

FLAGGAN

To preserve, teach and celebrate Swedish heritage.

Fall 2021

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Special Exhibits

By Angelica Farzaneh-Far

The Museum is currently displaying two art exhibits that touch on a number of current issues in society. In the Main Gallery, Anna U Davis's exhibit "Reality Check" adorns the walls and "Essential Worker Portraits" by Carolyn Olson is on display in the Wallenberg Gallery on The Museum's second floor.

Davis's "Reality Check" investigates the concept of the diffusion of responsibility in regard to pressing global issues. Diffusion of responsibility is a socio-psychological phenomenon when an individual assumes that other people are responsible for taking necessary action.

In "Reality Check," Davis juxtaposes mixed media paintings depicting diffusion of responsibility with works investigating gender inequality, racial discrimination and climate change. The work addresses our unwillingness to listen, our resistance to speak up and our inability to see the imminent consequences of our indifference.

A native of Lund, Sweden, Davis began expanding her artistic practice and developing her signature "Frocasian" characters after moving to Washington, DC in the 1990s. Frocasians appear in her art as abstracted, grey-toned figures, inspired by her interracial marriage, and her strongly held belief that everyone, regardless of their skin color, should be treated as equals and have the same opportunities in life. Davis creates narrative work where her characters investigate social inequalities, often focusing on gender relations. What began as hard-edge acrylic paintings have evolved into multimedia works which incorporate acrylic paint, cut-paper collage, textiles and traditional pen-and-ink drawing techniques. Davis is a two-time recipient of the Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant and has received multiple fellowships from the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities. In 2020, she was featured on the cover of the journal *Feminist Studies* (issue 46.1). Her recent solo and duo shows include Galerie Myrtis (Baltimore, Maryland), the Embassy of Sweden (Washington, DC), and Bredgade Kunsthandel (Copenhagen, Denmark). Her work has also been shown in solo and group exhibitions in Cuba, Europe and United States, and her work is held in public and private collections throughout Europe and United States.

Carolyn Olson is a narrative painter, sculptor and graphic designer. She observes life around her in hopes she can recreate what she sees. Carolyn's compositions are made up of overlapping figures joined and connected through eye contact, body language and architectural grids. She enjoys playing colors against each other and redefining the figures versus background.

In the early 1980s, Carolyn spent time working in Jackson, Mississippi- a radically different



Our Weight by Anna U Davis

**SWEDISH
AMERICAN
MUSEUM**

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MISSION STATEMENT

Through its arts and educational programs and its permanent collection, the Swedish American Museum interprets the immigrant experience for children and adults and promotes an appreciation of contemporary Swedish-American culture.

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5211 N. Clark St.
Chicago, IL 60640
Phone 773.728.8111
Fax 773.728.8870

Editors: KARIN MOEN ABERCROMBIE
KRISTIN MARIE BIVENS PH.D.
ANGELICA FARZANEH-FAR

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Dear members and friends,

This is a very special issue of *Flaggan* for us. To manage expenses and yet still get information to you regularly, we moved *Flaggan* online in March 2020. For this special issue, we printed and mailed it to our members (of course, it remains available in print at The Museum for friends and visitors). We are thankful to you for adjusting to the online version, and we know that some information about upcoming programs is more easily noted while in your hands with a hard-copy printed version.

Here are some recent Museum highlights I want to share. The Celebration Weekend in September was planned well by the celebration committee. I offer special thanks to committee members Karin Bjorkling, Anna Engstrom-Patel, Sherrie Magnuson, Janet Nelson, Vereen Nordstrom, Liz Peterson, Frank Schneider, Joy Thorbjornsen-Coates, and Kevin Williams. There were events throughout the whole weekend. The Museum's founding director Kerstin Lane and her husband Joe participated in all events and on Saturday evening Kerstin shared moments from the early years. Her dedication and hard work during her 20 years as executive director is the foundation we are all able to build on today. We were very happy that Bo and Anita Hedfors were with us from California before their move back to Sweden, and that Bengt and Gerd Sjögren came from Sweden. Thanks to Paul Muhr's special video, we were able to watch highlights from the past 45 years that showcased many special moments.

We are happy to welcome Markus Matti (community engagement manager), Kristen Larson (Kerstin Andersson Museum Store manager), and Phoebe Yates, (curatorial assistant) to our staff here at the Museum. You can read more about them on pages 10 and 12. I hope you get to meet them in person during your next Museum visit. They join Emily England, (curator), Angelica Farzaneh-Far (communications manager), and me. Together we are a great team dedicated to The Museum.

Many of you ask about the status of our projects. Just like other institutions and companies, we experience delays completing projects. Here is a quick summary of where we are with our current Museum projects.

The connection between the 5211 and 5217 buildings is finished, and we are waiting for the final inspection. We hope to move the Museum Store to the 5217 retail space during the first quarter of 2022, which allows us to open the café in our current Museum Store space at 5211. With the construction timing, we aim to be open by summer 2022. In the meantime, we will continue hosting pop-up cafés in the gallery space, offering baked goods during the holiday season and throughout 2022, as well. Since we have our own personal and friendly courtyard, which is an extra benefit of owning the 5217 building, the pop-up café was open most weekends in the summer and offered baked treats and Swedish (open-faced) sandwiches.

This winter holiday season, we plan to use both retail spaces for regular Museum Store items and fun holiday items, such as *tomtar*, books, linen, candles, and of course, all the holiday food we offer.

