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April 26, 2pm	Annual Meeting/Danish Day	Gethsemane Lutheran Church
May 17, TBA	Norwegian Constitution Day	Location TBA
June 22, 4pm	Midsommar	Home of Anne Keating

Welcome to the Emerald City! In late February, and March, I long for green leaves, flowers and warm breezes. Finally, Spring seems to have arrived, along with the celebration of Easter. We also have two meetings coming up to enjoy Danish and Norwegian heritage. Feel free to bring a Danish dish, or any other that you would like to share on April 26. If anyone would like to tell us about recent travels, we will all enjoy that. An occasional meeting without a planned program has allowed us to get better acquainted.

Glenn and Kathy Blomquist gave a wonderful talk on Sweden, Finland, Latvia and Poland at our last meeting. The personal connections with friends in far places enable a special understanding on what is happening and how people feel about that. Tack sa mycket!

I have something special to share with you in this newsletter. Thomas Ehrenborg is studying at Cornell, and has signed up for a course in Swedish. His mother, Margaret Readdy, sent me a copy of her interview of Thomas to tell us about the course, which is shared among 3 universities.

**Learning Swedish at Cornell: Interview of Thomas Ehrenborg by M. Readdy**

This year I am taking Swedish as part of the Cornell's Shared Course Initiative <https://lrc.cornell.edu/sci>. This allows Cornell to offer a wide range of less-commonly taught foreign languages via videoconferencing with other universities.

Here is how it works. I have Swedish class twice a week on Monday and Wednesday mornings for two hours. The room has a screen on one wall where you can see a large Zoom call. This is a Zoom meeting between our room and the corresponding Zoom rooms at Columbia University and Yale. You can see what is going on in the other classrooms.

Most of students in my Swedish class are Columbia students (about fifteen –it is difficult to tell since you can't see the entire classroom at Columbia). Another student is from Yale. The remaining four, including me, are Cornell students. One of the Cornell students is a graduate student. I am a sophomore studying mathematics. The other two Cornell students are freshmen. They study biology and art history.

Our instructor's name is Heli Sirviö, or Heli, as she prefers. Here is her website: <https://germanic.columbia.edu/content/heli-sirvioe>. She is Finnish and has a Masters degree from Helsinki University Theater Academy (Uniarts Helsinki); see <https://www.uniarts.fi/en/units/theatre-academy/>. According to her website she is interested in Nordic literature and film.

Like typical language classes, we have textbooks and workbooks that we use. In the Fall we learned different verb tenses (past, present, future). We studied numbers, sounds (å as in "Hej då", ä as in "Jag är svensk" and ö as in "Ö" – island), prepositions, etc. The Spring semester is a continuation of the previous semester. Our homework consists of writing, as well as small grammatical exercises.

Our instructor Heli comes to visit in person once a semester. In the Fall she arrived for a one day visit. Heli is very nice. She has yet to visit this semester. The academic schedules of Cornell/Columbia/Yale don't quite match. So during our spring break week, we still had class on-line. Our exams are take-home exams as it is hard to do in-person exams via Zoom.

Tack sa mycket, Thomas and Margaret. The University of Kentucky offered a Swedish course around the time SHSKY was organized that some of our members attended. According to AI, UK still offers one, based on student interest and availability of a qualified instructor. Margaret also mentioned that there is another resource that we may explore in a future newsletter. By the way, the Donovan program at UK allows people over 65 to take courses free of tuition and course charges.

Danish news highlights the Danish Prime Minister, Mette Frederiksen, telling the U.S. that it cannot annex Greenland which is a semi-autonomous territory that belongs to the Kingdom of Denmark. The U.S. and Denmark should not be divided as allies, she said. Security is being strengthened by Denmark, through a variety of measures, although the U.S. already has military control, and has since WW II! Meanwhile, 200,000 people have signed a satirical petition for Denmark to buy California from the U.S. ([san.com](http://san.com))

In late November, Denmark detained a Chinese ship which dropped its anchor in Swedish territory and dragged it 100 miles, severing undersea communications cable lines in the Baltic Sea between Sweden and Lithuania, and then between Germany and Finland. In January, Norway stopped a Norwegian owned, Russian crewed ship to investigate damage to an underwater cable between Latvia and Gotland.

