

## Message from your President - Kristi Gustafson



This is the second newsletter in our Covid-19 experience and life has slowed for many of us. Hopefully, you are finding ways to adapt to the changes this pandemic has brought about. It certainly makes one appreciate that we live in a time in which advances in science and medicine allow research to be done more quickly and give hope there will be a vaccine in the near future. Meanwhile, we will be Swedish strong and work our way through it.

Our New Sweden board has continued meetings via Zoom but we look forward to our next meeting in August, which will be outside using appropriate social distancing. For the safety of our members, the board has made difficult decisions to cancel some of our traditional events like the annual Kräftskiva party. As our state guidelines change, we are looking at organizing some simple get-togethers outside in parks for our general membership. We will notify you by email of dates and times.

It was the 93rd year the Swedish community celebrated Midsummer in Portland. Over the years, the event has had its ups and down but this was a very unique year due to the pandemic. For many months the League of Swedish Societies had been working to have a more traditional Midsummer, planning on moving it to a park in Lake Oswego on the shores of the Willamette River. That changed with the pandemic and the League board opted to have a small event primarily to maintain the tradition. Hopefully, next year we can return to a larger gathering.

When Carol Tripp was president of New Sweden, she generously donated a small storage building that is on the grounds of Fogelbo and known as the Swedish stuga. Our stuga needed to be moved and leveled as well as some repair on the entrance. The Fogelbo Trolls, a group of volunteers mostly from the Finlandia Foundation and Nordic Northwest, meet on Tuesday mornings to work on the grounds of Fogelbo. They offered to do the work on the stuga if New Sweden paid for the materials, which the New Sweden board gladly agreed to. It was decided that the roof would be changed to allow for more storage as well as making it visually consistent with the other adjacent small storage buildings. The project is progressing and we are grateful for the work the trolls are doing.

Stay healthy,

Kristi Gustafson  
New Sweden President

## 2020 Events Calendar summary

(Canceled) Kräftskiva celebration on August 8th.

[More event info TBD for our October newsletter.](#)

### COMMUNICATIONS

We are relying more on emails to update our members with information that develops after the last newsletter was printed, but would be outdated before the next newsletter.

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### Storage stuga work by the Fogelbo trolls

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**Lunch by Troll Mama - the Trolls have nearly perfect attendance on work days.**

Dirk Schulbach, raised Finnish but science says he is 30% Swedish! Dirk is making roof trusses by first creating a "jig" so the trusses will all end up alike and there will not be "waves" in the roof.

Robert Basel, says he is Swedish but historically he is Astorian. "Bob" likes to be called

Robert. Here he is notching 12 ft. 4 X 4s to create an over lapping "joint". The 4 X 4s will bolt to the top of the wall plate and extend 4 ft. over a porch at the front door to keep water out when the front door is open and four feet over the back wall to form an eave that will eventually cover a rear wall storage/equipment locker. Long construction screws were used to anchor the walls to the top plate and to the floor. "Hurricane" brackets will secure the roof trusses to the walls as the new roof will be taller and have more wind exposure.



Framing from the original roof is being used as bracing for a storage "loft". The roof trusses will each be 24" apart, covered construction sheathing and screwed to the trusses for strength and rigidity. Tar paper, metal roofing and a vented cap will complete the roof. Fogelbo trim will complete the conversion.

## Storage stuga work by Fogelbo trolls (continued)



The latest picture of our New Sweden stuga with finish trolls Dave and Ray working on it.

## Photos by Gun Blodgett



From left to right: Sir Ross, Jim Blodgett's 80th birthday and all decked out for midsummer 2020.

## League of Swedish Societies Midsummer at Fogelbo on June 19



**Text below and all photos from Kim Whitcher Majors Facebook post**

Played with my daughter at the majstång (midsommar pole) at Fogelbo. Lots of technical difficulties so we were not able to live stream. We think some of it got recorded, waiting to hear about that. We had a small group attending, all at a distance and wearing masks. We got cool Swedish Dalahorse and Swedish flag masks.