We are working to bring back regularly scheduled holiday programs and events in November and December. Although we will limit the number of people at each event to keep safe, Got Glögg? will take place on Nov. 19 followed by *Julmarknad* on Dec. 3-5, then Breakfast with Tomten, Lucia, and *Julmiddag*. More details are available on the program pages 7-9 (for the most recent updates, please check our website).

Figuring out how to open up the Brunk Children's Museum of Immigration to visitors and keep everyone safe is another focus of ours. We will seek your input about this in a survey. Please look for the survey in your email or on our website. In the meantime, we offer birthday parties and small group visits that can be planned ahead of time. Let us know if you have an idea or want to bring a group.

We have exciting news to share about our core exhibit "Dream of America." In August, we received great news from the Institute of Museum and Library Services: that our grant application to redo the second floor exhibit had been awarded. We started work toward this about 5-6 years ago. You might remember the surveys, focus groups, and reviews. We will update the exhibit with a new outline, yet still focused on immigration; new display cases; and interactive elements. The exhibit's name will change to "We are America." The project will take two years, and the current exhibit will most likely be closed during the first four to five months of 2023. The new "We are America" grand opening is planned for either August or September 2023. We will continue to share updates in *Flaggan* and on our website. It is very exciting and special for all of us.

We hope that you are able to come to The Museum or connect with us via email, phone call, or mail so you continue to feel part of our Museum community. Our hope is that you are able to have a little bit of Sweden or Swedish-America during the holiday season.

Thanks for being a supporter and interested in what we do. You make our work very rewarding.

Best



Karin

Curators Corner

By Emily England

As discussed in the previous installment of this series on the life of a museum artifact, before you propose a donation to any museum's collection, you should stop and think about the following:

- What is the museum's mission, and how does this object in particular support that mission?
- What is the museum's collections policy, and how does this object and its story fit into that policy? Is the object likely to be accepted according to that policy?
- Is this a unique object? Is the museum likely to already have many objects like this one?
- How compelling is this object's story? Do both the object and its story contribute something singularly unique to the historical record?
- Would the story I'm trying to preserve be better told with a different object?
- How much time am I willing to spend talking to the museum staff and writing down this object's story?
- Am I confident this object is probably worth at least \$50 of the museum's resources to consider for their collection?

What happens after a proposed donation has been evaluated and accepted into a museum's permanent collection? The short answer is a lot of paperwork.

First the legal transfer of property and any associated conditions must be recorded. Being in the business of keeping things forever means you should record everything clearly and immediately as future ownership disputes are not uncommon. Doing the paperwork now can save many headaches down the road in a decade or two. Legal transfers of property must describe the property being transferred and show clearly who the legal owner is, the owner's intent to transfer ownership to the museum, any conditions either party is attaching to the gift agreement, and the physical transfer of ownership. At this point, it is best to also iron out other issues, such as who holds the copyright of a donated creative work and whether the copyright is donated alongside the physical object (if the donor holds the copyright). Oftentimes copyrights are not held by the object's legal owner by the time they are donated to a museum, which can complicate the work's use by the museum.

Once all the necessary gift paperwork is out of the way, the object is formally accessioned—or formally added—into the collection. If acquisition is the act of physically owning an object, accessioning is the act of legally putting the object into your permanent collection and promising to care for it in perpetuity. When an object is accessioned, it is given an identification (ID) number to track it. These numbers are affixed to the object in a number of ways – they can be tags tied or sewn onto the objects or physically written on the object itself. This number is also referred to as a catalog number or object ID. Most museums use a three-part numbering system where the first two parts are the object's accession number—the number assigned to the donation paperwork that may be shared among many objects from the same donation lot. The last part is a unique identifier for that particular object. Oftentimes the first number is the year in which the artifact was donated to the museum; the second number indicates what donation it belongs to from that year; and the third number is a number within that donation lot. An artifact with the number 1970.35.6 would mean that artifact is the sixth object in the 35th donation made in 1970 to a museum.

After accessioning, the artifact is then cataloged. Museums keep detailed records of all the artifacts in their collection for a variety of reasons, chief among them being historical documentation and tracking purposes. A good catalog record should include enough information to sufficiently distinguish that artifact from every other artifact in the collection. At a minimum, catalog records include a basic description of the artifact, its dimensions, storage and/or display location, condition, photographs, age, provenance, and other pertinent information, such as make or use history (if known). Oftentimes this information is recorded in two-four locations and kept digitally and physically as the accession and object records are among the most important institutional records for a museum.

Then comes the arts and crafts part where the artifact is given a museum-quality housing. This can range quite a bit,



Upside down



more arts and crafts with rehousing...

continued on page 4

Special exhibits

continued from page 1

culture from her home in northern Minnesota. In Jackson, she came of age as an artist and as a person who understood the artist's role in reflecting society. During that time, she worked in an African-American owned print shop as a graphic designer. She also worked with a socially active organization focused on integration and equality between race and class. She taught art in the Jackson Public Schools as specialist in a gifted elementary art program offered through the Mississippi Museum of Art. Her work matured and her perspective as a painter took hold.

At the Mississippi Museum, there was an exhibition of Jacob Lawrence's work, including many paintings from "The Builder's Series." Lawrence's use of strong shapes told his story simply through gestures and strong exaggerated playful characters. Lawrence painted everyday scenes, such as people in libraries, little girls playing with dolls, and people talking on the street in their neighborhoods. This was a connection that Carolyn would continue as she worked on her own narrative work.

