

LIFE, LORE AND BELIEF IN THE VIKING AGE: PROBING THE VIBRANT LEGACY

“Sagas and the Viking World” is the theme of the 10th Annual Nordic Spirit Symposium which takes place February 6-7, 2009 at California Lutheran University.

A colorful journey into Viking Age life, legacy and ideas, the Symposium will revolve around the Icelandic Sagas, the richest legacy of the Viking Age, hailed and studied throughout the world. Still pursued with vigor by scholars and enthusiasts alike, the sagas continue to bring “pleasures and wisdom to modern America,” as well as to serve as a guide to Viking Age art, beliefs and everyday life..

Featuring distinguished speakers and polished performing artists, the symposium invites the general public, as well as the Scandinavian community, “to share the time-honored spirit of a symposium, blending music, dining and the free exchange of ideas to enhance the pleasure of learning,” according to Nordic Spirit founder and director, **Howard K. Rockstad**.

Kicking off the two-day event, Symposium-goers will mingle with presenters and performers at a gala reception at the Scandinavian Center adjacent to the CLU campus, beginning at 5:30 p.m. Reservations are requested.

Moving into Samuelson Chapel, the Friday evening program will begin at 7 p.m. with a colorful celebration of art forms of the Viking Age, as revealed in some of the latest research into the period.

Tapestries – mostly woven by women – captured the legends of the Viking times, and represent “the female way of telling a story,” according to Stockholm-born **Lena Norrman** of the University of Minnesota, author of “Viking Women: The Narrative Voice in Woven Tapestries.” She will present an illustrated look at the stories these threads tell.

(Continued on p. 6)

‘SAGAS AND THE VIKING WORLD’

10th Annual
NORDIC SPIRIT
SYMPOSIUM
at CLU

FEB 6-7, 2009

RESERVATION FORM
Page 7



Images of
history
woven in
tapestries

STORIES IN CLOTH

STORIES IN GOLD AND STONE

Gold bracteate from
Rogaland, Norway



Nancy Wicker sheds light on Viking Age objects



Runestone from Uppland

Viking specialist
Marit Synnøve Vea
returns from Norway for
Nordic Spirit encore



MESSAGE FROM SACHF PRESIDENT GLENN BRAATEN

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS: Committees, volunteers and membership

Our most recent membership report indicates that SACHF has a total of 259 paid-up members for 2008. This is at an all time high. Many thanks to the **Membership Committee** and all of our existing members who have reached out to sign up new members to our cause. Your membership is very important to SACHF whether it be individual, household, student, sponsor or Nordic Circle Life. Membership helps SACHF in needed funds for our operations as well as it broadens our base for reaching out to the Scandinavians in the Southwest who have yet to discover us. A form in this issue is available for your 2009 renewal. We look forward to our continued growth.

The SACHF Visions Committee under the guidance of **Siri Eliason** has formed and will be considering the present and future status of SACHF. Our dreams and needs for the future are currently under consideration. Thank you, Siri, for chairing this committee.

The 10th Annual **NORDIC SPIRIT SYMPOSIUM**: Sagas and the Viking World, will be held at California Lutheran University Feb. 6-7, 2009. The Symposium Committee once again has planned an interesting and diverse program. Pre-enrollment in the symposium greatly assists the committee in their planning.

It is not too early to mark your calendars for the 2009 **SCANDINAVIAN FESTIVAL** to be held Saturday, April 18 and Sunday, April 19. The Festival Planning Committee is hard at work to make this a bigger and better festival. In order to make this happen there is a need for many more volunteers than we have had in the past. In addition to attending the festival, please consider volunteering a few hours of your time to help in areas that are needed to make the festival successful. To volunteer, simply contact **Eric Berg** at: Berg1292@earthlink.net. I am sure he can find you an enjoyable and interesting way to help that will add to the success of the festival. We look forward to your participation. The festival may not be able to continue unless volunteers

sign up. On the financial side, the **Barbro Osher Pro Suecia Foundation** has once again provided a major grant to support the Scandinavian Festival.

The Scandinavian Center at 26 Faculty Rd. in Thousand Oaks continues to be a busy and interesting place on Wednesdays. Attendance at the brownbag lunches, with its many interesting programs, has been increasing this past year. For members who have not visited the Center, Wednesdays would be a good day to consider for a visit. Our library is overflowing with Scandinavian books and there is a self guided tour of the Museum available for visitors.

Congratulations to **Lynn M. Anderson, Dagfinn Gunnarshaug, Einar Hovind, Anita Londgren, Agneta Nilsson and Judith Gabriel Vinje**, who were each elected to a new three year term at our last Annual Meeting. Thank you for continuing to serve on the SACHF Board of Directors.

