

SWEDISH-AMERICAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Established to Record and Interpret the Swedish Presence in America

Newsletter /March 2011

April 16 at Swedish Museum

'Shuttle' author Marion Marzolf to speak at spring dinner

Marion Marzolf, author of *Shuttle in Her Hand: A Swedish Immigrant Weaver in America*, will be the speaker at the Society's spring meeting Saturday, April 16, at the Swedish American Museum, 5211 N. Clark St. in Chicago. The program, including Swedish music by flutist Jane Florine, accompanied by Janet Eckhardt, will follow a 6 p.m. wine and cheese reception and 6:30 dinner catered by Tre Kronor restaurant. Reservations may be made by mail using the form on page 4 or on the Society website, swedishamericanhist.org.

Marzolf, a retired University of Michigan professor of journalism and Scandinavian studies, will give a power-point presentation on the book, the Society's latest publication and its first novel. Sustaining members and above received copies as their 2011 dividend.

The book is the story of Maja Lisa Lindholm and begins in Rättvik, Sweden, then follows her through various chapters in her life: 1930 Stockholm, Appalachia, Grand Rapids, Mich., World War II, the Art Institute of Chicago and finally a farm in Wisconsin. It is historically accurate and features many actual places.

Marzolf says of the book, "The strong immigrant woman who successfully survives in a new life in America seems to be missing from our fiction. At least in the Scandinavian immigrant stories I read in college, the female characters were mostly dependent and longing for their homeland. Yet in the immigration history books we learned that a number of immigrant women came to America on their own—young, single, unmarried and unspoken for."

When, following her retirement, she began studying the history of weaving in Michigan: "I learned that this was a field of endeavor that was largely neglected in historical texts. To my surprise, I found that quite a number of weavers in twentieth-century America were born and trained in Sweden. Other Americans traveled to Sweden to learn weaving."

Marzolf's hobby led to publication of *Fascination with Fiber; Michigan's Handweaving Heritage* (2006), co-written with Marie Gile. Her other books include *Up from the Footnote: A History of Women Journalists* (1977) and *The Danish Language Press in America* (1979).

From the Swedish-American Archives

by Anne Jenner, Society archivist

The Society's most recent publication, *Shuttle in Her Hand* by Marion Marzolf, prompted me to reflect on the many Swedish Americans I know who are eager to learn and pass on traditional Swedish handicrafts. They gladly don Swedish folk costumes, gather their tools and supplies, and head to fairs, folk festivals and historic sites to demonstrate their craft and share their talents with young and old. Traditional patterns and methods merge with innovative techniques of contemporary crafters and new styles begin. Selma Jacobson (pictured at table), founder and first archivist of the



Swedish-American Archives of Greater Chicago, avidly demonstrated Swedish crafts on many occasions. In our photo collection, I found Selma in 1971 at the 12th Annual Folk Fair demonstrating *halmslöjd*, the traditional craft of shaping ornaments, animals and other figures out of straw.

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Newsletter editor: Eric Lund

A look back at Society history

50 Years Ago

Jan. 27, 1961. The Society's annual meeting is held at North Park College. Speaker at the dinner is Franklin D. Scott on Adolph Wertmüller, subject of his book *Wertmüller, Artist and Immigrant Farmer*, which later became a dividend book for members.

40 Years Ago

Apr. 3, 1971. Dinner speaker at the annual meeting at North Park College is Sune Åkerman, associate professor of history at Uppsala University in Sweden, on "Who Were the Immigrants?" Text of the talk appeared in the January 1972 *Quarterly*.

30 Years Ago

Mar. 14, 1981. The annual meeting is held at Northwestern University in Evanston on the theme, "The Swedish Heritage in America." The afternoon program, "Finding Swedish America," features Raymond Jarvi on place names, Alan Winquist on historic sites, and Wesley Westerberg and Lennart Setterdahl on archival sources.

The dinner speaker on "Swedish-American Cross Currents" is Franklin Scott, former president and *Quarterly* editor, who is surprised at the conclusion of his talk on being awarded the Society's Carl Sandburg Medal. The text of the talk appeared in the October 1981 *Quarterly*.

20 Years Ago

Apr. 13, 1991. The Annual dinner at the North Park campus center is followed by a program in Isaacson Chapel by Scott Erickson and friends, "I Sing with Joy and Gladness: Hymns of the Swedish Immigrant."

10 Years Ago

Apr. 28, 2001. The annual meeting at North Park is followed in the evening by participation in the Swedish Council of America awards dinner at the Kenilworth Club. In the fall, Nov. 2-3, the Society takes part in the Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center 20th anniversary conference at Augustana College in Rock Island on "Being Swedish Today."

