



# THE SWEDISH CLUB NEWS

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

May/June

2008

Volume XXI-No. 3



## President's Column by Margaret St. Clair

Once again it is that time of year when activities and the weather begin to shift in preparation for summer. Schools are in their final weeks and Houston's

humidity is on the rise. In Sweden, perhaps it is a bit too early to think of school being out, but the weather is certainly changing. Trees are beginning to bud and the early spring flowers are set to bloom. For Swedes this is cause for celebration, and celebrate they do with *Valborgsmässoafton*! On the evening of April 30, large bonfires are lit throughout Sweden. Celebrants enjoy eating, drinking and singing songs about springtime and the end of winter.

For The Swedish Club here in Houston, we celebrate the holiday in our own unique way—kind of welcoming spring and summer at the same time! We hope you will join us for our **Swedish Bonfire and Texas Barbecue** at the beautiful Winstrom Ranch near Brenham on Saturday afternoon, May 3<sup>rd</sup>. Our gracious hosts are Swedish Club members Drs. Bill Riley and Margit Winstrom. For several years they have had us as their guests, and we are most grateful for their hospitality. If you have never been, you must go. It is an event not to be missed. So come, with your family, for a fun-filled relaxing day in the country. There are games, fine food and fellowship, a hayride and finally the bonfire and singing. It's a great time for young and old alike. And best of all, it is FREE! Just be sure to RSVP with Pelle Fisk, so we know how many folks to expect.

I hope you didn't miss our last event—*Kräftskiva* (**Swedish Crayfish Party**). Held at The Monument Inn, 79 guests enjoyed a wonderful evening of Swedish-style crayfish, fried chicken, fish and all the trimmings. Many thanks go to Chairman John Stavinoha and his assistants, David Bash and Mark Swanson, for organizing a fantastic evening. And *tusen tack* (thousand thanks) to new Club member Christopher Westerlund for his enthusiastic participation in *snapsvisor* (*skåling* songs)!! Decorations were expertly placed by Dina Jo Colburn

and the check-in table was manned by Diana Rodionov. Another highlight of the evening was the performance by award-winning Swedish singer Theresa Andersson. She entertained us with her unique singing and playing style and included some Swedish songs in her repertoire. All in all, it was a very special evening, perhaps one of the best *Kräftskivor* in recent memory!!

Now in closing, I wish you all a great summer. If your travels take you to Sweden, plan to be in Barkeryd, Småland, on Sunday, August 3<sup>rd</sup>. That is when The Swedish Club's Lucia, Jenny Panahi, will represent the Club at Barkeryd's Texas/Swedish Festival. This year is significant because Jenny is the 20<sup>th</sup> Lucia we've sent to Barkeryd, and the parish is commemorating this fact by inviting all former Lucias from The Swedish Club to attend. The festival will indeed be a special one and you won't want to miss it.

See you May 3<sup>rd</sup> at Bonfire!

*Margaret*

## Welcome Spring with a Swedish Bonfire and Texas Barbecue *Valborgsmässoafton* Saturday, May 3, 2008, 3:00 p.m.


Join in the fun at this **FREE** event at Dr. Margit Winstrom's ranch, 3383 Peters Lane, Brenham. (See page 2 for directions.) Festivities include games, a hayride, a bonfire at sunset and traditional singing to welcome Spring.


### What to bring:

- ▶ Food to grill for yourself (hot dogs, hamburger, steak)
- ▶ Beverage, and
- ▶ Side dish to share

This event is free, but Event Chair Pelle Fisk asks that you let him know by Thursday, May 1, that you are coming, either on the SCH website, [www.swedishclub.org](http://www.swedishclub.org), or by calling him at 281-348-2584.

## BITS & PIECES

 Recently-elected SCH Board member **Magnus Åkerlind** has had to resign his position, due to changes within the company he works for. Magnus and his wife, Heidi, relocated to Stockholm in mid-April. Best wishes, Magnus and Heidi! We will miss you!

 Alternative rock stars 311 are teaming up with hip-hop icon Snoop Dogg and newcomers Fiction Plane for the 2008 Unity Tour, bringing a healthy mix of rock and rap to The Showgrounds at Sam Houston Race Park on Wednesday, July 30, 2008. Peter and Adam Raspler, sons of SCH member and former president **Mona Raspler**, manage 311 through their business, Raspler Management. For more information, visit [www.theshowgrounds.com](http://www.theshowgrounds.com).

