



THE SWEDISH CLUB NEWS

The Swedish Club of Houston
Preserving Swedish Heritage on the Texas Gulf Coast Since 1986

July/August

2007

Volume XX-No. 4



President's Column

by Margaret St. Clair

The heat is on! I know you don't need me to tell you the obvious! It is another typical Houston summer and this year we are blessed with lots of rain too.

All this heat and humidity make me think of my friends and relatives who either live in Sweden or are vacationing there. I wish that I were in Sweden too. I am especially nostalgic today because, as I write this, their *midsommar* celebration is in full swing. I dream that someday I can experience a Swedish *midsommar* for myself, when, on *midsommar* eve, the *midsommarstång* is dressed with greenery and flowers. Then it is raised and the dancing and games begin. Afterwards there is an early dinner with pickled herring in different sauces, new potatoes with butter and dill, and schnapps and beer. For dessert everyone enjoys strawberries with whipped cream. The celebration continues into the bright night/early morning and goes on for the whole weekend. Mmmmm.....perhaps next year at this time, I will be there

But enough dreaming! Back to matters at hand! First, a heartfelt thank you to Pelle Fisk for organizing our fantastic *Valborgsmässoafton*—Swedish Bonfire and Texas Barbecue on May 5. Many thanks also to members Drs. Margit Winstrom and Bill Riley who hosted the Bonfire at their ranch near Brenham. We had about 55 in attendance. Young and old alike celebrated the arrival of spring, Swedish-style, with games, good conversation, a hayride and plenty of delicious food.

Kudos to John Stavinoha for producing another excellent Membership Directory. By now, you all should have received your copy in the mail and have checked it out, hopefully finding yourself and your friends inside. Please keep it handy and use it to contact board members and event chairmen so you can volunteer for upcoming events!

Now, at the midpoint of the year, I look forward to our remaining activities for 2007:

- Our 2006 Lucia, Morgan Halvorsen, in Barkeryd, Sweden, on Sunday, August 5, ~1 p.m. to 6 p.m., for the annual Texas Day Celebration and Parade
- Lucia 2007 applications are now being accepted. See page 7 for more information and application form.
- Annual Smörgåsbord, BraeBurn Country Club, Saturday, October 20
- Annual Christmas Traditions and Lucia Celebration, Saturday, December 8, Christ the King Lutheran Church

In closing, I wish you all a continued good summer.

Margaret

Scandinavian Folk Dancers Perform at Folklife Festival


by Kathy Bjork, President


The Scandinavian Folk Dancers of Houston had a great time in San Antonio for the Folklife Festival. We performed twice on Saturday, and once on Sunday. Before our Sunday performance, we went to Air Force Village Assisted Living, where we performed for the residents there. One of our members, Bridget Jensen, did a triathlon in Austin Sunday morning, where she placed in the top 10 overall, and first for her age group! After that, she hustled down to San Antonio for the performance. Another dancer, Chris Broad, is also in the Houston International Folk Dancers. He performed with both groups, both days! What a trooper!


Two couples were able to perform for the annual Swedish Pioneers meeting in Round Rock. It was a lovely meeting, where we enjoyed great music and a wonderful history lesson on Swedish immigration in Texas. I highly recommend attending this annual meeting whenever you have the opportunity.

As always, we encourage you to stop by to see us and consider becoming a part of our group. We practice most Mondays, at Christ the King Lutheran Church in Rice Village. We are currently off for the summer, so please call before coming. (Kathy Bjork, 281-480-4163, kebjork@academicplanet.com)

BITS & PIECES

 Jan Dryselius, Honorary Consul, Consulate of Sweden, and founding member of The Swedish Club, extends to all our members a wish for wonderful summer holidays with family and friends. Thank you, Jan, and we wish the same to you!

 Ken Nilsson has graciously offered to put together a scrapbook of previous SCH events. If you have photos or other memorabilia you would like to share, please contact Ken at 713-460-1726 or kennilsson88@msn.com.

 Diana Rodionov recommends two YouTube clips for anyone who enjoys Swedish music and/or dance: "The Nyckelharpa Road Movie" (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EZsUdLzdTdE>) and "Swedish Dancing" (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kLebrlRCj2g>).

