



THE SWEDISH CLUB NEWS

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

November/December

2009

Volume XXII-No. 6

Christmas Traditions and Luciadagen

Saturday, December 12, 2009
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

*Natten går tunga fjät runt gård och stuva.
Kring jord, som sol'n förlät, skuggorna ruva.
Då i vårt mörka hus stiger med tända ljus
Sankta Lucia, Sankta Lucia.*

Nightly, go heavy hearts round farm and
steading.
On earth, where sun departs, shadows are
spreading.
Then on our darkest night, comes with her
shining light
Sankta Lucia! Sankta Lucia!

On December 12 the familiar strains of *Sankta Lucia* will once again be heard as The Swedish Club of Houston holds its annual Christmas Traditions and *Luciadagen*. Lucia 2009, Athena Flusche, will be dressed in a long white gown with a red ribbon at her waist and a crown of lit candles on her head. She will lead a procession of similarly dressed attendants and starboys in singing the traditional Lucia song.

The 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. As always, the service will include the singing of traditional Swedish Christmas songs, readings from the Old and New Testament and a homily.

After the service, guests will gather in Parish Hall to socialize and enjoy traditional *Luciadag* refreshments such as *lussekatter* (saffron-flavored buns), *pepparkakor* (ginger cookies), *lingondryck* (lingonberry drink), *kaffe* and *glögg*. The Scandinavian Folkdancers of Houston will perform traditional Scandinavian folk dances and everyone can sing and dance around the Christmas tree. Guests can shop the Bazaar and Bake Sale—great opportunities for

purchasing those special holiday gifts! There will also be treats for the children and a visit from the *jultomte*.

The event is open to the public and admission is free.

Välkommen och God Jul!
Welcome and Merry Christmas!

Attendants and star boys wanted

Girls (ages 5 to 20) and boys (ages 5 to 15) are invited to participate as attendants and *stjärngossar* (star boys) in the Lucia procession. Attendants wear all-white clothing with silver trim and accessories which the Club provides, although anyone having his/her own outfit is encouraged to wear it.

During the service, attendants will be singing *Sankta Lucia* and *Stilla natt* (in Swedish). In order for the children to become familiar with the songs, participants will be sent in advance a CD of the songs. Please RSVP to Margaret St.Clair, at margestclair@hotmail.com or 281-493-4978, or Diana Rodionov, at drodionov@comcast.net or 281-636-8153, if your child will be participating.

Adult help is needed, too!

Although you may be too old to be an attendant or starboy, never fear! There are plenty of other ways for you to join in the fun. 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 Margaret St.Clair, at margestclair@hotmail.com or 281-493-4978, or Diana Rodionov, at drodionov@comcast.net or 281-636-8153.

Lucia 2009

Athena Flusche, daughter of Jay Flusche and Judy Flusche, has been selected as our Lucia for 2009. She is 18 years old and a senior at St. Agnes Academy. Her many interests include horseback riding, swimming, listening to music, dancing and reading. She also enjoys traveling and learning about new cultures. In recent summers she has gone to Ecuador on medical mission trips. Other travels have taken her to Greece and Turkey. Athena is active in her parish youth group and sings in the church choir. One of her favorite activities in school is theatre. She recently performed in To Kill a Mockingbird at St. Thomas High School.

Athena plans to attend college next year, possibly with a double major in Mechanical Engineering and Physics. Here is her story in her own words:

Texas, Germany, and Sweden All Rolled into One

I am a native Texan, born and raised in Houston, Texas, and have always been proud of my Texan heritage. I am able to explore and learn more about my Texan heritage because of the benefit of living here. The thing is, I am not only Texan, I am also Swedish, German, and bits of random countries mixed in. I have always been proud of my mixed heritage. I am a



curious person; I want to learn more about different countries. I have grown up embracing both my Swedish heritage and my German heritage. Both parents have taught me about the different traditions of each culture ever since I was little. My mother is all Swedish. My mother's grandfather was named Karl Lennart Svensson. His family lives primarily in Malmö, Lund, and Helsingborg—all in the southern tip of Sweden. My mother's other grandfather was named Eric Anders Rosenholm. His family lives primarily in Ramvik, about halfway up the eastern coast of Sweden. Both men came to the USA in their teens in the early 1900s. We still have many family members living in Sweden that my mother keeps in touch with.

