



SVENSKBYBORNA CULTURAL SOCIETY

July 2014 NEWSLETTER

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President's Report

Karen Wright

2014 Cemetery Service & Annual Meeting

Memorial Service August 10 at 11am, Svea Cemetery

- weather permitting
- dress accordingly & prepare for possible mosquitoes
- Pastor is yet to be determined

Potluck lunch at the church following the service

Annual General Meeting following lunch

2015 Jubilee, August 8 – 9, 2015

The planning has begun for the 85th Jubilee

next year.

We are planning on holding a silent auction again as it was so popular. The items can be anything from hand-made crafts to interesting items old and new.

On Saturday, tours are being planned of some of the original homesteads and farms. We are hoping to have Katarina Hoas' 1912 wedding dress on display at the Wetaskiwin & District Heritage Museum as part of the tour.

Saturday registration and dinner is planned to be held at the Ferintosh Recreation Centre as there is plenty of parking and room for holiday trailers.

To decorate the hall, we are asking families to create a collage of family photos on poster boards to hang on the walls. Each collage will have a question for those attending to try to answer with the person having the most answers correct winning a prize.

We'll end the celebration on Sunday by attending the annual Memorial Service at Svea Cemetery followed by a catered lunch at nearby Calvary Lutheran Church and the Annual General Meeting.

Family News

Departed

The Society wants to honour the memory of the following descendants and relatives of the Svenskbyborna who have recently left us:

Hilda Buskas (Schachtschneider), wife of the late Emil Buskas passed away on February 11, 2014 in Wetaskiwin, Alberta at the age of 84.

Frankie Albers (Caine), wife of the late Gordon Albers, passed away in Lacombe on February 12, 2014 at the age of 93.

Doris Margaret Ball (Schmuland) passed away on February 20, 2014 in Kitchner, Ontario at the age of 82. She was the daughter of Frederick and Maria Kristiansdotter (Buskas) Schmuland.

Jenna Valene Albers, wife of the late Emil Albers, passed away April 11, 2014 in Edmonton, Alberta at the age of 99 years.

Richard Morris Annas, son of Kristoffer and Birgitta Annas, passed away on June 19, 2014 in Edmonton, Alberta at the age of 72.

Births

None reported.

Marriages

Steven John Dimock married Amanda Catharina Prosser in Edmonton on May 31, 2014. Steven is the son of Pat Dimock (Buskas).



Milestones

None reported.

Swedish Villagers – The Sky Our Roof, Earth Our Floor – The Musical

Carol Oslie

We are famous – at least in some circles. As reported some time ago, a musical about our history has been written and produced at the community theatre in Visby, Gotland, Sweden. The following two stories are reproduced from Swedish internet sources. The first appeared during rehearsals and the second when the King and Queen attended a performance. The successful production ran from February to April this year. The Swedish Society mounted a small exhibit in the theatre lobby to augment the play. Now if only it could be translated into English with performances here in Canada.

HELAGOTLAND.SE

The County Theatre's new big push

published 2014-02-05

Länsteatern sets up newly composed musical

The musical "Swedish Villagers - The sky our roof earth our floor" will premiere on February 21 at Visby county theater. Final rehearsals are in full swing right now.





The musical is completely rewritten and is based on a true story of when Swedish villagers in 1782 were sent from Hiiumaa in Estonia to the south of Ukraine. The main characters in the set are the girls Nelly and Alvina (played by Anna Jankert and Martyna Lisowska) who, along with the rest of the village are moving to Sweden in 1929.

Sweden theatres nowadays. For us, the nation's smallest county theater, this is an enormous investment, says theater manager Thomas Sundström.

The music is written by Mathias Lundqvist and script by Carsten Palmaer. The director is Eva Gröndahl, who, as preparation for the musical, met descendants of Swedish villagers.

The musical will premiere on February 21 and played until April 6. "The theatre can accommodate only 120 people so it'll be sold out", says Eva Gröndahl to Gotland.net.

<http://www.helagotland.se/nyheter/artikel.aspx?articleid=9680836>

Their Majesties the King and Queen's visit to Länsteatern Gotland.

Published 2014-03-30

TEXT: Mona Staflin

PHOTO: ' Tommy Söderlund / Stig Hammarstedt



Contemporary musical theater is not usual in



Here together with the ensemble from [the] Musical [about the] Swedish villagers.

