THE SWEDISH CLUB NEWS

The Swedish Club of Houston

Preserving Swedish Heritage on the Texas Gulf Coast Since 1986

KRÄFTSKIVA - SWEDISH CRAYFISH PARTY

Saturday, April 1, 6:00 p.m.

It's crayfish time again! The annual kräftskiva will be held again this year at the Monument Inn, 4406 Battleground Road (Texas 134), La Porte, near the San Jacinto Monument. The menu will include crayfish with the traditional Swedish seasoning of sea salt and dill (not to be confused with Cajun crayfish!), plus fried fish and fried chicken with potatoes, corn, soft drinks and beer.

Tickets purchased in advance are $20 for adults and $10 for children 12 and under. **At the door, tickets will be $25 for adults and $15 for children.** Advance reservations must be received by **Wednesday, March 29**, so mail your check (made payable to "Swedish Club of Houston") today, using the form below.

Bring a friend(s) and join us at 6:00 p.m., or come on out to the park earlier to visit the San Jacinto Monument or the Battleship Texas.

To get to the Monument Inn: Take West Beltway 8 to TX 225, then east on TX 225 toward Deer Park and La Porte. Turn north on TX 134 and go past the San Jacinto Monument. The Inn will be on your right just before you get to the Lynchburg Ferry. (An alternate route is to go east of Houston on IH-10 to Exit 787 and take TX 134 south across the Lynchburg Ferry, if the ferry is running that day.)

For further details, call the Swedish Club Events Line at 713.774.2739.

RESERVATION FORM FOR
KRÄFTSKIVA - SATURDAY, APRIL 1, 2006

(Must be received by Wednesday, March 29, for advance price)

Please make check payable to "Swedish Club of Houston" and mail to: John Stavinoha, 807 Mulberry Lane, Bellaire TX 77401

Name:	Phone Number:	
Name(s) of other(s) Attending:		
_____ **Adults** attending Crayfish Party	@ $20 each (advance purchase)	_____
_____ **Children** (12 and under) attending	@ $10 each (advance purchase)	_____
	CHECK TOTAL	_____

THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE - by Margaret St.Clair

The New Year always brings changes and resolutions. This is especially true for The Swedish Club. At our club's Annual Meeting on January 21, a new board was nominated and elected. As your President, I feel honored to have been chosen and I resolve to do my best to serve and guide the club in 2006.

You may want to know a little bit about your new President. I was born and raised on an Illinois farm, but I have lived in Houston for 30 years. My husband Dave and I have two children who have left the roost and are now living in Los Angeles and East Lansing, Michigan.

I became a member of The Swedish Club in 1995 after I returned from my first trip to Sweden. I was highly motivated to learn Swedish so I enrolled in the club's Language School. Being able to speak and read some Swedish really enhanced my subsequent trips to Sweden in 1998 and 2003.

My Swedish roots are with my maternal grandfather who was born in Orlunda (near Vadstena). He immigrated to the U.S. in 1911 and settled in the Swedish community of Galva, Illinois, west of Chicago. My mother grew up not knowing much about her Swedish relatives. That changed in 1994, when one of her nephews in Sweden contacted her. That set forth a flurry of correspondence which led to my traveling to Sweden to meet my newly-found family.

I think you can see why The Swedish Club is so important to me. Through the club, I have not only learned a little Swedish, but have also gained some knowledge of Swedish history and culture. I feel that my ties to my family in Sweden are stronger because of the club. Even my parents, who still live in Illinois, have benefited from my being a member of The Swedish Club of Houston, as I often share with them what I have learned. And last, but not least, I have made many new friends through the club.

So, enough about me . . . .

In case you didn't attend the Annual Meeting/Pea Soup and Pancakes Dinner, you missed a great time of fellowship, good food and fun. About 55 of us gathered at the Inwood Forest Country Club in the beautiful Round Room. Many thanks go to Gunhild Jansson and Pelle Fisk for planning the event. Thanks also to Chuck Nelson who helped out by being the sponsoring link with the Country Club. We also appreciate Dave St.Clair, Ken Nilsson and Arvid Johanson who provided a slide show of Swedish Club 2005 events.

Outgoing President, Pelle Fisk, opened the meeting with reports from the Treasurer, Membership and Language School Director. The club had a balance of about $11,000 at the end of the year. Membership total stood at about 120 and the school is doing quite well with about 35 students. Pelle then gave a "State of the Club" message in which he described club events from the past year. Overall, 2005 was deemed a success as we strove to meet the club's goal of "Preserving Swedish Heritage in the Texas Gulf Coast". Pelle also introduced the slate of Officers and Directors for 2006, and they were duly elected as follows:

President	Margaret St.Clair
Vice President	Nancy Webb
Treasurer	Ken Nilsson
Secretary	Diana Rodionov
Membership and Language School	John Stavinoha
Newsletter Editor	Laura Millikan
Webmaster	Erich Wolz
Director	Eric Condon
Director	Pelle Fisk
Director	Mark Swanson
Director	Ingrid Philipson
Director	Dina Jo Colburn

Pelle thanked outgoing board members Arvid Johanson, Gunhild Jansson and Patric Stafshede. In addition, he welcomed to the board Mark Swanson and Laura Millikan.

