



# THE SWEDISH CLUB NEWS

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

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November/December

2007

Volume XX-No. 6

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## **Christmas Traditions and Luciadagen**

Saturday, December 8, 2007  
Christ the King Lutheran Church  
2353 Rice Boulevard, Houston, Texas

4:00 p.m. - Bazaar opens  
4:30 p.m. - Worship service and Lucia procession  
5:00 p.m. - Bazaar and reception

Start your Christmas season off in a great way by participating in the annual Christmas Traditions and *Luciadagen*. This year's celebration on Saturday, December 8, will again be held at Christ the King Lutheran Church, 2353 Rice Boulevard, Houston (near Rice Village).

Jenny Panahi has been selected as the club's Lucia 2007 and will wear the Lucia crown of

candles while leading the procession of female attendants and star boys during the brief worship service. She will also



2006 Lucia, Morgan Halvorsen, with her attendants

represent the club at the Texas-Swedish heritage festival in Barkeryd, Sweden, next summer.

Following the service, everyone is invited to gather in the Parish Hall for socializing, singing, dancing and traditional *Luciadag* refreshments. Plan to do some Christmas shopping at the Bazaar, which will be open both before and after the worship service. There will also be games and *godis* (candy) for the children, along with a visit from the *jultomte*.

Admission to the festivities is free and open to the public. Come kick off the Christmas season Swedish-style!

## **Your Help Is Needed!**

In order to make our Christmas Traditions and *Luciadagen* the success we all want it to be, we need you! Helpers are needed to

- bake Swedish cookies (recipes can be supplied)
- make baked goods/candies for Bake Sale
- make craft items for bazaar
- serve refreshments
- sell raffle tickets
- be a greeter for sanctuary and Parish Hall
- set-up (2:00-4:00 p.m.)
- clean-up (6:15-7:00 p.m.)

To volunteer, please contact Nancy Webb by phone (713-661-1011) or email ([Nancy.Webb@kelsey-seybold.com](mailto:Nancy.Webb@kelsey-seybold.com)).

## **Attendants and Star Boys Wanted**

Girls (ages 5 to 20) and boys (ages 5 to 15) are wanted to participate as attendants and *stjärngossar* (star boys) in the Lucia procession at the Christmas Traditions and *Luciadagen* on Saturday, December 8. Attendants wear all-white clothing with silver trim and accessories which the Club can provide. Anyone having their own outfit is encouraged to wear it.

The attendants will be singing (in Swedish) "*Sankta Lucia*" and "*Stilla natt*" during the worship service. If your child will be participating, please contact Nancy Webb by phone (713-661-1011) or email ([Nancy.Webb@kelsey-seybold.com](mailto:Nancy.Webb@kelsey-seybold.com)), as soon as possible, in order that your child will have time to receive her/his own CD of the music to practice.



**President's Column**  
by Margaret St. Clair

It's that time of year again! As I write this, it is a crisp cool day with bright sunshine—so energizing! It's good to leave the heat and

humidity behind—hopefully they won't reappear anytime soon. But you never know—this is Texas!

The cooler weather reminds me that the holidays are fast approaching, which means that our annual Christmas Traditions and Lucia Celebration is not far away. I hope that all of you have marked your calendars and will be at Christ the King Lutheran Church on Saturday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, at 4 PM. It will be a special day, featuring Lucia 2007, Jenny Panahi, with all of her attendants and starboys in a beautiful service in the Sanctuary. Following will be a bazaar, bake sale, refreshments, a raffle and dancing. It's definitely a great way to celebrate your Swedish roots and to prepare for the Christmas holidays. Don't miss it!

Speaking of missing it, I hope you didn't miss our 21<sup>st</sup> annual *Smörgåsbord* at the beautiful BraeBurn Country Club. Seventy-seven Swedish Club members and their guests gathered to socialize and to enjoy delicious Swedish food. A highlight of the evening was the introduction of our Lucia, Jenny Panahi. In addition to presiding over the Lucia festivities next month, she will also represent the Club next August at the Texas-Swedish Festival in Barkeryd, Sweden.

