

THE SWEDISH CLUB NEWS

The Swedish Club of Houston

Preserving Swedish Heritage on the Texas Gulf Coast Since 1986

November/December 2008 Volume XXI-No. 6

Christmas Traditions and Luciadagen

Saturday, December 13, 2008 **Christ the King Lutheran Church** 2353 Rice Boulevard, Houston

4:00 p.m. - Bazaar opens 4:30 p.m. - Worship service and Lucia procession 5:00 p.m. - Bazaar and reception 6:00 p.m. - Closing

On Saturday, December 13, all over Sweden, in homes and auditoriums and parish halls, girls will be dressing in white, full-length chemises, with red ribbons around their waist and an evergreen wreath with candles on their heads. They will be accompanied by similarly dressed attendants and by "star boys," singing the traditional Lucia song as they process with their hands devoutly pressed together in front of them.



The Scandinavian Folk Dancers entertained everyone with several traditional dances last vear.

This year, we have the rare opportunity to also participate in a Lucia celebration on the actual St. Lucia Day, December 13. Our celebration will begin with the opening of the Bazaar at 4:00 p.m., followed by the worship service and Lucia procession at 4:30 p.m. Eden Shapiro has been selected as the club's Lucia 2008 and will

wear the Lucia crown of candles while leading the procession of attendants and star boys.

Following the service, everyone is invited to gather in the Parish Hall for socializing, singing, dancing around the Christmas tree and traditional Luciadag refreshments. There will also be games and candy for the children, along with a visit from the

Admission is free and open to the public. Välkommen och God Jul! (Welcome and Merry Christmas!)

Lucia opportunities for all ages

It takes a lot of people to make the annual Christmas Traditions and Luciadagen the success that it always is, and there are opportunities for the whole family to participate.

Girls (ages 5 to 20) and boys (ages 5 to 15) are invited to participate in the Lucia procession as attendants and stjärngossar (star boys). Attendants wear all-white clothing with silver trim and accessories which the Club can provide, although anyone having his/her own outfit is encouraged to wear it. If your child will be participating, please contact Nancy Webb (Nancy. Webb@kelseyseybold.com or 713-661-1011) or Diana Rodionov (drodionov@comcast.net or 281-636-8153).

There are also opportunities for adults. Helpers are needed to

- bake Swedish cookies for reception (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/or Parish Hall
- set-up (2:00-4:00 p.m.) and/or clean-up

To volunteer for any of these, please contact Nancy Webb (Nancy. Webb@kelsey-seybold.com or 713-661-1011) or Diana Rodionov

(drodionov@comcast.net or 281-636-8153).



Save the Date!

What: Annual Meeting/Pancake and

Pea Soup Dinner

When: Saturday, January 24, 2009

6:00 p.m. Time:

Where: Christ the King Lutheran Church

Watch for details in the next issue of the newsletter!



President's Column by Margaret St. Clair

It's a few days after our annual *Smörgåsbord* and I am still reveling in the excitement of the evening! We had a wonderful turnout of approximately 130 at the

beautiful BraeBurn Country Club. I got to visit with a lot of folks whom I hadn't seen in a while, and I met many other folks for the first time.

I think all who attended will agree that BraeBurn prepared a delicious and authentic Swedish table. Many were heard to comment that this *Smörgåsbord* was the best ever! The Swedish Meatballs and Jansson's Temptation (both recipes supplied by long-time member Mona Raspler) were especially delicious.

The highlight of the evening was the introduction of our Lucia 2008, Eden Shapiro. Eden's parents, Adrian and Dianna Shapiro, and both sets of grandparents were there to witness the proud moment. In addition to presiding over our Christmas Traditions and Lucia Celebration next month, Eden will also represent the Club next August at the Texas-Swedish Festival in Barkeryd, Sweden.

Thanks to all who contributed to the success of the evening—to all of you for coming, to Karen Wolz, John Stavinoha and Knut Gezelius for planning the event and to other board members who assisted: Publicity Chair Ingrid Philipson, Historian and Treasurer Ken Nilsson, Cathy Wahren for the centerpieces, Dina Jo Colburn, Laura Millikan, Erich Wolz and Christopher Westerlund. We are also grateful to accordionist, Joyce Calderon, who once again provided us with music for the evening's entertainment. And lastly, many thanks to BraeBurn Country Club for once again providing us an excellent venue for our *smörgåsbord*.

