



# THE SWEDISH CLUB NEWS

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

January/February

2010

Volume XXIII-No. 1



## President's Column

*by Cathy Wahren*

I hope every member's holiday was wonderful. It's always nice to have a few days off, of course, but the part I like best is the decorating and cooking. Sometimes it gets to be too much, or you're not in the mood, but once all the decorations are up with timers turning on the lights before I get home I really love it. I'm the middle daughter in my family and have in the past few years taken over the Christmas Eve *Smörgåsbord* open house that my mother put on for us for so many years. And a long time before that we went to my Murmur's house, which is where my Swedish holiday traditions initially took shape. Murmur was lucky in that she had 13 grandchildren of all roughly the same age to enjoy—four of them, including myself, born in 1960! I can just imagine what a banner year that was with my Mom and three aunts all walking around pregnant at the same time. My "holiday history" is a little unusual, because we were raised in Argentina, in the southern hemisphere—so our Christmases were in the summertime. That was just great as far as I was concerned because I loved being able to play in the sun and at the beach with my cousins and all our new toys. The various uncles would take turns as our *jultomte*, dressing up in a heavy coat and hat as though they thought it should be cold outside. Each one used a different ruse to keep the children from figuring out who he was. I also remember singing (sort of) Swedish carols around a freshly cut tree with real candles clipped to the branches. We never had a mishap, but there was a bucket of water nearby, just in case . . . .

Back to the present! We're having our Annual Meeting at Christ the King church again this year with all the board members pitching in with the cooking. Some of you may have received a call inviting your participation for this and other events in 2010, but you don't need to wait for a call—anyone interested in participating is welcome to call or email any of the board members.

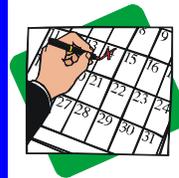
We have some board positions open and are always happy to put volunteers to use on one of our party committees. Even something as simple as well wishes or a new idea is good to hear. Our board meetings are typically held at IKEA every 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday and anyone may attend, but call first to confirm location just in case, as we may vary the venue from time to time. Lastly, our Spring event, the date for our *Kräftskiva* (crawfish dinner) is already set for March 27 at the Monument Inn in La Porte—looking forward to that!!

*Cathy*

## Membership renewals due

A new dues year began January 1<sup>st</sup>. Annual dues are \$35 for a family membership, \$25 for an individual or \$10 for students.

Renew your membership now either *online* at [www.swedishclub.org](http://www.swedishclub.org) or *by mail* by completing the form on page 7 and sending it with your check payable to "Swedish Club of Houston" to John Stavinoaha, 807 Mulberry Lane, Bellaire, TX 77401.



## Mark your calendar Upcoming 2010 SCH Events

**Saturday, March 27 - *Kräftskiva* (Crayfish Boil)**  
at Monument Inn

**Saturday, April 24 - *Valborgsmässoafton***  
Bonfire/Barbecue near Brenham

Watch for details in the March/April SCH News.



## Check out the redesigned SCH web site!

*Tusen tack!* (thousand thanks) to Erich Wolz, SCH Webmaster, who has been hard at work in recent months redesigning the club's web site, [www.swedishclub.org](http://www.swedishclub.org). This was done, in part, because in the past only the webmaster could make changes to the web site. Also, because of the way the web site was originally designed, making any substantive structural changes was a very tedious process, even for the webmaster.

With the redesign, in addition to the very visible new look for the web site, Erich made changes to the basic structure, which will among other things allow persons other than himself to contribute to and share stored data, like Board minutes, treasurer reports, event reports, etc. It will also now be easier to control access to data, based on user roles which define each user according to what information he/she may view or edit.

So check it out! Click around on the web site, see what all you can find, and then take the poll ("Do you like the new look and feel of the site?") on the home page. Erich just asks that we remember the new site is still a work-in-progress, so if you have a suggestion or comment, if there's something you don't like or something you'd like to see added, please contact the webmaster via the 'Contact Us' link at the top of the page.