**FOR SWEDISH NEWS, CURRENT EVENTS,
TRAVEL INFORMATION, ETC., CHECK OUT
THESE HELPFUL WEB LINKS:**

Consulate General of Sweden: New York -
<http://www.swedennewyork.com>

Sweden.se: The Official Gateway to Sweden -
<http://www.sweden.se>



A little bit of Sweden - Drs. Margit Winstrom's and Bill Riley's beautiful ranch outside Brenham, site of the Valborgsmässaöften celebration

Consulate General announces Bangers photograph exhibit at Scandinavian Grace in Williamsburg, Brooklyn June 7 - August 30, 2007

In its June 2007 e-newsletter, "Fresh from Sweden," the Consulate General in New York announced the recent opening of Scandinavian Grace, a design boutique and showroom in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, featuring home furnishings and design from all over Scandinavia, and the Bangers photograph exhibit currently being held at Scandinavian Grace.

Scandinavian Grace is the brainchild of Swedish interior designer and FIT alum Fredrik Larsson. The elegant and airy boutique features both classic and contemporary housewares, furnishings, gifts, toys and accessories from Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Norway.

In addition to a regular selection of established brands such as Iittala, Normann Copenhagen, Stelton and Design House Stockholm, the space will also showcase the work of specific contemporary Scandinavian artists or designers. From June 7 to August 30, Scandinavian Grace will exhibit Bangers, a series of photographs by New York-based Swedish photographer Annika Sundvik.

Annika Sundvik was born in Stockholm and lives in New York. She was previously the principal owner of Annika Sundvik Gallery in SoHo, and currently the principal owner of Good World Bar and Grill in Chinatown. She is a partner in Damp Frog Productions, a digital and traditional mural color printing lab in New York.

In the spring of 2004, Annika set up her large-format camera alongside a traditional hot dog stand at a flea market on a farm outside Stockholm. She exchanged free hot dogs for a snap shot. The result, entitled Bangers, is a collection of candid, compelling and colorful portraits taken with 4 x 5 negatives and printed 30 x 40.

**Scandinavian Grace
167 North 9th Street
Williamsburg, Brooklyn
featuring Bangers by Annika Sundvik
from June 7 to August 30, 2007**

For more information: www.scandinaviangrace.com

Swede Honored with Texas Historical Marker

by Margaret St.Clair

On Sunday afternoon, April 29, Swedish immigrant, Gustav August Forsgard, received a Texas State Historical Association marker on his grave site in Glenwood Cemetery, 2525 Washington Avenue in Houston. Before the marker unveiling, members of Holland Masonic Lodge No.1, where Forsgard was



Worshipful Master in 1866, conducted a brief Masonic ceremonial burial. Afterwards Patrick Van Pelt from the Harris County

Historical Commission spoke briefly about the life of Mr. Forsgard. Following the ceremony, a reception was held at the Holland Lodge. The day's events were hosted by the Harris County Historical Commission, the Glenwood Cemetery Historic Preservation Foundation, Ann Becker of Becker's Books, and Worshipful Master Duncan Chapman of Holland Masonic Lodge No. 1.

Gustav Forsgard was born Gustav August Samuelson in Forserum, Sweden, in 1832. Forserum is a small town in Småland, just a few miles from the parish of Barkeryd. (The Swedish Club of Houston sends their Lucias to Barkeryd every August in order to commemorate the emigration of Swedes to Texas.)

Gustav arrived in Houston with a group of other Scandinavians in November, 1848, at the age of 16. Two prominent Swedish Texans, Swen Magnus Swenson and Swante Palm, met them at the port. The immigrants wintered at the Swenson plantation near Richmond in Fort Bend County and worked the fields picking cotton.

Gustav changed his last name to Forsgard, which was derived from the name of his village, *Forserum*, and the name of the farmstead, *Klockaregården*. Four of his brothers followed Forsgard to the U.S. and all adopted the same new name.

After a year of farm work, Forsgard returned to Houston and worked as a mercantile clerk for Shepherd & Burke. He also became part of Swenson's

and Palm's informal Swedish immigration agency. Forsgard acted as a liaison between new immigrants and Swedes already living in Texas. During the next several years, Forsgard attended school and pursued various business interests, which included being a book dealer, inventor, mercantile owner and banker.

Forsgard served in the Civil War with the Texas forces. His responsibilities included building fortifications near Galveston to defend against a possible Federal invasion. In 1866, he married Jennie Lusk, niece of Andrew Jackson Burke, a mayor of Houston. He was also related by marriage to E. H. Cushing, a well-known Houston newspaper publisher. He was active in civic affairs and served as a volunteer firefighter with Hook and Ladder No.1, a trustee of First Presbyterian Church, a director of First National Bank and was Worshipful Master of Holland Masonic Lodge No. 1. Mr. Forsgard died in 1919 at the age of 87.

