

NORDIC-AMERICAN PSALMODIKONFORBUNDET

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NOTES FROM MUSIC-ON-A STRING By Beatrice Hole

As I write this Newsletter, the Psalmodikon and I are preparing for our participation at the Nordic Fest in Decorah, IA. I am hoping to see many of you Psalmodikon enthusiasts there!

We have had a great Summer, a bit too warm, but fun never-the-less.

I am looking forward to our annual gathering on September 15-16, when we can all play our Psalmodikons together again. We will have a lot of practicing to do on Saturday because the Psalmodikons have been invited to participate in the Sunday morning worship service!

We are so grateful to Koreen & Don Gerdin-Paulson who have invited us to hold our meeting at their church, Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in East Bethel, MN. Also for Larry & Deann Gjen-vick who will once again be preparing and serving us a delicious lunch Saturday noon. Saturday evening we will plan to "eat out" - "Dutch Treat" at a restaurant in the area—we are working on arrangements for that. See inside for more information about the annual meeting)

I always appreciate the many folks that come and "re-introduce" themselves to me. Often times I am too occupied to recognize someone in the crowds.

This being a perfect example: Several weeks ago

the Psalmodikon and I had been invited to participate at the 150th Anniversary Celebration at the Washington Prairie Church south of Decorah, IA. After one of the services, I talked with Ruth Benson, who is a granddaughter of Elsie Thompson. Elsie was a member of the Wisconsin Ladies Quartet.

The article reprinted on Page #2 is from the 1938 issue of the Capitol Times of Madison, WI. These ladies have all passed away now, but Ruth has all of their Psalmodikons in storage. Hopefully, we will have a chance to see these sometime!

Meanwhile, enjoy the rest of the summer and we look forward to seeing many of you in September at the Annual Meeting!

Keep practicing your Psalmodikons - look for the hymn "Breathe on Me, Breath of God" further on in the Newsletter. By September may we be all ready to play this together.



A Note about Memberships

We have kept the annual dues for membership in the Nordic-American Psalmodikonforbundet at a modest \$5.00 per year. This covers the cost of preparing and mailing the newsletter approximately 3 or 4 times a year to our members and also includes complimentary issues to a number of cultural organizations, museums and individuals. Please take a moment to note address label and if the date is not 2001 or beyond, your dues remittance will show your continued interest in our group. Thanks!

On National Program For Third Time



Members of the McFarland Salmodikon quartet, who will appear in Washington, D. C., May 1-3, on the National Folk Festival program are shown above. They are from left to right, Bertha Larson, Mrs. Nora Brickson, Mrs. John Sullivan, and Mrs. Elsie Thompson.

McFarland Salmodikon Players to Washington

Appear on National Folk Festival Program Again May 1-3

By IVER M. KALNES
(Of The Capital Times Staff)

McFARLAND, Wis.—For the third time the McFarland Salmodikon quartet, playing the oldest string instrument of Norway, has accepted an invitation to appear on the National Folk Festival program, which will be held in Washington, D. C., May 1-3. The McFarland women, who have sponsored the revival of the ancient one-string instrument, appeared on the Folk Festival program in Chicago in 1937 and in Washington in 1938.

This summer's program will be the eighth annual National Folk festival. It is sponsored by the Washington Post Folk Festival association.

Sarah Gertrude Knott is the founder and director of the festival and M. J. Pickering, business manager. Both are from St. Louis, Mo., but early each year they set up offices in Washington, D. C., which since 1936 has been the permanent seat of the national festival.

Two Wisconsin members of the national committee of the festival association are Ethel Rockwell, Madison, former chief of the bureau of dramatic activities at the University of Wisconsin, and the Rev. Robert S. Johnston, S. J., Milwaukee, professor of philosophy at Marquette university.

Other Committee Members

On the roster of the national committee are found such names as Edwin N. C. Barnes, head of the department of music in the public schools

son, director of school of art in University of Oklahoma; E. C. Mable, head of department of speech and dramatic art, University of Iowa; W. Roy MacKenzie, head of department of English, Washington university, St. Louis, Mo.; Alnauld C. Marts, president of Bucknell university, Lewisburg, Pa.; Gith Thompson, head of English department, Indiana university; and Frank C. Brown, head of English department, Duke university, Durham, N. C.