### From the Consulate General . . .

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Houston, TX 77057

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

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Photo: imagebank.sweden.se © Bo Lind/Visit Sweden

*God fortsättning på det nya året.*

(Good continuation of the new year.)

## BITS & PIECES

 The Austin Nordic Film Fest, part of the 2009/10 Nordic Film Fest season in the U.S., is scheduled for Saturday, February 27, at the Bob Bullock Texas History Museum in downtown Austin. "Many high-quality films come out of the Nordic countries, and so few make it into the mainstream U.S. market," says Henrik Johansson, Austin-based Swedish screenwriter and producer. "Nordic film makers often bring a different sensibility to their work than you typically see, making these Nordic film fests unique opportunities for local film lovers. Here's a chance to see great films that otherwise you would probably miss."

Films tentatively scheduled include two feature films—"Everlasting Moments" (Sweden) and "Flame and Citron" (Denmark)—and a variety of Finnish and Icelandic short films. For more information, see <http://nordicfilmfest.com>.

 [Sweden.se](http://Sweden.se) has created a new web site to attract workers to Sweden. [Workinginsweden.se](http://Workinginsweden.se) aims to guide and inform anyone who is interested in moving to Sweden for work. It is part of a broad effort to meet the shortage of labor expected to confront the Swedish labor market over the next few decades.

### Places to go and things to see . . .

New York, NY - Scandinavia House presents "A Child's Adventure in the Swedish Countryside," a new interactive installation based on Swedish children's literature. The interactive playscape lets children explore, read and hear stories while surrounded by vibrant murals evocative of bucolic Swedish landscapes. Kids will encounter a fantasy city skyline inspired by simple, bright building blocks. They can explore woodland-inspired designs, go camping in a tent with Findus the Cat or play in Elsa Beskow's capricious hat house. The installation is created by designer Sarah Edkins and supported by the Consulate General of Sweden. It is on permanent display at Scandinavia House and is open to the public Saturdays, noon-5pm. Admission is \$5 per child, and children must be walking on their own to be admitted.

See [scandinaviahouse.org/events\\_kids.html](http://scandinaviahouse.org/events_kids.html) for more information.

## Cruise the Western Caribbean with Swedish band, "Streaplers"

This Easter, join the Swedish band Streaplers and the Norwegian dance company Kom og Dans (Come and Dance) on an unforgettable 7-day cruise to Jamaica, Grand Cayman and Cozumel. The cruise leaves from Galveston on Sunday, March 28, 2010, on the large and modern Carnival Conquest and returns on Easter Sunday, April 4.

Onboard, enjoy parties with Streaplers and get swing, Swedish Bugg and line dance classes and demonstrations from Kom og Dans. (A fee of \$100 cash per person is payable for the dance classes on the first day of the cruise.)



Streaplers is a Swedish musical group which was founded in 1959 as a pop group but later developed into a dance band. Considered Scandinavia's best dance band for swing and Bugg (a

variation of jitterbug), they released their 50<sup>th</sup> CD, "Ett år i taget" (One Year at a Time) this past November.

If you book the cruise, be sure to select the 2<sup>nd</sup> dinner seating. Also, Kom og Dans instructors would like to know ahead of time who wants to take the dance classes, and Leif Mauritzson, former Swedish Club President, has agreed to act as liaison/contact person. If you will be on the cruise, please let Leif know by at least Friday, March 12. He can be reached by phone, 936-321-8552 (home) or 281-797-7437 (cell), or e-mail, [lmauritzson001@comcast.net](mailto:lmauritzson001@comcast.net), and will be glad to answer any questions.

For more information on the cruise, see [www.carnival.com](http://www.carnival.com). For more information about Streaplers, see [www.streaplers.se](http://www.streaplers.se) (in Swedish). (Editor's note: When I googled "Streaplers," the second entry was for the Streaplers home page and gave me the option to translate the web site.)