After turning the meeting over to me, Pelle and I led an Open Forum to discuss the club. I stated that the club should focus on membership development and increased involvement of members in club activities. It was noted that we need to do more to promote the club, and we should try to increase our visibility by having a board member serve as Publicity Director. Also everyone was urged to bring at least 5 friends to every event. We were informed of several upcoming cultural events here in Houston that would be of interest to our members. It was noted that the newsletter and the club's website play important roles in keeping members informed. They also are helpful in promoting the club.

On a personal note, I would like to thank our outgoing President, Pelle Fisk, as well as Arvid, Gunhild and Patric, for all their hard work and time they have given to the club. We'll miss you! To the new board, I look forward to working with all of you. I know that we'll have a great year. And lastly, to all the members of The Swedish Club, I challenge you to become involved in YOUR club. Let us know what activities you want and what needs to be changed. WE NEED TO HEAR FROM YOU! To make it easier for you to communicate with all of us, please turn to the back page of this newsletter where you will find all of our e-mail addresses.

All for now. We'll see you at our next event, Kräftskivan (the crawfish party) on April 1st!

Margaret

Valborgsmässoafton in Texas!

Saturday, April 22, 3:00 p.m.

SWEDISH BONFIRE AND TEXAS BARBECUE IN BRENHAM

We celebrated it back in 2003, and now it is time again! In Sweden Valborgsmässoafton is usually celebrated on April 30 and is ranked as one of the most popular festivities after Christmas and Midsummer. It means that the winter is gone and the time has come to welcome the spring back with games, singing and bonfires.

Although we here in Texas might have already had spring for some time, Valborgsmässoafton is still a great occasion for us to spend an afternoon enjoying a relaxing atmosphere with family and friends. Dr. Margit Winstrom has graciously once again opened up her ranch just west of Brenham for us, and we thank her for her generous hospitality.

This will be another **FREE** event for the club, but everyone is asked to preregister by Thursday, April 20, either on the SCH website www.swedishclub.org, or by calling Pelle Fisk, 281-348-2584, so we know how many people to expect.

NOTE: Bring hot dogs, hamburgers or something else to grill for yourself, and one side dish for everyone to share.

We will start around 3 p.m. with Frisbee, volleyball, badminton, croquet and other customary Swedish games. Also on the agenda: a hayride across the large ranch and at sunset the long-awaited bonfire with traditional singing. Remember that this is the highlight of the year for bluebonnets in the Brenham area, so it should be a gorgeous drive to the ranch.

Follow these directions to the ranch, which is located at 3383 Peters Lane, Brenham, TX (Directions may also be found at www.mapsonus.com.):

--US 290 W towards Austin
--Take ramp (right) onto US-290/US-290 Business towards US-290/Austin
--Turn left onto O'Malley Road
--Turn left onto CR 29/Lange Lake Road
--Turn right onto CR 25/Old Mill Creek Road
--Turn left onto CR 2/Beckerman Road
--Turn right onto Peters Lane and stop at 3383

Hope to see everyone there!

Pelle Fisk, Event Co-Chair

Don't forget! Let us know by April 20 that you are coming, either on the SCH website, www.swedishclub.org, or by calling Pelle at 281-348-2584.

Wondering about the origin of Valborgsmässoafton?

The festival (known in English as "Walpurgis Night") is named after Saint Walburga (known in Scandinavia as "Valborg") born in Wessex in 710. Saint Walburga was a niece of Saint Boniface and, according to legend, a daughter to the Saxon prince, St. Richard. Together with her brothers she traveled to Württemberg, Germany, where she became a nun and lived in the convent of Heidenheim, which was founded by her brother, Wunibald. Walburga died on 25 February 779, and that day still carries her name in the Catholic calendar. However she was not made a saint until 1 May in the same year, and that day carries her name in the Swedish calendar.

Historically the Walpurgisnacht is derived from Pagan spring customs, where the arrival of spring was celebrated with bonfires at night. Viking fertility celebrations took place around April 30 and, due to Walburga being declared a saint at that time of year, her name became associated with the celebrations. Walburga was worshiped in the same way that Vikings had celebrated spring and, as they spread throughout Europe, the two dates became mixed together and created the Walpurgis Night celebration. (From "Walpurgis Night." Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia.)

ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF . . .
Laura Millikan, Newsletter Editor

My name is Laura Millikan, and I am a Swede, not by birth but by choice. After high school (many years ago!), I spent 13 months as an International Christian Youth Exchange (ICYE) student in Norrköping, Sweden, and have considered myself half Swedish ever since.

By birth, I am a native Texan, born in Austin, and raised on a farm just north of Tyler, Texas. After my year in Sweden, I majored in Speech Pathology at Southern Methodist University in Dallas and graduated with a BFA in 1971. I later continued my education by earning an MEd in Early Childhood Education at the University of Texas at Tyler.

While at SMU, I met and married Charles, a fourth-generation United Methodist pastor, and we have three children: Kevin and his wife Kelly, who live in Fort Worth; Kristin and her fiancé Wil, in Austin; and Katy and her husband Neal in Dallas. Much of my time right now is spent preparing for Kristin's wedding on May 6!

As a clergy family, we have moved several times, as Charles served as the senior pastor of churches in Porter, New Caney, Tyler, Katy, Seabrook, and Galveston and in administrative positions in Palestine and Pearland. Being a PK (preacher's kid) himself, Charles had always lived in a church-owned parsonage, so it was a really big deal when we finally were able to purchase our own home last summer, when he was appointed by the bishop to a position with The Methodist Hospital System in Houston. He serves there as the Vice President for Spiritual Care and Values Integration.

In addition to being very active in all the churches we have served, I also taught first grade for two years and worked for several years in my dad's law office. My work now is strictly as a volunteer, both with the after-school program at St. Paul's United Methodist Church and on the Board of Wesley Community Center (in addition to being the new Newsletter Editor for the Swedish Club of Houston!).

I have many fond memories of my year in Sweden. One of the highlights was that I got to be there when Sweden switched over to driving on the right side of the road. After months of preparation and training for all drivers (car, motorcycle, bicycle, etc.) and pedestrians, including an oft-played song, "Håll dig till höger, Svensson!" ("Keep to the right, Svensson!"), one night all traffic stopped for several hours while right-handed signs were unveiled and left-handed signs were covered. At the appointed hour, traffic began again but on the right side of the road. It was so much fun to watch a major intersection from a sixth-floor balcony as drivers tried to remember what they had learned about how to make right and left turns. What an exciting event it was to witness and be part of!

While in Sweden, I attended De Geergymnasiet, the equivalent of high school, and became very fluent in Swedish. One of my proudest accomplishments was easily reading a 600-page book in Swedish! Both my vocabulary and pronunciation have suffered over the years since, but I can still read and carry on a conversation in Swedish, which has served me well on my trips back to Sweden in 1972, 1989, 1999 and 2004, and as various family members have visited Texas on numerous occasions.

Our family has maintained a close contact with my Swedish family, even hosting my youngest Swedish sister, Kicka, during her senior year in high school, when our children were all in elementary or preschool. It was quite an experience for all concerned, since she grew up the youngest of five children and was suddenly the oldest of four, making our oldest the second-oldest! This last summer, Kicka came back to Texas for three-and-a-half weeks with her husband and two young children. It was wonderful to see all our children, both Texan and Swedish, together again and to get to know our Swedish barnbarn (grandchildren).

My year in Sweden led me to be very active with ICYE (later renamed Volunteers Exchange International, or VEI). As a result, we hosted three exchange students, Melia Calderon from Costa Rica, Kim Robinson from New Zealand, and Pyong-Tae Kim from South Korea. Two of our children spent time in other countries, as well. Katy spent a year in Costa Rica with Melia's family, and Kristin spent three months in Brazil as a Global Justice Volunteer with the United Methodist Church.

I am excited to be a part of the Swedish Club of Houston and look forward to getting to know everyone. Please let me know if there is anything in particular that you would like to see in the newsletter or if you think of something that would help further our mission of *"Preserving Swedish Heritage on the Texas Gulf Coast."*

ANOTHER NEW BOARD MEMBER . . .

