

# SWEDISH-AMERICAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*Established to Record and Interpret the Swedish Presence in America*

Newsletter / February 2009

## Society celebrates its 60th anniversary

Anderson, Nordstrom receive royal honors

The Swedish-American Historical Society celebrated its 60th anniversary Saturday, Nov. 8, at a symposium and festive dinner at the Westmoreland Country Club in suburban Chicago. Nils Hasselmo, former president of the University of Minnesota and of the Society, was speaker at the dinner, which included the presentation of royal and society honors to four longtime leaders.

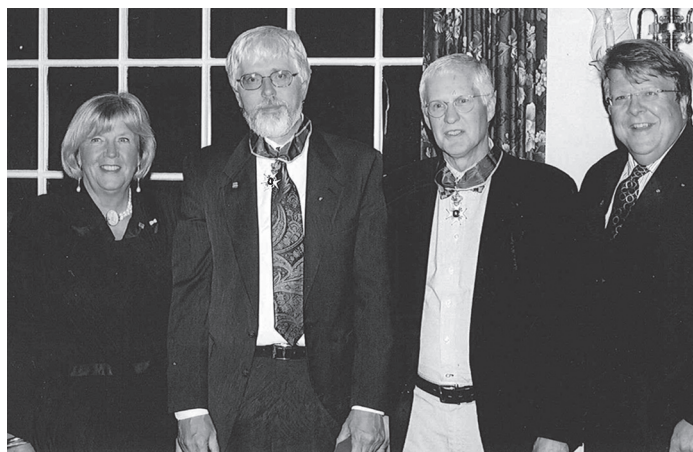
Society President Philip J. Anderson received the rank of Commander of the Royal Order of the Polar Star, awarded by King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden and bestowed on the king's behalf by Kerstin Lane, honorary Swedish Consul General for Illinois. Anderson was cited for his scholarship and writing, teaching (at North Park Theological Seminary in Chicago), and leadership in the Swedish-American community, including as president of the Swedish-American Historical Society since 1989.

Byron J. Nordstrom, editor of the Society's quarterly, also received the rank of Commander of the Royal Order of the Polar Star, bestowed by Bruce Karstadt, honorary Swedish Consul General for Minnesota. Nordstrom, professor of history at Gustavus Adolphus College, was cited for his teaching, writing, and editorship of the Swedish-American Historical Quarterly since 1997.

### Nelsons awarded Sandburg Medals

Society Carl Sandburg Medals were presented to Eloise and LeRoy Nelson of Chicago. Eloise has served as a director of the Society for 18 of the last 25 years, and as chair and vice chair during part of that time; LeRoy served as a director for six years and is a long-time member of the publications committee; together they have led Society tours to Swedish-American sites in America since 1985, as well as Christmas Holiday Lights tours to Sweden since 1987.

Anita Olson Gustafson, associate professor of history at Presbyterian College in Clinton, SC, was announced as winner of the Franklin Scott Prize for a first article in the Quarterly. The prize is named for an early president of the Society and leading scholar of Swedish America. Anita's article, "'We Hope to Be Able to Do Some Good': Swedish Women's Organizations in Chicago," appears in the October Quarterly.



Presenters Kjersten Lane (left) and Bruce Karstadt (right) with Polar Star recipients Philip Anderson and Byron Nordstrom. (Photo by Kevin Proescholdt)

Features at the dinner included music by Nordic Voices of Chicago, formed in 2005 and directed since 2006 by Melissa Grant, and a 16-minute film of 1948 Centennial Celebration events by Swedish photographer Bengt Janzon and American photographer Leonard Clairmont.

Nils Hasselmo spoke on "An Immigrant's Stories for His Grandchildren," a book he is writing. He came to the U.S. in 1956 as a student at Augustana College in Rock Island, IL, expecting to return to Sweden. Instead he stayed, became a teacher at the University of Wisconsin and then at Minnesota, where he rose through the ranks to president. He was also the speaker at the Society's 40th and 50th anniversary dinners in 1988 and 1998.

### Directors are elected

At a board meeting the morning of Nov. 8, Vincent Anderson, a former professor of English at North Park University, was elected a new director and two former directors, Ronald Johnson and Ellen Rye, were returned to the board for three-year terms ending in 2011. The three succeed Scott Erickson, Kerstin Lane and Eloise Nelson. Three others were reelected to three-year terms: Frances Johnson, Charles Peterson and Leslee Schiller. Kevin Proescholdt was reelected board chair.

