

The  
Human  
Edition

# Tomte Times

Volume Two \* Issue Two \* Spring 2021

## Walpurgis Eve & May Day Celebration News

Once again we are happy to report about the success of our Annual Walpurgis Eve Celebration. With the administrative year ending on April 30, there is a lot to lift a glass to—what better way to join together with singing, dancing and welcoming spring. Most cities and towns have chosen their new aldermen and alderwomen. The year begins anew.

If you remember two years ago, we had some pretty bland Nettle Soup, hence the very successful recipe contest last year for the best Nettle Soup. Ingrid Abramson had the winning entry and this year was gracious enough to share her recipe for use in our celebrations. It was

delicious and nutritious. Nettle soup contains a lot of great nutrients ~ especially for anemia and for the “monthlies” in women. The recipe will appear on our social page in this issue of the Tomte Times. Many individuals celebrated long into the night with



Stinging Nettle

bonfires that could be seen all over Alastour Island. While gunshots have been heard in past years, Hilding Olson asked the residents of the Island to please refrain from the gun shots as his Guernseys won't give milk the next morning after being scared silly.

May Day celebrations began as an annual day to honor working men and women. It started in Sweden in 1939. This year it was enjoyed mostly by the children with their parades. Since the day was a national holiday and no one had to work, while remembering National Workers Day a lot of people made it a low key day.

Relaxing for the day was appreciated after a late night at the Walpurgis Eve bonfires.

Nina Robertson will put out an invitation next year to make new banners for the parade. If you have ideas for slogans, please contact her.

### From the Council of Elders:

With new alderman and alderwomen being elected, it is now time to elect elders for the International Tomte Council and the Council of Alastour Island. There are four positions open and nominations are being accepted. Qualifications for both are:

- \* At least five years active service with a human family.
- \* Current Residency on Alastour Island of two or more years.

Please request an Elder form, fill out, and submit to the Council Office by June 1. Campaigns will begin once all of the candidates resumes and qualifications are verified. Elections will be held on the weekend of June 18 & 19. The New Elders will be commissioned at the raising of the maypole on Mid-Summer Eve, Friday, June 25. Thanks to Elder Jon Pederson and Elder Risto Sarrilinen for

their service. Two elders are up for re-election: Ellin Amossen and Nels Olson.

Our Elders Annual Winter retreat was great opportunity to set goals and visions for tomtes worldwide and to address the needs of Alastour Island. Time was spent around the fireplace giving thanks for all the gifts we have been blessed with this past year.



## Tack, Tack, Tusse Tack

Mona Oleson wishes to thank all those who baked semlar for Fettisdagen (Fat Tuesday). The call was put out for 10,000 and 10,056 were donated. Stefan Mikelson supplied the cream and was very relieved that he

had enough for the project. Procurement of marzipan became very tricky with every market on the island sold out. Mona had to resort to making the last bit from scratch. Next year Mona will call for more donations as there was not even one left!

The celebration was fabulous and everyone had a great time. Dagny Wicklund made her homemade Aquavit and everyone wanted her recipe. She shares it with the warning that "lite kommer att göra." (a little bit will do!)

### Homemade Aquavit

- ◆ 1 tablespoon of caraway seeds—lightly crushed
- ◆ 1 tablespoon of sugar
- ◆ 1 bottle bottom of the shelf Vodka

Add sugar and seeds to the bottle. Shake two times a day for 4 days. Strain. Store in container in freezer.



## ALASTOUR CURLING TEAM TRAINING

Tomtes are quite small so handling the 42 lb rock has required some interesting strategies. Our tomte team is going up against humans so we need creative thinkers to help. Gunnar Larson is the Team coach and will accept suggestions as the team trains.

Gudrun Abramsdotter is designing the Olympic team uniform. She would like to design it after the International Tomte Flag. It has been spoken of in legends but no one remembers ever seeing it. If you have one or have ever seen one, please contact Gudrun.

## Upcoming Events

- May 17—Syttende Mai (Constitution Day in Norway)
- June 5—Grundlovsdag (Danish Constitution Day)
- June 6—Sveriges nationaldag (Swedish National Day)
- June 17—Icelandic National Day
- June 18 & 19—Election Day for Elders
- June 25—Midsomarafton (Mid Summer Eve)
- June 26—Installation of New Elders
- June 26—Midsomara (Mid Summer)

## MAYPOLE and MIDSUMMER

One would think that the maypole would be used for May Day celebrations! In some countries it is, but in Scandinavian countries we include the Maypole in our Midsomarafton (Mid Summer Eve) and Midsomara (Mid Summer) celebrations. There are many types of maypoles but the one that we use on Alastour Island is a very tall pole with a ring on the top. We tie long colorful ribbons to the top that are woven in and out of each other as we sing and dance.

