

# SWEDISH-AMERICAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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

Newsletter / March 2019

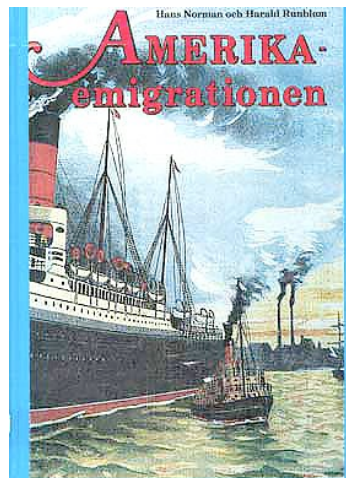
## *Spring Meeting*

## SWEDISH PROFESSOR HARALD RUNBLOM TO BE HONORED

The 2019 spring meeting of the Society will take place on Saturday evening, April 27, at the Swedish American Museum in Chicago. We are privileged to welcome Professor Runblom of Uppsala University in Sweden to be present to receive the Carl Sandburg Medal, the highest honor of the Swedish-American Historical Society. He will also be the evening presenter, speaking about Sandburg in Sweden (appropriate, given the honor) and personally about his ties to Swedish-American scholarship and life over the decades, as well as its prospects for the future.

Educated at Stockholm and Uppsala Universities, Runblom received his doctoral degree in history from Uppsala in 1971, was a central person in the Uppsala Migration Project, in which Uppsala historians in the 1960s and 1970s studied Swedish mass emigration to North America. He was one of the editors of the "final report" of the project, *From Sweden to America: A History of the Migration*,

which appeared in 1976. His career has been based at Uppsala University, first in the department of history, and from 1984-2005 in the Centre for Multiethnic Research (which he founded) and in the Uppsala Program for Holocaust and Genocide Studies. He has been a visiting professor at the University of Washington, University of Virginia, and at North Park University. For many years, Professor Runblom directed



the Fulbright scholarship program in Sweden, forging many transatlantic connections and friendships.

His pioneering research interests have focused on the role of migration in history and on multicultural societies, including immigration to Sweden, the Baltic Sea Region, and Jewish Swedish history. A major focus has been the

Swedish migration to North America, and he has published many books and articles in that field. Some examples include, *Transatlantic Connections: Nordic Migration to the New World after 1800* (1988), "Chicago Compared: Swedes and Other Ethnic Groups in American Cities" (1991), "A Nordic Melting Pot or 'Unmelting Pot' in North America" (1992), "Leaving Sweden, Entering Worcester" (1995), and *Migrants and the Homeland: Images, Symbols, and Realities* (2000).

Professor Runblom has been associated with the Swedish-American Historical Society for several decades, participating in events and conferences, assisting in co-publications with Uppsala University, and serving as the longtime chair of the Society's Swedish Committee. Harald has been a close colleague and mentor to many members of the Society for a half-century. His wife Ann will accompany him on this visit to the United States, and we warmly welcome both good friends back to Chicago for this richly deserved recognition.



Harald Runblom

**We look forward to an enjoyable and stimulating fall meeting, including dinner catered by Tre Kronor Restaurant, Swedish spring music by Merula, and more! Registration details are found on the back page of the Newsletter.**

### HISTORY OF THE CARL SANDBURG MEDAL

The Swedish Pioneer Historical Society (now Swedish-American Historical Society) created the Carl Sandburg Medal in 1977 to honor service to the Society, service to the Swedish community, and/or service to the community at large. It is the Society's highest honor. There have been only 25 recipients of the Carl Sandburg Medal in the 40+ years since 1978.

(continued on page 2)

The first Carl Sandburg Medal was awarded to Vilas Johnson at the annual meeting of the Society on April 8, 1978. He was a founder of the Society in 1948, and the first president of the Society from 1948 to 1954. Vilas gave a moving response to the award, recalling his friendship with Sandburg.



Carl Sandburg Medal  
photo: Janet Johnson

Among the other recipients of the Carl Sandburg Medal have been Conrad Bergendoff of Augustana College and Theological Seminary; Selma Jacobson, the guiding spirit behind the establishment of the Society's Swedish-American Archives of Greater Chicago; Nils William Olsson, a founder of the Society as well as the *Swedish American Genealogist*; Nils

Hasselmo, former president of the University of Minnesota; H. Arnold Barton, historian and long-time editor of the *Swedish-American Historical Quarterly*; Eloise and LeRoy Nelson, long-time board members and leaders of the Society; Kerstin Lane, former executive director of the Swedish-American Museum of Chicago; and Dag Blanck, historian, Uppsala University professor, and director of the Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center.

