

1990 IN REVIEW

Membership

Each year tends to provide its own set of features that point to growth or in unfortunate cases to decline. We did well in 1990, in some areas exceptionally so.

The addition of 303 new members deserves first mention. Not since the year of organization have so many subscribed to membership in the NAHA. Total membership now stands at 1,888. There were 69 cancellations. It is never pleasant to say goodbye, yet the cancellation figure is not excessive when contrasted with losses in preceding years. The increase in dues which took effect in 1990 reversed an earlier pattern; namely, the number of members (131) who transferred to lower membership categories was significantly higher than those who raised their membership status (53). For a more detailed statement, see the membership chart on the following page.

Gifts

If the future brings success, the launching of a chair in Scandinavian-American studies in cooperation with St. Olaf College may well in historical perspective prove to be the most significant event of the year. To this cause the members of the NAHA have contributed \$19,605.

As the readers of this newsletter may recall, two separate funds will support the proposed chair. Because of a matching agreement, valid until December 31, 1990, NAHA members with a St. Olaf College connection (alum, faculty, parent, etc.) were urged to direct their gifts to the College fund. Of the total cited above, \$12,855 went to this fund. The rest, \$6,750, was allocated to the NAHA fund. In that the matching agreement has expired, all future gifts from members or other sources will enter the NAHA endowment.

Gifts to the Rølvaag Memorial Fund amounted to \$6,703. There was one gift of \$200 specified for the Archives. It should be noted that life membership dues (one payment of \$200) enter the Rølvaag Fund. Since 53 new life members were added in 1990, this fund saw a total increase of \$22,703, lifting this endowment to more than \$200,000, a long-sought goal. The timing could hardly be better. We can now focus our attention on the proposed chair without fear of setting aside or diluting earlier established goals in other spheres of our work. Finally, total gifts for 1990 came to \$26,508.

Regarding the Chair in Scandinavian-American Studies, we have miles to go before we can rest. Institutional, foundation, and public grants must be sought. As a Chinese philosopher said: "Though the journey be a 1000 miles long, the first step must be taken." We are well beyond the first step.

Books

Although distribution of one book to the members took place in January, 1991, two books were produced during the course of the year: *Vivacious Daughter: Seven Lectures on the Religious Situation Among Norwegians in America* by Herman Amberg Preus, edited and translated with an introduction by Todd W. Nichol, and *In Their Own Words: Letters from Norwegian Immigrants*, edited and translated by Solveig Zempel.

Book sales of \$4,794 for 1990 fall below our past average of approximately \$6,000. Several reasons can be mentioned. Our more popular titles are out of print. The cost of books has increased at an alarming rate and library budgets have not kept pace, hence sales in this area have dropped. In addition, our editions are too small to permit us to engage in costly advertising or other forms of sales promotion.

Out of a total of 80 publications 48 are still in print with an unbalanced total inventory of 7,570 copies. Thirteen titles have an inventory of 50 or less; ten fall between 51 and 100. This portion of our stock must be viewed as a desirable reserve for future sales. Eleven titles fall between 101 and 200 copies. The most pressing need is to move the 14 titles that exceed a count of 200, some go as high as 600.

Archives

Material continues to come in, sometimes faster than we are able to process. Forrest Brown, who assumed responsibility as archivist in September, is at his desk and is gradually reducing the backlog that had accumulated. The archives see constant use by both professionals and amateurs.

As reported earlier, the NAHA archives and offices will first move to temporary quarters (perhaps for one year) in the new addition. Some areas of the existing library will be renovated. When this work has been completed, the NAHA will then move into its permanent quarters. We will have the Kierkegaard Library and the St. Olaf College Archives as neighbors and will share some common facilities. The new quarters will provide an office for the editor. This has not been the case in our existing accommodations.

MEMBERSHIP 1990

	Associate	Sustaining	Patron	Life	Deceased Life	Total
January 1, 1990	490	318	108	595	143	1,654
Members added	195	45	10	53	—	203
Transfers in from other categories	89	66	4	27	9	195
Total	284	111	14	80	9	398
Cancellations	53	13	3	—	—	69
Transfers out to other categories	38	82	64	9	—	193
Total	91	95	67	9		262
Net Gain/Loss	+193	+14	-53	+71	+9	+234
Total Members, December 31, 1990	683	332	55	666	152	1,888

Thank You!

