



THE SWEDISH CLUB NEWS

The Swedish Club of Houston

Preserving Swedish Heritage on the Texas Gulf Coast Since 1986

Crawfish Festivities



"The annual crawfish party or Kräftskivan, took place at the Monument Inn on Saturday evening, March 26th. Over 90 club members and guests took part in the ritual fest. There were several new faces among the crowd, some of whom are now our newest members, **Maria Cordon, Henrik & Ghislaine Thomsen, Nicolas & Christina Lestrer, Charlie Prator, and Jill & Tim Garde.**

Although smaller than usual, the crawfish tended to be softer shelled and easy to harvest. This year there was no musical performance which has been done on even numbered years for the last few occasions. Background Swedish sounds via an iPod were occasionally drowned out by singing of songs about the crawfish, the nubbe, or anything at all.

For next year, we encourage any interested songster to compose a song to a known melody and submit it before the event for printing. We would like to establish a roster of Texas-based songs, English and / or Swedish, to be sung at various events thru the year."

- **John Stavinoha**

In the News

--The Central Bank recently announced an update to the Swedish currency, including both bills and coins. The new bills will sport the likeness of more contemporary Swedish figures, such as Astrid Lindgren and Greta Garbo, and will go into circulation in 2014-2015. The Riksbank is currently asking artistic Swedes to send in their own vision for the new bill designs.

- Riksbank: <http://bit.ly/dEfKUU>
- Wired UK: <http://bit.ly/mSfroV>

--Gevalia coffee makes its debut on American supermarket shelves and retailers across the nation this August. Kraft has decided to expand the brand in order to compete with its main rival, Starbucks. Gevalia is the number one brand of coffee sold in Sweden.

- Kraft: <http://bit.ly/ks4rTO>

--IKEA Houston has given 24 KLIPPAN couches to local artists to decorate in conjunction with the Art Car parade's 24th anniversary. Artists will have free reign to decorate their couches as they see fit. Will one have a Swedish theme? Find out when they go on display at Discovery Green on May 21 or visit the Art Car parade on May 22. If you fancy one of the artistic couches, you can bid on it during an auction benefiting the Orange Show, the organization behind the ever popular and quirky Art Car parade.

- CultureMap Houston: <http://bit.ly/IFKZcE>

Board Members



The 2011 board members were elected in January. The members this year include:

Devon Westerlund - President 2011
Cathy Wahren - Vice President 2011
David Bash - Treasurer 2011
Karen Wolz - Secretary 2011
Erich Wolz - Website 2011
Chris Westerlund - Svensk Talande & MITDC
John Stavinoha - Membership & Lang. School
JoAnna Taves Harlan - Board Member 2011
Elisse Hayes-Karlsson - Board Member 2011
Stina Bengtsson - Publicity 2011
Sara West - Newsletter Editor 2011

Connect to *The Swedish Club*
on



- Get the most up-to-date news
- Find info on the latest gathering
- See photos from club events
- Discover useful pages and links

And more..

Search for "The Swedish Club" then click the Join button.

May Flowers

If you've ever been in Sweden during the last few weeks of April, you may have noticed children everywhere selling small flower pins. What is this tradition and when did it begin?

In 1907, a woman in Gothenburg named Beda Hallberg had an idea. One day, Beda's daughter came home with a flower in her hat she bought on the way back from school. Intrigued by the idea, Beda realized it would be a good way to raise money for the poor. She created a small pin that could be purchased for 10 öre, with the money going to help children in Sweden.

Beda created more than 100,000 plastic *majblommor* during the first year and they were an instant hit. Everyone in Gothenburg sported one, from students and tram drivers to police officers and kids playing in the parks.

The fundraiser soon expanded to other countries, including Germany, Holland, Cuba, and the US. The money raised in these countries went to fight tuberculosis in children.

Today, the tradition is still going strong in Sweden. Children age 9 to 12 sell the flowers all over the country. Plastic *majblommor* are now sold for 10 kr and the money raised still goes to children facing difficulties.

For a radio report about this tradition, point your web browser here: <http://bit.ly/jcBJ1G>

Beda Hallberg helped spread the idea to other countries and, in 1922, the fundraiser was brought to the US.

The May Flower campaign ceased in the US when tuberculosis was brought under control.

