



To preserve, teach and
celebrate Swedish heritage.

Flaggan

Fall 2025



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Dear members and friends,

For many years, the Museum and the Consulate have been part of Peace Day at Daley Plaza in September. The Consular Corps and many local schools gather to celebrate Peace. Over 190 countries flags are walked across the stage as the audience says Peace and the name of the specific country. A very nice tradition organized by the Chicago Peace School since 1978.

Tradition is something that we hold near and dear. It is usually connected to holidays but there are other types of tradition as well. This summer Dan and I went to Sweden to spend some time with my family at our cabin in northern part of Dalarna. The house was built by my father (and a little help from his daughters, my sisters and I, when we were young) and it is in the small town where my dad grew up. It has been many years since my dad passed away, but we are keeping the traditions going that he enjoyed: from fishing, walking in the woods, picking berries, making the local bread from our little place of Storbo. Norway is only 5 km away, so we visit often. We had beautiful weather the whole time and no mosquitos – cherished by all of us. Even the reindeer kept up their tradition of walking up to our property and eating the blueberry and lingonberry plants while wandering to find the rest of their herd.

Another tradition when I grew up was that we had family dinners. Daily when we were young and as we got older it was more a weekend event on Sunday evenings. The meal was usually prepared by my mother and we had a nice dessert that she had baked. Saturday dinner was fresh fish and Sunday was usually meat, either wild meat that my dad had hunted or a steak purchased in the store. My mom was a great cook and baker and many of her cookies are now part of what we are offering as part of Mormors Café treats. The weekend dinners are something we continue to enjoy and now it is with Kathryn and Joe, when our schedules allow.

As we approach the colder months, my thoughts turn to the holiday traditions I grew up with in Sweden—especially Jul (Christmas) and Lucia, two celebrations that are deeply rooted in Swedish culture and full of light, music, and warmth.

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.

Flaggan

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Jul in Sweden is a time of togetherness, candles in every window, and tables full of traditional food. Our family always began the celebration with lilla julafton—"little Christmas Eve"—a cozy gathering before the main holiday. On Christmas Eve, we would watch the beloved TV program Kalle Anka och hans vänner (Donald Duck and his friends), something almost every family in Sweden still does at 3 p.m. sharp! The julbord (Christmas buffet) followed, filled with herring, meatballs, ham, brown beans, and of course, Janssons frestelse—a creamy potato and anchovy casserole. Dessert was the homebaked pepparkakor (Gingerbread cookies) and other special holiday cookies. Earlier in the day for breakfast we had risgrynsgröt (rice pudding), and if you found the hidden almond in your bowl, it meant good luck in the coming year.

Another favorite tradition is Luciadagen, or St. Lucia Day, celebrated on Dec. 13. In the dark mornings of December, children dress in white robes and sing traditional songs, led by a girl chosen to be Lucia, wearing a crown of candles. It's a beautiful celebration of light during the darkest time of year. There were usually several celebrations throughout the day, in the morning at school and then in the evening we would go to church. We always had lussekatter, saffron buns shaped into little curls, and pepparkakor (ginger cookies) afterward.

Here in Chicago we celebrate the traditions at the Swedish American Museum, Ebenezer Lutheran Church, SWEA (Swedish Women's Educational Association) and with Swedish American Chamber of Commerce for their Lucia luncheon.

These traditions are more than just rituals—they connect us to our roots, to our families, and to the rhythm of the seasons. They remind us of where we come from, and they create memories we carry forward.

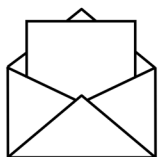
Wherever you find yourself this holiday season—here in Chicago, in snowy Sweden, your home town, or somewhere in between—I hope you find joy in the traditions that matter to you and maybe even start some new ones.

Welcome to the Museum and maybe we can be part of your holiday tradition!

