

**The Norwegian-American
Historical Association**

Northfield, Minnesota

From the Secretary's Office to the Association Members

NEWS LETTER



NUMBER 106

Editor, LLOYD HUSTVEDT

JUNE 1999



Kimberly Holland

A New Leader

Lloyd Hustvedt who has served as Executive Secretary of the NAHA for forty years will turn over his duties to Ms. Kimberly Holland some time in early June. The redefined office, now known as Administrative Director, is a half-time salaried position with corresponding benefits.

After considering four finalists, the Search Committee presented Ms. Holland as their choice to the Board of Directors on May 15, 1999. The Board gave its unanimous approval.

Born to a Norwegian-American father and to a mother of German ancestry, Kimberly (Kim) Holland grew up in Blue Earth, a south-central Minnesota town near the Iowa border. After high school she attended St. Olaf College, graduating in 1981 with majors in History, American Studies and Art History. Her three semesters of Norwegian language study will prove an asset.

After graduating from St. Olaf, she worked for a time as a publication supervisor for Marketing Science Institute in Cambridge, Massachusetts, but left this work to study law at Drake University and earned her degree in 1985, with concentrations in Agricultural Law and Law of the Arts. After law school she spent two years as Assistant General Manager of an agricultural business in Oregon.

Her position as Commodity Commission Program Manager for the Oregon Department of Agriculture spanned nine years. In this capacity she planned, developed, coordinated and directed the activities of Oregon's twenty-nine agricultural commissions. These not-for-profit commissions were composed of and led by some 200 volunteers. Ms. Holland's work entailed both long-range planning as well as preparing day to day agendas for the individual boards. In addition, she served as a liaison between the commissions, the Legislature and other state regulatory agencies. She oversaw budgets ranging from \$50,000 to \$2 million.

Prior to moving to Owatonna, Minnesota, in December, 1998, Kim Holland had worked as an independent consultant in St. Louis, Missouri, for one year. Retaining her maiden name, she married John Green in 1994. He is the Director of Sales for Agri-Growth, a business concern based in Hollandale, Minnesota, a town south of Owatonna. Kim and John have two Weimaraner dogs named Delta and Ibsen.

Ms. Holland brings to her new assignment an educational background that combines the humanities with practical jurisprudence, a warm and friendly manner, a positive and cheerful outlook, and a vigorous and outgoing personality. You will be hearing from her soon. You can be sure of that.

The Roof Needs New Shingles

Before Old Main at St. Olaf College was renovated, Professor Art Solum was asked to assess the condition of that building. In his report he had the following to say about the roof: "Why the slate roof has not come tumbling down from Old Main long ago has only one possible explanation. It just simply got so used to being there."

The same must explain my forty years as executive secretary of the NAHA. But now it is farewell time and saying farewell is something I've never learned to do well. For each serious goodbye, we leave behind a piece of ourselves. Yet, it is in moments of departure that we know what love is.

Promoting a cause among Norwegian Americans is not the easiest assignment one can have. The trick, however, is to get through the first twenty years. Everything is down hill after that. Norwegian Americans become downright loveable and nothing they might say or do, including saying or doing nothing at all, will surprise or disturb you.

My rewards have been many. I have had three editors as colleagues, Theodore C. Blegen, Kenneth O. Bjork and Odd S. Lovoll, and have witnessed their combined production of 52 publications. I have worked closely with three remarkable curators, Beulah Folkedahl, Charlotte Jacobson and Forrest Brown. Among the assistant secretaries I mention Charlotte Hughes, Elaine Kringen and Ruth Hanold Crane for their competence, long tenure, and unflinching loyalty.

At the risk of sounding self-serving I share some of the more satisfying features of my experience. First has been my opportunity to witness the transformation of our archives from a crude warehouse for collected material into a properly organized research center. Second has been the teamwork that has built our financial assets from twenty-seven thousand dollars to one and one-half million, an amount that incorporates varied special purpose endowments. A climb in membership from 650 to 2,000 brings moderate satisfaction. The

future, however, begs for bigger things in this sector. High on the list has been my friendships with persons who have wished both me and the Association well. Among them are Harry J. Williams, Sanford Fosholt and Oddmund Hydle, all now deceased. Not to be forgotten are the countless persons I have met by virtue of my office – the tales we have shared and the stories we have swapped.

