

Scandinavians in the News

EXPENSIVE ROYALS ① **King Carl Gustaf** and **Queen Silvia** cost more than ② **Queen Margrethe** and **Prince Henrik**. The upkeep of Sweden's royal family costs nearly USD 3.5 million more than that of the royal family in Denmark. Norwegian taxpayers pay the most in Scandinavia for their royal family, which is nearly twice as costly as the Danish royal family. While Denmark's Queen Margrethe had to make do with a modest \$ 9.4 million contribution from the state last year, Norway's royals picked up \$16.6 million. In addition, Norway's **King Harald** receives almost another million dollars in personal maintenance over and above free protection and other perks. Sweden's King Carl Gustaf got \$1.3 million last year to make ends meet.

DANISH GOLF PLAYER STRUGGLES WITH

DK **LPGA** After forging her identity, **Mianne Bagger** continues to struggle with LPGA policies and critics of her unusual sexual identity. She was born a man 38 years ago, but underwent gender reassignment surgery in 1995. A year ago, she made history by becoming the first transsexual woman to ever play in a professional golf tournament. This was around the time, the Olympics and the Ladies European Golf Tour opened the doors to athletes like her, changing their rules to allow transgendered athletes. The Danish-born 38-year-old still has obstacles to face, however. The LPGA won't let her play because it allows only natural-born women. The rule is based on the belief that allowing transsexuals to compete against natural-born women "would create an unfair effect on the competition." However, Bagger says the physical advantages she had as a man have actually disappeared thanks to the female hormones she has taken since before undergoing gender reas-

signment surgery. According to her, she actually has less testosterone in her body now than many women and she has to rely more on accuracy and less on strength. Bagger, who refuses to divulge her birth name, has never considered herself a male, even when she was just a teen.

MILLIONAIRE SHOOTS HIMSELF

N **g**ian businessman suspected of embezzling 65 million kronor shot himself dead as Swedish police tried to arrest him. **Ole Christian Bach**, 48, was wanted by Interpol in 182 countries and had been on the run since last fall. In July Swedish police had apparently received word that Bach was in the Stockholm area and investigators spotted him outside a grocery store on the island of Ekerö. According to the police's account, Bach drove off and officers in two unmarked cars gave chase. After driving a short way, Bach pulled over. When police approached his car they found him dead with a pistol beside him. He had shot himself in the head. According to the Swedish evening paper, *Expressen*, Ole Christian Bach "swindled financiers, porn kings and housewives". In 1988 he was sentenced to four years in prison for his role in a pyramid scam worth hundreds of millions of crowns. A few years later he was found guilty of receiving **Edvard Munch's** Madonna, which was stolen from an Oslo gallery. Norway's economic crimes unit launched an investigation against Bach, who was one of the country's richest men, in October 2004.

N ACCORDIONIST TO THE STARS

③ **Myron Floren**, 85, the accordion player who entertained generations of television viewers on *The Lawrence Welk Show*, died July 23 of cancer at his home in Rolling Hills Estates, California. Dubbed "The Happy Norwegian" for his perpetual grin, Floren

joined Welk's orchestra on the road in 1950. *The Lawrence Welk Show*, with its bouncing, effervescent music, began its 27-year national run on Saturday nights in 1955 and was a favorite of Middle America. After the show ceased production in 1982, Floren continued to travel 150 000 miles a year, playing special engagements. He performed until a few months ago. The son of a grain farmer, Myron Floren was born in Webster, S.D., and was drawn to music as a child. His father bought him his first accordion and by age 8, the self-taught Floren was entertaining at the county fair. In 1950, while celebrating his wife's birthday at a St. Louis ballroom where the Welk orchestra was playing, Myron Floren was invited on stage to play. The crowd was so enthusiastic that Welk offered him a job at intermission. Floren served as assistant conductor and manager of Welk's orchestra for many years.

NAME CAME FIRST

N **Beady Belle** is one of the most exciting sounds to come out of the left-of-field music underground of Norway. The band was created when ④ **Beate S Lech**, after singing with several bands, was asked by Jazzland boss **Bugge Wesseltoft** to make her own album and to take her vocal talents in any direction she wanted. It was the opportunity of a lifetime and Beate took it with both hands - composing, lyric writing, arranging, programming, recording and producing, and working with the bassist **Marius Reksjø** who provides the rhythmic grooves. Gradually, the project took on a life of its own, and Beate and Marius decided to give it a name. "I came up with Beady Belle," says Beate, "I think it sounds like the name of something beautiful, it's feminine which is why it's now become my stage name as well as the name of the duo project." Since their debut album *Home Beady Belle* >>>

