

August 7, 2006

Volume 1, Issue 8

# The Midnight Sun

## Finnish School Begins its 9th Year on September 11, 2006



We have heard it many times: "Finnish is one of the hardest languages to learn". Well, not for us who use it daily but I could imagine someone who doesn't speak the language would look at a Finnish word such as:

'lentokonesuihkuturbiini moottoriapumekaanikko' and wonder "What in the world is that?" The Finnish language sounds much like Estonian and has been classified as a Finno-Ugric language, similar to Hungarian.

The Finnish School students in Charlotte are all bilingual, some even trilingual. Finnish is spoken in their homes daily and that makes it easier for the students to participate in our Monday afternoon school. If your family is Finnish and use the Finnish language as

your first or second language, join us! The Finnish School is for children aged 4 and up.

The Finnish School of Charlotte, or Charlotten Suomikoulu, meets every Monday from 4:00 to 5:30 PM at Living

Saviour Lutheran Church, 6817 Carmel Road, Charlotte, NC 28226. For more information, please contact Sanna Tucker at [sanna@scandinavianconnection.org](mailto:sanna@scandinavianconnection.org).

And by the way, the 44-letter word above means "assistant mechanic of airplane jet engine," or something close to that...

### Inside this Issue

Finnish School Begins New Year	1
ScanFest Planning Session Rescheduled	1
August Means Crayfish Parties!	2
Recipes for Your Crayfish Party	3
Donations to SAGA and ScanFest Benefit You	4
Host Families Needed	4
Crayfish Parties (con't)	5

### Calendar of Events

- **ScanFest 2006 Planning Sessions**  
Living Saviour Lutheran Church  
6817 Carmel Road  
Charlotte, NC 28226  
Sunday, August 13  
Sunday, September 10  
Sunday, October 15  
Sunday, October 29  
4 pm
- **ScanFest 2006!**  
Wachovia Atrium  
301 S. Tryon Street  
Charlotte, NC 28202  
Saturday, November 4  
11 am - 7 pm

## ScanFest Planning Session Rescheduled

Please make a note that the ScanFest Planning Session originally scheduled for August 20 has been changed to Sunday, August 13. We will meet at Living Saviour Lutheran Church at 6817 Carmel Road at 4:00 pm.

The topic for the August planning session is **Decorations**. Light refreshments will be served.



All of the ScanFest Planning Ses-

sions are open to anyone with thoughts on how to make ScanFest 2006 the best celebration of Scandinavia the Charlotte area has ever seen. So bring your fabulous ideas and join us on August 13!

# August in Scandinavia means Crayfish Parties!

Crayfish are a great delicacy highly appreciated in many countries, especially in Europe and the southern United States. Arranging a special bash entirely dedicated to feasting on boiled crayfish is a popular tradition in the Nordic countries, like Sweden and Finland.

Crayfish parties are held there during the crayfishing season, mostly in August. In Finland, the open season for catching wild crayfish starts at noon on July the 21st and ends on October the 31st. For many the crayfish season is the highlight of the culinary year.

## A pricey delicacy

In the late 19th century Sweden, among the upper class, it became fashionable to celebrate the ending of summer season with a crayfish dinner. This custom also spread to Finland. At the time crayfish were abundant in the waters of Sweden and Finland. Since then, the crayfish plague, spread to Europe with the introduction of the American signal crayfish, have practically devastated the native stocks, and restrictions on river crayfishing were introduced back in the early 20th century. The season was limited to a couple of months from August. Crayfish thus became an exclusive and much sought-after delicacy.

Nowadays, the native noble crayfish in Finland are scarce, making their price very high. The signal crayfish are more affordable, yet still quite expensive, too. This is why cheaper — and mostly inferior — frozen crayfish imported from countries like Turkey, Spain, China and the U.S.A. are more often used to replace the fresh, domestic crayfish. Whatever their origin, crayfish in Sweden and Finland are cooked as the Swedes and Finns like them — in a brine, with plenty of crown dill.

## Organizing the party

Late summer from August to September is the traditional season for cray-

fish parties. Weather permitting, the party may be set up outdoors, usually in gardens, on patios, verandas, gazebos, balconies etc. Since the warm summer evenings are getting darker, the surroundings are often lit and decorated by hanging up colourful paper lanterns.

Many stores sell (more or less tasteful) matching sets of crayfish party accessories and tableware consisting of everything from dishes, glasses and cutlery to

textiles like tablecloths, place mats, napkins, aprons and bibs. Besides the usual table setting, also special crayfish knives are provided for the diners.

Crayfish are always eaten with the



Copyright © 2005 Nordic Recipe Archive

hands, which may be somewhat messy. To protect your clothing, it is advisable to tuck a napkin into your collar or neckline or wear a crayfish bib made of cloth or plastic. Lots of paper napkins should be available. Finger bowls or wet towels should be provided for the guests to clean their fingers from time to time. A slice of lemon or a blackcurrant leaf may be added in the finger bowl to scent the water.