In October, archaeologists in Denmark found 50 Viking skeletons, well preserved while doing renovations to the electrical grid in Asum. It appears possible to get DNA which will give information on diet, health and genealogical links. They found necklaces of glass, an iron key, a brooch, and rock crystal from Norway, which indicated these were people of some means and with wide trading networks.

In Denmark, according to Living the Danish Gene, Maundy Thursday is a bank holiday, which gives everyone a 5 day holiday. Most businesses are closed, so one must plan ahead. Danes regard spending time with family as very important. The Danish host a traditional Easter Lunch, called Paskefrokost. possible menu might include: Bread, eggs, salmon, prawns, herring, lamb, meatballs and salad, accompanied by beer and snaps with cheese, coffee and chocolates to follow. Children enjoy gækkebrev, the cutting out of snowflakes. Rather than sign the snowflake the child puts dots for each letter of the name; if the recipient guesses who gave the snowflake, he or she receives a chocolate egg; if not, the sender gets a chocolate egg. This custom dates back to the 1800s. you might enjoy visiting this website to see photos of the food! [livingthedanishgene.com](http://livingthedanishgene.com).

## SCANDINAVIAN HERITAGE SOCIETY P.3

Just so you know, according to [habitat.com](http://habitat.com), the 20 happiest countries in the world are: Finland, Denmark, Iceland, Switzerland, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Sweden, Norway, Israel, New Zealand, Austria, Australia, Ireland, Germany, Canada, United States (fallen to 24 on another survey), United Kingdom, Czech Republic, Belgium, France. This is based on a 3 year average of criteria such as GDP, life expectancy, family life, friendships, perceived freedom and emotional life. [Habitat.com](http://Habitat.com) gives more information on these areas which you might peruse. For example, Professor John Helliwell, a Canadian economist suggests that the necessity of dealing with long cold winters tends to promote closer relationships as people deal with challenging circumstances together. Another factor has to do with the expectations people have for happiness. Denmark has the highest rating for social mobility, and has highly ranked education and health care. Iceland ranks first on Global Peace index.

