



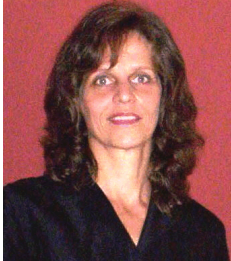
THE SWEDISH CLUB NEWS

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

September/October

2009

Volume XXII-No. 5



President's Column *by Cathy Wahren*

The SCH Board reconvened August 9th at IKEA with a lively session of planning. A few members were missing, but we managed to get through our agenda with plans for our *Smörgåsbord* at the Braeburn Country Club being our most pressing need. Most importantly, please note that the date has been moved up two weeks from our previously advertised date to our **NEW DATE: SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24th**.

Our membership has been holding steady at about 125 families—we would sure love to see that number grow! Also, the new semester for Swedish classes started in September with Frieda Tingdahl and Ylva Nordstrom teaching beginner, intermediate and “terminal” levels.

I attended IKEA’s Crayfish dinner on August 21 with my folks and boy, was it yummy! Plenty to go around, plus schnapps, *lingonsaft*, cheese, meatballs and mashed potatoes, to vary the diet a bit. I saw several Club members there, plus others from SWEA and SACC, too. The event was open to the general public, and it was interesting to overhear the few people not familiar with Swedish-style crayfish commenting on the cooking style—but as far as I could tell, there were no complaints!

If you recall from my last column, I was in Stockholm for a few days in July. The weather cooperated wonderfully, and I had a great time in Lidingö with my aunt and cousins. The Berlin Night Express to Malmö was interesting (though I pretty much slept through the experience), and we toured a couple of museums, including the *Vasamuseet*. We arrived there via water taxi under a warm, sunny sky. In case you’re not familiar with it, this museum depicts how a great 17th century warship sank and was later recovered. There are many engrossing exhibits, in addition to the ship itself: the iron diving bell that was first used to investigate the wreckage; a life-size reproduction of the gunwales, with little light and no headroom where the sailors worked and slept; even clothes and the skeletons of some of the victims! As I

was taking the steps down to a lower level, I noticed what I thought was an exhibit showing the horrible storm that sank the ship—but it wasn’t—it was a window to the outside where it was raining a torrent! We decided to have a sandwich and hope that it would pass, which it did, so we wandered down to Gamla Stan (Old Town Stockholm), found a nice café and drank wine till the sun went down—which was very late.

Cathy

Smörgåsbord 2009

Saturday, October 24

(Please note changed date)

**6:30 p.m. - Cash bar; 7:30 p.m. - Dinner
BraeBurn Country Club**

The Swedish Club of Houston looks forward to seeing you at our upcoming annual Swedish *Smörgåsbord*, on Saturday, October 24th. This year's event will again be held at the beautiful BraeBurn Country Club, 8101 Bissonnet, Houston. The cash bar will open at 6:30 p.m., followed by dinner at 7:30 p.m. Come early to socialize and select a table!

The price is \$25 for Club members, \$30 for non-members, and \$15 for children (12 and under).

Make reservations *by mail* using the form on page 7, or *online* on the SCH web site, www.swedishclub.org. If reserving online, payment may be made by check or credit card (using Google Checkout). Either way, payment must be received by Wednesday, October 21.

It promises to be a great evening with delicious food, live music with Joyce Calderon on the accordion, and wonderful friends. Seating is limited, so reserve early!



Photo: www.imagebank sweden.se © Ann Lindberg

Smoked salmon with dill is a *Smörgåsbord* delicacy.

Your Help Is Needed!

We need **you** to make our Christmas Traditions and *Luciadagen* the success we all want it to be. 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
- be a greeter for sanctuary and Parish Hall
- set-up and clean-up

To volunteer, please contact Margaret St.Clair (281-493-4978 or 281-731-1034 or by e-mail, margestclair@hotmail.com) or Diana Rodionov (281-636-8153).

Language School back in session

It's back-to-school time for anyone wanting to learn Swedish. Swedish language classes with native-speaking teachers meet weekly, 7:00-9:00 p.m., at IKEA, with three different skill levels (Beginner and Intermediate classes on Monday evenings, and the Advanced class on Tuesday evenings).

