

SWEDISH AMERICAN MUSEUM

2020 ANNUAL REPORT



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The Swedish American Museum’s board of directors held its last in person meeting on March 10, 2020. I attended Jason Diakité’s book talk at the Museum on March 11, and I started working remotely the following day. I never would have guessed that life would continue to be so different more than a year later, but here we are. Our Museum community has done a phenomenal job adapting to these uncertain times in ways that allow us to continue our mission while protecting the safety of Museum visitors, staff, and volunteers.

The COVID-19 pandemic may have ruined in person gatherings, but it couldn't stop our Museum from continuing its operations and programs. The board of directors and Museum committees have continued to meet via Zoom throughout the pandemic, and their work has not been interrupted. Zoom has enabled the Museum to continue hosting its traditional programs, such as language classes, cultural lectures, and genealogy sessions. We have even introduced some new programs, such as the Prata Svenska conversational group and the Swedish television discussion group. ABBA tribute band Dancing Queen held a virtual concert for Midsommarfest in June, and the Museum held its first virtual gala in November. These events have helped maintain some sense of normalcy at the Museum and have enabled our community to stay connected. Many thanks to Executive Director Karin Moen Abercrombie, Communications Manager Angelica Farzaneh-Far, Member and Community Engagement Manager Caroline Gerbaulet-Vanasse, Curator Emily England, Store Manager Catherine Selen, Education Manager Stacey Nyman and Marketing Assistant Elise Beck!

The Kerstin Andersson Museum Store has been constant throughout the pandemic. The staff expanded online and curbside shopping, introduced personal shopping services, and adopted safety protocols for in person shopping. The Museum Store is a great source of Swedish foods: the baked café items that rotate weekly are always excellent, and the Store stocks a lot of Swedish ingredients that cannot be found in most American grocery stores. In December, the Museum hosted a virtual Julmarknad and set up a holiday store in the main gallery. This spring, the Store will expand into the 5217 N. Clark building, and the space currently occupied by the Store will become a Swedish café!

There has also been a lot of work behind the scenes at the Museum. The Facilities committee has been busy working with contractors to

develop the courtyard behind the 5217 building, join the 5211 and 5217 buildings, open the café, and create a new parking area behind the courtyard with a dedicated entrance for caterers. We are all very excited about these capital changes! The Museum continues to display new exhibits in the gallery. We are all very excited about the Five Artists exhibit currently on display and the forthcoming Letters from Home exhibit that is being developed.

I would like to thank my fellow directors, as well as the Museum's trustees, members, volunteers, donors, staff, and other supporters for everything they have done to support our Museum community over the past year. I would like to extend a special thank you to the four directors who are stepping down from the Board this spring, Julie Benson, Vereen Nordstrom, Steve Satek, and Terry Uddenberg.

The board and I are very optimistic about the coming year at the Swedish American Museum. We are especially looking forward to celebrating the Museum's 45th anniversary and the Children's Museum's 20th anniversary, expanding the Museum Store, opening the café and the courtyard, continuing to host a wide range of programs, and seeing each other in person again.



Liz Peterson, Kevin Palmer and Frank Schneider at the opening of the exhibit "Double-weave in Sweden"



Lev i nuet och vänta inte tills imorgon, utan plocka livets rosor idag. | Live in the present and do not wait until tomorrow, but pick the roses of life today.

I think we can all say that 2020 did not turn out the way we had anticipated. For us, our family had just enjoyed a visit to Sweden celebrating Christmas and New Year's with my sisters and their families, which has been a wonderful memory to recall throughout the pandemic. However, there are many positive things that have happened in 2020. Several words come to mind related to describing 2020: perseverance, strength, ingenuity, creativity, flexibility, adapting, thankfulness, togetherness, and more. (Yes, we could focus on words like frustrating, unknown, fearful, and scared but that is emotionally draining and does not help taking care of today and now.)

The Museum staff was amazing and quickly adjusted to working remotely when needed and in person at the Museum when we could. We implemented all the precautions suggested by authorities and were able to safely enjoy the holiday season with our members and visitors. Responding to the pandemic took more hours and new energy to adapt and adjust, but we did it. With all programs and events available online, we were able to come together (without traveling) from the safety and comfort of our own homes.

For many of us, we connected more with our families in Sweden and other parts of the United States and the world. We made Zoom friends by

regularly getting together online. We now know people in so many other states because we are all Swedish or of Swedish heritage. For example, the Prata Svenska group quickly connected with people interested in the Swedish language. Now, there are people from Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, and even England who have improved their Swedish by gathering online regularly throughout the year. We have also learned about each other, our connections to Sweden, our hobbies, and our communities.

Furthermore, another group we started was the book club. A book club was a longtime suggestion to discuss the many popular English translations of Swedish books. Well, in 2020, it happened, and the variety of books we read ranges from learning about the World War II and Sweden in the 1940s through Astrid Lindgren's eyes to murder mysteries from the 1800s in the northern part of Sweden. The increased number of books available for us to offer for purchase in the store has also been a big help and inspiration.

Then, to end the summer and welcome the fall, we had an hour-long online concert with Dancing Queen who collaborated with the Scandinavian Park in Elgin. Both the Museum and Scandinavian Park usually work with Dancing Queen (formerly ABBA Salute), and the music inspired dancing in many homes!