*Anniversary fund drive raises \$11,025. page 3*

## Osher Foundation awards Society \$15,000 grant for digitization

On Jan. 28, the Society received news that it has been awarded a \$15,000 grant by the Barbro Osher Pro Suecia Foundation for digitizing the *Swedish-American Historical Quarterly*. The grant means that once the project is completed, Society members, scholars, researchers and others will be able to access every issue of the quarterly from its inception in 1950 using the Society web site.

The foundation is headed by Barbro Sachs-Osher, consul general of Sweden in San Francisco, who served in the same capacity in Los Angeles, 1995-98. She is former owner and publisher of the Swedish-American newspaper *Vestkusten*, established in 1886 and now part of the newspaper *Nordstjernen*. A native of Stockholm, she also chairs the Bernard Osher Foundation, founded by her husband, which in 2006 gave the third largest contribution to charity in the U.S.

Founder of the Swedish Women's Educational Association (SWEA) chapter in San Francisco, she was honored by SWEA International in 2004 as its Woman of the Year. Last year she was honored in Sweden as the Vasa Order of America Swedish-American of the Year.

The Society grant proposal was prepared by Anne Jenner, archivist of the Swedish-American Archives of Greater Chicago. "We thank Anne for her good work and the Osher Foundation for its generous support," said Society president Philip Anderson. "This digitization project, which will serve both Sweden and Swedish America, is a piece of a much larger endeavor that many of us will be involved in for years to come in mutually cooperative ways. Thanks to the foundation for your understanding of its importance and confidence in our execution of the project."

### **A request for help**

For a book he is writing on soccer in the United States, 1945-60, English author Finlay Edwards is seeking to get in touch with anyone who attended a match between Jonköping and Manchester United at Hanson Field in Chicago June 21, 1950 (some sources give the date as June 19). He also is looking for a match program and original ticket. In 1950, the Jonköping team toured North America and played ten matches in the U.S. and Canada. Edwards has information on eight, but is lacking information on two, including the one in Chicago. Edwards' e-mail address is [Crimsonclimber@aol.com](mailto:Crimsonclimber@aol.com).

## News of members

### ***Henry Hanson honored***

Longtime Society member and former director Henry Hanson was honored by the American Scandinavian Association of the National Capital Area on Sept. 15. Hanson, a retired U.S. State Department diplomat and college professor, was awarded an ASA Lifetime Achievement Award in the Preservation of Scandinavian Culture. His father, Henry Hanson Sr., founded Drott Lodge of the Vasa Order in 1910.

Board member Joy Lintelman's book, '*I Go to America*': *Swedish American Women and the Life of Mina Anderson*, is being published by the Minnesota Historical Society Press and will be available in February from bookstores and the Society. The book is 288 pages, with 45 illustrations, five maps, tables, notes, bibliography and index. See the Society's web site for ordering information.

The Fall 2008 issue of *Minnesota History* magazine includes an article by Kevin Proescholdt, Society board chairman, titled "Untrammelled Wilderness." "After eight years and 66 rewrites," Kevin writes, "an 'arcane' word, carefully chosen and tenaciously defended, remains a keystone of the most poetic passage in any federal statute."

## Obituaries

### ***Brook, Gjerde and Olsson***

Michael Brook, retired special collections librarian at the University of Nottingham in England, died last Mar. 27. Born in 1926, his special interest was Swedish-American labor history. He edited and wrote the introduction to *On the Left in America: Memoirs of the Scandinavian-American Labor Movement*, by Henry Bengston, published by the Society in 1999. He contributed book reviews to the Quarterly and, in the October 1969 issue, "Radical Literature in Swedish America: A Narrative Survey."

Jon Gjerde, dean of social sciences at the University of California at Berkeley, died suddenly Oct. 26 of an apparent heart attack at age 55. A leading Norwegian-American historian, he was the author of several prize-winning books, including *From Peasants to Farmers: The Migration from Balestrand, Norway, to the Upper Middle West*.

Dagmar Olsson, widow of Nils William Olsson, died Sept. 28, 2008, in Belfast, Maine, at age 95. Her father, the Rev. Carl A. Gavert, was an Evangelical Covenant pastor from 1906 to 1957, serving churches in Montana; Kansas; Minneapolis; Paxton, Illinois, and Chicago. She was married in 1940 to Nils William, a founder of the Society. Named president emeritus of the Society in 2001, Nils William died in 2007 in Winter Park, Florida, at age 97.