Greetings

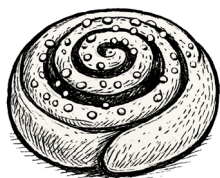
Karin

Karin Moen Abercrombie
Executive Director



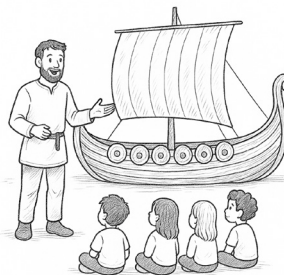
11,273

people received the Museum's
monthly newsletter in September



300

minimum number of
cinnamon/cardamom rolls
baked per week



27 school tours with **726**

students visiting the Museum
so far this year

Curators Corner

By Sarah Hawkinson

Digitizing the Swedish American Experience in Chicago

In an increasingly digital world, museums face a unique and enthralling challenge: preserving and highlighting the past, while also staying relevant and active in the present-day life of a community. Since its inception in 1976, the Swedish American Museum has risen to this challenge, both preserving the past of the Swedish American communities in Chicago (and beyond) and playing an active role in contemporary Swedish American culture through its wide array of cultural and programming offerings. In specific regards to the Museum's collection, digitization is the name of the game when it comes to continuing to evolve and grow in relation to those organizational goals.

Digitization, or the process of converting physical objects, documents, and other works into a digital format, has emerged as a crucial tool for museums and other cultural institutions. This practice is transforming how museums operate, how they engage with the public, and how they fulfill their mission of education, preservation, and accessibility.

The Swedish American Museum is thrilled to announce that it has received an award from the National Endowment for the Humanities to embark on a large-scale digitization project! Entitled Digitizing the Swedish-American Experience in Chicago, this project will involve the digitization of archival material from the Museum's Permanent Collection. Through the multi-step process of digitizing, rehousing, correcting and updating metadata, and publishing digitized records online, this effort will increase access to material that focuses on personal immigration stories and items that relate to the Swedish-American experience in Chicago from the late 1800s to the mid-1900s. These materials will include immigration documents, photographs, letters, and more. The assistance of a Curatorial Assistant and Archival Technician will also be enlisted to aid in the day-to-day efforts of digitizing this in-house material. Additionally, some of the Museum's oversized archival materials (for which we do not have large enough equipment to scan) will be outsourced for digitization, along with some audio-visual materials. A selection of photos will also be sent away for conservation treatment.



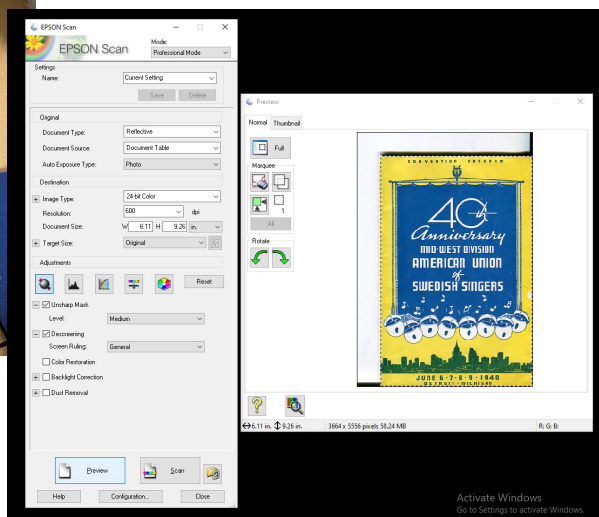
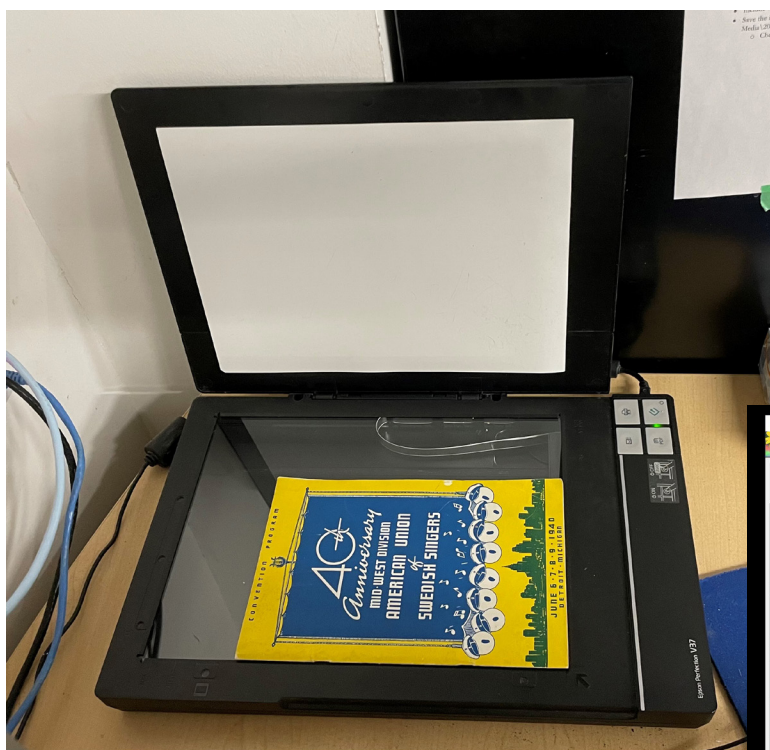
**NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
FOR THE
HUMANITIES**

