



THE SWEDISH CLUB NEWS

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

Summer Picnic Rescheduled to Saturday, 8/21

*The eensie weensie spider went up the water spout.
Down came the rain and washed the spider out!*

Unlike the familiar children's song, it wasn't just spiders getting washed out over the weekend of June 26 – 27. The picnic was washed out as well.

We have re-scheduled the picnic to Saturday, August 21st from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

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.

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.

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

Here is the schedule:

5:30 Pool is open

6:30 Games including the Midsommar Stång *

7:00 Hamburgers & Hot Dogs will be served

The web site (www.swedishclub.org) can take your RSVP now, or you can call on the events line (713.774.2739) and let us know how many people you are bringing. We will be sending out a flyer the first week of August as a reminder. There will be no charge for this event.

See you in August... Jay Flusche ...Picnic Coordinator

* For the first time in many years we were planning to do a Midsommar Stång (Midsummer Pole) to share a little Swedish Summer Culture. Although the date is changed we'll try again at the picnic. Please bring some greenery to decorate the pole in addition to your snacks. The Consul donated the rings so we have a good head start on the decorations.



A Message From Our Club President

Midsommar

June has come and gone and for everyone here in Houston we all know how wet it was. Statistics are showing it the second wettest June ever since we started keeping records. Unfortunately our picnic event was rained out and with it our plans to reinstate some kind of Midsummer celebration here at the club. For the people who are not so familiar with the Swedish midsommar I am going to give some insight to one of the most popular holidays over there.

Midsummer celebration in Sweden goes back approximately 500 years. Other places in the world celebrate the mid of summer with bonfires but the northern latitude with little darkness did not suit dancing around fires. Instead the Swedes took the May pole, which is another name for the midsummer pole, from other countries May Day celebration. The cold climate did not leave enough flowers and green leaves for decoration in the beginning of May, so they moved the festivity to the summer solstice and called it midsommar.

Midsummer eve always used to be on June 23rd but about 25 years ago it was changed to fit the working peoples schedule and it now falls on the Friday closest to June 23rd. Days before the holiday, houses, patios and even cars are decorated with small trees and branches of birch. People evacuate the cities to go to the countryside and summer cottages. All the islands and the coasts attract the majority of people but Dalarna, with its many lakes, is another favorite area.

The real celebration begins when people are getting together in the afternoon on Midsummer Eve. They “dress” the lying down midsummer pole with greeneries and flowers. When nicely decorated it is raised and the ring dancing with its traditional games start. The music and dancing is just like when dancing around the Christmas tree and most people are dressed up looking smart in light colors.

Afterwards follows an early dinner which often consists of pickled herring in different sauces, new potatoes with butter and dill, and of course schnapps rinsed down with beer. Desert if you have

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room would be strawberries and whipped cream. The talking, dancing and drinking then continue late into the bright night or early morning and the celebration goes on for the whole weekend.

Well folks it brings back some very nice memories from my time in Sweden writing this and I really hope we can get another shot at doing a “Midsummer picnic” next year. For now this is all I got. Have a great summer and I hope to see you in August at the rescheduled picnic.

Pelle Fisk



The Swedish Consulate in Houston has an excellent website

www.swedishconsulate.org/

**You will be pleased at the organization and the inclusion of these topics:
Citizenship, genealogy, visit Sweden, shopping, Facts about Sweden, Swedish Events in Texas, Swedish Events in the US, American Events in Sweden.**



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Folkdancing at the Texas Folklife Festival by Jay Flusche

During the year, the folkdancing group performs at a number of events and venues. Some events are more fun than others. The Texas Folklife Festival (TFF) in San Antonio is the highlight of our year. The folkdancing group has performed (under one name or another) at the TFF for 27 of the 33 years of the event. I remember as a kid in the 1970s seeing the dancers perform. Back then, the dancers used more props than today. They had swords & hoops & horns integrated into the performance. It was pretty impressive to this 14 year old. But, I digress...

This year we focused on doing a smorgasbord of dances from across Scandinavia. We perform dances from each of the Scandinavian countries. AND, we dance to live music. Live music just changes the entire feeling of the performance. It is a lot more fun than dancing to taped music.

The TFF has musical performers and dance groups representing over 40 ethnic groups that make up today's Texas. We were scheduled to dance twice on Saturday and once on Sunday. We got real lucky with our schedule on Saturday. We were scheduled to dance in the evening, and we had some strong acts following us. As a result, we always had a sizable crowd watching our performances. It is fun to look out at the crowd and see a couple hundred folks out there watching you.

