

SWEDISH-AMERICAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Established to Record and Interpret the Swedish Presence in America

Newsletter / March 2023

SPRING MEETING

April 29, 2023, Swedish American Museum, Chicago

“JENNY LIND PRESENTS P.T. BARNUM”

created by and starring Shelley Cooper

Known as one of the finest singers of her time, Jenny Lind found great success touring Europe in the 1840s. Born Johanna Maria Lind in 1820, Lind began studying at Kungliga Teatern in 1830. Just a few years later, in 1838, she earned her first lead in an opera as Agathe in Carl Maria von Weber's “Der Freischütz.” Her career as an opera singer was short. On May 10, 1849, Lind gave her final opera performance. It was not, however, her final musical performance. In fact, Lind would spend the next thirty-plus years touring, performing concerts throughout Europe, and, for a brief time touring the United States under the promotion of P.T. Barnum.

Phineas Taylor Barnum, noted hoax-promoter and co-founder of Barnum & Bailey Circus, approached Lind in London with a lucrative offer to tour the United States in 1850. Lind, already famous throughout Europe, accepted. Her tour would cement her fame on both sides of the Atlantic. While the tour earned Lind a windfall, most of which she donated to charities, she eventually tired of Barnum's exploitative business practices and split from the unscrupulous showman.

It is this moment, the lead-up to Lind breaking with Barnum, that Shelley Cooper presents in her one-woman operetta “Jenny Lind Presents P.T. Barnum.” Cooper is assistant professor of theatre arts at Augustana College and an award-winning performer. She recently won Best One Woman Show for her original performance “La Divina: The Last Interview” at United Solofest.

“Jenny Lind Presents P.T. Barnum” is Cooper's most recent work. This hour-long operetta presents to the audience Lind's last performance and her back-stage dealings with Barnum as she quits the tour. Directed by Dr. Michelle Crouch with costume design by Megan Hoppe, the operetta



was made possible by an Augustana College Wallenberg Grant.

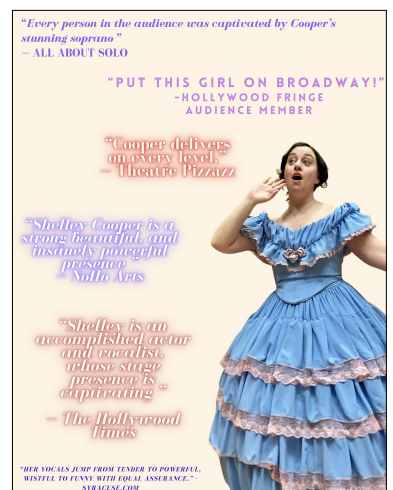
Already, Cooper's original work re-presenting Lind's relationship with Barnum has garnered rave reviews. Samantha Simmonds-Ronceros, reviewing the February 3 world premier of “Jenny Lind Presents P.T. Barnum” at Whitefire Theatre's Solofest in Los Angeles, writes that “[Cooper] develops these

wonderful stories, with mesmerizing performances of fascinating, beguiling musical women who ignore the stuffy world around them and forged their own unique paths, despite and perhaps even because of the adversity.”

Cooper's work, as Lind, presents the complexities of Lind's life experiences while amplifying her voice in defiance of the famously loud-mouthed Barnum. A fascinating woman, forging her own path as Simmonds-Ronceros writes, Cooper's Lind is an important historical addition to what we know, and think we know, about Lind.

Please join us as Shelley Cooper performs “Jenny Lind Presents P.T. Barnum” at the Swedish American Museum in Chicago on Saturday, April 29, as part of our annual spring meeting.

Tickets can be purchased online for \$60.00, or filling out and returning the attached registration form.



Message from the Board Chair

Board Service and the Upcoming Departure of Longtime Society President

Philip J. Anderson

As chair of the Society's Board of Directors, I am honored to report on the innovative and collaborative work of directors, committees, and officers. The Board is comprised of twenty-one elected members and three appointed officers, each of whom volunteer throughout the year to conduct the work of the Society. They advise on all publishing and financial matters; organize and host public programs; review applications for awards and scholarships; and provide support for member services and the archives. In short, Board members lend their time and expertise to the benefit of all members of the Society.