Swedes in Canada

Elinor Barr reports that her book, *Swedes in Canada*, is "inching its way toward publication." She sent letters of inquiry to four publishers last February; three replied positively, she chose the University of Toronto, and forwarded the manuscript. The press sent it to readers and by September, all three had made recommendations. In November, she returned the revised manuscript and hopes for a response soon.

News of members

Arnold Barton checks in from snowy Stockholm

Quarterly editor emeritus H. Arnold Barton, who moved to Sweden last year with his wife, Aina, e-mailed from snowy Stockholm in December to report on his activities:

"I haven't yet had the opportunity to do very much in a scholarly way, other than read as time allows. At least we now have book shelves and the books are out of the cartons. A few weeks ago I gave a talk on Eric Janson's evolving and devolving following (based on my *Quarterly* article) to the Svenska Bishop Hill Sällskapet in Biskopskulla, the prophet's birthplace in Uppland.

"It was very well attended and there was a lot of discussion afterwards. I will be giving essentially the same talk for Riksföreningen Sverigekontakt Stockholm in December."

LeRoy and Eloise Nelson are pictured on the latest package of Starbucks Verona coffee. Their daughter Steffi and her husband are pictured on the front side. It's the work of their youngest daughter, Sandy, a designer for Starbucks. Note: On packages bought at Starbucks, LeRoy and Eloise's photo is covered up by the price tag, but on packages bought at supermarkets, you see them.

Society director **Christina Johansson** is leaving her position with the Swenson Center at Augustana College and returning to Sweden to become a librarian at the Chalmers University of Technology in Göteborg. Christina has been a member of the SAHS board since 2006.

Swedes and Norwegians book due in December

The Minnesota Historical Society Press is targeting for December publication *Friends and Neighbors? Norwegians and Swedes in the United States*, proceedings of the October 2007 conference at Augustana College sponsored by the Society and the Swenson Center.

Presenters came from the United States, Sweden, Norway and Denmark. The book is being edited by Philip J. Anderson of the Society and Dag Blanck of the center.

The ways immigrant and ethnic groups related to and interacted with each other is a central dimension of American immigration history. Among the Scandinavians, there were numerous contacts and close interactions between Swedes and Norwegians. They were often neighbors, had similar occupations, married each other, cooperated and developed comparable—but not identical—religious, cultural and ethnic traditions. The relationship was not always harmonious; there was also friction and competition.

Society is fiscally sound and its programs thriving

The Society is fiscally sound and its publishing and membership programs are thriving. That was apparent from reports at the annual meeting Nov. 5 at North Park University and the conference that followed.

Treasurer Don Olson reported that the Society's endowment is healthy and that investments continue to earn a good return and provide operating income.

President Philip Anderson reported on several books in the pipeline as potential co-publishing ventures: Anita Olson Gustafson's revision of her doctoral dissertation on Swedes in Chicago and David Mel Paul's biography of inventor John Ericsson, who designed the Civil War ship Monitor of Monitor and Merrimack fame.

He also reported that half of the 1,000-copy press run of *Shuttle in Her Hand*, the Society's latest book, have been sold and that *Friends and Neighbors? Norwegians and Swedes in the United States* is proceeding to publication (see page 2).

The program committee reported that the Society's Detroit weekend the previous April was a success and that the conference following the board meeting, celebrating the 150th anniversary of the Augustana Lutheran Church and 125th anniversary of the Evangelical Covenant (Mission Covenant) Church, was well attended.

The next program will be a dinner April 16 (see separate story). Possible future programs being discussed include a conference/symposium on interaction between Scandinavian-Americans and Native Americans and a 2012 program in Gettysburg, Pa., marking the 150th anniversary of that historic battle and Swedish-American participation in the Civil War.

Seven directors are elected at annual meeting Nov. 5

Seven members of the Society board of directors were elected Nov. 5 at the annual meeting at North Park University to serve until 2013. In addition, the executive committee in February named a director to fill a vacancy.

The new director is Maria Erling, professor of modern church history and mission at Lutheran Theological Seminary, Gettysburg, Pa. A graduate of Augustana College and Yale Divinity School, she has a Ph.D. from Harvard Divinity School and has studied at Lund University in Sweden. She is co-author with Mark Granquist of *The Augustana Story: Shaping Lutheran Identity in North America*.

Three of the seven directors named Nov. 5—Stephen Anderson, William Beyer and Mark Granquist—were reelected. Named to new terms were Dag Blanck, senior lecturer at Uppsala University in Sweden and director of

the Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center at Augustana College; Carol Noren, professor of homiletics at North Park Theological Seminary; Charles Olson, retired North Park University administrator, and Kurt Peterson, associate professor of history at North Park.

All but Olson have served on the board previously. The four succeed Elinor Barr, Ellen Engseth, Bruce Karstadt and Joy Lintelman, who had served two terms and were not eligible for reelection for at least a year.