### *Valborgsmässoafton*

Saturday, May 3 • 3:00 p.m.  
3383 Peters Lane, Brenham

#### Directions:

- ▶ US 290W towards Austin
- ▶ Turn left onto O'Malley Rd. (The turn off 290 comes up fast and is easy to miss. When 290W and 36N make the split with a sharp 270 degree right turn, drive 2.0 miles further on 290W, then make the left onto O'Malley Rd. Watch for the balloons on the sign.)
- ▶ Turn left onto CR-29/Lange Lake Rd.
- ▶ Turn right onto CR-25/Old Mill Creek Rd.
- ▶ Turn left onto CR-2/Beckerman Rd.
- ▶ Turn right onto Peters Ln. and stop at 3383
- ▶ Drive through the gate and up to parking area by the ranch

## *Greetings*

### From the Consulate . . .

2909 Hillcroft St., Suite 515  
Houston, TX 77057  
713-953-1417

*Ha en trevlig sommar!*  
**Have a nice summer!**



Photo: Göran Assner;  
[www.imagebank.sweden.se](http://www.imagebank.sweden.se)

## From Småland to Big Land Texas

- \* Why did the first Swedish immigrants come to Texas?
- \* What did they experience when they arrived?
- \* What hardships did they face?
- \* How did they handle the Texas climate?

Plan a visit to the Williamson County Historical Museum in Georgetown, Texas, for answers to these questions and more with the exhibit, "From Småland, Sweden, to Big Land Texas." The exhibit, which opened in late January 2008, will run for one year and will include a component traveling educational trunk for area schools. Jim and Jean Quist Sellstrom, parents of former SCH member Liz Cadwallader, contributed many of the clothes and old tools for the exhibit.

After the exhibit's run is over, WCHM will develop a companion traveling exhibit available for audiences all over Texas.

The Williamson County Historical Museum is located at 716 S. Austin Avenue, Georgetown, TX, and is open Wednesday-Thursday, 12:00 p.m. - 5 p.m.; Friday, 12:00 - 6:00 p.m.; and Saturday, 9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. (or anytime by appointment). For more information, see [www.wchm-tx.org](http://www.wchm-tx.org) or call 512-943-1670.

## News from Sweden (from Swedish Council of America's March and April 2008 eUPDATES)

- The Associated Press reports that this has been a record warm winter in Northern Europe. According to the Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute, record high temperatures were set in twelve locations in Sweden.
- Minister for Enterprise and Energy, and Deputy Prime Minister of Sweden Maud Olofsson recently visited the United States to talk about Swedish energy and climate politics. She introduced Sweden's new initiative for sustainable urban living, [SymbioCity](#), at the Washington International Renewable Energy Conference.
- According to the SymbioCity web site, since the 70's, the dependence on oil for heating and electricity production in Sweden has gone down by 90%.
- On April 2, U.S. Ambassador to Sweden Michael Wood presented [48 Swedish energy and environment technology companies](#) to American venture capital companies in Boston. Mr. Wood has chosen to focus on one big mission during his time as Ambassador in Sweden, "one big thing"—to match Swedish energy technology with both governmental and private American venture capital. [Green Diplomacy](#) was the headline that The Wall Street Journal used in a recent article about Ambassador Wood.
- [Pernod Ricard bought V & S Group](#), owners of Absolut Vodka, for \$8.3 billion. V & S Group was put on the market last year as Sweden moved to privatize state-run businesses to pay off debt.
- Swedish archaeologists have discovered a rare hoard of [Viking-age silver Arab coins](#) near Stockholm's Arlanda airport. Most of the coins were minted in Baghdad and Damascus, but some came from Persia and North Africa.

## World's oldest tree found in Sweden

Swedish scientists from Umeå University say they have discovered a tree that is nearly 10,000 years old, making it the [oldest living tree](#) ever discovered on the planet. The ancient spruce was found among a cluster of around 20 spruces believed to be more than 8,000 years old at an altitude of 910 m (2,985 ft.) on Fulu Mountain in Dalarna province. It would have taken root just after the last ice age.