The atmosphere at crayfish parties is usually very relaxed and informal, including consuming of several schnapps with the food and singing of schnapps-songs (a Swedish tradition). Some Swedes also like to wear party hats.

A crayfish knife is used to cut and break the sometimes very hard crayfish shell and claws, and unlike other knives, it is allowed to be taken to

your mouth when eating. It is perfectly allowed to suck out the juices from the crayfish and eat them without the fear of making too loud slurping noises.

Some lively entertainment may be arranged for the party: music, speeches, games, trivia quizzes etc. Providing a step-by-step lesson in crayfish eating, taught to the eager novice by an experienced crayfish eater, is always a sure hit.

Also children should be welcomed to the parties, familiarizing themselves with the art of eating crayfish from an early age on — I know far too many adults afraid of even touching a crayfish, let alone eating one!

## Serving of food and beverages

Since the crayfish party revolves around crayfish, there should naturally be plenty of them available. The living crayfish are cooked on the previous day in a large pot of boiling water seasoned with salt and crown dill. The pot is placed in cold and the crayfish are left to cool in their sieved cooking liquid for several hours or overnight.

On the following day, the crayfish are drained and arranged on serving platter decorated with fresh crown dill. The crayfish are peeled and the tails and the meat inside the claws (if large

enough) are consumed on buttered toast sprinkled with lots of fresh, chopped baby dill. In addition, the crayfish tails may be sprinkled with a dash of fresh lemon juice and topped with a dollop of smetana or crème fraîche.

If organizing a traditional crayfish party for a larger crowd, it is advisable to serve the more affordable imported frozen crayfish, only you will need to know the trick of how to make them taste as good as the fresh ones.

(con't on page)



Copyright © 2005 Nordic Recipe Archive



# Recipes for Your Crayfish Party!

## Boiled crayfish

Serves 3-4

1 kg crayfish  
3 litres of water  
100 ml coarse salt  
3 sugar cubes  
6-8 crown dill leaves

Season the water with salt and sugar and bring to the boil in a large pan. Add the dill and let it boil for a couple of minutes. Add a couple of crayfish at a time into the boiling water. The cooking time is app. 8-12 minutes,



Copyright © 2005 Nordic Recipe Archive

depending on the size. Count the cooking time from the re-boiling of the water, after adding the crayfish. Lift the cooked crayfish with a skimmer into another bowl. Add fresh dill into the water and add more crayfish. Strain the stock over the crayfish and cool them quickly within the stock. When the stock is lukewarm, place the bowl in a cool place for 10-12 hours to gain more flavour. Serve with dill and toast.

## Pork Fillet, Filled with Horseradish and Apples

App. 800 g pork sirloin

1 tbsp butter and 1 tbsp oil for frying

Filling:

50 g horseradish

1 onion

1 apple

1 tbsp oil

2 tsp mustard

2 tsp honey

50 g walnut

Fresh sage

Salt and pepper

100 g unflavoured cream cheese

Light cotton thread (e.g. fisherman's thread)

Cut a deep slit into the pork sirloin (don't slice it). Peel and grate the horseradish. Peel and chop the onion. Cut the apple into cubes. Heat some oil in a frying pan. Sauté the onion, horseradish and apple. Season with the honey, mustard, crushed walnut, fresh sage, salt and pepper. Move the filling into a bowl and add the cream cheese. Spoon the filling into the slit. Close the slit with a toothpick or tie with thread. Heat some oil and butter in a frying pan. Fry the fillet completely, until golden brown. Place in a baking dish, and bake at 200°C (400F) for about 30-40 minutes.

## Caramelised Swedes

1 swede (rutabaga), app. 500 g when peeled

4 shallots or 2 small onions

App. 25 g butter

2 tbsp sugar

1-2 tbsp rosemary

1 tbsp apple vinegar

50-100 ml gingerbread crumbs

Salt

Black pepper

(Blue cheese)

Peel the

s w e d e

(rutabaga)

and cut it into

cubes of

about 2 x 2

cm's (0.8 x

0.8 inches).

Slice the onions. Pre-cook the swede wedges. Drain well. Fry the swedes on low heat in butter. Add the onion wedges and sugar. Cook, stirring, until the sugar dissolves and gets a bit golden. Add the chopped rosemary and vinegar. Reduce the heat, place a lid over it and let it simmer until tender. Season with gingerbread crumbs, salt and pepper. Sprinkle over it with blue cheese crumbs.



## Apple Pie

Crust:

500 ml buttermilk

500 ml flour

150 ml oatmeal flakes

1 tsp baking soda

2 tsp vanilla sugar (or vanilla powder, or extract)

250 ml sugar

150 ml oil



Filling:

App. 600 g apples

2 tsp cinnamon

2 tsp sugar

2 tsp vanilla sugar (or vanilla powder, or extract)

100 ml crushed nuts or almonds

Combine the flour, oatmeal, baking soda, vanilla sugar and sugar. Add the buttermilk and oil and stir until smooth. Pour the

dough on a parchment paper in a baking dish and spread evenly. Cut the washed, unpeeled apples and spread the slices over the dough. Mix the cinnamon, sugar, vanilla sugar and crushed nuts and sprinkle over the apples. Bake at 225°C (440F) in the mid section of the oven, for about 25 minutes. Serve warm with whipped cream.