*Editor's note: The following letter was received recently from new SCH member Lou Higginbotham. Lou and his wife, Anita, live in Littleton, CO, but take an active interest in many different Swedish-American organizations, as witnessed by his letter.*

Dear Swedes and non-Swedes,

I am a non-Swede. My wife is a Swede. She is very good at keeping the Swedish traditions. A "Swedish" trip to Chicago and visits to Swedesburg, Iowa, and Stanton, Iowa, started me on a project to learn all I could about "Swedish America."

I have visited many web sites where I have found museums, clubs and civic organizations that are keeping the Swedish traditions and history. I have four notebooks of information that I have gathered from these web sites.

There is a lot to learn from this amazing invention called the Internet. In Stanton, Iowa, there is a very nice museum. Swedesburg, Iowa, has a nice gift shop. The Swedish clubs in Houston, Portland and St. Louis have extremely interesting newsletters. They are well worth reading. My wife Anita's favorite newsletter is the "Gult och Blått" from St. Louis. Denver has a large and very active Swedish club. The recent Lucia Festival was very impressive.

Minneapolis is fortunate enough to have a mansion in which to house their museum and gift shop. There are *midsommar* celebrations in many parts of our country. In San Diego, the House of Sweden in Balboa Park serves coffee and Swedish pastries to the public every Sunday, noon to 4:00 p.m. They also have a very nice directory for members.

In little Wausa, Nebraska, (named after Gustavus I Vasa) there is much evidence of its Swedish heritage. In Chicago and Detroit, there are Swedish choruses. Anita and I were fortunate enough to attend a rehearsal of the Chicago Swedish Glee Club, which was organized in 1869 and is the second oldest male chorus in the United States.

I get excited about all these places, people and traditional activities and can hardly wait to visit as many as life will allow. My dream is that we with Swedish interests would become acquainted with this "Swedish America" and support it in any way we can.

With best wishes,  
Louis Higginbotham

## Christmas Traditions and Luciadagen 2009

by Margaret St.Clair

A great time was had by all at The Swedish Club of Houston's 22<sup>nd</sup> annual Christmas Traditions and Lucia Celebration held on Saturday, December 12, at Christ the King Lutheran Church. About 200 guests, who were greeted in the narthex by board member Fredrik Rehnmark, filled the sanctuary for the Service of the Word. It began with a prelude, by organist Mark Mummert, of Christmas songs most beloved by Swedes. Club president Cathy Wahren welcomed the guests, and Pastor Robert Moore officiated. Vocalists Howard Phillips and Veronica Corell Butler, along with the audience, sang the traditional Swedish Christmas songs: *När juldagsmorgon glimmar*, *Nu tändas tusen juleljus*, and *Gläns över sjö och strand*.



2009 Lucia, Athena Flusche

The highlight of the service was the beautiful candle-lit procession led by 2009 Lucia, Athena Flusche. Athena and her 22 attendants and starboys processed as everyone sang *Sankta Lucia*. Next, Margaret St.Clair introduced Athena while Diana Rodionov placed a pewter Lucia necklace around her neck, and the organist played *Lucia sången*. With candles still lit, all

sang *Stilla natt* before recessing.

The celebration then adjourned to the Parish Hall which was attractively arranged and decorated by Karen Wolz, Dave St.Clair, Fredrik Rehnmark and Cathy Wahren. Jay Flusche brought the fresh evergreen tree which was decorated with lights, Swedish flags, straw ornaments and *julgranskarameller* (traditional Swedish candies). The latter were made by Jackie and Claire Anderson, Cathy Wahren, Dina Jo Colburn, Diana Rodionov and Margaret St.Clair. Margaret and Diana also made the fresh evergreen table centerpieces. Thanks to all, including Lynn Mauritzson, who provided homemade

cookies/breads for the refreshments and Bake Sale. Also, many thanks to Carol Clarke, who once again served as kitchen chair, and to her assistants, Dina Jo Colburn and Elisse Karlsson. The delicious *glögg* was prepared by Ingrid Llanos.

