



THE SWEDISH CLUB NEWS

The Swedish Club of Houston

Preserving Swedish Heritage on the Texas Gulf Coast since 1986

Club Updates

•Join us for our second Swedish Club Movie Night @ 7:00 pm on **Friday, August 18th @ Jake's Sports Bar, 2944 Chimney Rock Road. Movie to be announced.**

•**We are going sailing!** Come sail with the Swedish Club of Houston on a three-hour sail aboard the *Blue Marlin*, a 38' sailboat berthed in Kemah, on Saturday September 30! Only one time slot is available: 5:30-8:30 pm. The price is \$35 per person, and there is a limit of 12 persons per cruise -- you may register and pay online at www.swedishclub.org (reservations are not confirmed until payment is received in full)! If you want to send a check, please make check payable to **Swedish Club of Houston** and mail to:

Swedish Club of Houston
c/o Karen Wolz
4526 Waynesboro Dr
Houston, TX 77035

In the News

• Sweden's gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 1.7 percent in the second quarter of 2017, fresh figures from Statistics Sweden (Statistiska centralbyrån, SCB) show. That means the country's year-on-year growth rate landed at 4 percent, beating the economists' forecast growth of 2.8 percent.

• Sarah Sjöström became the first woman to win four golds in the women's 100 m butterfly on July 24th at the world championships. The 23-year-old clocked 55.53 seconds, a new championships record, just 0.05sec from her own world record set at the Rio de Janeiro Olympics last year. She is the first reigning Olympic champion to add the world title in the event She is the first Swedish woman to win an **Olympic gold medal in swimming.**

Sheldon Shipbuilders

Purveyors to the Swedish Navy



In 1628, the HMS Wasa, then the pride of the Swedish navy, set sail for the first time from near the Stockholm shipyard where she was built. Carrying 64 cannon on two gun decks, the Wasa was the largest warship that Sweden had built and the first Swedish ship with a second gun deck. Now in those days, the design of any ship was based on the design of the last ship that you had built. If you tried something new and it worked, you would “make a note of that,” and if it didn’t work, you would say “don’t do that again.” As it were, the seas around Holland are shallow, requiring any ship sailing in those waters to have a shallow draft. This is accomplished by making the hull wider. While this makes for a more stable gun platform, it also makes the ship slower. If a ship were built by a Dutch shipwright, it is a safe bet that the ship had a shallow draft and a wide hull. However, in the frequently rocky and

jagged coastal waters of Sweden, skippers of larger vessels will do well keeping clear of inner waters, shallow or deep draft notwithstanding.



The Swedish king, having seen English ships with their deep draft and narrow hulls that could knife through the water and sail circles around the Dutch ships, had pretty much decided that in the future he would only hire English shipwrights. However, the Wasa had a much more serious problem than just a wide hull. The king had seen ships with two gun decks that could hold twice the ordinance of a similar size ship having a single gun deck. Halfway through construction, the king ordered a second gun deck to be added to the Wasa.

The builder, a Dutchman named Henrik Hybertsson, thought there might be a problem but really didn’t know in what way. He had never built a ship of that size before and if the king ordered it, you had better have good reasons not to follow his orders. When the Wasa was launched, a stability test showed that she was rather top-heavy. Just how top heavy really became apparent only when halfway across Stockholm Harbor. On that fatal maiden sail she rolled over on her side, filled up with water and sank like a rock, leaving only the tops of



her masts sticking above the waves with the Swedish flag flying proudly from her main mast. The days of the Dutch shipwrights in Sweden were probably numbered anyway, but the Wasa fiasco certainly accelerated their demise. While obviously a blunder of great consequence, the matter may not have been attributed so much to flaws in Dutch shipbuilding per se, with Holland being a notable seafaring nation in its own right, but perhaps more to the risks of straying outside original design parameters.

** Photos courtesy of Wikicommons

Sheldon Shipbuilders

Purveyors to the Swedish Navy continued

In 1654, the Swedes hired an English master shipwright by the name of Francis Sheldon. He came to Sweden and was put in charge of all shipbuilding in Sweden. He built six major warships including the Kronan before having a disagreement with the king and going back to England. At the time, the Kronan, with 126 cannon on three gun decks, was the largest warship that had ever been built by any country in the world. Francis had two sons who both became master shipwrights. When Francis left Sweden, he wanted to take them with him but they refused to leave. His son, Francis John, built three major warships before dying at the age of 32. His younger son, Charles, was the most prodigious of all of the Sheldons. He built 71 major warships and numerous buildings including a rope factory that was in use until the 1950's and two dry docks that are still in use today. He is the man most responsible for building Karlskrona into the naval base that it is. Charles had a son, Gilbert, who was a master shipwright who built 25 major warships and was a member of the Swedish Royal Academy of Science. Gilbert stuck to the age-old belief in seat-of-the-pants shipbuilding until he was replaced by another English master shipwright, Fredrik af Chapman, who took a more scientific view of shipbuilding and as a result came to build better ships.



