

NORDSTJERNAN

Swedish News - from Sweden & America

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Vestkusten

NORDSTJERNAN

America's Oldest Swedish Newspaper

A moment in time, an historic change: We wanted to celebrate the historic occasion of a combined Vestkusten and Nordstjernan and chose this photo of a Princess cake, omitting candles since today marks the birth of a new generation of Swedish American publishing. We'll save the candle for next year. More on the prinsesstårta and this particular cake's Swedish American maker on page 4.

By Ulf Mårtensson / Publisher

With this issue of Nordstjernan and Vestkusten, we bring you something new and different: a combined, truly nation-wide newspaper—the largest independent Swedish-American periodical in the U.S. (Actually, competition is scarce these days.) This combined periodical will have a slightly different format, remain tabloid-size, is printed on better paper and on both coasts to avoid a postal delay. Indeed, the latter change will bring advantages to the growing national audiences of both newspapers.

You won't see our beautiful logos on the cover again. Although we will stick to the name Nordstjernan, we have changed the presentation of the name on page one. And as for everything else, it has changed or will change, too—with your continuous input and support,

no doubt for the better.

Nordstjernan, founded in 1872, will continue the legacy of Vestkusten, founded in 1866, covering much of what is happening along the Pacific coastline. This means that you will find more pages of news and features on relevant events, activities, people and traditions from the entire continent.

To continue local events coverage on the west coast—editorial coordinator is Anna Connell, a native of Lund, Sweden, who has lived with her family in LA since 1995—we are developing the means to do this in the best possible ways. (It will take some time before we have all things in place so please allow us a couple months to get settled.) To do that most successfully, we need to know what you need and want, so we need your input: We are setting up new services to make it easy for everyone to share thoughts and ideas as well as important events.

Now flush, Norway turns tables on Sweden

OSLO, Norway—Newswire

Long a poor cousin in Scandinavia, Norway has surpassed Sweden to become one of the richest countries in the world and a magnet for young Swedes ready to work hard to make a quick - and rather big - buck.

“When I was young, Swedes had whiter teeth, clearer skin, ABBA and Björn Borg. We had lots fish, and not much more,” said Thomas Hylland Eriksen, professor of social anthropology at the University of Oslo.

“Today, Swedes have been cut down to size,

and I would say that many Norwegians enjoy the fact that so many Swedes are here doing menial jobs.”

In the years following World War II, in which Norway had been occupied by Nazi Germany and Sweden had stayed neutral, leaving its industrial base intact, Sweden's economy grew at a breakneck speed. Workers came from all over Europe, and not least from Norway, to fill the factories, shipyards and constructions sites of the boom years.

But in the 1980s, Sweden's economy started to stumble and the vast welfare state that had

The way I see it

Vestkusten, just like Nordstjernan, is and always has been an institution.

Institutions have no owners, no principals other than their audiences, their constituents, who in essence ‘own’ them. That makes me more of a caretaker, just as Barbro Sachs Osher has been a devoted, hard-working caretaker of Vestkusten for so many years. We have equally hard-working help to accomplish the task of safeguarding these institutions, but they (the institutions) will in reality never be stronger than their audiences—the institutions' real principal, i.e., you, the reader and fellow Swede or Swedish American.

Things have changed drastically since your last issue and they will continue to

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been built up in the post-war years began to show cracks.

At the same time, the oil that Norway had found in the North Sea in the 1970s began to have a serious positive impact on the country's economic growth. By the early 1990s, just as Sweden was entering a deep recession, Norway's boom years began in earnest.

The Norwegian GDP per capita, which had stood at 80 percent of Sweden's for much of the post-war period, soared past it in 1991, and never looked back. In 2006, the aver-

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This Week, Events 18-21



To many, the highlight of December is the tradition of St. Lucia, the Queen of Light. Above, SWEA Boston's Lucia; info on the New England celebration, page 12, other Lucia events, on events pages—18-21.

Sweden, Page 2

A group of Swedish women have launched a campaign to fight for the right to go topless on beaches and in swimming pools, saying they have just as much right to go without clothes as men.

Dashboard, Page 7

Gender equality in Sweden—reality or are there flaws? Another day, another standard...

Lifestyle, Page 10

Julie Lindahl on becoming an environmental nut while living in Sweden. Or not.

Viewpoint, Page 17

Sweden - i.e., the Swedish system - has created a culture of dependency, writes Ulf Nilson in this week's column.



Sports, Page 22

The annual Soccer Gala awards ceremony was held Nov. 12 in Stockholm. Above: Linköping and National team duo Josefine Öqvist, left, and Caroline Seger arrive at the gala. Also; a Swede takes over as coach of the US National women's soccer team.

Nordstjernan, Page 8

This week we'll cover a brief history of Nordstjernan; for next issue: Vestkusten.



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Swedish News



Women fight for topless rights

A group of Swedish women have launched a campaign to fight for the right to go topless on beaches and in swimming pools, saying they have just as much right to go without clothes as men. Scandinavian feminists were outraged when two women were asked to cover up their breasts by a lifeguard at a public pool near Stockholm, the Daily Mail's Metro.co.uk web site reported. "If women are forced to wear a top, shouldn't men also have to?" said one of the women, 22-year-old Ragnhild Karlsson. Now women in southern Sweden have set up the Bara Bröst network, which translates as 'Just' or 'Bare' Breasts. "We want our breasts to be as normal and desexualized as men's, so that we too can pull off our shirts at football matches," said a spokeswoman for the group. The campaign's strategy has reportedly been a raging success, with members of Just Breasts jumping into swimming pools across the country wearing nothing more than bikini bottoms. The country's equal opportunities ombudsman will decide whether to take up the case later this year. Log on to voice an opinion: <http://barabrost.blogg.se>

Sweden to shut more embassies

STOCKHOLM, Sweden—The Swedish Foreign Ministry is planning to shut down four more of its embassies, Radio Sweden reported Nov. 15. It quoted an unconfirmed report as saying the embassies to be closed are in Vientiane in Laos, Manila in The Philippines, Colombo in Sri Lanka and Luanda in Angola. The reason for the closures is financial, a member of the Swedish parliament said. The Swedish Foreign Ministry is reshuffling its budget as it builds new embassies in Iraq, Afghanistan and Sudan. The Swedish government had earlier decided to phase out Sweden's embassies in Nicaragua and Botswana and the Swedish Consulates-General in Gdansk, Poland and Phuket, Thailand.

Museum admits Warhol pieces are fake

STOCKHOLM, Sweden—Six Brillo boxes in the Andy Warhol collection at a Swedish museum are fakes made in 1990, three years after the famed pop artist died, the museum said Nov. 15. Warhol created the original Brillo boxes, replicas of Brillo soap pad cartons, as part of a 1964 exhibition displaying artwork resembling supermarket products. The Moderna Museet in Stockholm said it investigated the authenticity of its six wooden Brillo boxes, donated by its former head, Pontus Hulten, in 1995, after the Swedish tabloid Expressen reported in June that Hulten—the head of the Modern Museum in Stockholm in the 1960s and of the Centre Pompidou in Paris in the 1970s and 1980s—had Swedish carpenters build 105 copies of the Warhol Brillo box for an exhibition in Russia in 1990.

Riksdag OKs abortions for foreigners

Foreign women will be allowed to have abortions in Sweden from January under changes to legislation the Riksdag, Sweden's parliament, passed Nov. 15. "The abortion law is going to be changed so that foreign women will be allowed to have abortions in Sweden," a statement from parliament said. Previous legislation restricted abortions to Swedish women or women living in Sweden. The amendments passed by a slim majority, with 134 in favor against 124 opposed and 91 deputies abstaining.

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East Meets West...

Continued from page 1

change. Change, as we all know, is neither good nor bad. It just is and becomes what we make of it. We live in fascinating times to make the best of change, a time when we can share our thoughts and actions easily. It's never been easier to communicate over country or state borders, over generations, groups or organizations—there truly is "...neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth," to use a relevant fraction of Rudyard Kipling's *Ballad of East and West* of 1895. We have the tools today to reach out and make our institution a forum for our interests, for ourselves, for what matters to us. We just have to raise the bar and look beyond what is today.

At no other point in time did the individual - person or organization - possess better means to communicate his or her opinion fully and freely to a large group of recipients.

Nordstjernan is no exception. In addition to offering the framework of summaries of Swedish and Swedish American news and a selection of columnists that together bring a variety of viewpoints to the pages, we request that

If

- you feel we should do something differently;
- you want to add something you feel is important for the whole community;
- someone or a group did something that should be shared with a much larger group, share it and contribute: DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.

Contributing events or photos

Vestkusten will never be the same, neither will Nordstjernan. They will together become what we make of them. We will hand you the tools to contribute, to communicate, both in the paper and on community pages over the internet. Some of those tools are already waiting for you: If you go to Upload Center at www.nordstjernan.com, you can already contribute something for our event listings or a photo with a caption from an upcoming or recent event or a special person.

Subscriber service

Many people today look to the Internet for their daily dose of information. To us, the Internet is also a way to communicate better with you. Your subscription can already be accessed through an interactive fulfillment system, carefully handled on a secure Web server, by using your account number and zip code. In the coming 2-3 months, we will further develop this interactive service to include special offers for you regular readers and paying subscribers for books, art, photography, and a limited number of products we feel rightly communicate our shared heritage and interests.

Privilege and obligation

The road ahead won't always be easy, but then again, happiness is really about being on the way. Everything we do, we do to make it easier for us to deliver a better publication to you, and to support the individuals and organizations in Swedish America. And at no point in history were the tools more appropriate or the times better than right now to make good

things happen for the preservation of updated traditions and the safeguarding of our heritage into the 21st century. Upholding this is indeed both our privilege and an obligation.

"One for all..."

There are many different kinds of interest groups in Swedish America. Nordstjernan – Vestkusten is there for all of us, not just the few. The new, expanded Nordstjernan is a forum for discussion. I have previously called Nordstjernan a living bulletin board for Swedish-America and one thing is certain: We will continue to increase our coverage of life in Sweden and Swedish-America today.

I don't believe there is such a thing as objective reporting. Only by covering an issue from many subjective angles can we arrive at an objective opinion. Opinions expressed in Nordstjernan are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the staff and management of Nordstjernan or Swedish News, Inc.

It is our wonderful fate to be just at the beginning, in all areas. "Most things still remain to be done—a glorious future!" is one of the phrases coined – and lived—by IKEA founder Ingvar Kamprad, a role model for us all. (To see the article from our latest interview with this super entrepreneur, go to www.nordicreach.com/articles/people/22/).

We hope you'll enjoy our upcoming changes. Let me know what you think, in a regular letter or via email, through ulf@nordstjernan.com.

Ulf Mårtensson
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