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### 2010-2011 Event Schedule

Date	Event	Location	Contact
6/23/2012, 5:00 p.m.	Midsommar	608 Raintree Road	Anne Keating

### April Business Meeting

On April 21, 2012, the business meeting took place at Gethsemane Lutheran Church in the evening. After a delicious potluck supper, we adopted the slate of officers presented. Officers from 2011-12 will continue to serve with the exception of the secretary; that office may be filled at a later date. Thank you to one and all for serving! If possible, the plan is for new officers to take over after second terms so that more members may participate in decision making (and share the fun; we have a great time)!

### Syttende Mai

On May 12, 2012, the Syttende Mai picnic took place at Emanuel Baptist Picnic Ground on Tate's Creek. Asmund Vego kindly presented historical background on the holiday as set forth below, and led us in singing the national anthem of Norway. (See pages 4-5 for more about the celebration of this holiday and its cultural significance.) We were also very happy to have Jenny Berens' parents, Christer and Peggy Hilding, with us from Sweden. We enjoyed individual picnics followed by wonderful cupcakes and ice cream per tradition. Fortunately, the rains held off until the end of our festive occasion.



Syttende Mai picnic



Asmund Vego presenting the program.

## Laskiainen 2012

On February 25, 2012, SHSKY members and friends celebrated Laskiainen at Beaumont Presbyterian Church in style. As you can see from the photos, we sampled delicious pea soup with many accompanying dishes: herring, salmon, salads, breads and knickebrod and more. The desserts were amazing! Later, Risto Marttinen gave a very interesting presentation about his father who immigrated to America with his family from Finland. Risto and his friend Urho Lehtikoinen both provided information for this article.



As a young man, Risto's father, Alpo Marttinen, fought in WW I and quickly made Captain. By the end of the war, he was a Major. He stayed in the army and became Lt. Colonel and then Colonel by age 36 during WW II. He was especially good at strategic planning. During WW II, the Finns were attacked by Russia in a conflict known as the Winter War, which lasted from November 30, 1939 to March 13, 1940. The Russians had 3 times as many soldiers, 30 times as many aircraft and 100 times as many tanks according to Wikipedia, yet the Finns managed to protect their sovereignty, ceding a relatively small area of territory. The Winter War against Russia was an enormous challenge and called on people to do things beyond endurance, known as "Sisu," a quality for which Finns are well known.

In recognition of his outstanding service, as a Regiment Commander, Risto's father received the Mannerheim Cross, a knighthood approved by the legislative body known as the Diet, and presented by the President. With Russia looking to retaliate against their adversaries after the war, Risto's father left Finland and took his family first to Sweden, then to the U.S. where he joined the US Army at a rank of full Colonel.

When Alpo joined the United States Army, he consulted on teaching survival techniques for soldiers in the Korean War. US soldiers were perishing in the harsh Korean winter until they learned the Finnish approach to survival, stoves for the tents, and layering of clothes. This involved, for example, wearing cotton socks, covered with woolen ones, heavy boots, and more socks. When not on the march, soldiers would substitute heavy felt boots and put more socks over them. On the torso, soldiers wore a flannel undershirt, a woolen uniform, woolen sweaters under the uniform and a woolen coat. Dressed this way, one could make it through the midnight shift on guard duty at 40 below 0 F. for 8 hours--a fact to which Urho could attest!

## Laskiainen 2012

Urho Lehkoinen also is a veteran of the Winter War and WW II; he got out of the Army in 1944 and in 1946 came back to America where he had earlier lived. While born in Finland, Urho grew up in Pittsburgh. At the suggestion of Urho's uncle, Urho's parents came to join him in Pittsburgh, and were married upon arrival. Urho's sister, 7 years older, was born in the United States while he and his younger sister were born later in Finland where the family returned during the Depression. Once the war broke out, the family stayed in Finland rather than be separated from the father, who was not allowed to leave, despite dual citizenship. The father became a Finnish officer, first Lieutenant, with a specialty in mortars. During WW II, Urho volunteered with the National Guard and served three and a half months on guard duty in the ski patrol. His outfit stood by to backup the fighting forces as needed. In 1941, he was drafted into the regular army and served mostly in Russia in the infantry. (Note that Urho speaks Finnish, Swedish, Russian and English!) He served as 2d and 1st Lieutenant, and was decorated twice for valor, after fighting Russians and Germans in Lapland. After WWII, the boundaries between Finland and Russia reverted to those determined by the Winter War. The Russians did not occupy Finland, knowing that guerilla warfare would follow.