"I heard the McFarland Salmodikon players at the National Folk festival in Chicago in 1937 and they did a very nice job," Miss Rockwell commented when interviewed by The Capital Times Wednesday.

Mrs. Elsie Thompson, leader of the McFarland quartet, will be 78 years old on her next birthday, June 25. Her father was a school teacher and cantor in Norway, where he used the one-string instrument in teaching school children the melodies of church hymns. That was the original use of the salmodikon which continued through generations. Before the advent of the organ, the salmodikon was also used to lead the singing in churches.

Improve Playing System

The McFarland women, in reviving the use of the salmodikon, have improved on the system by playing four salmodikons in ensemble, something that was never done in Norway. Those who have heard the quartet at the National Folk festival, where an amplifying system is used, say that the music sounds like that from a pipe organ. Without amplifiers, the salmodikon volume is limited and mellow.

a daughter of Mrs. Thompson, is the group's announcer. She tells the history of the salmodikon as well as the history of the Norwegian hymns played. Mrs. Nora Brickson, McFarland, is also a daughter of Mrs. Thompson. The fourth member of the quartet, Miss Larson, is Mrs. Thompson's niece. The success of the quartet rests largely on keeping it a family affair, which makes it easier for the members to get together for rehearsals.

The McFarland women have played at the Century of Progress in Chicago, at the state fair in West Allis, and at numerous concerts in churches in Rockford, Ill., Chicago, Madison, and many other places.

Leave McFarland Apr. 25

The quartet will drive to Washington in Mrs. Brickson's automobile. They plan to leave McFarland on Friday, Apr. 25, spend four days on the road, and have a day or two for rehearsals before the festival opens.

Idun lodge, Sons of Norway, Madison, has voted \$10 toward travel expense for the group. Other Scandinavian societies in Madison, Slough-ton and Edgerlon will be asked to contribute. The cost of the trip was kept down to about \$80 last time and the women hope to be able to keep within that budget again.

"The girls suggested that we go to hotels this time, on account of my age," said Mrs. Thompson, "but I told them that I can take it as well as anyone in the group and we will buy groceries, do our own cooking and sleep in tourist cabins."

Festival Afternoon in Statement

In a letter to this writer, Pickering, business manager of the festival, said:

"The Salmodikon quartet has appeared on our program twice, in 1937

in Chicago and in 1938 in Washington. Due to the unusual type of presentation, it is always particularly well received by our audiences and also it is the subject of much advance publicity, as well as following the appearance, many of these stories carrying pictures. This is not only true of Washington, but papers throughout the country, and magazines, which carry reviews of the festival.

"Last year we had 588 participants from 27 states and Hawaii, all of them coming to us at their own expense, or as is usual, sponsored by civic and educational organizations in their communities who recognize the value of what the groups are doing in preserving their folk heritages.

"The National Folk Festival association is a non-profit, educational organization and a co-operative one, and only in this way can the annual event be held with the various organizations throughout the country paying the expenses of the groups coming in.

"We like very much to have the fine women of the Salmodikon quartet with us again and suggest that the Sons of Norway and the Scandinavian-American Fraternity and others interested at Madison sponsor them."

*From Cap Times
Madison, Wis.
-1938-*



following—Thanks for sharing, and we hope to see the Psalmodikons at the Annual Meeting)

Letters from our members.....

Beatrice,

I appreciate your dedication toward the Presentation of the Psalmodikon.

Today my wife and I helped entertain 300 Jr. High Pupils at what is called "Buckshot Junction" on the east outskirts of Bismarck, ND.

Nineteen old buildings have been moved to this place and have been restored. There were demonstrations and narration at most of the buildings. The students came in groups of 20 to 30.

I demonstrated the Psalmodikon and Hardanger Fele with our other Norsk artifacts.

At ninety-one years, I feel fortunate to still be able to take part. Keep up the good work.

Hilsen, Sig Peterson of Almont, ND.