Although classes began on Monday, September 14th, and Tuesday, September 15th, it's not too late to sign up. Tuition for the classes is \$150 for the semester.

For more information, please contact John Stavinoha, Language School Director, at john.stavinoha@memorialhermann.org.

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Question: What do the following have in common?


- * *I Was Prepared*, by Justin Case
- * *The Numbers Game*, by Cal Q. Later
- * *Deep in Debt*, by Owen A. Lott
- * *Favorite Swedish Recipes*, by the Swedish Club of Houston


Answer: They are all books that were never written! Of course, there is ample reason why the first three were never written. But there's only one reason why the last one wasn't: We don't have enough of your favorite Swedish recipes!

Send your favorites to Karen Wolz at kswolz@sbcglobal.net.

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BITS & PIECES

 The Scandinavian Folk Dancers of Houston are practicing again after taking the summer off. We would love to welcome new members. We practice at Christ the King Lutheran Church in Rice Village on Monday nights from 7 - 9. Please call before attending, to be certain we are practicing that night. For more information, call Kathy at 713-870-3543.

 Dr. James Steele, long-time SCH member, has graciously donated to the club a copy of his recently published biography, *One Man, One Medicine, One Health: The James H. Steele Story*, by Craig Nash Carter, with Cynthia Gregg Hoobler. Dr. Steele received his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree from Michigan State College in 1941 and a Master's of Public Health from Harvard University in 1942. He went on to establish the veterinary division of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in 1947, where he contributed much to the understanding of the zoonoses, the epidemiology of diseases shared by animals and man. He is the only veterinarian to ever receive the prestigious Surgeon General's Medallion, awarded to him in 2006.

Dr. Steele autographed the club's copy with the following inscription: "August 2009. Swedish Club Colleagues—Great to enjoy your companionship. James Steele."

Thank you, Dr. Steele, both for the book and for your many contributions to public health!



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

*Christmas Traditions and
Lucia Celebration 2009*

**Saturday, December 12, 2009, 4:00 p.m.
Christ the King Lutheran Church**

Please note: If you would like for your children or grandchildren to participate in the Lucia procession as attendants, please contact Margaret St.Clair (281-493-4978 or 281-731-1034 or by e-mail, margestclair@hotmail.com) or Diana Rodionov (281-636-8153).

My Trip to Barkeryd

By Eden Shapiro

Lucia 2008

When I first found out I would be taking a trip to Sweden, my whole mind-set for the trip was that I had been chosen as the Texas Lucia, and this trip was for me to learn about Swedish culture and history, give my speech in Barkeryd, and meet some relatives along the way. However, as John Steinbeck said, "We do not take a trip; a trip takes us." After spending sixteen amazing days in Sweden I can say that Sweden truly did take me on a trip through my culture and heritage that I had never been aware of or anticipated. The experience was one that I will never forget, and I will keep the memories of the beautiful country close to my heart for a long time to come.



With my Swedish cousins,
Olle and Anita Nilsson

I have always grown up knowing that I was part Swedish, but it seemed like a far dream that I would ever get to go to Sweden and actually meet and get to know my relatives who still live there

today. My mom went to Sweden in 1986, with my brother Benjamin who was only three years old then. She visited my Swedish cousin Lina, who was eighteen at the time. Now Lina is forty-one, and by coincidence I am eighteen, and now her daughter is three. Spending time and getting to know them was definitely a highlight of my trip. It showed me how important keeping up our family connections are, and hopefully the next time I see them, I won't be the one who is forty-one.

Lucky for me, I also have relatives who own a summer home next to a lake and were kind enough to allow my parents and me to stay there for a few nights. I was blown away by the beautiful forests and lakes that



are sprinkled all over Sweden. I loved Stockholm and being in the city, but I adored the beautiful wild flowers, mushrooms, and berries that are able to grow

in the cooler climate. I absolutely loved picking wild blueberries, strawberries, raspberries, and even a new one for me, lingonberries. Additionally, my cousin Mikael and his family hosted us at their island home in Waxholm in the Archipelago.