We ended with a Nylandspoikarnas tune, “Nerifrån” and we told the story how the Olson brothers (Nylandspoikarnas) immigrated in 1928 to Vancouver, WA. They had reintroduced 6 tunes lost to the Bingsjö, Sweden repertoire when they went back to Sweden for a visit. I hardly know a fiddler who plays Swedish folkmusik that doesn’t have “nerifrån” in their repertoire! The highlight was meeting the 1941 Midsummer Queen of Portland, Elsie Lovgren Nordby, who is the mother of Jeff Klein, one of our dancers/dance instructors. Elsie says she remembers the Olson brothers playing locally way back when! The Olson brothers passed away late 60’s/early 70’s.



The League of Swedish Societies Midsummer has been an Oregon Heritage Event since 1928. A good crowd turned out at Fogelbo on June 19 to celebrate, despite the muggy weather. Many thanks to the League of Swedish societies for keeping this wonderful tradition alive!



**This article is continued from the May newsletter:**

**[https://www.newsweden.org/lib/doc/newsletter/Newsletter\\_May\\_2020.pdf](https://www.newsweden.org/lib/doc/newsletter/Newsletter_May_2020.pdf)**

**The final installment of the article will be published in the October newsletter.**

The biggest production was with the Portland Opera in 1986. This included many of the local Scandinavian performing groups. Four opera singers came from each of the Scandinavian countries. The Swedish Folk Fiddler orchestra came from Seattle. The concert was emceed by Carol Niskanen and Robert Bailey, the director of the Portland Opera. Ross Fogelqvist co-directed the event with Robert Bailey.

The concert was broadcast nationwide on National Public Radio. It was no doubt the biggest and most successful cultural event in the history of the Nordic community in Portland. The Portland Opera provided colorful backdrops for the staging, plus all the technical know-how for producing such a grand event. The Portland Art Museum hosted a lavish patrons party. Opera singers from Scandinavia were part of that program. A post-concert Christmas party was held at Fogelbo, which was in its Christmas glory with over thirty candles burning, people in festive Scandinavian costumes, fiddlers from Seattle, and a Christmas buffet with plenty of libation (glögg etc.).

A festive party followed the concert at the Schnitzer concert hall. After five major concerts at the Schnitzer concert hall, it was decided we would try another approach to fundraising.

The first ScanFeast dinner and auction was held at the Red Lion Inn next to Portland State University. An enthusiastic crowd raised \$10,000. That was the beginning of an annual fall tradition. These banquets and auctions were held at many different places in the Portland area throughout the next thirty years. The planning committee consisted of many volunteers from each of the Nordic countries. There was an auction chair, plus silent auction and oral auction chairs. Since the construction of Nordia House, the auctions have been held in that facility. The most recent auctions raised between \$150,000 and \$200,000. Many members of the Nordic community organizations attended the earlier auctions. Recently, their numbers have dwindled to a handful of people. They have been supplanted by well-to-do benefactors.

## History of Nordic Northwest (formerly SHF) by Ross Fogelqvist (continued)

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Many local Scandinavians were unhappy with the loss of our Nordic treasures to other museums and cultural centers. There was also a real lack of a center where local Nordic organizations could hold meetings and events. It was decided that it was important to have a Scandinavian center in the Portland-Vancouver area. Two properties next to Fogelbo came on the market in 1992. Ross Fogelqvist made the first sizable donation by selling an acre of land, including a rental house adjacent to his property, for \$15,000. A prominent Norwegian woman, Gunvar Dahl, made a donation of \$10,000 to initiate the fundraising. She also donated an exquisite Norwegian immigrant trunk that is now housed at Nordia House. A capital campaign was started to raise money for the proposed Scandinavian center. The goal was two-fold: first, to have a facility in which we could exhibit our local, cultural Scandinavian artifacts and significant cultural and historical items. Second, it was to have a facility where local organizations could hold their meetings and events. It was decided to purchase an acre and a half of land, adjacent to the acre donated by Ross Fogelqvist.

Carl and Marian Thompson kindly volunteered to initiate the Founders Club. For a number of years, they conducted a well-organized presentation for fundraising for the proposed center. Founders (those who donated \$1000) were recognized by colorful medallions from each of the Nordic countries. They raised sufficient funds for SHF to purchase the adjacent property. Swedish Lodges each donated: Harmoni, \$10,000; Nobel, \$11,000; and Linnea, \$18,500.

In 1986, the official name of the organization became Scandinavian Heritage Foundation. This proposal was made by Dr. Bernhard Fedde, the patriarch of the then Scandinavian community. A board of directors was formed with mostly members of the Scandinavian organizations. Board meetings were held at the office of Priscilla Blumel, our first executive director. This office was located at Southwest Merlo Drive in Cedar Hills.



