

## Gail Martinsen, Cultural Director



Nisse may have come from the Norse word, *niðsi*, which means “dear little relative”. Nisse is thought to come from the name Nils, which is the Scandinavian form of the name Nicholas. Today’s *julenisse* is different from the ancient tales of *nisse*. They thought the *nisse* were short (no taller than a child) and stocky with a long white or gray beard. The *nisse* had 4 fingers, pointed ears and eyes that reflect light in the dark just like a cat’s eyes! He wears traditional farm clothes with a pull-over wool tunic, a belt at the waist, knee breeches, knee high socks and a knit cap in red or another bright color. Often he is mentioned as the *haugkall* or *haugebonde* from the old Norse *haugr*, which means mound. In pre-Christian times the

farmer was buried in a mound on the farm. They thought that the *nisse* would follow the generations of relatives at the farm when they moved to a new location. The *nisse* protected the family farm. He especially loved caring for the horses, he would even steal some hay from the cows and give it to his favorite horse! If the *nisse* wasn’t treated well the farmer could experience crop failure and both animals and people could become ill! The *nisse* lived in the barns and farmhouses. Today the *julenisse* is older, good-natured and a grown man with a long white beard, red hat and suit. He is seen carrying a sack filled with toys on his back while visiting the children at home on Christmas Eve and asks them “Are there any good children here?” The children believe that he lives at the North Pole and has a workshop up there! Norwegian’s have a love of nature that is found in their mythology. The stories of small “invisible ones” and the power of the Norse gods have entertained Norwegians for centuries!



**God Jul! Godt Nytt Ár!**



**Njord**

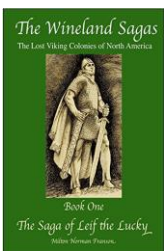


Njörðr is the god of the wind, sea, seafaring, fishing, wealth and fertility of the crops! Njord is Frey and Freya’s father, their mother is Nerthus, Njord’s first wife and, also, his sister! His second wife was giantess, Skadi. When Skadi’s father was killed by the gods of Æsir they gave her 3 “acts” of reparation including letting her to choose a husband among all the gods by looking at their feet only! She chose Njord by mistake thinking they were Balder’s feet! Their marriage was miserable and didn’t last long! They couldn’t agree where to live, he wanted to live at his home, Nóatún by the sea and she preferred Tryheim on a mountain with large forests and wolves. So, they lived 6 months at one place and then the other. When Njord came back from the mountains he said: “I was not long there, only nine nights. The howling of the wolves sounded ugly to me after the song of the swans.” Many cities throughout Scandinavia are named after Njord including Nærøy in Norway. A well known Norse saying mostly referring to the wealthy is “as rich as Njord!



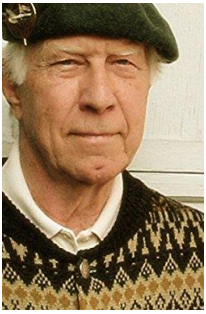
## Black Ravens

The raven is very important in Norse mythology. At times Odin is called the Raven God because of his connection in the Poetic Eddas to ravens, Huginn and Muninn. Huginn and Muninn flew around the world getting information to bring back to Odin. Huginn and Muninn sat on Odin's shoulders. Huginn represented thought and Muninn memory. The Isle of Man is named after Muninn. You can find many Norse crosses with images of Norse mythology and runic inscriptions on the island. One of them is the 10<sup>th</sup> Century Thornwalds Cross showing a carving of Odin with a raven on his shoulder. In a 9<sup>th</sup> Century poem at a meeting with a Valkyrie and a raven, they are discussing Harald Fairhair's life and adventures. The Vikings feature ravens on their armor, helmets, shields, banners and the carvings on many Viking longboats. It was done to show Odin's power to their enemies. Ravens sailed with the Vikings on their ships, when the captain thought they might be near land they would let the ravens loose. If they returned to the ship the crew knew that they weren't close to any shore!



## “The Saga of Leif the Lucky” by Milton Norman Franson

I just finished reading “The Saga of Leif the Lucky” book 1 of “The Wineland Sagas”. It is quite an interesting and exciting historical novel! Leif grew up in Greenland. His first trip from Greenland to Iceland was at 10 years old with his father. Eirikur “the Red.” At 18 years old, his father sent Leif on his first voyage as Captain of the Viking ship, Svanen (the Swan). Eirikur “the Red” chose Leif as Captain of the ship over his 3 older brothers! Also, Leif and the crew of the Swan traveled to Norway and dined with the Norse King Olaf! In 1003, Leif and his crew sailed southwest to find the new land mentioned in numerous sagas. They discovered the northeast coast of America! While exploring the land they found grapes growing wild in the forest. So, Leif named the new land “Wineland the Good”. Also, they met native tribes who were wary of these strangers on their shore. So, Leif became a trader hoping to be able live in peace with the natives. They had many items to trade that the natives hoped to own. It is unknown how long the Vikings lasted in Vinland, but, millions of Scandinavians followed Leif to America's shores from 1638 to the early 1900's settling all across America! Leif's dream for a Norse settlement in America came true over the centuries!