71 gifts are received

## Anniversary financial appeal brings in \$11,025

The Society's 60th anniversary financial appeal as of the end of January had received \$11,125 from 72 respondents. Donors were invited to specify to which Society fund they wanted their money to go. The biggest beneficiary was the Selma Jacobson Archives Fund.

Others were the Vilas Johnson/Rolf Erickson Publication Fund, Prince Bertil Heritage Fund, and Nils William and Dagmar Olsson Research Fund. Just over \$1,000 was unspecified and will go into the operating fund.

Contributions ranged from \$10 to \$2,000. Every contribution is welcome regardless of size, and we thank each and every one who responded.

### **\$1,000 and above**

Philip and Karna Anderson, Chicago, IL  
Jon and Linda Brorson, Naperville, IL  
Ronald and Janet Johnson, Madison, WI

### **\$500-\$999**

Arnold and Aina Barton, Carbondale, IL  
Nils and Ann Hasselmo, Tucson, AZ  
Ellen Rye, Silver Springs, MD  
Dr. Mary A. Seeger, Caledonia, MI

### **\$200-\$499**

Erik J. Ehn, Djursholm, Sweden  
Duane Kullberg, Chicago, IL  
Bruce L. Larson, North Mankato, MN  
Ann M. Legreid, Shepherdstown, WV  
Eric and Grace Lund, Evanston, IL

### **\$100-\$199**

K. Stephen Anderson, Chicago  
Vincent P. Anderson, Chicago  
Ray and Carol Appelquist, Mt. Dora, FL  
Jennifer Attebery, Pocatello, ID  
Don and Mary Benson, Washington Island, WI  
William Beyer, St. Paul, MN  
Bernice Brandel, Northbrook, IL  
Earl Check, Madrid, IA  
David B. Djube, Glenview, IL  
Ellen Engseth, Milwaukee, WI  
Barbara Graves, Olympia Fields, IL  
David Gustafson, Carol Stream, IL  
Henry and Mildred Hanson, Springfield, VA  
Anne-Charlotte Harvey, Lemon Grove, CA  
Carl Johnson, Elk Grove Village, IL  
Gary T. Johnson, Evanston, IL  
Kerstin and Joe Lane, Chicago  
Joy Lintelman, Moorhead, MN  
LeRoy and Eloise Nelson, Northbrook, IL

Rolland G. Nelson, Duluth, MN  
Kevin and Jean Proescholdt, Minneapolis, MN  
Jon B. Sellin, Lanham, MD  
John and Lois Weborg, Princeton, IL  
Glen Wiberg, St. Paul, MN

### **\$10-\$99**

Rolf D. Anderson, LaPlata, MD  
Harry and Evelyn Anderson, Milwaukee, WI  
Devere Blomberg, Lindsborg, KS  
Thomas Branagar, Salem, OR  
Glen and Elaine Brolander, Stillwater, MN  
Robert N. Campbell, Davis, CA  
Jane Edgren, Manistee, MI  
Gretelyn Elmen, Woodstock, CT  
Scott Erickson, Washington, DC  
Helen Fredrickson, Northbrook, IL  
Margit Fredrickson and Barbara White, Northfield, MN  
Barbara A. Jabr, St. Paul, MN  
Roy and Martha Johnson, Eden Prairie, MN  
Frances E. Johnson, Park Ridge, IL  
Mark D. Johnson, Oconomowoc, WI  
Bruce Karstadt, Minneapolis, MN  
John Lindholm, Fergus Falls, MN  
Gilbert McCollum, Everson, WA  
Selma Halberg McLaughlin, Chesapeake, VA  
Sylvia Meagher, Kalamazoo, MI  
Carrie Melin, Lacrosse, WI  
John Moore, Chicago, IL  
Rosemary Nelson, Munster, IN  
Byron Nordstrom, LeSueur, MN  
Darlene Norman, Brookfield, WI  
Elvy S. O'Brien, Williamstown, MA  
Arthur R. Olson, Jamestown, NY  
Fred and Marjorie Olson, Silver Springs, MD  
Janet S. Olson, Pittsburgh, PA  
Christopher Olsson, Stockton Springs, ME  
Wendell Peterson, Houston, TX  
Leslee Schiller, Chicago, IL  
Doris Sutor, Addison, IL  
Mariann Tiblin, Minneapolis, MN  
Carol Wedin, Frederic, WI