The visible portion of the 13-foot-tall spruce tree is comparatively new, but four "generations" of wood pieces around the spruce have the same genetic makeup as the tree above them. Carbon dating done at a laboratory in Miami, Florida, of the old tree fragments showed that the root system has been growing for 9,550 years.

Leif Kullman, professor of physical geography at Umeå University, said the spruce's stems or trunks had a life span of around 600 years but, as soon as one died, a cloned stem could emerge from the root system. The clones take root each winter as snow pushes low-lying branches of the mother tree down to ground level, Kullman added.

Previously, a bristlecone pine named "Methuselah," located in California's White Mountains and believed to be between 4,500 and 5,000 years in age, was designated as the world's oldest tree by the Guinness Book of World Records.



This 9,550-year-old spruce has been discovered in Dalarna, Sweden. A favorable climate has produced an upright trunk since the beginning of the 1940s. Photo: Leif Kullman

If you are currently receiving your newsletter by "snail" mail but would prefer to get it delivered in color to your e-mail Inbox, please notify the editor by sending an e-mail to [ljmillikan@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ljmillikan@sbcglobal.net).

## Texas Swedish Pioneer Association Annual Meeting

The Texas Swedish Pioneer Association will hold its 91<sup>st</sup> annual meeting at Palm Valley Lutheran Church, Round Rock, Texas, at 2:30 p.m. on Sunday, June 22, 2008. The meeting honors the first group of 100 persons who immigrated from Sweden to Texas in 1867, as well as all the other Swedish immigrants who arrived here at various times and from whom many are descended.

The meeting will include special music and the awarding of scholarships to high school graduates. Although the meeting is conducted in English, it will also include a little Swedish, with the recitation of *Fader Vår* (the Lord's Prayer) and a Swedish table prayer, as well as singing *Du Gamla, Du Fria* (the Swedish national anthem). Following the meeting, refreshments will be served in the Church Hall.

**Anyone** of Swedish heritage is considered a "member" of this association. There are no membership requirements or dues!

The meeting is open to the public, and everyone is *välkommen!* Palm Valley Lutheran Church is located at 2500 E. Palm Valley Blvd./US Hwy. 79N, Round Rock (north of Austin), about 2.5 miles east of IH-35, near Dell Diamond baseball stadium.

### *A Swedish-Texan history lesson . . .*

#### **Palm Valley Lutheran Church and Community**

The Swedish pioneers were without a church in which to worship for their first years of life on the Texas frontier. In 1861, in Palm Valley (in present-day Round Rock), the immigrant's first place to worship was a log cabin, paid for by Andrew Nelson and built by three of his farm workers. It was also used as a schoolhouse.

In 1874, a wooden church was built in Palm Valley. By 1882, the congregation had grown and the church was enlarged. In March 1890, a decision was made to build a new church; however, a plan could not be agreed upon. Finally, on July 19, 1894, the cornerstone for the new building was laid. Built of red brick in the Gothic style, the church is 70 feet long, 40 feet wide, with walls 20 feet high, and crowned with an imposing steeple which can be seen for miles.

The church was dedicated on April 12, 1896. The sanctuary has remained as built, except that 12 new stained glass windows replace the original ones. New additions over the years have transformed the church property into a great complex. The nearby, well-kept cemetery with its many markers and headstones will stand for ages and bear witness to a group of Swedish people who lived and worked in Palm



Palm Valley Lutheran Church, ca. 2006  
Photo Courtesy of Jean Sellstrom

Valley. Now it is the place of rest for those pioneers and their descendants.

The beautiful Palm Valley, divided by Brushy Creek, was named in honor of the Palm family, some of the first settlers there. Palm Valley is the second oldest Swedish community in Texas. (Govalle in Austin is the oldest.) In 1852, the first Swede to live there was Mrs. Anna Dyer, favorite sister of S. M. Swenson, with her husband, William Dyer. They moved from Fort Bend County and settled near Kinney's Fort, south of Brushy Creek.

Soon other immigrants arrived, and the foundation was laid for the largest Swedish community in Texas. The black-land farms were fertile and productive, and the settlers were successful in clearing and working the land. The immigrants from Sweden readily traded the rocky land of Småland for a better life of farming here in faraway Texas.

