

# Nordic-American Psalmodikonforbundet

“ A Society dedicated to the education and preservation of the Psalmodikon and Sifverskrift Music. ”



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## Notes from MUSIC-ON-A-STRING

Beatrice Hole

*It has been a busy summer and time flies by too quickly. It has been enjoyable. We did some travelling, visited many friends and family, and enjoyed playing the psalmodion several times at different venues.*

*A big thank you to Molly and Kirk Beiningen of Milwaukie, Oregon for their donation of two soft sided psalmodikon carrying cases and one hard-side case, formerly used for Appalachian dulcimers. Not only did they donate the carrying cases but also covered the postage to mail them to my house. I met them at the psalmodikon session when visiting Oregon and Washington this summer. For anyone who is in need of a new storage case, please contact me. It is always sad to open the mail and have to read that we have lost a special friend. This issue we write of two long-time members who have passed on.*

*Thank you to everyone who supports the psalmodikon heritage. It is always fun to get the updates from you folks.*

*Have an enjoyable holiday season. Will write again in the Spring!*

*May you always have a song in your heart and music at your fingertips!*

## VESTERHEIM PSALMODIKON DISPLAY

Beatrice Hole

**V**esterheim, the National Norwegian-American Museum and Heritage Center in Decorah, Iowa, shares the most comprehensive collection of Norwegian-American artifacts in the world, including over 30,000 artifacts and 12 historic buildings. This includes many old psalmodikons several of which are displayed in a glass case with information available either by cards or connecting to the [QR Code](#).

*QUOTE: “Psalmodikon Music”, published in Kristelige Salmer by S. O. Anderssen: One of the main reasons for the psalmodikon’s popularity was its simplicity and accessibility – it was easy to make and even easier to play. Music for the psalmodikon was frequently notated on slatted boards which fit alongside the fingerboard. Different arrangements of numbers on the boards represented various musical keys. Playing was as easy as connecting the numbers written on the music page to the ones next to the fingerboard!*

*QUOTE: The psalmodikon is a very simple one-stringed instrument which was frequently used in Norwegian churches. It was officially recognized in 1835 by the Royal Resolution in Norway as a musical instrument acceptable for playing church music (the fiddle was not!). After this authorization, its popularity increased and the instrument spread rapidly. The psalmodikon was mainly used to play hymns and was an inexpensive alternative to a pump organ, making it common in early Norwegian-American churches. Once an immigrant church congregation became more financially established, they frequently abandoned the blander sound of a psalmodikon in favor of an organ or a piano.* 



**Above:** This psalmodikon is complete with a string and numbered transposition sticks used for changing the key note of song rather than returning. **Left:** The display card has a fascinating link with its QR Code. Can you scan it and find out where you will be led?



# In Memorium

Beatrice Hole

## ARDYCE ALBRECHT

Ardyce Albrecht of Montevideo, Minnesota passed away at the age of 93 on 15 June 2017.

Ardyce and her husband, Bud, became members of the Nordic-American Psalmodyikonförbundet in 2000. Eventually their daughter, Emily, and husband joined them and formed a Psalmomdikon Quartet, all playing on psalmodyikons built by Bud.

Bud passed away in 2003 and is remembered as the generous one who built and gave everyone a fold-away, table-top music stand.

Eventually Ardyce lost much of her eyesight and was no longer able to play the psalmodyikon, but she continued to faithfully attend psalmodyikon meetings with her daughter. The last one she attended was in



**Above:** Ardyce Albrecht (r) and her daughter, Emily;  
**Above Right:** Henry Storhoff and his wife.

August 2015 at Zion Lutheran Church in Hudson, Wisconsin. She loved the music of the psalmodyikon!

Our condolences to the family of Ardyce.  
*May her memory be blessed.*

the monies, the membership, and encouraged the writing of the Psalmodyikon Newsletter. He also introduced his son, Paul, to set up a web site. Even after Larry and Deann moved to Wisconsin, he continued his interest in the psalmodyikon organization by e-mail correspondence, if not in any other way. Larry built several psalmodyikons and loved to play them.

We have lost a very special man with a gentle spirit and a profound personal faith. Larry made a difference in the lives of so many people — living his faith and his life in the service of others.

