

The Swedish-Egyptian Society

Your suggestions
and/or
contributions
to your bulletin
are welcome.
Thank you!

2005-11-15

Årgång 5, nummer 13

This is only the first bulletin for 2005, but also the last one with this layout.

True, we have spent a lot of time to refine the information provided on the site of the society, thus establishing a good basis for an even and continuous flow of information in both directions.

But we also know that not everybody has access to the Internet. Future bulletins will therefore be more frequent but more like a single A4 flyer.

Simpler, quicker and cheaper to produce these flyers will also be an excellent complement and update to the global information the site is intended to provide.

The new website is owned and run by the society and, of course, an email address is also available.

See also special info below.

WEBSITE AND EMAIL OF THE SOCIETY

The Swedish Egyptian Society (SES)
has now its own site and email address

www.swedegypt.se
ses@swedegypt.se

A major "face lift" and a global update were made and we recommend to visit and see by yourselves!

All emails addressed to the society will be received by the secretary and either answered by him or forwarded to a member of the board.

The Swedish Egyptian Society welcomes

AMB. SAMAH MOHAMED SOTOUHI

Ambassador of Egypt
to Sweden and Latvia.



Born 1950, the Ambassador obtained his Masters in Law (1977) before starting his diplomatic career.

Among his previous posts abroad, he has also been Ambassador to Finland.

Many of us have had the opportunity to meet him in conjunction with our recent

activity at Sällskapet on September 14th and both then and in subsequent meetings with representatives of the Society he stressed his resolve to strengthen and further develop the excellent relationship between Sweden and Egypt and even outlined specific projects which he ambitions to implement.

The board and the members of the Society wish to extend to Ambassador Sotouhi and his family a heartfelt welcome to Sweden and a pleasant and interesting stay with us.

THE MOST CELEBRATED SWEDE IN EGYPT?

Professor **Vivi Laurent-Täckholm**, who built the Botanical Institution at the Cairo University, certainly qualifies!

Born in 1898 in Stockholm she had time to travel extensively in the States and publish a best-seller before marrying Gunnar Täckholm in 1926 and joining him as the newly appointed Professor of Botany at the University of Cairo.

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SCHEDULED ACTIVITIES FALL 2005– WINTER 2006

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ACTIVITIES AUTUMN 2005 WINTER 2006

The following events/lectures are planned:

► NOVEMBER 16TH 2005

Lecturer: Mr Bror Olsson
Project Manager, SWECO
Title: **Preservation of the temples of
Luxor and Karnak**

Lecturer: Mr Sven-Erik Frick-Meijer
"Some personal reflections on Abou
Simbel, nearly four decades later"

Venue: Sällskapet

► JANUARY 27TH 2006

"Spaghetti opera", or CLASSICO, is a three meal course interspersed with a collection of well-known arias.

Venue: Reginateatern—also known as
"Stockholm's Opera Food House"
Drottningatan 71

See also enclosed flyer for reservations.

► MARCH 8TH, 2006

Lecturer: Mr Leif Hjärre
Title: The Great Discoveries in Egypt
From Napoleon to today

Venue: Sällskapet

A buffet-dinner will be arranged and detailed invitations will be mailed well ahead of time.

But you may wish to **book** the last two dates already **NOW!**



Cairo Opera House , front entrance

OPERA IN EGYPT

The famous Opera house has been through a lot over the years. It was initially built by Khedive Ismail in 1869 and was the first in the Middle East, Africa and Asia at the time.

Giusseppe Verdi was commissioned by Ismail Pasha, Khedive of Egypt and a great patron of the arts, to write an opera for the 1869 inauguration of the 1000 seat Théâtre de l'Opéra that he had built in Cairo.

Verdi wrote Aida in four months, but its premiere was delayed. Mariette, as well as the sets and costumes, were unable to get out of France in time for the inauguration, and it was Verdi's Rigoletto that inaugurated the Opera House on November 1, 1869.

However, as its world premiere in Cairo on December 24th 1871, Aida was a sensational success. It received a triumphant reception at its premiere that has made it a favorite here in Cairo ever since, as it also does throughout the world to this day

This cultural beacon quickly gained international recognition and started to host various artists from all over the world as well as theatrical performances by Youssef Wahbi and Naguib Al-Rihani troupes as well as other great stars.

The operatic and symphonic arts and ballets also had their share of shows here. But the Opera House had a terrible fate awaiting it. It was burned to the ground in 1971 with all its art documents and treasures.

But Egypt could not do without such a center. A new one was built after 17 years with the help of a Japanese grant.

You will find a restaurant and breathtaking interior gardens. In addition to a library that includes over 697 books in Arabic and 2,317 in foreign languages about different topics and recordings of most performances held there, the grounds also house a museum and art gallery.

The Cairo Opera House was inaugurated on October 10th, 1988, following a void, which lasted 17 years since the burning down of Cairo's first and World famous Opera House in 1971.

