

NORDIC AMERICAN PSALMODIKONFORBUNDET

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 3

NOVEMBER 1999



Notes from MUSIC-ON-A-STRING

While searching through the back copies of the Psalmodikon Newsletters, I realize that I wrote my first Newsletter in November 1996. My how time flies! Records show that I mailed the Newsletter to approximately 60 of my faithful followers and many are still on the mailing list today.

Since then I was successful in organizing the Nordic-American Psalmodikonforbundet and with the help of all the enthusiastic members, we are doing a great job of carrying on the Psalmodikon tradition. Everyone had a fun time at our meeting in Decorah, Iowa in September. Those in attendance were from Iowa, Wisconsin and Minnesota. Many of them brought their Psalmodikons along to play and learn some more songs. I hope that next year even more members will attend. Much time and effort goes into the planning of an interesting and educational meeting.

During the business meeting it was decided that the club could donate the Psalmodikon to the Emigrant Museum in Norway. I want to thank everyone who contributed their time and gifts of money to make it possible. Expenses for the Psalmodikon were kept down as Paul Knivsland, who built the Psalmodikon charged the club for only the building materials. I volunteered my time to do the Rosemaling and while I was doing the painting—the phone rang. And here it was a call from Ruth Gibson of White Bear Lake, MN telling me she was planning a trip to Norway in September and offered to "hand carry" the Psalmodikon to the Emigrant Museum. What a welcome call that was! Not only did she save us the shipping costs but I was assured it would arrive in good shape. Ruth delivered the Psalmodikon to the Museum on September 17. All I had left to show those attending the meeting were photos and the E-mail that arrived just as I was leaving for Decorah.

The E-Mail read as follows:

"The Psalmodikon and Ruth Gibson both arrived in excellent condition

today. We took it out, checked it out, and photographed it.

On behalf of the museum, I hope you will pass on my thanks to the

Psalmodikonforbundet for this very fine gift. Also, please pass on my
appreciation for making it and the rosemaling. It is lovely work.

Sincerely, Knut Djupedal.

The Norwegian Emigrant Museum Ottestad, Norway.

Thanks to Darrell Henning and Angie Reynolds, our group had a very educational and interesting visit to the Vesterheim Museum to see the special display of Psalmodikons. We then went over to the Dayton House Restaurant for a delicious lunch of Norwegian foods.

Maybe it was the coffee pot that was on all day long with all the Scandinavian sweets, but I felt that our practice sessions went real well in that five of us felt confident enough to participate in the 5:00 p. m. Worship Service at Good Shepherd. A very proper ending to a wonderful get together for another year.

I am very excited about the possibility of the Nordiska Psalmodikonforbundet from Scandinavia wanting to come to America next summer to hold a "joint" meeting. As of now, no date has been set but we are working out the details. If this comes to be, I will need a lot of help from all of you to make this event a memorable and successful one for everyone attending!

The Spellstemna brought to a close a busy Summer of performing for the Psalmodikon and I. Now we are into the Fall gatherings and accepting invitations for the Christmas season. It is time to start practicing Christmas carols!

Wishing you all a Happy Thanksgiving and in the meantime, keep practicing!



THERE'S NOTHING LIKE A MEETING OF THE NORDIC-AMERICAN PSALMODIKONFORBUNDET TO PUT US BACK IN TUNE AGAIN!

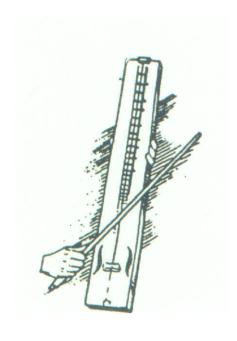
A JOINT MEETING OF THE PSALMODIKONFORBUNDET IN THE YEAR 2000???

Excerpts of a letter from Helena Odvall, secretary of the Nordiska Psalmodikonforbundet in Scandinavia...