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Beatrice,

In "Notes from the Editors" in the April issue (Psalmodikon News) I see the editor and staff are inviting members to submit photos. Enclosed are 3 photos of items I have built—including psalmodikons, horse hair bows (full size and miniatures), carrying cases, and KD music stands.

If you remember at the September 2000 workshop meeting, I'm the new member who came with a psalmodikon that had a very irregularly spaced fret board. I showed you how I arrived at the fret positions by using the piano. In retrospect I guess either my piano was out of tune, or my hearing was bad, or—a combination of both.

Many thanks to Floyd Foslien for providing me with a printed sheet on how to space the frets mathematically. This so enthused me that I couldn't stop with building just one psalmodikon. In asking family and friends for horse hair, I wound up with a more than ample supply—so I couldn't stop with building just one bow. With some shorter hair left, I made several 12-inch miniature bows.

I remember the article in the August 2000 issue of the Psalmodikon Newsletter about the horse hair should be in alternating directions—so yes, every hair (one at a time) is placed that way. The bows sound pretty good.

Thanks again for your and Rodger's kind hospitality to my wife, Ardy, and me at the September 2000 workshop meeting.

Bud Albrecht, Montevideo, MN.

(Note Bud's fine accomplishments in the 3 pictures



I recently received the June 2001 Newsletter, "PSALMODIKA" from our sister Psalmodikon group, Nordiska Psalmodikonförbundet of Sweden/Norway. They will be holding their Annual Meeting on August 17-19 in Vätergotland, Sweden, the home district of Helena Odvall-Enoksson. I so enjoy reading their Newsletters and will bring the last two issues to our September meeting to share with those attending. The following is a reproduction of a page from their newsletter showing a photo of a Psalmodikon - Purchased at an auction and now owned by Bengt Pettersson from Gretlanda, Sweden. This is possibly the only Psalmodikon known to be made in a factory. The Psalmodikon was in need of repair and while Rodney Sjöberg, of Trollhattan, Sweden was making those repairs, he discovered a note inside of the Psalmodikon. It reads: "Sold in Gustaf Adolf Boije Book and Music Shop in Borås, Sweden". Late 1800's—Price 3R:dr 32 sk B:ko (old currency)

#### Psalmodikonet i Gretlanda

En av förbundets medlemmar, Bengt Pettersson från Gretlanda, Rångedala är välkänd i sjuhäradsbygden som auktionsutropare. På en av hans auktioner började vi att tala om psalmodikon. Bengt berättade då om sitt instrument han hade hemma. Men det fattades ju lite på den. Sagt och gjort. Jag tog med instrumentet till Rodney som lagade upp det och samtidigt gjorde en upptäckt! Psalmodikonet var fabriksstillverkat och inköpt i en musikaffär i Borås! Rodney som innan bara hade hört tala om att det funnits psalmodikon som tillverkats på fabrik. Här fanns beviset. En liten etikett bredvid stallet.



På instrumentet finns skrivet Per Gustav Andersson f. 1867 Gretlanda. Detta var Bengts farfars bror som senare kom att flytta till Norge. Instrumentet bör vara inköpt i slutet av 1800-talet. På etiketten står: Försäljes uti Gustaf Adolf Boije Bok och Musikhandel i Borås Pris 3 R:dr 32 sk B:ko (Affären låg på Österlånggatan 80 i Borås. En filial fanns i Fritsla.)



Foton HÖE

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#### Video Tapes for Sale:

#### "HOW TO PLAY THE PSALMODIKON"

Instructions on how to tune and play the Psalmodikon. You can also play along with several songs. Sifferskrift music included.

Send \$15.00 to: Beatrice Hole  
6560 Leesborough Avenue  
Eden Prairie, MN 55346  
(952) 934-4535 E-Mail: Enstreng B@aol.com

#### ANNUAL MEETING NEWS!

I am hoping many of you will be able to attend the 5th Annual Psalmodikon Meeting on September 15. We will have a fun time playing the old familiar tunes as well as some new ones. Please bring along your favorite songs. I am looking forward to a great time of fellowship and Psalmodikon music during the workshop. See you then!

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Our Saviour's Lutheran Church is located in East Bethel, MN at 1652 Viking Blvd. NE. It is located approximately 17 miles north of I-694 1 block east of Highway 65 (Central Avenue) on County Road 22 which is Viking Blvd. The telephone number at the church is (763) 434-6117.