In line with the overarching goal of increasing public access to the collection, this project will also involve public-facing elements, such as sessions that will be hosted at the Museum on how to access and use the CatalogIt online portal, also known as the CatalogIt Hub. Through this resource, members of the public can explore thematically and topically-organized sections of the Museum's collection from anywhere. We will also be organizing and inviting participation in a "Photo Identification Project", in which people will be able to review some of our recently-digitized photos and share any information that they might have on the featured people and places. The Museum will also be joining the Chicago Collections Consortium and the Illinois Digital Archives, both organizations that connect collections from across Chicago and Illinois. These are both great resources for those who are researching in a local context. Through joining both of these consortia, the Swedish American Museum will be contributing the history of Swedish-Americans to these growing resource networks and exposing the Swedish American Museum to a new audience as well.



This digitization project will yield long-term benefits that extend beyond the grant period. Members of the public, near and far, will be able to access increasing portions of the Museum collection online, and the collection will achieve increased visibility in general. Museum staff and researchers will be able to retrieve information with more ease, and digitization will pave the way for better preservation of collection materials. Through this project, Museum staff will also be able to better identify gaps in what people, groups, time periods, and geographical areas are represented in the Permanent Collection, which will inform future decisions regarding proposed donations. This will ultimately help us in forming a more holistic and complete story of Swedish immigration to America and Swedish-American life in Chicago.

We are excited for you to join us in exploring more Swedish-American stories through this exciting project over the next year. Watch this space, along with other Museum outlets, for more updates!



Museum Store

By Lydia Taylor

Finding Joy in Our Little World

An excellent example of a Swedish Christmas celebration can be found in the first act of Ingmar Bergman's *Fanny och Alexander*. The Ekdahl family celebration is an extravagant affair. All the best in excess – decoration, food, community, joy. Though perhaps not to the same extent, many elements of their celebration are also traditions amongst Scandinavian Americans to this day. Perhaps some of you can relate to the dishes they serve, the drinking songs and the dancing, or even just the candles in the window. At the Museum Store, we delight in providing you with the essentials (and the extras) to make your own celebration as special as it can be. If an excess in decoration and food is appealing to you, we have just what you are looking for (community and joy as well, but we will get to those later). Let me highlight some products available in the Museum Store this holiday season.

As always, we have the regular Christmas staples. In addition to our classic offerings, every holiday season we introduce new products in hopes that we will charm you with something unexpected. We have a number of new decorations, from an expanded selection of ornaments and felted products, to candle holders (Photo 1) and festive trays (Photo 2). An iconic holiday symbol is the tomte – you will see tomte in many forms across our collection. I would like to specifically mention our beautiful tomte from Åsas Tomtebod. Handcrafted in Sweden, using wool from Iceland and Gotland, these gnomes are truly special. This year we have a larger selection than usual, with sizes ranging from 20 to 80 cm (Photo 3).

1. *Änglaspel Rotary Candle Holder, First Snow*
(\$40.00) – New, extra-large size!



