



# THE SWEDISH CLUB NEWS

The Swedish Club of Houston

Preserving Swedish Heritage on the Texas Gulf Coast since 1986

## *Club Updates*

- Thanks to everyone who came out to our Annual Meeting for Pea Soup and Pancakes and our yearly Fika held at the Norwegian's Seaman's church. It is always nice to make time for Swedish fellowship.
- Please note the new date for Valborgsmässafton, graciously hosted by Dr. Margit Winstrom at her ranch in Brenham to be held on **May 28th** this year. For more information on this and other events hosted by the Swedish Club of Houston visit <http://www.swedishclub.org/calendar/2016-events>. Coming up in May and June are Movie night, May 20th and Sweden's National Day Celebration June 11th
- If you are up for a road trip, plan to visit San Antonio June 11th and 12th for the Texas Folk Life Festival where the **Swedish Folk Dancers** will perform.

## *In the News*

- His Majesty the King of Sweden, Karl XVI Gustaf will be celebrating his 70th birthday on April 30, 2016.
- Sweden's own Princess Sofia gave birth on April 18th to a bouncing baby Prince. Alexander Erik Hubertus Bertil, or Prince Alexander, will become Duke of Sodermanland, the region south of Stockholm.
- Sweden can now boast of being home to the world's best sommelier. Jon Arvid Rosengren took home the award at Le Concours du Meilleur Sommelier du Monde competition held this year in the Mendoza province of Argentina.
- April is strawberry season in Sweden and there is an annual contest to be the first farmer to sell his crop. This year's price was \$148 / kilo and the winner is Lars Jacobsen from Hjalmsht.

## Anders Jonas Ångström

### Founder of the Field of Spectroscopy



Uppsala University in Sweden has produced many natural scientists of world renown, one of which the physicist Anders Jonas Ångström. Born in Medelpad near the coastal town of Härnösand on August 13, 1814, he received his higher education in Uppsala.

Following a stint at the Stockholm Observatory, he would join the Uppsala faculty eventually becoming Head of the Physics Department. While at Uppsala, Ångström took a special interest in observing and characterizing phenomena originating in space, such as the Sun and the Northern Light.

In devising instruments that enabled the examination of light spectra emanating from the sun, Ångström came to be recognized as the founder of spectroscopy, the study of the interaction between matter and electromagnetic radiation that is used to this day in advanced analytical laboratories

around the world. His most important work, *Optiska Undersökningar* (Optical Research), was presented to the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences in 1872 and earned him the Rumford Medal of the Royal Society. In it, Ångström pointed out that an electric spark yields two superposed spectra; one from the metal electrode and one from the gas through which it passes. This is now one of the fundamental principles of spectroscopy. Beginning in the early 1860s, he paid special interest to the solar spectrum. His combination of spectroscopy and photography proving that the Sun's atmosphere contains hydrogen and other elements was summarized in a map of the solar spectrum including detailed measurements and more than 1000 spectral lines. He was also the first to examine the spectrum of the Aurora Borealis or Northern Light, detecting and measuring the characteristic bright line in its yellow-green region. He was able to disprove the hypothesis about the Northern Lights that said that they were caused by sunlight being reflected through airborne ice crystals and proved instead that it was caused by excited oxygen atoms. The oxygen atoms emitted the light because they were super charged by the sun in a way, which made them produce color. He also invented an instrument that became the standard in 1905 for measuring solar radiation.

During his work with the solar spectrum, he discovered radiation of extremely low wavelength of the order of atomic or molecular dimensions approximately one ten millionth of a millimeter in size that is now recognized by the international scientific community as a unit by itself named Ångström, Å. In 1907, the [International Astronomical Union](#) defined the international Ångström by the wavelength of the red line of [cadmium](#) in [air](#) as equal to 6438.46963 international angstroms.

He was an elected member of a number of learned societies including The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, The Royal Society and the Institute de France and died in Uppsala on June 21, 1874. Both his son and grandson chose a career in physics thereby continuing his work.