In Jackson, and upon her return to Duluth, Carolyn worked with large constructivist figures, reminiscent of the ones she paints. Groupings of the 6 - 12-foot-tall figures were displayed in public settings, such as a mother and daughter walking down the street carrying packages after shopping, an anxious couple sitting in a windowsill at the bank waiting to apply for a home mortgage loan, or a group of boys and one girl playing pool in a pool hall.

Over the years, Carolyn's art has documented past and present family events, such as getting a haircut, shoveling snow off the roof, or visiting a great aunt's house, as well as activities that define her community, such as dancing at the local club, ice skating, or grocery shopping. Her paintings, drawings, and sculptures are also the results of her trying to understand another's point of view. Recently Carolyn's focus has been on "Essential Worker Portraits" in pastel. Beginning with the stay at home order from March 2020, she has worked on this series of pastel portraits.

Carolyn watched and listened to stories about the effect of COVID-19 on communities and families. Her two adult children are essential workers. This pastel work provided her with an outlet for her anxiety about her family members working during the pandemic. Many worked unvaccinated and at risk of getting sick or even dying. It seemed society was okay with some people being sacrificed.

Her art begs the question: "how can we ask essential workers to do this work when underpaid, provided no health insurance or affordable housing?" The series continues to initiate conversations between people who have only met online and ask what it takes to bring about systemic change in society.



EMT and Ambulance Drivers by Carolyn Olson

Curators Corner

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depending on the museum's budget, in-house expertise, and the type of artifact being housed. A simple photograph may be given an archival folder and put in a filing cabinet; or, it may be given a Mylar encapsulation with UV film, put in an archival folder, then place that archival folder inside an archival Hollinger box. A bowl may be placed on an ethafoam-lined metal shelf or it may be given its own box with customized supports using a variety of archival materials. The sky's the limit! The key is to make sure all materials are archival and any weak points in the artifact are supported.

Many of these steps have been formalized quite a bit over the last 10-25 years, and so most museums didn't complete all of these steps when they first received most of their artifacts. Now, they are working backwards to update their artifacts with proper documentation, cataloging, imaging, and/or housing – not to mention processing incoming artifacts, rehousing artifacts as materials age and deteriorate, or using better archival materials as they are developed!

If any of these steps sound fun to you, especially collections photography or scanning, and you'd like to help us with our collections work, please reach out to me at england@samac.org, and we can chat about what possibilities exist here at The Museum!

Exciting Happenings with Our Core Exhibits!

By Emily England

First, we are so excited to announce that we have received a large grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and their Museums for America project to update our beloved “Dream of America” exhibit. The Museum has fundraised and planned for this update over the last six or so years. The main exhibit will close in early 2023 then reopen in the summer or early fall of 2023 as “We Are America.” The revised exhibit will keep much of what everyone loves about the current “Dream of America,” yet also provide some much needed updates identified in a 2014-2015 visitor evaluation.

The “We Are America” revitalization will better address current community concerns, reflect updated scholarship and implement contemporary best practices for museum exhibitions. We will alter the architecture to create a single-entry point, meet Americans with Disability Act guidelines, improve visitor orientation and slightly expand the space. New sensory and interactive features will enliven the space and directly engage audiences with at least one offering the opportunity for community-created content. We will improve the protection and preservation of our artifacts by reducing the number in the exhibit and better protecting those on display.

The updated exhibit narrative will also demonstrate how immigration to Chicago has shaped every ethnic groups’ experience here, and how immigrants have changed and continue to change the very nature of the city. We will use Swedish-Americans and Chicago as a microcosm through which to examine immigration to the United States at large, while also incorporating diverse viewpoints from a number of our 43 first-voice ethnic museum peers in the Chicago Cultural Alliance. Stay tuned for more updates and opportunities to help with this major project as it develops!

Please note that during this period, we have elected to institute a temporary hold on donations for the collection effective immediately. This means we will not accept any items into our permanent collection until further notice. Doing so enables us to reserve our remaining collections storage space to safely house artifacts currently on display in our “Dream of America” exhibit during the space’s renovation over the next two years. We will reevaluate our collecting needs and capacity to accept donations in 2024.

Other exciting news is the recent addition of a small new permanent exhibit on the second floor in the Lind Hardware Room! “Andersonville Through the Ages” shares how the Andersonville we know and love became what it is today. In the exhibit, you can learn more about Simon’s early history as a speakeasy during Prohibition, the effort to revitalize Andersonville in the 1960s and more. You can even see some artifacts from The Museum building’s early history as the Lind Hardware Store, including an original ceiling tile! Come visit and stay tuned for updated content over the next few years.



Andersonville through the ages

SWEDISH AMERICAN MUSEUM HOURS

GENERAL MUSEUM AND STORE HOURS:

Wednesday - Friday
10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Saturday & Sunday
11 a.m. - 4 p.m.

HOLIDAY HOURS:

Nov. 15 – Dec. 5
Tuesday - Friday
10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Saturday & Sunday
11 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Dec. 6 – Dec. 31
Monday - Friday
10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Saturday & Sunday
11 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Children’s Museum is closed until further notice.