The Sheldons stayed in Sweden for another three generations before Gilbert's great-grandson died. He was working as a foreman in the shipyard in Karlskrona and he and his family lived in a house on that shipyard. He left no pension, his wife had no widow's benefits and to add insult to injury, the shipyard approached her and said "you know Mrs. Sheldon, your husband does not work for us any more so you will have to find another place to live." She took her four daughters and sixteen year old son, Joseph, and moved to Chicago. With his fluency in Swedish and English, Joseph wound up working at a Swedish-English publishing house while he put himself through law school.

While working there, he met and later married the young daughter of the owner. My father was the result of that marriage. My father would later marry the daughter of two Swedish immigrants who each came over in their early twenties and met in Chicago. Depending on which grandparent you choose, I claim Swedish roots in Karlskrona, Hälsingland, Skåne and Västergötland. **I am Bert Sheldon.**

** Photos courtesy of Wikicommons

Svenska Kyrkan In the heart of Manhattan



When visiting New York City, you may want to take a break to The Swedish Church located on East 48th street very close to Fifth Avenue, where you can enjoy some coffee with Swedish cinnamon rolls and other pastries, in the calm of its library, reportedly having more original Swedish titles than anywhere else in the United States, with the possible exception of some University specializing in Nordic languages.

The Swedish Seamen's Church (Svenska Kyrkan) was first established on Water Street in 1873 to serve seafarers and resident Scandinavians. In 1978, the organization purchased the former New York Bible Society building at 5 East 48th Street, built originally as one of a row of brownstones, altered in 1921 to its present day neo-Gothic form. The space was retrofitted to include a common room and café for guests to relax. The chapel, located a floor above the common room, offers Mass (*Högmässa*) each Sunday, and is also sometimes used for concerts performed by visiting Swedish musicians.

You will love the excellent coffee and fresh made cinnamon buns, and its serenity in the middle of the bustling Big Apple. They also serve tasty Swedish sandwiches some with fish and egg on brown bread. Buns are made fresh daily, and they cost is quite affordable. First make your order s in the back, then enjoy it in the spacious and comfortable library.

The library, coffee shop, and the Church's doors are always open to Swedes and friends of Sweden and Swedish traditions. For families, the church provides a feel of Sweden whenever they miss their homeland. There are also multiple weddings conducted in the chapel each week, and people come from all over to celebrate holidays and shop at their Christmas Bazaar.



** Photos courtesy of Wikimedia Commons – top photo taken by Kathleen Conklin, window photo taken by Mattias Hallberg

Anders Zorn

Famed Swedish Painter

Anders Zorn, 1860 – 1920, was a famous artist born in Mora, Sweden. During his active time, Zorn engaged in painting, sculpture and etching (printmaking). He studied between 1875 and 1880 at the Royal Swedish Academy of Arts in Stockholm, the city where he took residence and of which he became a lifelong citizen.

Zorn traveled extensively to London, Paris, the Balkans, Spain, Italy and the United States, becoming an international success as one of the most acclaimed painters of his era. It was primarily his skill as a portrait painter that gained Zorn international acclaim based principally upon his incisive ability to depict the individual character of his model. His subjects included three American Presidents, one of whom was Grover Cleveland in 1899, as well as his wife, along with William H. Taft and Theodore Roosevelt. At 29, he was made a Knight of the French Legion of Honor at the 1889 Paris World Fair.



Zorn's art made him wealthy and he built up a considerable collection of art which was acquired during his travels both in Sweden and abroad. Some of his most important works can be seen at the National Museum of Fine Arts in Stockholm. Among them is *Midsummer Dance* (1897), a depiction of dancers in the evening light of a rural Midsummer's Eve celebration. Other museums holding major works by Zorn include the Musée d'Orsay in Paris, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. The Zorn Collections (Zornsamlingarna) located in Mora and Garberg, Älvdalen, consist of four museums dedicated to the life and works of Anders Zorn. The main

museum, Zornmuseet, was designed by [Ragnar Östberg](#) and opened in 1939. Shown there are extensive works of Zorn and his collected art by Rembrandt van Rijn, Bruno Liljefors, Albert Edelfelt, and Pehr Hilleström. As proof of their artistic versatility, Anders Zorn and his wife Emma were awarded The Bellman Prize (Bellmanpriset), a literature prize for an outstanding Swedish poet, awarded annually by The Swedish Academy.

In 1886, Anders Zorn and his wife Emma bought land close to Mora Church, where they moved a cottage from his maternal grandfather's farm. Following some improvements, the home was christened Zorngården and remains today much as it was at the time of the death of Emma Zorn in 1942. With inspiration from English and Swedish architecture, it exemplifies the architectural freedom that characterizes the years around 1900.

The main part of Zorngården consists of Zorn's home and a museum with his art, but there are two other museums that also are part of the Zorn Collections. Gammelgården is in the southern part of Mora and consists of some 40 timber houses that Zorn bought to make sure that the old art of building such houses would not be forgotten. Gopsmor, Zorn's refuge when under stress, is in [Älvdalen](#) and is open for visitors in July.



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The Swedish Club News is published 6 times a year by the Swedish Club of Houston.

Articles, photos, etc., are welcome. We would especially like personal news of our members, explanation of family traditions and Swedish culture, news of Swedes and of Sweden, and your favorite Swedish shops, products or resources.

Please send your news to newsletter@swedishclub.org or by post to the return address below.

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