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Swedish Genealogical Society of Minnesota

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Swedish Genealogical Society of Minnesota

An active local society in one of the “Swedish” States!

The *Swedish Genealogical Society of Minnesota* (SGSM) started in 1983, and can thus in a few years celebrate its 30th anniversary. The society has a close connection to the *American Swedish Institute*, but moved last year for various reasons to the localities of the *Minnesota Genealogical Society* in South St. Paul.

SGSM has their library there, as well as the microfilms for the Swedish-American churches of Minnesota.

SGSM has meetings four times a year, and also publishes a quarterly newsletter, *Tidningen*, which has many useful articles. A past president was the late Phyllis Pladsen, well known for her *Genealogical Dictionary*.

The present president is Virginia Taylor, who has many dedicated volunteers, including Dee and Ray Kleinow, who work with the website and the program planning.

Last October SGSM organized a well-attended research seminar with lectures and one-on-one help from no less than 7 visiting Swedish genealogists on their premises.



A scene from the Fall Research Seminar, when the one-on-one sessions kept all the visiting Swedes busy. Photo: Dee and Ray Kleinow.



Tidningen

NEWSLETTER of the SWEDISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY of MINNESOTA

Bokband 13, Nummer 2 Summer 2009

Celebrate Midsommar !

Midsommar (midsommar) is the longest day of the year! The summers are short so this day is given to celebration and partying in Sweden and all of Scandinavia. The celebration begins with the raising of the midsommar pole. The tall pole crosses at the top and is decorated with greens and flowers. It is erected on Midsommar Eve with the music of fiddlers in their folk costumes. Swedes will decorate their cars and boats with birch greenery. Girls will make flower wreaths to wear on their heads. Potatoes with dill and pickled herring are the common food. At night, a person will pick seven different kinds of flowers to put under their pillow so they will dream of their future love.

Midsommar festivals are celebrated all over the world among the Swedish community and throughout the United States. The NYC Swedish Midsommar celebration in Battery Park, New York City, attracts some 3,000 to 5,000 people annually which makes it one of the largest celebrations after the ones held in Leksand and at the Skansen Park in Stockholm. The event is co-hosted by the Swedish Consulate in NYC and the Battery Park City Parks Conservancy. Swedish Midsommar is also celebrated in other places with large Swedish and Scandinavian populations, such as Chicago, Minneapolis, and Lindbergh Kansas. The Swedish language village (summer camp) Sjöland, run by Concordia College in Minnesota, also celebrates its own Midsommar festivities.

Geneva, Illinois, hosts a Swedish Day (Svenskarnas Dag) festival on the third Sunday of June. The event, featuring may pole-raising, dancing, and presentation of an authentic Viking ship, dates back to 1911. The Seattle, Washington neighborhood of Fremont puts on a large Summer Solstice Parade and Pageant, which for many years has controversially included painted naked cyclists. In St. Edwards Park in Kenmore, Washington, the Skandia Folklife Society hosts Midsommarfest, which includes a Scandinavian solstice pole.

A solstice celebration is held on Capser Mountain in Wyoming at Crismson Dawn park. Crismson Dawn is known in the area for the great stories of mythical creatures and people that live on Capser Mountain. The celebration is attended by many people from the community, and from around the country. A large bonfire is held and all are invited to throw a handful of red dirt into the fire in hopes that they get their wish granted.

Among the celebrations in Minnesota this year are the American Swedish Institute's Midsommar on June 20th; Swedish Heritage Day (Svenskarnas Dag) in Minneapolis on June 25th; and the Gammelgården Museum's Midsommar Dag in Scandia on June 27 (photo below from last year). See page 2 for more details on the Minnesota events.



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October 2009 Research Seminar, from left: Dee Kleinow, Fran Hillier, Elisabeth Thorsell, Anna-Lena Hultman, Jan Eurenus, Charlotte Börjesson, Kathy Meade, Anneli Andersson, Virginia Taylor, and Olof Cronberg. Photo: Ray Kleinow.

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