Thanks to everyone who contributed to the success of the evening—to all of you for coming, to John Stavinoha and Karen Wolz for organizing the event, to Diana Rodionov for the beautiful yellow and blue floral centerpieces, to the rest of the board members who pitched in and helped, to Joyce Calderon for once again providing lovely music and to the folks at BraeBurn who for so many years have provided an excellent venue for our *smörgåsbords*.

Even though we may be in the holiday mode, I must address something of utmost importance: we need to start thinking who will serve on our Board next year. I know—no one wants to think about that, but it is essential that we have active and willing members in order for the Club to thrive! If you have enjoyed our various events, ask yourself this: “What have I done to contribute to the success of the Club?” Yes, I know that attendance is a way of showing one's support, but we need more than that from our members. Take a look on page 6 of this newsletter and you will find many opportunities to serve, whether as a board member, being on a committee or chairing an event. Please give it your heartfelt consideration and volunteer!!

*Till slut, önskar jag er en underbar helgtid!  
God jul och gott nytt år! \*\**

*Margaret*

\*\*In closing, I wish you a wonderful holiday season. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



**Save the Date!**

**What:** Annual Meeting/Pea Soup and Pancake Dinner  
**When:** Sunday, January 27, 2008  
**Time:** 6:00 p.m.  
**Where:** Buffalo Grille, 3116 Bissonnet at Buffalo Speedway

**Watch for details in the next issue of the newsletter!**

## Lucia 2007

*Jenny Panahi has been selected as our Lucia for 2007. Here is her story in her own words:*



My name is Jenny Panahi, and I am a junior at Memorial High School. I am a combination of two very different cultures, both of which have had a great impact on who I am today. My mother is from Sweden, and my father is from Iran.

My childhood is filled with memories of Swedish and Persian celebrations. One of my favorite Swedish traditions is Christmas dinner. Every Christmas Eve, my mom serves herring and one of my favorite dishes, Janssons *frestelse*, on a traditional Swedish *smörgåsbord*. She also treats us with sweets like *knäck* and gingerbread cookies.

I have been to Sweden to visit my mother's family many times, the most recent of which was in the summer of 2006. My mom and I made the long journey on KLM Airlines to her hometown of Örebro. My grandparents still live there, and my uncle lives in a small town nearby. My mom's extended family also lives in Sweden, and I have been lucky enough to meet all of our kin. My cousin Johanna and I are about the same age, and write each other frequently. I get so excited every time I visit; it is such a beautiful country. Nothing can compare to the untouched green forests and lakes that encase its countryside. Even the cities fascinate me. Visiting Stockholm was like nothing I have experienced before. The history and architecture are so unique, I often found myself taking pictures of mundane street signs.

I myself have always enjoyed traveling. Another one of my interests is art. I love to paint,

although I do not think I am a very talented artist. Some artists I look up to are Piet Mondrian, Claude Monet and Andy Warhol. I spend much of my time reading or going to my school's football games. I am also a big UT fan and make an effort to watch their games on TV.

I am planning on going to UT to study either journalism or foreign affairs. In the future I hope to work for a magazine or work in the U.N. I plan to continue my education and someday earn a PhD and live in a big international city, like New York.

### Looking for Lost Lucias

As mentioned in the last newsletter, 2008 will be a special one for The Swedish Club of Houston and the Homestead Association in Barkeryd, Sweden. Next August 3, the Club will send our 20<sup>th</sup> Lucia, Jenny Panahi, to the Texas-Swedish Festival in Barkeryd. Both organizations plan to commemorate this important anniversary by inviting all former Lucias to the festival.

The first step in making this happen will be to contact each Lucia and extend the invitation. We know how to reach 13 of them as either they or their parents are members of the Club. But we do not know the whereabouts of the following six:

Desiree Gay  
Jenny Olsson  
Amy Accord  
Betsy Philen  
Kristin Klatt  
Kathryn Armstrong

If you have information as to their home and/or e-mail addresses, please contact Margaret St.Clair, by phone (281-493-4978) or email ([margestclair@hotmail.com](mailto:margestclair@hotmail.com)).

## Scandinavian Folk Dancers

by Kathy Bjork

The Scandinavian Folk Dancers of Houston, Inc., have been busy teaching new members Lars and Agneta, and Alexandra and Jeff, and preparing for performances. October 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>, the group performed at the State Fair in Dallas.