The most recent recipient of the Carl Sandburg Medal was Anne-Charlotte Hanes Harvey.

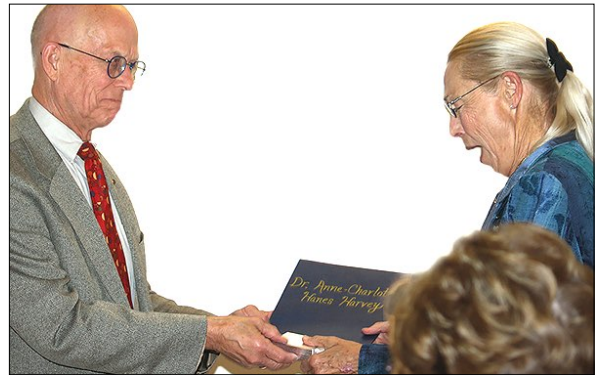
### **ANNE-CHARLOTTE HARVEY RECEIVES SANDBURG MEDAL**

At the Society's 2018 fall meeting in Chicago on October 20, Professor Harvey was honored for her many years of distinguished contributions to the cultural and musical heritage of Swedish immigrants. In presenting the medal, Society board member, William Beyer, said:

*Anne-Charlotte's service to Sweden and Swedish America stretches from her Ph.D. studies in theatre arts at the University of Minnesota to documenting and presenting the popular culture of Swedish immigrants in articles, on stage, in TV programs, and on four LPs. From 1972 through 1977, she was a headliner at the Snoose Boulevard Festivals centered on music popular between the 1880s and early 1950s among Scandinavian immigrants in Minneapolis' Cedar-Riverside neighborhood. As Professor of Theatre in the School of Theatre, Television, and Film at San Diego State University, now emeritus, Anne-Charlotte has contributed inside and outside the academy as teacher, scholar, translator, dramaturg, and playwright. Swedish scholar Ann-Kristin Wallengren recently noted in her book on Swedish emigrants and Swedishness in film, "The Swedish American theatre—staged performances by the*

*Swedish diaspora and Swedish American artists who toured the US—have been thoroughly analyzed by Anne-Charlotte Harvey."*

*Long of service to the community at large, Professor Harvey has continued the legacy of the Snoose Boulevard Festivals as a founding member of the Olle i Skratthult Project, bent on preserving the music that the festivals celebrated but also connecting it to the present-day Somali immigrants who now live in Cedar-Riverside. WorldCat, the online catalog that itemizes the collections of libraries in 170 countries lists 23 works by Professor Harvey in 45 publications in 5 languages and 354 libraries. Besides giving over one hundred concerts and cultural programs in the United States, Canada, and*



William Beyer and Ann-Charlotte Harvey

*Sweden, she has also found time to serve as board member of the August Strindberg Society of Los Angeles, Ibsen Society of America, and Swedish Council of America, as well as the Vasa Order's grand lodge cultural director for America and Canada.*

*The Swedish-American Historical Society, therefore, awards the Carl Sandburg Medal to Anne-Charlotte Hanes Harvey for these many contributions to the Society, to Sweden and Swedish America, and to the community at large—all accomplished with imagination, passion, and grace. Anne-Charlotte's January 2015 article in the Quarterly quotes from a poem by Carl Sandburg that celebrates the abidingly passionate among us. The excerpt fits here, too, most tellingly: "Luck is a star./Money is a plaything./Time is a storyteller./And the sky goes blue with mornings./And the sky goes bronze with sunsets./And the fireborn—they go far—/being at home in fire."*

### **VIKING EXHIBIT AT THE NORDIC MUSEUM AND AMERICAN SWEDISH INSTITUTE**

Currently on exhibit at the Nordic Museum in Seattle (October 20, 2018 to April 14, 2019), the American Swedish Institute in Minneapolis will be next to host the extraordinary new exhibition on the Vikings from May 17 to October 27, 2019. Entitled "The Vikings Begin," it features dozens of early Viking artifacts from boat graves



—organized by Uppsala University and its museum, Gustavianum, which is home to one of the world's finest collections of Viking and pre-Viking objects. With Viking helmets, swords, and weapons for attack and defense, as well as jewelry, glass vessels, bowls, and other objects with magical importance, the artifacts tell stories both about Viking society and the people buried with them. This is a collection that has never been outside Scandinavia until this year, with many finds that are around 1,400 years old. For more information, see [www.nordicmuseum.org](http://www.nordicmuseum.org) and <https://www.asimn.org/exhibits-collections>