**Milton Norman Franson**



“Misty Waters, Foggy Mountains”

Milton lives with his wife, Winnie and one of their 2 daughters in Liverpool, NY, a suburb of Syracuse. They, also, have a shi-tzu named Rowan living at home. Milton is a member of Sons of Norway, Oslo Lodge! Milton became interested in Leif Eiriksson’s discovery of America. So, he traveled to places Leif was thought to have visited, such as Cape Cod, Newport and Boston. Also, throughout his life he studied the cultures of the native Americans. Milton worked for over 30 years as a copy writer and an art director in an advertising agency and has painted Viking art, including a Viking longship, a Viking queen and even Leif Eiriksson. His drawing of Leif appears on the cover of “The Saga of Leif the Lucky”. Milton, also, is an artist, he had a solo exhibit of “Misty Waters, Foggy Mountains” on display at the Old Forge Library. Milton paints and writes, but, only if he still has time to go trout fishing!!

The Wineland Sagas, Book #2 is “The Battle for Wineland” The Lost Colonies of North America.



**Anne Hov**



Anne Hov (also, known as Anne Haav) was born in 1846. She was a milkmaid from Gudbrandsdalen. Anne became famous after creating the modern version of brunost (brown cheese). Gudbrandsdalen is a rural area in Norway and in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 1800’s they were suffering financially due to poor profits in butter and grain sales. In 1863, Anne was working at the Valseter mountain farm near Gålåin. When boiling the whey, she decided to add cream and boil it in the iron pot till the liquid was reduced to less than 80%. This made it firmer, fattier and more like cheese. The cheese became popular in the area! Anne got married and moved to the Rusthågå farm in Sør-Fron where she started a larger production of the cheese and added goat’s milk to the cheese for more taste! Ole Kongsli, a local trader liked the cheese so much that he exported it to his contacts in Oslo. He sold it with the name Gudbrandsdalsost (Gundrandsdal cheese). The sale of the cheese was such a huge success that it helped the region out of the recession! At age 87, Anne was awarded the King’s Medal of Merit in silver.





## Sandkaker (Sand Cakes)

From "Ekte Norsk Jul" by Astrid Karlsen Scott

Sandkaker is a popular Christmas cookie! Eat them plain or filled with whipped cream and fruit, pudding or jello. If filling them do it just before serving. Keep in air tight container or freezer.

1 cup sugar	2 cups butter	1 egg
2 tsp. almond extract	4 ½ cups flour	

Cream butter and sugar, add egg and blend in remaining ingredients. Chill dough thoroughly. Remove a small portion from the refrigerator. Put small amount of dough in fluted tart pan. Press a thin layer of dough on bottom and sides, turning the tart pan as you are working. Remove excess dough from edge. Place tart pan on a cookie sheet and bake at 350 from 12-15 minutes or to a golden color. Cool a minute or two before turning tart pan over. The tart should slide out, but, sometimes a tap with a spoon on the bottom of pan will loosen it.



## HJORTETAKK (DEER ANTLERS)

FROM "THE NORWEGIAN KITCHEN" EDITED BY KJELL E. INLI

3 eggs	¾ cup sugar	2/3 cup whipping cream
2/3 cup 35% fat sour cream	3 cups flour	2 Tbsp. baking powder
1 tsp. cardamom	2 Tbsp. melted butter	shortening or oil
2 Tbsp. melted butter		

Beat eggs and sugar until light and lemon-colored. Whip cream and sour cream lightly together. Sift the dry ingredients. Add alternately with melted butter and both creams to the egg mixture. Mix lightly together. Refrigerate overnight. Roll dough into 1/3" sausages. Cut into 5" lengths. Form into a wreath. Make 2 notches along the edges. Heat shortening or oil to 350F. Deep fry, a few at a time, until golden, 3-4 minutes.



## Christmas Meat

From "The Norwegian Kitchen" Edited by Kjell E. Inli

Serves 6

2 ¼ pounds, 6 medium veal chops	1 tsp. salt	1 qt. water
2/3 cup cracker crumbs	1 tsp. ground black pepper	butter
Salt	1 tsp. dark corn syrup	4-5 Tbsp. 35% sour cream

Trim excess fat from the meat & rinse. Cover the meat with salted water & bring to a boil. Lower heat & simmer 5 minutes. Dry the chops, then dip them in cracker crumbs mixed with salt & pepper. Brown in butter. Add syrup & sour cream. Cover & simmer over low heat until tender, about 30 minutes. Shake pan occasionally to prevent the meat from sticking. Serve with boiled potatoes & vegetables.