Most of the above information about Mr. Forsgard came from research done by Ann Becker, and it was she who was instrumental in obtaining his historical marker. She states that G. A. Forsgard was "a remarkable Swedish immigrant who was the perfect example of a tough Texas pioneer, eager to succeed in this new land and willing to help others do the same." Ms. Becker has written a short book about G. A. Forsgard and has a collection of portraits/photographs of him, his family and his homes both in Sweden and Houston. Ms. Becker can be contacted by emailing her at oldbook@wt.net.

Anyone interested in visiting Mr. Forsgard's grave site may do so by entering Glenwood Cemetery through the main gate on Washington Avenue. Bear to the right at every intersection until you see the Forsgard family plot on the right. Gustav has



Dave (not pictured) and Margaret St.Clair and Annett, Daniel and Ingrid Philipson represented The Swedish Club at the dedication

good company in Glenwood, as his grave is directly across from the Allen family plot where James Allen, one of Houston's founders, is buried!

See these locations next time you visit Sweden

by Knut Gezelius

Summer is a time when many of our members visit Sweden. Since several of you have already visited the most famous tourist attractions, it may be of more interest to our community to learn about other Swedish locations well worth a visit. This article provides examples of three geographically dispersed places widely recognized in Sweden, but less known to the outside world.

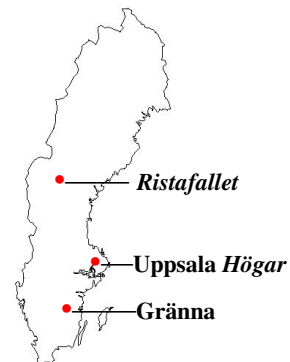
Gränna and Polkagrisar. Founded in 1652, the town Gränna is beautifully situated on the eastern shore of the lake Vättern. While Gränna offers glassblowing studios and hosts the largest hot air balloon contest in Scandinavia, Swedes associate the town primarily with red-and-white peppermint candy sticks, or *polkagrisar*. Historians credit the widow Amalia Eriksson of Gränna with inventing the characteristic red-striped *polkagris* design in 1859. Today several mom-and-pop bakeries crowd the streets in the small town center, often displaying the actual baking process through the windows. Gränna, which claims to be “The *Polkagris* Capital of the World,” is located 180 miles southwest of Stockholm and can easily be reached by car, bus or train. If you go, don’t forget to say hi to Aunt Amalia, whose statue overlooks the town park.

Gamla Uppsala Högar. Few, if any, Swedish cities boast such a distinguished cultural and historical heritage as Uppsala. In Old Uppsala, two miles north of Uppsala, there are three burial mounds, known as *Uppsala Högar*, believed to date back to the 6th century. With a diameter of 200 feet and a height well above 30 feet, these mounds make an impressive sight. Archeological excavations conducted in the mid 1800s have confirmed that the mounds are barrows of powerful men. In fact, the majestic mounds are usually assigned to Adils, Aun and Egil, all men of royal descent according to Nordic skaldic poems. Today the mounds are referred to by their geographical location: the Western Mound (*Västhögen*), the Middle Mound (*Mitthögen*), and the Eastern Mound (*Östhögen*).

Ristafallet in Hålland. Even though *Ristafallet* is not the tallest waterfall in Sweden, it certainly qualifies as one of the most spectacular. Water from the river Indalsvälvén cascades more than 40 feet into a roaring mass of whirls and foam. *Ristafallet* is most powerful in early summer when the snow masses from nearby mountains melt and gush down the river. In the fall, however, when the water level is low, it is possible to walk behind the stunning water curtain. In addition to the scenic view, a visit to the falls brings a historic touch. A short walk along the downstream trail leads to St. Olaf’s Spring, which purportedly was a water stop on a medieval pilgrim route. The waterfall is located next to highway E14, approximately 10 miles southeast of the ski resort Åre or 50 miles west of Östersund.

Sources: Åre Turistbyrå, Gränna-Visingsö Turistbyrå, Uppsala Turistbyrå and various internet reference material

Knut Gezelius is a native Swede who recently moved to Houston from Boston.