We will performing at the Norwegian Seamen's Church on Young Street in Pasadena on November 3, at noon. The church has an annual Christmas Bazaar with wonderful foods and Christmas decorations. We will also perform on December 8 at the St. Lucia celebration at Christ the King Lutheran Church in Rice Village. The celebration starts at 4 p.m., and besides the church service and the entertainment, Scandinavian treats and other items are available.

The Scandinavian Folk Dancers will be selling *glögg* at Dickens on the Strand, December 1 and 2. If you go to Dickens, please stop by and say *hej!*

The Scandinavian Folk Dancers wish our Swedish Club friends and all their readers a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

## SWEA Lucia Celebration

SWEA Houston (Swedish Women Educational Association) invites you and your friends to the traditional celebration of Lucia on Sunday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4:00 - 6:00 p.m., at the Norwegian Seamen's Church, 4309 Young Street, Pasadena, TX. In addition to the Lucia procession, the program will include a raffle, dancing around the Christmas tree, and activities for children. Traditional Christmas treats and refreshments will be served.

Admission is \$10 for adults and \$2 for children, 3-15 years of age. Everyone is asked to bring a wrapped gift, identified as to whether for a boy or girl and age (baby - 16). SWEA will then forward the gifts to children at Ben Taub Hospital.

## Linneas of Texas

by Shelia Lee

The Linneas of Texas will hold their annual *Luciadagen* on Sunday, December 9, at 2:30 p.m., at Clarewood House Retirement Community, 7400 Clarewood Drive, Houston, TX. This year there will be two Lucias, Rachel Fisher and Megan Horan. Master of Ceremonies will be Warren Fisher, chairperson is Shelia Lee, and refreshments will be organized by Gail Glass. For further information, please contact the President, Eileen Fowler, at 281-471-8856.

The Linneas of Texas will also hold their annual Bake Sale at Clarewood House on Saturday, November 10, from 9 to 12.

## News from Sweden (from Swedish Council of America's October 2007 eUPDATE)

→ The city of Växjö, Sweden, has cut CO<sub>2</sub> emissions 30 percent since 1993. Read about how it and other European cities are tackling climate change in the article from the Associated Press at <http://ap.google.com/article/ALeqM5gBGlgfbWCSTLsKDjTXae26YRLowD8S8U4J00>.

→ According to the 2007 Migration Integration Policy Index, Sweden is top ranked for integration of migrants. The Index covers six policy areas which shape a migrant's journey to full citizenship: long-term residence, labor market status, family reunification, political participation, access to nationality and anti-discrimination. Read more at [www.integrationindex.eu](http://www.integrationindex.eu) and <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7043878.stm>.

→ The Swedish Film Institute has named Roy Andersson's 'You, the Living' as Sweden's candidate for an Academy Award nomination for Best Foreign Language Film. Learn more at [www.sfi.se/sfi/smpage.fwx?page=8794&NEWS=20631](http://www.sfi.se/sfi/smpage.fwx?page=8794&NEWS=20631) and [www.royandersson.com/dulevande](http://www.royandersson.com/dulevande).



## Astrid Lindgren 100 Years Anniversary



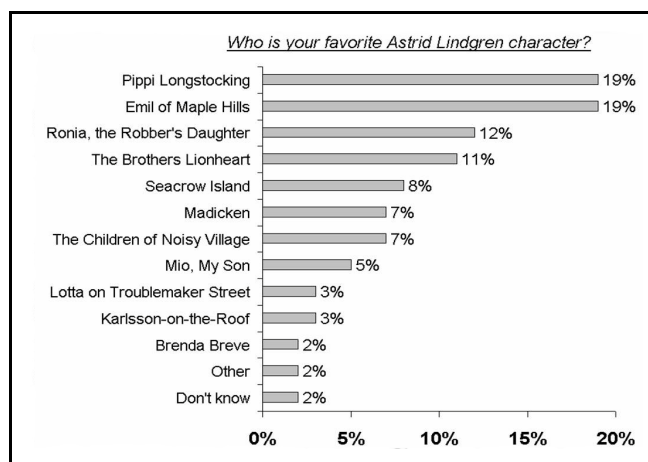
Astrid Lindgren (1907-1992), one of Sweden's most loved and read writers of children's books, would have turned 100 on November 14, 2007. Given the attention this event has received in Swedish and international media, it merits a few words in our bi-monthly newsletter as well.