Mark Swanson

We have yet another new member on the Swedish Club Board of Directors to introduce. Our other newest Board member is Mark Swanson. Mark is a recently retired senior Coast Guard officer now working for Lloyd's Register here in Houston and is married to the former Emmie Keesler, a native of Charlotte and North Litchfield Beach, North Carolina. Mark and Emmie have lived all sorts of crazy places including Sweden and Alaska and have three children: Alfred (17), William, (17) and Benjamin (6). The Swansons reside in League City, Texas, and have had a long association with the club and have lots of work and personal connections to Sweden. Mark's father, two aunts, and grandparents were all born in Sweden and emigrated to U.S. in 1929. The Swansons lived in Malmö, Sweden, and traveled extensively throughout Sweden from 1994-96, while Mark was teaching Naval architecture at the World Maritime University. Since moving to Houston in 1996, the Swanson family has hosted a series of 5 exchange students including three Swedish high school teens from Ramlösa, Stockholm and Stenungsund, (1997-2002). Two of the Swanson's favorite exchange students, Annika and Mari, became involved with the Swedish club's language classes and SVEA's '99 and '00 Lucia Tåg as Lucia and Lucia's attendant respectively. One of the Swanson's twins, Alfred, attended Concordia College's Minnesota summer Swedish language immersion camp in 2004 and is currently halfway through a gap-year in Stenungsund, Sweden, as an exchange student, staying with the family of their former exchange student, Annika. Mark and his family just recently returned to Sweden for a few weeks over Christmas to visit with their son, Alfred, and Annika and family in Stenungsund. Both the Swanson twins are planning on a summer eu-rail adventure starting in Sweden this summer prior to heading off for college this fall.

Mark indicates that his whole family jabbers on in Swedish to varying degrees and that, while son Alfred is near-fluent, after years of study he himself is only now reasonably proficient with Swedish. Mark reports that he and Emmie both started learning the language in 1994 with two months introductory Swedish given by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture in Washington DC. From there Mark and Emmie have both progressed through two years Nybörjar Svenska at the Folk Universitet in Malmö, and 7 years of lessons from the Swedish club of Houston, at the intermediate, advanced, & (tongue firmly in cheek here) "terminal" levels. Mark says he is currently working his way through a huge pile of Swedish paperbacks and is interested in sharing his horde of Swedish books with anybody who has an interest in swapping some contemporary Swedish language novels or who has Swedish films or music to view/copy.

Beyond Swedish, Mark reports he has lots of interests and hobbies that include: reading, sailing of any kind including dingy and iceboat racing and windsurfing, biking, boat building, snow boarding, swimming, and most importantly relaxing in a hammock. Mark says home repair is not really a hobby but it certainly takes a lot of his time.

Currently Mark is helping out the club by running down some fun singable tunes for the upcoming Kräftskiva fest. Mark's ambition for the Swedish club is to talk–up the food and social events on the calendar and to encourage closer association and synergistic cooperation with other Swedish entities in the area including SVEA, the Swedish Consulate, and Swedish American Chamber of Commerce.

Mark Your Calendar!

Coming events. . .

April 1, 6:00 p.m. - Kräftskiva (Crayfish Party), at Monument Inn, La Porte (John Stavinoha and Mark Swanson, co-chairs)

April 22, 3:00 p.m. - Valborgsmässoafton Barbecue and Bonfire, at Brenham (Pelle Fisk and Eric Condon, co-chairs)

October - Smörgåsbord (John Stavinoha and Ingrid Philipson, co-chairs)

December 9 - Lucia Celebration (Nancy Webb and Diana Rodionov, co-chairs)

January, 2007 - Annual Meeting

2006 OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS met February 8 at IKEA- *Back row, l. to r.* - Eric Condon, Margaret St. Clair, Ingrid Philipson, Dina Colburn, Ken Nilsson. *Front row, l. to r.* - John Stavinoha, Laura Millikan, Nancy Webb, Diana Rodionov. Not pictured: Pelle Fisk, Mark Swanson, and Erich Wolz.

Lost and Found!

These items were found after the Lucia celebration on December 10th and are looking for their owners:

- A child's jacket (navy blue nylon, size 5)
- A small sack of seven items purchased at the bazaar

To claim, call Margaret St.Clair at 281-493-4978.

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Membership Application/Renewal Form - Bring or send it in soon.

(Please PRINT carefully)

Annual dues are $35 for family membership, $25 for individual memberships, and $10 for Students. Membership is on a calendar year basis, due by April 1. Please pay now and keep your mailings coming. Make check payable to "Swedish Club of Houston" and bring to the Kräftskiva or better yet mail to: The Swedish Club of Houston, c/o John Stavinoha, 807 Mulberry Lane, Bellaire TX 77401.

PLEASE pay special attention to the email addresses. They are hard to check.

Name(s): _____

Street: _____ Home Phone: (_____) _____

City: _____ Work Phone: (_____) _____

State: _____ ZIP: _____

Home e-mail(s): _____

Work e-mail(s): _____

Which e-Mail address do you want the newsletter sent to: Home _____ or Work ____

PEA SOUP and PANCAKES
ANNUAL MEETING, January 21, 2006

THE SWEDISH CLUB NEWS

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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 that is not in the general news, and your favorite Swedish shops, products, or resources.

Please send **YOUR NEWS** by email to ljmillikan@sbcglobal.net or when necessary by post to the return address below

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