*Karin Moen
Abercrombie
and
Lena Billgren
in the kitchen*

Of course, we can't forget about food and how much more we are cooking at home and experimenting with new recipes in new ways. Personally, I embarked on the sourdough path. And after some hard loaves of bread, we are now regularly enjoying soft homemade sourdough bread. At the Museum, we decided that it would be a lot of fun to use the new convection oven that SWEA Chicago and SWEA MAME (Middle Americas Region) funded. So, starting in May 2020, our member and volunteer Lena Billgren came every Friday morning to help bake kanelbullar and anything else that we felt comfortable adding to the menu. Eventually, it became a mix of mazariner, pepparkakor, chocolate cookies, traditional drömmar, drömmar with cardamom and oats, then later with gingerbread spices. We even made choklad biskvier, rulltårta, drömtårta, mockarutor, and more. Even though Lena moved back to Sweden, the weekly baking has continued. Now, to connect virtually instead of in person, we share the pictures of the baked items we make.



Museum cooking class

We offered in person cooking classes during the first quarter of 2020 and a few classes in the summer; the rest of the cooking classes have been online. Together, we have made open-faced sandwiches, smörgåstårta (sandwich cakes), Christmas cookies, soups, semlor, and bread. One goal we have is to identify the foods that people are longing for so we

can include them in our Café (once it opens). We continue to encourage people to give us their food input and suggestions so that we can experiment and test.

Connected with the baking and cooking classes is the increased interest in our food items that the Museum Store offers. It is amazing how many people get almost nostalgic over Kalles Kaviar, herring of various varieties, Swedish cheese, pearl sugar, yellow peas, and Swedish coffee. A specialty (that only some of us enjoy) is a canned version of ground fish in dill or lobster sauce or fiskbullar (fish balls). Just like herring, you either like it or do not.



Kevin Palmer as Tomten

We converted our events with food as “to-go.” I truly enjoyed watching our Swedish tomtar (Kevin Palmer and Mats Selen) talk with children one-on-one about their Christmas wish lists (after they had enjoyed Swedish pancakes at home). It was heartwarming. With the Herring Breakfast to-go, we also took the opportunity to learn more about herring fishing in Sweden. As usual, Tre Kronor cooked the Herring Lunch food. Then, to end the 2020 to-go food offerings, Tre Kronor also prepared the food for the Julbord dinner in December. Along with detailed instructions on how to heat up the food at home, there were many containers used to accommodate all the Julbord delicacies. It was a great way to taste jul in Chicago.

Then, leading up to the Gala, we finally moved the silent auction online. And with a new platform, we were successful in reaching a larger audience. We even managed to include baked goods in a to-go dessert box to be eaten while being part of the Aspire! 2020 Gala online at home. The hour-long celebration of 2020's honoree--the Chicago Swedish Mixed Chorus--was enjoyed by nearly 100 people. And again, it brought our community together. We also took the opportunity to share the first 40 years of the Museum's history by showing an hour-long video Paul Muhr put together in 2016.

In the midst of the pandemic, we also came together as a community in solidarity with our friends in Chicago and around the world to support diversity and equality. Being a member of Chicago Cultural Alliance connected us to communities throughout the city. For example, we worked with the DuSable Museum to organize a book reading with Swedish rapper Jason "Timbuktu" Diakite in March 2020 and again as we focused on Juneteenth 2020.

Even though 2020 did not turn out as we might have thought when the year began, we can look back and be thankful for all of our wonderful achievements and community support---idags rosar or today's roses. We received many generous donations from our members and donors that assured us that we were going to stay strong throughout 2020. In addition, we received a very special donation to create the Bo and Anita Hedfors Endowment to help us look beyond 2020. A complete list of all the donors are available on page 24.

I will always be thankful for how our Museum community got together to make sure that the Swedish American Museum would be here throughout 2020 but also for the future.



Steve Satek, Karin Moen Abercrombie and Amber Holst getting us ready for Midsommarfest at home



Three of the Swedish weavers at the Museum for the exhibit opening



Swedish Christmas Cookies baked to order



When it became evident that the COVID-19 Epidemic would alter the usual format of the annual Gala event and that in-person attendance would not be possible, the committee began planning for an on-line Silent Auction and a virtual Gala Aspire meeting. The virtual meeting would be recorded on video.

Remote auction software was obtained and installed. Potential bidders were advised to pre-register and assistance (in person and on the phone) was available the week of November 1 for those who needed it. A preview of some of the auction items was setup in the gallery for those who would like to come and see the items in person. The on-line auction ran from Sunday, November 1 to Sunday November 8 at 6:00 pm. More than 160 items were donated for the auction. In addition, bidders could purchase items for the Courtyard, such as tables, chairs, heaters, planters, etc. The remote silent auction raised a little over \$50,000 and an additional \$10,000 for the Courtyard items.

The Honoree for the meeting was the Chicago Swedish Mixed Chorus. The Chorus was formed in 1938 as a male chorus. In 2017 women were included and the name of the Chorus was changed to a Mixed Chorus. Since the Chorus could not attend the meeting in person, a special concert is scheduled for a later date.