But, I have now plodded long enough in the lowlands. I leave you now to become a wise man on the hill. But if it is correct, as my Irish friend says, that my chances of having Norwegian Americans as neighbors up there are practically nil, I may not stay long.

Lloyd Hustvedt

P.S. I thank all who have helped to advance the cause of the NAHA. And because of a rare and benevolent mood that is mine at the moment, I also forgive all who didn't.

A World Champion?

A recent donation by Ric Kilmer of his "The Pete Sanstol Story" along with Sanstol's autobiography entitled "Gjennom Ringen" (Through the Circle), 177 type-script pages, merits mention in our *Newsletter*.

Born in 1905 at Moi, Norway, Peter Sanstol moved to Stavanger with his parents as a child. During his youth he took up boxing and later trained in Germany where he befriended the noted heavy-weight Max Schmeling.

Sanstol, who boxed in both the fly- and bantam weight class at around 113 pounds, won 96 out of his first 99 bouts. He made his American debut in 1927 and was declared the World Champion in Canada when he defeated Archie Bell in Montreal in 1931. His title was, however, disputed in the United States. His last bout came in 1935 when he defeated Panama Al Brown, a former bantam weight world champion. He became an American citizen and served in the United States Army from 1942-1945.

He held a variety of jobs after retirement from boxing and took an interest in youth work and frequently lectured on youth guidance. He married Bessie Phyllis Gorden of Alaska in 1956. They lived for a time in Norway, then in Long Beach, California and still later in San Pedro, California, where he worked for Norwegian shipping concerns as a translator. He died of a stroke in 1982.

The chapters in his autobiography dealing with his childhood and youth are exceptionally well written. In contrast, the account of his later life is dispersed, even fragmentary. There may have been too much to tell.

As a child he was small for his age, and as the new kid on the block in Stavanger he was frequently bullied and beaten by his more powerful peers. This may have turned his interest to a sport that is hardly popular in Norway, and it may have instilled in him a life-long concern for the weak and exploited. His gentle and courteous manner led to his being dubbed "The Gentleman Boxer." From the many newspaper articles that are part of the collection, it is clear that his Canadian fans regarded him as a world champion, but he apparently attracted little attention among his countrymen in the United States and save for Ric Kilmer, and the documents he gave to the Archive, Sanstol is a man history overlooked.

Pleasant Summer Company

Ms. Marit Martinsen, a history student from the University of Tromsø, Norway, plans to devote her summer in our archives, or as much of it as is required for her to go through our sources on *Nordlandslaget*, the thesis topic she has chosen to write on for her Cand. Filol. degree. Her interest in O. E. Rølvaag goes beyond the leadership he gave to the *Lag* she is researching. Marit's home is at Vevelstad in Helgeland, south of the island of Dønna where Rølvaag was born.

Ms. Martinsen is interested in making contact with persons who have been or are members of *Nordlandslaget* or of one of its

sub-divisions. Her address: Ms. Marit Martinsen, c/o Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1510 St. Olaf Avenue, Northfield, Minnesota 55057.

Attention!

The University of Minnesota Press has issued a new and revised edition of Odd S. Lovoll's *The Promise of America*. A copy of the original edition was distributed to each member of the NAHA in 1984.

We carry a supply of the new edition (paper back) which sells for \$24.95 plus \$3 postage and handling. Because the book is not our publication we cannot offer the usual 25 percent membership discount.

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Our new and revised website can be viewed at www.naha.stolaf.edu

Random News

- Received from Mark Wyman his Distinguished Professorship lecture entitled "America the Museum: Contemplating the Non-Assimilation and Anti-Assimilation of Immigrants," 16 typescript pages. The lecture was given February 23, 1999, at Illinois State University.

- Received the following three items from Maxine Mess: "History of St. Petri Congregation from Its Foundation, June 1857, to Its 50th Jubilee, June 1907," (Story City, Iowa) by Ivar Havneros and translated by Rachel Vangness, 29 typescript pages. *West Lisbon Lutheran Cemetery* (Kendall county, Illinois), spiralbound, 123 pages; and *Lisbon Evangelical Lutheran Church*, Newark, Illinois, a 125th anniversary booklet of 102 pages, 1979.