It has been said that if a maiden picks seven kinds of flowers and puts them in her hair as she dances around the maypole, she will dream of the man that she will marry. Inge Finnlund was terrified last year after she had a dream about Torbjörn the Great. Her friends comforted her with the knowledge that her Aquavit intake was probably the reason for the nightmare!

Please refer to your local newspapers for your town celebrations.

### Lila Kafe Specials

## Midsomara

## Firande



Fredag Kvällsmat: Gravlax Pizza

Lördag Frukost: Swedish Pancakes  
with Lingonberries and Sausage

Lördag Lunch: Swedish Meatballs and  
Jansson's Temptation.

Lördag Kvällsmat: Gravlax Pizza

Söndag Frukost & Lunch: Traditional  
Smorgasbord: Risgröt, Porridge with  
dried cranberries, Pannukakku, Pickled  
Herring, Swedish Meatballs, Fruit Pre-  
serves (Cloudberries, Lingonberries,  
Goose Berries, Open Face Cucumber  
Sandwiches with Dill and Smoked  
Salmon, Knäckebröd & cheese, Hard  
Boiled Eggs, Rhubarb Torte

Call ahead for reservations

# Guild Reports and Activities



## \* Spinners Guild

The Spinners Guild is excited to announce an upcoming workshop with Hilding Olson at his farm near Happy Rock. Hilding has developed a way to dye his sheep red before spring shearing. He will demonstrate how he walks his sheep through his patent pending vat. Spinners have loved the yarn that is produced with this fleece. Come to his farm on 25 Mai to watch this intriguing process and purchase some red handspun from our Spinners. Funds raised will go toward knitting hats for our tomtes on assignment.



## \* Knitters Guild

Berta Svensen's knitting class held last Februari was such a hit with our knitters that she put out a challenge



to make Heart Hats. 685 hats were made and donated to tomtes on assignment. They were very happy for the donations since it is spring and their workload on farmsteads and gardens has increased. If

you would like to make Heart Hats, please let the guild know and we will get the pattern to you. We will not be meeting during the summer months. Plans for a Fall Retreat at Rainbow Mountain Lodge is being planned.



## Guild of Historical Librarians

We have news that Birgit Ruotsala will be writing more books about us. Her new book will be about our Tomte Smorgasbord. She is looking for traditional recipes. Please send to Beda Gustafson, and she will pass on to Birgit.



## \* Guild of International Bakers

After all the cooking that Mona Oleson did for Fettisdagen, we thought she would take a long time off, but she has offered to host a lefsa making session. The Alastour Island National Midsomarafton Celebration will be serving Gravlax Pizza. Lefsa will be used for the crust for Mona's delicious entre and she will need help. Bring your lefsa equipment to the main lodge kitchen on 21 Juni. We are afraid to ask her how many will be made!



## \* Island Farmers Association

Things are popping out of the ground all over the island. The glory of all the lilac trees at Lilac Farm Point is especially wonderful this year. Take a drive to the southeast end of the Island and stop by for Krumkake with Rhubarb Ice Cream while it is in season.

Karl Danielson is planting a new variety of lingonberry bushes this year. He will have a report on their productivity in the fall.

Stories are coming in from our tomtes on assignment. As in past years, everyone is working very hard to get crops in the ground. More people are relying on our way of gardening. We are hopeful for good agriculture practices so we can take good care of our land and animals—the tomte way.

Riisto Saralinenin has put in new raised beds for the residents of Happy Rock Estates. The lettuce crop is ready for harvest. Riisto designed the beds to be tall enough to keep the goats and sheep out of his lettuce. They were not happy with him so with his big heart, he has planted special leaf crops for them.

Gladys Swensen has given The Tomte Times permission to print her delectable Rhubarb Torte. It is a winner, and with rhubarb coming into season, we are grateful for her generosity.

## Rabarber Torte (Rhubarb Torte)

Ellen Thorsen's Award Winning Dessert for Summer

It's rhubarb time and Ellen is graciously sharing her recipe. We hope to see a lot of these with all of our upcoming celebrations.