Plan to be at the church by 8:30 AM - We'll have the coffee pot on and some treats to go along. Incidentally, if anyone would like to bring some "Scandinavian" goodies to share - you are extended a "Tusen Takk" for doing that.

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#### Motels

Americinn—13440 Highway 65, Ham Lake  
(763) 755-2100

Super 8—9410 Baltimore Street NE, Blaine  
(763) 786-8888

Comfort Inn—9052 University Avenue NW, Coon Rapids  
(763) 785-4746

Fairfield Inn—8965 Springbrook Drive, Coon Rapids  
(763) 785-8922

If you have any questions about Motels, give Koreen Gerdin a call—she will be happy to assist you (763) 434-6228.

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We hope you can stay for Sunday morning worship at Our Saviour's. Pastor Brian Fragodt and his wife Kim (who is Director of Music Ministry) have invited us to play our Psalmodikons during the worship service. Reward your hard work of practice with a performance that will be appreciated greatly.

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It's most important to know how many will be attending the Annual Meeting. Please take a moment to return the attendance form to Beatrice Hole, 6560 Leesborough Ave, Eden Prairie, MN 55346. We need to plan for lunch quantities.

# ANNUAL MEETING ATTENDANCE RESERVATION FORM

Yes, I (we) will be attending the Psalmodik-  
onforbundet Annual Meeting on September  
15th.

**BREATHE ON ME, BREATH OF GOD**

3 3 3 4 1 3  
Breathe on me, Breath of God

5 4 3 2 3 2  
Fill me with life a new

3 4 6 5 3 3 2 4  
That I may love what thou dost love,

2 1 7 1 3 2 1  
and do what thou wouldst do.

Written in sifferskrift for Psalmodikon  
Beatrice Hole - 1994

Musical note version found in Methodist Hymnal  
"The Book of Hymns" No. 133

\_\_\_\_\_ Number planning to attend.

We can stay for Sunday Morning to play our  
Psalmodikons for worship.

\_\_\_\_\_ YES (: \_\_\_\_\_ No ):

Name(s):

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Please detach this half and return to:  
Beatrice Hole  
6560 Leesborough Avenue  
Eden Prairie, MN 55346

Note: If your membership dues need to be  
made current, now is a convenient time to  
send them in. Thanks!





In June, I had the pleasure of touring Norway with my sister. On the outskirts of Hamar, our tour bus stopped at the Norwegian Emigrant Museum in Ottestad. If you recall, this is the museum that the Nordic-American Psalmodikonforbundet donated a Psalmodikon about two years ago. I enjoyed visiting again with Knut Djupedal, the Curator of the Museum. After a tour of the Museum, Knut removed the Psalmodikon from the display case and I played a tune for the tour group. That stop was real special for me!



Every place the tour bus stopped, I was on the outlook for Norwegian Psalmodikons. Here is the one I saw in the School House window in Maihaugen Open Air Museum.



While visiting the Maihaugen Museum, I had a nice visit with Kirsti Krekling, who is a Psalmodikon player that I met in 1995 at the Nordiska Psalmodikonforbundet in Ostervalla, Sweden.



This is an old Psalmodikon that is in a display case located within the main Maihaugen Museum.



## NORDIC-AMERICAN PSALMODIKONFORBUNDET

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Muskego, WI 53150-7323

Mailing  
Address:

PSALMODIKONFORBUNDET

### *Notes from the Editors:*

We try to keep our membership records accurate and up to date, however if you do note any error please advise the Editor for correction. **Check the date on your mailing label which indicates if your dues are current.** Dues for the year 2001 may be sent to Beatrice Hole. Thank you for your support!

The Nordic-American Psalmodikonforbundet Newsletter is published in March(April), August and November. The editor and staff are always looking for news worthy items or photos and welcome articles from members that you want to share with other readers.

Your \$5.00 membership fee helps to cover the cost of printing and postage for the Newsletter and also helps to defray the costs incurred at the Annual Meeting. The Newsletter is mailed to over 85 households as well as several Museums and other historical societies.