The virtual Aspire Gala meeting, on video tape, began at 5:30 pm on Saturday, November 8 with photos from prior Gala events, installation of the water tower, and the Museum's 40th Anniversary. This was followed by greetings from the co-chairs and the Swedish Ambassador, a promotion for the Silent Auction, introduction of the Honoree, and a report on the current status of Museum projects. The Chicago Swedish Mixed Chorus performed and some of the items on the Silent Auction were shown. The evening ended with a video of ABBA music.



Chicago Swedish Mixed Chorus

Thank you to our Sponsors!

Gold - Ulla Brunk

Silver - Wayne E. Nelson

Bronze - Russell & Catherine Holmquist
Ken Norgan

Program Book - Larry & Laura Ekstrom

Wine - Bob & Mardee Gramen

Evening - Wally & Sherrie Magnuson

Claes & Rebecca Warnander

Skybridge Resource Center

Law Offices A.E. Gustafsson, PC

Silent Auction - Julie Benson

Decoration - Vereen Nordstrom



BONADER

Dec. 14, 2019 - Jan. 12, 2020

Dec. 12, 2020 - Jan. 12, 2021

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. This exhibit adorns the Museum walls every holiday season.



DOUBLE WEAVE IN SWEDEN

Weaving Exhibit By 9 Swedish weavers

March 7 - Aug. 23, 2020

Double-weave is a special weaving technique that creates textiles with two layers. Early double-weave in Sweden was primarily used as a status symbol. It was commonly used as an art form or made into blankets, bride rugs, or baptismal robes for the wealthy. By the 1900s, the craft was very popular. Books were printed with patterns and instructions, courses were arranged, and textile art was displayed in public. This popularity lasted for almost a century before it suddenly stopped and nearly disappeared. This exhibit was put together by 9 weavers from Sweden. Their aim is to preserve this cultural heritage and teach people about its history and techniques. The weavers hope that by finding new uses, materials, and applications for double-weave, they will increase awareness around this weaving form and renew interest in the craft.



NATURAL SCENICS

Photography Exhibit by Jack Carlson

Jan. 15 - March 1, 2020

As a nature photographer, Jack Carlson believes it is important to carefully capture a photographic image rather than take numerous pictures that are then subjected to post-production editing. Jack's exhibit "Natural Scenics" is consists of pictures from his travels around this country, throughout the word, and his own backyard. Jack's Swedish-American background taught him that nature speaks for itself, and that a nature photographer's obligation is to respect and preserve the natural environment.



SWEDISH DADS

Photography Exhibit by Johan Bävman

Aug. 28 - Nov. 29, 2020

Sweden has one of the most generous parental leave systems in the world. The current system enables parents to stay at home with their child for a total of 480 days, while receiving an allowance from the state. Only a fraction of Sweden's fathers use all their days of parental leave, and only 14% of parents choose to share the days equally. This photo essay is based on portraits of dads who belong to that small percentage who choose to stay at home with their child for at least six months.



LOST HOUSES OF LYNDALE

By Matt Bergstrom

Oct. 5, 2019 - Feb. 17, 2020

Like many streets in Chicago, Lyndale St., between California Ave. and Kedzie Blvd. is lined with a mix of ordinary frame houses. Few of the buildings could be considered architecturally significant or worthy of historic preservation. The history of the street since the 1880s is little recorded. But these houses represent the hard-won rewards of homeownership for generations of working-class immigrants who passed their property on to their children or sold to the next wave of immigrants to arrive.



TO LIVE IS TO PLAY

Feb. 21 - Aug. 9, 2020

Learn about Sweden's beloved children's author, Astrid Lindgren, the creator of characters such as Pippi Longstocking and Emil. Generations of Swedes, at home and abroad, have grown up reading her books, listening to them on tape and watching the movies. It is as much a natural part of childhood in Sweden as riding a bike. In this exhibit, you will learn about Astrid herself, her life and what inspired her to write her stories.

Brunk Children's Museum of Immigration started the year offering our regular programming such as Moon Madness and Hejsan! We had 23 school tours and 11 birthday parties. We continued our tradition to celebrate Swedish culture by hosting a Julgransplundring where families and Svenska skolan joined in to dance the end of the Christmas season.

In March, the Children's Museum moved online. Great efforts were made to provide fun and quality material for children of all ages on our website. Parents can now find everything from alphabet crafts and activities to recorded video baking sessions and story time.

A number of Zoom activities were offered to children and families. Hejsan moved online and children would join for stories and games from their homes. Everyone loved the game "scavenger hunt" and it was played almost every week. It is a game where all participants have to find something in their house that starts with the letter.... G or color.... Blue and so on.



Mats Selen as Tomten

We also had visits from Pippi Longstocking, a real life Viking as well as Tomten! Pancakes were picked up in advance of the Pippi and Tomten event and then families could get themselves comfortable in front of their computers to meet with these celebrities. The Viking was a bit of a surprise and the kids had so many questions about what it is like being a real life Viking.

The Children's Museum managed to host one socially distant festival in September. A modified Family Festival was held with timed entry in the Museum gallery where families could come and craft.

School tours also moved online. As schools started to figure out online learning these picked up and in 2020 we had 8 online school tours.



A real life Viking (Scott Martin)

We were sad to see Stacey Nyman leave the Museum at the end of the year after many years as the Education Manager. She has worked tirelessly and with enthusiasm to create programming for families and well as schoolchildren on field trips. We wish her all the best in her future endeavors.

OUR WONDERFUL VOLUNTEERS

2020 started much like any other year for the volunteers. Volunteering happens daily in the Museum in roles such as at our Admissions desk or in the Museum Store. Volunteers also help by working our events and programming; such as the increasingly popular pop-up cafes. The Museum was lucky enough to have a table at the Chicago Volunteer Expo at the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum in February 2020. This expo is a wonderful opportunity for volunteers and staff to represent the Museum and recruit new volunteers!

Our volunteers are a big part of the Museum's life force, and we will always be grateful to how enthusiastically they remained connected even during lockdown. First, we connected through monthly online gatherings, and later as the months progressed, they found ways to volunteer remotely. Our volunteers advocated for the Museum from home by writing about us in their residence newsletters. Our volunteers were able to volunteer from home on a variety of helpful projects. By the second half of 2020, some socially distanced volunteering became possible once again. When the Museum was able to open its doors at a limited capacity, we also opened our doors to volunteering at the admissions desk and with our Store. Despite 2020's setbacks, our volunteers put in about 3,000 hours!

On behalf of the entire Museum, we want to tell you how appreciative we are of each and every one of our volunteers! In lieu of the official appreciation dinner, please know you are all honorary volunteers of the year in our hearts! Here's to a brighter future!



*Catherine Selen and Caroline Gerbaulet-Vanasse
at the Chicago Volunteer Expo*



*Diana Gardner at the
Chicago Volunteer Expo*

MUSEUM STORE

By now we are all very familiar with the ways small businesses, restaurants, and more generally, tourism around Chicago adapted to the many changes we faced in 2020. The creativity and innovation across our Andersonville community, and the local support for our neighborhood kept us all optimistic for the future. Like many others, the Kerstin Andersson Museum Store shifted focus to provide more opportunities for safely shopping our selection of Swedish and Scandinavian goods from home. With so many of our members and others around the country eager to show their support, our online sales increased dramatically from April to December of 2020. Though we did suffer a drop in total sales compared to 2019, some departments thrived and even surpassed previous records.



Food sales in 2020 soared over 2019 by over 30%. Both old friends and new ones came to us for Scandinavian foods to bring a taste of their most precious family memories home. Shortly after we closed the Museum's doors to visitors in March, the Museum Store was able to list our entire grocery department online for curbside

pick-up! Many Museum Members and neighbors alike enjoyed safely shopping with us for hard-to-find foods from the comfort of their living rooms. Coming to us for specialty ingredients to cook together over Zoom or mail to their friends and family, loved ones found creative ways to share their favorite meals from afar. We also had great success with the addition of weekly Swedish baked goods for pick-up each Friday. With the help of a new stove in our commercial kitchen, we have made hundreds of traditional kanelbullar for our community to enjoy. We are so thankful for our Member family who continue to support the Museum by enjoying a delicious fika from home each week.

In addition to the jump in food sales, we also saw a great increase in shopping through our website. The Museum Store was able to compile the inaugural Julkatalog, allowing us to share our full selection of Swedish Christmas décor and gifts online for the first time. All of our staff worked hard through the holiday season to fill, pack and ship orders placed through the catalog to homes all over the country. We reached many more people than we have in the past, even sending orders as far as Chugiak, Alaska! We were also happy to have the Holiday Store set up in our Main Gallery to allow for visitors to safely distance and enjoy our annual Bonader exhibit while they shopped. It helped to bring a small taste of the wonderful holiday programs that usually take place in the gallery every December.

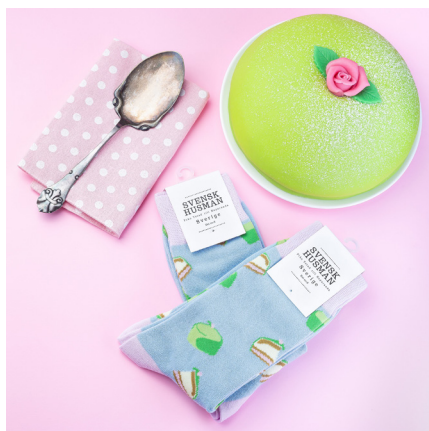


Soap by Ninni



Julmarknad

Happily, the Kerstin Andersson Museum Store was still able to introduce some new vendors and merchandise to our customers in 2020. Svensk Husman has been a big hit, with their range of Swedish food themed socks and masks, a great gift for any age. We were also happy to bring in some products from local Swedish-American skincare formulator, Ninni. Inc., who was featured in both our Aspire Gala Silent Auction and our virtual Julmarknad. Like many other stores, we found ourselves selling hand sanitizer and facemasks for the first time. We



Socks by Svensk Husman

were so happy for the generous donation of hand-made masks from member Lyn Selen. Sales of these masks, along with those contributed by staff members, raised over \$2,500 for the Museum.

Despite all of the difficulties we have overcome since March of 2020, everyone at the Museum has played a role in making the Store as successful as it could be. Our whole Museum Staff worked tirelessly to help in the Store as much as possible, sacrificing a part of their own busy schedules to assist whenever needed. Members of our Store committee did so much to keep things running smoothly both behind the scenes and behind the counter when we were able to reopen the Store to customers in-person. We have immense gratitude for all of you who supported us by volunteering, attending virtual programs, and by shopping with us throughout 2020. Tusen tack! We are looking forward to many reunions and celebrations in our 45th year as a Museum.

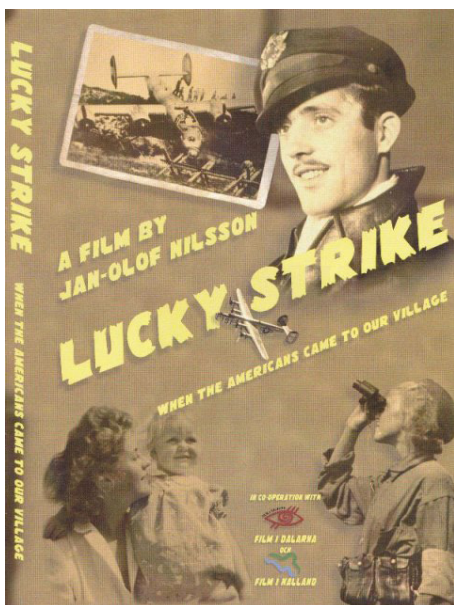


Selection of facemasks

Despite the pandemic, our genealogical programs and research help continued. Early in 2020, the program delivery method had to be changed from in person to virtual. As many people sheltered at home, they had more time to do research (and hence contact the Genealogy Center for help) and participants and presenters could be involved even though geographically distant. Participants came from as far away as Sweden and presenters ranged from local locations to Massachusetts and to Sweden.

One person, Douglas Lindseth Jack, received guidance from the Genealogy Center. Douglas remarked, “Wow, how things are evolving with my Lindseth research, thanks to you [(referring me to researcher Shirley Koelling)] . . . [and the] package provides additional depth to my family tree.

The year started off with two in-person presentations. The first, a video titled *Lucky Strike: When Americans Came to our Village*, evoked family memories for a genealogy board member, Lori Johnson. Lori shared that, “This film had special meaning for me because my father became an internee when his B-17 plane crashed in Sweden in 1945. This event, during which thousands of American and British airmen bailed out of their planes and reached the security of Sweden, is part of little known World War II history.”



The second program was with Kathy Meade. She discussed “What’s New in ArkivDigital” during her in-person presentation, and then discussed “Searching by Name: Swedish Records Using ArkivDigital” during a virtual presentation. One attendee, Sue Jackson, remarked, “No matter how long you’ve been working on genealogy, there’s always something new to learn on ArkivDigital. ArkivDigital continues to add to its records and to make them easier to use.”



Additional programs held on Zoom included Bengt Sjögren’s continued discussion of the Four Estates with “The Burghers: Societies of Craftsmen and Traders.” He presented “Swedish Nobility” in 2019 and hopefully the remaining estates, clergy, and farmers will be presented in the future.

Genealogy members helped others during “Hitting A Brick Wall” sessions when participants explained their issues and help was provided. For example, Lilly Setterdahl discussed how she and her husband Lennart interviewed many immigrants and preserved their stories on tape and microfilm.

Greg Paris, a former biomedical research scientist, software engineer, and current genealogist, explained how he became obsessed with finding his great-grandfather who emigrated from Sweden in the late 1800's, sired his grandmother, and then disappeared. He explained how DNA and ArkivDigital provided clues in "Finding My Ne'er Do-Well, Scoundrel Swedish Great-Grandfather."

The year ended with professional genealogist Dan Hubbard providing information on how to reconstruct a person based on numerous sources, all of which must be checked and double-checked for accuracy. The title "From The Source's Mouth" was highly descriptive.

We are continuing with virtual programs for early 2021, but we hope to be together again in person sometime this year. And, we will go to lunch again! In the meantime, please attend the genealogy monthly Zoom programs and contact the Museum for research help. We are here for you.

SWEDISH LANGUAGE CLASSES

Throughout the year, the Swedish American Museum offers evening language classes on four levels, Beginner I and II, Intermediate and Conversational Swedish. During the challenging Covid -19 pandemic and adhering to the social distancing safety standards, our classes moved online. There has been a sustained increase in students, remaining strong through all sessions. In fact, the benefit of the virtual format has brought students outside of Chicago and even the midwest to our courses which has been a welcomed change and has helped our classes thrive. The strengthening interest in connecting to Swedish roots and language for the purpose of traveling once that becomes safe, kept new students coming and current students returning.

Hanna-Klara Thurfjell has continued as the instructor for Beginner I and II, and the Conversational class, and the Intermediate Swedish class is taught by Claes Brameus.

Beginner I is our warm welcome to the Swedish language and culture, starting with practicing vowel sounds, being able to introduce oneself, weekly vocabulary lists, textbook work and an overview of Swedish holidays, geography and traditions.

Beginner II builds on beginner I, adding further elements of grammar, and includes assignments in which the students are given scenarios of daily activities and are encouraged to engaged in dialog to problem solve and ask questions.

The intermediate Course is geared towards students who are ready to do individual work and use the Swedish language in more practical ways. We use radio, books, TV and movies to interact with everyday language, individual weekly assignments to practice writing and spoken language, and we do listening comprehension. Classes include Swedish history, art, culture, geography and current events as applicable. Students are expected to be able to use the language to write and speak at a basic level, as well as understand hearing. The classes are tailored to fit the students current level and help them get to a conversational level.

Conversational/Advanced Swedish is taught in Swedish and is geared toward students with advanced knowledge of the language and who wants to practice with others. This include weekly discussions, a book club section and news articles and media clips. The Swedish classes continue to offer members and nonmembers a valuable educational connection to their heritage, their current family, the Swedish community in Chicago, and beyond.

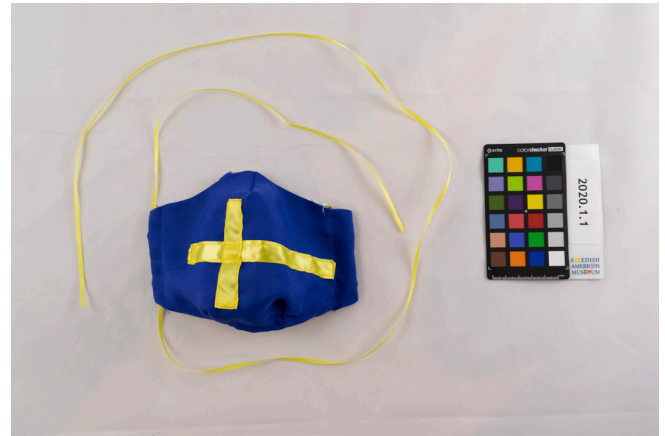
MUSEUM COLLECTION

Active collecting was a bit slower this year and a number of donations that began in 2020 remain in process. Approximately 55 artifacts were approved for the permanent collection, and a total of 32 have been successfully received and completed. Completed donations include Swedish-American themed face masks made in response to the COVID-19 pandemic; an original Birger Sandzén lithograph; 2 textiles worn by Swedish immigrants over 100 years ago; and a collection of family heirlooms demonstrating a wide variety of Swedish-American craftsmanship in woodworking, tatting, fabric painting, quilting, and more.

One artifact from our permanent collection, a vintage Hansel and Gretel book, remains on loan to Vasa National Archives for a two-year exhibit on Nordic fairy tales. We responded to over 20 research requests and hosted one research visit to the collection. We also finished inventorying the books in the third floor classroom as we move forward with building modifications to better serve the present needs of our community.



The Wallenberg gallery turned into a digitization room for the collections.



Digitized donations to the Museum Collection



This year we codified many new collections standards and procedures and began conducting a full-collection inventory that will verify, update, and standardize all the data in our collections catalog, as well as add digital images and metadata to all of our nearly 17,000 artifact records. These efforts will increase our collection database's cross-functionality, which will help us meet current best practices for collection management, for research, tracking objects, and documenting changes to artifacts' conditions over time, thus enabling us to eventually make the collections digitally accessible to everyone online.

This year we captured approximately 380 photographs to digitize 66, 3-dimensional artifacts; and we created 270 scans to digitize 2-dimensional archival artifacts and collections. We inventoried and assessed 38 artifacts to verify and update our catalog data. At the present rate, we hope an initial batch of artifacts will be published digitally online in the next 2-5 years.

PROGRAMS HIGHLIGHTS

2020 started with some of the favorites from 2019 such as cooking classes and pop-up cafes. The Museum served Semlor and mazariner at a rate where the kitchen had a hard time keeping up at times. The number of concerts at the Museum were down from other years but we did get to enjoy Jaerv in person as well as Anders Tenglund, Sofia Talvik and Dancing Queen online.



Sofia Talvik

The Museum offered an increased number of book talks this year. Jason “Timbuktu” Diakité visited the Museum just a few days before Chicago went into lockdown to talk about his book “A Drop of Midnight.” Billy Schloss joined us on Zoom together with his aunt to talk about his mother’s book “We Were Strangers: the True Story of Magda Preiss.” In a collaboration with other Swedish-American institutions as well as a couple of consulates, we met virtually with Jonas Hassen Khemiri who talked about his book “The Family Clause.”

With all this Zooming, Mary Alsopp put together a number of Zoom tutorials for the Museum website as well as hosting a number of classes to get us all Zoom savvy.

The nature of some of the Museum’s regular programs were easily moved online.

Many new opportunities opened up as we were no longer bound by location. People from all over the country as well as Sweden joined in our online events. We had speakers and artists join us from the comfort of their homes in Sweden for our members benefit. Richard Tellström joined us from Sweden and talked about herring and lutfisk in Swedish food tradition. For our annual Got Glögg? Event we had Mike Sjöblom join us from his home in California and teach us about the history of glögg and teach us how to make our own. The one event that would have been impossible to put together in person was when Director Folke Rydén joined us from Sweden, Murtada Al-Hachami from Iraq and his son from England in another collaboration across organizations for a viewing and discussion on the movie “Balloons over Babylon.”

As we move forward into 2021, we will take all these newly acquired skills and plan to continue to offer a varied program not only in content but also in presentation in order to keep these new connections that we have made across the country and world.



Jason
“Timbuktu”
Diakité at the
Museum



Jason "Timbuktu" Diakité

Special Events

- Herring Breakfast with Tre Kronor Restaurant
- Pop-up Café
 - Split Pea Soup & Swedish Pancakes
 - Semla
 - Mazarin
- Online Swedish Fika
- Herring Lunch To-Go
- Game Night Online
- Fjällräven Store Event
- Aspire! Gala

Holiday Celebrations & Programs

- Julgransplundring
- Online Midsommarfest
- Got Glögg? Online
- Julmarknad Online
- Livestream St. Lucia Celebration
- Breakfast with Tomten Online
- Julmiddag To-Go
- Christmas Crafts Online
- Gingerbread House Decoration Kit

Concerts & Performances

- Concert by Jaerv
- Online concert by Sofia Talvik
- Online concert by Dancing Queen
- Akvavit Staged Reading
- Online Concert with Anders Tenglund

Lectures, Films & Books

- Thursday night movies/TV series
 - Fallet
 - Caliphat
 - The Restuarant
- Book Club
 - Swede Hollow by Ola Larsmo
 - The Emigrants by Vilhelm Moberg
 - A drop of midnight by Jason Diakité
- Sami National Day talk by Dr. Charles Peterson
- Book talk and signing by Jason "Timbuktu" Diakité
- Nordic Consulate Panel Discussion on Family Leave
- Book Talk by Billy Schloss
- Herring, Lutfisk and Other Fish Traditions by Richard Tellström Online
- Book talk with Jonas Hassen Khemiri
- Balloons over Babylon film viewing and discussion with director Folke Rydén
- Talk about "Letters from Home" a collaboration with Arvika konsthall



Family Programs

- Moon Monday
- Hejsan! Story and Craft time
- Winter Crafts in the Classroom
- Bullerbyn Swedish Language Playgroup
- Pippi Longstocking movie showing
- Online Pancakes with Pippi
- Spring Crafts packet pickup
- Dala Pig Craft
- Family Festival
- “First Contact” movie showing
- Online visit from a Viking
- Winter Crafts packet pickup

Swedish American Genealogy Center

- Saturday Genealogy sessions
 - Film: Lucky Strike
 - What’s New in Arkiv Digital presented by Kathy Meade
 - Book discussion: Xenophobe’s Guide To The Swedes by Peter Berlin
 - Finding my ne’er-do-well, scoundrel Swedish great-grandfather by Greg Paris
 - From the Source’s Mouth by Daniel Hubbard

Classes & Workshops

- Swedish Language Series
- Scandinavian Jam Sessions for Musicians
- Cooking classes inspired by Magnus Nilsson’s cookbooks
 - Soup and Semla
 - Swedish Falu Sausage and Ris a la Malta
- Baking classes
 - Baking with Yeast
 - Swedish Cheesecake
 - Swedish Christmas Treats
 - Smörgåstårta
 - Open Faced Sandwiches
- Knitting Group
- Zoom Tutorial Online

Community Events

- #AlwaysAndersonville
- Andersonville at Home
- Chicago Film Festival

Guided Tours

- The Dream of America – Swedish Immigration to Chicago
- Walking Tour of Andersonville
- School Tours



Herring Breakfast with Tre Kronor

Svenska Skolan and Bullerbyn are the Swedish American Museum’s program directed towards Swedish speaking children.

Bullerbyn is for children who have not yet started Kindergarten and is a time spent together with friends and caregivers speaking, playing and singing in Swedish. Bullerbyn was put on hold in March and will open again as soon as it is safe to do so.

This year, Svenska Skolan is divided up into two groups.

January 2020 – June 2020 we had 14 students in the upper class, ages 10-16. We focused on Swedish spelling, reading and writing, literature and Swedish history and geography. In March, things changed due to Covid-19. We had our last in person class on March 8 and then had to change our format to Zoom classes. This was quite an adjustment and challenge at first, both for me as the teacher and for the students. The curriculum had to be changed somewhat, to work better for online learning. For example, we did not use our regular history books, but instead learned about Norse mythology and the Nordic gods. We were able to meet in person outside for our graduation in June and the students received their diplomas and some Swedish goodies.

The September 2020 – December 2020 school year started with 11 students in the upper class, ages 10-14. We had hoped to be back at the museum sometime during the fall but had to continue with our Zoom classes. Another teacher, Petter Wahlbäck helped out in my class. We used breakout rooms to divide the class into smaller groups during history and literature for example. We still focused on Swedish spelling, reading comprehension and Swedish history, but also incorporated some new material and used other resources like YouTube and Swedish television programs. During every class we watched a short Swedish television news program for children (“Lilla Aktuellt skola”), with current news from

Sweden and around the world. Unfortunately, our annual Swedish Lucia performance in December was cancelled. It has been a challenging year, but we still managed to learn a lot. The students continue to work on the four important language skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking every time we meet. Hopefully, we will be able to meet in person again at the museum in the fall of 2021.

The younger group is taught by Marja-Liisa Hiltunen. This group had 10 students this school year ending June 2021. The age group is grades 2 to 4.