The TFF is traditionally the last performance we do for the summer. After the TFF, we shut down until September. That is part of what makes it such a neat experience. We take the opportunity to hang out with each other for a couple of days and turn it into a mini vacation. We all stay at hotels in the downtown area, and we get to act like a bunch of tourists (which, of course, is exactly what we are)!

It is events like the TFF that make being part of the Scandinavian Folkdancers of Houston so worthwhile.

The fun that we have far outweighs the hassle of practicing on Monday nights in the Fall & Spring.

I encourage you to be a part of it. If you think that you would be interested in talking to someone about the folkdancing group, please leave a message on the Events Line (713.774.2739) and one of us will get back to you.

Have you ever been here before the caterpillars showed up?



The picture above is what is left of the original IKEA in Houston. See Page 5 for the latest on our New IKEA.

Swedish-English Dictionary On-Line
It is worth typing the link into your browser. <http://www-lexikon.nada.kth.se/skolverket/swe-eng.shtml> Besides the usual look-ups, this site helps you correct misspellings including wrong alphabet character.

TWO Monuments to the First Landing of Swedes in America

In the March-April 2004 issue we told you about the new monuments to the Swedish immigration to America on the Delaware River and that there were more to tell about that area.

Below is the monument Eleanor and I saw while visiting family in Goteborg.



Goteborg, SE

In addition to the description of the many bias relief pictures on the statue, there was this following inscription:

“The People of Sweden Erected this Monument to the memory of the First Swedish Settlement on American Soil and Gave in Custody of the State of Delaware The original monument is made of stone in the USA. This is made of bronze after a model of plaster. That plaster model was situated in Stockholm. This casting statue was made in 1938 by the royal casting man, Herman Berg. KF (a cooperation of customers) paid for it.”

In the little state of Delaware just East of downtown Wilmington are several Swedish historical items. One of the most prominent of historic markers is the stone monument that was mentioned on the Goteborg monument.



Wilmington, DE

This one is located within Swedes Landing section of Fort Christiania State Park.

The Wording on this monument gives its origin and meaning.

“This monument is a gift from the people of Sweden to the people of the United States. Its entire cost was met by about 225,000 individual subscriptions from residents of almost every community in Sweden responding to a broadcast suggestion. It is a permanent symbol of the friendship between the two peoples.
Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs.

Special thanks goes to my Swedish family for hauling me around Goteborg, and to friends Norman McLeod for pointing out the Delaware points of interest and Jim Johnson for the inscription from the Goteborg Monument.

For more information search for the Swedish Colonial Society website:

<http://www.colonialswedes.org/Historic%20Sights/DESite.html>

The New IKEA in Houston



“At Last, Houston gets what it deserves !”

Harald Witt, the owner manager, of the IKEA franchise in Houston announced-continuing that “Starting August 4th, a giant new IKEA store will bring a new shopping experience to Houston. With 300,000 square feet of floor space, this is a real Texas-sized store. Everything is bigger-there are nearly three times as many parking spaces, a new 300 seat restaurant, and many more cash lanes. Even the supervised kid’s area is larger and a lots more fun. The new store also features three model homes and 50 different room settings loaded with inspiring ideas. But most importantly, you’ll find a far larger selections of products, including a new Children’s IKEA showroom, a Greenroom full of wicker and plants, and much, much more. You have to see it to believe it – welcome !

OUR PERSONAL TOUR

Since IKEA has been so helpful to Swedish Club of Houston over the years , Eleanor and I took two of our BarnBarn to visit the new store during their soft opening period . You are welcome too if you don’t mind the walk from the old parking lot. I had a hard time keeping Eleanor and the BarnBarn (Matt12 and Sarah10) moving along in the store or the cafeteria. There were too many interesting things to see even though they were all familiar with the old store. We really enjoyed visiting the new restaurant on the second floor. We met Kicki Witt, Marketing Director for the store, and got a package of materials on the new store including Harald’s announcement above. Swedish American

food served cafeteria style really beat my usual cafeteria in taste, quality, and price.



Second Floor Restaurant

The new Exit Café and Swede store is doubled from the previous size. So if you don’t want a full meal, you can stop on the way out of the store for the normal deli fare.

What Is the Most Trusted Business in Sweden?

A survey last October conducted by an independent pollster, showed that it was not Ericsson or Volvo but was IKEA that Swedes trusted most! Of all the institutions in the survey, only the schools and universities ranked higher than IKEA. VOLVO came in a close second ahead of the socialist government. The absolute lowest rated was the European Commission just below political parties.

The survey commissioned by MedieAkademin, an independent media forum backed by Gothenburg University and local media, was carried out by pollsters NFO Infratest on 740 people in October 2003.



Swedish Food Store Near the Exit Cafe



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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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