Info summarized from majblomman.se

May-Flower Sale Commences Today

Local Swedish People To
Raise Money For Tuberculosis Sanatorium

Members of local Swedish churches and organizations will again undertake the sale of the small artificial flower, called *Majblomman*, the mayflower. The sale will begin today, and continue all through the month of May, the proceeds of the sale going to the support of the Swedish-American national sanatorium for tuberculosis in Denver, Col.



Places to Go and Things to See: compiled by Laura Millikan



The Swedish immigrant experience

Across North America and Sweden, organizations and institutions tell the story of the immigrant experience. This history comes alive through permanent exhibits in Philadelphia, Chicago, Minneapolis, and Seattle.

At the **American Swedish Historical Museum** in **Philadelphia**, three of the museum's 12 galleries are devoted to the history of the New Sweden Colony, established in the Delaware Valley in 1638. A Swedish farmhouse interior honors the large wave of Swedish immigration during the second half of the 19th century. Other galleries focus on more recent Swedish contributions.

At the **Swedish American Museum** in **Chicago**, the permanent exhibit, *A Dream of America— Swedish Immigration to Chicago*, tells a fascinating story that starts in the mid-1800s in Sweden and takes the viewer on a journey from Sweden to the New World. The display chronicles the struggles and triumphs of one immigrant family. Additionally, the Brunk Children's Museum of Immigration offers children the chance to experience immigration first hand.

In **Minneapolis**, the **American Swedish Institute's** permanent exhibit is titled *Swedish Life in the Twin Cities*. Personal diary and journal entries, objects brought from Sweden, family photos, maps and artifacts from the collection, as well as vintage sound recordings and video segments tell the day-to-day story of what life was like for Swedish immigrants in the Twin Cities. The ASI is housed in the 1908

Turnblad mansion, listed on the National Register of Historic Places. [The Turnblad mansion is currently under renovation and is set to re-open in November 2011.]

On the west coast in **Seattle**, the **Nordic Heritage Museum** is dedicated to honoring the legacy of immigrants from the five Nordic countries. The permanent galleries tell the story of immigrants through life-like dioramas in *The Dream of America*, depicting the journey aboard an Atlantic crossing ship, and experiences across the country ending in Ballard. Other galleries focus on the logging and fishing industries in *The Promise of the Northwest*, and heritage rooms and exhibitions which illustrate the bonds and achievements of the Nordic peoples.

In addition to the permanent exhibits, each museum offers visitors the opportunity to learn about other facets of the Swedish and Swedish-American experience. If you are unable to visit in person, take a look at the SCA slideshow highlighting these institutions' work and visit their websites to learn more about these great partners in the promotion of knowledge and understanding of Swedish heritage in American life. (Source: Swedish Council of America *eUPDATE*, July 2010)

Swedish Village at Concordia Language Villages

Sjölunden, the Swedish Language Village at Concordia Language Villages (CLV) in **Moorhead, Minnesota**, has grown to be a nationally recognized Swedish language and cultural immersion program. Each year, over 200 youth, families and adults learn the Swedish language and live in the culture of modern and historical Sweden. In 2005, CLV began construction of a culturally authentic setting for the Swedish language village to ensure that Sjölunden villagers today and for generations to come have the space and facilities they need to learn, love, and enjoy the Swedish language. For more information about the Sjölunden programs visit ConcordiaLanguageVillages.org.

Movie Night



Did you know a movie featuring the Vasa warship is currently in the works? The Swedish-American newspaper [Nordstjernen](#) reports that Director Anders Wahlgren is using green-screen technology to re-create Stockholm in the 17th century to tell the story of the fated ship. The main character is a shipbuilder by the name of Henrik Hybertsson who came from Holland to help build the Vasa.

While you're waiting for the project to wrap, why not bring home a few Swedish movies currently available from our local libraries? Take a look at the available titles waiting for you at the Houston Public Library (houstonlibrary.org) and Harris County Public Library (hcpl.net) branches:

Arn: The Knight Templar / As It Is In Heaven / Autumn Sonata / Fanny and Alexander / Pelle the Conquerer / The Girl Who Played with Fire / The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo / Let the Right One In (Swedish version & American remake) / The Magician / My Life as a Dog / Saraband / The Seventh Seal / Wallander: The BBC Series (English language) / Wild Strawberries

photo credit: from Flickr - user ScypaxPictures

Statewide Events

Check out this short list of Swedish and Scandinavian events taking place in May and June:



May 14 - Eurovision Song Contest Party in Austin at the Boundless Network office on 200 E. 6th St. Ste. #300 at 1 PM. The show begins at 2 PM. Cost is \$10. For more info or to register, visit www.sacctx.com and visit the upcoming events link.

