

Translated from Swedish  
by Dag and Karin Forssell

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## Greta Forssell

**Greta Forssell, née Leffler. Born September 28, 1908. Died September 15, 2004. Family and friends gathered for funeral services at Brevik church in Lidingö on October 8, 2004. Interment in the Bolstad cemetery is planned for early summer, 2005. Longtime resident of Gothenburg. After retiring, lived in Vänersborg and the final years in Lidingö, a suburb of Stockholm. Family roots and summer home in the Bolstad parish, county of Dalsland. Family and friends all across Sweden.**

Greta Forssell passed away on September 15, 2004, just two weeks before her 96th birthday on September 28. She faded away slowly during the last few months due to a terminal cancer, and received excellent care from the family, in-home services, and Advanced Medical Services in the Home, ASIH. She did not suffer, was as always in good spirits, and received visitors in her living room, conversing in English, up until two weeks before she passed on quietly in her own home, just the way she wanted.

Greta lived an unusually long, eventful and influential life.

**AT THE AGE OF TWELVE** she was hit by a car and brought to the children's hospital in Gothenburg. Here, head surgeon Sven Johansson carried out the first major liver operation in Sweden to save the girl's life. He was a bachelor and went home to his mother and said about the operation: "I have done all I can do, but I don't think she will survive the night." Greta heard this much later from her aunt, who was a close friend of doctor Johansson's mother. Nevertheless, she survived to read her own medical records at the children's hospital when she was there for a few days in 1940 for clinical experience. She had lost 400 ml of blood and the liver was tattered and almost torn in half.

She grew up and received a post-secondary education, as did all of her 16 female cousins, which was very unusual in the early 1900s. Greta was interested in the field of medicine, which had saved her, but the family was short of funds so she chose to become a dentist.

**FOLLOWING A FEW YEARS OF PRIVATE PRACTICE** she was employed by the National Dental Service in Gothenburg, where she specialized in the treatment of handicapped children. This practice made her acutely aware of four different problems: 1) Genetic injuries 2) Birth injuries 3) Malnutrition and 4) Infectious diseases. Greta was to become very influential in three of these four areas.

**BIRTH INJURIES:** Greta experienced the difference between a private clinic when she gave birth to her daughter Lena in 1936 and the public maternity hospital where she gave birth to her son Dag in 1940. In 1941 she submitted a critical letter to the editor of Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning, a Gothenburg daily paper, regarding the miserable general maternity care and risks to the children. A few days later, the physician who was responsible for maternity care in Gothenburg responded and agreed with her! Greta's article *Nativitet, humanitet och förlossningsvård* (Birth rate, Humanity, and Maternity Care), was published in *Social-Medicinsk Tidskrift* (Journal of Social Medicine) no 8, 1944 (www).

socialmedicinsktidskrift.se). Greta was expecting her third child, Margaretha, when the manuscript was due for review. She sent her husband Sigvard Forssell, in her stead (he was fully aware of the issues) to report to the journal on what information the article was based. Sigvard went on to formulate Ten Points for Maternity Care, which were posted on the walls of all birthing centers in Sweden. The widely read consumer magazine *Vi* no 32, 1944 published Greta's article Svenska mödrar får dålig BB-vård (Swedish Mothers Receive Poor Maternity Care). During the next few years, Swedish infant mortality declined from 4 to 1 percent.

**MALNUTRITION:** Greta joined her husband on a trip to Oslo one week in the summer of 1939. There, Greta “ran” right away up to the College of Dentistry to get in touch. She met the president, Dr. Guttorm Toverud, and his wife, pediatrician Dr. Kirsten Toverud, who ran a “Well-baby-and Mother” clinic for mothers and children in Oslo. Among other things, she taught how to make use of common weeds such as orache, nettles, and various wholesome plants. (<http://beckerexhibits.wustl.edu/mig/bios/toverud.html>) Greta was impressed that Dr. Toverud had managed to raise the birth weight for babies of unwed mothers to the same level as that of affluent mothers. Greta soaked up information on nutrition like a sponge during that week, something that her large family has tangibly experienced for many decades.