New Sweden  
Cultural Heritage Society

In 1989, the New Sweden Cultural Heritage Society was organized, with one of its major goals establishing a Scandinavian center, and promoting Swedish culture and heritage. Ross Fogelqvist served as their first president for many years. Many of its board members and general members worked in conjunction with SHF in major fundraising events such as ScanFeast. A number of their presidents served on the SHF board. They were granted affiliate status in 1991, which enabled them to have a voting delegate on the SHF board of directors.

## History of Nordic Northwest (formerly SHF) by Ross Fogelqvist (continued)

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A campaign was initiated to begin to collect and to inventory items for the future Scandinavian museum. Board members met with a chosen architectural firm, Farr, Flesher & Ayott, to begin the plans for building the proposed center. We were all very excited to be involved in the construction of the future center. Over \$40,000 was spent with this firm in preliminary plans for the center. This turned out to be an exercise in futility. Board members had unrealistic ideas on how to construct such a center. Eventually, former board member Cy Stadvold was employed to design the building.

The question of wetlands on part of the property became an issue of contention. Contrary to the opinions of the local state and private agencies, who'd declared it was not an issue, the U.S. Corps of Engineers disagreed. This caused considerable consternation and friction on the board as to how and where the future Scandinavian center should be built, The board decided not to purchase the land, after considerable difficulties with the county concerning the wetlands. At that time, and for some continuing time, dealing with the county's regulations was problematic. Some on the original board began looking at other properties, but found none were available or as attractive as the two lots we could purchase next to Fogelbo. Eventually, Cy Stadvold's wetland's specialist was able to mitigate the wetlands designation. Reason prevailed, and the issue was resolved. Plans then progressed for the construction of the center.

Plans continued for the future building on the Oleson Road property. The office was moved from the Cedar Hills location over to the home that existed on the newly purchased property. There were three offices, a board room, and a small storage area. This building provided the meeting space and the administrative center for the Scandinavian Heritage Foundation until 2013. The rental house on the Fogelquist property was demolished and the area was developed into a parking lot for SHF.



**Mike O' Bryant**



**Sassa Carver**

Mike O'Brian became the new executive director. He led the foundation for the next twelve years. He was of Swedish heritage on his mother's side, and was a hardworking, energetic and social individual who related well to the existing Scandinavian community. Sassa Carver, an outgoing and popular German native, was hired as secretary.

## History of Nordic Northwest (formerly SHF) by Ross Fogelqvist (continued)

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Four promotional videos were made to encourage people to donate and participate. A partially constructed Viking ship was moved to the property. This Viking ship received a lot of publicity in the local media. The organizers and overseers of the construction of this ship became involved in a dispute. Efforts to save the ship proved futile and the ship was eventually dismantled. Extensive meetings were held with Washington county authorities on attaining all the necessary permits for the construction of the center. Ralph Tumi coordinated the efforts for the planning of the center with the county. (He also oversaw the construction at OHSU for over thirty years.)

Fundraising was slow and sporadic. The recession of 2008 was a big hindrance. Many people in the Scandinavian community had a pessimistic view about when or even if this building would be constructed. Fortunately, far-sighted and enthusiastic board members continued to push for the construction of the building. Aase Beaulieu was hired to spearhead the fundraising campaign. The wetlands issue was successfully solved and mitigated. Volunteers planted the prescribed shrubs and trees, and a sprinkler system was established to ensure their survival.

Fogelbo became the site for many fundraising events. For one of them, Garrison Keillor, the well-known author and humorist, held a fundraising presentation on the grounds on May 29<sup>th</sup>, 1994. Carl and Marian Thompson provided much of the organization and participation in the event. Three hundred people gathered for a potluck picnic and show. Local folk musicians and dancers also provided entertainment. Garrison Keillor enjoyed the event as much as everybody else!

Fortunately for the foundation, the newly elected board president, a generous Swedish-American philanthropist by the name of Mike E. Nelson, donated a \$150,000 matching grant, and the board members responded generously. In addition to that, he granted a million dollar loan for the construction of the building. He served as president of the foundation from 2013-2020. He also provided funding for the Lucia program and certain aspects of the maintenance of the building. We were extremely fortunate to receive his kind generosity and leadership. In addition, the Finnish Lutheran church donated \$250,000, with the provision that they could use the facilities on Sunday mornings.