Photo: Stig Hammarstedt

Thomas Sundstrom, director of the County Theater in Gotland, is very happy after Saturday's visit of the King and Queen .

"I was pleasantly surprised at the royal couple's genuine interest in our daily work during Saturday's visit by the court to the County Theater to see the show *Swedish Villagers*. It was really nice! I perceived it as they loved the show and I've also heard



afterwards, through other people, they were very happy." Thomas Sundstrom was particularly delighted that the royal couple had plenty of time to talk, both before and after the show.



We talked about Länsteatern and what we do, children's theater, youth theater and especially in parallel with " Swedish Villagers" said Thomas Sundstrom. "On that day [they had to] take up the problem, being forced to flee their homes, but it is a show suitable for preschool children".

"I talked quite a bit with the Queen of the

need to make performances that not only exudes that everything is easy in reality, but there are complicated things that people have to flee and leave their homes and to make such performances even for children. The Queen is deeply involved in the issues."

Thomas Sundstrom was pleasantly surprised by the royal couple's genuine interest in the theater and the daily work , not only in the Swedish villagers' fate. "They're quite familiar with the story. They have been in the Swedish village in Ukraine and know more events and people there, and could refer to it when they saw our show."

"The king asked also about how it is to run the theater, though it is difficult to keep such a large ensemble considering the limited job market on the island. There was the time to really discuss many things and I think that was very good."

"The King and Queen's visit means a lot of attention for the theater and ensemble , which makes it all easier to carry on", explains Thomas Sundström.



"I'm glad everything went so well , the weather was good and the actors delivered at the highest level . "

"Were you nervous before the royal couple arrived?" I asked.

“Yes , that was me actually . Not for the actual performance, that I felt completely comfortable with, but you still feel responsible for anything going wrong in such a moment. In the evening I put on a pair of jeans and puffed out on the sofa”, said Thomas Sundstrom .

“It's great when the head of state comes to visit”, he notes. “It's not so much the court makes this big as the rest of us. The court has no problem if we get a bit wrong at times, but all we organizers do not want anything to be wrong”.

Thomas Sundstrom has attended the court twice before and says that the last time he met with the King during a visit to the residence, he was embarrassed. “My phone rang when the king gave his speech and the King joked about that time” .



Thomas Sundstrom, Länsteatern Theatre Director with Queen Silvia and King Carl XVI Gustaf.

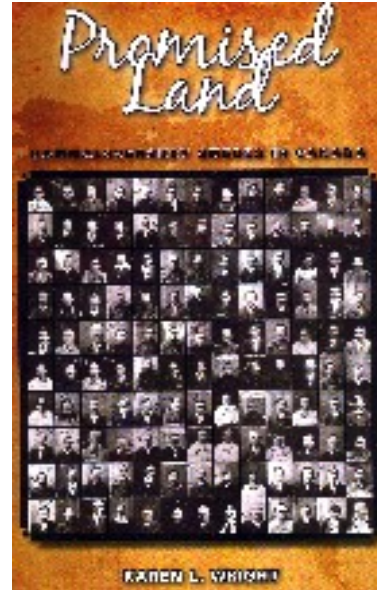
Photo: Tommy Söderlund

Promised Land

Carol Oslie

Many of you have a copy of Karen Wright's book on your reference shelf. You've probably looked for yourself and your family in those pages. Did you ever wonder what

prompted Karen to compile the masses of information and make it available to all of us in an easy to use format? Did you wonder how long it took? I asked Karen those questions and here is what she shared.



Why did you decide to write this book?

I have always been interested in our family history and seriously started researching when I left my full time job. I quickly realized that most of my father's tree had been researched quite thoroughly in Estonian, Swedish and German. So I thought it would be worthwhile to write the Canadian story so we could have a record in English.

How did you approach your research? What was your main source?

The initial research was on free websites such as FamilySearch.org. I also joined some research groups and posted queries on Rootsweb. It was through these sites that I came across Jörgen Hedman who put me in contact with our relatives in Sweden that we had lost touch with for over 30 years. Jörgen provided me with the base contacts to begin the Canadian story. I started contacting the families by email, mail

and phone to start gathering and updating the family trees. Almost everyone was so cooperative and excited about the project.

How long did it take you to write and edit?

It was a seven year project. The editing was the hardest part as the publisher I used didn't have the version of software that was compatible with the family tree tables.

What is the most interesting thing that you learned that you can share with us?

