

# 100 YEARS OF SERVICE TO ACS

Two people who have been connected with The American Club of Sweden and its tributary organizations for more than five decades each are Jade Ekström and Gunnar Rasmussen, who were recently interviewed by Club Member Ron Pavellas.

## Jade Ekström

Jade has been an associate and Lifetime Member since the late 1940s and is a life member of the ACS.

Jade's youthful energy and carriage belies her 90 years. She has lived in many countries, including the USA. Her honeymoon with her Swedish husband was a 10-month automobile tour of the United States.

She joined ACS to maintain connection with Americans living in Sweden and to stay proficient in the language she had learned. She is also conversant in Spanish and French, having lived in France and Mexico.

Jade told ACS that there were, for many years, monthly meetings held at Store Sällskapet, offering educational and cultural presentations in English by speakers from America, Sweden and other countries. She would like to see the Club sponsor such events again.

When the Club had dedicated spaces at the Grand Hotel, members and spouses held frequent mixed bridge sessions and other informal activities there in which Jade participated, and some of which she organized.

She remembers, too, the celebrations of purely American events held in the Grand Hotel, such as Columbus Day, Washington's Birthday and 4th of July.

Jade's current participation in ACS's "5by11" initiative will help the Club to boost its membership to 500 by 2011.

## Gunnar Rasmussen

Gunnar is the President Emeritus of the ACS. He earned this honor serving for 18 years as Club President in several stints between 1963 and 1990.

He also served as chief spark plug for many charitable and social events, especially the annual golf tournament with which he was actively involved (read about the results of the 50th tournament elsewhere in this issue).

Born in Tromse, Norway, Gunnar joined the board of ACS in 1960 and first became President in 1961 while country manager with Pan American World Airways.

He remembers fondly the days when the Club had space at the Grand Hotel and then later at the then new Scandic Park Hotel. There are also many good memories of a close cooperation with Operakällaren. And while we take for granted that social clubs have both male and female members, this wasn't always the

case and Gunnar recalls the circumstances leading to the change: pressure from younger members and finally, notice from American companies and the US State Department that they would be forced to have employees drop their membership in clubs that didn't allow women! The first female members were welcomed into the Club in 1975 and

today the Club (including merged organizations that had accepted females before 1975) is roughly a third women, as is the Board of Directors.

The Club has a long history of collaboration with other clubs, continuing to this day. Gunnar recalls a fashion show at the Embassy with the International Womens Club and the ACS. July 4th celebrations were a mainstay and the Club paid for the 4th of July celebration sponsored by the Swedish-American Society (which later merged with the American Club).



"We had the top executives of many American companies as members until the USA passed some laws that caused many of them to return to the USA."—Gunnar Rasmussen

Gunnar extends his praise to the Club's current volunteer work with Stadsmission at Thanksgiving which reminds him of earlier Club support for the School for the Blind.

Through the years, Gunnar has received praise and thanks from numerous U.S. Ambassadors, to which the Board also adds its heartfelt appreciation for his many contributions to the Club.



"The annual Lucia events, with all the wonderful children, are my fondest memories of the club"  
Jade Ekström