### Ingredients:

#### Rhubarb Mixture

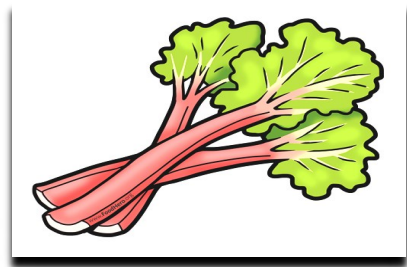
- 1 1/2 lb rhubarb
- 2 oranges, juiced
- 2/3 cup brown sugar
- 1 vanilla pod

#### Meringue:

- 6 egg whites
- 1/4 tsp lemon juice
- 3/4 cup sugar

#### Filling:

- 1/2 cup slivered almonds
- 2 cups heavy cream
- 1/4 cup confectioners sugar



### Directions:

Clean rhubarb. Cut into 2" pieces. Place in saucepan. Add orange juice and brown sugar. Cut vanilla bean in half and scrape out seeds, then add to the pot. Cook over medium heat until rhubarb is soft. Let cool.

To make the meringues, preheat oven to 350°F. Whisk the egg whites until they start to foam, then add the lemon juice and the sugar—one large spoonful at a time, while continuing to whisk. When all the sugar is added, keep whisking until the whites are glossy and form stiff peaks and all the sugar has dissolved.

Line three baking sheets with parchment paper. Spoon a third of the meringue onto each sheet, smoothing with a spatula to form equal-sized circles (about 9" in diameter).

Reduce heat to 300 °F. Bake for 1 hour and 15 minutes. Leave in the oven until cooled completely. Meanwhile, toast the slivered almonds in the oven for 15 minutes, until they are starting to color. Set aside to cool.

**To assemble:** whip cream until it forms soft peaks. Spread a third of it over one of the meringues. Add one third of rhubarb and some juice, then a third of the toasted almonds. Repeat until you have all three meringues, covered in cream, rhubarb and almonds. Drizzle any remaining rhubarb and juice down the sides. Serve.



## Lingonberry Cocktail from Henrik Nilsson

- 1/2 cup lingonberry preserves
- 4 cups club soda
- 4 cups aquavit
- 1 tbsp raw sugar
- 1 tbsp hot water
- 8 slices of lemon

- 8 Mint springs
- Combine hot water and raw sugar and stir until sugar is dissolved. Add preserves and stir. Gently add in soda water and aquavit. Fill 8 glasses with ice. Divide cocktail

## Stinging Nettle Soup shared by Ingrid Abramson

- 1 pound stinging nettles—use gloves
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- 1 white onion, diced
- ¼ cup basmati rice
- 4 cups chicken broth
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- Nutmeg, salt, and pepper to taste

### Directions:

Use gloves & carefully clean nettle. Put into pot of boiling water with 1 tablespoon of salt. Boil for 2-3 minutes until soft. Drain. Rinse with cold water. Trim off any tough stems, and chop coarsely. Heat oil in saucepan over medium heat, stir in onion and garlic. Cook until onion is soft—about 5 minutes. Stir in rice, chicken broth, chopped nettles, and cook until rice is tender. Puree soup with immersion blender. Season with salt and pepper. Drizzle with heavy cream. Sprinkle with freshly ground nutmeg.

# Syttende Mai



We will gather at Norsk Lodge on spruce Mountain for our Syttende Mai celebration. Sverre Sviland will be master of ceremonies this year. He attended a human celebration in Stoughton, Wisconsin a few years ago and will share his memories from his trip.

This day (May 17th, in 1814) is the day that the Constitution of Norway was signed at Eidsvoll. The constitution declared Norway to be an independent kingdom in an attempt to avoid being ceded to Sweden after Denmark-Norway's devastating defeat in the Napoleonic Wars.

Syttende Mai festivals have become a weekend-long celebration of Norwegian heritage featuring fun activities and cultural experiences for the whole family. There are three days of parades, amazing food and drink, arts and music, athletic competitions, and kids' activities steeped in centuries of Norwegian culture.

In Stoughton, Wisconsin, the city-wide festival takes place every year on the weekend closest to Norway's May 17th Constitution Day. From the late 1800s to the early 1900s, Stoughton enjoyed an influx of Norwegians, and at one time, as many as 75 percent of its residents spoke Norwegian. These immigrants celebrated Syttende Mai unofficially, but it became an annual, city-wide tradition in the 1950s. Many of our nissen are assigned to the area. When Sverre Sviland attended the celebration he was visiting his daughter Reidun.