It stands on the Gezira Island surrounded by other cultural centers: Museum of Egyptian Modern Arts, Nile Gallery, the Plastic Artists' Association and El Hangar Theatre.

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OPERA IN EGYPT

(Cont' from page 2)

The Cairo Opera House is more than just a place, where concerts and music festivals are held. The Opera Compound includes different places you can go to, if you want to relax after a live concert or just want to hang out.



The Cairo Opera House provides the most comprehensive technical and stage facilities in Africa and the Middle East.

In addition to presenting the various cultures of the world, it also presents and promotes the performing companies affiliated with the National Cultural Center: Cairo Symphony Orchestra, Cairo Ballet Company, Cairo Opera Company, Cairo Opera Choir, Arabic Music Ensemble, National Arabic Music Ensemble and the Cairo Opera Children's Choir.



Special programs and training classes exist for young talented performers in all the artistic fields.

Extract from various sites on Egypt.

For additional info on the Cairo Opera House, see <http://www.egyptguide.net/opera/>

Vivi Laurent-Täckholm(

Cont'd from page 1)

But this achievement was the “obvious” and says little of the personal touch she gave to a job that became a call.

I have had the privilege to visit her in 1960, and during the short time this visit lasted, witnessed a continuous stream of students, knocking unannounced at her door; some just to say hello, others to help with various household chores and yet others to seek help on a given problem, personal or academic. Her home was like a second home for all her children as she called her students.

A full time occupation, 24/7 as we would say today, which should leave time for little else. But not in her case!

She called herself “the world’s greatest beggar” securing phenomenal donations for the University of Cairo.

Her novels and textbooks, Faraohs Blomster, Student’s flora of Egypt, to name only these, and numerous essays are equally famous among the general reader and the scholar. She helped popularize Egypt for generations of Swedes with her popular travel books.

She was awarded the Linné medal in gold by the Swedish Academy of Science and later made Doctor honoris causa by the University of Stockholm. When she died in 1978, public tributes were paid both in Sweden and in Egypt

A digest by Sami A. Baladi

EGYPT'S FIRST LADIES

Starting with Ismail's first-born son, Mohammed Tewfik Pasha, monogamy became the rule rather than the exception for Egypt's heads of state. The role of First Lady was thus introduced in a Middle East increasingly influenced by Western culture.

Princess Amina Ilhami (right), is the first of 12 women who in varying degrees influenced Egypt's destiny.



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EGYPT'S FIRST LADIES

(Cont'd from page 3)

First Ladies Jehan Raouf and Suzanne Sabet came from educated middle-class backgrounds. Both sets of parents were carbon copies of each other. Their paternal grandfathers came from Upper Egypt, where Ahmed Raouf was a Public Health Department director and Mustafa Saleh owned property.



Both fathers pursued medical studies in the United Kingdom, while in their twenties, before returning to Egypt with British brides. As though by coincidence both these brides were born in 1904 and their respective fathers were called Charles Henry!

In Egypt the Raoufs and the Sabet raised their off-springs in non-traditional style, giving their respective daughters the benefits of a first rate Western education.

After guaranteeing a first-class education for their respective children, both First Ladies sought and obtained university degrees. At 46



Jehan received a much-publicized degree in Arabic Literature from Cairo University, where she eventually lectured. At about the same period Suzanne Mubarak enrolled at the American University in Cairo, where she obtained a BA in Political Science (class of '77), supplementing it with a Masters in 1982.

The above is an extract from the article by Samir Raafat (March 2005)
 "WOMEN WHOSE HUSBANDS RULED THE REALM – EGYPT'S FIRST LADIES
 For the full article, please see <http://www.egy.com/historica/egyptianconsorts.shtml>

**29TH CAIRO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
 C I F F**

NOVEMBER 29TH—DECEMBER 9TH 2005

"...Despite all the challenges facing the Arab world, the Cairo Film Festival is our way of forging links and building bridges through the language of art and the medium of cinema..."

**Chérif El Shoubashy
 President of the Festival**

In 1975, after a visit to the Berlin Film Festival the late writer-critic Kamal El Mallakh and a group of like-minded cinema critics wondered why such a world-class festival couldn't take place in Egypt. After much hard work and planning, the first ever Cairo International Film Festival was launched in 1976. The first film festival in the entire Middle Eastern region, it became another reason to put Cairo on the map as an avant-garde leader of cinema in the Arab World.

Today the Cairo International Film Festival is ranked by the International Federation of Film Producers' Associations (FIAPF) as one of 11 festivals worldwide with a top class rating.

The Cairo Opera House, located on the picturesque island of El-Ghezira in the middle of the Nile River, will be the home of the festival for the seventh year running.

*For more information, please visit:
<http://www.cairofilmfest.com/>*

 * **MEMBER'S PIN** *
 * A special "Member's pin", featuring the *
 * Swedish and Egyptian flags is now *
 * available. *
 * It can be ordered from the secretary *
 * and costs SEK 50:- , postage included *
 * *

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