**BACK IN GOTHENBURG** Greta began lecturing on nutrition and what foods were healthy, invited by Harriet Lindahl, head of Gothenburg's day care centers, among others. “Iron occurs in nature in the form of color. Make sure that the vegetables and foods you serve have color!” Harriet bought the food and cooks prepared it to be served in the day care centers. Later, Harriet called Greta to report that one of the physicians who participated in the annual check-ups of school children in Gothenburg had called her up and asked: “What are you doing differently this year?” – “What do you mean?” – “Well, blood counts for the children are noticeably higher this year compared to last.”

In 1942, *Idun*, a major ladies magazine, published the first of a series of articles by Greta: Småbarnens konserverhylla – konservera med tanke på barnens behov (The Children's Pantry – canning to meet the needs of children).

**SIGVARD'S OCH GREAT'S HOUSEHOLD** grew to six children of their own plus maids, and, by the mid-1950s, care for three cousins as well. The firm of Nils W. Englund, a wholesaler of fruit, vegetables and potatoes, classified the household as a small grocery store and sold fruit and vegetables by the case to “Firma Fru Forssell” with a ten percent discount for good measure. The standard breakfast was fried blood pudding with home-made lingonberry jam. The acid in the jam helps release the iron in the blood pudding. There was always a supply of very wholesome food in the home, something that the large family, including numerous cousins and honorary children, have benefited from greatly. No doubt these healthy habits contributed to Greta's own vigor and health to the very end. When she was examined last summer, she proudly told the physician that she took no medication at all.

During her last years, Greta again attracted much attention. Sweden's largest daily newspaper, Dagens Nyheter (DN), wrote a nice article when Greta turned 90, and in 2002/2003 Greta made her last contributions regarding public health.

**INFECTIOUS DISEASES:** On November 7, 2002 Greta dominated the front page of DN with a portrait that later was selected as one of the year's 40 best pictures. The background was that a few years earlier *Lancet* had published a study by a British physician claiming that vaccinations cause autism. This authoritative article made many parents throughout Europe refuse to let their children be vaccinated. Danish researchers analyzed the medical records of more than half a million Danish children, of which 82 percent were vaccinated and 18 percent were not. The study showed that the proportion of autism was the same for both groups. When DN presented this study they interviewed Greta, who by now was one of the few people alive who had experience of how infectious diseases ravaged before vaccines arrived. In this article, Greta told of how she experienced that her classmates in school died or were crippled. In many cases, her handicapped patients were crippled by infectious diseases. Vaccinet en välsignelse (vaccines a blessing) was the caption. The journalist at DN, Gunilla Eldh, reported later that the Children's Clinic on the south side of Stockholm, among others, called with thanks for the article. It helped them with a real problem. (In 2004 *Lancet* officially retracted the article and apologized for publishing the study. They did not realize that the British physician had been commissioned to find the relationship he said he found). \*

One year later, at the age of 95, Greta spoke from the heart for more than ten minutes about her life experiences, standing, without a microphone, to an audience of 200 physicians and nurses during the "vaccination day" sponsored by the Swedish Institute for Infectious Disease Control. She received a standing ovation. The institute's magazine *Smittskydd* (Infectious Disease Control), no 5/2003, featured a spread with an article about Greta: Relief beyond description when vaccines arrived!

**PUBLISHER:** In 1996, when she was 87, Greta published a very nice children's book *The Tortoise that was Lost*. Reviews by the Swedish Library Services compared it to classic children's books by Elsa Beskow, but commercial success never materialized. The market is rather saturated and Greta and Sigvard were not up on marketing. The book is based on an event that happened to the family at their summer home Slätten (now a golf course) in 1954. Remaining copies are much appreciated by children, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

**GRETA IS MISSED BY A LARGE FAMILY** and numerous very good friends. She has set an example for many with her enthusiasm, joie de vivre, generosity and her will to fight for what she thought was right. Family and friends can find pictures of Greta at various ages at [www.forssell.com](http://www.forssell.com) under Greta och Sigvard.