My father, Jay Flusche, has been a part of the Swedish Club for as long as I can remember. I have been part of the folk dance group, gone to the summer picnics, and have been to a crawfish boil. I have been attending the Lucia celebration ever since I was little, whether I was an attendant or just a person in the crowd. I also have helped in the kitchen during the Lucia celebration. I love that I can learn more about my culture through the club. It would be my honor to be the Lucia this upcoming year. I would enjoy representing the Swedish Club and getting to experience Swedish culture.

Swedish Council of America adds new resource on web site

The Swedish Council of America is proud to announce the launch of a new addition to the Resource pages of their web site. They have made electronic copies of every article from the 1987-1999 issues of *Sweden & America* and plan over the next year to sort those articles into topics and publish them on the web site.

They start this month with the **Food and Recipe** articles, which were written primarily by Eja Nilsson. The articles and accompanying recipes were miniature lessons in Swedish geography, seasonal cooking and history. In the coming months, web pages will be launched on a variety of other topics, including Politics and Society, Arts and Crafts, and Immigration and Genealogy.

Check out the "Resources" page at www.swedishcouncil.org and enjoy reading the articles and trying the recipes!

Save the Date!

What: Annual Meeting/Pancake & Pea Soup Dinner
When: Saturday, January 23, 2009
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Where: Christ the King Lutheran Church,
2353 Rice Boulevard, Houston

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

From the Consulate General . . .

2909 Hillcroft Street, Suite 515

Houston, TX 77057

Phone: 713-953-1417

Web site: <http://www.swedishconsulate.org/>

Email: houston@consulateofsweden.org



Season's Greetings!

Riksdag election 2010

In September 2010 elections to the *riksdag*, the municipalities and the county councils will be held in Sweden.

Swedish elections and voting from abroad

Swedes living abroad remain in the electoral registry, and thereby maintain their right to vote, for a period of ten years after their emigration is officially recorded in the national register.


After ten years, a written notification must be submitted to the Swedish National Tax Board (*Skatteverket*) in order to maintain the right to vote for an additional ten-year period. The completed notification form must be received by the National Tax Board at least 30 days before the election date. The form can be downloaded from <http://www.val.se/> and must be mailed to the National Tax Board at the following address:

Skatteverkets inläsningscentral
Enhet 2001
SE - 839 86 Östersund
SWEDEN


If the notification has not been received 30 days before the election date, Swedes abroad who are not in the electoral registry may still have the opportunity to vote. A vote received from abroad by mail or by a Swedish foreign mission will still be counted, if it has reached the Election Authority by 12 p.m. on the day before the election.

Read more at the Swedish Election Authority web site: http://www.val.se/valet_2010.

BITS & PIECES

 As the Consulate General of Sweden in New York closes in January 2010, the government has decided to open an honorary consulate general, which will provide certain consular services and conduct commercial, cultural and public affairs.

The honorary consulate general will open by January 4, and the honorary consul general will be David Dangoor. He has an extensive background in international business and is a member of the Board of Directors of the Swedish-American Chamber of Commerce in New York.

 Swedish guitarist Jimmy Wahlsteen has released his U.S. debut album, *181st Songs*, on Candyrat Records. Wahlsteen plays guitar using his very own personal finger-picking technique and sound over innovative open tunings. The instrumental album contains multi-track recorded material with expressive guitar arrangements and brilliant guest musicians. The core of all songs is the acoustic guitar mixed and enhanced with percussion, strings and lots of additional guitars.