That we are a very unique group of people and we should be proud of our humble beginnings because that is how they could survive all the experiences that they endured. That Gotland Swedish and Old Swedish dialects are two of the hardest dialects to master having a similar comparison of Newfoundland English. One of the families are Kabalarian (numerology) so their names changed with every life event making it almost impossible to track them down. I found the stories of each family's migration fascinating and I learned a lot of history too.

What advice do you have for anyone interesting in writing, for example finding your focus, research process, writing method, software, etc?

I used Family Tree Maker which was one of the best software packages available at the time. Now that genealogy is so popular, there are many programs to choose from. I chose not to post my tree on the web in programs like Ancestry because I didn't want to lose control of my research. You have to be practical in doing research because there are so many people who are willing to take your money. Being diligent and looking at alternate ways of digging out the information can take time but save you a lot of money. For example, to write this book, I did not



belong to any paid websites because 99% of the information was available on free websites and most of the families settled in Canada and not the US. Going to the LDS centre and visiting the libraries who had access to Ancestry also helped. I have several family tree books and used them to decide what my book would look like. I chose a hard cover because I believed the people would want it as a keepsake that would endure time. You have to be careful and diligent in your research for a self-publisher. They are really good at trying to convince you that your book is going to be on New York's bestseller's list. I knew who my audience was and did not deviate from that.

Do you have plans for a sequel or prequel or another kind of book entirely?

I do want to do my husband's family tree but it will be harder because they are Scottish and English with quite generic names. I would also like to print a correction and additions sequel for this book if there was enough interest.

What is the most satisfying thing about

having written this book?

The enthusiasm of the people I contacted over the years and the many enduring relationships that developed out of it. Hosting the first Jubilee in 2005 was so gratifying, bringing together families and telling them their history. Being in management for 14 years, I had to deal with a lot of ungrateful people. This experience was totally opposite and the journey was enjoyable.

Is there anything else you would like to say?

A book like this cannot be done in isolation. It was a success because of all the people who collaborated with me by providing their stories, pictures and family trees. I am indebted to them.

The Estonian Swedes

Carol Oslie

Roy Tinis is a dedicated genealogy researcher. Recently I asked him about his knowledge of the Estonian relationships. In a series of e-mails, he shared what he has discovered and his hope that we will all appreciate what our ancestors have endured.

Roy says "The only thing I have done on the Estonian branches (and it was just by postings on the genealogy queries sites), was to locate a large chunk of the Pavel Simonsson Buskas family and obtain a genealogy of their family. Pavel Simonsson Buskas was an older brother to our ancestor Nils Simonsson Buskas, who somehow, was allowed to remain on Hiiumaa.

I didn't get any photos, stories, etc. Just an extensive genealogy of Pavel's genealogy from a cousin, Patrick Rang, and Peep

Somera, whose roots go farther back on the Buskas family. I would love to try to find any of our other families (Tinis, Buskas, Utas, Mutas, etc) on Hiiumaa, but today, they may not use the same names. For example, for Grandpa Mickel Siffersson (Tinis) there are three possibilities; his sisters may have married and had offspring. That's all I have on any Hiiumaa relatives as of now. If anyone has any ideas of where to go next to search for them, I would be open to ideas.



Jorgen [Hedman] has been trying to locate more on all of the families that may be still on Hiiumaa and possibly in Estonia and other places. There are a few of the Pavel Buskas members in Toronto, according to the information, but finding information can be difficult.

I do have an outline chart of Pavel with about 200-500 names of cousins from that branch, many surnames sounding 'Swedish', such as Quarnstrom (some Swedish surnames use 'Strom'), The thing we just don't know is if Nils (our branch) and Pavel's six other brothers and sisters had offspring, or what happened to them.

Some of the more common Pavel Buskas surnames are Börjer, Pielberg, Lees (may be one or two families in Canada), Simmer, Nabi, Aul, Kvärnstrom, Eller (one family emigrated to Toronto), Rang, Miikman. There are many, many more surnames. Most stayed on Hiiumaa, it seems, but a few came to Canada, the U.S., and a small group went to Queensland, Australia

We are also related to the Kotz family. Three sisters; Walba (1788) (4th Great Grandmother) married Kristian Pettersson Albers; Anna (4th Great Grandmother) (1789), married Johan Mickelsson Tinis; and Kristina (4th Great Grandmother) married Andreas Matsson Buskas.

There are many, many more surnames I have for Uncle Pavel's family.