Our condolences to Dee and family. Larry will forever be in our memory.

## MEMORIES OF HENRY STORHOFF

When I first started playing the psalmodyikon, there were no written instructions as to how to play the psalmodyikon nor were there any public recordings available as to how it should sound while being played.

I don't remember just how it came about, but I have in my possession a tape



recording that was made at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, back in 1980 with Darrel Henning moderating and Henry Storhoff of Lanesboro, Minnesota telling about the history of his psalmodyikon as well as playing several of his favorite songs. That tape recording has become one of my most valuable possessions. When I was learning to play the psalmodyikon I played the tape over and over hoping to eventually sound as good as Henry Storhoff playing his psalmodyikon.

I come upon that special tape of Henry Storhoff recently as I was going through the files. Even today that is the best sounding psalmodyikon music I have ever heard. I also realized that I had drifted away from his style of playing and needed to make an adjustment. Listening to the Storhoff music on tape is very helpful.

The psalmodyikon is an instrument that produces the best sound while playing a slow melodic tone, such as the old church hymns, as that is what it was first intended for. I think sometimes, we get carried away and buzz through a song without slow deliberate strokes to create pleasing sounds.

I regret that I never had the opportunity to meet Mr. Storhoff as he and his music passed away in 1981 before I had even heard of the psalmodyikon.

Henry had a great passion for playing the fiddle and the psalmodyikon. *Blessed be his memory.*



## LARRY GJENVICK

Larry Gjenvick passed away on 19 August 2017, just shy of his 91st birthday. He was an enthusiastic member of the psalmodyikon and the organization. Larry and Deann, his wife, lived in Minneapolis at that time and attended the first organizational meeting of the Nordic-American Psalmodyikonförbundet in 1997. He became a strong supporter and with his advice, he probably made the psalmodyikon organization as strong as what it is today. Larry took care of

# THE TANDEM PSALMODIKON

Beatrice Hole

**W**hen I visited Sweden back in 1995, I learned about a psalmodikon that had two melody strings, one for each person to play while standing face to face. One was owned by Eric Rorborn and Janne Martensson of Jämtland, Sweden, and another was owned by Lars Eric and Gunilla Lauenstein of Åsbro (Askersunds kommun, Örebro län). They call it a Tandem Psalmodikon.

When I arrived back home again, I contacted a psalmodikon builder, Paul Knivsland in St. Paul, Minnesota, with the challenge of building a psalmodikon for me just like the one I had been introduced to in Sweden. He was able to create a very nice sounding Tandem psalmodikon for me and I was so pleased to add it to my collection.

More recently, Floyd Foslien of Hudson, Wisconsin, has made a Tandem psalmodikon also. Floyd and I create much interest as we play some of our favorite harmonizing tunes on this unique instrument. 



Pictured Above and Left: (1) Eric Rorborn and Janne Martensson; (2) Gunilla and Lars Lauenstein; (3) Floyd Foslien and Beatrice Hole.



## Psalmodikon at Norskeden



Beatrice Hole

**S**on a recent visit to Norskeden near Coon Valley, Wisconsin is a Museum of a nice little Norwegian settlement.

In touring the old buildings on the farm-like setting was a psalmodikon laying on the dining room table in the Haugen-Engum House. Obviously it is a



very old psalmodikon and it has an open back, which is uncommon.

The card reads: It was from the collection of Martha Brye ca. 1870. "This Psalmodicon was made in Coon Valley, Wisconsin and played by my brother Carl O. Brye." (1925 by Martha Brye). 

# PLUCKS AND TWANGS



Beatrice Hole stopped at a booth "CIGAR BOX GUITARS" at the 2017 Minnesota State Fair and visited with Gipson Shoemaker III, Minneapolis, Minnesota. In addition to guitars, he also makes a single stringed instrument that is amplified. Gipson plays it with a slide bar and makes beautiful music. We had an interesting visit as he was not aware of the psalmodikon.



A Psalmodikon was exhibited in the Creative Activities Building at the Minnesota State Fair 2017. The psalmodikon was entered by Tom P. Barrett of Little Canada, Minnesota and won a red ribbon. Congratulations!