Meet the Community Engagement Manager

By Markus Matti



My name is Markus Matti. I began working at The Swedish American Museum in June 2021 as the Communication Assistant. When the opportunity arose to become Community Engagement Manager, I jumped at it immediately and accepted this role at The Museum. As the Community Engagement Manager, I am fortunate enough to get to work closely with our amazing volunteers and, of course, my spectacular co-workers. In the short time I have worked at The Museum, I have learned about the vitality and importance The Museum has as the focal point of the Swedish-American community in Chicago.

Since I am from a relatively small town in Sweden, I am thrilled to have the opportunity to work in Andersonville for The Museum; it provides me with a chance to connect with my Swedish roots in Chicago. It has also allowed me to forge new connections with members of the Swedish-American community. Although I have lived in Chicago since 2016, it was not until I began working here that I finally felt truly part of a community. Even though I was able to partake in two different academic communities as a political science student-athlete at Oakton Community College and DePaul University, there were cultural differences that took a lot of effort and energy to overcome.

Now when I reflect back on my own integration process, my transition could have been much easier if I had been able to connect with the Swedish-American community in Chicago when I first moved here. Although it is a lesson I learned in retrospect, it is also a lesson that will serve me well in my future endeavors as the Community Engagement manager for The Museum. The Museum has the potential (as proven in the past through our many different successful programs and events) to serve as the true focal point for Swedish culture and life in Chicago, in Illinois and in the Midwest. It is important for me to make sure that our standing as the leading starting point for all things related to Swedish culture is knowledge that will be accessible for anyone who may find themselves in the same position that I did when I moved to Chicago.

The Museum, the Andersonville community, our amazing volunteers and my co-workers have embraced me with open arms as I have embarked on this new chapter in my life, which I will always be grateful for. I hope to be able to show my appreciation to The Museum community through my effort and my work and by always upholding and promoting the values of The Museum and its patrons.

Even though my journey at The Museum has just begun, I invite you to join our mission to promote appreciation for and knowledge about Swedish-American culture to create long-lasting collaborations with the broader Chicago-area community. There is no doubt in my mind that we can accomplish our goals and improve with your help. I had a professor at DePaul for a class where I was required to volunteer 25 hours for a political organization, and he told us that “volunteering can be the start of a wonderful journey.” For those of you who have volunteered in the past with us, your journey can continue and for that, I am thrilled. However, for those who are reading this and are considering joining our amazing team of volunteers, I would like to express my encouragement for all of you to take the leap and come together with us. Join our cause in creating the preeminent Swedish-American museum in the greater Chicago area and a unifying force within the Midwestern Scandinavian community. Join us and create friendships that will last a lifetime, take advantage of the opportunities we offer in advancing your own career, learn new skills and tricks, and allow yourself to become the best possible version you can be – and subsequently, we as a community will improve and continue to grow in our journey with you by our side.

Exhibits

MAIN GALLERY

REALITY CHECK

By Anna U Davis

EXHIBIT CLOSES

Sunday, Nov. 28

4 p.m.

“Reality Check” is a series of new works contrasting people’s diffusion of responsibility with specific global issues. The work addresses our unwillingness to listen, our resistance to speak up and our inability to see the imminent consequences of our indifference.

Davis’ mixed media paintings consist of grey-scaled abstracted figures called “Frocasians” (an amalgam of Afro and Caucasian.) They are meant to transcend racial divide and are inspired by her interracial relationship with her husband. Davis chose the color grey, since grey is an achromatic color (a color “without color.”) The “Frocasian” characters carry out Davis’ target subject matter, which draws upon a broad range of influences that internalizes her fascination with gender relations, sexuality and other social issues. What started as hard edge acrylic paintings, has evolved into multidimensional work, which incorporates acrylic paint, ink drawing and paper collage.



Shark-cuteri by Anna U Davis

BONADER

EXHIBIT OPENS

Friday, Dec. 10

10 a.m.

One of the most remarkable examples of Scandinavian folk art is the painted picture indigenous to the Swedish peasant home. The commonly used name for these peasant paintings is bonader, and their provenance was to decorate the walls and ceilings of the homes at Christmas time and on feast days, thus adding a note of color and gaiety to the otherwise dark interiors. Between festivities, these canvas or paper panels were taken down and carefully kept, to become a part of the family inheritance. The collection of bonader at the Museum is a collection of extraordinary works on linen and paper, with vegetable and mineral pigments that achieve arrays of color. They were sized for specific wall spaces and hung unframed. Several of the artists were identified, and more than 100 may have practiced the craft. Donated to the Museum in 2000 by the Art Institute of Chicago, the 29 Bonader represent the eighth largest known collection. They originated in 1931 among acquisitions from world traveler Florence Dibell Bartlett of Chicago. Inspired by what she viewed as a decline in creation of folk art, Bartlett acquired pieces she found in 37 countries. She was the founder in 1953 of the Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

RAOUL WALLENBERG GALLERY

ESSENTIAL WORKER PORTRAITS

By Carolyn Olson

EXHIBIT CLOSES

Sunday, April 24, 2022

Carolyn Olson is a narrative artist working and living in northern Minnesota. She intends her art to inspire us to be better people as we become more aware of ourselves and the world around us.

Beginning with the “Stay at Home order” in March 2020, Carolyn has worked on a series of pastel portraits of essential workers. She watched and listened to stories about the effect of Covid-19 on communities and families. Her two adult children work as essential workers. This pastel work provided her with an outlet for her anxiety about her family members working as essential workers. Many worked unvaccinated - at huge risk of getting sick and/or dying. It seemed society was OK with some being sacrificed. The art begs the question “how can we ask the essential worker to do this work while not being paid enough, provided no health insurance or affordable housing?” The series continues to initiate conversations between people who have only met online and are asking what it takes to bring about systemic changes in society.