The most surprising things I come across in my research is the lack of relatives caring about their roots, especially ours from Gammalsvenskby, where three-quarters of them were either wiped out by The March from Hiiumaa to Gammalsvenskby plus the various diseases that hit the villages, and the bloody despots (Stalin, etc) that tried for centuries to wipe us off the map. It is a miracle that we are even here.

I am most disappointed that some of our relatives from Europe have not responded to my enquiries. It makes completing the family trees and research more difficult.

Also, discovering someone you went to school with (this happened a lot when I went to Mecca Glen) was related to you, and trying to figure out how (Darwin Riske thought that Ivy Tennis and I were related one day on the school bus and we connected), or just drawing a line North of Edmonton to the Alberta-U.S. Border, and West-East borders, and realizing how many relatives you have in that little box alone.

One thing on my mother's side. A few years ago, with the help of Rootsweb-like sites, I found first cousins of my Great-Grandfather Olson living down around Strathmore. Surprising! Didn't know he had any first cousins in Canada (or very many cousins at all).

You must remember, I have basically been interested in genealogy (didn't know that's what it was called then), since I was five years old. I really find genealogy fascinating (we could easily add the Graff family to our tree, since there are at least about seven branches so far connected to it!), and mapping out the Ferintosh/ Bashaw/ Ponoka/ Edberg/ Wetaskiwin/ Camrose area starting with the connections to us, and let them go on their own branches. I think that would be fascinating.

And one more thing. I also want to find some way to help those in Gammalsvenskby. If you have family that lives in a country that needs help, shouldn't we, their blood relatives, make an effort to go over there and help them out? They may not need as much help as some [other countries], but just to constantly ignore them and not learn about their plight, while having no problem going to a dictatorship country and helping people there, is just not right."

Membership

We have 50 paid members.

Membership is \$25 per year. New members are always welcome. Contact Deb Fettig, Secretary-Treasurer or any member of the board.

Here in the Swedish Village Life Continues in the Russian's Shadow

Staphan Heimerso
2014-03-08 Reprinted from: AFTONBLADET website

Note: originally published at the beginning of the Ukrainian uprising. Translated by Google



Generations of suffering Svenskättade family Norberg in Gammalsvenskby in Ukraine live and suffer in silence and are fighting for a better life, despite the threat from the neighbour.

This is the week when a) the Swedish defense minister likely sleep poorly, b) Gotlanders ask themselves what they will take with them if they are forced to flee and c) The Center obtains at least one new voice - me - by being the first to propose that system is strengthened.

This is the week when an old litany becomes topical : What if the Russians are coming! That's when I ask myself: What will the family Norberg think about the situation in their country? And the future?

I think I know. Victor Norberg, 63, and his wife Anna, 62, the brother John, 60, son of Valdemar, 36, and grandson Alexander, 16, are Ukrainian. They live 15 miles north of the Crimea, which - much like Hitler did in 1938 in the Sudetenland – was hijacked by

President Putin's Russian troops.

The clan Norberg's not going to dwell on the Russian assault or the sovereign debt crisis and the external dithering.

I can hear my inner mom Anna says: " It is what it is ."

The clan Norberg has known for nine generations how bad it always is, when czars, revolutionaries, communists and paranoid security men, agricultural reformer and contemporary neostalinist antagonists and kleptocrats are raging .

I met the Norberg's when I visited Ukraine last summer. On a whim, I tried to find Swedish descendants in the town with the storybook name Gammalsvenskby .

It was easy. Gammalsvenskby has 230 years of immigration in a fertile plain on the river Dnieper. It still has 130 people who count themselves as Swedish immigrants. The Norbergs started in the Baltics, in Hiiumaa. The island is now in Estonia but was a Swedish possession with a Swedish -speaking peasantry until Charles XII at Poltava, located in the present Ukraine, was defeated by Russia.

Catherine II wanted to modernize it's Russia and stimulated immigration, often by force. A thousand Hiiumaa Swedes made a nine-month long march from the Baltic to the Black Sea in 1781-82. Oppressed peasants jumped at what was perceived as a generous offer - fertile land and finished house awaited them .

Of course it was a lie. It was a death march with children, oxen, horses and carts. Just 135 of the Swedes lived; children and old people succumbed to cold and diseases.

They built themselves huts, put the shovel in

the black earth and built the first church.

Of the small group became a society that then survived:

1. The Crimean War,
2. The Russian Revolution as a result of
3. Civil War between the Reds and the Whites,
4. Moscow's brutal sovietization with murder and deportations of the Ukrainian elite,
5. an induced famine, the Holodomor, which cost millions of lives,
6. forced public launch of what was called the breadbasket of Europe; [collectivization]
7. religious persecution
8. Stalin's paranoia and terror in the thirties (a memorial at the Church speaks of "innocent Swedish villagers who were abducted and disappeared," 18 people in 1937),
9. The Second World War,
10. German occupation,
11. a new starvation,
12. Soviet withdrawal of the area,
13. deportations to Siberia and finally
14. the last two decades, a return to "normal life " and the re-privatization of their agriculture.

It was this amazing story - the suffering followed by worse suffering - I wanted to talk to them about. We sat in the garden among the ducks, dried fish on a clothesline and ripening apples inside a fence painted in blue and yellow, (which is, both Sweden and Ukraine's national colors). Three generations of Norberg and they represented the will to survive and patriotism.

They were not marked by all the violence and all the lies to which they have been subjected. They did not talk about Beria, who was Stalin's security chief. They had no perspective on the 70 destructive communist years. It rang no bells, when I mentioned the Soviet leaders Khrushchev and Gorbachev. It was as if time has stood still - and would continue to do so. Work and suffer but the little things make sure you get the better.

I visited the great city of Odessa and drove the vast wheat and sunflower fields to the Crimea, and I wanted to see Villa Livadia, where the Yalta Conference was held, the one that divided Europe into East and West. I talked my way in and found that the Ukrainian average person was a decent, gentle man with a distaste for politicians, oligarchs and power struggles in the capital. With patience, he wanted to materially create a better life: painting the apartment, buy Ikea furniture online, get new jeans, install a refrigerator and run a used Lada. Sweden in the fifties, Italy in the seventies.

I was also in the now current capital, Simferopol. There I ran astray in search of a hotel. A decent uncle steered me right and drove many miles extra on my account. Now afterwards, I wonder: was he Russian or Ukrainian? I was naive and did not understand that the issue would flare up. They want to be like us, I have had said to me. They want democracy, getting rid of corruption and to take steps towards the EU. It was not on my map, that the Ukraine seven months later would rise up in a classic, popular revolution against a leader - a thief - who gathered political and economic power in his own hands.

There are different interpretations of what is happening now. The strangest, adopted by the young intellectual Swedish left: It was a coup orchestrated by the Nazis and the

Jews in the Kremlin, in which case a unique alliance.

The outcome for Ukraine we do not know - it's a fatalistic choice between an approach to the heart of Europe, or connecting to an alliance of the East dictatorship. But it is a fair prophecy to say that we see the beginning of Vladimir Putin's attempts to destroy it. And with a memory image from Gammalsvenskby I wonder if Lenin's statue is still standing in front of the museum.

Help Wanted

Carol Oslie



Cemetery Service – 2010 Jubilee

This is a call to action. Without more help, the Society may fold next year after the Jubilee.

It's not money or purpose. It's a shortage of volunteers. The current board members have held their positions for many years, some from the beginning, and are feeling burned out. It may also time to review the Society's operation.

President Karen Wright says “ it has been my experience that without a rotating line of Board members, organizations tend to stagnate because of a lack of fresh eyes and perspectives. My suggestion is that there be a term of three years for each position and

this would have to be added to the bylaws.

Secretary-Treasurer Deb Fettig's daughter has volunteered to stand for a board position. Board member Myrna Wyse commented “I think that the only way this society will survive, is with the generation after us to express some interest” .

How can the next generations be inspired to learn, appreciate and celebrate their history? Young board members with new ideas and energy to implement them would be a good first step. Perhaps youth and children's programs are a possibility.

There will be board positions open at the annual general meeting in August. A change to the society bylaws will also be open for discussion. Please plan to attend and share your ideas and observations. Can you or someone you know pitch in and keep our society going strong? Volunteers for the board as well as behind the scenes are always welcome. So are ideas.

Need more information before you commit? Contact any of the current board members and ask.

Karen Wright, President
Rita Nelson, Vice President
Deb Fettig, Secretary-Treasurer
Myrna Wyse, Director
Sharon Sonnenberg, Director

Got Something To Share?

Carol Oslie

I am always looking for contributors to this newsletter. Please contact me if you have stories, ideas, photos, letters, comments or anything else you want to share with the members. I welcome your input. Talk to me, okay?

E-mail: coslie@telus.net