

# VIKING VISTA

May 2015

San Diego, California

## Midsummer Week

To help Balboa Park commemorate a century of existence, the House of Sweden is offering a smorgasbord of festivities, including food for thought, during its annual Midsummer celebration in June. What's more, the house will be open the entire week leading up to Sunday June 21, which marks the summer solstice as well as Midsummer.

To highlight Balboa Park's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary throughout 2015, the city of San Diego is requiring all of its international houses -- known as "the cottages" -- to expand their hours and be more accessible to the public. Although the pressure on the nonprofit volunteer organizations to do more is immense, it's an opportunity to educate people about different national traditions and recruit new members.

The House of Sweden has a variety of cultural presentations planned for the six days before Midsummer. There's a little something for everyone, but the central theme is story telling.

A "mini" Ingmar Bergman film festival is set for **Monday June 15**. *Smiles of a Summer Night* and *Autumn Sonata* are in the mix of classics to be shown. But special requests will be considered. Biographical information about Bergman will be on hand.

The House of Sweden's crafts group, Pyssselgruppen, will demonstrate skills and answer questions on **Tuesday June 16**. The talented members of Pyssselgruppen use clay, papier mache, salt dough, yarn, cloth, paint, paper and wood to make greeting cards, figurines, hats, pot holders, trivets and other colorful folk art.

A "church chat" is scheduled for **Wednesday June 17**. Pastor Staffan Eklund, of Svenska Kyrka in Los Angeles, is participating in the House of Sweden's public outreach before Midsummer. Pastor Eklund will talk about matters material as well as spiritual. The history of Christianity in Scandinavia and the development of the Lutheran Church in the United States are possible topics of conversation.



## Midsummer Week continued



Members of the Swedish Women's Educational Association (SWEA) are graciously serving coffee and buns on **Thursday June 18** and **Friday June 19**. The women might also bind wreaths for display.

Activities on **Saturday June 20** are centered on kids and family fun. House of Sweden volunteers will read children's literature, fairy tales and some of Astrid Lindgren's popular Pippi

Longstocking stories. Other books, games, crayons and coloring-book drawings of Swedish images will be available for the children's enjoyment.

All the festivities culminate on Sunday June 21 with a dance around the Maypole. Live entertainment will include Ylva, her women's chorus and Balboa Park's International Dancers. Volunteers will serve plates of Swedish meatballs, cookies and beverages. A good time will be had by all.



## Balboa Park's Centennial

The House of Sweden's popular and colorful Midsummer celebration in Balboa Park represents the multiculturalism and rich history of San Diego, the West Coast's first city, which happens to border Mexico.

One hundred years ago, the city of San Diego created Balboa Park to host the 1915 Panama-California Exposition, which was attended by then U.S. President Woodrow Wilson. The exposition was a way for San Diego to advertise itself as the first U.S. port for ships arriving from the East Coast via the new Panama Canal.

Seedlings and trees planted in Balboa Park in 1915 grew to create today's spectacular botanical garden, which was the vision of horticulturalist and San Diego pioneer Kate Sessions. Although the exposition's buildings were meant to be only temporary, some of them became permanent fixtures in the park. The Spanish Colonial style of architecture reminds visitors that California, as well as San Diego, was once owned by Spain.

## Balboa Park's Centennial continued

Considered a crown jewel of the city, Balboa Park is so large that it is home to nearly 20 museums showcasing the arts, history as well as natural history, the military, the sciences, sports and technology. Balboa Park includes the “world famous” San Diego Zoo. Not only is the zoo a zoological park full of animals, but it is also an impressive botanical garden in its own right featuring a forest of ferns and an orchid house.

While Balboa Park promotes its centennial throughout 2015, the House of Sweden and other houses -- known as “the international cottages” -- are celebrating 80 years of spreading peace, understanding and goodwill. In 1935 – decades before Walt Disney Co. coined the expression, “It’s a small world, after all,” -- a campus of houses representing different countries was built.



This “mini-United Nations” coincided with Balboa Park’s hosting the 1935 California Pacific International Exposition. Visitors that year included then U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt and his rival, the former President Herbert Hoover. The House of Sweden and the international cottages outlasted the League of Nations and consequently are older than the United Nations. Each Sunday a different house serves its traditional foods and entertains the public with music, folk-dancing, singing and other live performances.

Then as now, members of the House of Sweden included new immigrants, descendants of immigrants and people with a special interest in Swedish culture and history. Year-in, year-out, year-round, the house has sponsored Swedish language lessons and cultural presentations. It has close alliances with the Swedish Women’s Educational Association (SWEA), Svenska Skolan and the Swedish-American Chamber of Commerce.

## Balboa Park's Centennial continued

In 1997, 1998 and 1999, the House of Sweden underwent an extensive renovation financed by \$50,000 of donations and fundraising activities. The cottage's interior was painted to resemble the light and bright décor of Swedish artist Carl Larsson's home, which is a major tourist attraction in Sweden. Swedish retailer IKEA donated Pergo flooring to the project.

Each year the House of Sweden joins the houses of Denmark, Finland and Norway in hosting Nordic Night, an evening of dining "al fresco," which is a lovely tribute to Scandinavia. All the international cottages participate in Balboa Park's International Christmas Festival, also known as December Nights. The event kicks off with a traditional Swedish Saint Lucia "festival of lights" procession. Photographs of students wearing white robes and crowns of lighted candles have become an icon of Balboa Park's holiday season.

