



Sheila Romaine, president of the New Sweden Alliance.



New Sweden Alliance Board at work, l to r: Marja Kaisla, Finnish Americans of Delaware Valley; Gene and Mary McCoy, Sister Cities of Wilmington; Tracey Beck, American Swedish Historical Museum; Janet Anderson, New Sweden Centre; John Morton, Kalmar Nyckel Foundation; Barbara Palo, Delaware Valley Finnish Americans; Sally Bridwell, Swedish Colonial Society; Rebecca Wilson, Old Swedes Foundation.



Rebecca Wilson, one of many enthusiasts for Swedish history.



Kalmar Nyckel in February: in preparation for all the summer events.

# They Build New Sweden's Future

**I**s there still a future for New Sweden in Delaware, the colony officially discontinued in 1655, but whose memory we still celebrate?

If we ask everyone involved in the preparations for this year's anniversary, the answer is a unanimous "yes." A whole list of organizations has formed a joint association – the New Sweden Alliance – whose first goal is to arrange the 375th anniversary.

Sheila Romaine is its president, and she tells about the ambitions to pass along traditions and knowledge to coming generations.

## Flaws in teaching

"My children didn't learn anything about New Sweden in school. The history lectures in college, which included much about the colonization of America, didn't mention anything about Delaware. That is something we must work to change," Sheila asserts.

"We have close contact with the leaders of Wilmington so that they will

clean up the area around Old Swedes Church and Fort Christina Park, making it more pleasant and welcoming there, and we have good talks with the governor, Jack Markell, and his wife, Carla, who have Swedish roots. I believe that New Sweden as a part of our history will be paid more attention in the future," adds Sheila.

Sheila Romaine got an eye-opener in 2007 for this part of Swedish-American history when her son was going to join the crew of the Kalmar Nyckel; the following year her daughter did the same thing.

## Concentration on Grade 4

"Now we have started to develop a special curriculum aimed at pupils in 4th grade. It is based on role play under the conditions prevailing during the colonization. Since our world looks so different compared to the one in 1638, it is important for the children to understand that the Swedes who came weren't refugees. They came as business men. By creating role play we want to give the children knowledge about trade and economics – but also about the cultural differences existing

between the Swedes and the Native Americans," Sheila explains.

Sheila Romaine tells that all the organizations involved in the work with the anniversary celebration, taking place on May 11th, have their own emphases – but that New Sweden is the common denominator.

"Kalmar Nyckel is a bit different from the others. Between 400 and 500 people are involved in some way, and many – perhaps most of them – have no Swedish connections. They are in it because they are interested in boats and seamanship or naval history," Sheila comments and adds that they



make up a rather large group that will also gain knowledge about the Swedish colony in Delaware.

"Together we will build a bridge to the future," Sheila Romaine emphasizes.

Tommy Hellström



King Carl Gustaf planted this rhododendron at Old Swedes Church on his visit to New Sweden in the 1970's.



Crown Princess Victoria has planted a rhododendron at the same place. Will Estelle also do so in the future?