Sewing Machine Repair Workers by Carolyn Olson

Recurring Events

PRATA SVENSKA

Saturdays 11 a.m. Online
Nov. 20, Dec. 18

Would you like to practice speaking Swedish with others who are learning as well as a native speaker or two? We will get together over Zoom for some informal conversation. Each session we will decide on a topic for conversation for the following session.

BOOK CLUB

Saturday 1 p.m.
Nov. 20 - Trolls by Stefan Spjut
Dec. 18 - The Saga of Gosta Bergling by Selma Lagerlöf

A different book by a Swedish or Swedish-American author will be picked every month. The event is free with admission. Registration is encouraged, and the book is for sale in the Museum Store. Registrations can be made by emailing museum@samac.org.

BULLERBYN

Sunday 10 a.m. - 11 a.m.
Nov. 21, Dec. 19

Taking place on alternative Sundays in tandem with Svenska Skolan, Bullerbyn is a time for singing cherished children's songs, reading humorous tales and having lots of fun in Swedish. Children aged 6 months to 5 years are welcome to attend with parents. Only Swedish is spoken in Bullerbyn, so Swedish should be spoken regularly at home too! We meet in the gallery space or the Children's Museum. Classes are free for members, non-members are asked to make a \$5 per child/class donation; payment can be made at the Museum. Reservations are recommended and can be made by emailing museum@samac.org.

SVENSKA SKOLAN

Sunday 10 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.
Nov. 21, Dec. 5 & 19

Taking place at the same time as Bullerbyn, Svenska Skolan is for children of school age (Kindergarten - High School) who speak Swedish. The children learn about Swedish history, geography and culture in a school setting. It is a great way for children to practice their Swedish with children their own age as well as learning more about their heritage.

SCANDINAVIAN JAM

Sunday 1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. Online
Nov. 21, Dec. TBD

Scandinavian Jam, where we practice what we teach

Join Mary Allsopp and Paul Tyler online on the first and third Sunday of every month.

Enjoy an afternoon of traditional roots music. We teach by ear, review and share tunes. We are happy to take suggestions and love meeting new people. It's a friendly group and we have folks joining in from across the country. Contact Scandi.Fiddler@yahoo.com or PTyler@ameritech.net with any questions and to get a zoom code.

KNITTING GROUP

Sunday 1 p.m.
Nov. 21 Online

Join the Swedish American Museum knitting group! All knitting levels are welcome. Bring your project, share some of your favorite patterns and learn from each other. There will also be chances to learn some specifically Swedish knitting patterns and techniques.

SWEDISH MOVIE SERIES

Tuesday, Nov. 30 4 p.m.
Kopps (YouTube)
Tuesday, Dec. 21 4 p.m.
Street Kids

Swedish TV Series online is kind of like a book club. You watch the episodes at home in your own time and then we get together via Zoom to discuss what we have watched.

November

THE MUSEUM IS CLOSED ON THURSDAY, NOV. 25 IN OBSERVANCE OF THANKSGIVING DAY.

DALA HORSE DECORATION

Monday, Nov. 15 6 p.m. Online
Wednesday, Nov. 17 6 p.m. In-person

Looking for a gift for someone who has everything or just always wanted to create your own Dala horse? Here is your chance. This is an event for the whole family. You can choose to paint a traditional unfinished Dala horse or a flat children's version. For the in person event we will provide paint but for the online version you will have to purchase your own. You can make reservations and see pictures of the different versions on the Museum website.

GOT GLÖGG?

Friday, Nov. 19 7 p.m.

Glögg, mulled wine, is a vital part of the Christmas season for Swedes. Join us for a fun competition to see who really has the best glögg in Chicago! Those wanting to compete should go on our website to reserve their space and receive the rules for competing. Tasters can purchase tickets on the Museum website or at the Museum. Admission is \$25 and includes sandwiches and samples from all our competing glögg masters. This year we are only selling 50 tickets so make sure you get yours.

BAKING CLASS

Monday, Nov. 22 4 p.m. Online
Tuesday, Nov. 23 6 p.m. In-person

Learn to bake some traditional Swedish holiday cookies. For the online class you can either watch and bake later or bake along. There are plenty of opportunities to ask questions. This class is \$10 for Museum members and \$15 for non-members. A maximum of 4 participants per in-person class. The in-person class is a hands on class and is \$25 for members and \$30 for non-members. Note that the online class and in-person class are the same so only sign up for one.

GENEALOGY SESSION

Saturday, Nov. 27 10 a.m. Online

Join the Genealogy Society in a book talk by Helen Lundström Erwin as she talks about her book *Sour Milk in Sheep's Wool*.

Helen was born and raised in Helsingborg, Sweden, and lives in New York City. She loves the city's rich multicultural community, especially its many cuisines.

Grounding her historical novels in scholarly research, she brings readers back in time by putting them in the minds of her characters. Intrigued by activity in day-to-day life that explains the thinking of the past, she sheds light on the people who fought for justice, and on those who held views we strongly disagree with today.

Helen is especially inspired by people who had the courage to challenge the beliefs they were raised to accept, thus breaking the cycle of racism, sexism and injustice. Her novels feature historical revolutionaries like Harriet Tubman, Dr. James McCune Smith, and Henry Ward Beecher.