Something about Sweden that really stood out to me was how modern the country was while still keeping its

Swedish traditions. While you walk through the cobblestone streets of Gamla Stan (Old Town Stockholm) you can just feel the rich history and culture speaking to you, but at the same time the



Enjoying some time
in Stockholm

adorable street cafes and shops keep you feeling up to date. Another highlight of my trip was walking around the Royal Palace. It was all so incredibly lavish and ornate. I think it is very cool that they still have a monarchy there. The beautiful balmy weather was also a nice change to the smoldering hot summers I have become accustomed to. It certainly made walking around outside a lot more pleasant. So,



royalty, great weather, and shopping. What's not to love?

Personally I am a big environmentalist, and all I can say is that when I saw how well Sweden

as a country and each citizen as an individual does his and her part to help the environment by recycling and bike riding, it made me downright jealous. I was very shocked when I walked into a McDonald's and saw that even they have places to recycle just about everything right down to the straws and lids. I also think it is amazing how everyone there seems to ride their bikes. I would even see businessmen on their way to work. You would never see people bike-riding in suits to work here in Houston. Sweden's immaculate bike paths coupled with the great weather would make anyone want to hop on their bike. Hopefully one day Houston will invest in good bike paths.

Before I knew it, my big day had come. I was so excited to finally give my speech and travel to the town of Barkeryd to see where it all began. Everyone was so friendly and warm; if I had any nerves they definitely put me at ease. It was very interesting



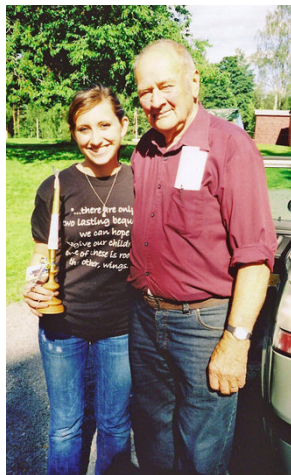
Making a speech—in Swedish!
—at the Barkeryd festival

visiting the local museum and learning all about why so many Swedes had decided to immigrate to Texas. There were many people who wanted to chat about Texas-Swedish connections, and it made me so happy to know that I was helping to keep those connections reinforced and strong.

I loved participating in the parade and throwing out American candy for everyone to try. No words can do justice to the way I felt. All I can say is that you really had to be there to fully absorb and experience how special the day was. If any of you are able, I strongly encourage you to go to the festival next year. It is an experience you won't soon forget.

By the end of my trip I had come to the conclusion that Sweden really has it all. I loved being in the city, but I equally loved being out in nature. Something about those thick, deep forests was enchanting. I would definitely go back to visit one day, and I hope that my relatives will come visit us in Houston soon as well.

I can't thank everyone enough who made this trip possible for me, but a special thanks to the Swedish



With the great-great-great-grandson of Swen Magnus Swenson, who was responsible for much of the emigration from Barkeryd to Texas



Our wonderful hosts in Barkeryd, Anita and Pelle Johansson

Club of Houston, Continental Airlines, and of course my parents. I would like to personally thank Anita and Pelle Johansson for hosting our family in Barkeryd. Their dedication to keeping the Texas-Swedish connection alive is

what makes this trip a reality each year. I would also like to thank John Stavinoha for his part in arranging my trip. Margaret St.Clair spent a whole afternoon of her time with my family explaining to me my duties as a Lucia and sharing her family's experiences with us. There are many people who work very hard each year to turn the dream of going to Sweden into a reality. Many thanks to the hard working board of the Swedish Club for making all of this possible.

With sincere sympathy . . .

Sincere sympathy and prayers are extended to the family and friends of Evert Jonsson of Barkeryd, Sweden, who died on August 7, 2009. Evert and his wife, Gunvor, were instrumental in starting the tradition of hosting The Swedish Club of Houston Lucias at the annual Barkeryd Texas-Swedish Festival.



The Swedish Club of Houston sent the floral arrangement on the far right for Evert Jonsson's funeral, which was held September 1, 2009, in Barkeryd, Sweden.

In Memoriam— Evert Jonsson

by Margaret St.Clair



The Swedish Club of Houston mourns the passing of Evert Jonsson who died August 7, 2009, in Barkeryd, Sweden. He was 83 years old, and is survived by his wife, Gunvor, children and grandchildren.