January *Quarterly* focuses on women; rune stone next

The January issue of the Society *Quarterly* will be in the mail soon and focuses on women. The lead article is "A Model for Her Sex: Ethnic Womanhood in Swedish-American Publications for Children and Young People, 1890-1920," by Agnieszka Stasiewicz, a young Polish scholar who did some of her research at the Swenson Center with support from the Nils William and Dagmar Olsson Research Fund.

A second article is "Honored Compatriot," Samuel Magnus Hill's Letters to Selma Lagerlöf, edited, translated and introduced by Lars Nordström.

The issue also includes book reviews by Roland Torstensson of a new edition of Selma Lagerlöf's *The Saga of Gösta Berling*, translated by Paul Norlen and introduced by George C. Schoolfield, and by Joy K. Lintelman of *Shuttle in Her Hand: A Swedish Immigrant Weaver in America*, by Marion Marzolf, a novel and the Society's latest publication.

The following issue will feature the Kensington Rune Stone led by an article on "Displaying a Controversy: Swedish and American Exhibitions of the Kensington Rune Stone," by Adam Hjorthen, a young Swedish scholar.

Museum to celebrate Waffle Day

The Swedish American Museum in Chicago will celebrate *Väffeldagen* (Waffle Day) Friday, Mar. 18, a week early. The day is usually celebrated Mar. 25, the feast of Bebdelsedagen or Annunciation Day, the day the angel Gabriel announced to the Virgin Mary that she had been chosen to be the mother of Jesus. The serving of waffles will begin at 10 a.m.

Rockford to hold annual meeting

The Swedish Historical Society of Rockford will hold its annual meeting Sunday, Mar. 20, at Immanuel Lutheran Church following a 12:15 lunch. Elise Peters, Swedish Council of America executive director, spoke at the monthly meeting Mar. 6 on Swedish America today.

SPRING DINNER MEETING RESERVATION

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Please reserve ____ places at \$40.00 per person for the dinner and program on April 16.

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 April 10.

Swedish Place-Names in North America: A sampling

Swedish Place-Names in North America, by Otto Robert Landelius, translated by Karin Franzen and edited by Raymond Jarvi, was published by the Society in 1985. Among the more than 1,000 names found by Landelius over many years were:

Bergstrom Air Force Base, Texas

Southwest of Austin, named for Capt. John A.E. Bergstrom of Austin, who was killed in a Japanese air raid on Clark Field in the Philippines in 1941.

Bremer County, Iowa

Named for Swedish author Fredrika Bremer at the suggestion of Iowa Gov. Stephen Hempstead, who admired her. There is also a township named Fredrika in Bremer County as well as a small community named Bremer in adjacent Warren county.

Galva, Illinois

One of the leaders of the nearby Bishop Hill settlement, Olof Johnson, is said to have suggested that the town be called Gävle for the city in Sweden. The name became corrupted as Galva and was copied in Galva, Iowa, whose first settlers came from the Illinois Galva, and in Galva, Kansas, whose name was suggested by a woman who had once lived in the first Galva.

Jenny Lind, Arkansas

One of half a dozen sites that honor the Swedish singer, the town was named in 1851 when she was on her tour of the United States (1850-52). There also are Jenny Linds in Calaveras and Fresno Counties, California, as well as a Jenny Lind Creek. Jenny Lind Island in arctic Canada was given its name by polar explorer John Rae, who liked her

“sweetness of voice.” The Jenny Lind Chapel in Andover, Illinois, is well known to Society members and is a frequent stop on tours.

Lindbergh, Alabama

One of five towns named for the Swedish-American aviator Charles A. Lindbergh; others are in Kentucky, Missouri, Wyoming and Alberta, Canada. Another ten sites also carry his name, including the San Diego airport, Lindbergh Field. Of five streets given his name, Lindbergh Drive in Charlotte, North Carolina, was renamed in 1941 because of his alleged sympathies for Germany during World War II.

Peterson Avenue, Chicago

A North Side arterial street, it was named for Swedish-born horticultural pioneer Pehr Samuel Peterson. When he died in 1903 in Chicago, seven-eighths of all the trees that adorned the city's parks, boulevards and streets had come from his Rosehill nursery or been brought by him directly from forests.

Princess Ingeborg Island, Canada

The largest of the many small islands in the National Geographic Society group was named by polar explorer Roald Amundsen in honor of Swedish Princess Ingeborg (1878-1958).

Sweede Point, Iowa

The second oldest Swedish settlement in Iowa—and one of the oldest in the United States—is now Madrid. Why the original name Sweede Point was changed after a new survey to the incorrect Sweede Point is unknown. Similarly misspelled is Sweeden, Kentucky.