Entertainment was provided by Joyce Calderon playing the accordion, and by the Scandinavian Folk Dancers of Houston.

Howard Phillips, one of the dancers, led guests in singing and dancing around the tree. The children especially enjoyed this



The kids gathered around *Jultomten*.

activity—particularly because it was followed by a visit from the *jultomte* (a.k.a. Al Clarke) who appeared bearing *julgranskarameller*!

In addition to enjoying music, dancing and typical Swedish refreshments, guests also strolled the various sales booths and perused the items for raffle. *Tusen tack* (thousand thanks) to the Rod Anderson family who once again chaired the successful Swedish bazaar. Thanks also to the Pelle Fisk family for their generous donation of Swedish books for the Book Sale and to Karen Wolz for manning the sales table. Guests also shopped at Joyce Calderon's *rosmålning* booth, the Club t-shirts sales table and the Bake Sale. The raffle proved very successful thanks to the generous donation of a gift basket from IKEA, a beautiful Gingerbread House made by member Lynn Mauritzson and a varied assortment of Swedish items. Also contributing to the raffle's success were ticket sellers, Ingrid and Annette Philipson.

Our Lucia, Athena Flusche, and her family were introduced during the reception. In attendance were her parents, Jay and Judy, along with members of Athena's extended family. Athena's Swedish roots lie on her mother's side, with both great-grandfathers emigrating from Sweden to the United States in the 1900s. Athena is well-deserving of the honor of representing the Club next August 1<sup>st</sup> in Barkeryd, Sweden, at their Texas-Swedish Festival. Hopefully, her transportation from Houston to Scandinavia will once again be provided by Continental Airlines. The

Swedish Club appreciates so very much Continental's support in sending last year's Lucia to Sweden.

The Swedish Club also thanks the staff of Christ the King Lutheran Church for hosting the Christmas

Traditions and Lucia Celebration. Margaret is grateful for the assistance of Diana Rodionov, Nancy Webb and unnamed others who made this event the success that it was.

**It takes a lot of people to make *Luciadagen* a success, including . . .**



Diana Rodionov, Dina Colburn and Claire and Jackie Anderson helped make *julgranskarameller* for the children.



Lucia attendants and starboys line up for the procession.



Margaret St.Clair and Athena's mother, Judy Flusche, helped get her ready.



Claire and Jackie Anderson offered a wide variety of Swedish items for sale.



Ingrid Philipson sold raffle tickets.



The Scandinavian Folk Dancers of Houston perform traditional dances.



What would the celebration be without *jultomten*, Allen Clarke?

## News from Sweden (from Swedish Council of America's November and December, 2009, and January, 2010, *eUPDATES*)

→ The global economic crisis has been a growing headache for Skyways, a Swedish airline established in 1987 and previously known as Avia, and the company has been facing severe economic difficulties. The famous Swedish shipping company family Salén and Scandinavian airline SAS have now sold their stakes in the airline to CEO Lars-Åke Bertilsson for the price of one krona (15 cents). "It's been a lot of different proposals to reduce costs. But none of them went on to the goal. This is the best solution," said Staffan Salén. The company's new name will be Avia Express.

→ Five hundred Viking era silver artifacts have been plundered from a site of archaeological interest on the Baltic island of Gotland. The methodical thieves dug some 250 holes in a bid to secure as much booty as possible. It is estimated that the impostors made off with 500 silver pieces worth a combined total of 250,000 to 500,000 kronor (\$35,000 to \$70,000). Following the raid, the field was placed under police surveillance.

→ U.S. President Barack Obama's job creation plan to expand federal support for clean energy, give consumers incentives for home energy efficiency and boost infrastructure investments is good news for a number of Nordic companies and the entire clean-tech sector. Skanska, Electrulux and Vestas are among the companies that may gain from President Obama's new plan to fight unemployment and boost energy efficiency.