The transition to learning via Zoom went surprisingly well. The attendance has been kept up and despite some challenges with engagement the students were able to continue their learning of Swedish geography, vocabulary and reading. Everyone is however eager to get back into the classroom soon again.



Svenska skolan graduation 2020 was done family by family by the midsummer pole.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS AND PARTNERS



T H E
B A R B R O
O S H E R
P R O S U E C I A
F O U N D A T I O N



THE
SWEDISH-AMERICAN
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Ulla & Bertil Brunk Family Foundation, Inc.

FINANCIALS

Revenues	2020	2019	2018
Contributions and dues income	\$374,765	\$261,761	\$328,732
Admission fees	\$13,517	\$41,239	\$38,285
Memorials and restricted gifts	\$526,234	\$44,063	\$94,519
Gift shop sales	\$148,811	\$233,756	\$210,143
Special events/programs (net of program costs)	\$61,898	\$89,510	\$91,482
Total public support	\$1,125,225	\$670,329	\$763,161
Grants from government agencies	\$168,367	\$88,566	\$78,077
Other income and net assets released from restriction	\$209,377	\$301,853	\$67,354
Total Public Support & Other Revenues	\$1,502,969	\$1,060,748	\$908,592
 Expenses			
Program services	\$665,888	\$793,149	\$778,199
Management and general services	\$147,498	\$147,233	\$126,399
Fund-raising services	\$53,235	\$46,760	\$43,863
Total Functional Expenses	\$866,621	\$987,142	\$948,461
Change in net assets	\$636,348	\$73,606	-\$39,869
Prior period adjustment/Special Expense		-\$74,731	
Change in net assets	\$636,348	-\$1,125	
Net assets - beginning of year	\$3,987,819	\$3,988,944	\$4,028,813
Net assets - end of year	\$5,260,515	\$3,987,819	\$3,988,944
 Balances at Year End			
Assets			
Total current assets (cash, grants and inventory)	\$2,764,819	\$2,112,950	\$2,095,975
Fixed assets, less depreciation	\$3,226,642	\$3,273,439	\$3,273,076
Contributions receivable (noncurrent portion)	\$40,000	\$31,000	\$30,000
Total other assets	\$0	\$0	\$74,731
Total assets	\$6,031,461	\$5,417,389	\$5,473,782
 Liabilities and Net Assets			
Total current liabilities	\$142,658	\$108,909	\$99,069
Long-term and deferred debt, net of current portion	\$1,264,636	\$1,320,661	\$1,385,769
Total liabilities	\$1,407,294	\$1,429,570	\$1,484,838
Total net assets	\$4,624,167	\$3,987,819	\$3,988,944

A year ago we wondered how the Covid-19 pandemic would impact our Museum. With the strong support of our members and staff, the Swedish American Museum of Chicago adapted to the difficulties imposed by the pandemic and finished the year even stronger than before and is prepared to advance in 2021 and beyond.

Total Public Support and Other Revenues of \$1,502,969 increased by 48% over last year. Contributing to this increase was a generous gift from Bo and Anita Hedfors and the creation of the Bo and Anita Hedfors Endowment, government grants to help struggling organizations and

the wonderful financial support from so many members and organizations. This increase in support offset declines in admissions, store sales and program revenues.

Management and general services expense remained constant at \$147,498 but our programs were curtailed resulting in a 16% reduction in spending to \$665,888. In total, the Museum's support and operations resulted in an increase in our net assets by 16% or \$636,348.

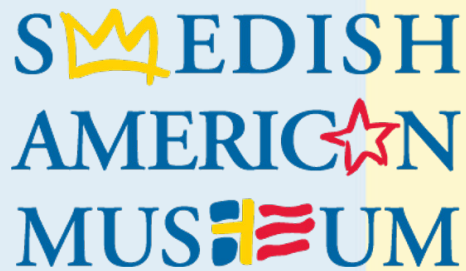
At year end our balance sheet was strengthened; the cash balances and investment accounts increased resulting in total assets of \$6,031,461; an increase of 11.3%. At the same time our liabilities decreased by 1.6% to \$1,264,636. Further, \$60,000 included in the yearend liabilities was a Government Payroll Protection Loan that has been forgiven in 2021. We should note that the prior period adjustment of \$74,731 was the elimination of the value included in prior year's assets for our collections. The amount was an estimate of the value of art work donated to the Museum by the Art Institute of Chicago. Since the current value is difficult to assess and we show no value for other items in our collection, it was deemed best to have a conservative and consistent accounting practice to no longer show any value on the balance sheet.

And so, our Museum is well positioned to adapt programs to meet a new normal and complete the important projects that have been planned for the future.



The process of getting the courtyard ready and the two buildings connected.





MISSION

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.

VISION

To be the preeminent Swedish-American immigration museum in the greater Chicago area and a unifying force within the Midwestern Scandinavian community.

CORE VALUES

The Swedish American Museum
Celebrates Swedish culture, customs, and traditions
Honors the Swedish immigration experience
Recognizes contributions of volunteers and supporters
Fosters collaboration with the broader community.

In the Heart of Andersonville, 5211 N. Clark St., Chicago, Illinois 60640
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