Sour Milk in Sheep's Wool is inspired by her own family history and genealogy research. Based on Helen's great grandmother, an unwed mother, and about the women who fought for suffrage and women's rights in Sweden.

Cost is free for the Swedish American Museum's Genealogical Society members; non-member cost is \$10.

December

THE MUSEUM IS CLOSED ON FRIDAY, DEC. 24 THROUGH SUNDAY, DEC. 26 IN OBSERVANCE OF CHRISTMAS AS WELL AS FRIDAY, DEC.31 THROUGH SUNDAY, JAN. 2, 2022 IN OBSERVANCE OF NEW YEARS.

PREVIEW SALE

Friday, Dec. 3 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.

Kerstin Andersson Museum Store invites you to enjoy a day of Christmas shopping! Specially priced Christmas items will be available and members receive a 20 percent discount all day.

JULMARKNAD

Saturday, Dec. 4 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Sunday, Dec. 5 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Julmarknad is the Museum's annual Christmas Bazaar, where traditional Scandinavian and modern handicrafts will be available for purchase. Visit the Children's Museum for crafts and a special visit from Santa. It is entertainment for the whole family that includes some performances and a kaffestuga to-go. This year we are partnering with Andersonville Winter Market. Catalpa Avenue will be closed off with tents for vendors and food. The market will include one Swedish tent so make sure you visit both locations.

CANDLE MAKING AND CHRISTMAS CRAFTS

Wednesday, Dec. 8 6 p.m.

Come and make your own hand-dipped candle, it's a fun part of making Christmas crafts at the Museum. While the candles are drying we make other Swedish decorations. Hopefully we will have time for a special treat as well. Come prepared with a pair of scissors. Coffee and sandwiches are served. Cost is \$20 for members and \$25 for non-members. Reservations are required by Wednesday, Dec. 1 and no refunds within 5 days of the event. This event is for adults and children 12 and over.

GINGERBREAD HOUSE DECORATION KIT

Order by Saturday, Dec. 4 5 p.m.

PICKUP

Friday, Dec. 10 - Sunday, Dec. 12 during regular Museum hours

Preorder a beautiful gingerbread house with icing and candy for a fun holiday activity with your family. The house comes assembled. Cost is \$35 for a kit.

BREAKFAST WITH TOMTEN

Saturday, Dec. 11 9 a.m.

Sunday, Dec. 12 9 a.m.

One of our most popular family events of the year is back! Join us on either Saturday or Sunday for a Swedish pancake breakfast with traditional crafts, a special visit from Tomten, and dancing around the Christmas tree. Cost: \$15 members (adults and children 2 and over); \$20 non-members (adults and children 2 and over); \$5 children aged 12-24 months; Infants are free. Prepaid and confirmed tickets are required and no refunds available for cancellations within 5 days of event.

ST. LUCIA CELEBRATION

Monday, Dec. 13

4:30 p.m. Crowning at the Museum

5 p.m. Procession up Clark street to Catalpa Avenue

5:30 p.m. Performance at Andersonville Winter Market on Catalpa Avenue

Performance at Ebenezer (Time tbd)

Celebrate St. Lucia Day with Lucia candidates representing Swedish-American organizations throughout the Chicago area. Due to Covid-19 only family members will be able to attend the Crowning at the Museum. Anyone who is interested in walking in the procession along Clark Street can join in behind starting at Farragut Avenue. The procession will be divided in two and walk up on both sides of the street. This year the choir will have additional help with background music since it is hard to hear people sing with masks on. The performance at Ebenezer will be for reserved ticket holders only and will be to recorded music.

JULMIDDAG

Sunday, Dec. 19 5 p.m.

A festive and traditional Swedish Christmas smörgåsbord will be served at the Museum. The children are invited to participate in a St. Lucia procession before a special visit from Tomten and everyone is welcome to dance around the Christmas tree. Cost is \$70 for members; \$80 for non-members; \$20 for children 12 and under; infants 12 months and under are free. RSVP by Dec. 11 on the Museum website or at the Museum. Prepaid and confirmed tickets are required and no refunds available for cancellations within 5 days of event.

Meet the Store Manager

By Kristen Larson



My name is Kristen and I come from Iowa and Illinois but have only been in Chicago for the past 7 years. I have bachelor's degrees in both Physics and Visual Communication. I have been involved in the museum field since 2014 working at both the Mitchell Museum of the American Indian and the Niels Bohr Library and Archives. While not predominantly Swedish, I am a German-Danish American (second and fourth generation, respectively) and have ancestral roots in Sweden most recently with Maria Jönsdotter my Fourth Great-Grandmother born in Genarp, Sweden in 1852.

I have been a visitor of the Swedish American Museum in the past and hope to learn more about Scandinavian traditions that may have been lost through the generations of assimilation. Even though I have some Scandinavian familiarity, it is quite limited. I have mainly interacted with the culture through books and museums, and I hope to transform the shop into a place where people can feel a cozy atmosphere, where people can find a bit of Hygge to take home. If you have any recommendations on certain goods you would like to see in the shop please contact me at klarson@samac.org.