We thank outgoing directors Kerstin Lane and Mark Safstrom, whose terms ended in October 2022, and welcome directors Philip Friedlund and Ronald Johnson, who served earlier and now return. In addition, five members were elected to a second three-year term: Chad Eric Bergman, James Holst, Anne Jenner, Donald Olson, and Kurt Peterson. Board terms of service run three years, and one is ineligible to return after two consecutive terms until at least one year has passed. The Nominating Committee welcomes inquiries from Society members who may wish to serve on the Board. Learn more online <https://www.swedishamericanhist.org/board-of-directors/>

A monumental change to Society governance will occur this year as Philip J. Anderson, who has served as president since 1989, plans to retire from his post in October 2023, coinciding with the Society's 75th Anniversary celebration. Phil has guided the Society with

steadfast leadership through more than three decades of exciting and successful programs, publications, and collaborations with organizations throughout the country and Sweden. It is not an overstatement to say that the pulse of the Society beats through Phil's heart. In the coming months, we will be sharing ways collectively to celebrate Phil and thank him for his contributions to the Society.



Phil Anderson

The Board's strategic planning process, expertly led by Marcus Cederström, is preparing for the era following Phil's leadership. After eighteen months of work, this committee has prepared new approaches to support Board



Anne Jenner

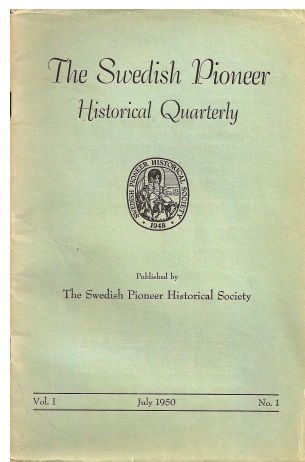
work and positioned the Society to live into its future with strength and resources to continue and expand its role as an historical society. It has revised the Constitution and Bylaws, which will require the membership to vote by proxy on approving the revisions to the Constitution. This will occur sometime between the spring and fall 2023 meetings of the Society.

Empowered to use new tools, resources, and approaches to fulfill the Society's mission, the Board of Directors will be announcing exciting programs and new publications in pace with this year of change and celebration. We ask you to participate in the member survey that aims to learn about your thoughts and experiences as a member and welcomes feedback. Help us by completing and returning it promptly!

Membership Survey Coming Soon!

Help the Society Evaluate Its Mission and Programs

It has been some years since the Swedish-American Historical Society conducted a comprehensive survey of its members. Given the work of the strategic planning committee the past several months and the upcoming 75th Anniversary celebration in October, it is especially timely to hear from you, our members, and what you appreciate about your participation in the Society and the benefits offered. Comments and suggestions will be most welcome!



This is also a time when discussions are underway that explore potential expansion of programs and constructive change. Among them, our publications have been central to the Society since 1950, when the *Swedish Pioneer Historical Quarterly* was launched and published continuously since (changing its name to the *Swedish-American Historical Quarterly* in 1982). It was also the year that the Society published its first book with the University of Minnesota Press, the first volume in translation of the memoirs of Gustaf Unonius. These have been regular, tangible benefits of being a member.

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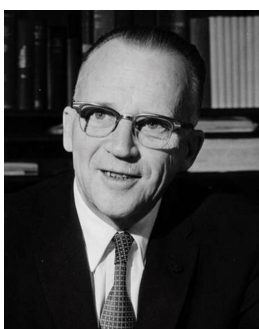
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The Publications Committee has been discussing over the past several months the possibility of the quarterly journal becoming an annual publication. This would entail two related potential developments. First, the annual publication would be a volume of peer-reviewed scholarly essays and book reviews on important topics (by professional and lay historians) in book-length format. Published in conjunction with a university press, this would provide advantages of marketing, distribution, recognition, online access (if desired) for readers and researchers, and efficiencies in cost and the work of our editors. Many journals are published as annuals.

Second, this would lead the Society necessarily to expand its Newsletter in frequency and content, a primary vehicle of regular communication with our members, in news of the Society and Swedish America, including features and brief articles of general interest. The continuity of these publication benefits over past decades would remain, but in new formats and attractive new design. No decisions have been made, and it is important to know that if there are adopted changes, publications will continue to be received in print form through the mail, as well as opportunities to access them online.