Urho enrolled at the University of Helsinki after the war, then returned to the America on an educational visa to resume his studies and to settle his parents' estate. Urho attended Suomi College and Michigan Technical University where he majored in Industrial Chemistry. This led to a career supervising research for the federal government in weapons, survival strategies and special warfare. It is a point of honor for Urho that the first manned space craft in orbit, the Mercury capsule, carried components of his design.

Many thanks to Risto and Urho for sharing their stories with our group. These remarkable events form individual histories, but also impart the richness of our joint cultures, blended together to great benefit.



## The Celebration of Syttende Mai

By Asmund Vego

### Historical Background

The Constitution of Norway was signed at Eidsvoll on May 17 in the year 1814. The constitution declared Norway to be an independent nation.

The celebration of this day began spontaneously among students and others from early on. However, Norway was at that time under Swedish rule and for some years the King of Sweden and Norway was reluctant to allow the celebrations. For a couple of years in the 1820s, King Karl Johan actually forbade it, as he thought the celebrations a kind of protest and disregard—even revolt—against Swedish sovereignty. In 1833 the official celebration was initiated by the monument of the late politician Christian Krogh, known to have stopped the king from gaining too much personal power. The address was held by Henrik Wergeland, thoroughly witnessed and accounted for by a Swedish spy, sent by the king himself.

After 1864, the day became more established, and the first children's parade was launched in Christiania, in a parade consisting only of boys. This initiative was taken by Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, although Wergeland made the first known children's parade at Eidsvoll around 1820. It was only in 1899 that girls were allowed to join in the parade for the first time.

### Children's Parades

A noteworthy aspect of the Norwegian Constitution Day is its very non-military nature. **All over Norway, children's parades** with an abundance of flags form the central elements of the celebration. The longest parade is in Oslo, where some 100,000 people travel to the city centre to participate in the main festivities. The massive Oslo parade includes some 100 schools, marching bands, and passes the royal palace where the royal family greet the people from the main balcony.

During the parade a marching band will play and the children will sing lyrics about the celebration of the National Day. The parade concludes with the stationary singing of the national anthem "Ja, vi elsker dette landet" (typically verses 1, 7 and 8), and the royal anthem "Kongesangen".

In addition to flags, people typically wear red, white and blue ribbons. Although a long-standing tradition, it has lately become more popular for men, women, and children to wear traditional outfits, called bunad. The children also make a lot of noise shouting "Hurra!", singing, blowing whistles and shaking rattles.

All parades begin or end with speeches. Both grown-ups and older children are invited to speak. After the parades, there are games for the children, and often a lot of icecream, pop, sweets and hotdogs are consumed.

### Russ Parades

The graduating class from the Norwegian equivalent of high school - known as russ - has its own celebration on May 17, staying up all night and making the rounds through the community. The russ also have their own parades later in the day, usually around 4 or 5 PM. In this parade, russ will parade through the street with their russcars carrying signs and pickets. They may parody various local and political aspects, although recently this has become less frequent. Russ parades have lately become smaller and smaller due to diligent police discouragement.

### Celebration Abroad

Syttende Mai is also celebrated in many Norwegian immigrant communities throughout the world, with traditional foods, sometimes including lutefisk. In the United States and Canada, the local lodges of the Sons of Norway often play a central part in organizing the festivities. One major celebration occurs in Petersburg, Alaska, which is also known as "Little Norway". The town is a Norwegian settlement and strongly retains its roots. The festival occurs the weekend closest to May 17 and includes a parade, Leikarring dancers, herring toss, Norwegian pastries such as lefse and even a pack of Vikings and Valkyries.

Another major Syttende Mai celebration occurs in Stoughton, Wisconsin, which is the 2nd largest in the world, and the largest in the U.S. Festivities include canoe racing, two parades, an art fair, a 20-mile run that starts in Madison, Wisconsin, and a great deal of bratwurst consumption. The festival features the Stoughton High School Norwegian Dancers, a group that tours the country showcasing traditional ethnic dances of Scandinavia.

## Norway's National Anthem

Yes, we love with fond devotion  
This our land that looms  
Rugged, storm-scarred o'er the ocean  
With her thousand homes.  
Love her, in our love recalling  
Those who gave us birth.  
And old tales which night, in falling,  
Brings as dreams to earth.