2. MK Reindeer Tray (\$32.00) &
Tomte Trees Cocktail Serving Tray (\$52.50)



Last year, Kalastyle soaps added several new products to their Swedish Dream collection for the holidays – most notably, the Swedish pine soaps and bath bombs, with a mushroom and tomte theme. This year, they have expanded even more. We are pleased to now offer these items in a Swedish tea and cardamom scent, inspired by the tradition of Fika, the Swedish coffee break (Photo 4). Treat yourself to a cozy self-care day – take a bath, light a candle. Also new from Kalastyle this year, is an adorable matchbox in the shape of a cottage, providing both utility and decoration. How perfect. We have many candles for sale as always, scented and non-scented.

On the subject of candles, I am happy to announce our special collaboration with local candle company, Edgewater Candles. With their guidance, we have created a custom candle for the Swedish American Museum, which is exclusively available in the Museum Store. The scent is, you would never guess... Fika. Created with these colder, cozier months in mind, this warm fragrance combines cardamom, cinnamon, and sugar, with coffee and freshly baked bread. Our hope is to evoke the experience of walking into Mormors Café, buying a bulle and kaffe, and sitting by the window with a book. Thank you to Edgewater Candles for the privilege of your partnership. If you have not visited their brick and mortar on Bryn Mawr, I recommend that you do so at your soonest convenience. You can also purchase all of their goodies from their online store.

If you are familiar with any of Bergman's work, you know that his work is generally quite bleak and depressing - Fanny och Alexander is one of his more hopeful films. Probably the most well-known quote is delivered by Gustav Adolf. "Therefore let us be happy while we are happy. Let us be kind, generous, affectionate and good. It is necessary and not at all shameful to take pleasure in the little world." It is indeed necessary to find joy in our communities, especially this time of year. Let the Museum be a little world for you to find comfort and peace this holiday season, and beyond. Come in out of the cold, and let us celebrate together.

God Jul.

3. *Wool Tomte*
Olle (\$185.00) (left)
Verner, White (\$95.00) (right)



4. *Kalastyle Holiday Collection (\$10.00-\$12.00)*



Special Exhibits

Home + Away | Hemma + Borta

Photographs by Allen Wheatcroft

Open through Sunday, Nov. 30

Main Gallery

A portrait of everyday life in Sörmland, Sweden, and Chicago's bustling Northside. Depicting Chicago's Northside or Sweden's Birch Road, Wheatcroft shows that a cold eye needn't be cruel and that a warm eye needn't be wet, that sentiment can be controlled without being crushed, conveyed without being sappy.



Painted Bonader

Friday, Dec. 5, 2025 – Sunday, Jan. 11, 2026

Main Gallery

This annual exhibit features Swedish folk art from the Florence Dibell Bartlett Collection. Donated to the Swedish American Museum in 2000, these pieces reflect a unique style of folk art that thrived in Sweden during the 18th and 19th centuries, particularly in the country's southern regions and in the province of Dalarna. Often depicting Biblical scenes against the backdrop of everyday life in Sweden at the time, these pieces were typically hung in the home during the holiday season.



Mov Giele | My Voice
by Per Elof Nilsson Ricklund
Friday, Jan. 16 – Sunday, April 12, 2026
Main Gallery

Per Elof Nilsson Ricklund is a third-generation Sámi artist residing in the southern part of Sápmi. Per Elof learned early on to search for truth and understanding in the vast, snow-covered landscape of his forebears. Through his art, he aims to capture impressions of his ancestors' way of life, uncover their untold stories, and create new worlds by merging his perspective into the broader context of Sámi history.



SPECIAL EXHIBITS

Naturens Rytmer | Rythms of Nature
by Maria Jonsson
Friday, Nov. 7, 2025 – Sunday, Feb. 15, 2026
Wallenberg Gallery

Rhythms of Nature features work created by fiber artist Maria Jonsson, who weaves using recycled materials. Equally inspired from the natural world of Sweden and northern New Mexico, Jonsson's work reflects a sense of wonder that comes from experiences in nature, as well as humanity's capacity for art and visual storytelling.



Mormors Café

By Jeanette Norlock

Hej alla vänner, nya och gamla!

As fall settles into Andersonville and the Museum fills with stories of heritage and history, our Café continues to be a warm, welcoming space for reflection, conversation, and connection. Our patio will be open with warm blankets and seating pads, just like any café or restaurant in Sweden. There is no such thing as bad weather in Sweden after all. Whether you are a regular visitor or stepping in for the first time, we are excited to share what's coming through the end of 2025.

Seasonal Moments & Cultural Celebrations

This fall, we are launching Quiche Wednesday in addition to our Soup Thursday. We will continue to highlight Swedish Food Days with specials both sweet and savory. Menus will be posted on our website and social media as well as in the Café.

The holiday season kicks off with our annual Got Glögg competition, followed by Julmarknad, Breakfast med Tomten, Lucia and Julmiddag, all good reasons to visit the Café and stock up on treats.

From Our Oven to Your Table: The In-House Bakery

At the heart of our Café is our in-house bakery, where tradition meets craftsmanship. Every morning, our bakers, Rachel and Jack, rise early to prepare a selection of Swedish baked goods using time-honored recipes and techniques. From our signature Cardamom and Cinnamon rolls to *Dammsugare* and *Prinsesstårta*, each item is made with care, inspired by the flavors and textures that have been passed down through generations.

This isn't just baking—it's storytelling, from mother to daughter, sister or friend. Our bakery honors the legacy of Swedish immigrants who brought their culinary traditions to America, and we are proud to continue that legacy right here in Andersonville. Whether you are stopping by for a quiet fika or picking up something to share, you are tasting a piece of history.

A Space That Reflects the Museum's Mission

Our Café isn't just a place to pause—it's a continuation of the Museum's story. We are proud to be a space where history meets hospitality, where visitors can linger and reflect on the exhibits they have just explored. Throughout the year, we will be showcasing local Swedish-American artists and makers, turning our walls into a gallery of community creativity.

Thank You for Being Part of Our Story

To our loyal guests, Museum staff, and curious newcomers—*Tack så Mycket*. Your presence makes our Café more than just a stop; it makes it a gathering place. We are honored to be part of your Museum experience, and we look forward to sharing the rest of 2025 with you. Come by soon. There is always a seat waiting for you.



Baker Rachel



Mormors Café



Baker Jack

Brunk Children's Museum of Immigration

By Jack Rogalla

The Swedish Julbock

Among the garland, ornaments, and lights, one addition I find that makes Swedish Christmas decorations unique is a big straw goat tied in red ribbon, the *Julbock* or Yule Goat. But what do goats have to do with Christmas? Some speculate that the *Julbock* tradition could date as far back as the Viking age. One text from the Byzantine emperor Constantine VII describes Swedish Vikings employed in his court, known as the Varangian guard, having a Christmas tradition of dressing up in pelts and various animal masks, dancing and chanting “Jull Jull!”. The goat inspiration could come from Tannggrisnir and Tanngnjóstr, the goats who pull Thor’s chariot in Norse mythology.

While we are not certain if our modern *Julbock* comes all the way from the Vikings, we do know that there were traditions of dressing up and giving gifts as early as the Middle Ages. In some traditions, a choirboy would be chosen to dress up like St. Nicholas and present gifts; however, he did not go alone. He could be joined by a whole cast of masked characters such as his helper, Knecht Ruprecht, jesters, and even a devil-like character depicted as a goat, with big horns and hooved feet. Over time, the image of this goat like character softened into a friendly and familial character.

This tradition varied over the centuries. In a text from the 1860s, the American ambassador to Sweden, William Widgery, described people dressing in all sorts of costumes such as kings and queens, soldiers and sailors, clowns and harlequins, and still the *Julbock*, parading in the streets and handing out gifts. There developed a tradition of a family member or friend dressing up in a big coat with a goat mask made of straw and carrying a walking stick and bag of gifts. He would enter the home, tap his cane on the floor, and ask “*Finns det några snälla barn här?*” “Are there any nice children here?” to which the children would cheer and anticipate their presents. This tradition can be seen in *Elsa Beskow’s Petter och Lottas Jul* (1947).

Perhaps older generations remember the *Julbock* bringing them gifts, however, over time the *Julbock* was replaced by the big bearded and jolly *Jultomte* that we recognize today. I was recently in conversation with a Swedish Finn who said that their Christmas bearer of gifts is still called *Julbock* despite no longer taking on a goat-like appearance.

While he may have retired as a gift-giver in most Swedish homes, the *Julbock* as a straw goat remains a prominent sight to see among the Christmas décor. One place where the tradition is taken very seriously is in the city of Gävle. Every year, starting in 1966, the city builds a massive *Julbock* out of straw in the town square rising over 42 feet tall. Being made out of such a flammable material, the *Julbock* always attracts mischief-makers who attempt to burn down the structure. In fact, only 17 of the past 59 *Julbock* statues have survived the winters. Attempting to burn down the *Julbock* is illegal, and with the help of increased security measures, the statue has only burned once in the last eight years. You can see a smaller *Julbock* statue here in Illinois in the city of Galva, named after Gävle by Swedish settlers from Bishop Hill.

We keep the *Julbock* tradition alive with straw goats standing proudly around the Museum throughout the month of December. If you would like to welcome the tradition into your home, you can find them available in our Store. We plan to honor the tradition this upcoming holiday season by crafting our own versions of the *Julbock* with pipe cleaners at our holiday family events.



Photo: Lieselotte van der Meijs/ imagebank.sweden.se

In Memory of

Honoring the Legacy of Our Late Members



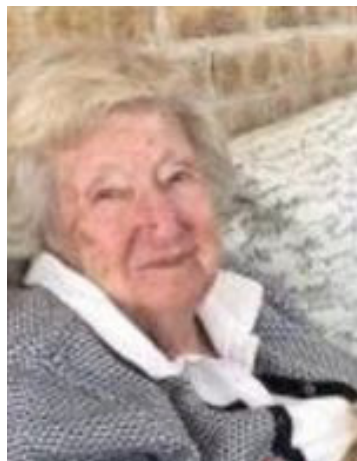
Jon R. Lind



Nels R. Nelson



Kenneth R. Norgan



Ruth Snyder



Richard Young

Jon R. Lind

Jon R. Lind passed away peacefully at home on April 2, 2025, at the age of 89. Born on July 4, 1935, to Robert and Ruth Lind, he grew up in Wilmette, Illinois, excelled at New Trier High School, and went on to Harvard University, where he was an All-American swimmer and later earned his law degree, followed by a Master's in Comparative Law from Cambridge. Jon met his wife, Jane, in a New Trier English class, and together they built a joyful life in Wilmette and Winnetka, raising three children and a series of beloved Labradors. A corporate securities lawyer, he spent 27 years at Isham, Lincoln & Beale and later practiced at McDermott, Will & Emery until his 2000 retirement. Dedicated to community service, Jon served as attorney for the Winnetka Park District, chaired Hadley's Board, was Chancellor of Christ Church, and served 30 years as Trustee of the Swedish American Museum—an institution tied to his family's history. A lifelong athlete, golfer, and skier, Jon's humor, kindness, and quiet excellence defined his life, leaving a legacy of love, integrity, and wit that will be deeply missed.

Nels R. Nelson

After 94 well-lived and deeply loved years, Nels Richard Nelson passed away at home in Evanston, Illinois, on December 18, 2024. Born in Chicago on May 3, 1930, to Swedish and Finnish immigrants Nels Hjalmar and Margaret Nelson, he graduated from Northwestern University in 1952, served in the Army, and enjoyed a nearly 40-year career with IBM, earning the company's Golden Circle Award 14 times. On October 29, 1954, he married his beloved Alice Helene Wallsten of Kalix, Sweden, and together they celebrated their 70th anniversary. They raised three sons in Glenview, where they lived for 49 years, choosing the community for its excellent schools. Deeply proud of his Swedish heritage, Nels shared its traditions with his family and supported many Swedish organizations. Nels served on the Board of Directors and Board of Trustees for many years at the Swedish American Museum, and Nels and Alice were honored with the Swedish American Museum Award in 2008 and Life Trustees in 2023.

Kenneth R. Norgan

Kenneth R. Norgan, 82, Chicago businessman, educator, and philanthropist, passed away peacefully on June 9, 2025. Born in Lincoln Park on January 13, 1943, to George and Dagmar Norgan, Ken grew up in Lincolnwood and began his career making fries and burgers at his family's first McDonald's locations after his parents invested with Ray Kroc. A University of Michigan graduate with degrees in linguistics, he taught German before returning to the family business in 1971, expanding it to 13 restaurants and providing exceptional support to employees. A founding member of Ronald McDonald House Charities, he co-chaired the campaign for the 16-story Ronald McDonald House near Lurie Children's Hospital. Deeply proud of his Swedish heritage, Ken served as Trustee of the Swedish American Museum, Swedish Hospital Foundation, and Bernadotte Foundation, and supported the Lyric Opera, Ryan Opera Center, and Harris Theater. With his beloved partner of 28 years, Jose "Pepe" Conforme, he traveled widely and welcomed friends with warmth, wit, and generosity, living a life defined by kindness and a love of people.

Ruth Snyder

Ruth Jeanette Snyder, age 101, of Deerfield, Illinois, passed away peacefully on July 29, 2025, at Trulee Senior Living in Evanston, where she had lived since age 97. Born on May 27, 1924, in Chicago to Swedish immigrants Hilda and Richard Olson, Ruth married Robert (Bob) Snyder in 1948, and together they raised three daughters in the Deerfield home Bob built with his army friends. She worked over 20 years as an executive secretary at DiPietro Plumbing Corp and was a devoted member of the First Presbyterian Church of Deerfield, serving as both Deacon and Friendly. Proud of her Swedish heritage, Ruth volunteered at the Swedish American Museum, especially during Julmarknad alongside her daughter Nancy. Known for her love of sewing, the Chicago Cubs, and lively games of Scrabble or Bridge, Ruth's warmth, humor, and generosity touched everyone around her, leaving a lasting legacy of love and community.

Richard Young

Richard Young was born to Swedish immigrants Conrad A. and Elna (Lindblad) Young in Chicago's Andersonville neighborhood, where he lived for 92 years as the youngest of four siblings. His family often welcomed newly arrived Swedish immigrants into their home until they could establish themselves. A lifelong supporter of Andersonville's Swedish establishments, Richard was a member of Verdandi Lodge #3 for 76 years, holding many leadership roles within Verdandi and the Independent Order of Svithiod Grand Lodge, and was also active with the Swedish American Museum. A talented first tenor, he sang for decades with the Chicago Swedish Male Chorus and the Swedish Glee Club, touring Sweden in 1977, and was known for his quick costume changes during chorus conventions. Deeply involved in the American Union of Swedish Singers (AUSS), he served as Central Division President and Board Member of the AUSS Cultural Heritage Foundation, receiving the AUSS Gold Medal in 2002, the Union's highest honor. Richard also enjoyed athletics, especially bowling, as part of the Swedish athletic club.

Journey through Sweden

By Julie Benson

Celebrate 50 Years of the Swedish American Museum with a Journey Through Sweden!

In honor of our 50th anniversary in 2026, we invite you to join fellow Swedish-Americans for the trip of a lifetime: The Swedish Odyssey – Sights and Landscapes

May 28 – June 8, 2026

A fully escorted motor coach tour hosted by the Swedish American Genealogical Society and the Swedish American Museum, this unforgettable journey will take us deep into the heart of our ancestral homeland.

Our Itinerary Highlights:

Malmö

Begin in Sweden's third-largest city and explore the rich history of Skåne.

West Coast Drive

Travel north along scenic coastal roads, stopping at a 16th-century manor house en route to Göteborg, Sweden's second-largest city and a key port of emigration during the 19th and 20th centuries.

Östergötland

Discover Vadstena, home of 14th-century Saint Birgitta. Visit the serene cloisters, abbey, and castle on the shores of Lake Vättern, and dive into the archives for a glimpse into your family's past.

Dalarna

Admire the iconic hand-painted Dalahäst (wooden horses) and soak in the region's folk traditions.