Photographer: Thomas Marquart



Photographer: Magnus Andersson

Valborgsmässaöften 2007

by Pelle Fisk

Once again , on May 5, we celebrated Valborg just outside of Brenham at club member Dr. Margit



Margit Winstrom, Mary Lynn Koenig, Kurt Fisk (Pelle's father) and Pelle

Winstrom's and her husband Bill Riley's beautiful ranch.

This event is getting bigger and bigger; about 55 people had gathered this windy Saturday afternoon. Some came as far as from Sweden (my father visiting).

Arvid and Eleanor Johanson had a total of 17 family

members there. With ages spreading between 2 and 70 (and then some), it was a very diversified crowd.

We started with some kite-flying and spontaneous game playing: volleyball, croquet, Kubb and ladder ball. People were also socializing to get to know or catch up with each other. We had lots of Swedish tunes thanks to Mark Swanson, his CD collection and amplifier.



Samuel and Tobias Lindqvist play croquet, with the help of Margit Winstrom

Everyone had brought one side dish, and just after



Tomas and Samuel Lindqvist, Kristofer Tingdahl, Mark Swanson and Adrian Fisk play Kubb

we started to display them in the pavilion we got requests for the grill to be heated up. We took turns on the grill, and after a good hour and a half

everyone was fed.

It was now time for our games with prizes. Imran claimed the first IKEA gift certificate for mastering the ladder ball.



Eleanor Johanson and Margaret St.Clair at the Balloon Toss

We had a tie in the Kubb variation championship but narrowed it down to one winner. Nina and team won the scavenger hunt. There were a lot of water balloons, and

almost everyone stayed winners, I mean dry, the whole water balloon toss.

The sun was now setting, and Margit started the old John Deere tractor and we filled the big hay-covered trailer with people. She took us around her property, and we made one stop to feed some Longhorns. During the ride we determined that the wind had died down



Going on a hayride!

enough to light the *majbrasa* (bonfire). It was a little difficult for us to keep the fire going due to the damp firewood in the bonfire, but we got a few Swedish songs in before we couldn't read the lyrics anymore in the dark night. I had a great time with my family, all my old friends and some new ones I just met.

Thank you every one that was there, that made this day a very relaxing and enjoyable play day. A special thank you once again to Margit and Bill, that opened up their property for our club to use. We hope to be back next year.

Pelle

Tack så mycket!

Many thanks to Dave St.Clair for taking such wonderful pictures of the Forsgard historical marker dedication ceremony and the Valborgsmässafton celebration!

News from Sweden **(from Swedish Council of America's** **May 2007 eUPDATE)**

→ Sweden's Prime Minister, Fredrik Reinfeldt, visited the United States in May. He met with President Bush at the White House where they discussed trade, the Doha Round and climate strategies. The Prime Minister presented the President with a Husqvarna 335 RX brush clearing saw to be used at Mr. Bush's Crawford, Texas, ranch. After his visit to Washington, Reinfeldt continued on to Sacramento, California, where he met with Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. The Prime Minister ended his trip in Colorado where he visited a center for renewable energy.

→ Starting next year, Swedish food products that meet climate-friendly criteria will be given a special label by KRAV, an organization that works to encourage environmentally friendly consumption. While the details still need to be worked out, the criteria could include how groceries are transported and whether alternative fuels are used in the production.

→ ConsumerReports.org was impressed by a presentation given by Roger Johansson, Chief Strategist, Traffic Safety, for the Swedish Road Administration. Read "[Why Sweden rules in road safety.](#)"

(Editor's note: The Swedish Council of America, founded in 1972 and based in Minneapolis, Minnesota, is the premier umbrella organization for all Swedish-American groups, organizations, and institutions. For more information, or to sign up for SCA's monthly newsletter, visit the SCA website, <http://www.swedishcouncil.org>, or contact SCA's Executive Director Elise Peters by email to elise@swedishcouncil.org or call 1-800-981-4SCA.)