Tall Tomten



Green Tree Taper Candles

Store Updates

By Kristen Larson

Although the weather still believes its late summer, the Museum Store is already in full-swing Holiday mode. Inventory keeps pouring in and our new store manager, Kristen Larson, is doing her best to keep up and make a plan for going forward. After the Annual Gala, the Store next door (5217) will once again transform into a Winter Wonderland of cheer, with an anticipated opening on November 12, 2021.

Pictured below are some of the items that will be on sale from our Holiday inventory that has been an excitement to find and unbox:

As winter days are short in Sweden, candles feature heavily in any holiday decoration. The Museum Store has an excellent selection of candles and candleholders that will be available for the holiday season and beyond. A tradition that is still prominent in Swedish culture even if it has lost its religious background is the lighting of advent candles. Swedish windows and tables are adorned with candleholders holding four candles. The first candle is lit on the first of Advent and the countdown to Christmas has begun. On the fourth Sunday and on Christmas all four candles are lit and at different lengths. This is the inspiration behind the electric taper candles. Even though they are all lit together they still feature the different heights to symbolize the countdown to Christmas.



Red Drop Candles in Natural Wood Candle Stick Holders



Advent Taper Candle

Hipp Hipp Hurra!

By Anna Engström Patel

The Museum and Brunk Children's Museum of Immigration celebrated their 45th and 20th anniversaries this year. The celebrations culminated during the weekend of Sept. 17-19 with a fun filled, packed program. From the children's festival to the fancy dinner party, there was something for everyone.

All guests enjoyed free admission, tours, and the summer café throughout the weekend. On Friday night, members were invited to a cocktail party. Board member Joy Thorbjornsen-Coates planned the anniversary event; for weeks before the party, she tried different recipes for a special cocktail and hors d'oeuvres. The results featured a yummy peach and blueberry flavored cocktail and the treats were all scrumptious. It was a very nice evening and an excellent start to the weekend.

Bright and early on Saturday morning, I personally participated in plogging—(picking up garbage while you jog or walk)—near Foster Beach. It was a beautiful morning and about 30 of us met up at this location to plog. In the process, we got lots of fresh air, exercise, and did a good deed at the same time. Onlookers recognized our efforts, and we generated many cheers from bystanders. As an avid runner, I recommend this type of “bend down and pick up” exercise—I have to admit that my legs were much sorer than after a normal run! After plogging, my family and I decided that we had earned a well-deserved *fika* (a coffee break) at The Museum. I am sure that if my son had been in charge, there would have only been cinnamon rolls and Daim cookies to eat, but the mom in me made sure we each had at least one delicious *köttbullsmörgås* before the sweet treats. There is a good Swedish word to describe this experience: *mumsfillibabba* (super tasty).

Ever since Anna U Davis' work was put up in the main exhibit space, I have been admiring her art; yet somehow every single time I visit the exhibit, I find new and intriguing details in her work. I was therefore particularly excited to attend her artist talk at noon on Saturday (also on Sunday). It did not disappoint. It was wonderful to hear Anna talk about her different choices of color and materials, and her thoughts and collaborations with musician-husband, Peter.

Although I did not visit the children's festival in the parking lot myself, I could tell by their faces as they returned to The Museum that it was a success. Well, the recipe for success was pretty simple: bean bag tossing, duck bobbing, fishing for treats, balloon animals, and crafts was on the agenda so what could possibly go wrong? The festival had been carefully planned by the Children's Museum advisory board. A special thanks to Kevin Palmer, Frank Schneider, and Kristin Rydholm who worked all day with the help of Erika Devine and Maggie Callahan to make a fun day for the children.

On Saturday evening, it was time for the highlight of the celebration—the formal dinner. For many this was the first time that they met in person since March 2020, so it was not only a fantastic evening of celebration, but also a

continued on page 13



Family Festival



Guests at the cocktail party



Merula performing for dinner guests in the courtyard

Hipp Hipp Hurra!

continued from page 12

reunion of friends. Through speeches we learned the history and development of The Museum as a small shop to The Museum as we know it. It was a great chance for many of us to thank the few people who have been instrumental in the evolution of The Swedish American Museum in Chicago. Food was prepared by our Swedish fan favorite Tre Kronor and the Merula choir provided a pandemic-safe rendition of their repertoire. The dinner was a great success thanks to Karin Bjorkling, Janet Nelson, and Sherrie Magnuson who planned the evening and decorated the room beautifully.

The finale of the celebration weekend was the birthday party on Sunday. Paul Muhr prepared a video presentation that guided us through events in the past that provoked many guests' memories. Angelica Farzaneh-Far and Karin Moen Abercrombie made *Prinsesstårter* (Princess cakes) in The Museum's state-of-the-art kitchen. When the *Prinsesstårter* was served, we all joined in and sang happy birthday. The party concluded in the courtyard with Linda and Paul Muhr and their Nordic dance group entertaining us with traditional Scandinavian dancing.

As a Swede, a Museum board member, and part of Team Sweden (a network promoting Swedish exports and investments in Sweden), I am thankful to the entire anniversary committee members, volunteers, fellow board members and especially our Executive Director Karin Moen Abercrombie for the hard work and effort in planning and executing the celebration weekend together. Thank you!



Museum birthday cake



Joy serving guests at the cocktail party



Kerstin and Joe Lane at the Dinner



Dinner to pave the way for the future



Bo and Anita Hedfors at the Dinner

Finding a birth mother

By Shirley Koelling

In 2019 before COVID-19, the Swedish American Museum Genealogy Center was open public every Wednesday and Saturday. On one Wednesday, I was working, and I got a call from the front desk; they were sending someone up to see me. He was from Peru, Illinois, and he had several appointments in Chicago that day. He had a few hours before his next appointment. He told me that his name was Eric, and he was adopted. He thought we might be able to help him find his mother who was born in Sweden. Since I had found the identity of my mother's biological father, I told him that I had some experience with adoption.