→ Nobel week was celebrated in Stockholm during the second week of December. Altogether, 37,000 flowers were imported from San Remo, the Italian city where Alfred Nobel died on 10 December 1896, to decorate Nobel Week's two main venues, Konserthuset and Stadshuset. Konserthuset was decked out in the colors of a wintery Swedish forest; the wall behind the stage was decorated with about 14,000 flowers in various shades of green and white, which were framed by Swedish fir. The laureates in literature, economics, medicine, physics and chemistry received their prizes

at a gala ceremony. The laureates, royal family and specially-invited guests were clad in white-tie dress for men and evening gowns for women. A record five women were awarded Nobels this year—nearly one-eighth of the 41 awards to female recipients in the 108-year history of the prize.

→ The Swedish population grew more in 2009 than it has in any year since 1946, according to new figures from Statistics Sweden. The increase is attributed to high birth and immigration rates, as well as sharply reduced emigration and fewer deaths. At the beginning of 2010, Sweden's population reached 9.34 million. Emigration in 2009 decreased by 15 percent compared to 2008. The number of Swedish citizens relocating to Norway and Finland remained the same, but emigration to the US and UK decreased somewhat. Immigration also contributed to the marked population growth. 102,000 immigrants moved to Sweden 2009. The largest group of immigrants is returning Swedish citizens.

→ Three Swedish universities were rated among the 100 best in the world in 2009: Karolinska Institute (#50), Uppsala University (#76) and Stockholm University (#88). The Academic Ranking of World Universities, published by Jiao Tong University in Shanghai, reviewed a total of 500 universities and based its ratings on research performance, measured in terms of Nobel Prizes and other awards, and publications in scientific journals. Harvard University and Stanford University in the United States topped the list. The best European institution is Cambridge University in the U.K. (#4), while the best Nordic institution is the University of Copenhagen (#43).

→ Seven Swedish companies were included among 200 finalists for the "Global Top 100" award, presented by the weekly magazine Red Herring to honor the leading private technology companies from around the world. "Despite the global economic situation, many good companies have developed innovative and amazing products. It has been very difficult to select the finalists," says Alex Vieux, editor and CEO of Red Herring. Chosen from an analysis of over 1200 companies, the winners were just announced at a gathering of some 500 industry professionals in Laguna Niguel, California, on January 14, 2010. Among the seven Swedish finalists, the company HealthCap earned a Top 100 award.

# Membership Application/Renewal

Membership Type:

- Application
- Renewal

Annual Dues:

- \$35 Family Membership
- \$25 Individual Membership
- \$10 Student Membership

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) and birth year(s) of children living at home: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: Home ( \_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

Work ( \_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: Home \_\_\_\_\_

Work \_\_\_\_\_

Please e-mail my newsletters to:

- Home
- Work
- Both
- Neither; I prefer hard copy

*The following optional information would help us plan club activities:*

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Hobbies: \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

- Single
- Married

Spouse's Hobbies: \_\_\_\_\_

*Yes! I would like to serve on the Board:*

- Officer
- Newsletter
- Membership
- Finance
- Swedish School
- Programs
- Publicity
- Sponsor Relations
- Webmaster

*Yes! I can help chair/co-chair an event:*

- Pea Soup/Pancake Supper
- Kräftskiva* (Crayfish)
- Valborgsmässoafton* (Bonfire)
- Smörgåsbord*
- Lucia
- I have another idea!

*I prefer to help "behind the scenes" with an event:*

- Make baked goods
- Make cookies
- Make craft items
- Help with decorations
- Set up/clean up
- Greeter
- Reporter/Photographer
- Serve refreshments
- Sell raffle tickets

Mail this form, with your check made payable to "**Swedish Club of Houston**," to:

The Swedish Club of Houston  
c/o John Stavinoha  
807 Mulberry Lane  
Bellaire, TX 77401



# 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](mailto:newsletter@swedishclub.org) or by post to the return address below.

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