The Nordiska Psalmodikonforbundet met on August 20-22, 1999 at the Nordiska Folkhogskolan in Kungalv. At their meeting it was suggested that they come to the United States next year (2000) and have a joint meeting with the Nordic-American Psalmodikonforbundet!

As of yet, no date has been set but ideas are being sent back and forth and we are hoping to make this possible.

Wouldn't that be one for the history books!



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Thank you note:

September 22, 1999

Beatrice,

A note to thank you for the special music your group provided to our worship service last weekend. We really appreciated the sharing of talents with the congregation. I know the children were especially intrigued by the instrument and its sound. God's blessing on each of you.

> Amy Farlinger Worship Chair Good Shepherd Lutheran Church Decorah, Iowa

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2 3 2 Si - lent night! Ho - ly night! 4+ 4+ <u>5</u> <u>5</u> 2 through the dark - ness, beams a light!

4+ 3 2 3 2 7

SILENT NIGHT

$$\frac{6}{\text{Rests}}$$
 in heav - en - ly peace,

5

$$\frac{5}{8}$$
 2 $\frac{7}{7}$ 2 1 $\frac{7}{6}$ $\frac{5}{5}$ Rests in heav - en - ly peace.

A famous violinist once said her secret to success was practicing first, then doing the dishes.

- - - - Works well for Psalmodikons, too- - - -



Members attending the Nordic-American Psalmodikonforbundet, September 17-19



Knut Djupedal at the Norwegian Emigrant Museum in Ottestad, Norway, holding the Psalmodikon donated by members of the Nordic-American Psalmodikonforbundet.

Nordic-American Psalmodikonforbundet Att: Beatrice Hole 6560 Leesborough Avenue Eden Prairie, MN 55346 USA

Vår ref.: 2705.63/kd

On behalf of the Norwegian Emigrant Museum I would like to thank you so much for your generous donation of the following object:

1 Psalmodikon, made by Paul Knivsland in 1999. Rosepainted on top and both sides by Beatrice Hole.

Ottestad, 20.09.99

It arrived safely, and will be registered and included in the museum's collections.

Enclosed you will find two copies of the museum's gift certificate. I ask you to please sign both and return one copy to us.

Sincerely,

ss: Knut Djupedal Director

NORSK UTVANDRERMUSEUM OG FORSKNINGSSENTER THE NORWEGIAN EMIGRANT MUSEUM AND RESEARCH CENTER

THE PSALMODIKON IS ON ITS WAY TO NORWAY!



Paul Knivsland of North St. Paul, MN, Ruth Gibson of White Bear Lake, MN Beatrice Hole of Eden Prairie, MN



THE PSALMODIKON THAT WAS DONATED BY THE NORDIC-AMERICAN PSALMODIKONFORBUNDET
TO THE NORWEGIAN EMIGRANT MUSEUM

FINANCIAL REPORT

Cash on hand beginning of year	\$ 22.75
Income:	
Memberships	465.00
Donations	140.00
Expenses:	
Newsletter Printing	101.58
Postage	81.54
Supplies (paper, labels)	15.00
Psalmodikon for Museum	100.00
Balance in treasury at 11/10/99:	
Cash on hand	320.06
Stamps	9.57
	-
Total Cash/stamps on hand	\$ 329.63

Note: Annual Meeting expenses were -0- due to the kindness and generosity of Good Shepherd Church for not charging us for the facilities and furnished us with plenty of coffee to keep us going all day long. Thanks too for the members who brought baked treats for all to enjoy.

Why the name Nordic-American Psalmodikonforbundet?

The name of our organization "Nordic-American Psalmodikonforbundet" came about during our first annual meeting in September 1997. It was chosen because we hoped to model ourselves after the organization in Scandinavia called the Nordiska Psalmodikonforbundet.

Forbundet translated means an alliance, league or club.

Spillemann means musician.

Stemne means convention, rally, or meeting. Now if you see the word "spelstamma" you will know the meaning.

It's hard to say which is worse - a child who doesn't practice his music lessons, or one who does!

