

Swedish-American Historical Society

March 2008

Chisago County: May 2-4

Relive the Swedish emigrant era in Minnesota

The weekend of May 2-4, members of the Swedish-American Historical Society are invited to participate in two days of events celebrating the emigrant era in Minnesota.

Activities begin Friday afternoon, May 2, at the American Swedish Institute in Minneapolis with a tour of the 33-room, castle-like mansion and its many exhibits on Swedish emigration and culture.

Zorn paintings on exhibit

This will include a special exhibit of Swedish painter Anders Zorn's etchings and paintings: "From Peasants to Presidents: Sweden's Greatest Etcher." Zorn, a popular artist in America, painted three portraits of U.S. presidents along with many other subjects.

The evening at the institute will conclude with a dinner and a program with a speaker and entertainment illuminating the emigrant experience.

Saturday will find the group on a bus to "Moberg Country" in Chisago County. Vilhelm Moberg spent the summer of 1948 riding a bicycle, gathering information from descendants of early settlers in this area, and researching historical records.

A new life in America

He then wrote his renowned novels on Swedish immigration, *The Emigrants*, *Unto a Good Land*, *The Settlers*, and *The Last Letter Home*, describing the joys and sorrows of the fictional characters Karl Oskar and Kristina Nilsson, who left Småland for a new life in Chisago County.

Nov. 8: 60th Anniversary dinner

On Oct. 15, the Society will be 60 years old, and on Saturday night, Nov. 8, we will celebrate at an afternoon program and gala dinner at the Westmoreland Country Club in Skokie. Save the date! Details will be forthcoming.

In connection with the anniversary year, the Society is launching a special fund-raising drive to further build on its endowment and finance special projects. See article by President Philip Anderson on page 3.

Attractions the group will visit include the eleven-acre Gammelgården Museum, with four original immigrant log buildings (where lunch will be served), the Välkommen Hus with its Scandia Butik gift shop; the Karl Oskar House, "Nya Duvemåla," near Lindstrom, and the Center City Lutheran Church, with its museum and archive of pioneer days.

Will visit novel's cemetery

The group will also see the Glader Cemetery, which figures in the Moberg novels, as well as a statue of Karl Oskar and Kristina and a sculpture of Vilhelm Moberg on his bicycle.

Returning to Minneapolis, there will be a final dinner and wrap-up program.

Complete information and details about the hotel, where a block of rooms will be reserved, will be sent to SAHS members in March.

Newsletter editor: Eric Lund

AUSS archives now part of Brandel Library at NPU

The archives of the American Union of Swedish Singers is now housed in the Brandel Library of North Park University in Chicago along with the Society's Swedish-American Archives of Greater Chicago and several other archival collections.

The AUSS was formed during the Chicago Columbian Exposition in 1893. Although diminished in size, the AUSS is still active, with 26 choruses throughout the United States and over 600 active and inactive members.

Through a generous bequest by John Werner, the AUSS Cultural Heritage Foundation was formed in the mid-1980s with the goal of financially assisting active choruses and retaining and maintaining the historical data and memorabilia of the organization. The Foundation has a gallery in the Rockford Museum and Midway Village, where most of the historical data was stored.

For some time, it was clear that the Rockford facility was not a practical location in terms of accessibility and safe keeping of the collection. In this regard, Christina Persson, a Swedish archivist associated with the Emigrant Institute in Växjö, was engaged to sort and catalog a large part of the material, including protocol from choruses many of them now dissolved.

Once the material was cataloged and properly boxed in library-grade containers, the board began considering relocating it to a more suitable place.

In the fall of 2005, with the assistance and encouragement of Dean Charles Peterson of North Park University, a meeting was held with then archivist Steven Elde and an agreement reached to transfer the collection to

the archival facilities in the Brandel Library on the university campus in May of 2006. Copies of the AUSS publication *Musiktidning* dating from 1906 through the current issues (now published as part of the Swedish-American newspaper *Nordstjarnan*) are an important part of the collection.

The Swedish American Historical Society is supportive of the transfer, and ongoing negotiations will further develop the maintenance of the present material and expected future acquisitions.

--Donald Ahlm

Donald Ahlm, a member of the Society board of directors, is chair of the AUSS archives committee that arranged the transfer from Rockford to North Park.

Swedish-American Archives of Greater Chicago news and notes

Archivist Anne Jenner reported at the SAHS board meeting in November that recent users of the archives at North Park University included a researcher from Göttingen, Germany; another from the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, and an 8th grade student from North Park elementary school.

Collections researched included those of St. Ansgarius Church, American Daughters of Sweden, Swedish-American Athletic Association, Svithiod and *Svenska Amerikanaren* newspaper.

A \$10,000 grant from the Society is making it possible to pay an assistant to catalog the archives' extensive book collection. A volunteer, Erna Mungaini, is processing records from Nordens Söner and Vasa lodges.

Future goals, according to Jenner, include a complete inventory of Chicago Swedish-American newspapers, on microfilm or in digital versions.

SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY FUND-RAISING CAMPAIGN

During the fiftieth anniversary year in 1998, the Swedish-American Historical Society launched its first significant fund-raising effort to benefit the endowment that supports the programs and day-to-day work of the Society. Our members and friends responded with generosity and the goal of \$50,000 ("Fifty for Fifty") was exceeded. Our endowment has continued to grow during the past ten years with investment earnings as well as other gifts and bequests and now stands at \$473,453.

Once again the Society celebrates a significant anniversary by seeking gifts to benefit its five named endowment funds that support programs central to its ongoing mission. While yearly membership dues and generous year-end gifts comprise the majority of our budget revenue, the Society relies on interest from endowment to support and expand its archival and publishing programs, awards and grants, and general operation. The Society recognizes that continued growth of the endowment is crucial to sustaining these programs securing their future.

The Sixtieth Anniversary Fund-Raising Campaign encourages members and friends of the Swedish-American Historical Society to consider a generous gift to one or more of its named endowment funds. Future mailings will outline specific projects that gifts will enable, allowing donors to support aspects of the Society's mission close to their interests and passions by designating specific funds.

The five named endowment funds are as follows, and together honor persons important in the Society's history. Your gift will continue to honor them and their memory.

Selma Jacobson Archives Fund

Selma Jacobson was instrumental in establishing the Swedish-American Archives of Greater Chicago in the mid-1960s and contributed generously of her time and personal collections. The archives is housed in the Brandel Library of North Park University in Chicago and managed by archivist Anne Jenner. The fund supports its expanding work of preservation and making collections available to researchers and the public.

Vilas Johnson-Rolf Erickson Publications Fund

Vilas Johnson was a prime founder and first president of the Swedish Pioneer Historical Society in 1948 following the enormously successful Swedish Pioneer Centennial celebration that year. Rolf Erickson, circulation librarian at Northwestern University, inspired and encouraged the Society in many ways until his death in 1992. This fund supports the book projects of the Society and the *Swedish-American Historical Quarterly*, published since 1950 and edited by Byron Nordstrom.

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**Nils William and Dagmar Olsson
Research Fund**

The Olsson Fund awards grants to scholars who apply for assistance in carrying out their research in significant and promising areas of Swedish-American history. It honors founder Nils William Olsson, whose presence and influence in the Society and wider life of Swedish America are well known.

Franklin Scott Memorial Fund

Franklin Scott, longtime professor of history at Northwestern University, edited the *Quarterly* for many years and this fund competitively awards prizes to first-time contributors to the journal.

**His Royal Highness Prince Bertil
Heritage Fund**

This fund honors Prince Bertil, who was the royal representative of the Swedish crown during the Swedish Pioneer Centennial in 1948. This is the Society's principle endowment that supports its general work and administration. All new life memberships are placed in this fund.

We look forward to a successful and celebrative sixtieth anniversary year in 2008. Watch for further mailings publicizing events and providing details of specific projects that can benefit from the fund-raising campaign. We thank you for your generosity in advance.

Philip J. Anderson, President

Book notes

***New volumes by Attebery,
Granquist and Lovoll***

Recently published books by Society members, two dealing with western themes, include:

Up in the Rocky Mountains: Writing the Swedish Immigrant Experience, by Jennifer Eastman Attebery. Letters home from immigrants in Idaho and other western states to their families in Sweden.

The Augustana Story: Shaping Lutheran Identity in North America, by Mark Granquist. The first book since 1960 on the history of the Augustana Lutheran Church, founded by Swedish immigrants in 1860 and merged in 1962 with other Lutheran denominations.

Norwegians on the Prairie: Ethnicity and the Development of the Country Town, by Odd Lovoll. Winner among some 80 books of the Denver Public Library Caroline Bancroft History Prize for best book published in 2006 on the westward movement. About the towns of Benson, Madison and Starbuck on the western Minnesota frontier.

News of members

Anderson, Bostrom honored

Harry Anderson of the Swedish-American Historical Society of Milwaukee and Char Bostrom of the Twin Cities Folk Dancers were among nineteen recipients of Swedish Council of America Awards of Merit at the council's 35th anniversary dinner last year in Edina, MN.

After a year as interim dean, historian Jon Gjerde last year was named dean of the University of California at Berkeley College of Letters and Science.

Year-end gifts to Society total nearly \$7,500

Year-end 2007 gifts to the Society totaled \$7,420.95, led by a gift of stock from Barbara Graves of Olympia Fields, IL valued at \$3,090.95. There were 55 gifts in all, from:

Alida Anderson, Media, PA
Bob and Margie Anderson, Pontoosuc, IL
Harry Anderson, Milwaukee, WI
Philip J. Anderson, Chicago, IL
Rolf D. Anderson, La Plata, MD
Don Benson, Washington Island, WI
Devere Blomberg, Lindsborg, KS
Bernice Brandel, Northbrook, IL
Glen Brolander, Stillwater, MN
Dr. James Brorson, Hinsdale, IL
Jon Brorson, Naperville, IL
Ronald Carlson, Naperville, IL
Ann Dewey, Palatine, IL
Lori Dillman, Grand Rapids, MI
Jane Edgren, Manistee, MI
Ellen Engseth, Milwaukee, WI
Jim and Leanne Erickson, Plymouth, MN
Scott Erickson, Washington, DC
Victor Erickson, Bethesda, MD
Elsie Franzen, St. Paul, MN
Marvin Granath, Dassel, MN
Barbara Graves, Olympia Fields, IL
Nils Hasselmo, Tucson, AZ
Helen Hayden, Hazel Crest, IL
Marietta Hultgren, Cambridge, IL
Weldon Hultgren, New Hope, MN
Carl Johnson, Elk Grove Village, IL
Franklin Johnson, Rockford, IL
Ronald A. Johnson, Centerville, SD
Ronald J. Johnson, Madison, WI
Martha Johnson, Eden Prairie, MN
Duane Kullberg, Chicago, IL
Kerstin Lane, Chicago, IL
Bruce L. Larson, North Manico, MN
Ann Legreid, Warrensburg, MO
John and Patricia Lindholm, Fergus Falls,
MN
Lloyd Lofgren, Boise, ID

Dr. J. Lorimer Holm, Barre, VT
Eric Lund, Evanston, IL
Selma Halberg McLaughlin, Chesapeake
Point, VA
Arthur Mai, Sharon Springs, KS
Sylvia Meagher, Kalamazoo, MI
John R. Moore, Chicago, IL
Leroy and Eloise Nelson, Chicago, IL
Paula M. Nelson, Platteville, WI
Rolland G. Nelson, Duluth, MN
Byron Nordstrom, LeSueur, MN
Edgar Norman, Brookfield, WI
Arthur Olson, Jamestown, NY
Constance Pope, Hillsboro, OR
Kevin Proescholdt, Minneapolis, MN
Doris Sutor, Addison, IL
George Tesch, Olivia, MN
Reeves Thompson, Shelter Island
Heights, NY
Carolyn Weden, Frederic, WI

Thanks to all!

'Fairytale Romance'

SAHS office manager is married in Danish castle

Society office manager Maiken Jakobsson was married Aug. 11 to Christopher James MacIntosh Sparshott at Dronninglund Castle in northern Jutland, Denmark, celebrating with their families from England, Denmark and Sweden and many friends

They met in October 2006 when Christopher was filling in for North Park University history professor Kurt Peterson, who was in Sweden with the school's exchange program. Maiken and Christopher found they had much in common, including a European dry humor.

Following a reception in England given by Christopher's parents, they spent their honeymoon in a Scottish castle in Mull. Maiken describes their meeting, wedding and honeymoon as "truly a fairytale."

News of members

Kerstin Lane heads new consortium of museums

Chicago is home to more than two dozen ethnic museums and cultural centers, from American Indian to Swahili and including the Swedish-American Museum in the Andersonville neighborhood.

Society board member and former long-time Swedish museum director Kerstin Lane is organizer and president of a new consortium of these museums known as the Chicago Cultural Alliance. For more, see the web site, www.chicagoculturalalliance.org.

Last year, Kerstin, honorary Swedish consul general in Chicago, was presented with the Swedish Order of the Seraphim medal by King Carl XVI Gustaf at an awards ceremony in Stockholm.

Swedes in Canada project well into writing phase

Society board member Elinor Barr has completed more than a third of the chapters for "Swedes in Canada," a massive research project that has documented Canada Swedes from the Yukon Territory to Newfoundland during the years 1767 to 1914.

Newsletters chronicling the history of the project, including the latest one, are available at www.swedesincanada.ca.

Scott Erickson in new job

Scott Erickson is the newly named Middle School director and director of studies of the National Cathedral School (Episcopal) in Washington, DC. The girls' school has 577 students, grades 4 to 12. Scott has served as a director of the Society for the past five years and is currently board secretary.

Board elects new chair, directors for coming year

At its annual meeting Nov. 10, the board elected Kevin Proescholdt chairman, succeeding Ronald J. Johnson, who continues as an at-large member. Kevin, of Minneapolis, is director of the Izaak Walton League Wilderness and Public Lands Program.

Eloise Nelson was reelected vice chair and Scott Erickson, secretary. Donald Olson was reappointed treasurer and Philip J. Anderson, president.

William H. Beyer, director of museum education, collections and program at the American Swedish Institute in Minneapolis, is a new first-time member of the board. He previously was a vice president of the University of Minnesota.

Two former members of the board were named to new terms: K. Stephen Anderson, director of communications for the Illinois State Bar Association, and Mark Granquist, visiting professor of church history at Luther Seminary in St. Paul.

Four directors were reelected to new three-year terms: Elinor Barr, Ellen Engseth, Bruce Karstadt and Joy Lintelman.

Coming in the Quarterly

An immigrant murder story

The April issue of the *Swedish-American Historical Quarterly* will include an article by Roger McKnight on the murder of a young Minnesota Swedish immigrant by two other young Swedish immigrants. McKnight, book review editor of the quarterly, was the author of an article in the January 2007 issue about Swedish-American inmates of the Minnesota State Prison, 1858-1914.