### Svenska Skolan

The past and the future converge at San Diego's Svenska Skolan, or Swedish School, which aims to keep cultural traditions alive through learning and language.

This year, as in previous years, the end of Svenska Skolan's academic year coincides with several festive performances of singing and dancing, including one at graduation and another on Swedish National Day, June 6.



The children's presence at the House of Sweden in San Diego's Balboa Park on Saturday June 6 at 4 p.m. is expected to brighten the annual ceremony of flag waving and adult speeches.

"It's important for me as a Swede to not have them (the children) forget where they're from," said Annette Skold, Svenska Skolan's new president. "It's a gift to our kids to keep up the language and to be bilingual. It's good for them to know the traditions, their roots and the culture."

A handful of Swedes started San Diego's Svenska Skolan in 1999, after learning about a similar school in Orange County.

Today San Diego's Svenska Skolan has about 100 students, who fall into the following groups: junibacken, one to three years old; bullerbyn, three to five years old; and saltkrakan, five years and older. They meet weekly at the Presbyterian Church in Solana Beach (120 Stevens Avenue).

## Svenska Skolan continued

The students come from Swedish-speaking households in which at least one parent is a Swedish citizen. The school does not teach Swedish to beginners, rather it builds on the language the children know and use at home.

The youngest students meet for one hour on Wednesday mornings to learn about animals, colors and other kid-friendly topics. Lessons revolve around playing together, rhymes and songs. The two groups of older students meet on Mondays for two hours starting at 4:15 p.m.

The preschoolers' subjects include numbers, letters, shapes and other useful vocabulary. Singing, dancing and playing Swedish games are among the activities. The oldest students advance to reading and writing. They also learn about geography, science and history while continuing to sing, dance and play.

Svenska Skolan has eight teachers and several assistants. They incorporate Swedish customs and foods into celebrating Christmas, Easter, Swedish National Day and other holidays with the

children. Some of the students participate in the Saint Lucia procession, which launches Balboa Park's iconic International Christmas Festival in early December.

Svenska Skolan is a non-profit organization operating on donations from individuals and other organizations such as the Swedish Women's Educational Association (SWEA), grants, fees from parents and financial support from the Swedish government. "It's also based on volunteering and helping out," said Amanda Cockle, the head teacher.

"In the beginning, you spend time with other parents," Cockle said, recalling 2010, when she first moved to San Diego with two toddlers. A year later, she became a teacher. "It's important that my children see other kids who speak Swedish, too."

Although Svenska Skolan started very small in 1999, it has come full circle, Cockle said, noting that one of the first students not only became a teacher at the school but also is now studying at a university in Sweden.



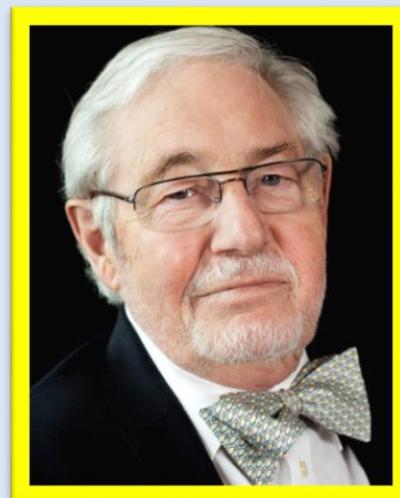
## Bob Swanson's Contribution: Swedish Innovation

With the passage of time, we all experience dental problems which are typically solved by the use of fillings, crowns or root canals. Eventually the problems result in the loss of one or more teeth. Past generations handled the loss with bridges or, in extreme cases, a complete set of false teeth which didn't work too well. Attempts to replace individual teeth by a prosthetic tooth anchored to the jaw were generally unsuccessful.

In 1952, a professor of orthopedic surgery in Sweden was doing research on bone healing. Part of the research involved attaching optical equipment to the bone for continuous observation without the need for surgery beyond the initial installation. This called for materials which were strong, light, and would not corrode or otherwise react inside the body of the subject, in this case a rabbit.

The best choice turned out to be titanium. When the time came to remove the apparatus, the professor found that the bone had fused onto the titanium and they could not be separated. The titanium-bone fusion came to be known as osseointegration. The professor, Dr. Per-Ingmar Brånemark, realized the importance of this discovery and quickly moved to test osseointegration on humans. For years, Dr. Brånemark's students could be identified by a small scar on their upper arms.

Like many scientific advances, Dr. Brånemark's discovery was met with disbelief. Medical journals rejected his papers, and applications for funding were turned down. It took almost 20 years before funding was provided by the U.S. National Institutes of Health, and the Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare approved the process of osseointegration for dental implants.



Dr. Brånemark's first titanium implant patient was Gösta Larsson, who had a cleft palate, jaw deformities and a toothless lower jaw. A set of prosthetic teeth supported by four implants served Larsson well for the remaining 40 years of his life.

The commercial manufacturing and distribution of Dr. Brånemark's titanium implant system is done by the Nobel Biocare Corporation. I can personally testify that my two titanium implants work very well. In addition to dental implants, titanium osseointegration has found many other applications in orthopedic surgery and in veterinary medicine.

Per-Ingmar Brånemark died on December 20, 2014 in Göteborg. He was 85 years old.