Norsemen whatsoever thy station,  
Thank thy God whose power  
willed and wrought the land's salvation  
In her darkest hour.  
All our mothers sought with weeping  
And our sires in fight,  
God has fashioned in His keeping  
Till we gained our right.

Yes, we love with fond devotion  
This our land that looms  
Rugged, storm-scarred o'er the ocean  
With her thousand homes.  
And, as warrior sires have made her  
Wealth and fame increase,  
At the call we too will aid her  
Armed to guard her peace.

## Ja, vi elsker dette landet

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

RICHARD NORDRAAK

Ja, vi els-ker det-te lan-det, som det sti-ger frem, fu-ret, vær-bit-t, ø-ver van-net,  
Nors-ke mann i hus og hyt-te, takk din sto-re Gud! Lan-det vil-le han bes-kyt-te  
Ja, vi els-ker det-te lan-det, som det sti-ger frem, fu-ret, vær-bit-t ø-ver van-net,

med de tu-sen hjem. Els-ker, els-ker det og ten-ker på vår far og mor og den sa-ga-natt som  
skjønt det mørkt så ut. Alt hva fe-dre-ne har kjem-pet, mø-dre-ne har grett, har den Her-re stil-le  
med de tu-sen hjem! Og som fed-res kamp har he-vet det fra nød til seier og-så vi når det blir

sen-ker drøm-mer på vår jord, og den sa-ga-natt som sen-ker drøm-mer på vår jord.  
lem-pet, så vi vant vår rett, har den Her-re stil-le lem-pet, så vi vant vår rett.  
kre-vet, for dets fred slår leir, og-så vi når det blir kre-vet, for dets fred slår leir.

# SCANDINAVIAN HERITAGE SOCIETY OF KENTUCKY



## Midsommar 2012

On June 23, SHSKY will celebrate Swedish Midsommar at Anne Keating's house: 608 Raintree Road, Lexington, KY at 5 pm. This is a potluck event, so please bring your favorite midsummer dishes to share.

If you have any questions, please contact Anne at (859) 269-8142. Please note that this is not the same location as last year!

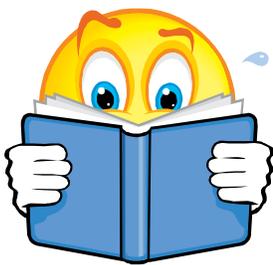
We look forward to this special celebration of summer.

## With Sympathy

We were very sorry to hear that Marie Hosie's sister Shirley Flynn, of Charleston, West Virginia passed away unexpectedly on March 28, 2012. We send our heart-felt sympathy to Marie.

## Lär Dig Svenska

At Midsommar, you will often see people dancing around the midsommar pole and singing many songs. One of the crowd favorites is "Små Grodorna", which is a song about little frogs. It seems practical, then, to share the words to this Swedish classic and the English translation so that you don't miss out on any of the fun. Make sure you ask any of the Swedes for instructions to the accompanying dance.



Små grodorna, små grodorna är lustiga att se.  
Små grodorna, små grodorna är lustiga att se.  
Ej öron, ej öron, ej svansar hava de.  
Ej öron, ej öron, ej svansar hava de.  
Ko-ack ack ack, ko-ack ack ack,  
Ko-ack ack ack ack kaa.  
Ko-ack ack ack, ko-ack ack ack,  
Ko-ack ack ack ack kaa.

Small frogs, small frogs are funny to see.  
Small frogs, small frogs are funny to see.  
No ears, no ears, no tails have they.  
No ears, no ears, no tails have they.  
Quack quack quack, quack quack quack,  
Quack quack quack quacka.  
Quack quack quack, quack quack quack,  
Quack quack quack quacka.

One may suspect from the lyrics that a great deal of alcohol may have been consumed when this song was written. There is typically a great deal consumed when the song is being performed, at least! The origins of the song are partially unknown, but the melody actually originates from a military march from the French Revolution. The British changed the text with condescending irony to "Au pas, grenouilles!" ("In step, little frogs"). No one knows how the melody ended up in Sweden, but the lyrics are clearly inspired by the English version.

We would love to see other languages here, if you would like to contribute a piece of your heritage to this newsletter! Please email Kisha at [shsky@shsky.org](mailto:shsky@shsky.org) with your contributions!