He brought paperwork with him from an Evanston adoption agency, The Cradle. He had requested it when his first son was born. It said that his mother was 24 years old at the time of his birth in December 1963. Her last name was Svensson, and she was a nurse. In addition, he had taken an ancestry.com DNA test, which told him that his ancestors came from southern Sweden.

To start, I checked the 1940 Swedish census to see how many Svensson babies were born in 1939. The number was around 1,100. However, we knew they did not all travel to the United States in the 1960s. By using several databases and adjusting ranges, we narrowed it down to around 20. We eliminated the men and those from northern Sweden, which narrowed it down to about five. One of them had travel documents that stated her occupation as nurse. This sounded very promising!

We now had the first name Berit, and Berit's birthdate. Using Berit's birthdate, I looked her up on birthday.se to find her married name. Then Eric asked, "I wonder if she's on Facebook?"

He found her right away, and we looked at her picture. I could see a resemblance. He sent his wife Michelle the photo, and he asked if she saw a resemblance. She did, so she started looking through Berit's list of Facebook friends for some American sounding names.

Over the next 24 hours, Michelle reached out by Messenger to some of Berit's Facebook friends. Eventually Eric got a call from a woman in Vermont whose family Berit had lived with in the Chicago area when she worked as a nanny. She told Eric that his theory was correct: Berit was indeed his birth mother!

She offered to call her for him; however, the phone number she tried didn't go through. Eric called her himself. When Berit answered the phone, he was almost speechless. He did say, "I'm calling from America." She began to question him, and he told her that he was a friend of the family she had lived with in Chicago.

He asked her if she was familiar with The Cradle and if she gave up a child for adoption in 1963. She said, "yes," and he replied, "I believe I am that child."

After a short pause, she said "Yes, you are that child." She was elated. She was so grateful he called. They talked for an hour. She was so happy. She asked if he has had a good life, and he said, "yes, it has been wonderful." He told her that he had great parents, great family, and great friends. She was filled with joy to know this.

She told him that she had married a man who was not his biological father, but they divorced. She has two daughters. She also told him that she had never told a single soul in Sweden about him, not her children, her former husband or his biological father. It has been a secret for 56 years!

I next heard from Eric 10 days later. He said, "The experience these past 10 days has been amazing. It's been filled with numerous video calls via Facebook Messenger. Each call leaving each one of us with great anticipation for the next call. It's nearly impossible to fill in 56 years of gaps." He told me that he decided that he would call Berit his mother rather than his birth mother and the same with his sisters (he saw no need in calling them half-sisters).

Eric, his wife Michelle, and his two son planned to visit Sweden in July 2020. Needless to say that didn't happen, so now they are trying for 2021. In the meantime, they are attempting to learn the Swedish language. They have also watched every episode of "Allt för Sverige." We will keep you posted as Eric tells us more.



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Fall 2021 Programs and Events at a Glance

Exhibits

MAIN GALLERY

REALITY CHECK

By Anna U Davis
EXHIBIT CLOSES
Sunday, Nov. 28 4 p.m.

BONADER

EXHIBIT OPENS
Friday, Dec. 10 10 a.m.

RAOUL WALLENBERG GALLERY

ESSENTIAL WORKER

PORTRAITS By Carolyn Olson
EXHIBIT CLOSES
Sunday, April 24, 2022

Recurring Events

PRATA SVENSKA

Saturdays 11 a.m. Online
Nov. 20, Dec. 18

BOOK CLUB

Saturday 1 p.m.
Nov. 20 - Trolls by Stefan Spjut
Dec. 18 - The Saga of Gosta Bergling by Selma Lagerlöf

BULLERBYN

Sunday 10 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
Nov. 21, Dec. 9

SVENSKA SKOLAN

Sunday 10 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.
Nov. 21, Dec. 5 & 19

SCANDINAVIAN JAM

Sunday 1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Online
Nov. 21, Dec. TBD

KNITTING GROUP

Sunday 1 p.m.
Nov. 21 Online

SWEDISH MOVIE SERIES

Tuesday, Nov. 30 4 p.m.
Kopps (YouTube)
Tuesday, Dec. 21 4 p.m.
Street Kids

November

THE MUSEUM IS CLOSED ON THURSDAY, NOV. 25 IN OBSERVANCE OF THANKSGIVING DAY.

DALA HORSE DECORATION

Monday, Nov. 15 6 p.m. Online
Wednesday, Nov. 17 6 p.m. In-person

GOT GLÖGG?

Friday, Nov. 19 7 p.m.

BAKING CLASS

Monday, Nov. 22 4 p.m. Online
Tuesday, Nov. 23 6 p.m. In-person

GENEALOGY SESSION

Saturday, Nov. 27 10 a.m. Online

December

THE MUSEUM IS CLOSED ON FRIDAY, DEC. 24 THROUGH SUNDAY, DEC. 26 IN OBSERVANCE OF CHRISTMAS AS WELL AS FRIDAY, DEC. 31 THROUGH SUNDAY, JAN. 2, 2022 IN OBSERVANCE OF NEW YEARS.

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