You will receive the survey form in the mail approximately a week after receiving this newsletter, and it will include a stamped, self-addressed envelope for ease of return. It will take approximately five minutes of your time to respond to the questions. There will also be an online version, if that is your preference, and the mailed form that you receive will include an online link, as well as a QR code, for your convenience.

SOCIETY AWARDS PUBLICATION PRIZES



Franklin D. Scott

The Awards and Grants Committee, in conjunction with the editor of the *Swedish-American Historical Quarterly*, is pleased to announce that the winners of the Franklin Scott Prize and the Emerging Scholar's Prize for 2021-2022 have been named for their outstanding contributions to the journal. Each received a \$250.00 award.

The Scott prize is awarded for the best article published by a first-time contributor. We honor **Sonja J. Bensen** for her article in the April 2021 issue, "When Atlantic Avenue Was the 'Swedish Broadway'," which focused on Scandinavian immigrant cultural life in Brooklyn, New York. Bensen received her master's degree from the School of International Public Affairs at Columbia University, New York, with a focus on the Scandinavian countries. The prize is named for Franklin D. Scott (1901-1994), professor of history at Northwestern University

(1935-1969), president of the Society (1965-1967), and editor of the *Swedish Pioneer Historical Quarterly* (1967-1974).

The Emerging Scholar's Prize was established to recognize the best article by a student and to encourage their development as a scholar. This year's recipient is **Oskar Brundin** for his article in the April 2022 issue, "The Partisan Reporter: A Case Study of Sven Öste's Reporting During the Civil Rights Era," an area of interest represented in his master's thesis at Uppsala University.

Congratulations Sonja and Oskar! Readers may wish to revisit these fine articles in the *Quarterly*.

Kevin Proescholdt to Speak at Peter Cassel Day

Society board member Kevin Proescholdt, a former editor of the *Swedish-American Historical Quarterly*, has been invited to speak at Peter Cassel Day in Kisa, Sweden, on Friday, July 28, 2023. Kevin has researched and written extensively about Peter Cassel and the settlement Cassel founded in 1845 at New Sweden, Iowa. He and former Society board member Earl Check co-authored the 2015 book, *Peter Cassel and His Family: Faces of Swedish America*. Kevin's most recent *Quarterly* article appeared in April 2022 entitled, "Patterns of Population Dispersal Away from New Sweden, Iowa, 1845-1890."



Kevin Proescholdt

Kisa, located south of Östergötland's city of Linköping, has hosted a Peter Cassel Day (*Peter Casseldagen*) since the 1970s, a celebration to highlight and explore the great migration to North America that Peter Cassel and his letters back to Sweden helped spark. Cassel and his group of family and friends left Kisa in May 1845 and eventually found their way to the southeastern corner of the Iowa Territory that fall, where they settled and established the community of New Sweden. New Sweden was the first lasting Swedish



settlement in North America in the nineteenth century. Cassel's letters back to Sweden, extolling the benefits of freedom and democracy in America, were published in Swedish newspapers and helped ignite the migration from Sweden to America that eventually brought about 1.3 million Swedes to America over the following eighty years.

Peter Cassel Day is now part of the "America Days" (*Amerika Dagarna*) event that runs from July 27-30.

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Included in the America Days are events also honoring the emigrant Andrew Peterson, who left Västra Ryd Parish south of Kisa in 1850 and eventually settled in modern Carver County, Minnesota. Peterson's decades of diaries later provided inspiration to the Swedish novelist Vilhelm Moberg in his famous *Emigrants* novels.

Peter Cassel Day is co-sponsored by the Swedish Peter Cassel Society (*Svenska Peter Casselsällskapet*), at <https://www.petercasselsallskapet.se/>. Andrew Peterson Day is co-sponsored by the Andrew Peterson Society (*Andrew Peterson Sällskapet*) at <http://andrewpeterson.se/>. The local Kinda and Ydre municipalities also co-sponsor the individual events and the entire America Days celebration. For more information about the America Days festival, see <https://www.ydre.se/destinationydre/kulturfestival---amerikadagarna-2023/american-festival-2023>.