Not true of Psalmodikon players though, no music sounds sweeter than when we are practicing with a bow and one string!



Through the efforts of Darrell Henning, Curator, at the Vesterheim Museum, members of the Nordic-American Psalmodikonforbundet were able to study the special display of the Psalmodikon collection at the Museum on September 18, 1999

Letter to Beatrice from Fyllis Foslien, Fridley, MN:

'Welcome to the Psalmodikon Club! I hope you are planning on attending our meeting in Decorah". --This card I received from Beatrice Hole, then a phone call from my nephew, Floyd Foslien --- "Unfortunately, I can't go but you and cousin Shirley should. You'd enjoy it and learn a lot", he said. Yes, I am going I thought. I'll call Shirley and together we'll have lots of fun. We stayed in a private home, the Rasmussen;s, and enjoyed our stay there so much, we asked them to reserve a room for us next Summer for the Norwegian Festival.

Early Saturday morning we found the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, where our meeting was to be held. We were met by the Berg's, who were our host and hostess, inviting us for coffee and lots of good Norwegian goodies. What a great gathering of friendly people! After introducing ourselves and looking and listening to the different Psalmodikons, we had a meeting and good discussion.

Beatrice had made it possible for us to go to the Vester-heim Museum to see their display of Psalmodikons. I'm sure there were between twenty to thirty of them and none were alike. We had lunch at the Dayton House Norwegian Cafe, which served delicious food. I ate Rommegrot, Lefse, and Almond Puff—-Yummy!

The afternoon, back to the meeting place we visited, took pictures and practiced "Aftensolen". Beatrice is so kind and patient, taking time with anyone who was trying to learn more. When she announced that the church had asked if we would play a number at their Saturday evening service — my first thought was "no way", but after practicing over and over, four of us along with Beatrice, did play. It was so interesting to have so many parishioners come to our table of Psalmodikons and ask questions, it was very rewarding. On Sunday during Communion, Beatrice played a medley of hymns and softly singing along with her playing. It was a great way to wrap up our Decorah trip.

I would like to tell you how Shirley and I got our Psalmodikons. In 1866 our grandmother, her sister and parents came to Minnesota from Norway. One of their possessions was the Psalmodikon, now belonging to Floyd Foslien. After Grandma passed away, my father, Frank Foslien (her son) put it away for safe keeping, and he really did. After his twelve children were grown and left home, he decided to show and give it to our brother, Norman, who with his wife, Nola, always entertained family and

friends with their numerous instruments. Nola worked and practiced on this old Psalmodikon and played at nursing homes and other gatherings. After my brother Norman passed away, Nola decided she should do something with this instrument, but keep it in the Foslien family. Nolan, being a very clever and thoughtful person, came up with the idea of having it auctioned off at our annual Foslien picnic. She said the proceeds of the sale should go to the Reunion Fund and that whoever became the new owner would have to learn to play it and do so at our next picnic. It was exciting bidding on this treasure of Grandma's and the final bid was my nephew, Floyd, who is now the proud owner of this antique instrument.

Not only did Floyd learn to play, he also made a replica of Grandma's Psalmodikon for the Reunion Picnic to be auctioned off, it was so exciting. Little did I know I would be the one to own this one — my husband, Tom, bid and won the bid so I have the first one Floyd made. But each year he donates one to our picnic reunion. Shirley Sorenson, also a granddaughter of Gurina, has the second one and this past summer my nephew Leroy Foslien, became the proud owner of one. I know there are many more in our big family interested in bidding on one. Our fund has grown by leaps and bounds.

Thank you, Beatrice and Rodger, and all the new friends we met in Decorah. It was an educational and exciting weekend. Hope to see you again next year.

Fyllis (Foslein) Flanery

Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm!

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Be slow to anger and quick to forgive - and you will have friends as long as you live.

Remember the teakettle... though it's up to its neck in hot waterit continues to sing.

The friends we meet on the path of life make the trip worthwhile.

Where there is room in the heart, there is always room in the house.