**This article will be continued in the October newsletter.**



**Mike E. Nelson**



## Unity and Inclusion in Troubled Times: *Swedes in America* (1943) by Rayna Flye

It is undeniable that we are currently facing a difficult period in American history. Sometimes, however, we can find strength to persevere by looking to the past to see how previous generations coped in challenging times.

We can see an example of this in the documentary *Swedes in America*. Produced in 1943 by the US Office of War Information, this 17-minute documentary stars famed Swedish actress Ingrid Bergman. In the film, Bergman goes around the country to learn more about Swedish contributions in America.

In doing this, Bergman discusses the similarities between the US and Sweden, and visits places such as New York, Philadelphia, and Minneapolis, “the center of Swedish culture.” Along the way, she forks hay, encounters the famous writer Carl Sandburg, attends church and a Lucia procession, and visits a town where every Thursday, all the residents sweep the streets. All across the country, Swedish immigrants are a valued part of American society, making impressive contributions.

The intent behind the film was not entirely innocuous, however. The US Office of War Information wanted to underscore the importance of unity and cohesion among all those living in the America - whether immigrant or citizen - during the war. It brings up the idea that the US is a place of immigrants that collectively contribute to the war effort, and in doing so, become American.

In one scene, Bergman meets “strong individualist” workers who nonetheless managed to peaceably discuss their problems, and work together to come up with solutions for a successful job. She notes, “They were not isolated and alone; they were working cooperatively.”

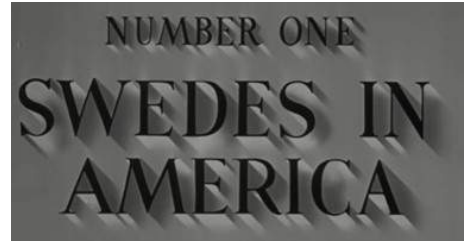
The message is clear: if the battle was to be won, it would be won with a public that was willing to follow the rules, and willing to think beyond their most immediate needs and desires. In other words, progress meant forgoing individual inconveniences for the good of the community. While this was in reference to World War Two, the sentiment still stands today. Amidst a pandemic, an economic downturn, and the challenges to overcoming inequality, it is good to remember those messages.

Admittedly, the writing in *Swedes in America* is not the best (no one is going to confuse this with Bergman’s work in *Casablanca* or *Notorious*), but it provides a wonderful snapshot of the contributions that Swedish Americans were making to the war effort.

The film ends with a message of hope: “Life can be good today, and tomorrow, still better.” Here’s hoping we can take this message from the past to our future, with a promise for a brighter tomorrow.

**The documentary is in the US National Archives, and can be seen here:**

**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FK6T4aaJoto>**



**Excerpt of music article: From a homeless street musician in Nashville to a top-selling artist in Sweden - The remarkable story of Doug Seegers (by J. Granstrom)**

In the previous newsletter, we covered Jill Johnson's highly celebrated TV show "Jills veranda (Jill's Porch)", where she invites Swedish artists to visit her in Nashville to make music and learn about different aspects about life in the American Deep South. In one of the most popular episodes during the first season of the show in 2014, Johnson and her guest Magnus Carlson - singer of the popular Swedish band "Weeping Willows" which has collaborated with Oasis member Andy Bell on several occasions - met the 62-year old homeless street musician Doug Seegers who was performing on a park bench in Nashville. A street vendor recommended Johnson and Carlson to check out Seegers, and both were immediately impressed by Seeger's voice. He tells them that he "lives in a place where he doesn't have to pay rent - under a bridge", and then brings them out to a church where homeless people are offered free food and clothes. During the visit, Seegers plays his own song "Going Down To The River", which impressed Johnson and Carlson so much that they returned some time later and offered to record the song with Seegers in Johnny Cash's old studio in Nashville. Seegers became an overnight sensation in Sweden after the episode was broadcast, and "Going Down To The River" was number 1 on the Swedish iTunes charts for 12 consecutive days. **Read the full article here: <https://www.newsweden.org/culture-heritage/entertainment/>**



**Seegers with Johnson at the Swedish TV show "Allsång på Skansen"**