It has been 156 years since the first Swedes settled in Palm Valley. Their flourishing farms and ranches that sustained them are now vanishing. The pioneers helped tame the land and made it a more productive place. Today new homes, schools and businesses will soon replace the farms of those early settlers.

A new wave of "Swedish Design and Quality" arrived just northwest of the Palm Valley area in November, 2006, with the opening of an IKEA store, where the Swedish flag now proudly flies beside the U.S. and Texas flags. That would probably please those Swedish pioneers!

This is a new time—a new era—for Palm Valley—and Texas.

Compiled by Jean Quist Sellstrom, March 2007

## Emigrating to the USA in the 21st Century

*The author, Christopher Westerlund, just emigrated from Sweden to America on a Fiancé(e) visa after finishing his studies at the School of Business Economics and Law at Göteborg University at the Center for Finance with a Master of Science with a Major in Advanced Finance that he passed with distinction (summa cum laude). He also holds a Bachelor of Science with a Major in Finance, Bachelor of Science with a Major in Business Administration and a Diploma in Economics from the University of Skövde.*

### Fiancé(e) Visa:

A fiancé(e) visa can be obtained for a person who has the intent to marry an American citizen in the USA. In order to be eligible for a fiancé(e) visa you must demonstrate that you have an ongoing relationship. The American citizen applies first for the fiancé(e) residing abroad. The process of obtaining all the paperwork and filing all the papers takes about one month. After you send the required documentation and filing fee in to the Department of Homeland Security they will issue a receipt in about one to two weeks. The requisite petition is Form I-129F, Petition for Alien Fiancé(e). The cost is currently \$455. The American citizen and the fiancé(e) will both have to fill in the G-325A, a biographical information form (general information such as name, age, address, etc.). Also needed are a sworn statement from both that they intend to marry each other and evidence of the relationship, for example, airplane tickets, photos, etc. After this step the waiting game begins.

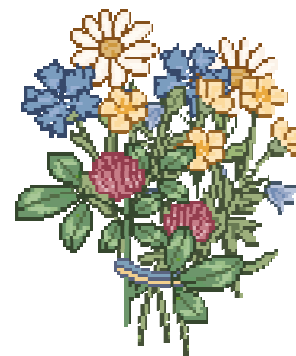
In approximately six months, if they approve your application, the Department of Homeland Security will send notification to the U.S. State Department's National Visa Center (NVC). The NVC will notify the petitioner (the American citizen) and the U.S. Embassy in the country in which the fiancé(e) resides. The embassy will then send an information package with instructions to the fiancé(e) on how to apply for the K-1 fiancé(e) visa, which costs about \$150 to file. This will take about one to two weeks. The fiancé(e) and the American citizen will then have to fill in several other forms and submit them to the Embassy in the country where the fiancé(e) lives. The forms include the Affidavit of Support, Form I-134, which establishes proof of financial support so that the fiancé(e) will not become a public charge of the USA. The DS-156 is basically more background information and identifies who will pay for your trip to the USA. The DS-230 is additional background data, such as

where you work, when you have previously visited the USA, mother's and father's names, etc. You will also need to undergo a medical examination at a U.S. Department of State-authorized physician's office, costing approximately \$300, and have your chest x-rayed for approximately \$100 to see if you have tuberculosis. The physician then completes Form DS-2053 and seals it in an envelope to be given to the U.S. Embassy. You will also need to show records from the police to check for any previous convictions. A birth certificate is also required, which in Sweden is an excerpt from the tax authority that lists place and date of birth, marriage status, and your registered address. All these documents need to be in English or translated to English by an authorized translator.

When all this information has been reviewed, which takes a couple of weeks or so, you will be scheduled for an interview at the embassy. If all goes well, the officer conducting the interview will congratulate you on your approved K-1 fiancé(e) visa and inform you that your passport, which you have already given to the NVC, will be returned to you with the visa inside. I must comment that all the staff members I met with at the embassy were very professional and genuinely nice people.

Once your passport is received, you can travel to America and marry your U.S. citizen. A fiancé(e) visa is valid for six months, meaning that you have six months to enter the USA. After that you will need to get married within 90 days and adjust your status if you and your new spouse would like to continue your life in America, but that is a completely different story . . .

