



# Swedish Center News

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Swedish Cultural Center . Seattle . Washington

## Our Mission

To promote better understanding between the United States and the Nordic countries, with emphasis on Sweden, and to perpetuate Nordic culture and traditions through the teaching, observance, practice and celebration of this culture and its traditions.

**HAPPY HOURS** took off in popularity once the lounge was opened for business every Friday evening. In a recent photo, Julie Albright, Kaylene Robbins, Judy Cooper, Sig Hansen, Karl Larsson, and Kristine Leander enjoy a light-hearted moment in the bar.

**TALKIN' 'BOUT MY GENERATION:** Annalisa Brombach, the SCC's Lucia Bride 2008, gets a tip from her grandmother, Ruby Johnston—who served as the Swedish Club's Lucia Bride in 1952. The family was pleased that Annalisa got the honor, now that the Swedish Cultural Center has returned to sponsoring the annual Lucia Ball.

**THE 2008 AUCTION** was a great success. Here we see Ia Dübois and Ann-Charlotte (Lotta) Gavel Adams, both from the Scandinavian Studies Department at the University of Washington, and Inga Mai Barenthein enjoying the evening.

## What a Year!

**2008:** Oh, what a year it was! There have been other landmark years in our history. The Swedish Club was established in 1892, the current building was opened in 1961, women became full members in 1989, and the name was changed to Swedish Cultural Center in 1998 when it switched from a private club to a 501(c)(3) charitable organization. But 2008 must be added as a milestone year with a host of changes and growth.



The paradox of many successful transformations is that they're often a return to an earlier time *with changes*. As Henry Buckle, 19th-century British historian, observed: "Every great reform which has been effected has consisted, not in doing something new, but in undoing something old." Much of 2008's progress was aimed at regaining members by reinstating past programs. (In the 1970s, the Swedish Club had more than 7,000 members.)

The changes actually started in 2006 and grew out of the Board's twice-monthly strategic planning meetings. The planners determined that the lounge was popular and the furniture should revert to the original style of 1960s modern. An architectural expert gave a lecture and Happy Hour attendees had a "sit-in" to determine their favorite chairs: Danish modern Arne Jacobsen furniture. The strategic planning committee also wished for a marketing director, and when Kristine Leander said she was available, they hired her.

Johanna Henriksson, a public relations student at Mid-Sweden University in Sundsvall, came as an intern. The club's second annual auction, chaired by Board Member Pam Madden, was both successful and fun. The library had been neglected, so volunteers spent days organizing books. The *Seattle Weekly's* "Best of Seattle" award went to the Center for "The Best Reason for Ballardites to Reconsider Their Scandinavian Allegiances." We went back to holding a holiday bazaar, but combined it with the Danish community, which

had outgrown its facility. The Board's building committee determined that the lobby needed opening up, so they restored it to how it looked a decade ago. Listening to younger members who *loved* the bar and its million-dollar view, the Board stepped up the bimonthly Happy Hours to every Friday evening. Board Member Anna

Anderson took on the role of Happy Hour Chair (hey, it's a hard job and someone has to do it!) with "standing-room-only" results. Listening to older members who pined over a restaurant, the Board also took a small step and created the every-Friday Kafé with *riktig svensk mat*. How old-fashioned is that? Hang on to your hats as we move forward with even more successful programs from the past.













