which the main characters travel the highways and byways of a country and experience unique encounters and adventures along the way. The first film in this outstanding series was *Cold Fever* (Iceland), shown on December 13. Set in Iceland, the film tells the story of a Japanese businessman (Hirata) whose perspectives change when he travels to the hinterlands of Iceland. Hirata is a reluctant participant in a quest to fulfill his obligations as a son by conducting a memorial ceremony at the site of his parents' death. His journey across the Atlantic island nation introduces him to odd characters, absurd situations, and unexpected insights as the road trip dismantles his preconceptions and brings him to a place of profound truth.

The second film entitled *Ariel* was shown on January 17. *Ariel* is the story of Taisto, a former coal miner, dreams of freedom, the open road, and far-away places in this eccentric adaptation of the road movie genre. A minimalist surface masks a teeming brew of wry humor, angst, and hope in the face of cruel irony in this restrained yet wide-ranging film by the Finnish master Aki Kaurismäki. This movie goes beyond the stereotypical bleak Nordic preoccupation with class struggle, suicide and meaninglessness, complicating these things with a Cadillac convertible and a comedic absurdity that have to be seen to be understood. The film was introduced by Professor Mia Spangenberg. An informal discussion followed.

### **There are three films remaining in the series:**

Sunday, February 21—*Bye Bye Blue Bird* (Faroe Islands)

Sunday, March 7—*Heart of Light* (Greenland/Denmark)

Sunday, April 11—*Aberdeen* (Norway)

*Bye Bye Blue Bird (Faroe Islands)*. Having lived for a number of years abroad, two friends, Rannvá and Barba, return for a visit to their native country, the Faroe Islands. The purpose of their visit is to solve unfinished family matters, but they soon find themselves fleeing the answers they came looking for as skeletons start popping out of the closet.

*Heart of Light (Greenland/Denmark)*. This film begins with the 1947 ceremonies in which Greenland becomes part of Denmark; Danish King Christian X gives a ceremonial rifle to

*Greenland's Niisi Lyngé. Fifty years later, Niisi's son Rasmus still has the rifle. A man whose dreams have faded, Rasmus finds himself in an unhappy marriage and a slave to alcohol. His son Niisi, also an alcoholic, drunkenly kills his brother's girlfriend and then commits suicide. The grief-stricken Rasmus sets out across the frozen land on a risky hunting trip, and the film's tone shifts from realism to satire as Danish female environmentalists make fun of his crude clothing and gear. In a folkloric vein, Rasmus encounters a hermit, the Qivittoq, who takes him into a mystical world for a reunion with his father.*

*Aberdeen(Norway). Kaisa is a strident, hedonistic, twenty-something businesswoman working in London. Her mother Helen calls from a hospital in Aberdeen where she's been diagnosed with terminal cancer. She wants to see her estranged husband Tomas before she dies, and dispatches Kaisa to Norway to track him down and bring him back. Tomas has become an alcoholic wreck whose airport antics cause the pair to be banned from the skies. At this point Aberdeen becomes a road movie, as Kaisa and Tomas make their way to Aberdeen via Harwich, London, Mansfield and Glasgow, picking up laconic Yorkshire trucker Clive along the way.*

*Sponsored by the Scandinavian Studies Program and the Scandinavian Cultural Center, the film series will be shown in the Scandinavian Cultural Center on the dates indicated above at 2:00 PM. Admission is free. An informal discussion will follow each film and refreshments will be served.*

## **CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

### **EXHIBITS**

#### **★Nordic Imagery: Pastels and Watercolors**

*by Sharon Aamodt and Bob Dexter*

*January 5—April 30, 2010*

#### **Public Hours—Free Admission**

*Sundays, 1:00-4:00 PM; Tuesdays/Wednesdays, 11:00 AM-3:00 PM*

*(THERE WILL BE NO PUBLIC HOURS ON WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 24)*

## MAJOR EVENTS

★Nordic Film Series, Spring 2010: The Nordic Road Movie, 2:00 PM, Free Admission

Sunday, January 17—Ariel (Finland)

Sunday, February 21—Bye Bye Blue Bird (Faroe Islands)

Sunday, March 7—Heart of Light (Greenland/Denmark)

Sunday, April 11—Aberdeen (Norway)