Now we prepare for the last event of the year and one of our biggest—Christmas Traditions and Lucia Celebration. In Sweden, Lucia Day is always celebrated on December 13. Our celebration this year will be especially meaningful as it will be held on the same date. So please join us on Saturday, December 13, at Christ the King Lutheran Church. Festivities begin at 4 p.m. when the Swedish Christmas Bazaar and Bake Sale opens. At 4:30 we adjourn to the Sanctuary for a beautiful candle-lit service led by Lucia Eden and her attendants.

Afterwards, everyone returns to Parish Hall for traditional Lucia Day refreshments such as *lussekatter*, *pepparkakor* and other traditional cookies, lingon drink, *kaffe* and *glögg*. There will also be a raffle, music, singing and dancing around the Christmas tree. What

better way to begin the holiday season than to celebrate one's Swedish heritage! And best of all, it is FREE and open to the public!

I am looking forward to seeing all of you on December 13th!

God Jul och Gott Nytt År!

Margaret

Swedish Club Wants YOU! Get involved—Volunteer!

2009 is fast approaching and the SCH Board is already planning events for the New Year. Why not make it your resolution to get involved and share your time and talents with the Club! Need a little push?? Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Serve on the Board. We may need to fill a couple of slots on the board in 2009. We generally meet at IKEA the 2nd Wednesday evening of every month (except June and July when we break for the summer). Meetings are casual and fun. First we gather in the cafeteria for a meal, then move to a meeting room to conduct business.
- Help chair an event. One does not have to be on the Board to chair (or co-chair!) an event. Currently there are five major events held during the year: Pea Soup & Pancake Supper (January), Crayfish Party (March), Bonfire (April/May), Smörgåsbord (October) and Lucia Celebration (December). If any of these interests you, speak up! You will not be alone in the organizing—others will be able to assist. We are also not limited to the above. If you have an idea for a new Club activity, let us know. And if you don't want to chair it, that's OK too!
- Be a "Behind the Scenes" member. Every organization needs folks who want to do the little things, i.e. help set up/clean up an event, bake for the Lucia Celebration, help with decorations, to name a few. Do you enjoy photography? Why not take photos of our events? Do you like to write? Then you could report on Club events or submit articles about Sweden for the newsletter.

It can be said: You get out of an organization what you put into it. So volunteer, expand your horizons, make new friends. You'll be glad you did!

To join the fun, call or email Margaret St.Clair at 281-493-4978 or margestclair@hotmail.com.

Your 2008 Lucia

by Eden Shapiro

(Eden, daughter of Dianna and Adrian Shapiro, has been selected as our Lucia for 2008.)



Little did my Swedish great-great-grandfather August Wicklund know, when he came to Texas with his two brothers many years ago from Åmål, Sweden, that his great-granddaughter would one day travel to his native land to participate in a Texas Day Celebration and parade in Barkeryd! My name is Eden Shapiro, and I am so pleased to be your 2008 Lucia.

I am a senior at Bellaire High School and, yes, I am

descended from Swedish immigrants. Granddad Wicklund settled in Weatherford, Texas, where he lived and worked as a train engineer. He would get so excited when letters would arrive from his family in Åmål. His grandson (my grandfather), William August, was especially close to him and shared his deep love for Sweden.

It was only natural that mother grew up hearing stories about Sweden, and when it came time to name my older brother, she continued the family tradition and named him Benjamin August. That's five generations (that we know about) with the name August—my family's unbroken connection to our Swedish roots. My mother has maintained contact with our Swedish cousins, and when my brother was three years old, they flew there to meet our family. That was 21 years ago—a bit before I was born!

Now we communicate with our Swedish cousins by email. Several years ago, my mother discovered the Swedish Club of Houston, and she and my father have been members ever since. She also began taking Swedish language lessons sponsored by the club at IKEA, which she continues to this day.

I would like the Club members to know about me. I served as president of my youth group last year and have been active in speech and drama since middle school. The past two summers I have worked as a lifeguard and enjoy interacting with the public. My favorite subjects in school are art and English, and I am a member of the National Honor Society.

I am truly honored not only to represent the Swedish Club of Houston but to have the opportunity to meet my Swedish relatives. Thank you for making one of my dreams come true!

BITS & PIECES

The Swedish Club Board is looking into the option of offering **Swedish language classes for children**. If you are interested, please contact Karen Wolz, kswolz@sbcglobal.net.