**Popularity At Home.** Few Swedish writers have managed to publish such a large number of books known to the entire Swedish population as Astrid. Virtually every Swede can outline the plot in several of her literary pieces and many instantly recognize quotes and sayings typical of her characters. In a recent online poll administered by the national newspaper *Dagens Nyheter*, readers were asked to identify their favorite character in Astrid's books. Unsurprisingly, *Pippi Longstocking* and *Emil of Maple Hills* tied for first place, each with 19% of the votes.

**Popularity Abroad.** The popularity of Astrid's books extends beyond the Swedish borders. Today they have been translated into at least 90 languages - ranging from Arabic to Zulu - and sold nearly 150 million copies worldwide. Some 50 million copies have been published in Russia alone. Throughout 2007 major celebrations have been held in several countries in honor of her outstanding contribution to the youth literary domain.

**First Book.** Astrid was 37 years old when her first real book (*Pippi Longstocking*) was published. The narrative of *Pippi Longstocking's* adventures was simply a compilation of bedtime stories that she had made up around "a crazy girl with a horse on the porch" when staying home a few days to care for her ill daughter. Three years later, Astrid read about a writing contest and decided to write down the narratives and submit them. *Pippi Longstocking* placed first and the success story started. From the age of 37 until the age of 85, Astrid published at least one book every year (except 1974).

**ALMA.** Second only to the Nobel Prize in size, the 5 million SEK (Editor's note: about US\$780,000) Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award (ALMA) aims at promoting children and youth literature across the globe. The Swedish government established this international prize in honor of Astrid Lindgren. Since its inception in 2003, the prize has been awarded twice to American authors of children's literature (Maurice Sendak '03 and Katherine Paterson '06).



### Did you know this about Astrid Lindgren?

- Debuted with *Pippi Longstocking* in 1945
- Awarded 4 Honorary PhDs by European universities
- Worked for Swedish intelligence during WWII
- Paid 102% income tax in 1976 due to a flaw in the design of the tax system (a public outcry followed)
- In 2007, Stockholm University instituted a one-semester course in memorial of Astrid Lindgren
- The Russian National Academy of Science requested permission to name a newly discovered asteroid after Astrid Lindgren. She accepted and commented, "Now people can call me Asteroid Lindgren"
- In Vimmerby (Småland), Astrid's place of birth, visitors can experience *Astrid Lindgren World*, a children's theme park featuring characters, houses and shows based on her masterpieces

By: Knut Gezelius

Sources: Reference material accessed online

## SCH Volunteer Opportunities

by Margaret St.Clair

The Swedish Club has many ways in which members can volunteer their time and talents. Willingness to serve and to learn is more important than ability. You do not have to speak Swedish (but if you are a non-speaker you may end up learning a few words in the process!). Following is a list of volunteer opportunities:

- **Serve on the Board.** We generally meet the second Wednesday evening of every month, except for June and July, at IKEA. Our May meeting is a social at a board member's home.
- **Be an Event Chair.** One does not need to be on the board in order to be an Event Chair! Currently there are five major events held during the year. In January we have our *Pea Soup and Pancake Supper* held in conjunction with our Annual Meeting. Late March/early April is our *Kräftskiva* (Swedish Crayfish Party). Late April/early May finds us celebrating *Valborgsmässoafton* (Bonfire Welcoming Spring). Our annual *Smörgåsbord* is held in October, and the second Saturday of December we hold our *Christmas Traditions and Lucia Celebration*.

Other events sometimes occur. For example, in recent years we have sponsored receptions for visiting Swedish artists. In years past, the Club has organized tours and trips, such as to the Swedish communities in central Texas and to Lindsborg, Kansas. The possibilities are endless!

- **Assist with any of the events listed above.** Even something as simple as volunteering to set up or clean up after an event, being an event greeter, baking cookies for the Lucia Celebration, being the Club's photographer, reporting on Club events for our newsletter, publicizing Club events in the Chronicle, or helping

with decorations for events are excellent ways to become involved in the Club.

Please know that if you volunteer, for example as an Event Chair, you will not be doing it alone. You will always be paired with a more experienced member who will "show you the ropes!"

So consider volunteering! You will expand your horizons, make new friends, and all the while you will be helping to preserve and promote Swedish heritage and culture in our area.

