

## Not a Member Yet ? Join Us !

Membership is only \$15 per year.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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@ \$15 each adult = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please send check to our treasurer >>>

### Scandinavian Club Contacts

President Eva Slawson 534-2230  
Treasurer Kris Johnson 836-7637

**Scandinavian-Club@hotmail.com**

## RESERVATION FOR JANUARY

Clubhouse at Village at River Place, Friday, January 21, 2011.

Number of people: \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$8.00 each = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to: **SCANDINAVIAN CLUB OF TOLEDO** and mail to:

**KRIS JOHNSON, PO Box 355, WILLISTON, OH 43468**

**Reservations with checks must be in by Wednesday, Jan. 19.**

### ADDITIONAL RESERVATION INFORMATION

After dropping your check in the mail using the form above, you may also call our treasurer at **419-836-7637** or email at **cjohnson143@woh.rr.com** to confirm your reservation if you feel the need to do so. Please leave your name and the number attending.

## Finnish'd Smoking

Finland is the first country in the world to write into its legislation that it intends to end all tobacco use through law. The first in a series of laws is now in place.

The possession of tobacco products by people under the age of 18 is completely banned, and it has become a criminal offense, punishable by up to six months in prison, to buy or give minors tobacco. The new legislation also makes it illegal to buy or sell tobacco products over the internet, to use tobacco in places frequented by minors, or smoke in spectator stands for all outdoor events.

In 2012, it will become illegal to display tobacco products in stores, and in 2015 cigarette vending machines will be banned.

—from *Scandinavian Press*, winter 2011.

### *What Crisis?*

After a temporary drop during the financial crisis, the prices of apartments in central Stockholm are continuing to rise. According to statistics from mortgage lender SBAB, in September the average price per square meter for a three-room apartment was SEK 56,152. Five years ago the comparative price was SEK 33,700 which means that prices have risen by 67% since 2005.

And there is no shortage of buyers, not even for an apartment that has a square meter price of SEK 173,160. An apartment on Strandvägen, with one of Stockholm's most exclusive addresses, has a listing price of SEK 80 million, the highest price ever recorded for an apartment in Sweden.

So, what do you get for that kind of money? 462 square meters of luxury. The apartment has 15 rooms and a fantastic view over Djurgården and Saltsjön.

—from *Swedish Press*, December 2010.

## EQUALITY

The World Economic Forum ranks 134 nations on how equitably income, resources and opportunities are distributed between the sexes. The WEF's annual gender gap index ranked **Iceland, Norway, Finland** and **Sweden** at the top, with **Denmark** ranking 7th. Nordic countries have some of the highest labor force participation rates in the world and lowest salary gaps while "women have abundant opportunities to rise to positions of leadership," the report says. They also have "higher and rising birth rates occurring simultaneously with high female workforce participation," compared to other rich countries such as Germany, Japan, Italy and Spain. "The Nordic experience points to fewer problems with aging in the future, as well as higher labor activity and a more robust economy," says the WEF report.

—from *Scandinavian Press*, winter 2011.



## The 'American Dream' is actually Swedish

While U.S. voters shunned the Democratic Party's traditionally redistributive policies in November's mid-term elections, **most Americans actually prefer a wealth distribution model similar to Sweden's.**

Forget the socialist-bashing rhetoric and reverence for the filthy rich. When it comes to wealth distribution, Americans — even Republicans — would really rather live somewhere like Sweden.

According to a study by researchers at Harvard and Duke universities, **Americans believe US society is much more equal than it really is**, and want it to be even fairer. Business school professors Michael Norton and Dan Ariely asked 5,522 Americans about US wealth distribution and how it should look if things could be changed. "Respondents vastly underestimated the actual level of wealth inequality in the United States," their study shows, "believing that the wealthiest quintile (20 percent) held about 59 percent of the wealth when the actual number is closer to 84 percent."

Studies show current US wealth inequality is near record highs, with the top one percent of Americans estimated to hold around 50 percent of the nation's wealth. According to Norton and Ariely this tops "even the levels seen just before the Great Depression in the roaring 1920s."

But when respondents were asked how they would like the United States to look, they picked "wealth distributions that were far more equitable than even their erroneously low estimates of the actual distribution." In a blind test, about 92% of respondents said they preferred a model closer to Sweden's wealth distribution to that seen in the United States.

The study's authors also reported a "surprising level of consensus" among different groups, with 92% of Republican voters backing the Swedish model versus

93.5% of Democratic voters, with the Richest and Poorest groups also voting along similar lines. "All demographic groups — even those not usually associated with wealth redistribution such as Republicans and the wealthy — desired a more equal distribution of wealth than the status quo." On average the top quintile (20 percent) of earners were perceived as holding just 32% of wealth — much less than the 84% in reality.

But anyone hoping this augurs well for a revolution will be disappointed. Even if Americans become more aware of the wealth gap that exists, Norton and Ariely suggest they may misplace faith in the "American Dream" to correct it.

"Just as people have erroneous beliefs about the actual level of wealth inequality, they may also hold overly optimistic beliefs about opportunities for social mobility in the United States — beliefs which in turn may drive support for unequal distributions of wealth."

Disagreements about the causes of inequality may also drown out the consensus. The authors also suggest there is a gap between what people would like to see and the policies they are willing to support to get there.

The authors also note that while more equal than the wealth distribution in the United States, Sweden's wealth distribution is still extremely top heavy.

The study is to be published in the journal "Perspectives on Psychological Science".

by **Andrew Beatty of AFP / The Local**

AFP/The Local: Swedens News in English  
<http://www.thelocal.se/30008/20101103/>  
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Download and read the entire study at  
<http://www.people.hbs.edu/mnorton/norton%20ariely%20in%20press.pdf>