**Dag Forssell**

\* See next page

# DAGENS NYHETER.

TORSDAG 7 NOVEMBER 2002

www.dn.se

LÖSNUMMERPRIS 12:- TEL: 08-738 10 00

## Priserna på hushållsel fortsätter att stiga

Elbolag varnar för fler kraftiga höjningar senare i vinter.

Ekonomi, C 1

## Svenska Bostäder vill ha 150 kronor mer för trea

Men nivån på hyreskraven varierar mellan olika delar av Stockholm.

Stockholm, A 8

## Länet lockar stockholmare

Stockholms stad tappar invånare till övriga Stockholms län bland annat på grund av bostadskrisen. Länet har den största folkökningen i Sverige.

Stockholm, A 10

## Persson vill prata EMU-omröstning

Under onsdagens partiledardebatt inbjöd statsminister Göran Persson de övriga partiledarna till överläggning den 29 november. Persson vill då diskutera en EMU-omröstning nästa år.

Politik, A 14

## USA lanserar resolution om Irak

USA presenterade på onsdagen ett omarbetat förslag till ny FN-resolution om Irak. Med största sannolikhet kommer säkerhetsrådet att rösta om resolutionen i morgon, fredag. Enligt texten får Irak "en sista chans".

Utrikes, A16

## Kultur

### Vietnamesisk mat bäst på video

Mat är bäst på video. Det trendriktiga vietnamesiska köket upptäcker man bäst i videoutiken. Filmer som "Doften av grön papaya" och "När solen står som högst" är laddade med måltidsförberedelser och imaginära aromer. Läs tredje delen av kulturredaktionens serie "Matkultur".

Kultur, B 1

### "Elektra" besöker flickornas fristad

Ibland är skolan den enda plats där unga flickor får lov att vistas utan uppsikt av far eller bröder. Därför skapades Projekt Elektra, som tar påsen "Elektra" till skolor och föreningar för att diskutera "hedersrelaterat förtryck". DN:s Pia Huss har sett föreställningen i Kurdiska riksförbundet i Nacka.

Kultur, B 3

## Ekonomi

### USA-ränta sänktes mer än väntat

Den amerikanska centralbanken Federal Reserve sänkte i går kväll styrrentan till rekordlåga 1,25 procent. Räntesänkningen var den tolfte på drygt ett år.

Ekonomi, C 1

### "Bäst om Anders Igel går frivilligt"

Att Anders Igel avgår frivilligt ur Telia Soneras styrelse vore den lösning som ger minst antal tappade ansikten. Det skriver DN:s börskrönikör Bengt Carlsson i en analys. Samtidigt står det klart att avtalet mellan Telia och Sonera strider mot EU:s idéer om att förbättra styrelsearbetet.

Ekonomi, C 2

## Sport

### Rosenkvist räddade IFK Göteborg

Tomas Rosenkvist blev IFK Göteborgs räddande ängel mot Frölunda. Rosenkvist är fostrad i Frölunda. I den första kvalmatchen gjorde han IFK Göteborgs kvitteringsmål till 1-1.

Sport, C 16

### Krafttag mot gendopning

Gendopning har skrivits in på nya dopningslistan som Internationella olympiska kommittén släppt. Ett bevis för att IOK fruktar ett missbruk av genetik.

Sport, C 16

## DN.Bostad

### Vad gör man åt galna grannar?

Vad kan man göra när grannen är galen och sprider skräck och sömnbrist i huset? När fallet bollas mellan hyresvärd, socialtjänst och polis. Problemet med psykiskt sjuka hyresgäster som stör grannarna har ökat märkbart sedan psykiatriveformen i mitten av 1990-talet.

Bostad, B 9

## Ledare

»Bo Lundgren säger sig vilja bli de arbetandes talesman och hämtar inspiration från farfar som var fackföreningsman.«



Vaccin en välsignelse. Barntandläkare Greta Forsell hade hand om alla särskolebarn i Göteborg och hon minns med fasa den tid då mässling och andra barnsjukdomar härjade. Hon har svårt att förstå dem som väljer att inte vaccinera sina barn.

FOTO: SARA MAC KEY

# Vaccin ger inte autism

Misstankarna om allvarliga risker med trippelvaccin för barn är ogrundade, visar stor studie.

DET KOMBINATIONSVACCIN mot mässling, påssjuka och röda hund som ges till barn orsakar inte autism visar den största undersökning som hittills gjorts i

ämnet. Över en halv miljon barn har ingått i den danska studien. Misstanken att MPR-vaccin skulle kunna orsaka autism väcktes av en brittisk barnläka-

re för fyra år sedan. Sedan dess har antalet barn som inte vaccinerats stigit kraftigt i Sverige. Barntandläkaren Greta Forsell, 94 år, minns hur det var

för, innan vaccinerarna kom. - Jag förstär inte hur folk vägar låta bli att vaccinera sina barn nu när möjligheten finns.

Sverige, A 6

## EU stöder privat vinimport

VARJE SVENSK SKA kunna importera sitt vin själv. Regeln att beställningar måste gå genom Svenska



Smak av Italien

Det hälsar på Sten Brunde eters

## Carlsson får spela alla roller

DE DAGLIGA INKÖPEN i livsmedelsaffären kan förvandlas till en allt annat än rutinmässig handling. Det skulle inte bli till en

## Uppsagd lurad på pensionen

BARBRÖ LINNÉR känner sig grundlurad. Under alla år fick lönekraven stå tillbaka för pen-

# Tre gripna för spioneri på Ericsson

Misstanke om brott mot rikets säkerhet. Militära radarsystem möjligt mål.

TRE SVENSKA medborgare har gripits för grovt spioneri mot telekomjätten Ericsson. Hemlig information ska ha lämnats till en utländsk underrättelsetjänst. Ericsson och Säpo är mycket förtagna om detaljerna kring den känsliga affären. De tre gripna, som är eller har varit anställda på Ericsson, är på sannolika skäl misstänkta för

grovt spioneri alternativt grovt företagsspioneri. Grovt spioneri är ett brott mot rikets säkerhet. Därför är det inte troligt att misstankarna handlar om att de ska ha lämnat ut uppgifter om Ericssons mobiltelefonsystem, utan det kan handla om att komma åt kunskap om Ericssons militära radarsystem.

Sverige, A 5

# Hög SL-chef får sparken

"Klottrets fiende nummer ett" misstänks för att ha skaffat sig egen vinning vid upphandling.

KJELL HULTMAN, trygghetsansvarig på SL, har fått sparken. Han kommer att polisanmälas av SL:s styrelse för troloshet mot huvudman och brott mot upphandlingsförfordningen. Det finns också misstanke om privatekonomisk vinning. Som anställd på SL:s kontraktshuset har Kjell Hultman tagit del av upphandlingen

av väktare och annan personal. Enligt uppgift har Kjell Hultman lämnat information som varit till skada för SL i det arbetet, och han har därmed kunnat göra egen ekonomisk vinning. Kjell Hultman har utmätts som "Klottrets fiende nummer ett". Han har vid flera tillfällen utsatts för hot.

Stockholm, A 9

## Upproret inom s sprider sig

DET INTERNA UPPRORET inom socialdemokratien fortsätter med nya turer. I dag angriper sju tunga socialdemokratiska kommunstyrelseordförande regeringens växande toppstyrning av kommunerna. Det grundlagsfästa kommunala självstyret har förvandlats till en kullis under Göran Perssons regeringstid, skriver de på DN Debatt.

Debatt, A 4

## "Anorexi beror på samhället"

DET ÄR INTE idrottens fel att sportstjärnor drabbas av anorexi. Samhällets ideal ligger bakom.

Det säger flera av landets största stjärnor med anledning av att Tina Nordlund tvingats sluta med fotbollen.

- Jag vet många tjejer som tycker att de är feta och gnäller på sig själva, säger friidrottens Carolina Klüft.

- Det är ju det förvånande kvinnoidéets fel, inte tjejernas.

Tina Nordlunds sjukdom innebär att svensk damidrott har tappat fyra av sina största profiler på ett år.

Sport, C 15

## Storseger för republikanerna