Please contact Margaret St.Clair at 281-493-4978 or [margestclair@hotmail.com](mailto:margestclair@hotmail.com), or any member of the Nominating Committee:

- ▶ John Stavinotha, at [John.Stavinoha@memorialhermann.org](mailto:John.Stavinoha@memorialhermann.org);
- ▶ Mark Swanson, at [markswanson@lr.org](mailto:markswanson@lr.org); or
- ▶ Ingrid Philipson, at [yourdreamhomewithingrid@yahoo.com](mailto:yourdreamhomewithingrid@yahoo.com)

### ***Pepparkakor (Gingersnaps)***

*Swedish ginger snaps are baked at Christmas and are served with either glögg or coffee.*

½ cup butter	1½ tsp. cinnamon
¾ cup sugar	1 tsp. cloves
1 egg	¼ tsp. cardamon
3½ cups flour	⅔ cup molasses
1 tsp. baking soda	2 tsp. orange rind
1½ tsp. ginger	

Cream butter and sugar. Add egg. Combine with remaining ingredients. Cover and chill overnight (may be refrigerated up to 1 week). Roll ⅛" thick, cut shapes with cookie cutters, and place on greased cookie sheet. If desired, sprinkle with sugar before baking, or decorate baked cookie with frosting. Bake 7-10 minutes at 375°F.

*Submitted by Diana Rodionov*

## Julbock, the Yule Goat

The Yule Goat is a typical Scandinavian Christmas ornament made of straw which is used as decoration throughout the home.

### Norse Mythology and the origins of the Yule Goat

Before Christianity arrived in Scandinavia, the ancient Scandinavians used to celebrate the winter solstice around the same time that we celebrate



Christmas today. The winter solstice is the longest night and shortest day of the year, and from here the days gradually increase in length and bring us spring and summer. For the ancient Scandinavians, the beginning of the end of winter was a

very important reason for celebration.

One of those traditional winter solstice celebrations was the Yule Goat. The Yule Goat was a person disguised as a goat who went from house to house entertaining families with songs and dances, and receiving drink and food in exchange for the entertainment.

Why would a goat be going from house to house to entertain people? In Norse mythology, the good-natured, protective god Thor traveled around in a chariot that was drawn by two magical goats. It is believed that the ancient tradition of the Yule Goat represented the magical goats who came with Thor as he visited the Scandinavian homes, bringing happiness and protection at this very special time of the year.

### The Yule Goat, a typical Scandinavian Christmas symbol

During the 19th century the tradition of the Yule Goat started to be displaced by our modern Santa Claus, who also visits every home and brings happiness to all the family. In Scandinavia the goat disguise was replaced by the jolly man in red, yet the Yule Goat was never forgotten.

People started making goats with straw and used them to decorate the house during Christmas time, as a reminder of the old days when the Yule

Goat visited their homes and brought entertainment and happiness. This tradition remains particularly strong in Sweden and Finland, where straw goats are used as decorative items practically everywhere: Christmas trees, dinner tables, gardens, etc.

### *Gävlebocken*, the biggest Yule Goat in the world

In Sweden, the Yule Goat tradition is so strong that you may even find large-scale straw goats displayed in public squares. The most famous of them all is the world-famous *Gävlebocken*, a giant straw goat which is built annually in the town of Gävle, about 180 km north of Stockholm.

The *Gävlebocken* was born in 1966 after a local citizen thought about displaying a giant-scale Yule Goat in the town center. The town put hands to work, and they succeeded in building a 13-meters-tall and 7-meters-long straw goat. Since then, the *Gävlebocken* has been built every year starting on the first day of Advent, which marks the beginning of the Christmas celebrations in Scandinavia.

The *Gävlebocken* is today a world-famous typical Swedish icon. In 1994 the giant goat accompanied the Swedish National Hockey Team to the World Championships which were held in Italy, and in 1993 the *Gävlebocken* got into the Guinness Book of Records as the tallest straw goat ever built (14.9 meters-high).

### Do you want to see the *Gävlebocken* live?



Every month of December, the Town of Gävle sets up a live webcam so everybody around the world can watch the famous *Gävlebocken*. Watch the *Gävlebocken* live at

[www.merjuligavle.se/bocken](http://www.merjuligavle.se/bocken). (There is even a link for English.)