The following made unsolicited gifts of \$100 or more to the NAHA in 1990. The list does not include contributions made as a response to the Chair appeal. They will be reported on separately. Alfred D. Olson and corporate matching \$1,500; Eva and Einar Haugen, Leif Melgaard, and Marion and Lila Nelson, each \$1,000; Ole V. Groos \$550; Robert Fering \$500; R.I. Jacobson \$300; Eunice L. Thompson \$250; Freda Hovden, Nils Wm. Olson, and Haldor Sandvin, each \$100.

Our Next Publication

Lowell J. Soike of Des Moines, Iowa, is the author of our forthcoming publication. The title, subject to later change, is *Norwegian Americans and Politics of Dissent, 1880-1924*. In this work

Dr. Soike examines the limits of ethnocultural analysis in explaining Norwegian-American political behavior. No precise publication date has been set, but our editor, Odd S. Lovoll, anticipates that the book will be distributed to members in early fall of this year.

Note!

Barring any errors on our part or on that of the postal service, our latest publication, *In Their Own Words: Letters from Norwegian Immigrants* should now have been received by all members in good standing.

Notify the secretary in the event you did not receive your copy. Also notify the secretary of any change in address. Books are not forwarded.

John R. Jenswold

Norwegian-American studies suffered a great loss in the recent and untimely death of John R. Jenswold (1952-1990), Assistant Professor of History at Augsburg College, Minneapolis.

He was the author or editor of a number of publications, the most recent being *Dictionary of American Immigration History*. The article "I Live Well, But . . .": Letters from Norwegians in Industrial America" was published in our *Studies*, volume 31. Articles like "Becoming Suburban, Becoming American;" "The Go-Betweens: The Lives of Immigrant Children," and "In Search of a Norwegian-American Working Class" reflect his interest in the urban aspect of Norwegian-American life.

An article by Jenswold will be published in his memory in *Studies* volume 33. His library and papers have been donated to the NAHA.

Millard Gieske

We can only hope that future newsletters will be spared the reporting of two deaths that touch so closely the NAHA. Millard Gieske, 59, a political science professor at the University of Minnesota—Morris, died of leukemia, January 31.

His scholarship was mainly directed toward Minnesota politics. He was the editor of *Perspectives on Minnesota Government and Politics* (2 volumes) and the author of *Minnesota Farmer Laborism: The Third Party Alternative*.

Several years ago Professor Gieske informed our editor that he was doing a study on Knute Nelson, former Minnesota governor and senator. This led to an agreement that the NAHA would publish his biography. At the time of his death he had completed a 600-page first draft of this work. Odd S. Lovoll has announced that he is seeking ways and means to have the manuscript completed. Fortunately years of research will not be lost, but publication will see considerable delay.

Erickson and Leiren Receive Research Grants

Two persons close to the NAHA have received stipends of kr.20,000 each from the Emigration Fund of 1975: Rolf H. Erickson and Terje I. Leiren. Rolf Erickson, librarian at Northwestern University, Illinois, and first vice president of the NAHA, will do research on Norwegian-American immigrant composers.

Terje Leiren, associate professor, University of Washington, Seattle, and a member of the NAHA board of publications, will research a tour of Norwegian-American editors to Norway in 1927, and its later influences.

The Emigration Fund was established by the Norwegian government in 1975, as an ongoing recognition of the Sesquicentennial celebrated in that year.

Call for Papers

Øyvind Gulliksen, president of NAHA Norway, made known to us that the fourth seminar on Norwegian-American history and culture will be held at Voss, Norway, August 12-15, 1992.

Papers may be presented in either Norwegian or English and the participants must be current members of the NAHA. Proposals for papers, not to exceed one page in length, should be sent to Øyvind Gulliksen, Telemark College, N-3000 Bø, Telemark, Norway, by October 1, 1991. Those who wish to attend the seminar without giving a paper should also report to the above address in order to be placed on the mailing list.