## Norwegian food served at Syttende Mai and pronunciation guide:

- **Kjøttkake** (key-ut kah KEE) - Norway's answer to Swedish meatballs
- **Krumkake** (CROOM-kak-AY) - a waffle cookie like an ice cream cone
- **Lapskaus** (Lops-COWS) - a thick stew with meat, potatoes and root vegetables
- **Lefse** (Lef-suh) - a traditional soft flatbread made from potatoes and flour
- **Lutefisk** (LOO-tuh-fisk) - dried cod, tenderized in lye, rinsed and cooked
- **Risengryn Grod** (REE-sen-grins GRUHT) - rice pudding
- **Riskrem** (REES-krehm) - leftover risengryn grod mixed with whipped cream
- **Rømmegrøt** (rum EE groot) - sweet porridge made with sour cream
- **Rutabaga soup** - hearty soup from a hearty root vegetable
- **Sot suppe** (SEWT SOO-puh) - a sweet soup made from dried fruits and tapioca
- **Varme Pølse** (VARM - uh PULL-se): Hot dogs served Norwegian style, wrapped in *lefse*

These words and definitions were found on the Stoughton Syttende Mai site. For more information about their celebration, please visit: [www.stoughtonfestivals.com](http://www.stoughtonfestivals.com)

I invite you to subscribe to *The Tomte Times* which you can find at the website:

[birgitsdesigns.com](http://birgitsdesigns.com)

We will keep you informed about all that is happening in our tomte world and answer your questions. Please direct your questions to Birgit Ruotsala at [birgitsdesigns@new.rr.com](mailto:birgitsdesigns@new.rr.com) and she will make sure to get answers for you.

In upcoming issues, we will feature different articles on tomtes: how tomtes are assigned to human families; the life of a tomte; where we come from; where our headquarters are; our activities; and anything else that you would like to know about us. Please feel free to invite your friends to subscribe as well. If you know a human or tomte (do you have a relationship with the tomte assigned to protect and help you?) that you would like to tell us about. Please direct your article to the e-mail above.

# News from Around the World

This is a new feature in our human edition. Editor Beda Gustafson has worked with her sources to bring you tomte news from places near and far.

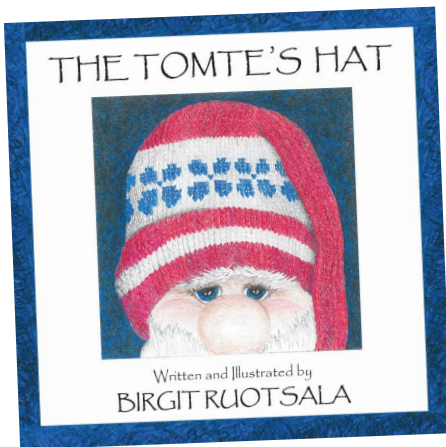
**What about tomtes? (and their cousins the nissen and the tontte)**

Many humans have no idea of the work that we tomtes do all over the globe. While it seems that our likeness is a big hit in gift shops (and I might add that for whatever reason, in most cases our hats have fallen over our eyes) we are a serious lot when it comes to our work. Here are a few facts about how we operate in the world:

- ◇ We are assigned to a human family as soon as we finish our schooling and training. For some tomtes, we go out into the world as single beings. Sometimes we are married and take our spouse. And in some cases, we even have a family that comes with us.
- ◇ Our assignments vary but most often, we are to help around the homestead and with the animals around the homestead. Depending on the type of land, or buildings or animals, we are assigned according to our specialties.
- ◇ We stay with our assigned family until our specific task is completed. This can take any where from a few years to generations of one tomte family. The longest assignment for a human family has been 206 years. That was a very intense situation that took a lot of work. But, the human family was wonderful and were grateful for all our work and help.
- ◇ We are sent all over the world—not only to Scandinavian families. There has not been a country where our help has not been given.
- ◇ When our assignment is over and the Council of Elders call us back to Alastour Island, we bring back many new traditions and ideas. That is what has made Alastour Island the wonderful place that it is. Only tomtes (and related cousins) inhabit the Island for obvious reasons.
- ◇ By law, tomte magic and help is to be used for goodness, kindness and love only.
- ◇ When a tomte is angry, a little porridge with a pat of butter smooths things over nicely.

*Olof Bergstrom*

Olof Bergstrom, International Correspondent



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