## Donations to SAGA and ScanFest Benefit You, Too

People who would like to give concrete support to the common goal, stated in the SAGA's Mission Statement, should know that their help to our operation would reduce their own tax liability, too. When we officially established SAGA in 2005, we took in consideration all the standards of a nonprofit corporation. However, being qualified to a true tax-exempt status requires an approval from the Internal Revenue Service and that was a time-consuming process. We have received the approval to the application now and the IRS has confirmed SAGA's tax-exempt Public Charity status. Thus, any given contributions will be tax deductible, retroactive to March 11, 2005. We shall handle different donor cases according to the applicable IRS rules. The following should clarify the procedures how SAGA will treat these various cases:

- Monetary donations are fully tax deductible and SAGA will provide a receipt showing the received amount.
- Contributions that will provide goods or services allow a tax deduction only for the value that exceeds that of the received benefits. SAGA will provide a written statement about the fair market value of the non-allowable share (if over \$75) by the time of payment.
- For contributions (\$250 or more) of property, SAGA will provide a substantiation of received property but it will be the donor's responsibility to provide the valuation of it.

I sincerely thank our volunteers and donors for their invaluable support and welcome all of our friends to come and enjoy our events throughout the year.

*Seppo Laaksonen*  
President of SAGA

### SUPPORT SAGA AND SCANFEST!

**ScanFest Family \$100**

**ScanFest Friend \$50**

**Please send your donation to:**

**SAGA, a nonprofit organization**

**C/O Seppo Laaksonen**

**6528 Highwood Place**

**Charlotte, NC 28210**

## Host Families Needed for ScanFest Vendors

Many of the vendors who are interested in coming to ScanFest 2006 are not local and will be visiting the Charlotte area from out of state. It will help some of



our vendors defray costs and make the trip more worthwhile for them if we are able to provide housing while they are here. Please consider host-

ing a vendor during the weekend of November 3 - 5, 2006. Some vendors may only need one night of stay, just a place to lay their head after a busy day at ScanFest. Contact Sanna Tucker at 704.846.9070 if you can help.

A Publication of SAGA of the Carolinas, a non-profit organization

The Midnight Sun  
P.O. Box 1416  
Huntersville, NC 28070

Phone: 704-763-9152  
E-mail: [Ulrika@ScandinavianConnection.org](mailto:Ulrika@ScandinavianConnection.org)  
[Jenn@ScandinavianConnection.org](mailto:Jenn@ScandinavianConnection.org)

"Connecting Scandinavia and the Carolinas"

We're on the Web!  
[www.ScandinavianConnection.org](http://www.ScandinavianConnection.org)



## Mission Statement

**SAGA of the Carolinas**, a non-profit organization, is organized to promote cultural exchange between the United States and the Nordic Countries of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden; to preserve and enjoy the Scandinavian traditions, customs, history and cultural heritage; to increase understanding of the Nordic people and societies among Americans; and to provide a forum where people interested in Scandinavia can meet and enjoy Nordic culture and activities.

## Calling all Scan-Am Groups!

If your group or organization would like to have your events or news included in the next issue of The Midnight Sun, please send your submission of 100-200 words to [Jenn@ScandinavianConnection.org](mailto:Jenn@ScandinavianConnection.org) by Friday, August 18.

## Crayfish Parties (con't from page 2)

There should be at least 12 crayfish reserved per diner, provided that you will also be serving additional dishes and snacks.

Besides the crayfish, suitable dishes to be served at a crayfish party are various savoury pies, fish dishes, mushroom and vegetable dishes, salads, bread and cheese, as well as some



typical of smörgåsbord may be served.

You should always provide alternative dishes for persons allergic to shellfish or for those who do not enjoy eating

them for some other reason. These dishes may consist of various foods meant to be eaten with the hands, so that the persons eating them can "get their hands dirty" like those fiddling with the crayfish.

The crayfish dinner may be started with a light or a more substantial soup or a piece of cheese, vegetable or mushroom pie, followed by the crayfish, served with all the trimmings. A more filling dish may be served next, made with fish, meat or game and served with a side dish of vegetables, like boiled new potatoes, broccoli or carrots, stewed mushrooms *etc.* Poached or hot-smoked fish may also be served cold. A sweet dessert may be served at the end of the meal.

Plain or differently flavoured

schnapps are an essential part of the crayfish dinner.



They are drunk whenever a toast is proposed, preferably in small sips only, since the toasts may be numerous. Besides the schnapps, beer and mineral or iced water are

the best choice to serve with the crayfish.

If wine is to be served, inexpensive, dry white wines are recommended, like Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc *etc.* Coffee and tea may be served with the dessert.