

The Norwegian-American
Historical Association

Northfield, Minnesota

NEWS



LETTER

From the Secretary's Office to the Association Members

NUMBER 57

Editor, LLOYD HUSTVEDT

MARCH, 1979

A Look at 1978

Continued progress marked the past year. Two publications were distributed to the members: *Theodore C. Blegen: A Memoir*, by John T. Flanagan, and *Blow, Silver Wind*, by Erik Bye. The latter was not a NAHA publication. Membership held steady, with a marked increase in life members. Notable acquisitions were added to the NAHA manuscript collections, and use of the archives continues to increase, as do written requests for services. Our staff remains the same. Charlotte Jacobson is our Curator and Archivist and Elaine Kringen manages all affairs related to membership records, annual dues, book sales, monthly reports, and the typing of correspondence and manuscripts. Professor Kenneth O. Bjork, now retired from his teaching duties, works daily on forthcoming publications. Inflation continues to be unkind; it is felt mostly in printing and mailing costs. Postage has suddenly become a major budgetary item. Fortunately, gifts from private sources and grants from public funds have increased sharply over the past few years, with the result that the NAHA is comfortably solvent but yet far from realizing the endowment fund it hopes to build.

MEMBERSHIP

"The doors swing in, the doors swing out;" so go the words of a ballad. They characterize the membership picture for 1978. Even though 86 new members were added, and six were reinstated, the total membership remained unchanged. As the figures below will reveal, there was a significant decrease in associate members, due mostly to cancellations and in part to transfer to other membership categories. The life membership category shows its best year, a net gain of 40.

	January 1, 1978	December 21, 1978	Gain or Loss
Associate	752	703	-49
Sustaining	172	176	+ 4
Patron	37	37	+ 0
Life	<u>235</u>	<u>275</u>	<u>+40</u>
	1196	1191	- 5
Deceased life	<u>80</u>	<u>85</u>	<u>+ 5</u>
	1276	1276	0

Cancellations were disappointingly high. They frequently take place after the first year of membership. Because of the clerical work involved in processing a new member, which includes both office and computer files, a membership of one or two years means a financial loss. The lesson seems to be that no one should be coerced into membership. The cancellation figures are as follows: associate 81, sustaining 7, patron 4, for a total of 92.

BOOK SALES

Book sales, including royalties, amounted to \$4,518.17. Out of a total of 460 books sold, the breakdown went as follows: *Studies* 110, Travel and Description 27, Authors Series 129, Special Publications 123, Topical Studies 67, and NAHA History 4. *Theodore C. Blegen* led the sales.

As of January 1, 1979, the inventory showed a stock of 6,962 books. Of a total of 60 publications, 19 titles are out of print, 8 carry an inventory of less than 50, ten fall between 50 and 100, twelve between 100 and 200, and the remaining eleven have an inventory of 200 or more.

GIFTS

Gifts received in 1978 amounted to \$11,576. The largest of these (\$5,000) came from an anonymous donor. James and Anna Berdahl, Karl F. Rølvaag and Ella Valborg Tweet gave jointly \$2,500. Henry and Janet Halvorson gave \$1,000. (See *Newsletters* for March and November, 1978). Other contributors were Eva Haugen (Mrs. Einar), \$500; Thor Ohme, \$400; Derwood Johnson, \$300; Freda Hovden, O. L. Hyde, Clyde H. Johnson, Sivert Klefstad, and Gladys W. Nelson each gave \$100. Gifts from \$50 to \$75 were received from Clarence Clausen, Gunnar Gundersen and Harry Williams. Forty-five members provided contributions of \$30 or less.

TREASURER'S REPORT (Condensed form)

	1978	1977
Fund balance, January 1	\$31,926.24	\$32,967.40
Income		
Dues, associate, sustaining, patron	10,202.50	10,433.50
Book sales and royalties	4,563.75	4,640.70
Interest on investments	4,734.75	4,269.61
Gifts (Memory of Andrew Wigeland)	5,000.00	4,800.00
Records Commission grant	4,000.00	-----
Miscellaneous income	223.32	317.80
	\$28,724.32	\$24,361.61
Expenditures		
Publications expense		
Printing and binding	\$15,554.97	\$17,724.85
Editorial, typing, mailing, etc.	4,296.38	2,070.43
	\$19,851.35	\$19,795.28
General expense		
Archives, stenographic, postage, equipment, office supplies, etc.	\$ 6,756.30	\$ 5,607.49
Total expenditure	\$26,607.65	\$25,402.77
Current income over (under) expenditures	\$ 2,116.67	(\$ 1,041.16)
Fund Balance, December 31	\$34,042.91	\$31,926.24
Fund Balances		
Chair in Immigrant Studies	\$11,120.49	\$ 7,073.44
Theodore C. Blegen Fund	39,240.77	38,387.68
Ole E. Rølvaag Permanent Fund	41,744.41	34,440.37
Sigvald Quale (Norwegian Society) Fund	5,657.16	5,338.41
Current Fund	34,042.91	31,926.24
	\$131,805.74	\$117,166.14

S/N LODGES GIVE A HAND

Organizations, whatever their character, understandably have a first responsibility to themselves. More often than not, the aims of a society tend to be far ahead of available funds and at times ahead of the collective will of the group.

The truth of this makes it all the more impressive that a number of Sons of Norway lodges have responded to an invitation to become life members of the NAHA, but members under a special plan: The lodge designates a local library as the recipient of the publications it would normally receive.