Aina Abrahamson, who served on the SACHF Board since its inception, passed away this past October. Aina did so much in support of the Scandinavian Center. She was the keeper of the Library and Museum artifacts. It will take many people to replace what she did for our organization. We miss her dearly, but are eternally grateful for what she has done to preserve and promote Scandinavian heritage. Our sympathy to Aina's family. We feel she was part of our family too, so we share in your loss.

Scandinavian Festival at CLU

'Affordable Family Fun'

April 18-19

*Lana Lundin, co-chair of the
Scandinavian Festival Committee,
sampling the wares at a
vendor's booth in 2008*



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26 Faculty Road Thousand Oaks CA 91360
(805) 241-0391*

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Saarinens Inducted into Scandinavian American Hall of Fame in California

Two new honorees were inducted into the Scandinavian American Hall of Fame in California at a Los Angeles Finlandia Foundation Event Nov. 9 at the Beverly Hills Public Library.

Howard Rockstad, past president of SACHF, made the honorary remarks. The following are major excerpts from his comments.

“The Scandinavian American Hall of Fame is a program of the Scandinavian American Cultural and Historical Foundation, whose Scandinavian Center is located in Thousand Oaks, in affiliation with California Lutheran University. This national Hall of Fame was founded in order to honor and make known the great achievements of rather special Scandinavian Americans who have made unique contributions to society...

This Hall of Fame is a young Hall of Fame with a modest number of members. The first inductee was Leif Erikson – the first Scandinavian American, centuries before anyone knew this land was to become America...

Another Finnish American, **Otto Heino**, an Ojai, California potter, is a member of this Hall of Fame. Otto Heino has received international recognition and attention for his personal creative design style and, particularly in Asia, for the monks’ robe yellow pots he uniquely makes...

But today our focus is on two legendary Finnish-American architects who did so very much to develop and influence architectural design. It is an honor to induct **Eliei Saarinen** and **Eero Saarinen** into the Scandinavian American Hall of Fame in California today.

Our congratulations to the Saarinen family on the continuing Saarinen design legacy.”

Members of the Hall of Fame now include Leif Erikson, Bernt Balchen, Harold “Swede” Carlson, Mikkel and Torjus Hemmestvedt, Ralph Samuelson, Knut Haukelid, Otto Heino, Babe (Zaharias) Didrikson, Sonja Henie, Knute Rockne, Sondre Norheim, George Lee, “Sparky” Anderson, John A. “Snowshoe” Thompson, Eliei Saarinen and Eero Saarinen.

Members of the Saarinen family at Hall of Fame induction



From left, Howard Rockstad, Erik Saarinen, Susan Saarinen, Mark Wilkinson and Eliot Saarinen.

AINA ABRAHAMSON 1915-2008



Aina, right, with her sisters Linnea and Dagmar

Librarian’s Extraordinary Gift to Her Scandinavian Heritage

Aina Abrahamson, one of the driving forces and reigning spirits of the Scandinavian Center at CLU, died Oct. 16 at the age of 93 after a brief illness.

Aina Abrahamson was devoted to her Scandinavian heritage, having spent decades ensuring that a rich legacy is available for future generations. She worked in the CLU Pearson Library for 20 years, and was director of the library the year before she retired in 1982.

As a founding member of SACHF, she took over the task of supervising the acquisitions in the Scandinavian Cultural Center, managing the collections for several years as books and artifacts began to fill the special room in the Pearson Library.

She helped institute the Scandinavian Festival at CLU. She was also concerned with other historical museums in the region. As a regional vice president of the California Historical Society, she represented Eastern Ventura County. She was editor of *The Almanac*, the quarterly publication of the Swedish American Historical Association of California, (SAHAC), a post she held for more than 21 years.

She was also very involved with her church, Holy Trinity Lutheran in Thousand Oaks. She was chair of the Global Mission Committee of the Southwest California Synod, ELC, and traveled to China in that capacity.

She was born in Warren, Minnesota. Her father, a junior college president, died when she was only three years old. She grew up to love education, teaching English and physical education before moving to California in 1954.

Her dedication to education and to her heritage has left a lasting monument in the shelves and display cases of the Scandinavian Cultural Center library. **Glenn Braaten, SACHF president**, expressed gratitude for “the great job **Aina Abrahamson** has done over many years in receiving donations of books, artifacts, artwork and more, and for her leadership and organization of these under the difficult conditions of limited space.”

She leaves her mark and spirit on the Cultural Center collections. Fond remembrances of her were shared at the SACHF annual meeting in November, with a DVD presentation by Joy Brooks. Plans are underway to name the Center Library for Aina Abrahamson, who gave so deeply to ensure its existence.