Jimmy Wahlsteen made his name being one of Sweden's most hired session musicians, frequently appearing on Swedish television as musical director and band member on numerous television shows and with touring international artists. Read more at www.candyrat.com.



SCH board member assists NASA with Space Station broadcast

by Christopher Westerlund, Founder and President of Westerlund Consulting

How did a small Swedish-owned consulting and translation firm get to work with NASA?

You guessed it—through the Swedish community. SACC Texas helped with connecting the parties for the live Swedish/English simultaneous translation that took place during the Discovery/ISS 128 flight in September 2009.

Swedish astronaut Christer Fuglesang had two Discovery/ISS in-flight events involving Swedish translation during his time in space, and Westerlund Consulting was there to help both times—one on Friday, September 4, 2009, and the second on Monday, September 7, 2009.

This is an excellent example of how being connected in the Swedish Community can be rewarding on both a personal and business level.



Christopher Westerlund, President of Westerlund Consulting, and Beth Weissinger, Audio Technician, sit in the Audio Control Room at the Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center in Houston.

Why are you a member of SACC Texas and The Swedish Club of Houston?

Being a member of SACC Texas is priceless. SACC Texas can connect you or your company with anyone looking for your services or help you promote your business. They can also provide you with excellent networking opportunities and advice on many different levels.

The Swedish Club of Houston provides me with a home away from home and has so many amazing people with different backgrounds, all with a common interest—Sweden.

How was it to work with NASA?

The professionalism of the people that I met at NASA is phenomenal. I also got a feeling that I was working on something that was larger than life, and this made the atmosphere very special. Since there are so many contractors currently working for NASA, I, as an outsider, was welcomed into the team with open arms. (Westerlund Consulting was hired by a contractor and worked directly with the staff at the Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center.)

How was it to have your voice transmitted live over NASA TV, reaching the whole world via the internet?

Sitting in the same complex a few buildings away from the control room that once put a man on the moon was very exciting and humbling. It was an honor to be able to work with NASA and translate for one of our really great scientists, Christer Fuglesang. The research that he conducts in space is priceless and will help us here on earth in many ways that we don't even know yet. Some of the spinoffs from the space program include water purification systems, virtual reality, golf ball aerodynamics, fire resistant material, breast cancer detection, microlasers and much more. To be able to be part of this is definitely something that I am proud of.

What parties were involved in the event?

NASA, the European Space Agency and various news media such as SVT, TV4, TT, SR, CBS, Reuter and The Houston Chronicle, to name a few.

Did something unexpected happen?

During the first event there was a Norwegian reporter who asked a question in Norwegian. Since I was the only Scandinavian translator I had to translate that as well. It was not a big deal but definitely caught me off guard.

Westerlund Consulting can be reached at 713-499-9903 or info@westerlundconsulting.com.

News from Sweden
(from Swedish Council of America's
September and October 2009
eUPDATES)

→ The Swedish government has approved the controversial Bypass Stockholm (Förbifart Stockholm) traffic link that will cost the state around 27 billion kronor (\$3.75 billion). The decision has been criticized by the Green Party (Miljöpartiet), the Left Party (Vänsterpartiet) and the environmental movement, which say that the plan will cause a large increase in carbon dioxide emissions. The motorway will connect the Stockholm region's southern and northern areas—from Skärholmen, south of Stockholm, to Häggvik in the north—and will pass to the west of the city, relieving the heavy traffic around Essingeleden.

→ In Sweden's west coast archipelago one finds the tiny Koster islands. As of September 2009, these two tourist magnets and the sea around them make up Sweden's first marine national park, 100 years after Europe's first national parks were created in Sweden. It's the unique marine wildlife of the area that makes it worth protecting. As Sweden's only cold-water coral reef, Kosterhavet harbors 300 species not found anywhere else. Harbor seals and the gigantic basking shark might also be spotted here. With around 6,000 species in total, this is the most species-rich area in Sweden.