It really isn't a smile until you aim it at someone.

tory of Psalmodikon players -

- 1789 Announcement of need for betterment of hymn singing within the Scandinavian churches. Mainly the rural churches.
- 1815 Norwegian publication "Music Conditions in Norway" by Lars Roverud. (1777-1850)
- 1819 Lars Roverud travels to Germany to study music. Learns of a single stringed instrument and Sifferskrift. (numerical method of reading music)
- 1820 Lars Roverud travels to Denmark and meets a school teacher, Jens Worm Bruun (1781-1836). Bruun is trying to simplify music teaching by using a simple instrument, which he called a "one-stringer". This instrument is similar to the ancient Monochord instrument of Greek Philosopher Phytagoras (496 b.c.) used for measuring the mathematical relations of musical sounds.
- 1825 Lars Roverud sees the Danish "one-stringer" now in Herr Winther's Music Shop in Kristiania (Oslo), Norway. Roverud becomes very interested in making improvements and hoping to use it for hymn singing. He hires Christopher Hansten, a mathematician, to measure the frets in half step increments and to mark them by number. The music can then be played using the Sifferskrift method. Roverud also reduced the many scales used on the Danish instrument and set up a system using transposition sticks to eliminate retuning the instrument for each song.
- 1828 Lars Roverud travels to Stockholm, Sweden, to study music and tells Johannes Dillner (1785 1862) about his Psalmodicon and how it can be used to lead in hymn singing and to teach 4-part harmony.
- 1830 Johannes Dillner writes instructions for playing the Psalmodikon and a special edition of the hymnbook is published using the Sifferskrift method.
- June 15, 1835 Lars Roverud receives authorization form the Royal Resolution of the State Church to play the Psalmodikon, using the Sifferskrift method, for the betterment of church singing. He also receives a grant to travel among the country churches and teach the Psalmodikon for the betterment of church singing.
- 1839 Rev. Johannes Dillner is ordained into the Ostervalla Parish. He encourages his parishioners to make and play 'heir own Psalmodikons. At this time there were over 10,000 Psalmodikons in this area and many of them are still in existence. The Psalmodikon of Rev. Dillner is still in the Ostervalla Church today.

- 1840 J. A. Lindeman (1805-1848) of Norway, publishes a book on "How to Use Psalmodicon with Music for Hymn Singing".
- 1849 L. P. Esbjorn (founder of the Augustana Church Synod in America) learns to play the Psalmodikon from the wife of Pastor Olaf Forsell of the Ostervalla Parish in Sweden, before he immigrates to America.
- 1846 Pastor Erik Jansson, a Swedish immigrant, played the Psalmodikon and it is on display at Bishop Hill, IL.
- 1850 Pastor Erik Norelius, a Swedish immigrant, of the Red Wing, Vasa and later St. Paul churches, writes "The Salem Singer" for Psalmodikon. Norelius' Psalmodikon is on display in Vasa, MN today.
- 1867 Carl Lundgren, a Swedish traveling preacher and his Psalmodikon, or "Ladan", as he called it. Carl used the strummed chord method of playing.
- 1937 McFarland, Wisconsin, Salmodicon Quartet (tape recording at University of Wisconsin). Performers: Elsie Thompson, Bertha Larson, Mrs. Herbert Flugstad and Nora Erickson.
- 1981 Ardith K. Melloh, Iowa City, Iowa, researches and publishes "Grandfather's Songbooks, or the Psalmodikon in America".

Henry Storhoff (1906-187) of Lanesboro, Minnesota enjoyed playing the Psalmodikon along with his wife playing the piano.

Harlis Anderson (1911-1994) of North St. Paul, Minnesota played a Psalmodikon made by his grandfather in 1867. Often performed with Beatrice Hole of Eden Prairie, Minnesota.

1997 - Beatrice Hole, Eden Prairie, Minnesota, founded the Nordic-American Psalmodikonforbundet to preserve the heritage of and rekindle interest in the Psalmodikon. Beatrice plays extensively giving demonstrations to groups and organizations.