Swedish Club Board member **Armando Garcia** recently resigned his position due to conflicts with his work. Thank you, Armando, for your service, and we look forward to still seeing you at Swedish Club events! At its September meeting, the board elected **Christopher Westerlund** to fill Armando's unexpired term.



Come join us!!

Julgranskarameller
Workshop!

Wednesday, November 19

Home of Margaret St.Clair 13831 Queensbury Lane (near Beltway 8 and I-10 West)

9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

(or come and go whenever!)
Lunch provided

RSVP: 281-493-4978

Every year, several SCH members get together to make 50 candy-filled Christmas tree decorations called *julgranskarameller*. We hang them on the Christmas tree at our Lucia Celebration, and later the *jultomte* gives them out to all the children. They are easy to make, so come and join the fun!

SWEA Houston Lucia Celebration

SWEA Houston (Swedish Women's Educational Association) invites you and your friends to the traditional celebration of Lucia on Sunday, December 7th, 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, \$2 for children (3-15 years of age) and \$5 for students with ID. 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.



From the Consulate General . . . 2909 Hillcroft Street, Suite 515
Houston, TX 77057
713-953-1417



Seasons Greetings

... and big news for anyone that will have friends and family visiting from Sweden next year:

Swedish Travelers Need Advance Authorization Before Traveling to USA

Effective January 2009, all Swedish travelers will be required to obtain an electronic travel authorization prior to boarding a carrier to travel by air or sea to the U.S. The electronic application must be submitted online well in advance of the trip using the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA).

This new pre-travel authorization was announced by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and is required by the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007. It applies to all nationals or citizens of visa waiver countries who plan to travel to the United States for temporary business or pleasure under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP). The

requirement does not affect U.S. citizens traveling overseas.

On August 1, 2008, the department began accepting voluntary applications through the ESTA web site at https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov. Until ESTA is mandatory for all VWP travelers, however, ESTA applicants will also still need to complete an I-94W form en-route, for presentation at a U.S. port of entry. The Secretary of Homeland Security is anticipated to publish a notice in the Federal Register by mid-November 2008, announcing implementation of mandatory ESTA requirements on January 12, 2009.

More information about ESTA and visa regulations may be found on www.usemb.se, the website of the U.S. Embassy in Stockholm.

. . . and if you are looking for a weekend trip:

SWEA-Austin's Third Annual Christmas Bazaar

SWEA-Austin will hold their Third Annual Christmas Bazaar on Sunday, December 7, 2008, 1:00-5:00 p.m., at Gethsemane Lutheran Church, 200 W. Anderson Lane, Austin, TX 78752.

Admission is free, and activities will include, in addition to the bazaar, a traditional Lucia procession, children's activities, live music, and a raffle. For more information, see www.chapters-swea.org/austin.

Gethsemane Lutheran Church, constructed in 1962, serves as a replacement for The Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church at 16th and Congress in Austin, now a historical landmark. The pastor, Karl Gronberg, has Swedish ancestors and will conduct Julotta, partly in Swedish, at 8:00 a.m. on Christmas morning.

Invitation to Dinner

You are cordially invited to a dinner to be held on Tuesday, November 11, 2008, with the Swedish Ambassador to the U.S., Jonas Hafström, as the guest of honor. The dinner, jointly sponsored by The Consulate of Sweden in Houston and The Swedish American Chamber of Commerce (SACC), Texas, also celebrates the 25th anniversary of SACC Texas and the appointment of Jan Dryselius, founding member and former president of The Swedish Club of Houston, as Honorary Consul General with expanded territories (Oklahoma and Arkansas).

The deadline for reservations is Thursday, November 7, 2008. For more details, see the official invitation and reservation form on page 9.

News from Sweden (from Swedish Council of America's September and October 2008 eUPDATEs)

- → The American soprano Renée Fleming and the British rock group Pink Floyd received this year's Polar Music Prize. The awards were bestowed by King Carl XVI Gustaf, in Stockholm. The Polar Music Prize was founded in 1989 by Stig "Stikkan" Anderson and is awarded for "exceptional lifetime achievements, transcending musical genres and breaking down musical boundaries."
- → October 8, 2008, marked the 50th anniversary of the implantable pacemaker. The technology for the device was developed by Rune Elmqvist, M.D., of the Swedish company Elema Schonander, and implanted in Mr. Arne Larson by Åke Senning, M.D., at the Karolinska Hospital's Heart Clinic in Stockholm. Elema Schonander later became part of St. Jude Medical based in St. Paul, MN.
- → Driving in Sweden became smarter with the opening of an intelligent stretch of road between Piteå and Luleå. 400 solar-powered devices have been installed to warn motorists of traffic jams and dangerous driving conditions.