- Received from Sarah Waugh *Northwest Missouri: A Genealogical Society Journal*, vol. 19, no. 1, 1999, 93 typescript pages, staplebound. Of special interest is Frank G. Nelson's article, "There were Norwegians in Missouri, Too," pages 18-28.

- Received from Donald Hesse *Reform: A Reform Sampler*, paperbound, 106 pages, Waldemar Ager Association, 1998. Contains selections from the Eau Claire Norwegian-language newspaper *Reform* running from 1898 to 1941, translated by Genevieve Hagen and Alf Hjemboe. The selections that move forward in chronological order provide a cross section of that paper: current events, literature, church, education, Norway, editorials, and tidbits of wit and humor.

- Received *The First One Hundred Years*

1894-1994, *First Lutheran Church, St. Joseph, Missouri*, by Irma Z. Midlaugh and Katherine M. Nelson. Many of the original members of this congregation were from the Peter Nelson colony from Grimstad, Norway, via New Orleans in 1847.

- Received from Per Øverland his *The Amundsen Family Tree: From Hasvik on Sørøya Island of Finnmark County in Northern Norway*, 47 pages, 1998. Several members of this family settled in the United States.

- “Just a note with my membership check to say thank you for all the wonderful work the NAHA does. I’m very grateful, . . . Blessings to all, Evonne Cain.” Blessings to you, Evonne Cain!

- The sixty-seventh annual Norway Day will be held on July 11, 1999, at Minnehaha Park in Minneapolis. The program for the day will begin with open air worship at 10:00 a.m. and will feature a children’s parade and a chamber choir from Norway.

- Pentland Press, Raleigh, North Carolina, has announced the publication of *Astrid: A Viking Saga* by Joan Felicia Henriksen. Born in Philadelphia and a journalist by profession, Henriksen lived for a time in Stavanger where she did extensive research into the Viking age, particularly the role of women.

- Received from Arnold Berwick his “Who was Uncle Ole,” 79 spiralbound pages, 1997. Ole Nelson (1864-1945) emigrated from western Norway to Santa Barbara, California in 1886 and ultimately ended up as a fruit farmer near Fairfield, northeast of San Francisco. Frontier hardships, toil and personal tragedies could be fully as severe in California as those experienced in the Middle West.

- Received from Nils Lang-Ree a manuscript entitled “XXVIII Norwegians,” a segment of a larger multicultural study made in 1983 under

Carrol Pusell at the California History Center and Foundation at De Anza College. The 21-page treatment relies on information already available and suffers from many omissions.

- Received from Etne kommune volumes V and VI of *Skåneviksoga: I gode og vonde dagar*, 1998, hardcover, 376 and 533 pages. We had received earlier volumes I through IV.

- Received from Chris Velline his *Ostrem and Hatleli Genealogies*, 61 spiralbound pages, photos with tables.

- Received from Robert Firing “We Stand in Fellowship of Faith” by Jeffrey A. Iverson, an award-winning paper presented at Gettysburg Seminary, 22 typescript pages. Iverson argues that the Norwegian Synod was more flexible in its doctrinal positions with regard to the predestination controversy of the 1880s than is commonly held by church historians.

- Received from William Powers his *You Can’t Sew Pillows Under Them*, a well-written biography (193 pages) of his mother Christine Ronningen Powers, a character who compares well with the mother portrayed in the play *I Remember Mama*. She came to Boston in 1909 to work at the home of a Harvard professor and while there married their chauffeur, an Irishman. This determined, deeply human woman held on to her old country values and in so doing created a truly functional family. The fact that not all her virtues were in equal balance invited both comedy and conflict. Wm. Powers, 47 Scott Road, Needham MA 02492. \$15.00.

- Received from Velma Stepp Wilson *The Lowes of North Carolina and Footsteps through Time*, a hard cover family history of 244 pages. Photos, illustrations, letters and genealogical tables. The Norwegian element enters through immigrants named Viarsen who changed their name to Wilson and a Minnie Wilson married a Stepp.

Change Service Requested

e-mail: naha@stolaf.edu

Tel: (507) 646-3221

Northfield, Minnesota 55057

St. Olaf College

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