## DONALD BERG, VESTERHEIM VOLUNTEER

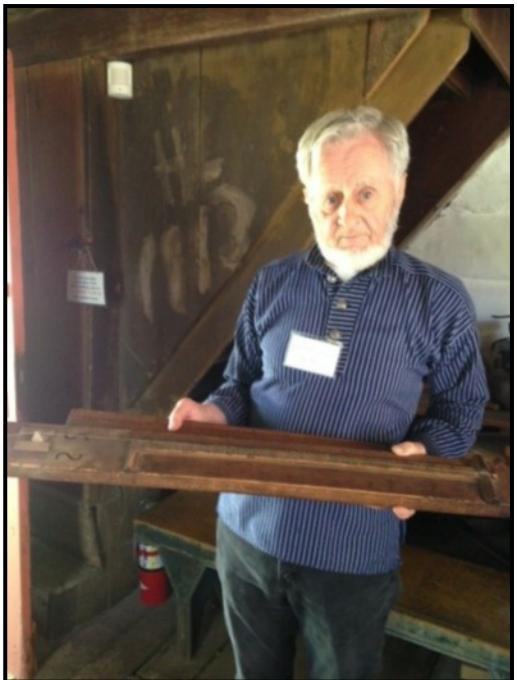
### Beatrice Hole

**S**he first met Donald Berg in 1996 when he was serving as Pastor of the Gol Lutheran Church in Kenyon, Minnesota. The psalmodikon and I participated at a Christmas service there. (I remember what an honor it was to play in the church where my Grandfather was baptized shortly after his family had emigrated from Norway). Pastor Berg sang along with the psalmodikon that evening.

Donald and his wife, Barbara, are now retired and living in Decorah, Iowa. Don is a busy fellow along with singing in the Luren Men's Chorus and volunteering at the Vesterheim Museum and other places. The Berg's are long time members of the Nordic-American Psalmodikonförbundet and in 1999 they hosted the annual psalmodikon get-together at the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Decorah.

Donald Berg with psalmodikon inside of the Egge House located in the Open Air Division of the Vesterheim Museum. Don is a sincere

psalmodikon enthusiast and enjoys telling the Museum visitors all about the history of the psalmodikon and its importance in the churches and homes of the early pioneers. ♫♪



## THE DIARY OF ELISABETH KOREN

**E**he Egge house, that displays the old psalmodikon, was built by Erik Egge in 1852 on his farm five miles southeast of Decorah. In July 1853, he married Helen Pedersdatter, a widow with two small children.

From December 1853 to March 1854, the newlywed immigrants, Rev. Ulrik Vilhelm Koren and his wife Elisabeth, lived with the Egge

family. It is strongly suggested that a good book to read is *The Diary of Elisabeth Koren*, which provides a detailed insight into what it was like for four adults and two children to spend the winter in this one room 14-by-16-foot log house.

Erik Egge and his wife lived in this house until 1872, raising a family of six. ♫♪

## ROSS SUTTER and His One-String Dulcimer

**R**oss Sutter of Minneapolis is best known as a musician of Scandinavian, Scottish, and Irish songs, and for his wide repertoire of American traditional and popular songs. He is at home in any situation from concert hall to library or school, from outdoor festival to senior center, also as a solo performer or with additional musicians or dancers.

With a degree in Music Education, Ross has years of experience working with children, adults, and seniors and has developed many popular and time-tested workshops. His popular one-string dulcimer building workshop always leads to a successful completion of an

instrument with playing instructions.

On September 11–15, Ross conducted a week-long class at the Senior Center in Northfield, Minnesota. On Wednesday he was assisted by Beatrice Hole on her psalmodikon, which is similar to the one-string dulcimer, and several new songs were learned.

On Friday following the week of classroom instruction, the eight students played several songs on their dulcimers in the Sunshine Café. This was followed by a Psalmodikon Concert by duo Beatrice Hole and Floyd Foslein.