### **IN MEMORIUM: NILS HASSELMO (1931-2019)**

Nils Hasselmo, former president and chair of the board of the Society, passed away January 23 in Houston, Texas, age 87. He was born in the small community of Köla in rural western Värmland, Sweden, close to the Swedish-Norwegian border. Through a long and distinguished career in the United States, Värmland's culture and scenery remained close to his heart throughout his life. Educated at Uppsala University, in 1956 he moved to Rock Island, Illinois, accepting a scholarship at Augustana College. It was there he discovered the historical newspaper sources of Swedish America, focusing his interest on immigrant language transition.

After graduating from Augustana, Hasselmo continued to Harvard University where he studied with the Norwegian-American linguist Einar Haugen for a Ph.D. in linguistics on the topic of "American Swedish." He taught at Augustana College and at the University of Wisconsin-Madison before becoming professor of Scandinavian studies at the University of Minnesota in



Nils Hasselmo

1965. Hasselmo was at Minnesota for 18 years, as head of the Scandinavian Department but also of the Center for Northwest European Language and Area Studies. He also served as associate dean of the College of Liberal Arts and vice president for administration and planning. He left Minnesota in 1983 to become provost and senior vice president at the University of Arizona in Tucson. Nils returned as the 13<sup>th</sup> president of the University of Minnesota in 1988, a position he held until 1997. Between 1997-2006 he was the president of Association of American Universities (AAU), an interest organization for the sixty leading research universities in the U.S. and Canada.

Nils made significant contributions to Swedish-American studies, especially to the linguistic aspects of the Swedish-American community. They culminated in his book *Amerikasvenska* from 1974 which traces the development of the specific form of the Swedish language that developed in America. The book is still a classic in the field of immigrant bilingualism and language contact. His interests went beyond the purely linguistic and he managed to show how a Swedish-American cultural sphere was created in the U.S. with roots in both Sweden and the U.S. In this he foreshadowed much of the development in immigration history and ethnic studies of late twentieth century.

Over the years, Hasselmo assumed many positions of academic leadership. He served as president of the Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Study (SASS), president and then chair of the board of the Swedish-American Historical Society, and a member of the advisory committee of the Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center at Augustana College. He also worked tirelessly to promote academic and cultural contacts between Sweden and the United States. He received many recognitions, including honorary doctorates from Uppsala University, Augustana College, and North Park University; several Swedish royal honors; the Carl Sandburg Medal; and the Order of Vasa's "Swedish-American of the Year" award in 1991.

### **CROSS-BORDER COMMEMORATION BOOK**

Adam Hjorthén has just published a new book entitled *Cross-Border Commemorations: Celebrating Swedish Settlement in America*. Published by the University of Massachusetts Press, Hjorthén explores how the histories of settlement in America are inherently transnational events, involving not only the United States but the sending country as well. In *Cross-Border Commemorations*, the author focuses on two celebrations of Swedish settlement in America – the 1938 New Sweden Tercentenary and the 1948 Swedish Pioneer Centennial. The latter sheds fresh light on the founding and early life of our Society. He examines a wide variety of sources to demonstrate how cultural leaders, politicians, and businessmen used these events to promote international relations between the United States and Sweden during times of great geopolitical transformation. Look for a full book review of this book in an upcoming issue of the *Swedish-American Historical Quarterly*.

Newsletter Editor: Phil Anderson  
Production: Grace Lund

**MANY, MANY THANKS TO 2018 YEAR-END DONORS!**

*The following donors generously contributed \$6,265 to the year-end appeal:*

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***Swedish-American Historical Society Dinner and Program***

**Saturday April 27, 2019**

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

Reception 6:30 p.m.

Dinner 7:00 p.m.

***Spring Meeting Registration***

Swedish-American Historical Society  
3225 W. Foster Avenue, Box 48  
Chicago, IL 60625-4816

Phone: (773) 244-5592

E-mail: [info@swedishamericanhist.org](mailto:info@swedishamericanhist.org)

Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ places at \$50 per person for the dinner, catered by Tre Kronor Restaurant, and the musical program on April 27.

Enclosed is my check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Or charge my credit card:    Visa    Master Card \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. \_\_\_\_\_

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**Please respond by April 19**