UNESCO lists World Heritage Sites in Sweden

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has listed many places in the Nordic countries as UNESCO World Heritage Sites for their outstanding cultural or natural importance for the heritage of mankind. Selected sites can be either natural or man-made. Sites listed in Sweden include:

- ✓ The Royal Domain of Drottningholm, which is the primary residence of the Swedish royal family.
- ✓ Birka, generally regarded as Sweden's oldest town, and its neighbor, Hovgården (near Stockholm)
- ✓ Engelsberg Ironworks, in central Sweden
- ✓ Rock Carvings at Tanum, in southern Sweden
- ✓ *Skogskyrkogården* (Woodland Cemetery), in Stockholm
- ✓ Hanseatic Town of Visby, on the island of Gotland
- ✓ *Gammelstad Church Town*, near Luleå, in northern Sweden
- ✓ Laponian Area, which comprises a large part of the Swedish Lapland province, in the north of the country
- ✓ Naval Port of Karlskrona in southern Sweden
- ✓ Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland, an island in the Baltic Sea in southern Sweden
- ✓ High Coast and Kvarken Archipelago, a natural region shared by Sweden and Finland in the Gulf of Bothnia
- ✓ Mining Area of the Great Copper Mountain in Falun, central Sweden
- ✓ Grimeton VLF transmitter, at Varberg Radio Station in southern Sweden
- ✓ Struve Geodetic Arc, a chain of survey triangulation points set across different countries, from Norway to the Black Sea, with survey points in Sweden at Tynnyrilaki in Kiruna, Jupukka in Pajala, Pullinki in Övertorneå, and Perävaara in Haparanda.

(Editor's note: This information is taken from the March 2007 issue of Scandinavica.com newsletter. For more information on any of these sites, or to see sites listed for other Nordic countries, see: <http://www.scandinavica.com/culture/travel/unesco.htm#sweden>. For more information on Scandinavica.com, or to subscribe to the newsletter, visit the website, <http://www.scandinavica.com>.)



2007 SWEDISH CLUB LUCIA

Applications for The Swedish Club of Houston's 2007 Lucia are now being accepted. Our 2007 Lucia will be presented at the annual Swedish Christmas Traditions and Lucia Procession scheduled for Saturday, December 8, 2007, 4:00 p.m. This year's celebration will again be held at Christ the King Lutheran Church, near Rice Village.

Candidates for Lucia must meet the following requirements:

- ▶ Single young woman, 16-24 years of age;
- ▶ Member of the club (either individual or as part of a family membership, including granddaughters);
- ▶ Able to attend the Swedish Traditions program on December 8;
- ▶ Able to represent the club at the Texas Day Celebration and Parade in Barkeryd, Sweden, on the first weekend of August, 2008;
- ▶ Responsible for own ground or air transportation to and from Chicago (round-trip airfare provided from Chicago to Sweden);
- ▶ On her return to Houston, Lucia must write an article for publication in The Swedish Club News about her experience in Sweden.

Participants are also needed for the Lucia procession, which is made up of female attendants, ages 5-20, and star boys, ages 5-15. Attendants and star boys wear all-white clothing and accessories. The Club can provide some articles of clothing, but individuals are encouraged to use their own.

For twenty years, the Lucia program has provided a wonderful way to travel and learn about our Swedish ancestry and our Texas connection with Barkeryd, Sweden. As an ambassador of the Club, our Lucia will be in a parade and take greetings to the people of Barkeryd from The Swedish Club of Houston.

NOTE: Lucia candidates, in addition to completing the application below, must also write a short *essay* about their Swedish heritage, their interests and why they would like to represent the Club in Sweden, and must provide a *current photo* of themselves. The application must be postmarked by **September 28, 2007**.

For questions or further information, contact Nancy Webb (713-661-1011 or newebb@kelsey-seybold.com) or Diana Rodionov (281-636-8153), co-chairs of the 2007 Lucia program.

THE SWEDISH CLUB OF HOUSTON APPLICATION FOR 2007 LUCIA CANDIDATES, ATTENDANTS AND STARBOYS

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Address: _____ Phone No.: _____

E-mail address: _____

I would like to be (check one): Lucia _____ Attendant _____ Starboy _____

Lucia candidates only: Please include your **essay** and **current photo** with your application, postmarked by **September 28, 2007**.

Mail applications and enclosures to:

The Swedish Club of Houston, c/o Nancy Webb, 3707 Darcus St., Houston, Texas 77005



THE SWEDISH CLUB NEWS

The Swedish Club of Houston
Preserving Swedish Heritage on the Texas Gulf Coast Since 1986

SWEDISH CLUB NEWS

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 that is not in the general news, and your favorite Swedish shops, products or resources.

Please send **YOUR NEWS** to ljmillikan@sbcglobal.net or by post to the return address below.

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Swedish Club News
www.swedishclub.org

Page 8

July/August 2007
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