—Sponsored by St. Olaf Norwegian Department and Humanities Faculty ♫♪





## ITEMS FOR SALE

### **PSALMODIKON SONGBOOK** (revised edition)

written in *Sifverskrift* and 4-part harmony for psalmodikons  
\$15.00 ea. + \$7.20 pstg

Send orders to: **Beatrice Hole**

### **PSALMODIKON QUARTET CD**      \$15.00 pp

Send orders to: **Singsaas Lutheran Church**  
Attn: Music CDs  
P.O. Box 87, Hendricks, MN 56136  
<http://www.countrychurchmusic.com/>

## Greetings from Readers



Hei hei Beatrice,

Jen, Jeff, and Else just returned from ten days circumnavigating Iceland. They were having supper in a restaurant in Reykjavik, and Else noticed a picture on the wall of an old man playing a Psalmodikon. [See right] She thought of me and sent an Instagram of the picture.

Notice how the old man is holding his left hand??? Do you suppose he is using his thumb on the frets!!!!???

I asked for the name of the Restaurant, so Jen sent me a photo of the restaurant sign hanging over the sidewalk.

Anyway, a couple of photos for your collection.

Ha det. — Herb, Stillwater, Minnesota



## Nordic-American Psalmodikonforbundet & Newsletter

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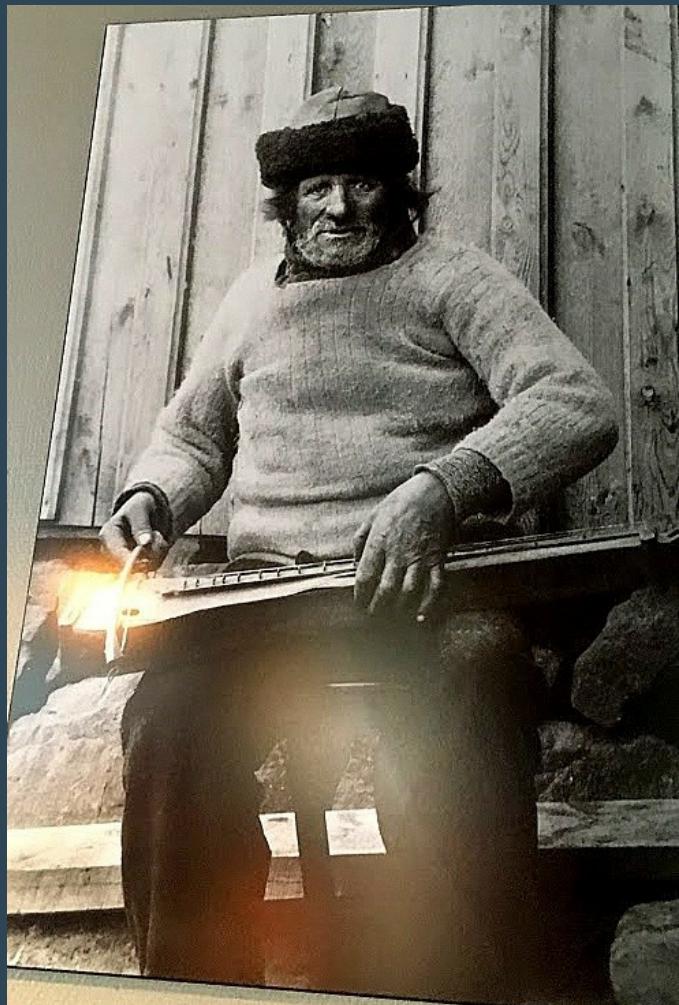
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The *Nordic-American Psalmodikonforbundet Newsletter* is published in the Spring, Summer, and Autumn. We are always looking for newsworthy items and photos that you want to share with other readers.

The **\$8.00 membership fee** helps to cover the cost of printing and postage for the Newsletter, annual fee for the Psalmodikon Web Site, and annual meeting expenses.

Check the date on your mailing label which indicates if your dues are current.

Send membership dues to: **Beatrice Hole**  
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## PSALMODIKON FOR SALE

(#65 made by Floyd Foslien)

Psalmodyikon Songbook and CD. \$200.00.  
Contact: Myron Wilcox (608) 276-7609  
325 S. Yellowstone Dr. #328  
Madison, WI 53705

## PSALMODIKON CASES

2 Softside cases with zipper enclosure; 1  
Hardside case suitable for a small Psalmodyikon  
or Dulcimer. Slightly used. Make offer.  
Contact Beatrice Hole.

### NORDIC-AMERICAN PSALMODIKONFORBUNDET



MUSIC-ON-A-STRING

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