★Danish Fastelavn, Saturday, February 27, 2:00 PM

★God's Temples on the Dakota Prairie, Saturday, March 13, 7:00 PM

A lecture by Rod Oppegard

★Norwegian Heritage Festival, Saturday, April 24, 3:00 PM, Free Admission

## CLASSES

★Advanced Norwegian Language Classes, Mondays, 6:30 PM

★Intermediate Norwegian Language Classes, Thursdays, 6:30 PM

Contact: Audun Toven 253.536.8392 or <tovenat@plu.edu>

★Norwegian Cooking Classes, March 9, 18, 27, 10:00 AM, \$5/per class, 253.584.2690

★Swedish Cooking Class, March 23, 10:00 AM, \$5/per class, 253.584.2690

★Danish Cooking Class, Date to be announced, 10:00 AM, \$5/per class, 253.584.2690

## MEETINGS

★Danish Sisterhood, January 6 and February 3, 11:00 AM, 253.843.2249

★Danish Brotherhood, January 9 and February 13, 9:30 AM

★Danish Sangaften, January 17 (no meeting) and February 21, 6:00 PM, 253.984.6700

★Norwegian Heritage Festival Committee, January 26, 6:30 PM, 253.838.4232

★SCC Council, January (No Meeting), February 10, 5:30 PM

★SCC Executive Board, January (No Meeting), February (TBA)

## *Sankta Lucia Fest provides unique cultural experience for many during exciting 3-day event*

*By Emma Kane, Sankta Lucia 2008*

*I had the honor of wearing the Lucia crown in 2008. It was such a pleasant and rewarding experience that I chose to participate in this year's program even though I didn't compete for the scholarship. Celebrating Lucia has been a tradition in my family for as long as I can remember, so the event sponsored by the Scandinavian Cultural Center brings back many fond memories of my childhood.*

*The Sankta Lucia Fest has been a tradition at PLU for over fifty years. The three-day event has a full schedule that requires a great deal of commitment on the part of everyone involved—the planning committee, the students, the children and their parents, the entertainers, stage services, and the audio-visual staff. Each year the main program takes*

*place on the first Friday in December in Lagerquist Hall and officially announces the arrival of the holiday season on campus. The following day the program is presented at the IKEA store (cosponsors of the event). On Sunday students perform for the residents of a local retirement home. Leading up to the actual performances, students attend weekly rehearsals, craft nights, and personal interviews.*

*My classmates and I especially enjoyed getting together with the children in the program for craft night. Taught by former Lucia planning committee chair Betty Larson, we learned to make the traditional woven paper hearts. We made lots of extra hearts in all colors and sizes this year so we could give them as gifts to the retirement home residents. They were delighted to receive them.*

*Following the program in Lagerquist, it was great fun to walk across campus in our white gowns carrying lighted candles and singing the Lucia songs. Many students in the dorms opened their windows to see the procession and to listen to the singing. At the reception in the Scandinavian Cultural Center, we danced breathlessly around the Christmas tree, teaching children and adults the traditional Swedish dances we had learned. The next morning, we were up bright and early for our trip to the IKEA store in Renton. After our performance, we enjoyed posing for pictures with the children and families who attended, and we still had time for a bit of personal shopping before returning to campus. Each student receives a \$25 gift certificate from IKEA which makes shopping even more fun!*

*One final thought about the students who participated this year. Our paths crossed often in the weeks and days leading up to the day of the Lucia Fest and invariably we greeted each other with smiles and excitement about the events to come.*



*Lucia receives her crown and a red sash just before the program begins at what is called the Sashing Ceremony. We were all pleased when Caroline Olsen was crowned Lucia 2009 (pictured above). Part of what I love about this tradition within the PLU community is that despite it being a competition, there is genuine camaraderie among all of the candidates. I will remember Lucia 2009 fondly*

*as a time of growing, learning, and sharing—growing in friendship, learning from one another, and sharing in a very special Scandinavian holiday tradition.*

*Olsen is crowned Lucia 2009 as Emma Kane (left) and Mary Wuest (right) share the exciting moment. (Photo by Jordan Hartman, PLU Photographer)*

The *Scandinavian Scene* is a bi-monthly newsletter published for members and friends of the SCC.

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