Sjölunden High School Student Membership Initiative

Once again, the Society has sponsored seventeen students from around the United States to study Swedish language and culture at Concordia Language Villages in northern Minnesota, begun by Concordia College (Moorhead) in 1975. This is the only organization that grants high school credit for Swedish language in the United States. The Society formed this initiative in 2021 to encourage

students to become lifelong learners and supporters of Swedish-American history, language, and cultural life by granting them student memberships. Many attend year-after-year and form enduring friendships.

These future leaders attended Sjölunden in 2022, with their Swedish names listed first:

Aina Anna Benson
Liv Sylvia Buckner
Henrik Henry Fleming
Tilly Tilly Foley-Voonen
Mio Zev Jackman
Ofelia Rayna Johnson
Anja Aloria Larson
Bernt George Phillips
Hanna Emily Raman
Elsie Lillian Rice
Lorelai Dylan Rich
Estelle Robbie Schultz
Evelina Ruby Thomas
Melker Luke Umholtz
Göran Nat Umholtz
Astrid Annika Utsogn
Tuva Kajsa Woodger

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Newsletter editor: Phil Anderson
Production: Grace Lund

75TH ANNIVERSARY SAVE THE DATES!

“Honoring Our Past, Sustaining Our Future”

October 20-21, 2023

Chicago, Illinois



The 2023 fall meeting of the Society will be a celebration of the rich history since its founding on October 15, 1948, as the Swedish Pioneer Historical Society, an outcome of the successful nationwide Pioneer Centennial of that year. The anniversary celebration will remember and honor the past, and importantly will also focus on the present and the future that lies ahead.

The 75th Anniversary Committee has been planning for some months the events that will occur.

- On Friday evening, October 20, a festive gala dinner and program will be held at the Old Orchard Country Club in Prospect Heights, just northwest of Chicago and close to O'Hare International Airport. There will be a reception and dinner, followed by a program of music, presentations, and a featured keynote speaker.
- On Saturday afternoon, October 21, the Society's Swedish-American Archives of Greater Chicago will host an event in Brandel Library at North Park University highlighting its work in an exhibition, along with a program of interest to Society members and friends. It will also recognize the longtime relationship with North Park, the Society's physical home since the mid-1950s. Refreshments will be served.

Please mark these dates and events in your calendars, and beginning this spring you will be receiving more information and details of the anniversary year and celebrations. There will be registration for those attending the gala dinner and program. The archives event will be free and open to the public.

We look forward to an exciting 2023, beginning with our spring program in Chicago on April 29, and culminating with events in October.

Welcome! We look forward to celebrating together, as we honor our past and commit ourselves to the Society's important mission in a sustainable future!



MANY, MANY THANKS TO 2022 YEAR-END DONORS!

*The following individuals and organizations contributed \$9,215 to the society,
including a successful year-end appeal response:*

Karin Abercrombie
Karna and Philip Anderson
Alan Axelson
Jennifer Johnson Barkley
Sonja Bensen
Donald Benson
Pam Berven
Theodore Carlstrom
Scott Erickson
Philip Friedlund and Lisa Isenberg
Anne-Charlotte Harvey
Anne Hasselmo
James and Sandra Holst
Karen Humphrey
Niel M. Johnson
Ronald and Janet Johnson

Bruce Karstadt
Kerstin Lane
Ann M. Legreid
Larry Lundblad
Marlin R.A. Mattson
Eloise and LeRoy Nelson
Sandy Nelson and Chris Brown
Byron J. Nordstrom
Don and Kay Olson
Kevin Proescholdt
Steven and Yvonne Stallard
Swedish Council of America Fund, Minneapolis Foundation
Donald Sweet
Verdandi Lodge No.3 I.O.S.
Joel Wiberg
Kim-Eric Williams



Swedish-American Historical Society Dinner and Program

Saturday April 29, 2023

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

Social Hour 5:30 p.m

Dinner 6:00 p.m.

Show 7: 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

Please reserve _____ places at \$60 per person for the dinner, catered by Tre Kronor Restaurant, and the musical program on April 29.

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 26