Evert lived his whole life in Barkeryd. He and his father owned and operated a grist mill and a lumber mill. He and Gunvor served for many years as caretakers for the Barkeryd Church.

Evert was a long-time volunteer in the Barkeryd community. For 30 years he served on the Board of Directors of the Barkeryd Historical Museum. He also helped to plan and build Barkeryd's Agricultural Museum.

Evert was a great friend of The Swedish Club of Houston and will be remembered for his contribution in strengthening the tie between Texas and Barkeryd. For those who are unfamiliar with The Swedish Club's connection to Barkeryd, it was from this small parish in Småland that so many Swedes emigrated to Texas between 1836 and 1927. Barkeryd's Texas-Swedish Festival celebrates this connection. In 1986, Evert, along with his wife, Gunvor, and Swedish Club members, Gusten and Inga Lisa Calissendorff, created a youth program in which our Swedish Club Lucias would visit the Texas-Swedish Festival every year on the first Sunday in August. For 13 years, from 1989 through 2002, Evert and Gunvor graciously hosted our Lucias and their families in their Barkeryd home. Their warm hospitality is vividly described below by Allana Clarke Helland, Lucia 2001.

My family and I stayed in Evert and Gunvor Jonsson's home when I served as the Lucia ambassador to Barkeryd's Texas-Swedish Festival in the summer 2002.

When I returned to the United States, I tried to describe the experience to my friends. They seemed to think I was exaggerating—surely nowhere on earth could be as perfect as this place I described! Evert and Gunvor's home in Strömsfors was like a perfect "Epcot style" picture of life in Scandinavia: lush flower beds, a grist mill, and a traditionally appointed

manor home. Evert and Gunvor were such amazing hosts, serving Evert's wild game and sherry from berries Gunvor picked out back. Just when we thought things could not be more perfect, Gunvor and Evert would bring out another course of locally procured food.

My Swedish is basic; I can speak in the present tense only, just barely enough to get my thoughts across. Much hand waving and gesturing also helps, as well as having someone truly bilingual nearby, like Inga Lisa Calissendorff. With Evert, though, no words were needed. He said everything with a twinkle in his eye and that winning smile. My husband (then fiancé) who spoke no Swedish, seemed to carry on lengthy conversations with Evert, as they spoke in smiles, looks and laughs.

The time spent in Evert and Gunvor's lovely home was magical. If my husband and I took away just a fraction of what we experienced with these hosts, we have become better people. Evert will always have a place in our hearts.

Betsy Philen Hardy was Lucia 1994 and was one of the former Lucias who attended last year's Texas-Swedish Festival, which celebrated the 20th anniversary of Swedish Club of Houston Lucias going to Barkeryd. Her parents, Martha and Everett Philen, shared the following remembrance:

We do have fond memories of staying with Evert and Gunvor. Such wonderful hosts!

They took us to visit a dairy farm to pick up milk. He said that it is not too different than in the USA, and that for sure the smell was the same. :)

My husband still talks of the tour of the museum at the festival. Evert and Everett were so funny trying to talk to each other. They both had books to point out words to help them say what they were talking about.

Gunvor's meals were so good, and the table setting was beautiful. They had a litter of kittens, and I tried to feed them, but they would not come to the English language of "Kitty, Kitty." Gunvor had to come out and call them to be fed.

Gunvor thought of everything for our comfort. She even had a radio and tapes for Betsy to have in her bedroom. Great host for sure.

We shared a big Texas flag with Evert to use at the festival a few years ago, and we got the most wonderful thank you note. I do hope the festival will continue.

We are so glad to have shared our lives with the Jonssons.

News from Sweden (from Swedish Council of America's July and August 2009 *eUPDATES*)

→ On August 21, 2009, Ambassador Matthew Barzun presented his credentials to His Majesty King Carl XVI Gustaf, in a formal ceremony marking the official recognition of a foreign Ambassador in Sweden. Ambassador Barzun, 38, is the second-youngest U.S. Ambassador to serve in Sweden. He was previously a vice president at CNET and is a friend and supporter of President Obama.

→ In a recent poll, support within Sweden to change its currency from the Krona to the Euro has hit a six-year high. Only one percent separates the two sides with forty-three percent in favor of keeping the Krona and forty-two percent in favor of the Euro. Sweden voted to keep the Krona in 2003 when many other EU nations were converting to the Euro. Of the Nordic Countries, only Finland has replaced their national currency with the Euro.

