

Preserving the heritage

Swedes in Michigan settle in Farmington Hills

By LORRAINE McCLISH

Herring breakfasts and steamed codfish dinners, Noel Night with lutfisk, Scandinavian music, dance, skills, traditions and crafts are preserved and fostered by members of The Swedish Club.

Members number about 350 strong, stemming from the first Swedish immigrants who began arriving in Michigan's Upper Peninsula in 1849.

"We're scattered throughout the metropolitan area now," said Eric Johnson, a Bloomfield Hills resident whose position as president of the group has made him overseer of building plans for a new base of operations in Farmington Hills.

All efforts are geared now towards the Swedish Cultural Center that will make room for expanded activities on a scenic two acre ravine site on Freedom Road, west of Orchard Lake.

"We'll have our own rehearsal hall, room for folk dance lessons, language lessons, gymnastics," Johnson said, adding that he hoped the new building

would prove incentive to keep the membership chairman busy.

Muriel Schedin, a Southfield resident, stands ready to take membership inquiries at any time by calling her at 557-4058.

THE SWEDISH Club stemmed out of three groups who felt the need of unification: The Arpi Swedish Male Chorus, the Arpi Ladies Auxiliary (to the male chorus) and the Scandia Women's Chorus.

Of these only the male chorus was loosely affiliated with any national group, the American Union of Swedish Singers.

"That was only because they felt the need for kinship with others of Scandinavian heritage, which is the same kinship and camaraderie our club offers," Johnson said.

These are all now sponsored by The Swedish Club and all donate heavily from their individual fund-raisers towards the goal of seeing The Swedish

Cultural Center completed before the end of 1980.

"The center will be one more incentive for members to gather in addition to regular meetings," said Ebba Slomeana welding a pair of asbestos mittens.

The Redford Township resident explained her gloves as necessary for maneuvering large and hot trays carrying fresh-frozen fish delicacies from Sweden for the group's herring breakfasts and codfish dinners.

SUNDAY BREAKFASTS are served at noon and Sunday dinners are served at 3 p.m., both in The Finnish Cultural Center, 32500 Eight Mile Road, in Farmington, which is The Swedish Club's temporary home.

The meals serve a two-fold purpose. They are fund-raisers for the building program and at the same time dovetail into the group's purpose of perpetuating and sharing the Scandinavian culture. Dinner is accompanied with Swedish music and dancing.

Meanwhile, the Scandia Women's Chorus stages an annual Cabaret Concert every June, in addition to a year round schedule of choral presentations.

The Swedish Male Chorus entertains audiences throughout the U.S., Canada and Sweden.

It's ladies auxiliary sponsors one big bazaar a year offering Scandinavian imports, native foods and crafts.

The first bazaar given in this area, in the pre-Christmas season of 1979, was described by Mrs. Slomeana as "a smashing success."

All response to requests for performances at fairs and ethnic events. The club as a whole has participated in the Detroit Ethnic Festivals since their inception in 1970.

Members are native-born Swedes, those of Scandinavian descent and their spouses.

CHAIRPERSONS on The Swedish Club's standing committee are Nils

Nilsson of Livonia; Urho Kuusisto and Ms. Schedin, both of Southfield; Lillian Lagerkvist of Bloomfield Hills; Bror Nilsson and Mrs. Slomeana, both of

Redford Township; Jean Branzel of Farmington; Loretta Hamby of Westland; and Karl Holmberg of Birmingham.



EBBA SLOMEANA



ERIC JOHNSON

Farmington Observer

Suburban Life

(F1B)



Diane Olson (at left) and Barbara Peterson both choose separates from Breckenridge from the large selection of mix and match line in Designs On You. Mrs. Olson chose a bright red crepe for her blouse with the two-

piece navy blue cruise wear. Mrs. Peterson chose the soft wrap skirt, one of three offered, for her wash and wear afternoon costume during the Welcome Wagon benefit. (Staff photo by Randy Bors)

Welcome Wagon hosts lunch, fashion show

By LORRAINE McCLISH

Designs On You will furnish the fashions and Carnaby Street will create the hardros for Farmington Welcome Wagon's luncheon and fashion show which begins at noon Saturday, Feb. 16, in Roman Terrace.

"All proceeds go to Reyes Syndrome of Michigan," said Martha Penzien, promoting the group's once-a-year fund raiser.

"Our purpose is to welcome new residents into the Farmington area, help them get acquainted with us and our activities and the community," she said. "The benefits are staged for us to put back something into the community."

Designs On You contribute to the benefit this year with spring clothes from the boutique at 35167 Grand River in Drakeshire Shopping Center.

"The suited look will be the big thing in the show," said Rosemary Prain who oversees the informal modeling staged by the shop every Thursday for the lunch crowd in Mountain Jack's.

Straight skirts, A-line or pleated, they are softer this spring, more feminine. We're heavy on mix and match here. Our customers can choose from two jackets, several skirts and pants in several lines of separates.

"You make your own designs here," she said, adding that the name of her shop reflects her philosophy in buying and serving Farmington area's residents.

Hems remain two inches below the knee. "That's the rule to follow this spring," Mrs. Prain said, "and we'll alter that hem for our customers without charge."

THE SPONSORING club welcomes all residents who have lived in Farmington or Farmington Hills less than a year to its every second Tuesday of the month meetings in Farmington Hills Community Library on 12 Mile Road.

In addition to regular monthly meetings, the group offers a host of activities, scheduled during the day as well as in the evening, "for just about any special interest," Mrs. Penzien said.

"One of the most important ones to me is the baby-sitting co-op," she said, explaining that members build up points by babysitting for others, to be cashed in when they need a sitter.

Off-shoot special-interest groups sponsored by the club are a ladies tennis and ladies bowling team; a book club, a gourmet group, ladies and couple's bridge sessions.

"In March we'll have a wine tasting party and in April a progressive dinner," Mrs. Penzien said.

President of the group is Janice Boone, who will take membership inquiries by calling her at 661-2358.

Tickets for the luncheon and fashion show are \$9.75 and are available by calling Diane Olson, 477-3960. Deadline for reservations is Monday, Feb. 11.

Gala auction planned for Mercy

The pound of the auctioneer's gavel will echo throughout Mercy Center on Saturday evening, March 1, when a fund-raising auction will take place for the benefit of Our Lady of Mercy High School in Farmington Hills.

Proceeds are designated for building improvements and repairs, as well as keeping tuition costs as low as possible.

Channel 7 Action News anchorman Bill Bonds will act as master of ceremonies for the evening

which starts at 6:30 p.m. with a silent auction on small ticket items.

Music will be furnished by the Matt Michaels Trio and the Wayne State University Jazz Ensemble. Cocktails and hors d'oeuvres will be served.

At 9 p.m. the oral auction will start for the higher priced, or unique gifts. Ernest DuMouchelle of DuMouchelle Galleries in Detroit will auction gifts ranging from a fully-restored antique car to a week at a cottage in Gaylor.

Other gifts are a week-long stay at a Florida villa, major items of furniture, antiques, golf clubs, works of art, a catered dinner in a home.

A sandwich board will open at 11 p.m.

Tickets are available by calling the school, 476-8020.

Mercy Center is at 28600 11 Mile Rd., between Middlebelt and Inster Roads.

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