The plan helps to alleviate an old problem. In the past our publications have been distributed in the main to members and to libraries that have large budgets. Rarely have they entered small local or high school libraries, even if they were located in communities with a heavy Norwegian-American population.

The recent response also helps to fill a dream of the early leaders of the NAHA, who hoped that other Norwegian affiliated organizations, regardless of their objectives (fraternal, social, musical, literary, etc.), would view the NAHA as *their* service organization in matters of immigrant history. Such a view, felt strongly enough, would automatically enlist the support of kindred organizations.

Approximately twenty Sons of Norway lodges held earlier membership in the NAHA. In the interest of space we are listing only those who have responded to the recent invitation. In addition to these are a number of lodges that have indicated an intention to subscribe. We are most grateful.

Columbia No. 58, Vancouver, WA
Fedrelandet No. 23, Petersburg, Alaska
Ibsen No. 537, Estherville, IA
Kong Sverre No. 482, Story City, IA
Kringen No. 25, Fargo, ND
Midnatsol-land No. 535, Clear Lake, IA
Mjosen No. 78, Mayville, ND
Nidaros No. 1, Minneapolis, MN
Normont No. 507, Cut Bank, MT
Nornen No. 41, Madison, MN
Rib Fjell No. 496, Wausau, WI
Sarasota No. 539, Sarasota, FL
Solskinn No. 550, Huron, SD
Telemark No. 103, San Clemente, CA
Ulabrand No. 24, San Pedro, CA

\$15,000 GRANT!

Word has it that good and bad things come in threes. Our case is fortunately the former. It began with \$4,000 from the Historical Publications and Records Commission. Then came an award of 25,000 kroner from the Norwegian Immigration Fund. Just recently the Grants Review Committee of the Minnesota Historical Society awarded the NAHA \$15,000.

The last grant is a matching one to support the publication of *Land of the Free: Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson's America Letters, 1880-1881, The Pathfinder*, by Johan Reiersen (translated from the Norwegian by Frank G. Nelson), and volume 28 of *Studies*. The first has already seen print, and the remaining two are being prepared for publication by Kenneth O. Bjork.

The grant comes from an appropriation made by the Minnesota legislature entitled "State Grant in Aid." The Minnesota Historical Society serves as its administrative agent and considers applications related to historical projects, such as the preservation of historical sites, archives, and publications.

Kenneth O. Bjork processed the application and was present at the hearing which led to the approval of the grant.

BOOKS AND STUDIES

Reunion: East of the Sun, by Del Matheson, Eugene, Oregon, is a family history dealing mainly with the Steiro and Bakken families from Alsta, an island in northern Norway. The work is a model for how family histories should be compiled and written.

"Tragedy in the Life and Writing of Waldemar Ager: Norwegian Immigrant, Author and Editor, 1869-1941," is an M.A. thesis by Clarence Kilde at the University of Minnesota. It is a careful and sympathetic study of 108 typewritten pages.

Haul the Water, Haul the Wood, by Doris Stensland, Canton, South Dakota, is a semi-fictional story that follows the general outline of the lives of Johanna and Ole Overseth, early pioneers in Lincoln County, South Dakota. 210 pp.

ARTHUR ANDERSEN

Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, has named its Education Building Arthur Andersen Hall in honor of a former student, professor and chairman of Northwestern's Board of Trustees. The building also houses the department of economics. Andersen was the founder of Arthur Andersen and Co. and served as president of the NAHA from 1936 to 1942.

THE KING IS DEAD!

O. I. Hertsgaard, 95, died March 10, in his Minneapolis home. He was a colorful, lively, and positive force in everything that can be called significant Norwegian-American affairs. Among the many offices he held, he was for years the president of the Bygdelagenes Fellesrad. He was popularly known as "Hallingkongen" (The King of Hallingdal), but his spirit ruled over a larger domain than that.

ATTENTION!

According to our records *Land of the Free* has been mailed to all paid up members. There have been cases wherein the sticker labels have torn off during postal handling. Such packages are returned to us, but we have no evidence who the rightful owner might be. Anyone who has not received our latest publication should notify the secretary's office.

TRAVEL SPACE AVAILABLE

The St. Olaf College Orchestra will tour Scandinavia this summer. A DC8 charter (SAS) will leave Minneapolis for Bergen, Norway, on May 28 and return from Stockholm, Sweden, June 16.

Three options are open to interested persons. First, transportation only, \$418. Second, a Scandinavian Civilization and Culture course offered by Reidar Dittmann, a travel-study program that offers college or continuing education credits; the comprehensive cost (travel and accommodations) is \$1,600. Third, the VIP Travel Office in Northfield has designed a Scandinavian tour which incorporates hotels, transportation, some meals, sightseeing tours, and free time for individual activities. The comprehensive cost is \$1,613.

For additional details and reservations, write to Robert C. Johnson, St. Olaf Orchestra Charter, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota 55057. (507) 663-3179.

WELL DONE!

If the NAHA were to elect a "member of the year," it would have to be Casper Nervig. By conducting a "one-man" recruitment program of his own design, he turned over in one letter nineteen — we repeat, nineteen — membership applications, five of them life. Casper Nervig, Williston, North Dakota, is a charter member of the Association.

NORWEGIAN-AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
St. Olaf College
Northfield, Minnesota 55057

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U. S. Postage
PAID
Northfield, Minn.
Permit No. 107