→ Eight Swedish National Hockey League (NHL) players will get to play their first game of the 2009-2010 season in Sweden. The NHL recently announced the schedule for the upcoming season, including the October 2nd and 3rd contests between the Detroit Red Wings and the St. Louis Blues, to be played in Stockholm. The Red Wings have seven Swedish players while the Blues have one. The Red Wings will also play their final pre-season game against the defending Swedish Elite League champion Färjestads BK in Karlstad, Sweden, on September 30th.

→ In a unique project, the people of Hornstull in Stockholm aim to radically transform their neighborhood. The goal: turning it into the world's largest outdoor gallery and a more eco-friendly place. The project is called *100Hus* (100 houses), and project manager John Higson and his team have given themselves till May 2010 to turn Hornstull upside down. In the fall of 2009 the project is spreading to Hultsfred in southern Sweden, and several other Swedish cities have also shown interest in *100Hus*. Read more at www.sweden.se/eng/Home/Lifestyle/Reading/Transforming-a-Stockholm-neighborhood/.

→ A nude saxophone player surprised four similarly dressed violinists in northwestern Sweden to claim victory as the year's best incarnation of a water fairy, a mythical creature from ancient Swedish folklore. The winning performance by Martin Norberg marked the first time in the 15-year history of the *Årets Näck* ('Water Fairy of the Year') competition that a saxophonist, or a musician playing anything other than a violin, had taken top honors. According to legend, a water fairy is a supernatural being that takes the form of a naked man playing the violin on the shores of Swedish lakes and streams. The creature's captivating music supposedly holds magical powers which tempt people into the water, causing them to drown.

Places to go and things to see . . .

Philadelphia, PA (through November 22, 2009)

- The American Swedish Historical Museum traces the journey of Swedes and Finns coming to the Delaware Valley in 1638 in "Colony to Community: The Story of New Sweden." A collection of objects, historic documents and images explore the origins of the New Sweden Colony and celebrate New Sweden's legacy today. For more information, visit www.americanswedish.org.

New York, NY (October 1, 2009- January 9, 2010) - Scandinavia House presents the first major U. S. exhibition devoted to Carl Fredrik Hill (1849-1911), one of the most important and original Swedish artists of the 19th century.

The exhibition focuses on the series of 75 astonishingly visionary drawings Hill produced during the last 30 years of his life, a period in which he was regarded as incurably insane. Although derided by his contemporaries, these late drawings are now recognized as important precursors of such movements as Surrealism, Expressionism, and even Pop art.

The exhibition is organized by the Malmö Art Museum, in conjunction with the American-Scandinavian Foundation. Due to a generous grant, gallery admission is free.

Read more at the Scandinavia House web site, www.scandinaviahouse.org/programs.html.

Consulates General to close

In an attempt to overcome a financial deficit, the Swedish government has decided to close Consulates General in New York, Los Angeles, Canton and Kaliningrad, and the embassy in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

The closure of the Consulate General in **Los Angeles** is to be completed by 31 December 2009 at the latest, and the closure of the Consulate General in **New York** is to be completed by 31 January 2010 at the latest. The Embassy in Washington will take over responsibility for the nine honorary consulates that currently report to the Consulate General in Los Angeles and the 17 honorary consulates that report to the Consulate General in New York.



Save the Date!

What: Annual Meeting/Pancake and Pea Soup Dinner
When: Saturday, January 23, 2010
Where: Christ the King Lutheran Church

RESERVATION FORM FOR

Smörgåsbord - Saturday, October 24, 2009

(Must be received by Wednesday, October 21, for advance price)

Please make checks payable to "Swedish Club of Houston" and mail to:

Swedish Club of Houston, c/o Karen Wolz, 4526 Waynesboro Dr., Houston, TX 77035-3644

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail address: _____

_____ Adult Members (advance registration)	x \$25.00 =	\$
_____ Adult Non-members	x \$30.00 =	\$
_____ Children (12 and under)	x \$15.00 =	\$
	Total	\$ _____



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, and your favorite Swedish shops, products or resources.

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

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