→ FamilySearch and Svensk Arkivinformation (SVAR), a division of the National Archives of Sweden, have recently launched the largest online indexing initiative undertaken to date. The two groups unveiled plans to engage Swedish volunteers throughout the world to help create a highly searchable, free online index to the historic parish registers of Sweden—200 years of recorded Swedish history as documented in the Sweden church records—comprising over 400 million names. "The church records are a key source for genealogists seeking Swedish ancestors because nearly everyone who lived in Sweden was recorded in a church record," said David Rencher, FamilySearch chief genealogical officer.

Volunteers need only Internet access and the ability to read Swedish to contribute to this historic effort. A unique quality control process ensures a

highly accurate, finished index. The project will start with records from Örebro, Uppsala, and Södermanland counties. Indexing will begin with the earliest year available for each parish and continue through 1860. A typical downloaded "batch" (group of records) will take a volunteer about 30 to 40 minutes to complete. The indexing utility has built-in tutorials and helps. Anyone interested in volunteering for the Sweden Church Records project can do so at www.familysearchindexing.org.

→ Collectors and Ingmar Bergman fans proved willing to pay far more than expected for a range of the legendary film maker's personal items auctioned off in Stockholm recently. A total of 339 objects from Bergman's home on the remote Baltic island of Fårö were for sale, in line with his wishes to avoid disputes within his large family—he had nine children by six women—over his belongings. A chipped and incomplete chess set believed to have been featured in one of Ingmar Bergman's best known films fetched one of the highest bids at a special auction for the late director's belongings, auction house officials said.

Places to go and things to see . . .

Galveston, TX - The exhibit "*Forgotten Gateway: Coming to America through Galveston Island*" opened at Moody Gardens Discovery Pyramid on November 21 and will run through September 11, 2010. The traveling exhibit chronicles the Port of Galveston's largely forgotten history as a major gateway to American immigration from 1845 to 1924.

On Saturday, December 5, tentatively scheduled to begin at 1:00 p.m., Jan Faubion, member of the Carl Widen Vasa Lodge #743 in Austin, will talk briefly about Swedish emigration to the Central Texas area and show family heirlooms.

For the rest of the afternoon until about 5:00 p.m., Jan and her son Rob will demonstrate making holiday ornaments out of wheat straw. Children can make one to take home as a souvenir of their visit to the exhibit.

At about 3:00 p.m., Rob will present a Swedish story time about the tomte.

Admission to the exhibit is \$8.95 for adults.

For directions and updated information, see http://www.moodygardens.com/attractions/discovery_museum.



Reading Corner

The Saga of Gösta Berling, by Selma Lagerlöf (author); Paul Norlen (translator)

One hundred years ago, Selma Lagerlöf became the first woman to win the Nobel Prize in Literature. She assured her place in Swedish letters with this sweeping historical epic, her first and best-loved novel, and the basis for the 1924 silent film of the same name that launched Greta Garbo to stardom. Set in 1820s Sweden, it tells the story of a defrocked minister named Gösta Berling. After his appetite for alcohol and previous indiscretions end his career, Berling finds a home at Ekeby, an ironworks estate owned by Margareta Celsing, the "Majoress," that also houses an assortment of eccentric veterans of the Napoleonic Wars. Berling's defiant and poetic spirit proves magnetic to a string of women, who fall under his spell against the backdrop of political intrigue at Margareta's estate and the magnificent wintry beauty of rural Sweden.

This edition, recently published by Penguin Classics, is the first new English translation in more than 100 years and includes an introduction by George Schoolfield, professor emeritus of Scandinavian literature at Yale University.

Source: Consulate General of Sweden in New York's *Fresh from Sweden*, November 2009

The Pied Piper of Sweden, by Tom Steele

This historical novel is the story of the tragic breakdown of a 19th century utopian experiment called the Bishop Hill Colony. The colony was established in 1846 as a Swedish religious haven on the western Illinois frontier. Today, Bishop Hill is a village of 125 people, and a registered national historic site. In the Bishop Hill Cemetery, a tall gravestone marks the spot where the remains of the village founder were put to rest. Engraved on the monument are the words, "Murdered May 13, 1850."