Gulliksen registered the hope that grants would provide partial payment for travel and housing for the participants. More detailed information regarding the program, accommodations and costs will be sent to all names on the mailing list in January 1992.

Random News

- Received from Erling Balstad and Roberta Balstad Miller their *Røttene og Greinene/Roots and Branches*, Namsos, Norway, 1988, a paper-bound book of 120 pages. Both the English and Norwegian languages are used. Summaries in English follow the Norwegian sections.

The Balstad family (Selbu) and its branches on both sides of the ocean are treated. Central to the story is Peder Balstad who came to Minnesota in 1886. After some years in a variety of work, he began to prepare *lutefisk* at his home for a nearby Minneapolis grocery store with a Norwegian clientele. He became so good at this trade that the Kildall Company, the nation's largest processor of *lutefisk*, hired him as their superintendent, a position he held for 24 years. He always took the streetcar home from work. Report had it that everyone on the streetcar knew of the nature of his work since some of the aroma of the factory came along for the ride. He was also one of the founders of Sons of Norway.

- Acquired *The Great Newman Show* by James

B. Alfredson, David Meyer Magic Books, Glenwood, Illinois, 1990, 49 pages.

Christian Andrew George Naeseth was born in 1881 at Kenyon, a small rural village in Goodhue county, Minnesota. His father John published the local newspaper, the *Kenyon Leader*. Still a youngster, Christian began to develop skills in magic, hypnotism, mindreading and related fields. As a teenager he gave shows in the surrounding communities, booked as "Newmann the Boy Wonder." Later his show traveled throughout the country under the name of "Newman the Great". Although he performed in the large cities, he had a preference for smaller towns with rural settings. He continued to amaze his audiences until shortly before his death in 1952. He also collected what may have been the largest private collection of literature on magic, well over 5000 volumes.

In the interest of a concrete illustration we might report that as a boy he featured tricks like the following: A citizen would write a postal card to a fellow citizen, place it in a post-office box and hide the key. Blindfolded, the "Boy Wonder" would find the key, open the correct mail box, deliver the card to the proper recipient, and finally reveal its message. Not bad!

The Naeseth career calls attention to the fact that a study on Norwegian-American entertainers remains to be done. In such a work Naeseth would hold a prominent place.

The treatment is sketchy and falls far short of being a biography. It may have been written mainly for other magicians. No secrets of their trade are revealed.

• Received from Inge Wehrmann her master's dissertation for Westfälischen Wilhelms Universität, Münster, Germany, *Die*

Thematisierung von nationaler Identität und Emigration im Werk Waldemar Ager (National Identity and Emigration in the Works of Waldemar Ager). Bound typescript reproduction, 93 pages, 1989. Of interest is the fact that a graduate student in Germany developed a special interest in Ager. Wehrmann spent several weeks in our archives.

• Received from Baard H. Thue the records of the Norwegian-American Technical Society.

• Dr. Kenneth O. Bjork, our former editor, is not as well as he and his many well-wishers would like to see. For several months now he has been at the Three Links Care Center, 815 Forest Avenue, Northfield, MN 55057.

• The *Landskappleik*, an annual contest and festival of Norwegian folk music, song and dance, will be held at Voss, Norway, June 19-23, 1991. For more information contact Kari Bye, Sivlevegen 10, N-5700 Voss, Norway.

• Received from Rolf and Helga Schey *The Brues and the Tjernagels: Incidental Papers Relative to the Confluence and Experiences of Our Families* by Mellak S. Tjernagel. Typescript reproduction, spiral bound, 300 pages, 1988.

• Died. Karl Fritjof Rølvaag (1913-1990), son of Ole Edvart Rølvaag and Jennie Marie Berdahl. Minnesota Lt. Governor 1954-1962; Governor 1962-1966; Ambassador to Iceland 1966-1969; Chairman Minnesota Public Service Commission 1972-1977; Delegate to the United Nations Human Rights Commission and Economic and Social Commission meeting Geneva Switzerland, 1979 and 1980. As a life member and through speech and deed, he was a staunch friend of the NAHA. Memorial services were held at St. John's Lutheran Church in Northfield on December 28. The Honorable Walter Mondale was among the speakers.

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