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Greetings from the Executive Director

Dear Members and Friends,

2024 is almost over and it has been another special year, with the opening of the second floor exhibit *We Are America* and the Café. We have entered a new and exciting time. The installation of *We Are America* took a little longer than originally planned and the anticipation was high. It is wonderful to hear the positive comments from our visitors. The immigrant journey is compellingly displayed, enhanced by new text and interactive elements. The map that shows where our visitors are from tell us that we have people visiting from all over the world. We hope the immigration story we present connects with visitors regardless of their background and heritage.

The Café, which first was just open on weekends in May and June, is now open every day the Museum is open. The traditional Kanel bullar (Cinnamon Rolls) and Kardemumma bullar (Cardamom Rolls) are baked daily, served along with the variety of cookies, special ice cream, other sweet treats, and open-faced sandwiches. We enjoy hearing the comments about childhood memories and cookies that were enjoyed at Grandma's. We are happy that we have repeat customers and some try a new item along with their favorite each time they come. Even our Swedish visitors feel at home in our Café.

November is the time we have our annual fundraising event and this year we were at The Crystal Ballroom & Lounge in Evanston on Saturday, Nov. 2. The event was chaired by Liz Peterson and Tim Yocum along with a wonderful committee that created an evening of fun and support of the Museum. We have included some photos on page 3.

We used to have what seemed to be a slower time period after the Gala until Thanksgiving, but now it feels like Christmas starts right after Halloween. I remember when I first started at the Museum we started selling Christmas items around Thanksgiving. Now, the last two months of the year are all about Christmas. Our calendar is filled with holiday events for all ages. You may have your own connections to events like Julmarknad, Lucia, Julmiddag and Breakfast with Tomten, to name some. If you want to share your own memories with us, we would love to hear from you.

The Store is always filled with both traditional and modern items that are hard to resist. Staff and volunteers always look forward to unpacking holiday items and to see what we can add to our own collections.

Some of our staff members have moved on and we wish them the best of luck in their new positions. Phoebe Yates, our previous curator, is now at DePaul Art Museum and Lisa Lindstrom, our previous collection manager, moved back to Sweden and is working at IKEA Museum. The baked goods will soon be being prepared by our baker Candace Serna and we thank Iona Bodem for her time with us. We look forward to seeing you at the Museum and wish you a joyful holiday season.

Karin M. Abercrombie

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.

Holiday Hours 2024

Dec. 2 - Dec. 23

(see below for Julmarknad Weekend Hours, Dec. 6 - Dec. 8)
Swedish American Museum, Café & Kerstin Andersson Museum Store

Monday - Friday 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Saturday & Sunday 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.

****Dec. 6, 20: Museum and Store open LATE until 8 p.m.****

Brunk Children's Museum of Immigration

Monday - Thursday 1 p.m. - 4 p.m.

Friday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Saturday & Sunday 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.

****Monday, Dec. 23: Open 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.****

Julmarknad Weekend: Dec. 6 - Dec. 8

Dec. 6

Swedish American Museum, Café & Kerstin Andersson Museum Store

10 a.m. - 8 p.m.

Brunk Children's Museum of Immigration

10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Dec. 7

Museum, Café, Children's Museum & Store

10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Dec. 8

Museum, Café, Children's Museum & Store

10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Dec. 26 - Dec. 30 &

Jan. 2 - Jan. 5, 2025

Swedish American Museum, Café, Kerstin Andersson Museum Store &

Brunk Children's Museum of Immigration

Thursday - Friday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Saturday & Sunday 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.

We will be closed on the following days:

Dec. 24 - 25 for Christmas

Dec. 31 - Jan. 1, 2025 for New Year's

Aspire Gala 2024

Honoring the Swedish-American Chamber of Commerce, Chicago

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*Aspire Gala Photo Credit:
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Liz Peterson, Gala Co-Chair



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Maria Loew, Stina Vansvik
& Beata Krakus



Kerstin Lane and
Tamara Biggs



Keely Vasquez and
Alex Newkirk
“Rogue Harmony”



Members of Verdandi Lodge No. 3, I.O.S.

A Dedicated Julmarknad Vendor

A Discussion With Henry Carlson

By JJ Kells

Collecting vintage items from Sweden and Scandinavia started as a hobby for Henry Carlson, but over the years he has become a vendor and mainstay at Julmarknad.

Henry was born in Oak Park, Illinois, but his father was from Norrbo, Sweden, and Henry had many other relatives living there as well. Some of Henry's favorite memories from Sweden include being with his grandparents in their country home, swimming with his many cousins in the local river, and enjoying Midsommar celebrations with family where he could dance around the Maypole. Henry learned to play the accordion at a young age and became part of a music group that eventually included Herman Dahl. Henry and Herman completed a choral and music tour around Sweden and Henry remained in Norrbo afterward with family, where he learned Swedish.

After Henry and Herman retired, they developed some interesting hobbies. Herman and his wife suggested that Henry join them to visit estate sales, and eventually Henry started working at the estate sales. Henry worked at estate sales for 15 years, which became an outlet to spend his energy after he retired from the City of Chicago as a Civil Engineer. While participating in these estate sales, Henry acquired an array of vintage Swedish and other Scandinavian items. In fact, people who knew Henry were aware of his ongoing search for Swedish items so they helped by keeping their eyes open for these as well. During the holidays Henry and Herman continued making their annual batch of glögg, providing another way for Henry to stay busy, and well-connected to his Swedish roots.



Henry at his 2023 Julmarknad booth

When his collection turned especially large, and with some mild urging from his daughter, Lauralee Carlson-Reese - another of our Julmarknad vendors - Henry decided to become a vendor. Henry remains a much-anticipated vendor at this special holiday event. He describes with enthusiasm that he's met so many people each year and that he loves meeting more Swedish speakers who want to converse in the language. He also loves that he is helping younger people remember history by appreciating what people - perhaps their own relatives - may have owned in the past. Henry adds that he is not there just for the money; he participates to meet more people in the Scandinavian community, and support the Museum.

It's clear that Henry appreciates each item for its unique qualities, not necessarily its monetary value. He speaks with joy while reminiscing about the wall hangings and other decorations that shoppers have purchased and displayed to celebrate Christmas and other holidays. He also enjoys thinking about the many vases, other glass items, and Swedish tablecloths that he's discovered and shared.

When asked how he decides what to sell and what to keep for himself, Henry indicates that the main joy he derives from collecting vintage items is the excitement people get when they browse, buy and describe how they will be used in their homes or as gifts. While Henry keeps some things for himself, he says that he simply can't use everything he collects so he would prefer to make others happy by participating in Julmarknad. Still, Henry enjoys a small collection of his finds at home, which includes a vast Dala horse collection, vintage glass and copper. He also gifts some items to family when they take a liking to them.

As for the accordions, the question had to be asked: has Henry found any impressive vintage accordions? Henry says he has, in fact, found a unique Italian accordion - however he recently decided to sell it to a family accordion business in south suburban Chicago. Thankfully Henry still has his original accordion, which he received upon graduating high school, should he get the desire to play some tunes!

Julmarknad is not the only way Henry has become a special individual involved in the Museum's holiday events. Henry's other hobby of making glögg won him 1st prize in the Museum's Got Glögg event in 2021. We at the Museum are thrilled that Henry has become such an important part of our holiday celebrations. His festive attitude, and unique appreciation for history and connecting with others, have added tremendous joy to the season for years. At age 95 he's still going strong! Henry still has lots of vintage items to share. You may even hear some of his recorded accordion music at Julmarknad - but don't count on getting his glögg recipe!



Got Glögg? 2021, when Henry won!

Curator's Corner

The Story of Bonader

By Phoebe Yates

Starting Tuesday, Dec. 10, our annual exhibit *Painted Bonader* will be on display in the Main Gallery. The exhibit highlights Swedish folk art from the Florence Dibell Bartlett Collection. Collected by Bartlett in the early 1900s, various framed bonader and hand-painted furniture pieces were donated to the Art Institute in 1931 and transferred to the Museum in 2000. Bartlett had traveled around the world collecting folk art and eventually opened the International Museum of Folk Art in Santa Fe, New Mexico in 1953.

What is Bonader?

Bonader (singular: bonad) are large painted textiles produced in the mid-18th – 19th centuries to mimic tapestries and wall hangings of the elite homes in Sweden. Originally, scenes were painted on linen using natural, local pigments. By the 19th century, bonad artists moved away from linen and produced them as paintings on paper. Artists produced their work locally, and thus designs were unique to each region. Often used as Christmas decorations, artists painted Bible stories, farm life, and people in traditional, local dress bordered by flowers and rosmålning (rose painting).

Who Made Bonader?

Swedish artists who made bonader in the mid-18th – 19th centuries were often of a lower class, lived in the countryside, and were self-taught folk artists. While they did not sign their work, artists dated them and, due to the style, the origin of the work can often be determined. Figures in various scenes are seen depicted in traditional, local dress, a nod to the origin of the piece.

Folk Art Revival

Bonader were not and still are not mass-produced. They have remained products of individual artists around Sweden and now in the United States. While bonader were originally popular in the mid-18th century, contemporary folk artists are reviving the practice. In the 1940s, the handicraft movement erupted in Sweden, placing a focus on the use of good, natural materials and honoring tradition in material, technique, function, form, and decoration. This movement placed an emphasis on traditional folk arts.

Today, there are many Swedish and Swedish-American folk artists around the world. Some bonad artists use styles, materials, paint and techniques similar to those from the 18th century, while others put their own modern twist on the historic art form.

**Stop by the Museum between Tuesday, Dec. 10, 2024 and Sunday, Jan. 12, 2025
to see historic and contemporary bonader on display for the holiday season!**



Collections

Holiday Items

By *Lisa Lindström*

God Jul from the Collections! The Museum's permanent collection preserves the history of the Swedish-American immigration story. In our collection of about 10,000 artifacts and 300 linear feet of archival material, it is no surprise that many of these items represent Christmas.

During the dark and long Swedish winter, Christmas is a long-awaited and much-loved festival. It is one of the most popular holidays in Sweden. When Swedes immigrated to the United States, they brought their traditions and holidays with them. The home, in particular, remains a place to celebrate and honor these traditions. Our collection captures glimpses of the Swedish-American community upholding and evolving Swedish Christmas practices of decorating, singing traditional songs, and preparing traditional foods in a new country.



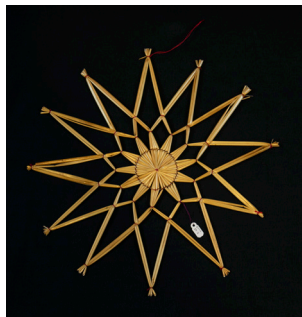
*Photograph of Vera and Carl Jr. Book,
a Swedish-American family in Chicago,
celebrating Christmas in the mid-20th century.
Accession# 2015.35.6.*

In Sweden, Christmas Eve is preceded by weeks of celebration. Lucia, which is celebrated on Dec. 13, is a festival of light honoring the Italian Saint Lucia during the darkest time of the year. This popular tradition continues to be celebrated at the Museum every year. In our collection, we can trace the popularity of Lucia festivals and processions in the Swedish-American community over the past 100 years.



*Photograph of a Lucia performance
by Värblomman Children's Club,
ca 1938-1939.
Accession# 1989/51:3.*

Straw has long had an important role as a craft material in Sweden. It is also a common material used for Christmas decorations. While straw is mainly known to be decorative, it was often used for roofs, insulation, and flooring in Sweden. The use of straw decreased during the 20th century as agricultural reforms made way for new materials. Many Swedish immigrants, particularly women, brought their handicraft skills with them and continued to decorate with, produce, and sell straw items in the United States. Our permanent collection contains many examples of this traditional handicraft.



*A decorative straw star made by Selma Jacobson.
Accession# 2009.29.2.*

As we move into 2025, we hope to continue to grow and improve our collection. If you have items that represent the Swedish-American community that you are interested in donating, please contact the Museum.

Kerstin Andersson Museum Store

Celebrating Light in the Darkness

By Lydia Taylor

I would like to extend a warm welcome to my favorite time of the year. Every turn of the wheel of the year brings me joy, but nothing compares to the special feeling of greeting the holiday season once again. I know I am not alone in saying that, especially in this community. I've waited in long lines with fellow Scandinavian-Americans at the meat market in December, all of us excited to secure the necessities we have eaten every year at our holiday gatherings. For what is a julbord without köttbullar or julskinka? What is a holiday celebration without tradition? Moreover, for those who are many generations removed from their immigrant ancestors, this can be a time to turn again to a heritage they do not often consider throughout the rest of the year.

Though we have entered what is widely regarded as the most wonderful time of year, it is also the darkest. The nights are long here in Chicago – they are longer in Sweden. Perhaps our familiarity with the dark and the cold allows us to better access and appreciate the light and the warmth of this season. Our beloved tradition of Lucia is, of course, the perfect example of this. What better way to combat the darkness that surrounds the shortest day of the year – as Dec. 13 historically was – than with a celebration of light that features a crown of candles and baked goods?

At the Kerstin Andersson Museum Store, we celebrate light all season long. As always, we have an abundance of candles for you. There are the classic options – tea lights, chime candles, drop candles, channel candles – all made by the experts in Scandinavia. Pick up an angel chime or a rotary candleholder as a gift for yourself or a loved one. Advent candles are a fun way to count down the days until Christmas. You can find taper and pillar style Advent candles here, as well as an adorable cone-shaped tomte version. Electric candelabras and Advent stars can be seen in windows throughout Sweden, and are a cozy way of cutting through the darkness. We have a variety of colors and sizes to best fit your style and space.

We are pleased to introduce some new and interesting products as well. If you are looking for a great gift with a touch of whimsy, the Swedish Dream Mushroom Candle is made of hand-blown glass and features a fragrance of Swedish pine and eucalyptus. Are you interested in a risk-free way to fill your home with candles? You will love our battery-powered tapers, which can be used in any situation where you would reach for a standard taper. In order to appear as realistic as possible, these candles are made of wax and feature a flickering fake flame. We have several new candleholders at the Museum Store, from a simple white wooden taper holder to a seasonal glass Moomin tea light holder. Stop by and see for yourself!

I hope to see you in the Museum Store very soon, and to give you my well wishes in person. I must say I am grateful to have the opportunity to work in an environment where celebrating the season is on the agenda, and where I am interacting with those who have a similar appreciation for the holiday specifics of Swedish and Swedish-American culture. I find that embracing these traditions with loved ones every year fills me with light. Despite all of our celebrations, I recognize that this time of year may be especially dark and difficult for a variety of reasons. However the season looks for you, know that I am wishing you comfort, joy, and peace, as well as a bright new year ahead.

May you find the light in these darker days.

God Jul!



Some New Holiday Items in 2024

Below are some of our new holiday items for purchase and we have others as well!



Snowy trees
10cm \$42.00
15cm \$64.00



Felted Greenery: Dark Green Mistletoe \$24.00



Metal Dala Horse Votive \$10.00



Wool Tomte with Gray Hat and Cane
Small \$80.00
Large \$150.00

Brunk Children's Museum of Immigration

Interview With Tomten

By Jack Rogalla, Featuring Miles Lindblad

For years, families have enjoyed our Breakfast with Tomten event. Tomten, being what the Swedes call Santa, comes in his bright red suit to greet children, take pictures, and pass out the traditional smållkaramell ornaments and goodie bags. He arrives after the families create Christmas crafts and are served Swedish pancakes with lingonberries and sausage. We often hear from the families who love coming to the event each year, but what does Tomten think about it? To get his perspective I sat down with Miles Lindblad, who volunteered to play Tomten for many years.

Let me start by saying that I really appreciate you taking the time to sit down with me. How long have you been involved with the Museum?

I think I became a member in the mid to late 1970s and that I started to work as Tomten about year 2000 and continued to be Tomten through Christmas of 2019. Unfortunately, I contracted Covid-19 and I thought it better to end my tenure as Tomten then.

How was your experience at Breakfast with Tomten?

I always enjoyed the Breakfast with Tomten event, and found it fun for children and their families. I enjoyed interacting with the children. It was always a positive experience enjoyed by everyone who participated.

What was it like being able to meet the children after they've waited for you all year?

Well, there were always a few children who did not want to interact with Tomten. I always tried to accommodate the children by telling them that it was all right if they didn't want to speak to me. After all, a letter to Tomten always works just as well. Joy and laughter were always a big part of the experience. Each year, I'd make sure the children had the Tomten experience they wanted.

Did you ever receive any tall orders from the children?

The only difficult requests from the children always involved wanting a dog. This required a tactful response. I typically told the child that such a request needed to be run past one's parents who had to agree to such a gift. Additionally, I said that I couldn't have dogs in the sleigh because the dogs upset the reindeer and distract them from keeping the sleigh on schedule to deliver presents to all the children of the world. This answer seemed acceptable to both the children and their parents.

Were there any memorable crafts that the children did?

A lot of the children, during the craft time before the breakfast, liked to write a letter to Tomten. This letter was then presented to me and it was made sure that I read it and understood what they wanted. I always found this endearing, but I also tried to return these letters to the families so that they had it to keep in remembrance of this particular Christmas.

There were many children and their families who came every year to Breakfast with Tomten. I'm sure that there are many photos of the children and their families which will be looked at and remembered for a long time.

What did you feel was important to being Tomten?

I would arrive after everyone had eaten and it was always a big deal to knock and ring the sleigh bells before coming in to see the children and families. I would make my rounds around the room greeting everyone. I really enjoyed this general interaction before I got down to the serious business of talking with the children. I always tried to make it more than just asking the children what they wanted for Christmas. The children seemed to like to talk about who they were and who their families were. This I found to be very important for everybody.

Are there any Swedish Christmas traditions you're particularly fond of?

Eating of course. (Laughs) When I was growing up Christmas Day was not particularly important, but Christmas Eve was. My father always had to have lutefisk on Christmas Eve. He and I were the only ones who ate the lutefisk. My mother and sister weren't fans. Fortunately, there were lots of other food dishes of which to partake.

Additionally, my Swedish aunts and uncles were typically a part of the Christmas Eve celebration. Thankfully, my mother (an Irish woman) whom my father had sent to his mother to learn to cook was a very good Swedish cook. She always made our Christmas Eve meal a success no matter how many showed up at the table. A good memory.

Did your parents speak Swedish?

My father did but not my mother. Her family was Irish. However, she was a fabulous Swedish cook. Good enough in my book.

Do you still make a Julbord at Christmas?

Yes. It is what I grew up with and find very enjoyable and important as a reminder to the past.

Is there anything else you would like people to know about your experience playing Tomten?

I hope that the children and their families enjoyed my portrayal of Tomten as much as I did playing him.



Tomten enjoying the holiday festivities



Volunteering

Volunteers Help Make Holiday Programming Possible

By Layne Borden

The holiday season brings about joy, cheer, and many events. At the Swedish American Museum, we get a lot of help from our amazing community of volunteers, and these events would not be possible without their help.

Each year, we begin the holiday season with Got Glögg?. This is an annual mulled wine contest to determine who has the best glögg in Chicago. You can sign up to be a contestant or a judge, with fun on both ends of the event. As a test for the Museum's reinstated Volunteer Committee, Kevin Williams and Linda Flentye have taken more of a leadership role for the coordination of the event itself and helped create the Got Glögg? winner's trophy.



Got Glögg?

Following Got Glögg?, the Museum hosts Julmarknad, our second largest event of the year, on the weekend of Dec. 6 - Dec. 8. Volunteers are an integral part of this event, and they will be assisting us with running crafts for the Children's Museum, selling candy in the gallery space, giving tours of our core exhibit, taking admissions, helping run the Store, and much more. This is a time of good cheer, and the Museum's busiest weekend in the Store all year.



Julmarknad

The weekend after Julmarknad, on Dec. 14 and 15, we host Breakfast with Tomten. This is a great volunteer opportunity for those who like to serve food, assist with crafts, and play Santa. Another event involving food is Julmiddag, which falls closer to Christmas.



Breakfast With Tomten

Volunteering, whether it's to help coordinate or to provide an extra set of hands on the day of an event, is incredibly important to the continuation of these fun events and great traditions. If you are interested in volunteering, apply on our website at SwedishAmericanMuseum.org/volunteering.

If you have an interest in a specific annual event and you would like to help in coming years, reach out to the Museum's Community Engagement Manager, Layne, at eborden@samac.org

Communications

Remembering My First Museum Holiday Season

By JJ Kells

I still believe I started this position at the best time, in November of last year. There is no better way to attack beginning nerves than by diving right into the action, which for me was the unrolling of the holiday festivities. I couldn't know beforehand just how many memorable experiences I'd enjoy within that time.

Julmarknad came within a month of my starting date and I found myself sad when that workday was concluding. I couldn't stop looking repeatedly throughout the collection of vendor stalls in our Main Gallery. I always appreciate when a special event is multinodal, incorporating various elements of fun to keep things vibrant. Julmarknad was exactly that. How could one get bored when surrounded by a maze of wooden ornaments, straw pieces, clothing, Dala horse artwork, Swedish vintage treasures and more, while intermittently being greeted with music and dance courtesy of the Nordic Folkdancers, the Chicago Swedish Mixed Chorus, the Merula Choir, and the Lucia performers...all intermingled with sightings of Tomten throughout the day?

The Lucia celebration was another incredible evening and truly a first experience for me. The Lucia participants of all ages were so invested in their performance and it was heartwarming to witness this. Their enthusiasm and singing surely lifted the effects of the cold temperatures outside, as did the amazing support of the spectators. Around the middle of this calendar year, a child approached me at the front desk to ensure the Lucia event was happening again, as they had covered the topic in school. This exemplifies my favorite lesson that children offer...never lose curiosity.

Our *Painted Bonader* exhibit was also a sight to take in. This exhibit, described wonderfully by Phoebe a few pages back, to me conveyed both vibrancy and subtlety at once, offering a calming nod to the holidays. Each picture told an entire story and the colors, of which there were many but in shades that didn't overwhelm the experience, matched the coziness of the season. I gained a special appreciation for this style of art and it now stands as one of my personal favorites.

This first-year experience also offered me insight into the holiday traditions of other Scandinavian countries. While I was familiar with the Icelandic tradition of gifting and enjoying books on Christmas Eve, I was admittedly unfamiliar with some other details such as the particular consumption of newly published works for this time of year. Even more special, I love that we shared this tradition with both adults and children through our Book Flood Fair, reading works of the amazing authors featured in our Store.

As we neared Christmas, I found that the events really rounded in on the theme of togetherness, with Christmas Dinner and Julgudstjänst, a traditional Christmas church service held in Swedish. Having taken our members and guests through a wonderful journey of joyful shopping, music, art and more, this finale felt just right. The opportunity to be taken on this journey myself was certainly a personal holiday gift.



I love that the holidays bring the opportunity to support unique artists' work, such as these beautiful straw weavings created by Sidonka Wadina.



Programs & Classes

View our events online at
SwedishAmericanMuseum.org/Calendar



RECURRING

Book Club

Saturday, Dec. 28, 2 p.m. ONLINE

We discuss books from the Nordic countries that can be bought in the Museum Store. In December we will discuss *Everything Is Not Enough* by Lolá Ákínmádé Åkerström

SWEDISH LANGUAGE CLASSES ONLINE

Winter courses begin January 2025. See website for details.

SVENSKA SKOLAN & BULLERBYN

Sunday, Dec. 15, 10 a.m. at the Museum

Svenska Skolan (10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.) is for children of school age (Kindergarten – High School) who speak Swedish. Children learn about Swedish history, geography and culture. Bullerbyn (10 a.m. - 11 a.m.) is a time for singing and stories in Swedish. Children aged 6 months to 5 years are welcome with parents. Kids are welcome to play in the Children's Museum afterward.

HOLIDAY & SPECIAL EVENTS

Julmarknad

Friday, Dec. 6, 4 p.m. - 8 p.m. (Preview sale)

Saturday, Dec. 7, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Sunday, Dec. 8, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

The Museum's annual holiday market. You can browse and buy a variety of products from our wonderful vendors. There will be performances, visits from Tomten, and Swedish treats.

Lucia

Friday, Dec. 13, starts at the Museum

4:45 p.m. Procession goes from Museum to Catalpa Ave.

5 p.m. Performance at the Christmas Tree on Catalpa

7 p.m. Ebenezer Lutheran Church, 1650 W. Foster Ave. Honoring St. Lucia, known for her generous spirit.

Special Exhibits

The Art of Fika

Watercolors by Jan Padover

Open through Sunday, Feb. 2, 2025

Raoul Wallenberg Gallery

What is fika and why is it so popular amongst Swedes? This exhibit dives into the history of this daily ritual and displays Jan Padover's watercolors of popular Swedish fika treats.

Breakfast With Tomten

Saturday, Dec. 14 & Sunday, Dec. 15, 9 a.m. at the Museum

A special Swedish meal and a visit from Tomten. A holiday event for the whole family.

A native San Franciscan artist, Padover received his BA in Fine Art at San Francisco Academy of Art. He went on to study Graphic Design at Stockholm's Gerlesborgskolan and Konstfackskolan. His work has been exhibited in Sweden's National Museum and Stockholm's Liljevalch Museum. In addition to being an artist, Padover teaches drawing and painting at the School of the Arts High School in San Francisco.

Holiday Baking Class

Tuesday, Dec. 17, 6 p.m. at the Museum

We will make holiday treats.

Julgudstjänst

Sunday, Dec. 22, 4 p.m. at Ebenezer Lutheran Church, 1650 W. Foster Ave.

A Christmas church service led in Swedish.

Julmiddag

Sunday, Dec. 22, 5 p.m. at the Museum

A traditional Swedish Christmas smörgåsbord. Children are invited to participate in a St. Lucia procession and there will be a special visit from Tomten. Food provided by Tre Kronor Restaurant.



Painted Bonader

Tuesday, Dec. 10, 2024 – Sunday, Jan. 12, 2025

Main Gallery

This annual holiday exhibit displays artwork dating back to the 19th century. Bonader is an example of Scandinavian folk art that was used to decorate Swedish homes at Christmastime and on feast days. Contemporary folk art is displayed in addition to historic folk art, showing how the art form has grown. 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 the 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.



Karin Larsson: Let the Hand Be Seen

Created by Carl Larsson-gården

Friday, Jan. 17, 2025 – Sunday, April 20, 2025

Main Gallery

Immersed in the world of the Swedish countryside, Karin Larsson's work in textile arts, furniture construction, and interior design reflect curiosity, innovation, and openness to the emerging trends facing life in the late 1800s. This exhibit displays Karin's work through her experience as an artist, wife, and mother. The exhibition will feature reproductions of her most significant pieces including furniture, dresses, curtains, pillows, and other handmade designs that accented the Larsson family home. Though only her family and some friends knew Karin's body of work during her lifetime, her impact remains an important part of Sweden's contributions to women's history and art.

Shop for Karin Larsson items in the Museum Store!



Our Core Exhibit: We Are America

We Are America opened in June 2024. It follows the path of people who made the decision to leave Sweden for a life in Chicago. Through a range of artifacts, images, and interactives, visitors will learn about the lives Swedish immigrants built in the U.S., from employment to recreation to religion to home life.

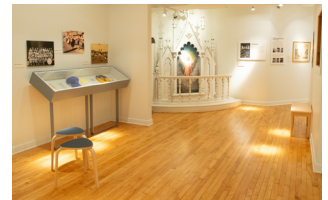


Exhibit Sponsored By

- Institute of Museum and Library Services
- Swedish American Museum 40th Anniversary Campaign

Many thanks to our community who volunteered their time and donated their stories and items to the Museum. Thank you to our exhibit team and to all those who made this exhibit possible!

Karin Moen Abercrombie - Executive Director

Phoebe Yates - Curator

Lisa Lindström - Collection Manager

Tamara Biggs - Project Advisor, Installation Lead

Miles Lindblad - Architect

Amy Reichart - Exhibit Designer

Jordan Mosher - Exhibit Designer

Mark Ramirez - Graphic Designer

Mark Schall - Contractor

Patience Baach - Exhibit Evaluator

Katie Biggs-Wrona - Mannequin Artist,
Installation Team

Erin Bliss - Mountmaker, Installation Team

Kassadi Locke - Graphic Design Intern

Carol Turchan - Paper Conservator and Mountmaker

Geneva Wrona - Fabricator, Installation Team

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