The founder of the Bishop Hill Colony was Erik Jansson, yet only slight mention is made of him in modern tourist brochures. Promotional literature for the village glosses over Jansson's mismanagement of the colony and the tyranny of his religious doctrine.

The focus of Steele's novel is Jansson's delusional nature and his assertion that he was the second coming of Christ. Of particular interest is the story of Charlotta Jansdotter, Jansson's cousin, who is forced to choose between her spiritual devotion to Erik Jansson and her passionate love for John Root, the man who murders Jansson.

Source: Tom Steele, author

A Faraway Island, by Annika Thor (author); Linda Schenck (Translator)

The young adult novel *A Faraway Island* by Swedish author Annika Thor was recently published in the U.S. by Delacorte Press. It is the first of four books about 12-year-old Stephanie Steiner and 8-year-old Nellie, Jewish sisters from Vienna who are sent to Sweden to escape the Nazis in 1939. They expect to stay there six months, until their parents can flee to Amsterdam; then all four will go to America. But as the world war intensifies, the girls remain, each with her own host family, on a rugged island off the western coast of Sweden.

Nellie quickly settles in to her new surroundings. She's happy with her foster family and soon favors the Swedish language over her native German. Not so for Stephanie, who finds it hard to adapt; she feels stranded at the end of the world, with a foster mother who's as cold and unforgiving as the island itself. Her main worry, though, is her parents—and whether she will ever see them again.

The books were bestsellers and were adapted into a popular television series in Sweden.

Source: Consulate General of Sweden in New York's *Fresh from Sweden*, November 2009

Lucia, Saint of Light, by Katherine Bolger Hyde

Long revered in both East and West, St. Lucia is an early virgin martyr whose life and legacy shine as a light of faith, hope, and compassion in the darkness of winter and sin. This beautiful children's book tells the story of St. Lucia's life within a story of a contemporary Swedish-American family celebrating her festival. Daria Fisher's warm and vivid illustrations lend a real Scandinavian flavor to the book and will make it a favorite with children and parents alike. *Lucia, Saint of Light* makes an excellent gift for those who love St. Lucia as well as for those who may not yet be familiar with her.

Source: Katherine Hyde, author

Scenes from Smörgåsbord 2009



Ingrid Philipson and Christopher Westerlund welcomed guests.



Joyce Calderon entertained everyone with her accordion.



Gunhild Jansson, Carol Clarke and Margaret St.Clair



Mark Swanson and Mona Raspler



SCH President Cathy Wahren and Erich Wolz



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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, and your favorite Swedish shops, products or resources.

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

OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

| | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Cathy Wahren | President | president@swedishclub.org |
| Karen Wolz | Vice President | vicepresident@swedishclub.org |
| David Bash | Treasurer | treasurer@swedishclub.org |
| Diana Rodionov | Secretary | secretary@swedishclub.org |
| Laura Millikan | Newsletter Editor | newsletter@swedishclub.org |
| Ingrid Philipson | Publicity | publicity @swedishclub.org |
| John Stavinoha | Membership & Language School | membership@swedishclub.org |
| Christopher Westerlund | Sponsor relations/svensk talande | svensk@swedishclub.org |
| Erich Wolz | Webmaster | webmaster@swedishclub.org |
| Dina Colburn | Director | djcolburn@yahoo.com |
| Elisse Karlsson | Director | ehayes38@aol.com |
| Fredrik Rehnmark | Director | fredrikr@sbcglobal.net |
| Margaret St.Clair | Director | margestclair@hotmail.com |
| Mark Swanson | Director | m.swanson@shell.com |



THE SWEDISH CLUB NEWS

c/o Laura Millikan
6102 S. Sumac Drive
Pearland, TX 77584-8064

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED