

SWEDISH-AMERICAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Established to Record and Interpret the Swedish Presence in America

Newsletter / September 2017

Fall Meeting Features “Nordic Noir— with Emphasis on Swedish Crime Fiction”

On Saturday, October 21, the fall meeting of the Swedish-American Historical Society will take place in Chicago at the Swedish American Museum (5211 N. Clark Street), with a program highlighting the so-called “Nordic Invasion” of crime-writing that has gripped and delighted readers in recent decades. The speaker will be Mary Anderson Seeger, who has been a member of the Society for more than fifty years and currently serves on the board of directors. In 1965, she began teaching at Grand Valley State University in Allendale, Michigan, and soon became Academic Dean for Advising Resources and Special Programs, ultimately serving more than 22,000 students each year. Dr. Seeger retired



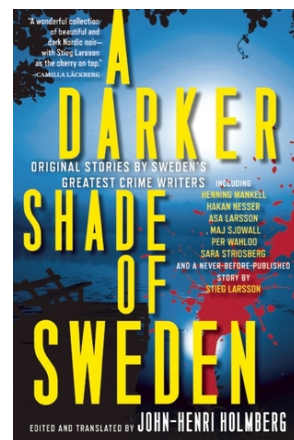
Mary Anderson Seeger

after forty years from her position in 2005, where she was also Professor of Modern Languages. She has been a tireless leader and advocate for programs that benefit young women. For a half-century, Mary has been a self-confessed “member of Sisters in Crime, a bibliographer, a professor, and an addicted reader.”

Through the years, Swedish writers Maj Sjöwall and Per Wahlöf, Henning Mankell, Kjell Erickson, Håkan Nesser, Stieg Larsson, Camilla Läckberg, and several others have become household names through their books and fictional characters. Larsson’s *Millenium* trilogy (2005-07) especially led to Swedish crime fiction becoming a worldwide phenomenon through television and movies. It is a genre written from a police point of view (often wise,

experienced, and beleaguered by life and work—such as Martin Beck and Kurt Wallander), which captures the pulse of Swedish society, one that is not always kind as it confronts social challenges, inequality, violence, and systemic injustice, seeking to uncover and redeem dark secrets and hidden hatreds.

Professor Seeger will review the background of this surging literature and suggest WHY and HOW and WHO we might read, looking at the current crop of Swedish authors. It will be a special evening, not to be missed, with good food from Tre Kronor, enjoyable conversation, a great presentation, and all the news of the Society as it prepares for its seventieth anniversary in 2018. Please see details of registration and cost on page 4.



Pre-Christmas “Holiday Lights” Tour to Sweden

SAHS board member Eloise Nelson and her husband LeRoy, along with Linda and Philip Stenberg, are once again leading a tour group to Sweden from November 30 to December 15, a special time of year with many concerts and events from the First Sunday of Advent through Lucia. The trip includes visits to Växjö, Örebro, Tällberg in Dalarna, and Uppsala. Back in Stockholm, the tour concludes with a beautiful December 13 Lucia pageant in the Immanuel Church. **For more information, phone (773) 259-1559.**

Swedish American Museum Raises New Water Tower

Since 1927, an old water tower on top of the Lind Hardware Store in the 5200 block of North Clark Street in Chicago's historic Andersonville neighborhood served as a familiar landmark. It was installed as part of the building's



original sprinkling system, a not uncommon sight throughout the city. Few remain. The building was purchased by the museum in 1987 and beautifully transformed into museum, exhibit, and public programming space. The tower became a symbol of the neighborhood in the mid-1990s when it was painted in the colors of the Swedish flag—a

nod of remembrance to the immigrants who forged the community in the 1880s, one that today is richly diverse and multiethnic. By 2014, the tower's condition and age condemned its viability. Instead of attempting costly repairs, the museum—its leadership and generous donors—raised about \$200,000 and hoisted, with great fanfare on August 8, a two-story steel and fiberglass replica to the roof of the museum. It looks suitably at home, as that vacant spot in the air has once again been filled with a familiar sight that anchors a neighborhood.

Minneapolis Newspaper Highlights Swedish Immigrant Hans Mattson

The *Minneapolis Star Tribune* recently ran a story featuring Swedish immigrant Hans Mattson (1832-1893). An early immigrant to the U.S. (1851), Mattson served as a captain (and later colonel) of a largely Swedish and Norwegian army unit (the Third Minnesota Regiment) that he had recruited for the Civil War. Later he served as an immigrant recruiter, both for a railroad company and also for the State. Mattson was also elected as Secretary of State in Minnesota, the first Swedish immigrant to be elected to a statewide office in that state. Mattson also served as the U.S. general counsel in India. Late in his life, Mattson wrote his autobiography; first in Swedish as *Minnen* (1890) and the following year in an English

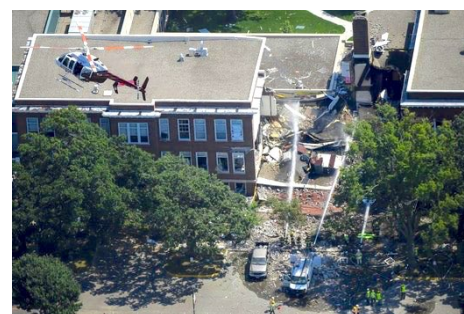


translation (*Reminiscences: The Story of an Immigrant*, 1891, available online at tinyurl.com/HansMattson). To read the recent article from the Minneapolis newspaper, see <http://www.startribune.com/minnesota-s-first-swedish-born-politician-elected-to-statewide-office-was-an-avid-recruiter-too/441819533/>.

Minnehaha Academy Suffers Natural Gas Explosion

Two staff members died in a natural gas explosion at Minnehaha Academy in south Minneapolis on August 2. Minnehaha Academy, which opened in 1913, is a well-respected private school affiliated with the Evangelical Covenant Church, the church denomination founded by Swedish immigrants that also operates North Park University in Chicago. The explosion occurred at the Upper School

for grades 9-12, but fortunately fall classes had not yet begun so the building was not filled with students. The two staff members who died were Ruth



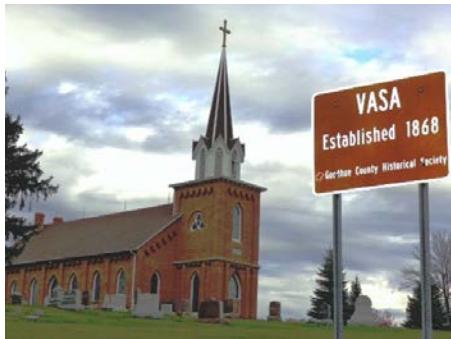
Berg, 47, the school receptionist who brought smiles from everyone throughout her seventeen years at the school, and John Carlson, 82, a Minnehaha Academy alumnus who worked part-time as a custodian long past his retirement because he loved the school. Nine others were injured in the blast. The Upper School will temporarily re-locate to the site of the former Brown Institute in Mendota Heights, Minnesota, about ten miles from Minnehaha Academy, during the reconstruction of the Upper School building.

New Project Documents and Supports Nordic Heritage Church Buildings

Engaging Artists and Communities to Preserve Nordic Heritage Churches, a project of Philadelphia-based Partners for Sacred Places, has been launched to establish the first broad inventory of churches in the upper Midwest begun by Swedes, Norwegians, Danes, Finns, and Icelanders. It will also identify two cohorts of up to sixteen churches from the inventory to sustain their presence in the community and preserve their buildings through grants by carrying out repair and restoration projects with local artists, craftspeople, and artisans.

The project, which covers Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, the Dakotas, and the upper peninsula of Michigan,

addresses the reality that many of the region's historic churches that exhibit the architectural styles and folk art traditions of the Nordic countries are increasingly at risk. Limited resources and changing demographics often make these buildings vulnerable, whether they still serve



r e l i g i o u s congregations or are now used for another nonprofit purpose in the community. The project has three primary purposes: first, to lift the profile of these churches by

developing and promoting a searchable inventory/database; second, advance the care and preservation of Nordic cultural heritage in the upper Midwest by *identifying, convening, and building the capacity of ten to sixteen historic churches*; and third, to support these cohort churches by engaging them with their communities and *providing grants to fund successful repair and restoration projects* with local artists and artisans.

Society president, Philip Anderson, is part of this project, serving as a resource for churches begun by Swedish Americans. For more on the organization, see www.sacredplaces.org

Member News

SASS Remembers H. Arnold Barton

Daron Olson, associate and book review editor of the Society's *Quarterly*, chaired a panel on 12 May 2017, at the annual meeting in Minneapolis of the Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Studies in honor of the late Professor Barton, former editor of the *Swedish-American Historical Quarterly* and an influential member of SASS. The panel consisted of five scholars who knew Arnold, his personal life, and his work as an historian: Dag Blanck, Odd Lovoll, Byron Nordstrom, Jennifer Eastman Attebery, and Olson—Arnold's final doctoral student. A lively conversation ensued, with audience participation. A chair among the panel members was intentionally unfilled in Arnold's memory.

Long-time SAHS executive board member Eric Lund honored by journalists

Chicago Daily News Alumnus Eric Lund, who died in January 2016, has been honored with induction into the Lincoln League of Journalists, administered by the executive board of the Illinois Associated Press Media

Editors. The award was created in 2000 for men and women "who have provided exemplary service to other journalists and to daily newspapers published in Illinois." Eric was nominated for the honor by Dennis Anderson, editor of the *Peoria Journal-Star* and one of Eric's former students at Columbia College Chicago. Previous recipients have included Roger Ebert. Accepting the award June 8 in Springfield from the organization, Eric's widow Grace Carlson Lund pointed out the wide range of his life and career.



Swedish-American Borderlands Workshop in Sigtuna, Sweden

Twenty-one scholars from Sweden, the United States, Germany, and Italy gathered on August 24-25 in the medieval town of Sigtuna (the oldest in Sweden) to discuss the implications of "Borderland Studies" in their respective disciplines, research, and writing. The meeting was held at *Sigtunastiftelsen*, a beautiful conference center founded in 1917 and well-suited to conversations in small groups and plenary sessions. "Borderlands," in this case,



may be defined as those points—whether geographic, national, intellectual, or cultural—where intersections occur that affect and shape relationships between Sweden and the U.S. in lasting ways.

Participants prepared shorter papers to be read together in preparation for discussions guided by three concerns:

first, how each would define the concept in a useful and valuable way for personal research; second, what the implications may be in terms of starting points, theories, analytical concepts, and results; and third, what the dimensions of personal research in various disciplines might say about the more general question of Swedish-American (or transatlantic) relations. The event was arranged through Uppsala University by long-time board member Dag Blanck and Adam Hjorthén, and included specialists in history, sociology, linguistics, anthropology, journalism, museums, architecture, media and religion. Society members Jennifer Attebery, Ulf Jonas Björk, and Philip Anderson participated. A future public conference is being planned for 2018.

Newsletter editor: Phil Anderson
Production: Grace Lund



THE SWEDISH-AMERICAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

invites you to a

FESTIVE FALL DINNER

featuring a program on Swedish Crime Fiction, "Nordic Noir,"
by Mary Seeger, SAHS board member

The evening will also include an informative report on the
Swedish-American Historical Society by Philip J. Anderson, Society president,
and a tribute to the late Eric Lund, most recently board member at-large.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2017, 5:30 P.M.

The Swedish American Museum
5211 N. Clark Street, Chicago, Illinois

■ 5:30 p.m. Reception ■ 6:00 p.m. Dinner ■ 7:00 p.m. Program

----- *DINNER MEETING RESERVATION* -----

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Please reserve _____ places at \$40.00 per person for the dinner and program on October 21.

Enclosed is my check for \$ _____.

Or charge my credit card: Visa Master Card _____ Exp. ____/____

Name(s) _____ Phone _____

Address _____ E-mail _____

City, State, Zip _____

Please respond by October 13.