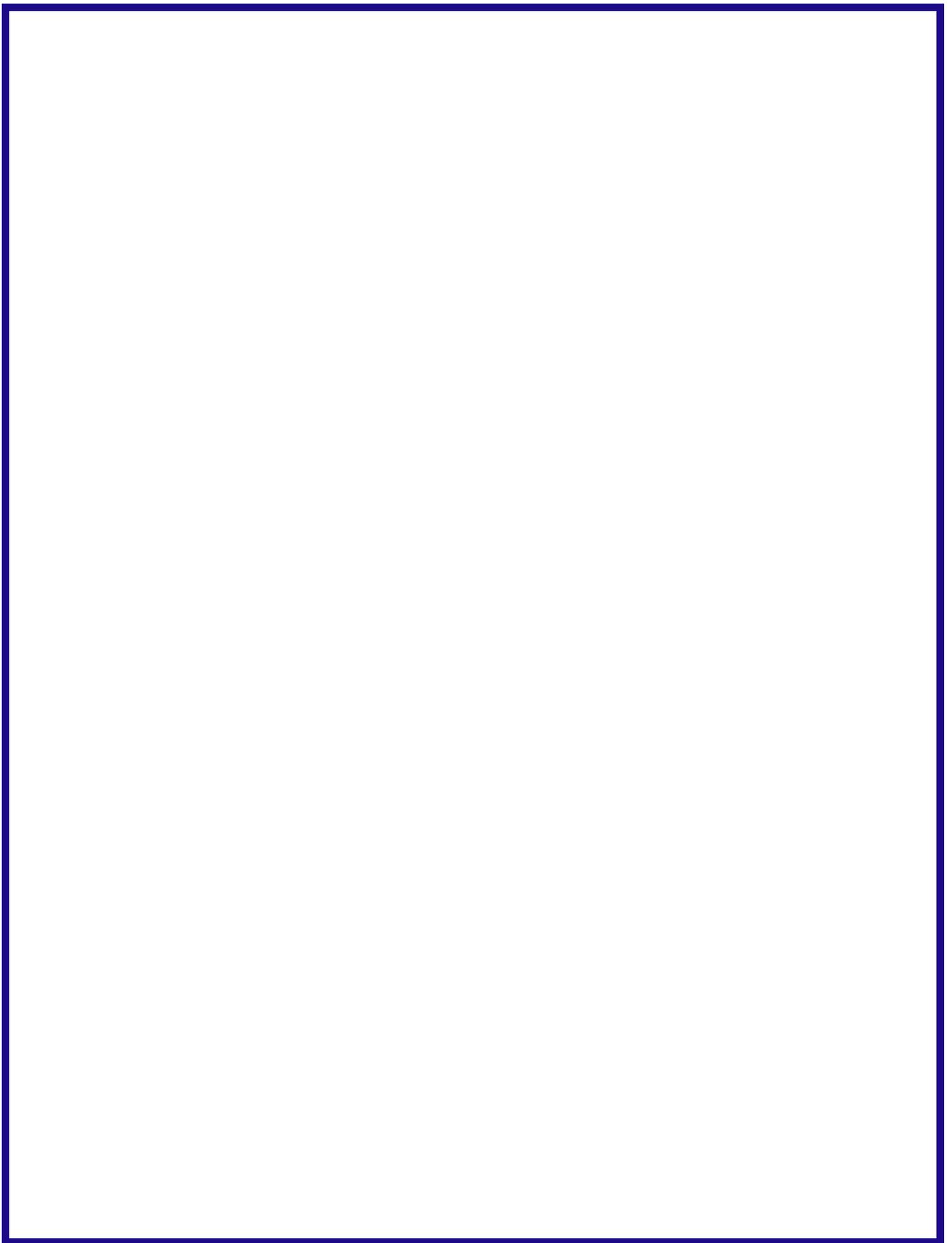
There is a show in Sweden called Den stora Älgvandringen, in Swedish. This is a film of the Great Migration of Moose, which began in 2019. Due to warm weather, it started early this year, and will last until May 4. The moose swim across the Angerman River which is 187 miles NW of Stockholm as they head for summer pastures. People find it soothing and relaxing to watch. There are live feeds of other wildlife around the globe now; you may have seen the ones related to birds. Because the moose have followed the same trail for thousands of years, it has been easy for the crew of 15 to set up the necessary cameras. Sweden has 300,000 moose living in their woods! The largest bull is said to measure 6 feet 10 inches at the shoulder and weight 992 pounds. Note that in Maine, it is about as serious to kill a Moose as a person! Their knee caps come to about your car lights!

Norway is caught in the trade war, not so much for the amount of exports to the U.S., but for the repercussions with the rest of Europe which may be forced to make cuts in the auto industry to which Norway exports steel, aluminum and auto parts. For more information, go to [newsinenglish.no](http://newsinenglish.no).

Former NATO Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg is returning to government in his native Norway as finance minister. Before leading NATO from 2014 to present, he was Norway's prime minister.

A Spanish kayaker Aniol Serrasolses kayaked through ice and water falls in Svalbard and you must see it! Go to BBC News on YouTube on Dec. 4, 2023. He said it was, "like kayaking on another planet." His descent was the longest ever recorded! It is a very cold experience, but he went with no gloves!

On that note, I'll sign off today. I hope to see you on the 26<sup>th</sup>!







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