



THE SWEDISH CLUB NEWS

The Swedish Club of Houston

Preserving Swedish Heritage on the Texas Gulf Coast Since 1986

MIDSOMMAR PICKNICK

Burgers, Games & Swimming this June 26th

The summer picnic this year will be a bit different than in years past. We will still have the picnic at the Nanes Pool & Recreation Area (17101 Nanes, located at the corner of Nanes and FM 1960 – approximately 1 mile West of IH45 on 1960) and we will still have use of the pool. We will still have Jay Flusche organizing and leading the fun. <See center of picture below> The date is going to be Saturday, June 26th from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.



< Editors Notes: Nanes is great setting for a picnic. The tall pine trees provide lots of shade and are high enough to let a cool breeze through.>

This year, however, by having the picnic earlier in the summer, we can save money on rental charges. With the savings, the club is going to provide hamburgers and hot dogs (and all of the condiments) for all of the picnic attendees. The club will provide plastic flatware, paper plates and napkins.

What we are asking for this year is for everyone to bring a side dish or snack to share: desserts, pasta, fruit, chips, beans, etc. Also bring your own water or soft drinks in non-glass containers.

Please plan on coming out to the picnic. It is a great opportunity to visit with friends, make new friends, swim, and play some games.

While it is too early to RSVP now, we will be sending out a flyer the first week of June with RSVP information. Also you can RSVP on the SwedishClub.Org website in June. There will be no charge for this event but a donation jar will be provided.

Saturday 26th is close enough to June 21st.to enjoy Midsommar (MidsummerDay)-Texas Style..Bring some greenery and flowers for the MidsommarStang. This will be the first year in a long time that we will do the stång thanks to this years President: Pelle Fisk.



< A typical Midsommar Stång from Malmon, SE>

SWEDISH DAY IN GALVESTON

By Diana Rodionov



<Kathy Bjork and Diana >

On Sunday April 25, 2004, about 30 people attended a celebration of Swedish heritage in Galveston at the Old Zion Lutheran Church, on the corner of 18th and Market at noon followed with a picnic on the church grounds. Brite-Marie Bodorff from SWEA of Houston and Shelia Lee from Linneas of Texas were speakers for the occasion. Sheila and Brit-Marie presented a Swedish Flag to the current owner of the property. Sheila played Swedish music from an 1850 Swedish music book on her 1895 hand-built Italian accordion. Women who grew up in the church spoke of the old church. A letter was read from the Houston Consulate of Sweden. After the presentation there was a tour of the church grounds and an opportunity to visit with the current owner John Stokley. Photos and documents were available to be seen at the Swedish Day Celebration.



<Brite-Marie Bodorff, Shelia Lee, and John Stokley>

The Old Zion Lutheran Church in the east end of Galveston's Historic District is listed in the city's historic records as the "Swedish Church". Chartered in 1892, the church was originally housed in an 1886 building what is now called the Parsonage on the southern-most corner of the property. The new temple complete with beautiful stained-glass windows and an expensive Pilcher pipe organ from Louisville, Kentucky was dedicated in 1926.

The 16 stained-glass windows are in memoriam to former church families with the names: Martin and Julia Pederson, Nels and Maria Anderson, Bernhardt and Emma Johnson, Carl and Carolina Matson, and B. Adoue. One stained-glass window contains a Swedish flag in the shape of a shield. The windows were presented to the church by The Linneas Society and The Ladies Aid Society. The pews, alter, and interior walls are in beautiful shape due to restoration efforts started by the current owner.

The people who organized the celebration need support to preserve this Swedish landmark and heritage in Galveston with the purchase of the Old Zion Lutheran Church property. Much restoration is still needed to maintain the buildings and original pipe organ.

For more details, please contact:

Brite-Marie Bodorff 713-529-0143
With SVEA of Houston

Shelia Lee 409-621-5561
With Linneas of Texas



INTRODUCING DIRECTOR DIANA RODIONOV

A few years ago I got a new identity! I always thought I was 100% Swedish. But then, I met a cousin of my father who came from the same village in Finland as three of my grandparents. She told me in a very firm voice that I was a Swede-Finn! This moment was the turning point of discovering my family history.

I was born and raised in California about 10 miles from the Pasadena Rose Bowl in a lovely, secluded, small valley called La Crescenta. My father's parents lived a mile from my home. Although my grandmother came to America at age 19, she never spoke English. Subsequently, I heard a lot of Swedish spoken at my grandparent's home. Originally from very cold Finland and then having lived on the extremely cold shores of Lake Superior in Wisconsin, my grandparents truly felt that La Crescenta was God's paradise with its dry, warm, sunny weather.

My mother's father came from Tuna, Sweden, which is a very tiny Småland village only minutes from Vimmerby, the hometown of Astrid Lindgren, the author of Pippi Longstocking. My grandfather's large family of 12 was very poor, so as soon as the children were old enough, 8 of them left their parents and Sweden to settle in America. My grandfather became a successful dairy farmer in Minnesota. In retirement he lived an hour from my home, so I knew him very well.