Sources:

- <https://thescienceclassroom.wikispaces.com/Anders+Jonas+Angstrom>

## Walpurgis Eve

Walpurgis Eve, or Valborg in Sweden, is celebrated in many northern European Countries and is named after the English missionary Saint Walpurga who lived in the 6th century. In Sweden, the day has little to do with religion and a lot to do with the arrival of Spring. Back in the Middle Ages, April 30th was the end of the administrative year and was celebrated by merchants and craftsmen and students as the end of the year. For farmers, it was the time to let the cattle out to pasture. Because May Day is an official holiday in Sweden, many people celebrate Walpurgis Eve into the wee hours. Bonfires are traditional and date back to the early 18th century where they were lit to scare away predators from the herds, today they are lit in celebration. Valborg is celebrated at many universities as it falls towards the end of the school year. Students used to roam the streets singing and trick or treating and some Swedish Universities have adopted a custom of having champagne and strawberries for breakfast, then the traditional BBQ and bonfires as the day winds down.



### Valborgsmässoafton

Welcome spring back to Texas with Swedish flair. Join us for the Valborg Bonfire and BBQ at Dr. Margit Winstrom's ranch in Brenham. The festivities begin at 3:00 PM on May 28th. There will be games, singing, grilling, and more during our annual Valborg celebration.

**Who:** Swedish Club Members and their guests

**What:** Valborg Bonfire and BBQ to welcome spring

**When:** Saturday, May 28th at 3:00 PM

**Where:** [3383 Peters Lane, Brenham, TX](#)

Please bring one item to grill, such as hot dogs or hamburgers for each member of your family, plus one side dish (Swedish, if possible) to share with everyone.

## Fika - coming to the American workplace?



Just this week the Huffington Post posted an article lauding the Swedish custom of Fika. Having attended several of the Swedish Club's yearly Fika gatherings, I paused to read the article with interest. The writer was making the argument that bringing the practice of Fika to the American workplace would make for a happier and more connected work force.

The comparison was made between the tradition of Fika as it is honored in Swedish work places as opposed to the American coffee break. In Sweden, Fika is taken every day at set time periods, usually 10

am and 3 pm and is taken with co-workers, coffee accompanied by a sweet and is a social event where employees gather together to talk. The American coffee breaks are grabbed on the go. A quick dash to the lunchroom for a refill of coffee to be taken back to one's desk.

The article made the point that if Americans would emulate the Swedes by embracing the custom of Fika in the workplace, American workers would be happier and more productive. I tend to agree, can we have more sweet?

Sources: Huffington Post  
Photos courtesy of Swedish Club and freedigitalphotos.net



## Under the Midnight Sun in Swedish Lapland

Some of our readers who are members of AAA Texas may have just received the May/June 2016 issue the AAA Magazine noting the article by frequent contributor Dan Oko describing a delightful visit to the northernmost region of Sweden called Lapland.

The article describes a visit by the author, his wife and young daughter to this beautiful and pristine region and their experiences that included an environmentally sound “bird nest” tree hotel in the forest, rivers and huge rapids carrying 200 tons of water per second, and close-up contact with reindeers and the Sami, a nomadic population inhabiting some of the area around the Arctic Circle extending from Norway, Sweden, Finland into Russia.

To learn more visit your local AAA branch, call [\(800\) 814-7471](tel:8008147471), or go to [AAA.com/explore](http://AAA.com/explore)

Sources: AAA Texas  
Photo: Shared by Skogsfun courtesy of Wikipedia Commons





# Items of Note

## Swedish Language School

The Swedish Club of Houston has maintained a Swedish Language School for many years. It is the only source of Swedish language instruction in southeast Texas.

As student enrollment demands, the school offers classes at several levels. Instruction is by native speakers of Swedish, and the approach emphasizes a conversational approach since most persons wishing to learn Swedish want to be able to speak it when visiting Sweden.

Classes meet one evening a week, Monday or Tuesday (depending on level), from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM. The cost is modest, and varies according to the cost of materials, which come from Sweden. The school operates on a 15-week semester basis, with the first semester running from October to January, and the second from January to May. It is not possible to start as a beginner in January, but other levels will accommodate.

You can register online at <http://www.swedishclub.org/component/forme/?fid=10> or for more information contact John Stavinoha @ [membership@swedishclub.org](mailto:membership@swedishclub.org).

## Newsletter



We encourage you to participate and share your experiences with the rest of the club. If you have had an interesting experience, have traveled or have a story to tell or pictures to share, we would love to hear from you!

Email us your thoughts at [newsletter@swedishclub.org](mailto:newsletter@swedishclub.org).



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

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