By Richard Londgren



Folks associated with the Scandinavian Center lost a valued friend and active helper when Aina Abrahamson died at age 93 on Oct. 16. This photo at her 90th birthday includes others from the SACHF board (back, from left): Agneta Nilsson, Lana Lundin and Allan Carlson.



Pat Sladek checks the Swedish uniform being modeled by Donald Morrow (of the Swedish language class) for photography associated with the storing of exhibit garments in museum-quality containers. Sandee Kane chairs the committee that also includes Anita Londgren, Diane Seal and Jean Scott.

Torsten Olsson (front) and Jan Wennberg helped erect a storage building needed to house materials for the Scandinavian Festival as well as other materials for SACHF. The Habitat House in the background also stores a variety of Scandinavian items and supplies.



In a typical weekly Brown-Bag Lunch gathering, the listeners take in a presentation of one of many topics featured. Leonard Smith (inset) offered “show & tell” about the museum of his hometown, Stanton, Iowa. Also in that photo, Sandee Kane takes a break from preparing and serving coffee and cookies. Cal Lutheran has shared on four occasions, including the CLU President, the Director of the Adult Education Program (which is a joint-tenant with us in the Center), the Director of University Relations, and a Professor of Political Science. Recently, a DVD was shown about Swedish-American composer Leroy Anderson.



Scandinavian Festival 2009

at California Lutheran
University
April 18-19 again means

affordable family fun

What theme—besides repeating our timely **affordable family fun**—will best attract visitors to the Scandinavian Festival 2009.? The ScanFest committee grappled with that in the Nov. 11 meeting. Committee member **Heidi Kneff** referred to her fifth grade students, who she said tend not to know what **Scandinavia** means. And that knowledge gap might apply to many others in the larger community. So she suggested action themes that might interest people—such as **Explore Scandinavia** or the alternative **Experience Scandinavia** recommended by **Siri Eliason**. Now your vote could count. Because your reaction could help influence the decision of the committee, let Co-Directors **Lana Lundin** (lana@tripnet.se) or **Eric Berg** (berg1292@earthlink.net) know what you think would increase awareness of Scandinavia and the Scan Fest, or suggest a different approach that might attract those in our area with little knowledge of Scandinavia.

The Scandinavian Festival offers AFFORDABLE activities for all ages, with cost for visitors 12 and up at \$5, and those below 12 and Cal Lutheran students FREE.

Visitors can take in the music, dancing, lectures, demonstrations and the Scandinavian-vehicle show. The Nobel Prize exhibit will repeat, and the Kavli Prize display will be new. For food and fun, visitors can tour the Viking and Sami Villages, shop at the variety of “stores,” and eat from a selection of Scandinavian favorite foods.

Kids of all ages can make or help with Scandinavian crafts, take in or join in the Scandinavian drama, listen to Scandinavian stories, and learn about soccer and see the soccer game.

Hours are 10:00 a.m. till 5:00 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Sunday worship services at 11:00 in the CLU Samuelson Chapel will involve leaders representing the Scandinavian countries—Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.



The Scandinavian Festival is sponsored by the Scandinavian American Cultural and Historical Foundation, 26 Faculty Road, Thousand Oaks, CA 91360. The Festival committee includes (clockwise, from back left) Jerry Miller, Dick Londgren, Heidi Kneff, Lana Lundin, Eric Berg, Sandra Grunewald, Glenn Braaten, Siri Eliason and administrative assistant Linda Lowe.

**GET ON
BOARD!
The Scandinavian
Festival
needs
lots
of
volunteers in
2009!**



'SAGAS AND THE VIKING WORLD'

(continued from p. 1)

Stories — vital life clues — are also preserved in Viking Age jewelry and other artifacts. **Nancy Wicker**, chair of the Art Department at the University of Mississippi, will present "A Fresh Look at Art of the Viking Age." Wicker hails from Minnesota State University in Mankato, where she was director of the Scandinavian Studies Program, teaching Scandinavian art and a seminar on Vikings.

Accounts and legends of the early Scandinavians are also preserved in the words penned by the Icelanders. The Icelandic sagas are a common thread linking much of the Saturday program, which begins at 9 a.m., also in the Samuelson Chapel.

Returning to the Symposium stage will be Norwegian Viking specialist **Marit Synnøve Ve**a, who will delve into narratives around goddesses, valkyries, housewives and mistresses — some of the diverse roles women of the age played in life and literature. Vea, who is project manager of the Avaldsnes Project, Norway, where she directs a recreation of Viking Age life, entertained and enlightened the 2008 Nordic Spirit audience with her accounts of kings and commoners alike.