Celebrating Selma Lagerlöf

(From Swedish Council of America eUPDATE, October 2008)



150 years ago this month, Selma Lagerlöf (1858-1940) was born at Mårbacka in Östra Ämterviks parish, Värmland, Sweden. Lagerlöf is one of Sweden's most well-known authors. In 1909, she became the first Swede and the first female to be awarded the Nobel Prize for literature, "in appreciation

of the lofty idealism, vivid imagination and spiritual perception that characterize her writings." Her first novel, *Gösta Berlings saga*, was published in 1891 and is said to be her best novel of all time. Other significant works include *Jerusalem* (1902) and *Nils Holgerssons underbara resa genom Sverige* [*The Wonderful Adventures of Nils*] (1906). These titles, and many others of her books, continue to be sought after and have been printed in several printings.

Additionally, many titles have become prizewinning films, including "Gösta Berlings Saga" which began Greta Garbo's mythical career. The portrait of Selma Lagerlöf is found on Sweden's 20 kronor banknote. In addition to being a prolific author, she was engaged early in societal questions fighting for woman's rights, voting rights and against militarism. Selma was well-traveled and fashion conscious. She was also a businesswoman, farmer and politician. She was modern for her time, and her literary works still resonate in today's society.

Stuck in the Mud at Post Oak Island released in October

Charlene Hanson Jordan's new book, *Stuck in the Mud at Post Oak Island*, about the Swedes at the community of Type, east of Austin, was recently released. The book is about the people, especially the Swedes, who lived at Post Oak Island, a community named for an isolated grove of post oak trees on the prairie where the buffalo used to come (and where they still graze), between the time of the Republic of Texas and World War II.

This illustrated history is about both the people and the place. Told in the words of the people who lived it, the book portrays their culture, their tragedies and triumphs, where they came from in Sweden and how they changed as the place changed. Ninety-five photographs are included, some of which are rare, such as a car stuck in the mud, a KKK funeral and interior shots of a "modern" Swedish home at Type, taken about ninety years ago.

The book is written in three parts, with the first section about the early settlers during the period from 1837 to about 1880. The second part is about the Swedes, Danes and Germans at Type on the dividing line between the sand and the prairie, the churches and the saloon. The third describes life on the prairie, particularly Robbins Pasture where Charlene's own Swedish ancestors settled in the 1890s, and descriptions of the wild rose hedges that marked survey lines and the farms carved out of the huge cattle ranges when barbed wire came into use.

To purchase a copy of *Stuck in the Mud at Post Oak Island*, send a check payable to "Charlene Hanson Jordan" for \$25.20 (includes tax and shipping) to Charlene Hanson Jordan, 1361 County Road 464, Elgin, Texas 78621.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Laura,

First of all, thank you for a very informative and interesting newsletter. I read it early this morning. I was "uppe med tuppen" as we put it in Swedish as "demolishers" are coming to tear down the ceiling and the walls in my bedroom and my living room. My house was hit hard by Ike.

I have spent the whole summer in Sweden and was ready to return to Houston when the bad rumor reached me that Ike could hit Houston. My daughter in Sweden tried to persuade me to stay in Sweden (*Du är inte klok mamma om Du åker*²), and my children in America also tried to stop me (*Mamma, nu är det vi som talar om för Dig vad Du ska göra och DU LYDER—det brukar vara tvärtom*³).

But my return ticket had the date September 11, and nothing could stop me from taking that flight. I arrived in Houston just in time to be able to empty that part of my home where I had all my Swedish furniture and valuables. I and my son Erik worked hard but did not have time to do anything about the bedroom. We had to leave Houston because Ike came closer and closer.

Halfway to Austin I remembered that the picture of my husband's great-grandmother was hanging close to the window in the bedroom. But we could not return to Houston and save that. When we came back after the hurricane and saw the total mess, I found that great-grandmother was in perfect shape despite that the wall her picture was hanging on was very damaged.

My home is on the bayou, and erosion had taken away the support for the trees along the bayou. The largest tree could not stand up against Ike. It fell over my house and came into my living room and bedroom with the whole crown resting on my roof.