*Disclaimer: Please be aware that immigration law is federal and might change at anytime. This article should only be seen as an informative story and not be perceived as advice or guidance of any kind. The author is not a lawyer or legal expert. Always check with your own attorney/lawyer and Immigration authority before filing any papers.*



## Kräftskiva 2008



Dina and Wayne Colburn  
and Mona Raspler



Diana Rodionov



Nancy Westrup and Fred Kruse



Vassily Rodionov



Fredrik Rehnmark, Christopher  
Westerlund and David Bash lead  
the group in *snapsvisor*.



Eric and Bianca Condon and  
daughter



Theresa Andersson provided  
a wonderful evening of  
music.



Kenedy Millikan liked  
the big Dala horse.

## Nordic Fiddles and Feet: Norwegian and Swedish Music and Dance

Buffalo Gap Camp in Capon Bridge, WV  
June 28-July 5 (full session) or  
June 28-July 1 (mini-camp)

Come experience a week-long immersion in the music, dance, and traditions of Sweden and Norway—right in the heart of the eastern US. This magical event includes daily classes in dance and music, concerts, culture sessions, nightly dance parties, fabulous food with Scandinavian specialties, swimming, hiking, sauna and a welcoming community that shares its passion for Scandinavian traditions. Beginners and experienced participants, families, singles, couples—all are welcome!

Internationally recognized teachers and musicians provide expert instruction and exciting performances in traditional dance and music styles. Featured in 2008 are dances and music of Valdres (Norway) and Föllinge (Sweden). For more information, see [www.nordicfiddlesandfeet.org](http://www.nordicfiddlesandfeet.org) or call 865-522-0515.

## New Sweden Days to be held in Pennsville, NJ, June 7-8

If your summer travel plans include the Delaware Valley (New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania and Maryland), or if you are still making plans, consider being in Pennsville, NJ, on June 7-8 for New Sweden Days. Events will include a wreath ceremony at the New Sweden Heritage Monument and special all-day events at the Kalmar Nyckel Shipyard. Also, the "Experience New Sweden" exhibition at the New Sweden Centre will be open.

Future events of interest in that area include Mouns Jones Day, September 27, 2008, at Douglasville, PA. This is the historic area known as Morlatton Village, established by Swedes and Finns when William Penn bartered and acquired the land (owned by Swedes and Finns) that became Philadelphia, PA, in exchange for land further up the Schuylkill River.

For more information on any of the events, contact Aleasa Hogate, Educational Director, New Sweden Centre, at [goaleasa@juno.com](mailto:goaleasa@juno.com) or (856) 678-5511.

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## 2008 SWEDISH CLUB LUCIA

Applications for The Swedish Club of Houston's 2008 Lucia are now being accepted. Candidates for Lucia must meet the following requirements:

- ▶ Single young woman, 16-24 years of age;
- ▶ Member of the club (either individual or as part of a family membership, including granddaughters);
- ▶ Able to attend the Swedish Traditions program on Saturday, December 13, 2008, at 4:00 p.m.
- ▶ Able to represent the club at the Texas Day Celebration and Parade in Barkeryd, Sweden, on the first weekend of August, 2009;
- ▶ Responsible for own ground or air transportation to and from Chicago (round-trip airfare provided from Chicago to Sweden);
- ▶ On her return to Houston, Lucia must write an article for publication in The Swedish Club News about her experience in Sweden.

**NOTE:** Lucia candidates, in addition to completing the application below, must also write a short *essay* about their Swedish heritage, their interests and why they would like to represent the Club in Sweden, and must provide a *current photo* of themselves. The application must be postmarked by **September 1, 2008**.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone No.: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail application, with essay and photo to:  
The Swedish Club of Houston, c/o Nancy Webb, 3707 Darcus St., Houston, Texas 77005

For questions or further information, contact Nancy Webb (713-661-1011 or [Nancy.Webb@kelsey-seybold.com](mailto:Nancy.Webb@kelsey-seybold.com)) or Diana Rodionov (281-636-8153), co-chairs of the 2008 Lucia program.



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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](mailto:ljmillikan@sbcglobal.net) or by post to the return address below.

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## THE SWEDISH CLUB NEWS

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