1999 - All the members of Nordic-American Psalmodikonforbundet who are dedicated to carrying on the Psalmodikon tradition.

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BOB SOLUM

August 23, 1999

Dear Beatrice.

Thank you for being at the Hjemkomst Center in Moorhead, Minnesota last May. Donna and I enjoyed having you play the Psalmodikon at the morning service. After hearing you play your Psalmodikon at the Hjemkomst Center, I knew it was a project I wanted to get on. I thank you for the Psalmodikon pattern and information.

Didn't have time to locate correct materials, so built it out of "on-hand" stuff. Now had to make a bow. At first it didn't play, but with much determination, I have a bow that works. Used the hair from the tail of my grand-child's horse.

Also was asked to demonstrate at a Lund Church near Detroit Lakes, Minnesota, at a Summer Service. Had so much interest and questions asked. Hopefully someone there will want to make one and I will help whoever I can. What a wonderful experience.

I look for more wonderful times with this, as I plan to make a Psalmodikon for each of my four daughters. To make a bow that works, is a real triumph.

Glad to be a small part of this. Thanks for everything.

Bob Solum Hawley, Minnesota

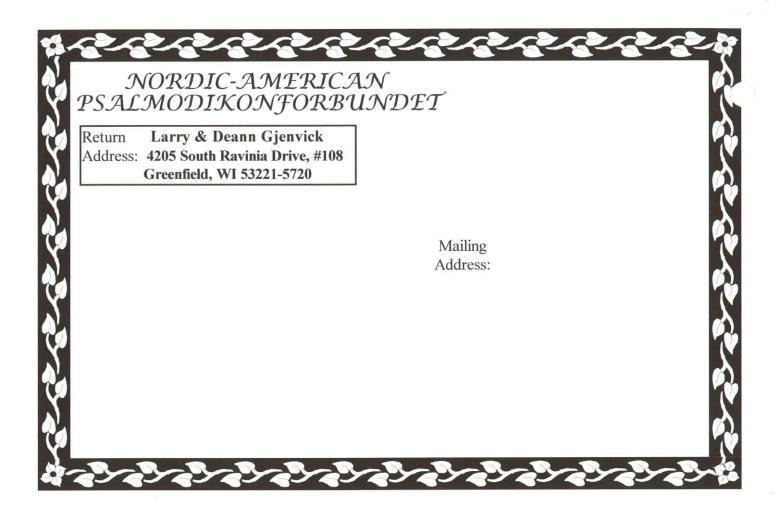


DONALD & BARBARA BERG

The Nordic-American Psalmodikonforbundet gives a great big "THANK YOU" to Donald & Barbara Berg of Decorah, Iowa, for hosting our 3rd Annual Meeting. They are members of the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church and made all the arrangements for our meeting which was held at the church, reservations at the Dayton House for lunch, the publicity and also made arrangements with Darrell Henning of the Vesterheim Museum for a great display of the Psalmodikon collection. That was a big job well done!!!



THE WELL FED PSALMODIKON PLAYERS



Notes from the Editors:

We try to keep our membership records accurate and up to date, however if you do note any error please advise the Editor for correction. Check the date on your mailing label which indicates if your dues are current. Dues for the year 2000 may be sent to Beatrice Hole. Thank you for your support!

The Nordic-American Psalmodikonforbundet Newsletter is published in March(April), August and November. The editor and staff are always looking for news worthy items or photos and welcome articles from members that you want to share with other readers.

Your \$5.00 membership fee helps to cover the cost of printing and postage for the Newsletter and also helps to defray the costs incurred at the Annual Meeting. The Newsletter is mailed to over 78 households as well as several Museums and other historical societies.

THANK YOU!

Thanks to all those of you who donated funds for the Norwegian Emigrant Museum project. This enabled the gift of the Psalmodikon to the Museum from the Nordic-American Psalmodikonforbundet and the our organization will be associated with the display at the museum for all time.