The collection of Icelandic sagas is considered one of the great world literatures. Presenting an overview of this Norse legacy will be **Merrill Kaplan** of Ohio State University, where she is a lecturer with the Center for Folklore Studies and the Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies. Specializing in Nordic mythology and the sagas, she also teaches 19th century Norwegian literature, culture and folklore.

And proving that the sagas are more than a dead literature of the past, Minnesota poet and educator **Bill Holm** will discuss "Living Every Day in Iceland with the Still Alive Sagas." The author of nine books, both poetry and essays, he spends half of each year in northern Minnesota while he teaches at Southwest State University in Marshall, the other half on a northern Iceland fjord.

As Symposium-goers learned last year, the sagas owe their very existence to Christian writers, who preserved the narratives of the pagan past. **Anders Winroth** of Yale University will speak on "Pagan Norway turns Christian: A Few Facts and Many Fictions." Winner of a MacArthur Fellowship in 2003, one of academia's top honors, Swedish-born Winroth teaches early medieval Scandinavian history. Norwegian chronicles and Icelandic sagas continue to inspire modern accounts of the conversion of Norway.

Wrapping up the day will be a performance by Finnish-born singer and flutist, **Ulla Suokko**, along with flamenco guitarist **Carlos Revollar**, in "Dancing with the Northern Lights — A Musical-Magical Journey into the World of the Valkyries." Suokko was the recipient of the Finlandia Foundation National Trust's performer of the year award.

The two New York-based musical storytellers will also entertain at the Saturday evening dinner celebration in the Lundring Events Center at CLU. The dinner begins at 7 p.m.

The Nordic Spirit Symposium is sponsored by the Scandinavian American Cultural and Historical Foundation and California Lutheran University, and is made possible by generous grants from the **Barbro Osher Pro Suecia Foundation** and the **Royal Norwegian Consulate General in San Francisco**.

For further information, call (818) 788-4552 or e-mail seeallan@sbcglobal.net.

Nordic Spirit Duo to Stage 'Musical-Magical' Tapestry



*Singer Ulla Suokko &
guitarist Carlos Revollar*

*'Dancing with the Northern Lights —
A Musical-Magical Journey into the World
of the Valkyries'*

OLAF ENGVIG TO PRESENT 'VIKING TO VICTORIAN' AT SACHF BOOK SIGNING EVENT

Norwegian native Olaf Engvig will present a slide show following the January SACHF board meeting, at 1 p.m. Saturday, January 3, 2009 at the Scandinavian Center, 26 Faculty Rd., Thousand Oaks.

The lecture will focus on material from his latest book, "Viking to Victorian: Exploring the use of iron in ship building."

Covering a 1000-year span of the use of iron in marine technology, the book includes first-hand accounts his open-sea exploration in a small 1863 longboat, which was completely original, including the sail.

The book will be available at a discount at a book signing right after the presentation.

NORDIC SPIRIT SYMPOSIUM 2009

RESERVATION ORDER FORM

Reservation deadline for Saturday Lunch and Dinner is January 26

	Quantity	General Ad- mission	Quantity	SACHF Mem- bers	Students	Total Amount
Fri Eve & Sat		\$55 \$50 by Jan. 19		\$40 \$35 by Jan.19	Free	
Fri Eve only		\$20 \$15 by Jan. 19		\$15	Free	
Sat only		\$40 \$35 by Jan. 19		\$30 \$25 by Jan. 19	Free	
Fri Gala Reception		\$10		\$10	\$10	
Sat Luncheon		\$12		\$12	\$12	
Saturday Dinner Petit filet mignon Grilled salmon Vegetarian		\$38		\$38	\$38	
SACHF	Membership Dues	\$35 individual \$50 household				
TOTAL						

NORDIC SPIRIT SYMPOSIUM RESERVATION FORM

Mail with check to: Nordic Spirit Symposium, 26 Faculty Rd., Thousand Oaks CA 91360

Name (each person) _____

Keep your Nordic Spirit alive ♦♦♦ by supporting SACHF

♦ *The joy of celebrating heritage* ♦ *the drive to preserve it*

- Household (family) \$50
- Individual member \$35
- Full-time student \$20
- Sponsor-Organization \$75
- Nordic Golden Circle life \$1000
- Patron \$500
- Corporate Member \$250

Name(s) _____

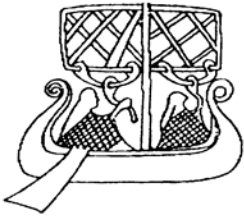
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Time to re-up your SACHF membership for 2009!

10th Annual
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Make your reservations now

**‘SAGAS AND THE
VIKING WORLD’**

Sagas and runes



Musical Storytellers
*Ulla Suokko
& Carlos Revollar*



Viking Age Design

Scandinavian Festival April 18-19

‘Affordable Family Fun’