### **In the latest Quarterly**

The January issue of the *Swedish-American Historical Quarterly* features articles by Terje Mikael Hasle Joranger, a young Norwegian scholar, on "A Historiographical Perspective on the Social History of Immigration to and Ethnicity in the United States"; Nils Hasselmo, "Writing Stories for My Grandchildren," and Helena Karlsson, newly named professor of Swedish and Scandinavian literature at Gustavus Adolphus College, on "Reflections on My 21st Century Swedish Christmas."

## Growing up in rural Nebraska

### *A Swedish-American Christmas*

On Jan. 1, the *Chicago Tribune* printed the following letter to the editor, titled "Blessed Morn," by former Society board member Junita (Nita) Borg Hemke recalling her Swedish-American childhood in rural Nebraska.

During the war (the big World War II), our family lived in Wausa, Neb., a small town of 732 inhabitants. My dad was the Augustana Lutheran pastor of the large church of several hundred parishioners of Swedish descent. It was a large white-frame structure with a wonderful bell that could be heard seven miles out in the countryside. The Christmas service was "Julotta," held on Christmas morning at 5 a.m. Because our family had to be ready for that occasion, we went to bed early on Christmas Eve after eating our traditional Christmas supper of lutefisk. We did not open any Christmas presents until the next day after that Christmas service.

But the memory for me--and it's especially dear for me this year because my mom died Oct. 2, just 19 days before her 100th birthday--is that of the early morning air, the calm quiet, the only sound crunchy white snow, the stars still shining, our walk across the street from the five-bedroom parsonage and into the church.

My dad would put on his black robe and stole. My mom would also put on her robe and special shoes. She played the pipe organ for the church service and had to wear those flat black shoes to play the pedals. My sister and I sat in one of the front pews. The service would begin with all pews filled with many farm families (moms, dads and their children). If the unpaved roads were good, the church was packed. We sang the opening hymn and the wonderful liturgy began with Dad turning and facing the congregation at the proper times.

After Dad gave his prepared sermon, the last hymn, "All Hail to Thee O Blessed Morn," would begin. And when we were singing that hymn, my dad's loud voice could be heard above the singing congregation, while mom was busy at the pipe organ. The sun would be coming up in the East and we knew that it was now daylight. It truly was the blessed morning of Christmas. That's my best holiday gift--a wonderful childhood memory--for now I am no longer a child.

## **2009 dividend book**

If you are a Sustaining, Donor, Benefactor or Life member of the Society, your 2009 dividend book will be *Zorn in America: A Swedish Impressionist of the Gilded Age*, by William and Willow Hagans. Regular and non-members will be able to buy the book through the Society's web site [swedishamericanhist.org](http://swedishamericanhist.org) for \$25.00 (members) or \$29.95 (non-members) plus \$4.00 shipping and handling.

Between the years 1893 and 1911, the influential Swedish artist Anders Zorn made seven trips to the United States, traveling widely and crafting portraits of some of America's most prominent figures, including three presidents, Grover Cleveland, Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft, and industrialist Andrew Carnegie. These sojourns helped solidify Zorn's standing at the time as one of the era's greatest and in-demand artists. Yet very little has been written about these important visits until now.

The Hagans have spent twenty years researching their book, which is being published by the Swedish-American Historical Society. Their personal collection of sixty Zorn etchings was exhibited last year at the American Swedish Institute in Minneapolis. Willow Hagans is a former president of the Swedish Foundation of Detroit, where they live. Their book was introduced Feb. 6 at a gathering at the Zorn Museum in Mora, Sweden, his birthplace. A book signing is set for Mar. 22 at the American Swedish Institute. The book contains more than 120 paintings, etchings and photographs, including many from private collections rarely seen.

## **New members**

New memberships since the last newsletter include one gift sustaining membership and six regular memberships. The new members represent five states and Sweden. We welcome:

Robert Anderson, Hamden, CT  
Jens Björk Andersson, Hudiksvall, Sweden  
Nancy and Will Bromley, Morton Grove, IL  
Paul Gjenvick, New Berlin, WI  
Kathleen Meade, Chicago, IL  
Paul Peterson, Petaluma, CA  
Kim-Eric Williams, West Chester, PA