Uppsala

Tour the majestic 13th-century cathedral and pay tribute at the tomb of King Gustav Vasa.

Stockholm

Conclude in Sweden's vibrant capital, where we'll explore Gamla Stan (Old Town), the Royal Palace, and the stunning archipelago spread across 14 islands.



Julie Benson in front of the Royal Palace in Stockholm

A Personal Connection

Whether you're tracing your roots or simply embracing your heritage, this tour offers a unique opportunity to connect with your past. Our genealogy team is excited to help you locate living relatives—and with a little luck, you might even meet them during your Swedish Odyssey!

Bonus Options

Pre- and post-tour extensions to Copenhagen and Oslo will be available for those wishing to explore even more of Scandinavia.

Stay tuned for your brochure—we can't wait to travel with you!

Annual Appeal

As 2025 comes to an end we would like to thank you for your support!

When you donate to the Swedish American Museum you help us bring in artists both local and international. You bring a part of Sweden to Chicago. In 2025 we featured Karin Larsson's art in collaboration with Carl Larsson gården in Sweden, and photography in collaboration with Fotografiska Museet in Stockholm. We were entertained by artists such as Thomas Martin, Sofia Talvik and Korgossarna. In addition we had a number of lectures on topics from Easter Traditions to the Tyranny of Money and a poetry reading.

We look forward to being able to continue this variety with your support in 2026! The artists already scheduled to exhibit their work in 2026 are Per Elof Nilsson Ricklund (Sweden) and Sofia Hagström Møller (Denmark). Oscar Stenmark will return to perform at the Museum and we hope to invite a number of performers and offer interesting lectures and movies.

Since opening Mormors Café in May 2024, it has rapidly expanded. We now bake over 300 cinnamon and cardamom rolls per week. The jury is still out on which one is more popular. We are hoping to expand our ability to take orders on baked goods in 2026.

By donating to the Museum you will also help us increase our family programs. The Brunk Children's Museum of Immigration is a beloved part of Andersonville and sees a steady stream of visitors and school tours. Many local schools take advantage of the Museum when teaching their unit on immigration.

If you would like to make a donation please visit www.SwedishAmericanMuseum.org/donate and choose Annual Appeal.

Volunteering During the Holidays

By Layne Borden

As the holidays draw nearer, the Museum hosts many annual events members of the Museum and our community know and love. Behind the smell of cinnamon and flickering light of candles, we take the time to appreciate the meaning behind many of these great events, the joy and laughter found in community. At the Museum, we are thankful to have such an amazing group of people around us to share in these special celebrations: from the guests who enter our building, to the staff that keep things going, to the fantastic volunteers who make it all possible.

Our holiday events, from Julmarknad to Julmiddag wouldn't be the same without the hard work of volunteers. The Museum's events fill the holiday season with cheer, but the thing that brings the most joy are the many volunteers who help us hold events. If you would like to join our volunteer community and experience these events in a new way, you can fill out our online application at SwedishAmericanMuseum.org/Volunteering or email Layne at eborden@samac.org.



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Moving? Remember to send us your change of address! Don't miss one issue of Flaggan.

Free Tuesdays

Visit the Museum on the second Tuesday of each month and enjoy complimentary admission for all visitors. On these special days, each area of the Museum offers something additional to enhance your experience.

The Brunk Children's Museum of Immigration has extended hours for a full day of exploration and creativity, featuring special craft activities in the classroom designed to engage and inspire young visitors.

Guests are also invited to stop by Mormors Café, where a special treat will be available in celebration of Free Tuesday. Museum Members receive an added benefit—a complimentary beverage with any purchase.

In the Main Gallery, visitors can view a select display of artifacts drawn from the Museum's extensive Permanent Collection of more than 10,000 objects. Because it is not possible to exhibit the entire collection at once, a new group of artifacts will be showcased each month. Each display invites guests to reflect on the stories these objects tell, explore their historical significance, and even guess their original purpose.

Make the most of your visit by joining us on the second Tuesday of the month—an opportunity to experience the Museum in new and engaging ways, free of charge.