My other three grandparents came from a Swedish-speaking village called Esse near Jakobstad north of Vasa on the western coast of Finland. I estimate my family moved from Sweden to Finland in the 1200's when Sweden took control of Finland. A lot of Swedes moved to Finland at that time. I have family trees for all of my grandparents. One family tree goes back to 1500 and shows that each person came from my family's village of Esse or a village nearby; people did not move around! My maiden name is Esselström, named after the river

that runs through the village of Esse. My great-grandfather Esselström actually came to America in the 1880's, then went back to Finland where he then had 17 children!

Since realizing my new identity, I have learned a lot about my family's past and have visited relatives in Sweden and Finland. Seeing the Swede-Finns have been in Finland for so many years, there is some Finnish blood in these Swede-Finns. The Winter War with the Soviet Union unified the Swede-Finns and the Finns with national pride. I am glad to now know my Swedish and Swede-Finn heritage.



Diana in Esse Finland Folk Dress

Another successful, gourmet, funny, kräftskiva was hosted by John Stavinoha at the Monument Inn. This is the same place we have used for years since they know how to prepared Swedish Crayfish even though their major product is Cajun Spiced Crayfish. If you missed it, you may not know how well dill and sea salt can flavor crayfish.



<Beginning with Music>



<Lot of time for fellowship >



Texas Folklife Festival is set for June 10-13, 2004

Is there a better way to travel the world in four days than to visit the 33rd annual Texas Folklife Festival? Probably not! Mark your calendar for June 10-13, 2004 at the Institute of Texan Cultures in downtown San Antonio; savor authentic international cuisine, delight in the music and colorful costumes of the finest entertainers, and browse through the arts & crafts market.

The festival runs 5-11 p.m., Thursday, June 10, and Friday, June 11; noon – 11 p.m., Saturday, June 12; and noon – 9 p.m. Sunday, June 13.

Tickets at the gate are \$10 for adults 13 and older; \$6 for seniors 55 and over; \$6 for active or retired military with I.D.; \$4 for children ages 6-12; children under 6 are free. Adult tickets in advance are \$8. Group and other discounts are also available. To order advance tickets (May 1 – June 1) visit www.texasfolklifefestival.org, or write to Texas Folklife Festival, 801 S. Bowie St., San Antonio, TX 78205-3296. For more information call 210.458.2390.

Story

SWEDISH CLUB LUCIA PARTICIPATES IN VIKING FEST 2004 IN WACO

Sjerrie Colburn, our Lucia for this year participated with two Lucias from the Waco Club and many attendants in the 2004 Viking Fest. This is a first also for the Viking Fest. Hopefully we'll have a story from Sjerrie or anyone else who attended.

WANTED –

Your Family story or a story about your Swedish Adventure .

FOLKDANCERS

The last month has been quite a busy month for the folkdancers. We danced down in Danevang, TX at the birthday celebration for Queen Margrethe of Denmark on April 17th. The Danevang experience is always a good one: there is always an enthusiastic crowd, the venue is nice, and the food is great.

This was our 4th year to dance down in Danevang, and we hope that we can continue dancing there in the years to come. It was the first performance by our newest dancer, Kathy Bjork. Kathy is a Swedish Club member, and started dancing with the folkdance group in January.

Later in the afternoon on April 17th, we came back to Houston and danced at the Houston International Festival at Reliant Park.

On April 24th, we danced twice at the International Festival put on by the Bay Area Montessori School. Each year, the school focuses on a specific country. For the school year of 2003-2004, the selected country was Norway.

We danced Norwegian dances and Joyce Calderon (our Norwegian accordion player) and Vassily Rodionov played a lot of tunes during the time that we weren't dancing.

Our next performances will be at the Texas Folklife Festival in San Antonio on June 12th and 13th. The Folklife Festival is unique among festivals because it focuses on the many ethnic groups that make up Texas. If you have not had a chance to go to the festival, I strongly encourage you to do so. Of the 33 years that the festival has been in existence, I have missed 5 years. It is not an overly expensive proposition, and getting the chance to play tourist in San Antonio during the summer is nice, indeed.

So... if you make it down to san Antonio for the Festival, make sure and attend one of our performances and say hello.

As always, if you have an interest in folk dancing, please contact our president, Joyce Calderon, at 281.360.9670 or at joycelalo@yahoo.com



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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** by email to arvid@johanson.us or when necessary by post to the return address below

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Pelle	Fisk	President	PelleFisk@bigfoot.com
Dina	Colburn	VP	djcolburn@yahoo.com
Diana	Rodionov	Sec'y	drodionov@houston.rr.com
Rodney	Anderson	Treasurer	dakotarod@earthlink.net
Lois	Betz	Director	lois_betz@yahoo.com
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Arvid	Johanson	News Editor	arvid@johanson.us
John	Stavinoha	Membership & Lang. School	John_Stavinoha@mhhs.org
Margaret	St.Clair	Director	margestclair@hotmail.com
Erich	Wolz	Webmaster	wolz@us.ibm.com

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THE SWEDISH CLUB NEWS
c/o Arvid Johanson
2010 Dowling Drive
Richmond TX 77469-5114