May 15 - Syttende Mai in Austin- The Sons of Norway and the Norwegian Society of Texas are celebrating Norway's Constitution Day from 4-6 PM at Gethsemane Lutheran Church, 200 W. Anderson Ln. Contact Merrill Austin: maustin4@austin.rr.com

June 11 & 12 - Scandinavian Folkdancers of Houston in San Antonio at the Texas Folklife Festival. Our local area folkdancers will be performing their show for our neighbors to the east. Come out to the festival and cheer them on. For more info, visit texasfolklifefestival.org

June 17- IKEA Midsummer Buffet in Round Rock from 5-8 PM. \$9.99 adults/ \$2.49 kids. Advance seating. No official word if the Dallas and Houston area stores will offer something similar.

June 23 - Mid-Summer Festival in Elgin at the SPJST Hall. The event is sponsored by the Swedish Association of Elgin and Vicinity. Social hour at 5 PM. Meal begins at 6:30 PM. Performance by the Swedish teen dancers from Lindsborg, Kansas. \$10 for adults and \$6 for children. For more info, contact Jan Faubion at 512-567-1938.



photo credits: from Flickr - users erasmus and johnthurm



Swedish Texan Profile:

Swante Magnus Swenson

Sven Israelsson and Margareta Andersdotter lived in quiet little Lättorp, located in the parish of Barkeryd, just east of Jönköping. On a chilly February morning in 1816, they welcomed their second son, Swante Magnus, into the world. His father was a calvaryman and cultivated the farmland the family received for his military service. Sven and Margareta worked hard to provide, but Sven's meager salary and the difficulties of farming in Småland hampered their efforts to keep their five children fed, and Swante was sent to live with relatives at the age of thirteen.

Swenson turned of age and took various jobs as the years rolled on. Just a week before his 20th birthday, he was offered the opportunity to sail to New York. He climbed aboard and spent more than four months at sea before reaching the American shore. Upon arrival, he took a temporary job and, after studying English for two months, began work for a railroad company in Maryland. In 1838, the company sent him to Texas to study rail opportunities in the new nation.

Swenson had a knack for business and took several risks, many of which worked out in his favor. Through the years, he ran a cotton plantation, purchased tracts of land, built a hotel, and established a highly successful mercantile business. By 1861, he owned twelve square blocks of what would later become downtown Austin.

His most significant land purchase came in October of 1850. Swenson purchased 182 acres of land with the express purpose of attracting Swedish immigrants to the area. He quickly accumulated land in surrounding tracts, resulting in a 400 acre spread he named "Govalle". Swenson, along with his uncle, Swante Palm, enticed fellow Swedes to relocate by offering to pay their way to the Texas Hill Country in exchange for a year's worth of labor at Govalle. After working for a year, they would receive favorable land rates from the acreage Swenson owned. It is not known how many Swedes took up the offer, but during one year, seventy-five of the one hundred Swedes who arrived in the area worked for Swenson.

Swenson would live at Govalle for ten years where all of his five children were born. After expressing unpopular views surrounding the Civil War, he moved to Mexico for his safety, while his wife and children stayed behind in Texas. In 1864, he went to visit his mother in Sweden. On the return trip back, he was quarantined in New Orleans due to a yellow fever outbreak. He decided to run his business from there and his family later moved to be with him.

Some years later, he moved his entire operation to New York but his Texas connections did not fade. He would go on to establish the SMS cattle ranches, which would become one of the biggest and most successful cattle empires in the Lone Star State, encompassing more than 300,000 acres in 12 counties.

Information summarized from *The Swedish Texans* by Larry E. Scott. Picture from Flickr user Big Grey Mare.



THE 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 your news to newsletter@swedishclub.org or by post to the return address below.

THE SWEDISH CLUB NEWS

c/o Sara West
4023 Sherwood West
Kingwood TX 77339-1037

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED