


12-1-2006

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Recommended Citation

Peterson, Christina (2006) "News from the Swenson Center: Augustana Summer School in Sweden," *Swedish American Genealogist*: Vol. 26 : No. 4 , Article 4.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/swensonsag/vol26/iss4/4>

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News from the Swenson Center

Augustana Summer School in Sweden (ASSIS)

The most incredible two months of my life began on May 27th, 2006, as the Augustana Summer School in Sweden participants left the U.S. for Copenhagen en route to Göteborg! We arrived – some of us without luggage – in Grebbestad (in the province of Bohuslän) the next afternoon and soon learned that it was one of the coziest, most welcoming towns on Sweden’s west coast. The locals look forward to the Americans visiting every summer and are anxious and willing to speak Swedish once you show them that you are as well. The laid-back attitude of the people in this tiny fishing town makes you feel at home before you know it. I wish that *everything* could have been carefree

while staying in Grebbestad, but we were there to learn! And so classes would begin immediately on our first full day!

Even though classes were a bit extreme, they were not too overwhelming. We had a lot to learn in only five weeks! The professors, both from home and Grebbestad’s *folkhögskola*, were excited to be teaching and passed that eagerness on to the students. The daily schedule for each class level consisted of two intense morning classes separated by a 20 minute *kafferast*. We then had “conversational Swedish” with a wonderfully intriguing professor from the school who kept us on our toes! Toward the end of the five weeks, our 4th year group progressed

from mere dialogue to debating with one another and performing skits. To conclude our classes for the day, the four levels met in one room where we had *Kultur Klubben* with topics ranging from restaurant tipping (or lack thereof) in Sweden to the current political state of the nation. We were then let loose to have lunch (either at the cafeteria or in town) and get started on homework.

Afternoons were useful for exploring the area with friends on the trip, journaling, bike riding, and anything else we desired. In Sweden, everyone has the right to be out in the countryside (their right of public access, or *allemansrätten*) and for that we grew very grateful. We ransacked that town and its surrounding areas and



documented it with thousands of pictures. Our favorite spot was *Tjurpannan*, the nature reserve about 4 miles from Grebbestad. Hiking, swimming, playing in the waves (and on stormy days – probably not the smartest idea!), and rock climbing kept us going back to *Tjurpannan* every chance we found. Since the sun didn't even *begin* setting until after 11:30 p.m., we had plenty of sunlight for hours for journeying!

Weekends in Grebbestad were useful for traveling as a group or individually. One weekend we went together to the north in Oslo and another to the south in Göteborg. We took a trip to the Koster islands and rode bikes (no cars!) and climbed to its peak. Another weekend, many students took elaborate sequences of trains and buses to different towns

across Sweden to visit relatives – some of whom they had never met! After venturing out on our own and braving public transportation, we all made it back safely with memories to last a lifetime.

After five weeks on the west coast, we moved on to the east coast. We spent a week in Stockholm without any assignments except to *have fun!* We stayed in a hotel close to the subway with an unlimited riding pass to use throughout the week. We took boat tours through town, visited tons of indoor (and outdoor!) museums, saw the changing of the guard at the Royal Palace in Gamla Stan, rode out to Drottningholm Palace, and some of us even got a taste of the nightlife (thanks to an Augustana alumnus from Stockholm). Even though it was quite possibly the

busiest week of my life, we enjoyed the different feel of each island, ate at so many unique restaurants, and tasted all too much ice cream!

The things you learn about yourself, your attitude, and your overall outlook on life are drastically different after spending six weeks abroad and I would not have changed a thing about it. Last summer might have been the only chance for many of us to ever visit Sweden. That being the case, I could not be more thankful for the instructors we had, the friendships we formed, and the times that we shared.

Christina Peterson

Text & photo

Augustana College class of 2007



Augustana College Summer School in Sweden

Augustana has been sponsoring Augustana College Summer School in Sweden (ASSIS) for over fifteen years. The program features intensive study in either first-, second-, or third-year Swedish for five weeks at Grebbestads folkhögskola, located on the west coast of Sweden. The pro-

gram concludes as students spend a week in Sweden's capital, Stockholm.

Who can come on ASSIS?

Anyone with the desire to learn the language!

When is it?

About every two years. Classes start around the end of May and finish at the end of June. Around the first week of July, the group spends a week in Stockholm.

For more information, check the web site:

<http://www.augustana.edu/academics/scandinavian/department/assis.htm>