(This article was originally published in [Scandinavica.com](http://Scandinavica.com) in December, 2006.)

## From the Consulate . . .

2909 Hillcroft Street, Suite 515  
Houston, TX 77057  
713-953-1417

### IMPORTANT INFORMATION from the Honorary Consulate of Sweden in Dallas and Houston

**Please be aware of the new passport routines that took place March 1, 2007.** In order for you to renew your Swedish regular/five year passport, you will have to travel to the Consulate General of Sweden in New York or Los Angeles. The application process time is about 4-6 weeks. Read more at [www.swedennewyork.com/pass](http://www.swedennewyork.com/pass).

You may also apply for a new Swedish passport while visiting Sweden ([www.polisen.se](http://www.polisen.se)). If you can't wait for your passport, usually six working days, you can ask to have your passport sent to the Honorary Consulate closest to you.

**If you have lost your passport and need an EMERGENCY/PROVISORISKT Passport.** The application process takes about three days, and the passport is valid for four to six months. You are welcome to contact the Consulate of Sweden in Houston or Dallas for more information.

**Houston:** 713.825.1417,  
[houston@consulateofsweden.org](mailto:houston@consulateofsweden.org)  
**Dallas:** 214.521.2312 or 972.991.8013  
[dallas@consulateofsweden.org](mailto:dallas@consulateofsweden.org),  
[viceconsul.dallas@gmail.com](mailto:viceconsul.dallas@gmail.com)

**Change of name:** Please make sure that you apply for the name change before you apply for a new passport.  
([www.skatteverket.se](http://www.skatteverket.se); + 46 2 707 34 00)

**If you have a newborn baby or an older child that is not registered in the Swedish population registry,** you need to do a **name registration/samordningsnummer** application before you can apply for a passport for your child. You can apply in person with your family at the Honorary Consulates in Houston or Dallas.

([www.swedennewyork.com/pass](http://www.swedennewyork.com/pass))

### **Automatic Loss of Swedish Citizenship**

You lose your Swedish citizenship when you turn 22, through statutory limitation, **IF** you are a Swedish citizen who (1) was born outside Sweden, (2) has never lived in Sweden and (3) has not stayed in Sweden under circumstances indicating an attachment to the country.

To avoid losing your Swedish citizenship if you were born and are still living abroad, you can apply to keep it. **You must do so before the age of 22.** (Apply between the ages 18-22.)


You do **NOT** need to file an application if you have lived in Sweden during any period of your life or if you visit Sweden regularly.

Download the application and find more information: [www.migrationsverket.se](http://www.migrationsverket.se)  
Email: [migrationsverket@migrationsverket.se](mailto:migrationsverket@migrationsverket.se)

Wish you all happy and safe traveling! Keep your passport expiration date in mind!

Greetings,  
The Honorary Consulate of Sweden in Dallas and  
Houston

### **BITS & PIECES**

 Ingrid Llanos reports that she and Zenon happened upon the Swedish Clog Cabin in Vail, Colorado, this summer. They learned from the owner, who is from Skåne, that she will for the first time ever have a booth at The Nutcracker Market, held at Reliant Center, November 8-11. If you go to The Nutcracker Market, be sure to look for the hand painted Swedish clogs and other Scandinavian products. You can also find the clogs at [www.tessaclogs.com](http://www.tessaclogs.com).



## Faces from Smörgåsbord 2007



Guests were greeted by  
Karen and Erich Wolz



Inger and Don Turbyfill, Mona Raspler,  
Leif Mauritzson (Don, Mona and Leif  
are all past SCH presidents)



Nancy Webb and Margaret  
St.Clair introduce Lucia 2007,  
Jenny Panahi



Dr. James and Brigitte Steele



Nancy and Bert Sheldon,  
Ehren Roehl



Gene and Mary Lou Wallin



Sonia and Kurt Swanson



Sjerrie and Dina Jo Colburn



Sammye and Leslie Munson



Vassily and Diana Rodionov



# 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](mailto:ljmillikan@sbcglobal.net) or by post to the return address below.

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Business Card	\$20.00
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[www.swedishclub.org](http://www.swedishclub.org)

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Events Line = 713.774.2739



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