I was lucky to remember that one of my Swedish friends, Elvy Condon, was married to a builder, Richard Condon. Elvy died several years ago and Richard had retired. Richard's son, Eric Condon, had taken over his father's business, and I called him. He and his wonderful crew are now working hard to

¹up with the rooster

restore my Swedish home, and I have a good feeling I am "in good hands."

Gunhild Jansson October 2, 2008

P.S. You may put my letter in the Swedish Club News. Very many of my friends in the Club have been to my home during all these years. My husband Birger was one of the founders of the Club.

(Editor's note: Gunhild, we are all very thankful that your experience with Ike has such a good ending and that great-grandmother survived the storm. Thank you for sharing this with us.)

The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo now available in the U.S.

The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo, by Swedish author Stieg Larsson, is an international best-selling sensation, with millions of copies sold. The highly anticipated U.S. edition, translated by Reg Keeland, was published on September 16, 2008, by Alfred A. Knopf.

The novel is a spellbinding amalgam of murder mystery, family saga, love story, and financial intrigue. Mikael Blomkvist, an investigative journalist recently at the wrong end of a libel case, is hired to uncover the fate of Harriet Vanger, a young scion of one of Sweden's wealthiest families, who disappeared mysteriously more than 40 years ago. Lisbeth Salander, a 24-year-old pierced and tattooed genius hacker with the hard-earned wisdom of someone twice her age, assists Blomkvist with the investigation. This unlikely team discovers a vein of nearly unfathomable iniquity running through the Vanger family, astonishing corruption in the highest echelons of Swedish industrialism, and an unexpected connection to each other.

Stieg Larsson was editor-in-chief of the Swedish magazine Expo and one of the world's leading experts on anti-democratic, right-wing extremist and neo-Nazi organizations. He died in 2004 at the age of 50, shortly after delivering the manuscript for this and two subsequent novels.

(from "Fresh from Sweden, September 2008," the newsletter of the Consulate General of Sweden in New York, www.swedennewyork.com.)

²You are crazy, Mamma, if you go.

³Mamma, now we are the ones telling you what you should do, and you need to obey—it's usually the other way around.

Faces from Smörgåsbord 2008



Ingrid Philipson and Christopher and Devon Westerlund welcomed and checked in guests.



The cold foods table was set with a beautiful array.



Margaret St.Clair, SCH President, introduced our 2008 Lucia, Eden Shapiro



Eric and Bianca Condon's daughter danced to Joyce Calderon's accordion music.



Eden, with her parents, Dianna and Adrian Shapiro, standing nearby, expressed her appreciation at being selected as Lucia 2008.



The Wolz family (Erich, Karen and Christian) and Karen's mother



Richard Condon and Mona Raspler

Photos of Sweden

Peter Drysdale coordinates the exchange program between Mays Business School at Texas A&M University and Jönköping International Business School (JIBS) in Jönköping, Sweden. JIBS has a similar exchange program with the business school at Baylor University. Peter recently returned from a visit to Scandinavia and shared these photos with SCH.

(Editor's note: These photos really make me want to get on a plane to Sweden!)



Jönköping International Business School



The open-air museum, Skansen, is a great place to take in the autumn beauty of Stockholm.



View from the Castle in Kalmar



(left to right) Carl Lejon, Peter Drysdale, and Jakob Persson enjoy a sunny fall day in Stockholm. Carl and Jakob attended Texas A&M University in 2005-2006; they now live in Stockholm.



Biologiska Museet in Stockholm



Fall colors at Skansen



A quiet morning street scene in Kalmar







The Swedish American Chamber of Commerce, Texas

Cordially invite you to a dinner featuring

Celebration of the **25**th Anniversary of The Swedish American Chamber of Commerce, Texas &

Appointment of Honorary Consul General Jan Dryselius

Guest of Honor

The Swedish Ambassador to the U.S. Jonas Hafström

Tuesday, November 11, 2008 at The Petroleum Club, 800 Bell, 44th Floor The Coastal Room Reception: 6.30 pm, Dinner: 7.00 pm

Underwritten by: SACC Texas, Houston & Nanotox Inc.



To register: Please complete and return the form by Friday, November 7, 2008, to:

Astrid Marklund, 4130 Pine Crest Trail, Houston, TX 77059

Checks payable to: SACC Texas

Price per person: \$35 Please reserve for	person(s)	Amount:
Name:		
Company:		
Phone:		
Visa MasterCard	AMEX	Exp. Date
Credit Card No:		
Signature:		



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 ljmillikan@sbcglobal.net
or by post to the return address below.

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