

AMERICAN SWEDISH HISTORICAL MUSEUM

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-- FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE --

LUCIA CELEBRATION BEGINS THE HOLIDAY SEASON AT THE AMERICAN SWEDISH HISTORICAL MUSEUM

The American Swedish Historical Museum will hold its annual Lucia Procession and *Julmarknad* (Christmas bazaar) on Saturday, December 6, 2008 from 12 noon to 4:30 p.m.

Light, warmth and music have been hallmarks of the Lucia celebration at ASHM since 1939. Each year families pour through the magnificent bronze doors of the museum to be greeted by the aroma of freshly baked pastries, meatball platters and strong Swedish coffee. Then there is just enough time to stroll through the Christmas bazaar or *Julmarknad*, where Swedish delicacies, crafts, decorations, and imported gifts may be purchased, before the musical entertainment begins.

At 1:30 pm and 3 pm the lights will dim and the doors will close for the duration of a performance of Swedish songs and dances, which are sure to warm your heart in the cold of winter. Children from toddlers to teens dressed in costume entertain, culminating with the procession of Lucia, wearing her crown of candles, surrounded by her white gowned attendants and star boys. **Admission is \$7 for adults, \$2 for children 7-12. Children 6 and under are free when accompanied by an adult.**

The Lucia tradition in Sweden was at first celebrated in the family home, with the eldest daughter serving special saffron buns and coffee to her parents while wearing a crown of candles and singing *Sankta Lucia* to the melody of a Neapolitan boat song. The more public, modern Lucia celebration in Sweden started in 1927 when a Swedish newspaper had its readers elect a Lucia for Stockholm. A combination of folklore, showbiz and beauty pageant, the event was a great success. Today in Sweden, Lucia is celebrated by towns and cities, in homes, schools and workplaces, marking a popular beginning to the holiday season.

The American Swedish Historical Museum is located in FDR Park at 1900 Pattison Avenue in South Philadelphia, near the Sports Complex. The Museum is easily accessible from Route 95 or 76 and has plenty of free parking. The Broad Street subway is within walking distance, and Septas's Route 17 bus can bring you right to the Museum.

For more information call 215-389-1776 or visit our website at www.americanswedish.org

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